



# Yukon Legislative Assembly

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Number 32

2nd Session

34th Legislature

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## HANSARD

Wednesday, October 4, 2017 — 1:00 p.m.

Speaker: The Honourable Nils Clarke

# YUKON LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

## 2017 Fall 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

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Hansard Administrator	Deana Lemke

**Yukon Legislative Assembly  
Whitehorse, Yukon  
Wednesday, October 4, 2017 — 1:00 p.m.**

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

*Prayers*

## DAILY ROUTINE

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

Tributes.

## TRIBUTES

### In recognition of National Family Week

**Mr. Gallina:** Mr. Speaker, it's an honour to rise today and pay tribute to National Family Week on behalf of the Yukon Liberal government and the Third Party NDP caucus.

Each fall, Canadians take the first week in October to celebrate the importance and joys of family life. National Family Week is promoted through an annual campaign from the non-profit organization, Canadian Association of Family Resource Programs. Family Resource Programs promote the well-being of families by providing national leadership, consultation, and resources to those who care for children and support families. They deliver a range of services, guided by principles that focus on building supportive relationships, facilitating growth, respecting diversity, and furthering community development. These resource programs provide support on important issues such as family well-being, healthy child development, and positive parenting. Family Resource Programs Canada is the national voice for the family resource support network. Their resources reach over 1,500 family resource programs that, in turn, reach hundreds and thousands of families, promoting well-being for children and education for parents and caretakers.

Mr. Speaker, for our communities to succeed, our families must thrive. Our families are what our communities are built upon. Ensuring our families have the proper supports and resources they need to prosper is vital to ensuring our children grow up healthy and happy. This year, the theme for National Family Week is "The Power of Play." Play has been shown to have positive effects on early childhood learning and development. In honour of the theme, "The Power of Play", I would like to encourage all parents and those who care for children to consider how we can better support our children through play.

Mr. Speaker, like many Yukoners, play is a prominent component of activities that take place in my household on a daily basis. Myself, my wife and my father, who also lives with us, regularly play with our daughters who enjoy crafting, playing shopkeeper, sports, drawing, preparing gifts for friends, and really anything that has to do with creating. It's important within our family to be mindful of the balance between structured time and free time when a child can be a child.

I want to thank Family Resource Programs Canada for all the hard work that goes into supporting thousands of Canadian families each year, and I would like to take this time to recognize my father, Peter Gallina, who is in the gallery here today. Thank you.

*Applause*

**Mr. Istchenko:** I rise today on behalf of the Yukon Party Official Opposition to pay tribute to National Family Week here in the territory. Across Canada, families are coming together in celebrations throughout the week to spend time with one another and have fun. Here in the Yukon, events are being held each day that families can take part in at no cost to them. Many Rivers Counselling and Support Services has done a wonderful job this year of organizing these events, which are held right across the territory and range from free sports and games to family dinners.

I would encourage families to take part in these events. I have heard great things about the festivities held so far and the wonderful volunteers working to make them a great success — and it's only the second day, Mr. Speaker.

Being from a small community, I know it's true that it takes a village to raise a child, but the job starts at home. Parents and guardians have a big role to play in a child's success, and it begins with getting those kids up and getting them to school, happy, fed and ready to learn — make learning exciting and make the family an important part of our children's lives. These activities are a wonderful way to spend time together and get your kids excited about learning and being active.

Once again, thank you to Many Rivers and all of the staff and volunteers at various schools, churches and community facilities across the Yukon. I would encourage our parents and guardians to check out the Many Rivers website for the schedule of events and prizes and try to partake in some of these celebrations. There is really no better way to get the family out for a week of fun.

### In recognition of Mental Illness Awareness Week

**Ms. McLeod:** I rise today on behalf of the Yukon Party Official Opposition to recognize and pay tribute to Mental Illness Awareness Week in Yukon, which takes place this year from October 1 to 7. Mental Illness Awareness Week has been the result of a concerted effort of government agencies, community organizations and individuals to destigmatize and raise awareness of the realities of mental illness across Canada.

In the north, we must remind ourselves that mental illness can affect more people and their families than in the southern provinces. It appears that higher levels of substance abuse, depression and anxiety occur in the north, and in rural Yukon these statistics tend to climb.

The 2017 mental wellness summit at the Kwanlin Dün Cultural Centre over the past two days features a number of presentations, stories, discussions and workshops surrounding mental wellness. The response to this free event was overwhelming and registration is full.

For those who are unable to take part, there will be a mental health panel taking place at 5:00 p.m. today at the Gold Rush Inn's town hall. This will offer a keynote speech as well as an opportunity for Yukoners to take part in the discussion.

This is an excellent opportunity for community members to take part in this important awareness campaign. There are a number of people who worked tirelessly to promote and aid mental wellness across Yukon and I would like to recognize the good work done by the Mental Health Association of Yukon, Mental Health Services as well as all of the organizations and individuals who worked to address mental wellness throughout the territory. It is the work that you do to create awareness and destigmatize mental illness and to promote mental wellness that makes our community a better place. I urge all Yukoners to take part in these important awareness initiatives as they happen. Bringing together a community to promote mental wellness is the best possible way to acknowledge, manage and heal all those affected by mental illness.

I want to take a moment to thank the public health centre and Alcohol and Drug Services for hosting the health fair in Watson Lake today.

**Hon. Ms. Frost:** I rise today in the House to recognize this week as national Mental Illness Awareness Week. It was an honour this morning to present to the mental wellness summit and forum. We have over 200 members registered. It was an absolutely amazing representation of Yukoners, highlighting that mental wellness is alive and well and that we are, as a government — and the communities — really focusing on trying to remove the stigma associated with mental illness and focusing on wellness.

As defined earlier, play and interaction is part of the healing process that needs to take effect in our communities. In any given year, one in five Canadians will experience a mental health problem or illness. Often their struggle is compounded by a lack of support or by societal stigma associated with seeking help. We are seeing this far too often in our small rural communities.

As expressed this morning at the opening of the forum, we have in the last week had four suicides in our communities, and that tells us we have a significant challenge ahead of us. As government, as Yukoners and as community members, we need to be actively involved in participating in finding the solutions.

That's one of the reasons I'm speaking today: to help in a small way to reduce the stigma. The more we talk about it, the better off we all are for it. We are all impacted; every one of us in here and everyone in our communities know of someone or have some connection.

As part of Mental Illness Awareness Week, there's a mental health panel — as expressed by the member opposite — taking place this evening with Northwestel, the Mental Health Association of Yukon and the Second Opinion Society. This event is open to the public and I encourage everyone to

attend. There will be time to ask questions of a panel of mental health experts.

Over the past year, we have been working hard to increase the supports available in our communities. Working closely with our First Nation partnership committee, we have been moving forward with the implementation of the Yukon's 10-year mental wellness strategy. Two of our major initiatives of this work include improving quality and increasing access to services, especially for communities outside of Whitehorse.

These initiatives mean Yukoners will find it easier to access mental wellness services when and where they're needed most.

As part of our goal to provide more mental wellness services in the communities, 24 community innovation projects across the Yukon are receiving various degrees of support through the mental wellness strategy. Each of the projects led by community organizations and First Nation governments focuses on service delivery in communities and under-represented populations.

These projects are providing real support for Yukoners where they need it most and helping strengthen community capacity to support those who struggle. This focus on improved access to Yukoners has been led with a phased plan to implement mental health strategies and services, alcohol and drug service expansions, and youth and child therapeutic services into a single program. This integration will allow us to better serve Yukoners, provide more services and deliver them more efficiently, reaching out more broadly into rural Yukon.

Access to local and timely support is an incredibly important step toward mental illness and mental wellness. It is also important that mental health practitioners have the knowledge and training to provide high-quality support.

With this in mind, service providers and community members have participated in regular training opportunities that have dealt with such things as mental health, addictions, trauma and other foundational competencies.

In the last year, more than 800 participants participated in a mental wellness training session. A mental wellness strategy can't be implemented alone. We have to reach out and work with our partners in the communities and across the Yukon. With the Yukon Hospital Foundation, we introduced an EMR mental health nurse pilot project at the Whitehorse hospital.

Today and tomorrow, the mental wellness providers from across the Yukon are gathered here in our city to celebrate the successes and achievements, but also to strategize and come up with long-term solutions. We're excited to continue this important work.

In closing, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the many Yukoners who spent countless hours — the professionals and advocates — who work tirelessly to dedicate their time to improving mental health for all Yukoners.

**Ms. White:** I stand on behalf of the Yukon NDP to honour Mental Illness Awareness Week. In recent days, many people in this Chamber and our community have been asked

to participate in a Northwestel mental illness awareness campaign. The campaign aims to remove the stigma of mental illness and to encourage people to talk about how they are really feeling. It seems like an easy solution but, until recent years, we didn't really talk about mental health. Many, many people suffered in silence, and that has to end.

While Canadian society has a growing understanding of why mental health is important, the Canadian Alliance on Mental Illness and Mental Health believes that it's crucial to understand the numbers that illustrate the burden of mental illness across a lifespan and our country.

In a global context, mental disorders account for more than the burden of disease than all cancers combined: 6.7 million Canadians suffer from a mental illness each year; in comparison, 2.2 million Canadians suffer from type 2 diabetes. To put these numbers into perspective, that means one in five people suffer from a mental illness while only one in 15 suffers from type 2 diabetes. Why is that an issue? Because we talk about diabetes all the time; 500,000 Canadians in any given week are unable to work due to mental illness. Mental health issues account for more than \$6 billion in lost productivity due to absenteeism a year.

By 2020, depression will become the second-leading cause of disability, next only to heart disease. Seventy percent of young adults living with mental health problems report their symptoms started in childhood. That's problematic because, in 2015, 6,000 Canadian children waited for one year for mental health treatment, and in 2016 that number doubled to 12,000.

People living in low-income neighbourhoods are more at risk of developing mental illness such as depression than people living in high-income neighbourhoods. Ten percent of patients with mental health illness experience a repeat hospital stay, and it's 20 percent higher than that for patients living in poorer neighbourhoods. Mr. Speaker, poverty affects health.

Only one-third of those Canadians with a mental health problem reported that they will seek and receive care because of stigma and because care is not sufficiently accessible.

So what do all of these numbers mean? They mean that even if you feel isolated and alone, you aren't. Mental illness affects all segments of Canadian society, and not one single person is immune. We know that people living in rural Yukon do not have the same access to mental health services as those in Whitehorse, but let's be honest — wait times and service availability in Whitehorse aren't anything to brag about. More resources are needed to increase capacity to make the treatment of mental illness accessible and timely in all of Yukon. We can't just talk about mental health and mental illness; we need to act in a meaningful way.

Mr. Speaker, one more life lost to mental illness is one life too many.

**Speaker:** Introduction of visitors.

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Hon. Ms. Dendys:** I would like to invite the House to help me in welcoming a constituent of mine,

Mr. Mike Gladish, to the House today. Thank you so much for coming. It's nice to see you here.

*Applause*

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

## TABLING RETURNS AND DOCUMENTS

**Hon. Ms. Dendys:** I have for tabling the Yukon Arts Centre Corporation annual report for 2016-17, which is tabled pursuant to section 12(3) of the *Arts Centre Act*.

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

Are there any petitions?

Are there any bills to be introduced?

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

### Bill No. 6: *Public Airports Act* — Introduction and First Reading

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** I move that Bill No. 6, entitled *Public Airports Act*, be now introduced and read a first time.

**Speaker:** It has been moved by the Minister of Highways and Public Works that Bill No. 6, entitled *Public Airports Act*, be now introduced and read a first time.

*Motion for introduction and first reading of Bill No. 6 agreed to*

**Speaker:** Are there any further bills for introduction?

### Bill No. 8: *Act to Amend the Workers' Compensation Act and the Occupational Health and Safety Act (2017)* — Introduction and First Reading

**Hon. Ms. Dendys:** I move that Bill No. 8, entitled *Act to Amend the Workers' Compensation Act and the Occupational Health and Safety Act (2017)*, be now introduced and read a first time.

**Speaker:** It has been moved by the Minister responsible for the Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board that Bill No. 8, entitled *Act to Amend the Workers' Compensation Act and the Occupational Health and Safety Act (2017)*, be now introduced and read a first time.

*Motion for introduction and first reading of Bill No. 8 agreed to*

**Speaker:** Are there any further bills for introduction?

### Bill No. 9: *Act to Amend the Pounds Act (2017)* — Introduction and First Reading

**Hon. Mr. Pillai:** I move that Bill No. 9, entitled *Act to Amend the Pounds Act (2017)*, be now introduced and read a first time.

**Speaker:** It has been moved by the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources that Bill No. 9, entitled *Act to Amend the Pounds Act (2017)*, be now introduced and read a first time.

*Motion for introduction and first reading of Bill No. 9 agreed to*

**Speaker:** Are there any further bills for introduction?

Are there any notices of motions?

## NOTICES OF MOTIONS

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

THAT this House urges the Yukon government to recognize the needs of residents of the new Grizzly Valley subdivision by:

(1) repairing the road and reopening the second access road into the new Grizzly Valley subdivision for the purposes of convenience and improved fire protection; and

(2) providing school bus service to the subdivision, which was designed by Yukon government engineers to safely accommodate the school bus service that is currently being requested by families living in the area.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to review and modernize the *Coroners Act*, including consideration of a medical model as used in most provinces and territories in Canada.

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

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### Canadian leaders meeting in Ottawa

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Yesterday, we opened the 34<sup>th</sup> Session of the Legislative Assembly, which I was very disappointed to miss, as I heard it was a very eventful day. I was absent because my fellow premiers and I met with Prime Minister Trudeau, federal ministers and national indigenous organizations in Ottawa.

The timing of the meeting was well out of our control and definitely less than ideal. I travelled to Ottawa because it's my responsibility to communicate the concerns of Yukoners to national leaders. Mr. Speaker, it is easy to criticize parties in power for travelling, I know very well — I have done it myself from time to time. It is also at times very difficult to appreciate the value of such trips. I believe this is because, as ministers, we're not used to sharing information about the purpose of our travels, which is why I would like to take some time today and speak to you about how I used this time to represent Yukoners and why I felt this particular trip was warranted.

I did travel to Ottawa because Yukoners deserve to have their concerns heard. While in Ottawa, I met with Minister Catherine McKenna and asked her to help us make the best use of the funds available for green energy projects, retrofits and emission-reduction projects. I spoke with her about our desire to reduce Yukon's greenhouse gas emissions and asked her when we would know more about a federal backstop on carbon pricing. She had questions about how our YESAA works, and I invited her to the Yukon to learn more about our unique and effective process.

I met with Minister Carolyn Bennett and asked her what the division of INAC would mean for Yukoners. We learned that this split will eventually mean the dissolving of Indigenous and Northern Affairs and the creation of two new departments. We found out as well that the two new mandate letters for those departments are now available online. She said that there is still a lot to be discussed, but that she believes it will bring better services, more appropriate programming and a more collaborative approach to the federal government's work in the north — all good news, Mr. Speaker.

She and I discussed the Arctic policy strategy and I asked her to reach out to all provinces and territories to speak with us about the plan. We want to be supportive, but we need to have more participation from Yukoners in the development of this document.

We also spoke about Bill C-17. She is working hard to move this bill forward and I offered her any support that we could give. This bill is important to the Yukon and we want to see it moving quickly through the Canadian legislature.

In the days leading up to the trip, I heard from the business community in the Yukon. They asked me to deliver a message to Minister of Finance Bill Morneau. We sent a letter explaining the concerns that we heard and yesterday I spoke to Minister Morneau directly. I used my time with him to reiterate the concerns that have been voiced. I explained that the business community in Yukon wanted more time for consultation and more consideration for the overall impacts of this federal tax. I suggested that Minister Morneau should consider transition provisions as well to ensure that businesses have time to properly account for any changes that are made. I was very honoured to be able to deliver these messages from the small business community from Yukoners to Ottawa.

I was also enthusiastic to hear Minister Morneau offer reassurances, both to me and the entire group, that only the 1.7 percent of previously owned corporations that control 80 percent of the economy would be affected.

**Speaker:** Order, please.

**Mr. Hassard:** First, I would just like to thank the Premier for that five-minute-long infomercial from the federal government.

Mr. Speaker, I don't think anyone questions the need for members of government to travel from time to time. However, I note the Premier says the devil is in the details. Unfortunately for the Premier, the details of his trips often include coming back with nothing or just rolling over to Ottawa. On his very first trip to Ottawa, the Premier only came back with a carbon tax. As the Premier says, the devil is in the details. Unfortunately, despite this being the first thing he signed on to as Premier, he has since provided no details to Yukoners on what this carbon tax scheme is going to look like. We have even asked him for simple things like economic analysis of the impacts of the carbon tax scheme he signed on to and it turns out he hasn't done any. This from a government that claims to make decisions based on evidence.

On his next trip to Ottawa, it appears he only went there to go to the Liberal Party of Canada's Christmas party.

On another trip to Ottawa, he came back after having signed on to an agreement reducing the amount of health funding coming to the Yukon. In fact, to local media he bragged that the deal he agreed to would mean \$1 million less for Yukon. Think about that, Mr. Speaker. He bragged that he had only agreed to a \$1-million cut. That's money that could be used for mental health nurses, for medicine and for supporting our community hospitals. Not only that, but the Premier didn't even push to get emergency funding to deal with the fentanyl crisis as other provinces did.

As you can see, Mr. Speaker, the Premier has a history of going to Ottawa and not standing up for Yukon, but instead rolling over to do Ottawa's bidding. Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, it appears that this week's trip was no different. Last week, the Premier and the minister said that they would stand up for Yukon's small businesses. However, yesterday, when we brought forward a non-partisan motion calling for the Government of Canada to extend their consultations on their small business tax changes, the Premier and his government opposed it. Today, the Premier was delivering speaking points from the federal Finance minister, defending Ottawa's approach to the tax changes.

I also note that the Premier says he met with the federal Environment minister to discuss their joint carbon tax scheme. Well, so far he has given Yukoners no information on this file. I hope that he will be providing a bit more to us during this Sitting.

Further, I note that he talked to the minister about energy retrofits. We will certainly be interested to hear the details on that discussion as well. As you know, Mr. Speaker, the Liberals promised to deliver \$30 million a year in new money for energy retrofits and so far they haven't lived up to that promise. Instead of simply delivering Ottawa's speaking points, I would have hoped that the Premier would have explained his plan to deliver on that as well.

As I said from the outset, we understand that from time to time travel is necessary — as long as it isn't frivolous. Unfortunately, today, rather than laying out a plan for Yukoners and telling us what the Premier is going to do, he has spent five minutes telling us how great Ottawa is.

**Ms. Hanson:** I thank the Premier for his brief remarks about his trip to Ottawa and the First Ministers' meeting. When the federal Liberal government was elected in 2015, their platform did include promises to address tax avoidance and, in particular, small business income splitting. However, they did not say how they would deal with these issues. The issue is not just about the merits about the proposed tax changes. It is ostensibly about how government most effectively brings about changes to Canada's tax system to ensure fairness and equity.

The fact of the matter is that it has been over 50 years since the federal government did a comprehensive review of Canada's tax system. That review, the Carter Royal Commission on Taxation, took four years to do extensive

consultation. In contrast, the federal Liberal government, through Minister of Finance Morneau, announced changes that will affect Canadian-controlled private corporations during the summer months — during the time when many Canadians are either on vacation or working hard at their businesses. The declared objectives of the proposed changes, which are income splitting, passive investment made by small businesses or the conversion income into capital gains, are important matters.

According to the federal Finance department, these changes are an attempt to save the Canadian government \$500 million in lost revenue. The real challenge is for the federal government to address tax evasion, measures that allow people to have offshore investments that are costing the Canadian government — you and me — billions of dollars. These deserve full, fair and objective debate. What has occurred over the past couple of months has been anything but, and the federal government bears much of the responsibility for a poorly communicated consultation.

I too attended the Yukon Chamber of Commerce's special meeting last week and heard the many deep concerns being expressed. Some of those concerns might be addressed if the federal government were to actually engage, prior to changing tax laws, to provide opportunities for Canadians coast to coast to coast to be heard.

Changes to tax laws affect all Canadians and an informed and open debate on making Canada's systems of taxation fair and equitable for all Canadians is long overdue.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to commend the minister's mentioning that he had conversations with Minister McKenna and Minister Bennett on YESAA. Many Yukoners were concerned to hear yesterday about representations made before the committee reviewing the necessary changes to YESAA to correct the egregious amendments put forward by the Yukon Party government and the former Yukon senator.

We will hold this Premier and the federal Liberals to their commitment to make YESAA whole again.

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** I guess nothing has changed since the summer is over. We got some great points from the NDP as far as the message that was delivered and some platitudes from the Yukon Party.

I will comment a bit about the poor communication. I completely agree. I think the federal government didn't do a very good job of communicating, and I also believe that, after the conversations we did have, there is a change. I think the word "tweak" is maybe a little bit too moderate a word from the assurances that we got.

The Finance minister told us, "We've heard from the small businesses. We're not focusing in on the small businesses that the opposition would have you think that we are." It's more like 1.7 percent of the businesses — like 30,000 businesses, corporations — that make up 80 percent of the wealth. That is the way it was explained to us. All the premiers around the room heard from the small businesses and said, "We want to have that conversation about extending 75 days more." The answer we got back, for us, allows us to say,

“All right, the devil is in the details; tell us what you heard from small businesses, put it down in writing, and let us know that these small businesses will not be affected.”

We heard from the minister. He said, “I guarantee that these businesses will not be affected.” Now, that’s good enough for us because we don’t want to see this continuing down the road, because that is going to create more uncertainty for small businesses. The Yukon Party would love that. They would love to see this continue down that road so they can continue to make it seem like — what were the words that they used, Mr. Speaker? They used the word “co-management” or “co-tax”. This is what they do. They were talking about federal issues all last session. They are going to continue to talk about federal issues this session — the reason being that they know the financial situation they left us in. They know the hard work that this government has to do to make sure that we get back on track. As far as our conversations with Ottawa, we will continue — whether it’s the government in Ottawa or First Nation governments or municipal governments — to maintain positive relationships with these partners because we honestly believe that it comes out in spades. For example, Prime Minister Trudeau coming to the Yukon and presenting the biggest infrastructure spend in Yukon history — in Yukon history. This former government says that when we go down to Ottawa we get nothing done. That is an interesting comment, Mr. Speaker.

We did speak also about cannabis, and I would like to put that on the record as well. I think the federal legislation on cannabis is in good hands with the representatives that the federal government has put forward on this issue. We asked for five questions to be answered from the federal government, and we got that from Bill Blair. There is lots of work that has been done, and I think the main point that he made was that, right now, 100 percent of the traffic is the illegal market. Based on his conversations with other jurisdictions, like Colorado, which now feels that they have solved that problem from a 50- to 70-percent ratio of cornering out that market. They are on a good pathway forward to make sure that this criminal element is out of business in Canada.

Mr. Speaker, we did have some fantastic conversations, whether they were during the First Ministers’ meetings on the economy or the tax changes that the federal government is proposing, or particular meetings with the ministers on the federal changes to tax regimes or the federal carbon-pricing mechanism. We believe that every time we do have these conversations, whether it be on NAFTA, taxes or the economy in general, or on resource roads, these conversations are valid.

I want to again, in closing, thank my amazing team on this side of the Legislature for, in my absence, presenting grace in the Legislative Assembly.

**Speaker:** This then brings us to Question Period.

## QUESTION PERIOD

### Question re: Federal tax policies

**Mr. Hassard:** Small businesses are a cornerstone of the Yukon’s economy. Last week, the Minister of Economic Development promised the business community that getting an extension to the federal consultation on their small-business tax grab was a priority of his.

Mr. Speaker, the Premier and minister had the opportunity to put their money where their mouth was and vote in favour of our motion to call on the federal government to extend the consultations. Having this Assembly unanimously call on the federal government to extend the consultations would have sent a powerful message to Ottawa that Yukon is united across party lines. Unfortunately, the Liberals refused to support this motion and stand up for small businesses in the territory.

Can the Premier or the minister tell us why his government did not join us and the Third Party in supporting small businesses, farmers, placer miners and doctors yesterday?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** Thank you for the question. It’s a great opportunity to clear the air. I guess the Leader of the Official Opposition didn’t listen to the phone call that I had with him yesterday and didn’t listen to the ministerial statement that we just did in the Legislative Assembly.

We are confident — the premiers are confident — that the small businesses have been heard. We are also confident when the federal minister says that the small businesses that are outside of that 1.7 — those 30,000 companies — are not going to be affected by these changes. Any extension right now will just create more uncertainty for the exact businesses that the member opposite just said — the small businesses like the placer miners, the small businesses like the farmers. All of these businesses want to know that their livelihoods, their savings, are not going to be affected by these tax changes that are supposed to narrow in that ever-expanding income gap that we have in Canada. All of the premiers agreed that we don’t need to extend the 75-day period. The devil will be in the details. It’s now in the federal government’s court to come good on the promise they made to Yukon small businesses and to the premiers.

Again, on the conversation that I had with the Leader of the Third Party — I don’t think he was going to get unanimous consent to the Yukon Party motion from either party.

**Mr. Hassard:** Mr. Speaker, on the issue of the federal Bill C-17, this House unanimously passed a motion expressing our support for the bill. The passing of this motion came after the territorial government had sent a letter to Ottawa. At the time, the Premier said it was important to send a unified statement from all parties to Ottawa to show cross-party support. However, when it comes to small businesses and doctors, the Premier appears to be saying that it’s not as important to do that. He’s saying that standing up for small businesses and doctors is redundant.

Mr. Speaker, will the Premier stop playing politics when it comes to small businesses and doctors and support the



unanimous motion to ask the federal government to extend the consultations on their small-business tax grab?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** If the Leader of the Official Opposition would get off of his notes from his chief of staff and listen to the answers in the Legislative Assembly and have an actual dialogue here, he would hear what we're saying.

Is it the Leader of the Third Party's objective to find out if Canadians and small businesses have been heard? If that actually is, we've been told by the federal minister that they are not going to just tweak — they did hear. They went out and they went right across Canada and they heard from the small-business communities and they will present changes to these drafts. That was the whole process; that was the whole reason for the 75 days.

Now I agree with the Leader of the Third Party that they didn't do a very good job of communicating. I guess there's a combination of — didn't do a good job of communicating, but also hopefully listening. Again, the devil will be in those details. If the focus is going to be, again, on the 1.7 percent of corporations that make up 80 percent of the wealth of the companies in Canada, when you know that there are millions — and I mean millions — of corporations and small businesses, well then, what does the Official Opposition want to do? Do they just want to drag this on so they can continue to make it seem like this is my tax or continue to make it seem like they're somehow fighting for Yukoners, when what we want to see is the details of these changes to make sure that the federal ministers' commitments will be adhered to?

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Hassard:** It certainly is too bad that this government has chosen not to stand up for small businesses and doctors and support a unanimous call from our Legislature asking for an extension.

Mr. Speaker, yesterday there was a vote in the House of Commons on whether or not to extend these consultations. Unfortunately, our Member of Parliament voted against this. I'm curious — did the minister or the Premier speak to our Member of Parliament beforehand and ask him how he was voting on the extension of the consultation?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. What a great opportunity today to clear the air again. I will say this again: I wrote a letter to Minister Morneau. I asked for an extension for our small businesses. I spoke with him directly — one-on-one — and I asked for an extension. We then met as premiers and we asked for an extension. Now we have the Leader of the Official Opposition saying, "You didn't ask for an extension. You didn't do enough." Well, we did ask for an extension, Mr. Speaker. We asked, based upon the conversations that the Minister of Economic Development had with the small business community and I commend him for the work that he did going in and having conversations — not only with the Chamber of Commerce, but also with all of the businesses — as many as he could — tirelessly standing up for the small-business sector. We believe, based upon what we heard — and ask any of the premiers the same thing — "these small businesses will not be affected" was the message from Ottawa. So that's the good news that we're all looking for,

isn't it? Aren't we waiting to hear this? Aren't we now looking to make sure that these small businesses who have been preparing all of their lives for a financial retirement, not having government pensions, making sure that women in the workforce who are planning for maternity leaves have the ability to continue to be an active part of the workforce? These are the good things that we brought to the federal minister and we believe that Yukoners were heard.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

#### Question re: Federal tax policies

**Mr. Cathers:** Mr. Speaker, today we see the Premier has come back from his 16<sup>th</sup> trip to Ottawa in less than a year empty-handed again. Either this Liberal government has no plan or if they do have a plan, they have been hiding it from Yukoners and not telling them the details. This is creating uncertainty across the territory for families and for small businesses.

When it comes to the Financial Advisory Panel's recommendations, the Premier has in the past said everything is on the table, but Yukoners have been very clear. They are already worried about the increase of costs associated with the Liberal's carbon tax and the federal tax increases on small business. Now they are worried about the impacts of the proposed sales tax.

Will the Premier listen to Yukoners and Yukon small businesses that are opposed to this new Liberal sales tax and commit that there will not be a sales tax here in the Yukon?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** Again, what a wonderful day to clear the air.

We have commissioned a third-party Financial Advisory Panel and from all the conversations that we've had on this side of the House, this panel has done a fantastic job of reaching out through two different phases of communications through surveys. Again, if anybody hasn't weighed in to this third-party exercise yet please, I absolutely implore you to do so, because what we're going to do is we're going to wait until that whole process is finished — the consultation process is finished — and once it is we will listen to Yukoners and make sure that we get ourselves back on to good financial footing. It's all there. If you don't have time to read the whole 100 pages, I urge every Yukoner, do please read the executive summary — it's all in there.

Ten years of the previous government spending more than they were earning has led us into a unique financial situation that we have to turn around. We will and we will take the advice from Yukoners once they have been heard through the process of consultation with the Financial Advisory Panel.

Again, I thank the member opposite for the opportunity to clear the air and to make sure that folks know that the panel did a great job of putting all options on the table. Really, I don't think the panel said a lot of stuff that economists in the Yukon haven't heard before. It is just a great exercise to show you where we are right now and the options moving forward.

**Mr. Cathers:** Again, we see contradictions and mixed messaging from this Premier. He tries to claim that the

previous government left the financial cupboard bare and yet he outsmarts himself this week and issues a press release saying the exact opposite, quoting Standards & Poor's as noting that the Yukon has maintained an AA credit rating for eight consecutive years and stating, according to his own press release: "As in previous years, strengths highlighted in the report for Yukon include good financial management, low debt levels and strong liquidity."

Again, this appears to us to be a process that looks at coming up with new excuses to raise taxes on Yukoners. First this government has signed on to the carbon tax scheme. Now they're talking about bringing in a sales tax and it looks like they're also considering increasing taxes on Yukon's placer miners — placer miners who are already worried about paying more as a result of the Liberal carbon tax, the Silver sales tax and a federal Liberal tax hike.

Will the Premier commit today to abandoning the idea of increasing royalties on Yukon's placer miners?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** I think I was very clear during the election campaign when I answered the Placer Miners' Association that I have no intention of raising the placer royalty rates. We've said these things before. I'm going to make that statement again in the Legislative Assembly, because that's what we said during the election campaign. That's how we responded to the KPMA.

I see what the member opposite is trying to do. He is blurring some lines here. The Financial Advisory Panel has gone out and they have shown all the things that a government can do to decrease their costs, to hopefully increase revenues — so that's the process. The member opposite was in government long enough. He should know the difference.

I don't know if he does or not, but we could have that conversation afterward. These are all the recommendations from the Financial Advisory Panel.

Again, it's a great opportunity to clear the record.

He talks about the credit rating. Yes, credit rating is a great thing to have — absolutely. Debt to GDP, a good financial anchor — I'm not sure. We need to look at all of the different financial anchors. We have seen the Yukon Party pinpoint small pieces of statistics and say that this is what we're going to concentrate on, as far as the financial situation that we have been left in. People don't need to be economists to know that, if you have an allowance of a dollar and you're spending more than that dollar, you're going to get yourself into a lot of trouble.

The Financial Advisory Panel told us very succinctly that we need to curb our spending, and we will.

**Mr. Cathers:** I have to remind the Premier that he was the one who set the terms of reference for the Financial Advisory Panel and what options they could look at, including potentially breaking Liberal platform commitments.

Again, the Premier issued a press release this week acknowledging the Standard & Poor's double-A credit rating for the eighth consecutive year in the Yukon, and noting that, as in previous years, strengths highlighted in the report for Yukon include good financial management, low debt levels and strong liquidity.

We have seen a number of contradictions from the Premier. He was on the radio earlier this week saying that if Yukoners want him to do nothing, he'll do nothing. What Yukoners are noticing is that this government has actually been doing a lot of nothing for the past 10 months. The main thing they have accomplished is to create uncertainty for Yukoners.

The Financial Advisory Panel's recommendations suggest cuts could be made to the public service. In September, the Premier said everything is on the table. In May, he said there would be no layoffs. Which one of the Premier's statements about layoffs should Yukoners believe, or is the answer "none of the above"?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** It's interesting — the tack that the member opposite is using, as far as trying to connect us to the Financial Advisory Panel and making it seem like we have set the terms of reference, and therefore we weren't somehow open and accountable. Even just yesterday, reading the Blues, the conversation from the member opposite talking about — and I quote: "From what the panel told us, they were given no special access to documents to actually review the government's financial situation in detail as the Premier promised they would." That's from the Member for Lake Laberge.

Yet last night, at a public forum, members of the panel approached the Member for Riverdale South and asked her to clarify about what had been stated in the Legislative Assembly that afternoon. Panel members told the Member for Riverdale South that they had, in fact, received all the information that they requested beyond the Public Accounts.

It seems the member opposite erred in making these comments. Maybe in his attempt to try to make it seem as if we're not being accountable, or they didn't leave us in the rosier of possible rosy situations, maybe he has erred in his ways, so I would ask for the member opposite to maybe correct his statements, as they were untrue. I would like to see him call into question —

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

### Point of order

**Speaker:** Member for Lake Laberge.

**Mr. Cathers:** It's contrary to the Standing Orders to accuse a member of uttering a deliberate falsehood, and the phrasing of "untrue" has been ruled out of order in the past pursuant to Standing Order 19(g).

Also for the record on that point, I relayed exactly what the Financial Advisory Panel told us during the briefing. I can't speak to a conversation they allegedly had with the Government House Leader.

**Speaker:** Hon. Mr. Premier, on the point of order.

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** I didn't say that he uttered deliberately a falsehood. I'm giving the member opposite an opportunity to clear the air. Clearly what he said in the Legislative Assembly yesterday counters what the Financial Advisory Panel is. I'm giving the opportunity to state why it is that he said something that, seemingly from the panel, absolutely was not the case.

**Speaker's ruling**

**Speaker:** This appears to be a dispute among members as to the facts. I will take it under advisement, review Hansard and get back to members, if required.

**Question re: Land use planning**

**Ms. White:** Last month, the Premier stood with Canada's Prime Minister to announce that \$360 million in combined federal and territorial funding would be made available to provide mining company access to the Dawson Range of the Nahanni Range Road. But land use planning for these areas has not been completed as Yukon committed to in chapter 11 of the *Umbrella Final Agreement*. Land use planning is the process through which all Yukoners are to determine how Yukon's land and resources are to be stewarded for generations to come. So far, only two out of eight land use plans have been completed. How can the Premier reconcile handing out hundreds of millions of dollars in public funds for mining road development when he has not yet met the government's obligation to complete land use plans?

**Hon. Mr. Pillai:** Thank you for the question. Certainly, it is a fantastic question. One of the key points I am moving forward on in the agreement with Canada on the gateway project was — and maybe this is another chance to clear the air, as I heard some rumbles across the way. There was an application that was submitted by the previous government to the federal government for this project.

In the early days of taking on the role of Energy, Mines and Resources minister, I came to understand that there was a proposal in but really no support. There was one letter of support from First Nations and absolutely no support for the project other than that. There were lots of attempts made, but they really had not made headway. The federal government then communicated to us that there had to be general support from First Nations in the Yukon in order to move forward, based on those traditional territories. Over the next 90 to 100 days, the Premier, the Minister of Environment, and I — many of us worked tirelessly to work with First Nations to come up with a framework that they would be comfortable with. That led to a series of letters that supported the project; hence the announcement this summer. The commitment that was made then was that we would continue to have the early discussions that would then lead into a framework with each specific First Nation on what they felt was an appropriate way forward. Hopefully there will be more questions —

**Speaker:** Order, please. Order.

**Ms. White:** The issue here is land use planning. It's an overarching agreement with all Yukoners. Yes, it was another institution that stems out of the First Nation final agreements. Many mining projects that are before YESAB right now would benefit directly from these roads to resources. Others that would benefit have not yet started their environmental assessments.

While YESAB is an independent board, it only issues recommendations. The government makes the final decision on whether or not a project gets approval, but this government

just announced hundreds of millions of dollars of public subsidies for mining projects that have not yet completed environmental assessments. This raises serious doubts about the government's ability to objectively take into consideration any YESAB recommendations in an impartial way.

How will this government be able to take a critical and objective look at YESAB recommendations for proposed mines when it has already announced millions of dollars in investment for these very same projects?

**Hon. Mr. Pillai:** I apologize that I didn't get to completely answering your first question. Within the next stage of this is to have discussions with our affected First Nations. Many First Nations — i.e. the Dawson Range — there is an ongoing conversation with almost every First Nation in the Yukon concerning land planning. Are we going to come to a point where the whole economy begins to slow or grinds to a halt until land planning is done? I think we all understand. We, first of all, have been left with a scenario where \$10 million was put aside for land planning. There is only \$3 million left. We are waiting on the Peel case, which is another challenge that has been left behind, and then we move to the Dawson piece.

I have been in conversation with multiple First Nations on doing some early work on regional land planning. Part of what we want to do is at least get the baseline data done and start to do maybe some specific planning and working with my Minister of Environment to come up with a set of tools that — even in chapter 10, we see a series of tools that we can use to ensure that we have structured areas that are looked after, while still being able to go down the road of development.

Like we have said to First Nations — and I think any First Nation government that you speak with will state that nothing is going to move forward unless there is a complete agreement between Yukon government and those First Nations. I hope that helps to answer your question concerning the YESAA piece.

**Ms. White:** We have seen in the past that a piecemeal approach to land use planning does not work. There is a problem when the Premier speaks at a mining conference in Toronto as if these roads are a reality. Then he turns around and tells First Nation governments and Yukoners concerned about these hundreds of millions of dollars in public subsidies that these projects are not yet a done deal. The irony was not lost on many Yukoners when the Premier stood with Prime Minister Trudeau to make this announcement. This very same announcement could have taken place two years earlier with the previous premier and Prime Minister Harper and their speaking notes would have been pretty much the same.

Mr. Speaker, how is the Premier's approach, where he announces millions of dollars in subsidies to projects that have not gone through environmental assessments, any different from his predecessor's approach?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** I can't speak on my predecessor's approach, but I can say that this government is going to make sure that the agreements will be in place with the First Nations whose traditional territory will be affected by these infrastructure upgrades. We recognize the importance of

infrastructure, Mr. Speaker, and that investment to strengthen and to grow Yukon's community, and we encourage the broader economic success that this will bring. The Yukon Resource Gateway project proposed upgrades to the existing roads. It is going to support roads in communities from Dawson to Nahanni and all roads in between.

We will respect the YESAA process 100 percent, absolutely — and no confusion. I don't know if the member opposite is confused, but when we were speaking with the financial folks down in Toronto, we told them what we have told the First Nation governments. We said that. We are not having one conversation with industry and another conversation with First Nations. We're saying that the money is not in our account, but what we did do is we signed on to that agreement. That agreement is there and it was a Rubik's cube of considerations that was hatched by the previous government where you had to have all the consent, and we got it — all the chiefs signing on in principle to this agreement. The money is not in our account now for this. What we're going to do from here on in is to make sure that the First Nations and ourselves move hand in hand on all of these agreements to make sure that they are in the conversation with us when it comes to resource roads.

#### Question re: School calendar

**Ms. Van Bibber:** With regard to the changes made to the school calendar, this government has chosen to lengthen the school day and shorten the school year.

We have received a large amount of feedback from parents who are concerned about the instructional time for their children and would like to see them in the classroom for extra full days as opposed to extra minutes in each day.

During the Spring Sitting, we asked the Minister of Education if she could provide any evidence that shows students will learn as well with longer days versus having full days in class. This government claims to be committed to evidence-based decision-making so it should be able to provide any studies that show this evidence.

**Hon. Ms. McPhee:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Thank you for the question. The school calendar was set with respect to the parameters that are set out in the *Education Act* with respect to the number of hours — not the number of days. As a result, the school calendar can be flexible for some schools here in Whitehorse or in more rural areas and our communities across the territory, and it does leave some flexibility for that reason.

With respect to the question that has been asked, I certainly don't have that information at my fingertips, but I do undertake to answer my friend and the member opposite with respect to her question about specific reports.

**Ms. Van Bibber:** Thank you. We've heard feedback from many parents who believe their children would benefit more from adding full days to the school year. Well, the minister said not to worry and that there was only three minutes longer added to each day, and that shouldn't be too long for students.

Parents aren't worried about additional minutes in the school day; they're worried about eight less full days of class. The minister said in April that if we are talking about extended minutes in a day, we're talking about less than three in most cases.

Does the minister think that having eight less days of class will negatively impact student outcomes and can she tell us how she arrived at her conclusion? Also, can she confirm how many minutes were added to each school day?

**Hon. Ms. McPhee:** I think what I'm trying to say — and if I'm not clear about saying it, I apologize for that — the number of hours is required by the *Education Act*. School calendars are a complex operation and a complex activity. They require a lot of planning and discussion to ensure that they balance the needs of the Yukon school communities, meet the requirements of the *Education Act*, and, of course, the collective agreement of the Yukon Teachers' Association.

After we discussed this last spring, there was, in addition to that, a motion in which we discussed it. I undertook at that time to go to the school communities, to school councils, to school administrators, to school teachers, families, children, students across the territory and determine what their interest was with respect to school calendars. We in fact did that. That process is underway — that survey which has been well-received by the public and certainly taken up in many school communities with the encouragement of school communities to participate in that. I take the opportunity today to encourage them still. That survey is open until the October 16. As a result, we will then be making some decisions with respect to which school calendars should be done for the next four years. You will recall that we'll be setting them for four years.

**Ms. Van Bibber:** As was just stated, the survey results will be known soon. Regardless of the survey results, Yukoners deserve to see more than just an executive summary. The opinions of parents, educators, families and school councils should be of the utmost importance to this government. Ensuring their views are incorporated should be a priority.

These results will contribute to an overall transparency of this government and allow the public to see that all decisions are evidence-based. Can the minister commit to releasing the full survey results without censoring written comments and to basing all decisions on future school calendars on the views of parents, families and school councils?

**Speaker:** Minister of Justice.

**Hon. Ms. McPhee:** I could be the Minister of Education today in relation to this question. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

I won't make the commitment that the member opposite has asked for today because I don't know the form in which that material will come to the department. Statistics Yukon is involved in assisting with the survey. Clearly I am keen to make sure that individuals who filled out the survey in confidence, thinking their information would be held confidential and may have privacy concerns — I can't make the commitment you have asked for today for those reasons.

I do commit to providing as much information — aggregate or otherwise — that we are able to as a result of making sure that everyone understands the responses that we got to the school survey, because it's critical and an important issue and is certainly one of the priorities for the department in the next number of months, so we can get school calendars and families can do their planning.

**Question re: Budget estimates and spending**

**Mr. Istchenko:** I have some questions for the minister regarding education capital projects that have been highlighted within the 2017-18 budget. The government has allocated \$8 million of this year's budget to the design and construction of a francophone high school. \$400,000 was dedicated in last year's budget to begin the design phase for this project, and it was said that the \$8 million for this year would be earmarked to finish the design work and start construction.

It does not appear construction has begun. Can the minister tell the House what the status of the design work is for the francophone high school project? How much of the \$8 million has been spent to date? Will this project be delivered on time?

**Hon. Ms. McPhee:** Thank you very much for the question. Much of the funding, as the member opposite has noted, in the 2017-18 year will not be spent in this budget year. As you may know, there has been a bit of a delay with respect to the environmental assessment of the property upon which the school is intended to be built next to F.H. Collins. As a result, the environmental testing will continue through the fall. We will have the results as soon as we possibly can.

I cannot tell you today how much of that budget has been spent, but I'm happy to return with that answer.

**Mr. Istchenko:** I thank the minister for that. This government's budget earmarked \$2.5 million over two years in a track and field and recreation site at F.H. Collins school. Unfortunately none of that money earmarked for this project was spent on physical upgrades to the site.

Without any work being done over the spring, summer and fall months of 2017 on the track and field that this government promised, we are left wondering about the timelines surrounding the project and how many years students will have to wait to be able to use these features.

Can the minister outline the work done to date on this project and let the House know how much of the \$2.5 million has been spent on track and field to date, the reasons for the delay in construction and when work is set to begin? How late will this project be?

**Hon. Ms. McPhee:** What I didn't say in response to the last question was that, at this point, despite the fact that the property upon which these items are all to be dealt with — and by that, I mean the French first language school, the outdoor activities, the basketball court for F.H. Collins — the track and field for F.H. Collins has been affected by the environmental problems that have been happening with that property. That property has now been remediated but testing is required.

That all being said, those projects are still on track with respect to the end date that we've prescribed with respect to the school. While I can assure you that no one was more disappointed than I was that the track won't be finished in this term, it is a top priority for me. The department knows that, the school knows that, and the individuals at Community Services and Highways and Public Works who are assisting with that joint project between the departments all have heard loud and clear from me that this needs to be done as quickly as possible.

**Mr. Istchenko:** These are large sums of earmarked funds for projects that appear to have no significant progress this construction year. For a government to claim that the reason they called their first Sitting so late in the year was because they wanted to be sure they got the budget right, it seems that they have had some shortcomings in planning. While funds are being held indefinitely, we have been raising issues of public safety concerns that would benefit greatly from some additional money. We have outlined safety concerns in letters, such as brush and weed control. We have outlined the importance of funnelling additional resources to the RCMP.

Has this government considered repurposing funds that are unused this year for the educational capital projects I have mentioned to areas that would benefit public safety?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** Even though this is a completely other question, I will go back to continuing the question of the francophone school and the preparation there as well.

We have heard the answer from the minister and know that this is a great priority for her and for this team. The question and the conversation about a francophone school have been discussed in this Legislative Assembly for not just our mandate, but for years before that as well. It is particularly rich that we're now being told by the Yukon Party that we need to hurry up with the francophone school.

We will do what we need to do, knowing full well that we have to go through a process. We would have loved to have spent that money. It's not like we're going back on this commitment. It's just that we have to make sure that the environmental considerations are in place. They are now and we will be moving forward on this project expeditiously. As the minister said, we expect that these timelines will still be adhered to and this will be on time.

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

Notices regarding motions respecting committee reports.

**Notice to call motion re Committee reports**

**Hon. Ms. McPhee:** Mr. Speaker, I give notice pursuant to Standing Order 13(3) that the motion for concurrence in the *First Report of the Standing Committee on Rules, Elections and Privileges*, presented to the House on October 3, 2017, shall be called as government-designated business on October 5, 2017.

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

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### GOVERNMENT PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

#### MOTIONS OTHER THAN GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

##### Motion No. 94

**Clerk:** Motion No. 94, standing in the name of Mr. Gallina.

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

THAT this House supports the *Paris Agreement* as an effective international agreement to deal with greenhouse gas emissions and climate change mitigation and adaptation; and commends leaders of national, provincial, territorial, state, First Nation and municipal governments who are committed to the agreement and working to take the necessary actions to fulfill its terms.

**Mr. Gallina:** This side of the House decided to focus our first motion on a topic that impacts all Yukoners — climate change — specifically the agreement reached in France two years ago this December. Today I want to speak a little bit about the agreement itself before moving into matters in our own country and, finally, in our own backyard. I know the Premier was at those discussions in Paris, and he and others on this side of the House will be joining the debate today.

The *Paris Agreement* — “On December 12, 2015, Canada and 194 other countries reached the Paris Agreement, an ambitious and balanced agreement to fight climate change. This new Agreement will strengthen the effort to limit the global average temperature rise to well below 2°C and pursue efforts to limit the increase to 1.5°C.

“The Paris Agreement and accompanying decisions recognize the essential roles of subnational governments, cities, civil society, the private sector and financial institutions in responding to climate change, and affirm the importance of engagement with all levels of government. The Agreement also identifies the need to respect, promote and consider the rights of Indigenous peoples, local communities, human rights and gender equality when taking climate action. The Agreement also includes language describing the need for a just transition of the workforce to a lower-carbon economy, the creation of decent work and quality jobs, and education, public participation and public access to information.”

Long-term goals — “In addition to the 2°C temperature goal and efforts to limit the rise to 1.5°C, the Paris Agreement also aims to foster climate resilience and lower greenhouse gas development, as well as to make climate flows consistent with a pathway toward a lower carbon future.”

Mitigation — “Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) have been invited to submit their first nationally determined contribution no later than when they submit their instruments of ratification, accession or approval of the Paris Agreement.

“At present, Parties have set targets for 2025 or 2030, and the Agreement has provisions to institute common time

frames. By 2020, Parties with a 2025 target are invited to communicate a 2030 target. Parties with a 2030 target are invited to re-communicate or update that target. Thereafter, contributions would be updated with increased ambition every five years. Contributions are to be recorded in an online registry.

“In 2018, Parties will participate in a...” discussion “... to take stock of their collective efforts in relation to progress toward the long-term goal and to inform the preparation of new or updated nationally determined contributions.”

Adaptation — “Adapting to current and future climate change impacts is recognized as a local, subnational, regional, international and global challenge. The Paris Agreement establishes a global goal of enhancing adaptive capacity, strengthening resilience and reducing vulnerability to climate change with a view to contributing to sustainable development and ensuring an adequate adaptation response in the context of the temperature goal. Parties are invited to prepare and communicate adaptation plans and priorities to be recorded in a public registry. The Agreement also recognizes the need to enhance cooperation to address loss and damage associated with the adverse impacts of climate change...”

Cooperative approaches — “The Paris Agreement acknowledges that Parties may use internationally transferred mitigation outcomes in implementing their nationally determined contributions so long as Parties report transparently and apply robust accounting rules, notably to avoid double counting. The Agreement also establishes a new, centrally administered mechanism to be built on the experience and lessons learned from existing mechanisms and approaches...”

Finance — “Developed countries continue to have an obligation to provide financial resources to assist developing countries, and other Parties are encouraged to provide support on a voluntary basis.

“Parties agreed that scaled-up financing should aim to achieve a balance between mitigation and adaptation and that financing will continue to flow from a variety of sources. Developed countries will continue to take the lead in mobilizing climate finance, and Parties will set a new long-term finance goal by 2025 from the floor of US\$ 100 billion per year, taking into account the needs and priorities of developing countries.”

Transparency — “In order to build mutual trust and confidence and to promote effective implementation, the Paris Agreement establishes an enhanced transparency framework. All Parties will be required to provide information related to greenhouse gas emissions, progress toward their emissions targets, adaptation efforts, and the provision and receipt of finance. The Agreement takes into account the varying levels of Parties’ reporting capacities by providing some flexibility on how climate action is reported. Notably, the information reported will undergo a technical expert review and be considered by other Parties through a multilateral process.”

Stock-taking — “To promote rising ambition, a global ‘stock take’ will take place every five years starting in 2023 to assess the collective progress in implementing the provisions

of the Agreement and in meeting the long-term goal. The 'stock take' will consider mitigation and adaptation actions undertaken by all countries, and the adequacy of financial, technical and capacity-building support. The results of the 'stock take' will inform Parties in updating their nationally determined contributions."

Entry into force — "Canada ratified the Paris Agreement on October 5<sup>th</sup>, 2016, following a vote in Parliament. The Paris Agreement entered into force on November 4<sup>th</sup>, 2016."

US withdrawal — in the summer of 2017, the United States announced it planned to withdraw from the agreement. At the time, Canada reconfirmed its commitment to the *Paris Agreement*. Canadians see the very real impacts of climate change in our country — floods, droughts, forest fires and a melting Arctic — and understand the need to take action to ensure a sustainable planet for future generations. No one government can stop this momentum. The *Paris Agreement*, supported now by all but three countries in the world, was a signal to the market.

Not only are countries around the world acting on climate change — so are businesses. Businesses in Canada, the United States and around the world are investing in clean innovation from renewable energy to zero-emission vehicles to energy-saving technologies. They understand that tackling climate change is not only the right thing to do, it is good for business. Provinces, states, cities and communities are also acting to protect our planet. With or without the United States, the momentum around the *Paris Agreement* and climate action is unstoppable.

Our country is taking the leadership role to tackle climate change and grow a cleaner economy. Canada played a strong role in helping to negotiate an ambitious *Paris Agreement*. The last federal budget included a number of actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, help Canada adapt and build resilience to climate change. Actions to support clean growth through innovation and clean technology are central in the budget. In 2018, when Canada hosts the G7, the focus will be on climate change and clean energy. Canada is committed to working with all partners to tackle climate change. As one of those partners, we understand the huge economic opportunity of clean growth, and we want to leave a cleaner, healthier planet for our kids and grandkids.

Despite the withdrawal of the United States, we look forward to working with many states such as Alaska and US stakeholders to build these relationships when protecting the environment. Shortly after the *Paris Agreement*, the Government of Canada met with premiers from across the country in Vancouver. It was in March 2016 at the end of the First Ministers' meeting that a declaration on clean growth and climate change was released. It stated: "In the spirit of cooperation and collaboration, we met today to discuss the economy and actions to address climate change and agreed on immediate work to support growth and create new jobs.

"Building on commitments and actions already taken by provinces and territories and the momentum from COP21 in Paris, we are moving toward a pan-Canadian framework for clean growth and climate change that will meet or exceed

Canada's international emissions targets, and will transition our country to a stronger, more resilient, low-carbon economy — while also improving our quality of life.

"We know that a fair transition to a sustainable low-carbon economy is necessary for our collective prosperity, competitiveness, health and security. Taking smart and effective action today is essential for future generations. These decisions will put Canada at the forefront of the global clean growth economy, and will create opportunities to diversify our economies, open up access to new markets, reduce emissions and generate good paying, long-term jobs for Canadians."

The Vancouver Declaration on Clean Growth and Climate Change was signed by the Yukon premier of the day — a Yukon Party premier. Premier Pasloski agreed, in the March 2016 Vancouver declaration, to adopt carbon pricing. The Yukon Party government worked with other jurisdictions for months, advising Ottawa on how, not whether, to implement carbon pricing. It is my opinion that this fact does not sit well with the Yukon Party members.

The *Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change* demonstrated the commitment of the federal government and the provinces to work with indigenous peoples, businesses, environmentalists and all Canadians to do our part to tackle climate change. We support the *Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change* and we recognize it as an opportunity to strengthen collaboration across Canada on climate change responses, innovation and clean growth.

The Yukon government is integrating the framework principles into its own planning by developing a new strategy for clean energy, green economic growth and climate change. The pan-Canadian framework recognizes that the north is particularly vulnerable to climate change impacts and identifies actions to support northerners adapting to climate change. We are working with other northern jurisdictions to develop the northern adaptation strategy to guide investments and future actions to build resilient northern communities.

The PCF is intended to help address climate change in Canada and provide a framework to meet Canada's national emissions reduction target. Provinces, territories and the federal government will report annually to First Ministers. The PCF process engage representatives of the provinces, territories and the federal government to produce reports in four key areas: adaptation and climate resilience; mitigation; carbon-pricing mechanisms; and clean technology, innovation and jobs. Yukon was represented on all four working groups. The federal government led engagement with Canadians, including with three national indigenous organizations.

The PCF includes many actions relevant to Yukon, including commitments to reduce reliance on diesel fuel through working with indigenous peoples in northern and remote communities, support healthy and indigenous communities through federal support for communities to undertake projects that protect public health and build climate resilience in the north through development of the northern adaptation strategy.

The Yukon annex to the PCF identifies areas of collaboration where Yukon and the federal government have agreed to work together on climate change and clean energy goals by: analyzing the implications of carbon pricing in Yukon on its economy, communities and people, including energy costs and costs of living in the north; advancing renewable energy, including specifically reducing the reliance on diesel; energy efficiency, including retrofits and accurately tracking emissions; adaptation; building resilient Yukon communities, including research on green innovation and technology; partnering on research and pilot projects.

Yukon is working to implement the PCF through the following approaches: identifying Yukon projects that align with the priorities in Yukon's annex to leverage federal funding and begin taking action on these priorities; working with the Government of Canada to undertake an implications study to analyze the impacts of the proposed carbon-pricing backstop system on Yukon's economy, communities and the cost of living — the findings of which will inform the design of the federal backstop to be implemented in 2018; participating in the development of the northern adaptation strategy, and planning to incorporate the relevant PCF actions in a new climate and energy strategy.

As you can see, it is a one-government approach that involves many departments across the Government of Yukon. I know that other members want to speak to this motion today, so I have a couple more points and then I'll wrap up my comments.

The motion is pretty straightforward. The Paris accord is supported by almost every country in the world, and I assume, by all three parties here in the Legislature. It is important to draw attention to the enormity of the task ahead of us as a territory, as a country, and indeed, as a citizen of the planet we all share. There is a cost to doing something and there is a much greater cost to sitting back and doing nothing.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Istchenko:** I thank the member opposite for his words. I am pleased to stand and speak in favour of this motion put forward by the Member for Porter Creek South. Yukon and the rest of the north feel the effects of climate change in a much more significant and profound way than the rest of Canada. Mr. Speaker, 180 years ago — just before Canada — you know, our 150<sup>th</sup> — my community of Haines Junction was under 300 feet of water, and it drained in three days. Last year, we saw the Slims River decide to change direction. So climate change is here.

Beyond simply affecting our day-to-day lives, climate change changes our way of life in the north. Recognizing this, Yukon's Official Opposition very much supports real, concrete action by all levels of government, business organizations, and individuals to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, as well as measures to help us adapt to our changing climate.

While the Yukon doesn't generate much in terms of greenhouse gases relative to the rest of our country or the world, the impacts of climate change on Yukoners today are

significant. During the last territorial election campaign, the Yukon Party proposed a range of measures that would actually help us reduce our greenhouse gas emissions while also creating economic opportunities for individuals and businesses in the north.

We also outlined our steadfast opposition to the imposition of a carbon tax, because we do not believe that it will be an effective policy to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the Yukon. Beyond that, we also believe that it will cause significant harm to Yukon's economy while making life harder for Yukon families. It is our view in the Official Opposition that a climate change policy needs to address the impacts of climate change while considering our unique northern circumstances, and therefore should not impact our cost of living, undermine our food security or threaten our economy.

While in government, the Yukon Party recognized the nature of this impact and focused very heavily on taking tangible action to address climate change while protecting the Yukon economy. This was through investments in climate research, supporting green energy projects and by retrofits to government buildings. In fact, we started taking action long before the signing of the *Paris Agreement*.

In 2009, the Yukon Party government established the Climate Change Secretariat. The officials at the Climate Change Secretariat are hardworking public servants and we sure thank them for their dedication. I enjoyed working with them when I was the previous Minister of Environment. Through the secretariat, the previous government was able to develop the Yukon's energy strategy. A climate change action plan identified four main goals to achieve. This included mitigation, adaptation, leadership and understanding.

Under mitigation and adaptation, the previous government established targets for emission reduction in a number of key Yukon sectors. This included the areas of transportation, buildings, electricity and industrial operations.

With regard to the building sector, our government worked to increase the average energy efficiency for all new residential and commercial buildings and began to work on energy retrofits for existing buildings. A dedicated energy audit was carried out on seven high-consumption government buildings and a number were retrofitted accordingly, including the main administration building — the legislative building we are working in right now.

As well, residential and commercial energy incentive programs were established to encourage homeowners, businesses, builders and general contractors to design and construct homes and commercial buildings to a high standard in energy efficiency.

With regard to the electricity sector, the Yukon Party government introduced a number of initiatives and investments to reduce omissions, such as the independent power production, microgeneration policies — which we look forward to and hope to see completed in the near future as it's very important — investments in hydroelectricity expansion, solar heating and biomass energy generation projects and



investment in wind power generation in partnership with the Kluane First Nation.

Further, under the Yukon's *Climate Change Action Plan Progress Report 2015*, we were able to identify many more areas to target as well, working to develop flood hazard maps, identify food security priorities, introduce fuel efficiency in fleet vehicles, install pilot trackers in heavy vehicles to identify potential inefficiencies there — as well as reintroducing the secondary sales program to optimize the use of hydro during our low use periods.

The Yukon Party government was proud to lead the Yukon delegation to COP21, which included leaders such as the Grand Chief of the Council of Yukon First Nations, leaders of the opposition and Yukon's climate change youth ambassador. We were pleased to see Canada support the *Paris Agreement* and are committed to supporting actions on the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions across the territory, without increasing taxes.

I should note though that as the vast majority of the world's greenhouse gas emissions comes from outside the territory and outside Canada, we believe the federal government has to do a better job of ensuring countries like China and India do their part to reduce emissions.

Mr. Speaker, as you know, the *Paris Agreement* is not binding and unfortunately there is nothing to ensure that other countries also do their part. However, as I said, it is a good sign that the countries are coming around to do their part. However, we oppose the imposing of a carbon tax because, as I said, we believe it will not be an effective policy to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the Yukon.

Further, we believe it will hurt Yukon's economy while making life harder for Yukon families. Our opposition to a carbon tax in the Yukon is not ideological. In fact, we agree that each jurisdiction should be able to compose and implement policies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions adapted to their own realities.

Some developed regions in southern Canada may believe that regulatory measures are the best suited for their jurisdiction, while others may prefer carbon taxes to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. That said, the carbon tax is intended to penalize individuals and families for the use of fossil fuels to make them choose alternatives. The Yukon — and actually all of the north, Mr. Speaker — is without these alternatives and is in a much different position from southern Canada. Therefore we believe the north needs different measures and tools than the ones that are needed in the south.

The use of fossil fuels in the north is considerably less discretionary than it is in the big cities. For example, in southern Ontario or British Columbia, it is reasonable that a person may take public transit to get to work or to go to the grocery store as an alternative to driving. In the Yukon, for a family living in Mayo or Marsh Lake, this alternative is not available. Likewise, in a cold climate, heating our homes is not a luxury; it's a necessity. As an illustration, this past winter, when temperatures throughout the territory were dropping past minus 20 degrees Celsius, the territory was hit with a major malfunction at one of our hydroelectric

dams. Although many houses and buildings in the territory are heated by fossil fuels, a significant portion are also heated entirely by electricity. Without a secondary option of diesel or LNG generators, many Yukoners would have been unable to heat their homes in the dead of winter, and our territory would have been facing a much more serious situation.

Transportation and home heating are just two examples, but they highlight the fact that, just because a carbon tax may work in the south, it doesn't mean it will work for families in the north.

As I indicated earlier, we also are concerned about the impact of a carbon tax on the economy, on municipalities and on First Nations. Yukoners reliant on the energy-intensive resource-extraction industry fuel our economy. Although Yukon is blessed with a vast mineral potential, the cost of conducting business in the north, and in northern Canada, is already more expensive than in other jurisdictions throughout the world. In an industry that is driven by the commodity markets, companies are constantly evaluating the viability of projects based on factors such as the cost of fuel and the shipment of goods.

All of that said, we do believe that Yukon can and should be a world leader. Actually, we are. In Canada, we are a leader in actions to address climate change in a way that reflects our northern realities and doesn't force a carbon tax on our families and businesses.

We have previously proposed a range of measures and proposals to do that and would support further action by the Government of Yukon and Canada to that end. Recently, we saw a major Canadian gold producer warn that the imposition of a carbon tax would negatively impact the viability of their project in Nunavut while also deferring future investments in the area.

We are similarly concerned that a carbon tax would negatively impact the economy and mining in the Yukon. Considering the impact on Yukon families and our economy, it is clear why we are concerned about the imposition of a carbon tax in the Yukon.

For instance, we support the development and expansion of renewable energy projects in the Yukon, whether that is a wind project championed by the Kluane First Nation, the biomass project by the Teslin Tlingit Council or the development of the next major hydroelectricity project. There is ample room for growth that can build on our already strong record of renewable energy in the Yukon. We support providing families and businesses with incentives to adopt renewable energy projects for their homes and buildings to reduce their reliance on fossil fuels. The member from Watson Lake and I are talking about building again and we are looking at some of these programs and looking at what we can do better. Nobody wants to pay more than they have to for energy. In fact, the Yukon Party had taken a lot of action in this regard while in government. I would just like to quickly read an excerpt from a recent local news story highlighting one of these many initiatives. The story is from August 29, 2017 and it is called: "Solar panel super power: Yukon leads with high per capita installations."

Here is an excerpt: “Yukon now has more solar panel units in operation per capita than any other jurisdiction in Western Canada, according to ... the territorial government’s energy branch.

“In the two years since the government allowed residential and business solar panel users to sell surplus power to Yukon Energy... almost 110 units have been installed.

“... if the current trend continues, Yukon could surpass Ontario as the country’s biggest solar power user per capita.”

That is just one area where we can incentivize behaviour. We know that many of Yukon’s large buildings are old and inefficient and would like to see more incentives to conduct energy retrofits. Yukon government buildings, in particular, are some of the worst and most inefficient. If the Government of Canada were to partner with the Yukon to retrofit these buildings, we could reduce greenhouse gas emissions, save energy and save taxpayers’ dollars.

Another commitment we had made during the election campaign was to install a number of electric vehicle charging stations throughout the city to support those Yukoners who want to purchase electric vehicles. All of this could be done while creating jobs and economic activity in the construction industry. All of these actions are an incentive-based approach that has a proven track record in the Yukon of actual measurable reductions in greenhouse gas emissions. There are tremendous opportunities to take real action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the Yukon if the Government of Canada and the Government of Yukon are willing to take them — and across the north, for all that matters. A carbon tax, however, is not one of them.

We encourage the Government of Yukon and Canada to consider taking real action to reduce emissions instead of imposing a carbon tax on the Yukon that will make life less affordable for Yukon families and will make our economy less competitive.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I do thank you and this House for the opportunity to speak today. As I stated at the beginning of this, we will be supporting this motion.

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** Why do we have a Paris accord? What the science tells us is that climate change is leading to global water stress, global food production stress and global biodiversity loss. Science tells us that climate change is leading to more extreme and more frequent extreme weather events — events like Hurricane Harvey, Hurricane Irma, Hurricane Maria — and not just hurricanes but also more extreme forest fires like the BC season we saw this past summer.

I would like to acknowledge our Yukon wildland firefighters who went down and helped in BC and for all of those folks who were out there trying to fight those fires.

What the science tells us is that climate change is being caused by us as people burning fossil fuels and adding to the greenhouse. The science does not say that some of it is caused by human activity. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, in particular their fifth assessment report — their most recent report — shows us that it is more than 95 percent

caused by our activity of burning fossil fuels and land use change — but human activity, to be sure.

When we began to use fossil fuels and to develop our carbon economy, we didn’t know about this unintended side effect, but now we do. Now we know we need to slowly and surely shift our energy economy. Climate change represents our greatest global challenge, both in terms of sustainability of our systems and in terms of the challenges to respond. It’s not easy to shift an energy economy. In order for it to happen, we all need to do our part. From China to Canada and from the Yucatan to the Yukon — thank you to the member opposite — we all need to do our part.

Just for a moment let me talk about our role in greenhouse gas emissions here in the Yukon. On a per capita basis, we are slightly below the Canadian average, and that is due to the fact that we have a largely renewable electrical energy grid. But when we compare ourselves to China, we produce four times the amount of emissions on a per-person basis. When we compare ourselves to India, we produce 10 times the amount of emissions. So if we’re talking about responsibility, I think there is a need to acknowledge that we have a responsibility in Canada and here in the Yukon.

Climate change is not an abstract issue for us. As the Member for Porter Creek Centre and the Member for Kluane noted, it has some real issues for us here in the territory. As it turns out, across the north, we are warming at twice the rate of the rest of the planet. We are effectively on the front line of climate change.

There are a few opportunities for us. For example, a warming climate in the winter will mean that we have a lower heating cost rate and there are some opportunities around agriculture, but, largely speaking, most of the impacts are negative and they are significant — degradation of our permafrost affecting our schools, affecting our roads, and risk of flooding. My thanks to all Yukoners who came and helped in Marsh Lake and the Southern Lakes in 2007, when we had a flood that was a foot higher than any previous flooding — and especially the risk that I am acutely aware that we are facing is an increase in the risk of forest fire and not just on human systems, but also across the territory — impacts on our wildlife.

As Yukoners, what can and what should we do? There are many things that we have been doing, and I thank the Member for Kluane for acknowledging the great work of the Climate Change Secretariat and the work of the college in adaptation. We are doing some great work on adaptation, although we have a lot more to do.

There are still a lot of impacts that we are facing and that we need to address. As I’ve already noted, we have a responsibility to address how to reduce the causes of climate change. It is folly for us to not address mitigation because, as we’re on the front line of climate change, we stand to lose. We really do need to address our greenhouse gas emissions.

I will also acknowledge some of the great work that has happened with the Energy Solutions Centre and other groups. But I will challenge the notion that we really have been reducing our emissions here in the territory. When I look at

the numbers and take a look at what has been going on with emissions here in the territory, they have gone down in the last several years, but the only single thing that I can attribute that to is a reduction in our economy. Surely that's not how we wish to design our systems of reducing emissions. We need and we wish for economy to grow, while at the same time reducing our emissions. That is the challenge.

The *Paris Agreement* is about standing up and taking responsibility — taking responsibility for the impact that we all have on this planet, taking responsibility for the impacts and risks of climate change and recognizing that it is indeed time to make some changes. It's about acknowledging that we all contribute to climate change and that we all need to do our part to build a better future for ourselves and our children.

That some world leaders are walking away from this agreement is truly a tragedy. It is not something to be copied. Now is the time for all of us — including us here in the Yukon — to stand up together and reaffirm our commitment to this collaborative process.

We know that a price on carbon is the number one policy recommendation to effectively reduce carbon emissions, so I will respectfully disagree with the member opposite. This is not sort of an extra maybe. It is the number one recommendation by economists and scientists on how we should reduce emissions, not here in the Yukon — globally.

A price on carbon doesn't have to cost us more. It can be a signal to change our behaviour to less carbon-intensive behaviours. Some of that behaviour change is very simple — keeping our tires inflating, carpooling, idling our vehicles less. By the way, it's 10 seconds — that's what the cars produced over the last decade recommend for the amount of time that we need to idle. We don't need to idle them for 10 minutes. These are not time- and effort-consuming activities. In fact, they are triple bottom-line activities. They will improve our environment, they will improve our economy, and they will improve our social fabric and our health.

Because the Yukon already has a low-carbon electrical grid, we are less sensitive to a price on carbon than some other regions of the country, but I will agree with the member opposite that the places where it will have an effect on us is on transportation and on heat. What a price on carbon does is it reinforces what the Yukon already does so well — that is shown through our electrical grid and that is how to reduce our dependency on fossil fuels.

In fact, one of the risks is not that we adopt a price on carbon and so it's going to cost us. The risk is that we don't adopt a price on carbon and we don't start to shift our energy economy and we remain dependent on fossil fuels, as other economies move off and we become less competitive and we become stuck in the old economy. We need to start moving forward.

I will note that the place where we can and should focus first is on how to reduce our emissions through heat. The member opposite stated that Yukoners didn't have an ability — that we need to heat our homes. It's true that we need to heat our homes, but if we insulate our homes better and our buildings better, then we don't need to heat our homes. That's

a way in which we can reduce our emissions. Again, it's a win for all of us.

I listened earlier during Question Period, when the Leader of the Official Opposition talked about us bringing in a price on carbon. First of all, it's a federal price on carbon. The Premier has reiterated this point many times. I wish we could agree to that, but I'm going to give credit where it's due. Credit goes on March 3, 2016 when the Leader of the Yukon Party and then-Premier of the Yukon, Darrell Pasloski, signed the Vancouver declaration, which states that carbon pricing must form part of Canada's climate change strategy. That's where it is, right there. We all — all of us as provinces and territories — agreed at that point to a price on carbon.

During the election a year ago, carbon pricing was a huge topic. We as candidates, and now as a government, are firm that we would stand with carbon pricing and would work with the federal government to ensure that the revenues collected would be returned to the Yukon.

Let me talk about carbon pricing for a second and try to allay some of the fears. In the earlier session, the first session when we were here in the spring, I noted that there were 19 questions from the opposition on carbon pricing. I'm worried that it is trying to introduce a notion of fear. I want to allay some of that fear. Let me just turn to some of the evidence.

We only need to look to our neighbours in British Columbia to see the impact of a price on carbon. By the way, they introduced a price on carbon in 2008, and that effectively became a price on carbon for us here in the Yukon for all goods that were travelling up through British Columbia, which is most goods, by the way.

Since a price on carbon was implemented in 2008, fuel use in British Columbia has dropped by 16 percent. Over that same period, fuel use increased across the rest of Canada by three percent, according to Statistics Canada. In the years prior to their price on carbon fuel, use was rising slightly compared to the rest of Canada's economies. At the same time, BC's GDP still managed to slightly out-perform the rest of Canada's.

So a price on carbon has been shown — not just in British Columbia, but in other jurisdictions, in other northern jurisdictions, like the Scandinavian countries, which have to deal with heat and transportation issues like we do here in the north — to be effective to allow the economy to grow while, at the same time, reducing dependency on fossil fuels — smart fiscal management.

There was a great article written in 2014 in the *Globe and Mail*. It was written by the chairperson of Pan American Silver Corp, a professor emeritus of economics at Simon Fraser and a professor of law and economics at the University of Ottawa. These people know a little something about economics. The article called it: "The shocking truth about BC's carbon tax: It works". I'm quoting, Mr. Speaker: "Far from being a 'job killer,' it is a world-leading example of how to tackle one of the greatest global challenges of our time: building an economy that will prosper in a carbon-constrained world."

In the election last year, two-thirds of Yukoners voted in support of a federal price on carbon. Our focus is, and continues to be, that we would ensure that any money collected in the Yukon on a price on carbon would be returned to Yukon families and businesses. We heard the Premier stand up today and reaffirm, through a conversation with the federal Minister of the Environment, that is the case. Again, I thank him for that work.

The federal government has committed to this, Mr. Speaker, and that is important for us and for Yukoners. We will work with Yukoners to help them to take that rebate and to seek opportunities to reinvest their rebates to reduce all of our use on fossil fuels, but we will put them in the driver's seat. The price on carbon puts — I think the member opposite referred to it as “penalizing”. I think of it as a price signal to the whole of the economy that there is a negative effect that we haven't been taking into account and now we are starting to internalize that cost. Again, this is strong and responsible fiscal management.

What we have been doing over the past months is that we have been listening to Yukoners about the rebate. We have been talking to them. We have been asking about how they would like to see this rebate work, how we should work out the details to see it 100 percent returned to Yukoners and Yukon businesses.

I personally met with the Yukon Chamber of Commerce and they told me they support a price on carbon. They want to work with us on a rebate system, and their voices will help shape that carbon-pricing rebate. Mr. Speaker, my conversation with the chamber is just one example of many conversations happening on how carbon-pricing revenues will be returned to Yukoners.

There are still some details to be worked out. I acknowledge that, but something that we already know is that Yukoners want to take responsibility for their carbon output because they care about the environment, they care about our future. We stand together — and I will use a phrase that I have heard the Premier use — “on the right side of history” through initiatives like carbon pricing as we work collaboratively as a territory to lower our carbon footprint.

I find it somewhat disappointing that members of the Official Opposition spend so much of their time in the House trying to — well, I respect the Official Opposition's right to bring forward a position that they disagree with carbon pricing, but I am concerned that the way in which it is happening is introducing both fear and confusion to the issue of carbon pricing.

As I noted during the last session, there were 19 questions on carbon pricing. I still hear things about it. I would love to have the conversation about how we get this money back to Yukoners across all party lines.

Putting a price on carbon puts the Yukon on par with 80 percent of Canada. I am now referring to 80 percent of Canada that already has a price on carbon either through a carbon tax or cap and trade. That's 80 percent of Canadians who already have it, as well as other regions and countries around the globe that are standing together to fight climate change —

climate change that is risking the future of our families and our kids. I'm proud of the Yukon for doing its part; standing up for the Yukon and alongside all Canadians.

**Ms. Hanson:** I thank the Member for Porter Creek Centre for bringing this motion to the floor today for debate and discussion. Just as I'm listening to the last two speakers, I'm feeling caught in the middle here, because we have dueling realities and different political stances being taken here. I want to step back and look at what the motion — I'm not talking about government programs or services or who's doing better than the other about this, because when I read this motion, I actually wrote across the top of the page, “it's aspirational”. That's my response to this. It's a lovely motion; it is aspirational and it is laudatory. However, Mr. Speaker, the reality is that it misses the point, and that point is that, despite the grand words and the commendable aspirations of world leaders gathered in Paris in 2015 — words that talked about an international agreement to deal with greenhouse gas emissions and climate change mitigation and adaptation — the stark reality is that, two years later, the political will to take serious and necessary action to give effect to the *Paris Agreement* is absent.

The agreement, and the global environment, is on life support. We need only look at the environmental disasters that have occurred over the last two years, to speak nothing of the record that the member opposite, the minister, just spoke about with respect to the serious and documented climate change impacts in terms of the two degrees already being reached year over year, and the four degrees over winter in the Yukon. We know it's a reality.

Government members opposite, several of whom attended the 2017 Canadian Council of Public Accounts Committees annual meeting, will recall that the Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development from the Office of the Auditor General — it's a special commissioner's position — provided delegates with an overview of her office's work with respect to climate change in Canada. Ms. Gelfand quoted the former Governor of the Bank of Canada, now the Governor of the Bank of England, Mark Carney, who has said that climate change will threaten financial resilience and longer term prosperity.

She also highlighted the drastic increase in necessary federal funding for natural disaster recovery and that, as the deputy governor of the Bank of Canada Timothy Lane has said: “... climate change itself and actions to address it will have material and pervasive effects on Canada's economy and financial system.”

Some of the examples that Ms. Gelfand cited included the impact of climate change on Canada's lumber industry, which is forecast to reduce that industry by \$17 billion by 2050. Heat waves already cost Canada over a billion dollars a year.

When we think about sea levels rising, often the example is given of the South Sea Islands that are disappearing. She gave a Canadian example and anybody who has travelled around the Gaspé will recall the Percé Rock. The sea level rise on eastern Canada is forecast to ensure that the Percé Rock in

Quebec — that whole area will lose over \$700 million over the next 30 years in terms of tourism revenue that is currently received.

We know that the 2013, Alberta floods cost \$1.7 billion and that the 2016 Fort McMurray wildfire cost \$3.6 billion. I'm listing these costs because we always say it's too costly to deal with climate change and we can't afford to deal with climate change. What Ms. Gelfand has pointed out is that we are — we are dealing with it, but we're dealing with it after the fact as opposed to trying to adapt and mitigate.

In addition to the mounting costs and the impact of climate change, she also pointed out in her presentation to us that the International Energy Agency has stated that the energy sector could become carbon-neutral by 2060 if known technology innovations were pushed to the limit, but to do so would require an unprecedented level of policy action and an effort from all stakeholders. When she is talking about policy action — that comes from the political will and the political direction of governments to be willing to take action that sometimes is not popular.

Having been at the Paris Climate Conference in December 2015, I heard — and it was a high when the UN Secretary-General called the reaching of that agreement a monumental triumph for people and our planet. I fear we are again allowing so-called market imperatives and short-term gains to cloud our vision and in doing so to impede progress. In fact, some actions taken by governments internationally, nationally and regionally actually threaten to reverse the progress.

Ms. Gelfand also pointed out that despite the findings of the OECD that — quote: "... taking action on climate change will increase the GDP of the G20 countries by five percent by 2050", there is no economic excuse for not acting on climate change. Despite that, we have heard across this country, and sometimes in this House, that now is not the time to resist or to implement necessary systemic changes to ensure that the commitments made in Paris do not join the long and sad history of previous international and national commitments going back to Kyoto.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Canada's Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development has underlined that dealing with climate change will require a substantial effort on the part of all Canadians with fundamental restructuring of multiple sectors of the economy. This is not just about adjusting the thermostat; it's not just about what kind of vehicle we drive. We are talking about systemic change that will affect multiple sectors of the economy.

As part of this *Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change* that the member for Porter Creek initially referenced, the commissioner has engaged on a collaborative climate change audit initiative to work with the federal government and to work with provinces and territories. As she shared with the federal, provincial and territorial public accounts committees and Auditor General, the gap between aspiration and action is large. For example, from the report tabled at the CCPAC meeting, the findings to date on action taken with respect to the pan-Canadian framework, she found

an example in Prince Edward Island where they had not done the work to determine the risk of climate change. Newfoundland and Labrador were unclear how each action in their plan impacts emissions. Some provinces don't even have a plan — for example, Saskatchewan. She said some plans were entirely haphazard.

What it does reveal for us, as the commissioner will be releasing her findings for each jurisdiction — we expect that Yukon's will be released later this year because she has worked with the Auditor General for Canada to complete the territorial audits — but yesterday, the commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development published her 2017 report on her findings. Her overarching commentary that is contained in *The Commissioner's Perspective* is sobering reading indeed. I think it is worth taking a few moments to reflect some of her findings. I will cite from its one page, and I have asked the Deputy Clerk to circulate that one page of *The Commissioner's Perspective* to other members in the Legislature. I know that it is sometimes difficult when somebody cites a document.

She said — and I quote: "The federal government has been clear in its desire for action on climate change." However, she goes on to say: "Since 1992, the government has repeatedly promised to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, adapt to the impacts of climate change, and support clean energy technology. However, since then, Canada has missed two separate emission reduction targets and is likely to miss the 2020 target as well; in fact, emissions have increased by over 15 percent." This is to the minister opposite's point. When she did talk about the percentage of emissions, it's 85 percent, not 80, so it's actually higher, which is kind of sad.

"The government does not have a solid strategy for eliminating inefficient fossil fuel subsidies..." — this despite the fact that Canada agreed in 2009 to begin to implement a policy with respect to the reduction of fossil fuel subsidies, an international agreement which the IEA, of all groups, supports — "... and is nowhere near being ready to adapt to the impacts of climate change."

She does talk about — to the member from Porter Creek — and clearly outlines that Canada's latest climate change strategy, the *Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change*, as released in December 2016 and endorsed by the federal government and most provinces and territories. Those four major commitments made are important, as stated by the minister and the member opposite.

This is where the challenge comes because, as the commissioner points out, previous plans have failed to produce concrete results. She said, and I absolutely agree, and I know members in this House will agree, that: "It's time for change. The federal government needs to start doing the hard work to turn this latest broad framework into tangible and measurable actions." We don't know until we're hit in the face with the consequences if we don't actually start making those changes and start measuring the progress toward our changes that are necessary.

Because we're part of this, as a territory and as legislators, the federal government has to take the lead and we

have to be supportive. If we're true to the aspirations that the member from Porter Creek referred to in terms of these international agreements, if we want to appear on the international stage and say that we have a commitment to put a price on carbon, that we have measures for reducing emissions in a number of sectors, that we planned actions for adaptation to the impact of climate change and that we are prepared to put an emphasis on transparent monitoring and the reporting of results, then all provinces and territories have to support the federal government in this initiative and push the federal government when they fail to take that leadership role.

She said that the findings presented in her fall 2017 report that she tabled yesterday show that: "... in two important areas — reducing greenhouse gases and adapting to the impacts of climate change — the federal government has yet to do much of the hard work that is required to bring about this fundamental shift. For example, instead of developing a detailed action plan to reach the 2020 target for reducing emissions, the government changed its focus to the 2030 target. In addition, the government did not pursue a number of greenhouse gas regulations, thereby losing opportunities to achieve real reductions in emissions."

Mr. Speaker, it is crucial that the federal government and the territorial government turn their plans into actions.

The commissioner found that the government is also not ready to adapt to the impacts of climate change. We're living with the consequences — national disasters in Alberta, the fires in British Columbia this year — and we haven't turned our heads to means of adaptation to the impacts of climate change, despite the fact that Environment and Climate Change Canada developed a federal adaptation policy framework in 2011, but didn't follow up with a plan to implement it.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have heard this repeatedly in this Legislative Assembly. We hear a lot about strategies and plans and I have been starting to hear the same echoes across the way from this government. We have this plan, we have this strategy, but where is the implementation plan — the how? How are you going to measure it and when are you going to say what you've achieved? It also failed to provide departments and other governments and organizations with adequate guidance and tools to identify climate change risks. This is kind of informative for us as a government — the members opposite and all of us — because she pointed out that at the federal level only five of 19 departments and agencies had fully assessed their climate change risks and taken actions to address them. We could ask the same question in this Legislative Assembly. Where are we at with that? "The others have taken little or no action to address risks that could hinder their ability to deliver programs and services to Canadians. This means that the government does not have a complete picture of the risks it faces from climate change. If Canada is to adapt to changing climate, much stronger leadership is needed."

The office of the Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development poses a challenge to us as members of the Legislative Assembly and to citizens. It is not just about listening or reacting to government saying, well, this is what

we're going to do, but what we need is all of us as Members of the Legislative Assembly to ask: What is the detailed plan for reaching our emission reduction targets? Do we as legislators and does this government have a comprehensive understanding of the risks that climate change poses? Does this government have a detailed plan to respond and adapt to the risks of climate change? I'm not talking about one department. I'm talking about the whole of government.

I hope that collectively, as Members of this Legislative Assembly, we take our job — I know that we take our job seriously. What I hope is that we don't see the next major international gathering — Paris, whatever, 5.6, whatever — at this stage of the game — these international gatherings, where we're still dealing with these issues and still apologizing for not having met the targets that we may or may not have set because they really weren't that strong or they really weren't targets. They might have been something that we were aspiring to do.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we cannot afford to leave that legacy to future generations. The damage and the trajectory of damage are already strong. We need to reverse course.

I thank the Member for Porter Creek Centre for bringing forth this matter for discussion today. It is an important issue, and it is one that you don't resolve in a brief debate in the Legislative Assembly, but it does highlight the absolute need for moving beyond words to action.

**Hon. Ms. Dendys:** Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and thank you so much for all of the comments that have been shared so far.

I would like to rise today to support Motion No. 94. I would like to thank the Member for Porter Creek Centre for bringing this motion forward.

Today I am going to speak about a few experiences that I have had over the summer within my role as the Minister of Tourism and Culture, which also includes responsibilities for heritage, archeology, and palaeontology. My experiences that I will speak about today are Herschel Island, the Yukon ice patches, and my attendance at the 2017 federal-provincial-territorial First Ministers' meeting of culture and heritage. I intend to speak about real-time issues related to my mandate.

The effects of climate change can be clearly seen in the north, particularly on Herschel Island. Today, 12 buildings are still standing that date from 1893 to 1930, along with remains of several subterranean houses and burial sites. Those particular sod houses and burial sites were striking to me — to see them and to hear first-hand from people of that area how significant they are and to see that — as I go through my talk today — some of the artifacts and the archeological and paleontological finds are being lost.

Heritage resources on the island include ice age fossils, bones that range in date from 16,000 to more than 50,000 years old. During this visit in early August, I went on palaeontology walks with our palaeontologists and I found a 25,000-year-old whale vertebra and two ancient horse vertebrae around the same age. Herschel Island is culturally significant, not only in Yukon but for Canada as a whole. The

island is part of the traditional homeland of the Inuvialuit. While I was there, our lead park ranger, Richard Gordon, who is a staff member of Government of Yukon under Environment, shared his passion and his personal history of this area. I cannot express to you just how significant that was for me to be led through that island with that particular lens on the importance of the history of this very amazing place that I cannot even begin to capture in words. It's something you have to actually go and place your feet on the land to appreciate.

Throughout the island, we have a number of areas where we do have exhibits that capture the history, timeline and significance of this area. It served as an American commercial whaling colony base in the 1890s. One of the buildings we still have there is what we call the Bonehouse, where some of these ancient finds are displayed for people to see when they visit the island. It was where early Anglican mission work occurred in the western Arctic. Going back to the tour that Mr. Gordon provided for me and for the whole team, talking about the history of colonization in that area and the story through that lens, it was the location for commercial operators, such as the western fur traders. It was also for the North-West Mounted Police to bring government to the area. Some of those historical buildings and dwellings are still there. Herschel Island also served as a link to early communication work through the Royal Canadian Corps of Signals. With so much historical and cultural significance, it is no wonder the island was commemorated at a national historical event in 1972. It became Yukon's first territorial park in 1987 as part of the *Inuvialuit Final Agreement* and is on Canada's tentative list of world heritage sites.

The department has been working to conserve these important heritage resources since the 1980s, but they are absolutely at risk. In 2008, Herschel was included on the World Monuments Fund 100 most endangered sites watch list. The changes on Herschel Island are startling. While I was there, there were two research groups from other places in the world doing research. They had been doing that research for several years.

I'll list out some of the findings, but warmer temperatures are a risk to the island, as it's mostly permafrost. In the bay, they recorded the temperature last year at 12 degrees, and this year it increased to 16. We are seeing rising sea levels, shifting shorelines. I witnessed metres of shore just disappear while I was there over a two-day period. It was unbelievable to see that happen in real time. There are more frequent storms with storm surges and high water levels, and changes in the permafrost. There were traditional ice houses on Herschel Island where they kept food and supplies. Right now we only have one of those ice houses.

I was given a great privilege to actually go into one of them and stand in one of these ancient ways of keeping supplies. So we have others that have collapsed over just the last few years because of the melting permafrost.

We are seeing faster snowmelt, causing water to pool in various parts of the island and under the buildings, which is really a risk to those heritage resources. That also causes a lot

of impact to the airstrip. I'm convinced it's not really an airstrip. It's kind of just a beach — very short — where you land a plane.

Despite the increasing challenges, we continue to implement strategies to protect the heritage resources on the island. As minister, I was proud to see first-hand the work being done to restore the historic resources on the island. We are so very fortunate to have the staff that we have in Tourism and Culture who do this work on behalf of us as Yukoners.

In August, I went out to the ice patches in the Rose Creek valley with archaeologists Greg Hare and Ty Heffner, who are Yukon government archaeologists. This is approximately 20 to 30 minutes from here by helicopter. In this area, while climate change is having a negative impact on Herschel Island, it is opening doors for archaeologists to make important new discoveries in other areas of Yukon.

The Yukon ice patch project, a collaboration of Yukon and First Nation governments, began in the late 1990s. This work is recognized internationally. We have found incredible artifacts in these areas. As average annual temperatures increase, alpine glaciers and ice patches that have persisted for thousands of years started to melt. As the ice melted, evidence of thousands of years of human and animal activity was exposed. They were initially discovered by a caribou biologist while studying the caribou dung on the mountain tops. Indigenous people hunted caribou in these areas as this is where the caribou would gather during spring, summer and fall seasons to escape insects, to cool down, and indigenous people hunted the caribou during those times. The ice actually has held many of those artifacts for all of these thousands of years and they're now being exposed.

It was astounding to me to see the depths because I've hiked on these mountains — the depths of the caribou dung that is now being exposed in the ice patches. Why was this astounding? It's the number of caribou that it would take to create that. While we were on those ice patches — we were out for a full day — we saw one caribou on the top of those mountains. What a change in our history in such a short period of time.

These archeological sites preserve the fascinating history of Yukon's first people. Ice patch melt is an issue with both ecological and cultural implications. The loss of these ice patches uncovers ancient biological remains of plants and animals. It will provide a better understanding of historical climate events. The melt has regularly uncovered cultural artifacts that provide valuable insight into ancient indigenous communities.

It's fantastic that we have these types of partnerships with Yukon First Nations who participate in these opportunities to go out into the ice patches. Elders, youth and others who have traditional knowledge of these areas are working side by side with our staff on this project. In fact, these fragile finds represent some of the most outstanding organic indigenous artifacts found in North America, including the oldest preserved moccasin in Canada. But time is of the essence. If the ice melts before archaeologists and indigenous researchers

are able to visit them, these irreplaceable objects will quickly deteriorate and become lost for all time.

This is, again, why I'm so proud of the government, First Nations and industry for working together to safeguard these incredible discoveries. If anyone is interested in more information, I really encourage everyone to watch *Secrets from the Ice*. It's a one-hour documentary on research, which will air on David Suzuki's *The Nature of Things* on CBC on January 14, at 8:00 p.m. I really encourage you to watch and learn more about the work that's being done in our own Yukon Territory.

In terms of the federal-provincial-territorial meeting, climate change is not a battle that we can win on our own. I think that all of my colleagues and others from across the way have spoken to that. We need to work together. In August, I attended the annual meeting of ministers responsible for culture and heritage in Quebec. One of the agenda items was heritage and climate change, and I was able to share all of the experiences and the knowledge that I've shared with you today with the other ministers across the country and to express just how, as we're talking about mitigating the impact of climate change — particularly Herschel Island — we've already used every method that was described to us in the presentations to protect the resources that we have.

Parks Canada and Northwest Territories put together thoughtful presentations regarding the impacts of climate change on heritage resources. The Northwest Territories presentation was of particular note.

Climate-change-induced effects there are causing significant and diverse impacts. The Northwest Territories is warming at a faster rate than the global average. The Beaufort Sea level is rising one to two millimetres per year and annual precipitation levels have decreased over much of the Northwest Territories.

The impacts of climate change on the north are simply staggering. That's why I'm pleased that this critical topic was discussed at the national table. We had all of our indigenous partners there and they spoke about their concerns across Canada around climate change. Again, we've all exchanged very good comments today about the importance of this issue that we all share.

While climate change poses challenges for protecting our cultural heritage resources, it also provides the opportunity to work and learn from one another. That's one of the things I took away from that particular national meeting.

I wanted to just talk a little bit about — last week, I had the opportunity to attend the Tourism Industry Association conference in Dawson. The theme was sustainable tourism. I wanted to talk about — Sheila Watt-Cloutier is an author and has written this amazing book, *The Right To Be Cold*. This is a human story of resilience, commitment and survival told from a unique vantage point of an Inuk woman who, in spite of many obstacles, rose from humble beginnings in an Arctic community in northern Quebec where she was raised by a single parent and grandmother, and travelled by dog team in a traditional ice-based Inuit hunting culture, to become one of

the most influential and decorated environmental, cultural and human rights activists in the world.

Her talk on climate change, her leadership around sustainability in the Arctic and just relating it back to trauma she experienced as a child, and the weaving of all of that into an incredible story of resilience — I really encourage everyone to take the opportunity to read this book. It's very good and will shine a different light on this topic that we're talking about today.

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** Doubt is powerfully corrosive to personal responsibility. It also destroys a society's gumption.

So before we start talking about our support for the *Paris Agreement*, it is important to establish, off the hop, that manmade climate change is not myth. More than 97 percent of actively publishing climate scientists agree that climactic warming over the past century is due to human activity. We've heard a lot about that this afternoon.

This position is endorsed by the world's most respected science academies, government agencies, and intergovernmental bodies from around the world. They include the American Chemical Society, the American Geophysical Union and the Geological Society of America. It includes the US National Academy of Sciences and 13 US departments and agencies. It does not include the current US president.

But the Canadian Association of Physicists is on board, so is the Canadian Geophysical Union, the European Science Foundation and its federation of geologists. I could probably go on for hours. I'm sure you're all relieved to learn that I will not. To some — a surprising number, actually — this ever-strengthening consensus doesn't matter. I know some of these people. I have spoken to them — often. And, make no mistake, I will hear from them following this speech.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, they will blame sunspots, volcanoes or they will cling to the bizarre theories of some obscure Russian skeptic who, virtually alone, stands opposed to the overwhelming evidence of peer-reviewed science. Some see such scepticism as having a free and open mind. But it sows doubt and, as my good colleague to the right here noted, confusion. It corrodes support for vitally needed change, and so more people will not admit their cars, poorly insulated homes, flights to Asia and a host of other choices play a significant role in our changing climate. They don't acknowledge their contribution to the fact that Arctic sea ice coverage is receding 13 percent every decade, that August 2017 was the second-warmest August in 137 years of record keeping, that the global average sea level has risen almost 18 centimetres in the last 100 years, and that 16 of the warmest years on record have occurred since 2001. A generation of high school students is seeing this right now. They have never experienced anything cooler.

Because of the doubt, the confusion, people don't accept our role in this blanket of carbon that is smothering our planet.

In this, I understand the doubters. Fear feeds doubt and doubt corrodes personal responsibility. It is easier to deny than to face the world-altering truth and your role in it. People turn



away from the horrible and the scary. For many, denial is a natural response — a defence — but with an issue like this, of this scope and threat, turning away from such a thing is a grave mistake. Faced with all the mounting evidence of our destructive habits and the overwhelming scientific support for the problem, indeed, the growing fear expressed by our scientists who study this phenomena, it is mandatory that we act. The Leader of the Third Party has made the case that we do not delay — do not dally — to seek solutions to one of the gravest threats our society faces is imperative. We must blunt it; we must slow it down. We must limit its effect and perhaps eventually reverse it sometime if we are lucky — if we act sooner rather than later. This is so very important for us, for our children and for our grandchildren.

Another chestnut doubters will toss around is the territory's small size. Our carbon emissions, given our tiny population and the scale of the problem, do not even register, they say. Why should we even worry about it? Well, because Yukoners have a long history of not letting our small population limit our participation in world events, particularly society-threatening ones.

On April 4, I had the pleasure of joining Michael Gates at the Old Fire Hall for the launch of his latest book. I was privileged to work with Michael for years. I look forward to his weekly History Hunter columns. He is an engaging writer. The latest book he has written is vintage Gates that chronicles a largely untold story in Yukon history. It is called *From the Klondike to Berlin: The Yukon in World War I*. It tells the story of the men and women of this territory who fought in the First World War. Some figures in this narrative, such as Joe Boyle, James Murdock Christie and George and Martha Black, are well-known.

Those who remained behind in the Yukon, largely women, raised staggering sums of money for the war effort and kept things running in the bitter frontier conditions they were left in, and are less well-known. Michael tells all their stories with flair, as always. The Yukon, as a jurisdiction, was only 16 years old when the First World War began in 1914. The Yukon's population that year was roughly 5,000 souls — 5,000 souls.

In August 1914, Commissioner George Black wired the Secretary of State that a force of Yukon volunteers would be raised to sail to Europe. He and MP Alfred Thompson were the first to sign up for the front. Behind them, almost 1,000 Yukon men and women volunteered to serve in the war: "... numbers that dwarfed the rates of enlistment in other parts of Canada", wrote Gates. Roughly 20 percent of the territory volunteered their lives to the largest threat their society faced.

Yukoners didn't balk at paying their share — indeed more than their fair share — toward this world-threatening cause. Quotes Gates, "... the *Dawson Daily News* has estimated that Yukoners donated often and generously at a rate of \$12 per capita compared with \$1 per person in the rest of the country" — \$12 to \$1. In April, I found this remarkable and I still do. How can you not? What a contrast to sentiments of the Official Opposition.

My dad once warned me that comparisons are odious — I won't tell you why — but I can't help but roll these two Yukons together in my mind — societies separated by time, separated by 103 years. I wonder what my grandfather, my grandmother as well, might think of us today — of our values, about our doubt in the face of such facts and experience, about our society's lack of gumption. It is beyond time we as individuals and as a society act. There are signs we are.

We have arrived at the Paris accord, the *Paris Agreement*. In September, Nicaragua announced it would sign the deal. This means all nations of the world except Syria and this current America have agreed to work together to reduce global greenhouse gases, to contain global warming and to help poorer nations to adapt to an already changing planet. There is no doubt that the world is changing. We see it here.

This summer, I toured a school that has shifted on melting permafrost. Fortunately, several engineering reports have confirmed the structure remains sound and safe for the children and staff, but it still represents a growing problem for Yukon communities to deal with and a cost for our government to absorb. We are exploring innovative ways to fix this problem, such as refreezing the ground.

There are also unsettling problems in Dawson. In Ross River, as I just noted, we now have to find ways to refreeze the ground. In Dawson, we have to consider the possibility that we have to help freeze a river. Last year, for the first time, an ice bridge was rendered impossible because the Yukon River failed to completely freeze. The Department of Highways and Public Works is now looking at innovative ways to deal with this problem, which would have been unthinkable years ago before our winters started warming so profoundly. As I noted, there are plenty of 16-year-olds who don't know another Yukon.

Again, in Ross River, unseasonably low water levels and sediment buildup has forced weight restrictions on the Pelly barge. It is also expected to cause faster ice buildup, which could result in the barge coming out earlier than previous years.

Mr. Speaker, there are plenty of other weirdnesses here to talk about. This summer, I drove the north Alaska Highway and crossed the Slims River bridge. The bridge now carries motorists across dry silt. There is no longer any water. We made international headlines for this. The Slims River is an example of river piracy as a result of climate-driven glacier melt — glacier retreat. From a distance, this bridge is often obscured by a veil of dust that is now churned up by the winds that beset the husk-dry area.

Further north, the Destruction Bay boat launch is a shadow of its former self. A hand-painted sign warns "Use dock at own risk." It's clear why. In July, there was so little water at the site I would have a hard time launching my kayak. The lake is shrinking, drawing back. We don't yet know what its new normal level will look like. This affects the community and its recreational activities. This is a tangible loss we face through our disrupted climate. There are plenty of places where roads are slumping and require more and more costly maintenance.

Mr. Speaker, we will face other bizarre situations; that is a certainty. Slowly, we are coming to the realization we all have to do our bit. The ever-strengthening science and national consensus is helping, but it isn't enough. BC, Alberta and Ontario have initiated a price on carbon. There, innovation and change is quickening as my esteemed colleague has noted. Ottawa, as most will know, is also putting a price on carbon. Now, our friends in the Official Opposition bench believe we can, due to our small size, do less than the others — than any other, in fact — that we're special. Well, 103 years ago, we were special because we did more than we were expected to do. We distinguished ourselves in the face of danger. Today, where are we? We have some urging to do less than the rest — to let others shoulder the burden. We, so the reasoning goes, are special. Is this really who we are?

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

### Point of order

**Speaker:** Member for Lake Laberge.

**Mr. Cathers:** I was tolerant at first, but the Minister of Highways and Public Works clearly seems to be contravening Standing Order 19(g) by imputing false or unavowed motives to another member in clearly putting, at great length, words in the mouths of other members that never came out of their mouths.

I would ask you to have him retract that statement.

**Speaker:** Any further comments or submissions on the point of order?

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** Mr. Speaker, I'm just merely reflecting the sentiment of the side opposite in the debate this afternoon.

### Speaker's ruling

**Speaker:** I would have to review — or if the Member for Lake Laberge wishes to cite the specific instances — but if the Minister of Highways and Public Works is skating close to quoting areas that perhaps were not said — I would have to review the Hansard. Please be cautious.

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will be cautious, although there is very little ice these days.

Where was I?

Our forebears gave \$12 for every dollar given in the rest of the country. Today, some don't even want to contribute the dollar. Around the globe, as my colleague has so wonderfully summarized, a price on carbon is recognized as the best method for changing behaviour. The federal price on carbon will give all Canadians a tangible incentive to choose to join the fight to alter their behaviour or to choose to pay for using carbon-based products. As a government, we have pledged to return all the money raised in the Yukon through the federal carbon price to Yukoners. We will make good on this promise. We will also change our behaviour as a government and as a society.

We will do our part, or more, as Yukoners have always done. We will help people adapt to a post-carbon economy. We will make our buildings more efficient. We will diversify

and expand our green energy options. I have pushed this publicly for many, many years. It is one of the reasons I sought a seat in this Legislature — because there are real benefits to our society joining this fight wholeheartedly — self-sufficiency, energy efficiency, less expensive production, innovation, new industry, more knowledge, less waste, improved personal health, opportunity.

We are going to do more. These efforts have to happen as a society, as a government. Our efforts as a territory, as communities, as individuals are vital. It's vital for us; it is vital for our children, for our grandchildren and beyond. Of this there can be no doubt. There can no longer be any confusion.

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** I'm very pleased to rise today to speak to this motion, and I want to thank all members who have had an opportunity thus far to speak on this important and timely topic. As the Leader of the Third Party mentioned earlier today, both she and I were at the talks in 2015 when the *Paris Agreement* was negotiated. We were part of the Yukon delegation that attended. As I recall, there were, I believe, eight Yukoners in total, including myself, the member opposite, the former Premier and also Sabrina Clarke — who was our youth delegate at that time — former Grand Chief of the Council of Yukon First Nations, Ruth Massie, and also officials from the department.

It was definitely an eye-opener to see how many different smaller jurisdictions, for that point, were really paying attention to climate change and attending this conference. It was great to see all of the different initiatives that were undertaken to address global warming. It really poked holes in the argument that some have advanced — that because Yukon is a small jurisdiction, or anywhere that is a small jurisdiction for that matter, we don't have to worry about our emissions. I believe the member from beautiful Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes spoke to this earlier. In other words, it is really an issue that only the big emitters should be worrying about and how false that notation is. I have been in the Legislative Assembly before, speaking about the tragedy of the commons in relative nature to this consideration — that concept that you think that your little piece is not going to matter much in the bigger pieces. It's disparaging, in my opinion — and I believe, by the attendance at this conference, the opinion of most people in the world — and just unfounded. If everyone took that approach, Mr. Speaker, I don't think we would get very far. Even the smaller players — to my point — they got that point.

To give members the idea of the scale of the event, I should just mention that there were some 50,000 delegates. The conference that we were at, where the accord was struck, had more people at it than currently live in the Yukon. That really drove home the enormity of the challenges facing the planet, and it shows that all around the globe this is a top priority. Everybody gets that, as was evidenced by the fact that an agreement was hammered out by the end of the day. What a process that was to see the Herculean task of getting changes to the agreement, amendments, conversations happening in real time in 18 different rooms across this

massive pavilion, let alone the international conversations that were being had back in the regions, the subregions of not only Canada, but internationally. To be able to come together as a nation and to hammer out this final agreement by the end of the day — it was such an amazing privilege to be there and to participate in it, and an opportunity that I will not soon forget.

There was a setback with the withdrawal of the United States. I believe that was mentioned earlier today. However, as we see in the United States, many of the individual states in the union in the United States continue to do their part and they have mentioned that, regardless of the buy-in of the United States, the individual states are going to keep to their commitment to the Paris accord. To me that springs hope that other states will soon follow.

In a way, it saddens me that the economic benefits of moving past fossil fuels into a green technology sphere is currently lost on the current president. That will set our neighbours and our friends in the states below and beside us years behind as the rest of the world turns to innovation and technologies in the modern world.

One of the topics that was discussed at the international level was the financial commitment from the developed countries of the world to put billions of dollars toward green initiatives, green technologies and the creation of that industry and the leadership in the universities, leadership in the think tanks. It's an opportunity for Canada — by Canada being on the right side. As the Prime Minister at the time said, "We're back." I think that was his quote. That's a huge opportunity for the technical institutes of Canada, the universities of Canada, and the trade schools of Canada to move forward for the sake of the economy, but also for the sake of the environment.

The economic benefits are there and they're clear, but we in the Yukon need to make sure that our voice is heard on the environmental side of things as well because, closer to home, Mr. Speaker — as we all know and as I think every single Member of this Legislative Assembly has said at one time or another in the Legislature — we agree that our Yukon landscape is changing; it absolutely is changing. We heard from the Minister responsible for the Women's Directorate and Tourism and Culture speak about her trip and the good fortune of being able to be on our most northerly part of our territory up at Herschel Island. You really do have to see things as humans. That's kind of the nature of our being. We have to see things with our own eyes almost.

I too felt the same way by my opportunity this summer. I had the good fortune to participate in the Canada C3 event. For those who don't know or for those who will read this in Hansard in the years to come, Canada C3 is a signature project for Canada's 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Confederation in 2017. The centrepiece of that is a 150-day sailing journey from Toronto to Victoria via the Northwest Passage. Canada C3 was connecting Canadians from coast to coast to coast, inspiring a deeper understanding of our lands, of our people, and the past and the present and the future of our country. I had a very limited experience. Every part of that journey — I believe there were 15 different legs of the journey — ranged in time

from several days to three weeks in duration. My trip was very brief. I had the opportunity to travel by ship from Tuktoyaktuk in the Northwest Territories to Herschel Island, which, of course, is our only offshore island. I was only on the ship for a day. But the stories of the people who lived in this part of the country — well, they're very striking, as were also the visual changes of the land itself. It was real. It was palpable.

When you get off the ship on Herschel Island, with Mr. Gordon showing you the sloughing of the banks from 20 years ago, and showing you the same environmental degradation happening just this summer, it's massive and it's real. To be able to say that I've been to Yukon's Arctic — that's something again that I will not soon forget. It was a huge honour to be there and to speak with folks from the Inuvialuit, hearing their stories about the land and their experiences, what they've heard from their elders and the stories that are being told moving forward. The impact of climate change is all around us here, but it's really all around you up on Herschel Island.

You don't have to travel to Herschel Island to see that, but a simple drive on some of our highways will also let you know that climate change is happening here. A simple visit to the curling rink in Dawson will let you know about the impacts of climate change with our buildings.

To be there on Herschel Island and to hear the stories — basically what I got back from that is that Yukon elders lived through winter temperatures that our grandchildren will never experience. These were the stories that we were being told up there. Wildlife species are claiming habitats in places they have never been before. Water systems are taking new paths, as glacial sources retreat. Invasive species like the pine beetle making their way north to the Yukon's forest — all happening in real time, in our time, here in the Yukon.

In the north, climate change is not just a theory. It's the cracks in our highways, it's the shifts in the foundations of our buildings, and it has a real impact on the communities we call home. Like the landscape we live in, Yukoners are also changing. We're modifying the way we build. We just heard from the Minister of Highways and Public Works about innovations in his department when it comes to ice bridges and exploring more sustainable sources of energy. That's another thing we can do as the humans who exist here and now.

We're monitoring and we're studying the changes that are happening all around us so we can make those informed decisions about the actions that we do take. The good news is we're not doing this alone. The Yukon is a very active member addressing climate change in our region, but we're joined by our nation and we're joined by our global community. We're participating internationally through the Arctic Council and by supporting Canada's commitment to the United Nations international climate change agreements, such as the one that was made in Paris a few years back.

Nationally, Yukon's perspective played a part in shaping the *Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change*. Regionally — that was the conversation in Paris: it's all about the regional conversations — we are working with

our neighbours and the federal government to establish a northern adaptation strategy.

Here at home, we are leading a coordinated strategy to reduce our emissions while also attempting other pursuits. We are adapting to current and future impacts of climate change as we go. We know that as our population continues to grow, we are going to require more energy. At the same time, we need to lessen our carbon footprint and ensure that economic stability exists in the Yukon. I really believe that this is all possible. We can take action to reduce our reliance on our non-renewable sources of energy and we can also reduce our energy consumption. With a good understanding of the risks of climate change impacts, we can prioritize our needs and we can dedicate the resources for adaptation when we are building schools or improving our highways so that they don't crack or buckle when the permafrost thaws.

The Climate Change Secretariat is also leading government's actions with addressing climate change. This office may be housed under the Department of Environment, but its staff collaborates right across government and works very closely with partners departmentally and also outside of government. Working across Yukon government — whether it is with Highways and Public Works or with Community Services or Energy, Mines and Resources — they support Yukoners in reducing energy consumption, saving money and in adapting to a changing landscape. We are working together to provide incentives for new energy sources, such as solar panels, wind turbines and high-efficiency biomass stoves and boilers. We are working with different First Nation communities and hearing about their plans for power and green energy. It is inspiring, Mr. Speaker.

We are also retrofitting the government's buildings and studying the best options for our vital highways as well. When vehicles or buildings need to be replaced, we have to look at not just the replacement but the changes in technology that we need because of climate change. We are not just replacing buildings; we are making them stronger, more versatile and more adaptable.

We are also looking into more efficient cars and infrastructure to take the place of an antiquated technology. We are also working across government to further our understanding of climate change impacts and ways that we can help Yukon communities be resilient to those impacts. We support the work of the Yukon College, for example, and others that are conducting research in these areas — Cold Climate Innovation. We are learning new ways of adapting to highways, buildings and community infrastructure that are affected by thawing permafrost. We understand more about food security as it relates to climate change. Putting a price on carbon will help us account for the costs of our consumption while keeping the money in the territory to support businesses and Yukoners through a Yukon rebate. Work on understanding the impacts of the federal carbon pricing in Yukon has already begun.

Yukon government has also started considering what a Yukon rebate may look like by asking the public for any ideas and suggestions that they would like us to consider. We

know that in our territory, heating buildings and transportation — well, those are our biggest sources of our emissions. We also know that temperatures are rising in the Yukon at double the rate that is seen in southern Canada. We need to adapt to the changes that are and will result from this.

In closing, all Yukoners have a part to play in addressing the impacts of climate change and together we can write our story of adaptation, mitigation and the future of changing in a changing Yukon. Given the importance of addressing climate change now, I hope that all members in the Legislature today will be supporting the motion put forth and I would like to thank all of my colleagues for all of their comments here today.

**Mr. Cathers:** In beginning to speak to the motion, I would like to note that we will be supporting to the motion and I do agree with the Premier's comments that Yukoners and all of us do have a part to play in the response to climate change.

I just want to, in making my remarks today, just clarify a few points and correct some of the comments made by one minister in particular and other members across the floor. I also want to note, as we vote in support of this motion — make it clear to people what we are voting for, particularly since there have been some within the Liberal Party who have attempted to inaccurately characterize the signing of the Vancouver Declaration as being signing on to a carbon tax and supporting that, which was of great surprise to both Premier Brad Wall and former Premier Pasloski. Again, this is an area where any Yukoner who is listening — we would note that to get past the Liberal spin and especially with this government, always read the fine print.

I would note as well that again we do agree with members opposite and with the NDP to our left that worldwide action is necessary to address climate change and that there is a role for government and for citizens. The Minister of Highways and Public Works was inaccurately characterizing the opinion of members of the Yukon Party by indicating that he said we were arguing that government should do less. In fact, that is the opposite of what we were arguing. What we are contending is do it in a different way.

The Liberal government's approach here, as with the federal government, is the argument that a carbon tax is the solution to global warming. It's the best approach, they argue, to addressing climate change. We do dispute the carbon tax is the right model, especially in the north with our disproportionate reliance on goods shipped from outside the territory and the high cost of, for many people, non-discretionary costs, including the cost of heating their homes and the cost of driving into work for people who live in my riding and others either outside Whitehorse or within Whitehorse but outside the public transit system.

We have contended in the past — and will continue — that an incentive-based approach is a very effective strategy for government to respond to climate change and to encourage people to take the actions that reduce their fossil fuel footprint. I would point out to all members of the Assembly

and to anyone listening that with the incentive-based approach taken during the time the Yukon Party was in government, a number of these initiatives have proven to be successful. The investment in Mayo B increased the Yukon's supply of renewable energy. Through the addition of the Mayo B unit, with that single action alone, the government more than met the energy target set out in the 2009 energy strategy for adding new renewable energy to the grid. We agree that more needs to be done following that.

I would remind members of the good energy program, another incentives-based program that has been very successful at reducing the electrical consumption of Yukoners by helping them transition to more energy-efficient appliances. It has assisted with other products that are energy efficient and, in doing so, not only has it resulted in people personally creating less of an impact on fossil fuels, but it has helped private sector companies that are selling the newer products and it has been overall an increase in economic growth for the territory. An incentives-based approach is a way to increase economic growth, rather than retarding it and putting the brakes on it, as a carbon tax would do.

I would also point to the microgeneration program, coupled with the changes that I had the honour of tabling as part of Bill No. 80 during the last term, which allowed Yukoners to borrow money under the rural electrification program for on-grid solar, wind and hydro projects outside municipalities. The combined success of those three programs — the microgeneration program, which allows people to sell renewable energy to the grid at a slight premium, the ability to access that secured loan funding under the rural electrification program and the incentives available through the good energy program — have resulted in a very significant increase in the number of Yukoners who have home-based renewable energy systems — primarily solar, but some wind. I believe there have been a couple of hydro ones, but that has been on a relatively minor scale for the sake of hydro.

I would point to that program. Two years after it was launched, it was reported by CBC, I think in midsummer, about the success of that program when they interviewed the director of the Energy Solutions branch, who noted that the Yukon had gotten to the stage where we are now second in the country in terms of per capita solar installations. That is largely with the result of those incentives-based programs and Yukoners choosing to access them and, in doing so, contracting local companies to install solar panels in their home.

I would also note the energy retrofit programs through Yukon Housing Corporation have also been very successful in getting people to invest in their homes. It has increased the value of those homes and reduced their operational costs. We believe those programs have proven to be successful.

So in addition to those incentives-based programs, which in concluding this portion of my remarks, I note our primary contention — a taxation-based approach — disproportionately affects those who can least afford to pay it and it places an additional burden on citizens and small businesses, rather than if an incentives-based approach is taken, it actually helps

people take that next step by encouraging them to make those investments in energy efficiency technology and home energy retrofits.

Other actions that we have taken that we're proud of and stand as good examples of what government can do right to help address climate change include the investments in the biomass pilot project in the Premier's hometown of Dawson City, the investments in the Cold Climate Innovation centre at the college, which is helping develop technologies not only for the Yukon, but potentially for the world, which can again add the technological response to doing things more efficiently in response to climate change as well as mitigating the effects of climate change.

Last but not least on my list, I would note the support for the growth of the agriculture sector through Growing Forward, Growing Forward 2, the investment we made in the Fireweed Community Market in supporting their operations, and the investment in the Yukon Agricultural Association. These are all actions that I would encourage the current government to look to and to recognize that these actions through our work, and through the work of Yukoners who played a part in those initiatives, have all helped to diversify the economy. They have helped people increase the value of their homes. They have helped people develop farms and market gardens and have allowed the Yukon to move a bit closer toward growing more of our own food here in the territory, which personally I believe should be an important goal for every Yukon government to increase the amount of food grown here locally in the Yukon.

I would note again, in summing up that portion of my remarks, that we are not — as one member said — arguing that government should do less. We are arguing that government should do it differently and that an incentives-based approach is far more effective than a taxation-based approach. The carbon-tax approach that is often touted by members is primarily theory. It is not proven and, in fact, members can look to the *Financial Post*. Recently, the Canadian Taxpayers Federation — the director for BC wrote an article that appeared in the *Financial Post* yesterday regarding the Canadian Taxpayers Federation's assessment of British Columbia's carbon tax. I'll just quote from that briefly, but I would note that the Canadian Taxpayers Federation's argument is that they say that, though the BC Liberal government brought in a tax that they said would be revenue neutral and return money to the citizens of BC, according to the Canadian Taxpayers Federation in the article currently online in the *Financial Post*, dated yesterday: "The nationally-vaunted 'revenue neutral' B.C. carbon tax has finally taken off its mask. It is now just another bare-faced tax grab designed to pinch money from residents' wallets and plunk it into government coffers."

Again, skipping down in the article, which I will not read at length, I would note that — again, according to the Canadian Taxpayers Federation — the cumulative tax increase brought in through the BC carbon tax was \$865 million, or \$728 per family of four — so, again, the

Canadian Taxpayers Federation's analysis of the BC carbon tax.

That is one of the reasons why one of the things that we hear from Yukoners is that, when they hear government promising that they're going to increase taxes but really they're going to lower them while doing so, people are more than a little suspicious of those claims. They do not trust that it will be anything more than a shell game.

So in fact, yesterday, I held a public meeting for my constituents and I did not bring up the topic of taxation but it was the top issue I heard from constituents who came to my meeting. Also, before I went to the meeting, I went to get coffee and tea from Tim Hortons. While doing so and while I was waiting for them to fill the containers, I had two people approach me who were concerned about taxation. In all of these cases — the people at my meeting and the people who approached me yesterday, and again, just as one example from within the past 24 hours — they're concerned about the federal government's small-business tax changes, they're upset that the federal government was only allowing 75 days, and they're upset with the fact that they've heard from credible groups, including the Canadian Chamber of Commerce, the Canadian Federation of Agriculture and the Canadian Medical Association — all of whom have said these changes will be bad for them. They are concerned with what they're hearing.

They're also concerned when they hear government talking about a carbon tax as a response to climate change and as the supposed solution to addressing climate change. They're especially concerned because they don't know the fine print. When they see news stories in, again, respected publications like the *Financial Post* about the cost of the carbon tax to BC citizens, people are concerned about what their financial future will look like a year from now.

Third and finally in the list of concerns that I've heard from constituents within the last 24 hours alone, using my example — and I would note I've heard a lot more from people prior to that, but just within the last 24 hours, these are concerns I've heard from Yukon citizens — people are also concerned that a sales tax has been proposed and the government has not stated whether they will or will not impose it. In response to questions, the Premier chose to dodge the question, as is his prerogative. But when people see indications like that and the choice that the Liberal government made yesterday to adjourn the House 3.5 hours early rather than debating a motion that would add weight to the request for an extension of the federal government's consultation period on small-business tax changes, people are concerned that they seem to be hearing one thing that sounds not too bad, but they hear other things that are very concerning and they, quite frankly — based on past performance and conflicting statements — have questions about whether the government will follow through on fairly grand claims and actually return the money to them after they increase taxes.

With those closing remarks, I would note again that the Yukon Party Official Opposition will be supporting this

motion, but hopefully my remarks will avoid members being tempted to misconstrue it as support for a carbon tax. We do support the Paris declaration. We do support action being taken to address climate change. But we will continue to advocate for a response that is primarily based on incentives rather than on a punitive, taxation-based approach.

**Speaker:** If the member now speaks, he will close debate. Does any other member wish to be heard?

**Mr. Gallina:** Thank you to all of the members who contributed to the debate here today. It is encouraging to hear that we feel the responsibility to address climate change. To the Leader of the Third Party, this motion is aspirational, and we do feel we need to act and focus on action. As leaders, we must move beyond platitudes. Climate change is way more expensive to deal with after the fact, as she pointed out. To the Member for Kluane, I thank you for sharing the programs and initiatives the previous government had undertaken to address climate change. While we agree on the need to address this global issue, we do differ on the approach that we as Yukoners should take to do our part. I disagree that, because we are a smaller jurisdiction, we shouldn't be held to the same standards as the rest of Canada or our global counterparts.

The *Paris Agreement* is about acknowledging that we are contributing to climate change and doing our part to build a better future for ourselves and for our children. We all contribute to climate change and Yukoners are more adversely affected than many others in the world. We cannot ask Canada, other provinces or other parts of the world for assistance in dealing with the impacts of climate change in the north if we are not also willing to do our part. It is important that we take responsibility alongside other Canadians. The effects of climate change can be clearly seen in the north, particularly on Herschel Island, where we have heard of startling changes that are occurring. We are monitoring and studying the changes around us so we can make informed decisions about the actions we must take to adapt. The changes on Herschel Island, and the staggering impacts across the north, show us that time is of the essence.

Here in the Yukon, we are leading a coordinated strategy to reduce our emissions while also adapting to the current and future impacts of climate change. We can take action to reduce our reliance on non-renewable sources and reduce our energy consumption. We know that a price on carbon is the number one policy recommendation to effectively reduce carbon emissions. A price on carbon doesn't have to cost us more. It can be a signal to change our behaviour to less carbon-intensive behaviours. All Yukoners have a part to play in addressing the impacts of climate change. Putting a price on carbon will help us account for the cost of our consumption while keeping the money in the territory to support businesses and Yukoners through a Yukon rebate.

Yukoners respond well to challenges — we always have — including the efforts surrounding the First World War.

Together we can write our story of adaptation, mitigation and the future of changing Yukon.

To the Member for Lake Laberge, carbon tax is one approach. It is not the only approach the Yukon government is proposing, nor is it a lone approach that any other jurisdictions that I am aware of are taking to address climate change.

It is a mechanism and incentive-based approach that will encourage a reduction in consumption. It is a mechanism through cap and trade or carbon tax that 80 percent of Canada has subscribed to, and we have concrete evidence from scientists, economists, and news articles as you have shared. We have news articles as well — that carbon pricing is effective, as the Member for Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes had presented.

In closing, I'll just pull from the *Vancouver Declaration on Clean Growth and Climate Change*, which was signed by all of the premiers. It states that the First Ministers commit to transition to a low-carbon economy by adopting a broad range of domestic measures, including carbon-pricing mechanisms.

I hope that everybody would support this motion that we've presented. I thank you for your time.

**Speaker:** Thank you.

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. 94 agreed to*

## Motion No. 32

**Clerk:** Motion No. 32, standing in the name of the name of Mr. Adel.

**Speaker:** It is moved by the Member for Copperbelt North:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to create solutions to promote aging in place and a full spectrum of care by:

(1) keeping the Whistle Bend continuing care development at 150 beds;

(2) working with Yukoners, health professionals and stakeholders to find solutions that offer alternatives and transitions between home care and full-time continuing care; and

(3) providing community-based services which allow seniors to age in place, to the greatest extent possible.

**Mr. Adel:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is a pleasure to speak to this important issue that affects all Yukoners directly and indirectly, now and in the future.

One of our government's is a people-centred approach to wellness that helps Yukoners thrive. This is something that we touched upon regularly during the campaign. It resonated with a lot of my constituents in Copperbelt North.

Our elders are a rich source of wisdom that we need to tap into and continue to have them as a viable part of our society. An important aspect of thriving is maintaining strong connections to one's family and this is important. How do we keep aging in place and keep our families together without moving them to other communities? These will take some really innovative thinking on the part of all parties involved. Friends are a very important part of keeping a community going and our seniors aging in place — community members doing their bit in volunteering to keep our communities together. We also need to provide adequate care for our aging population to be looked after as we age.

It's no secret that the Yukon has an aging population. It is probably one of the fastest growing segments of the population in general. Yukoners between the ages of 60 and 74 — in which some members of this House fall — are currently, we can be proud, the fastest growing age group in the territory. Based on community wellness, we're living longer and we're healthier. In the last 10 years, the number of Yukoners between 60 and 70 years of age has risen by 2,762 people — an increase of just over 87 percent. That's an A for effort no matter where you go.

Where I saw it was when I went out and participated in the Canada senior games last summer in Brampton, Ontario — 1,700 vibrant seniors over the age of 55 coming together in a community to participate in all sorts of sporting and cultural events. It's that kind of thriving population that aging in place and what we can do as a government will make this a more rich and viable community.

Yukoners 75 years of age and older are the next fastest growing age group — their numbers have risen by 511 people over the past 10 years. That's an increase of just over 61 percent. This is and will become one of the largest sectors of our population that we will have to commit resources to for health care, for community services and for ongoing services. We haven't faced a population bulge in the senior part of our

population like this before. Over the next 10 years, these numbers are expected to continue to grow. As our population ages, we need to plan for their comfort and care, creating solutions to promote aging in place and the full spectrum of care.

Forty-five years ago — which will give an idea of how long ago it was I went to university — we had an anthropology professor who stood up in front of the class, looked around at us all and said, “You’re all approximately the same age. By the time you reach the age of 65, your expectations will be for private care, for all your services provided for, for someone in the government to pick up the tab for doing this.”

He basically turned to all of us and he said, “This is unsustainable. No government will have the resources to look after that size of a population bulge. It will take an innovative community, government and private sector to look after these people, or you as a population.” At the time, I wasn’t looking forward enough to think about it, but at this point in my career and life, it’s looming a little bit more on the horizon.

As a result of these changing demographics, there is an increase in demand for all continuing care services. The government has been working to expand those services to meet the demand. In 2016, there were 24 additional beds opened. McDonald Lodge has opened more beds; the Thomson Centre added beds; all these things were great to see — a 10-bed care facility in Whitehorse opened as well.

In just under a year, Whistle Bend place is scheduled to open in September of 2018 with 150 beds, which will expand the government’s capacity to deliver the services that aging Yukoners need. Yet this motion asks us to hold it to 150 beds — not just build more buildings, take on more debt, live with more cost — because it’s just let’s put another 150 beds in and put people in there. Let’s be more innovative. Let’s work as a government, as a private sector, as a society for more innovative solutions for the care of our elderly, in keeping them aging in place somewhere they’re familiar and comfortable.

However, the expansion of these services and the costs that come with them need to be balanced with the provision of other programs and services like home care to support aging in place to see if we can keep people in their homes longer, to see if we can make it safe and comfortable and provide wellness for our aging population.

As most of you are aware, home care services include physiotherapy, occupational therapy, nursing, social work, personal care, light housekeeping, meal prep, shopping and caregiver respite — this is one that a lot of people overlook. We all take it on as family to help look after our aging population — look after someone who needs it in the house — but we forget about the person — the caregiver — who is there 24/7, who is there on call all the time. Who is there to give them a break? That’s something we can’t lose sight of.

The collaborative working relationship between home care and the Whitehorse General Hospital has been expanded through initiatives through Health and Social Services that allow patients with complex needs who are designated as

having an alternative level of care — and I’ll come back to alternative level of care — to be discharged to their own homes, where they are the most comfortable.

Alternative level of care is something where there’s a gap right now, something we need to address on how we get these people with more complex problems to stay in their homes longer. We require more training of qualified staff. Right now, we are in the midst of a global shortage. My wife works in health care in this particular field and says that one of their major challenges or hurdles is to find qualified staff. Perhaps we can partner with Yukon College to graduate more qualified people in this field. It’s obviously growing. It’s going to be something where good jobs will be available and we, as a government, can help with that. We could maybe expand the scope of practice for some of these individuals — nurse practitioners, et cetera — who can help with these complex alternative levels of service that don’t require us to pre-institutionalize our aging population before they are really comfortable to be there.

Copperbelt North constituents are concerned about gaps in services. I had an interesting conversation with one the other day, saying, “We have a lovely home, but it’s way too big for us. The kids are gone — everything. We’re just banging around in here.” They would like something they could go to that is not a Copper Ridge model, a Whistle Bend model, or a Macaulay Lodge model. They would like some supported living — someplace where they could go, still be independent, maybe get a meal, and have someone look in on them from time to time. Those are initiatives that need to come forward and, with some creative thinking, partner up in the private sector — whatever we have to do to make that a reality for these people. They have the means to make this happen and to provide for themselves longer, which makes them feel more independent and certainly keeps them connected to the community.

My own father was able to stay in his home for an extra three years through accessing home care in Ontario. They did all the light housekeeping and they helped him with his medications. Family stepped in — my sister came over from Barrie every second week and helped him for a couple of days — all of these things. We got together as a group to access government services and, along with family, kept my dad there much longer, where he was much happier. He was able to go for coffee with his friends and do all of the things that he wanted to do.

As I said earlier, in addition, we need to support housing for seniors through collaboration with community partners to supply alternative support and housing options for our aging population. “Aging in place” has a very broad definition, and it may mean something different to all of us. To me, aging in place means someplace on a beach with a fishing pole, but that probably won’t happen. My kids are more liable to put me on an ice floe with a bottle of scotch.

We will have to carefully consider our expectations for the delivery of services as we move forward with this initiative. We will have to establish requirements for the delivery of services that are appropriate to their location,



which takes me back to an earlier comment about trying not to move people out of their community, from their support groups and from their family connections.

We are committed to working with public stakeholders and partners around what aging in place means to identify the kind of supports and services that Yukoners need and deserve. I am looking forward to hearing from my colleagues here in the House about what kind of solutions we can focus on to ensure that our aging population here in the territory receives the care it needs to ensure Yukoners of all ages continue to thrive and enrich the lives of all Yukoners.

**Ms. McLeod:** I am pleased to rise today to speak to Motion No. 32, brought forward to the House by the Member for Copperbelt North. This motion could very well be divided into two separate discussions, and I am kind of disappointed that these very different concepts are being discussed in the same motion.

I would like to start off by saying how proud the Official Opposition is to see the Whistle Bend continuing care facility as it nears completion. By all accounts, the people who have viewed this care facility are very impressed. The previous government was dedicated to creating a functional solution to a number of problems in our communities with respect to health care. By designing this beautiful Whistle Bend facility to begin at 150 beds, with the opportunity to expand it to 300, we are able to tackle the immediate problem and the need identified for continuing care beds and also to plan for the future. The demand for continuing care will continue to grow with the population. However, the expansion of these services and the costs that come with them need to be.

The Premier has been against this project from the beginning, but the need was there, as was the solution, but no solution put in place by the previous government would ever be good enough for this Premier. So if you are going to cancel one plan, you need to have another one to replace it. The territory is in the midst of an urgent need for continuing care beds. This facility is undoubtedly required. When hospital beds are being used by patients who do not need acute care, but rather continuing care, the evidence of the need for increased continuing care capacity has to be addressed.

The term “continuing care” describes a level of care where patients receive around-the-clock care for chronic incapacitating illness, mental or physical disability and who cannot be cared for in a home and should not be cared for in a hospital. These patients can be any age or background, but share the common need for constant care. If the government is going to cap this facility at 150 beds and not look at the idea of an expansion, we need to see a plan. Our seniors need a plan and not having a plan would be irresponsible. I would be interested in seeing the capital and O&M cost estimates from this government on their plan for constructing multiple continuing care facilities throughout the Yukon.

With respect to aging in place and finding alternatives and transitions between home care and full-time continuing care — these are ideas that are worthy of a discussion all on their own. But I would like to address the piece on this motion

related to supporting our seniors to age in place where and when possible. This is a very important initiative and I’m happy to discuss the idea of home care today.

I spoke at length in the spring about the money allocated to Yukon by the federal government in addition to the Canada health transfer agreement. Specifically, this money was to contain \$6.2 million in order to address home care needs within the territory over a span of 10 years. I have spoken about how far the minister would have to stretch \$620,000 in a year to make it have any real impact and that such a small amount means that the needs of Yukoners will not be adequately addressed. We have heard nothing from this government regarding their plan to put these funds to use in our communities.

The Minister of Health and Social Services told me that this money would be flexible. I mentioned to the minister that Watson Lake home care service consists of very basic care and very basic housekeeping, largely capped at one hour per week. I asked about whether this government had given any consideration to extending these services in our rural communities and was provided with a very eloquent list about the things that have already been done. There has been no mention of how home care was going to be expanded or how the additional money was going to be spent. Mr. Speaker, home care has not changed in our communities. Improvements or enhancements have not been made and I have yet to find out where the additional funds from the federal government are being spent. This motion speaks to the importance of aging in place, yet nothing has been said of any work being done by this government to support this or to provide community services to allow seniors without complicated health problems to stay in their homes longer.

I asked the minister specifically about the rollout of the \$6.2 million from the federal government and specifically why only \$210,000 was allocated in this year’s budget. One would think that \$6.2 million over 10 years would leave more than \$210,000 in first year funding. As well, 5.5 full-time employees were allocated for home care this year. We have heard nothing about where these positions will be located and how services are going to be enhanced according to the government’s mandate to promote aging in place.

The motion, as brought forward, speaks about the transition between home care and continuing care. I would urge the government to provide the House with their plans going forward. It’s easy to say that aging in place must be a priority. We can all agree that our family and loved ones, and even ourselves, would benefit from being able to stay in our homes as long as possible. However, the government must also look at their plan for what people will do when staying at home is no longer possible. The Yukon’s population is growing and the number of seniors is growing.

This government has identified the importance of aging in place. This is a wonderful thing, but there’s no plan going forward. So far, what we’ve seen is the government make blanket statements regarding what is important, what should be considered, what is broken and how it’s the fault of the previous government. We have yet to see a plan laid out as to

how they're going to work toward those priorities or fix what they consider is broken. It's a time for this government to realize that this government is past the stage of making promises. It's supposed to be putting those promises into action. Tell us how this government is going to enhance home care, spend the additional money for home care, allow for better transitioning to continuing care, and why their view of building a suite of continuing care facilities can be best for Yukon, given their assertion that the Yukon's financial resources are strained.

Mr. Speaker, we cannot support this motion on the basis that it is talking about cancelling the expansion of continuing care in the territory without putting forward a tangible plan in place for what the next steps are. Not to have a real and tangible plan in place is irresponsible and does a disservice to our seniors and to all Yukoners and we cannot support having no plan.

Once the government actually develops a plan to provide continuing care to Yukoners, then we can review it at that time.

**Ms. White:** I am excited to jump into the fray of this one today because, again, we have the revisionist history. I'm going to offer some suggestions because of the things I have seen happen. I appreciate the Member for Watson Lake and her point of view. It's terrible that there's not enough home care in Watson Lake but, for five years, we discussed in this Legislative Assembly while I was here, and 10 years prior to that, about the importance of increasing home care access for people in the territory.

At one point in time, the previous Minister of Health and Social Services said that home care was available seven days a week, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. At that point in time, home care was available from 8:00 until 4:00 Monday to Friday, and we've added weekends since the Liberals have taken power. I will take that as a positive.

If we want to talk about improving access for seniors to age in place, let's talk about home care. Let's make that accessible. Let's make sure that, if someone needs medication at 10:00 p.m. and they need it at 6:00 a.m., they can get that, because if they can't get it at home, then they have to go somewhere else for that help.

If we want to talk about the best way to spend our health care money, let's talk about making it accessible for where people live. If someone is living in a house that works for them, let's say the ideal house, which has wide doorways, an accessible bathroom and it doesn't have any stairs — that's great.

So we have people right now who are planning for their aging future and they're building those houses and they are moving into them and that's fantastic. But what happens when they get to the point where they can't quite cover up everything that they need and they need help? The best thing for us to do is supply that help. Moving them into the Whistle Bend facility isn't the answer. When we talk about seniors and we talk about where you want to live, that is not the answer for everybody. It's not the answer for everybody.

The previous government — we could talk in circles about what people needed, and when the Vimy Heritage Housing Society project came forward over, and over, and over again, there was always a reason why that couldn't happen. Here's a new government — if we really want to talk about making housing accessible, let's talk about that project.

It's important to note that this is not — there has been some language that the government has used that makes me really nervous and that's the language of: "Work with Yukoners to promote aging in place and a full spectrum of care, both public and private". Now, I'm going to raise a flag for private, because there is a difference between public health care and private health care, and there is a difference between aging in place in a public facility and a private facility.

We can have a private facility that is not for profit, and that's what the Vimy Heritage Housing Society is about. That is a facility run by the residents, paid for by the residents, but that is a not-for-profit. We can look across the country and we can see problems that have happened in seniors facilities that have been run for profit. Those are private facilities — they are run solely for profit. There are examples across the country of how those have gone poorly.

The one thing I really want to flag is that at no point in time can health care be privatized. The Whistle Bend facility needs to be run by the Yukon government, it needs to be staffed by Yukon government employees and there needs to be oversight of Yukon government and Yukoners. It can never go private. That is something that won't change.

It's great, because you guys didn't have the opportunity yet to build any seniors complexes, and I can tell you the greatest growing population right now is seniors.

When I was a kid, people didn't retire here. They moved away to southern jurisdictions. Climate changed — things have changed and people want to stay here and that's fantastic. I have a seniors building in my riding, and I tell you, after being elected in 2011, I didn't think the first thing I would be championing was accessible bathrooms. I talked about toilets and talked about bathtubs for the first — well I talk about them a lot still actually, to be perfectly honest, because you know what? If you want to build a place that someone can use as their home until they pass away, then you need to make sure that they can get into their bathtub safely and that they can get out of their bathtub safely. When the bathtub is as high on my knee on the outside and higher when I step into the tub — you just have to talk to someone who has been stuck in the bathtub to know that they won't use that bathtub again. The great news is that home care can hook them up with shower chairs.

In our seniors housing, we have bathrooms that have accessible tubs in the basement often — well, mine is in the basement — but they can't access those bathrooms unless they have home care, and for someone who is totally independent to say: "Well, I need you to supervise me to have a bath" — you're not going to access that service either, because that is embarrassing and that is taking away your independence.

If we want to talk about making sure seniors can age gracefully and can age well in place, when we have people moving into seniors complexes, let's make sure that they can use their bathrooms from the first day they move in to the very last day that they use that bathroom. Let's stop putting in bathtubs. Let's put in a common bathtub on a floor. Let's make sure that we have showers that people can roll into, that they can shuffle into, and that they can step into.

I have a great friend who was here on opening day. She taught me that even a bathtub with a two-inch lip is impossible, without a riser, to get into it. If we want to talk about making sure that we are looking at our aging population and what happens to them, let's make sure that the buildings that you as a government invest in in the future are built for those people — people who will have changing physical needs as they age and will have different requirements. If you want to make a building truly accessible, then you make sure that you can use the bathroom. You make sure that the buttons on the oven are in the front and they are not on the back. Maybe we need to look at bulk purchasing of refrigerators where someone in a wheelchair can still get to the freezer in the refrigerator. What that looks like, I am not really sure, but I can tell you it doesn't work the way we have them now.

I appreciate that in Watson Lake — because communities don't have access to home care. I have a senior right now in the hospital who has just had a double-leg amputation due to diabetes complications, and he and his wife live in Carmacks. What does that mean? It means that they are not going back to Carmacks, because right now there is not enough home care in Carmacks to make sure that he would be safe.

When we look at it, we can't just talk about Whitehorse and accessible home care in Whitehorse. We need to look at communities. In some cases, we do absolutely need nurses. We need nurses to do those services, but sometimes the post person can knock on the door to make sure that you are all right. We have different government agencies all over the territory that could overlap in services.

We had a great conversation in Haines Junction one time, when someone says, "You know, the mail person knows when everybody is home and they know what is going on. They know who is okay and who is not okay. Why don't we ask them? Why don't we see if we can add something there, if they have the time?" There are ways to look at service delivery. We just have to be creative in how we do it.

Do I believe that there should be home care access in Old Crow? Absolutely I do. But is that one — is the nursing station — do they have that ability? No, maybe they don't, but does that mean that we have people in Old Crow who could help? Absolutely. Does that mean that we can give people in rural communities jobs? Absolutely. It is just looking at delivering it in a different fashion.

You know, Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the motion — I do. I think that if we had more access to home care, we would have a lot fewer people going into continuing care. If we help people age in place, if we help them age gracefully where they lived, we would require fewer continuing care beds, but let's be perfectly honest. There are some people who require that

higher level of service, that higher level of care and, because of that, then we're going to require those beds in continuing care.

Again, it's important that we talk about the different levels. So, public here — we all know that. We have public services right now. I mentioned my concern over private for profit. That is what we have in a lot of other places — in seniors facilities especially. They are run privately and they're run for profit.

Now, the Vimy Heritage Housing is a good example of private, but not for profit, and I think those are projects we should partner with. I think there are opportunities for First Nation development corporations to get involved in that in the communities. I think there are other ways of looking at this.

Maybe what we can do is look at some of the mistakes made in the last 15 years and look at trying to correct those and move forward. Let's build housing that is suitable for people. If we're going to talk about seniors housing, let's make sure it's accessible. Let's look at making home care accessible seven days a week, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, because that would be a game changer. That would ease up the burden at the hospital. That would make things so much better.

I just wanted to get that in. You know, it's an exciting time in the old Legislative Assembly. I appreciate the motion from the Member for Copperbelt North. There are lots of solutions and we're not going to talk about them here in the next 10 minutes, but there are. Let's start by building buildings that make sense for the people who we want to live there. That would be my first point — bathrooms that are accessible, buttons on the front of stoves — that would be great. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Hon. Ms. Frost:** I would like to thank the member opposite — some really great suggestions. My mandate as Minister of Health and Social Services and Yukon Housing Corporation is really to do just that: to look at innovation and try to find the solutions.

Clearly I have been given some specific language and priorities that are defined in the mandate letter that I have received. I am working with the Hospital Corporation, working with the corporations of Yukon First Nations, communities and municipalities to find the innovative solutions to age in place — defining what that means. It means aging well and being healthy in your own communities, in your own homes and the partnerships that are essential to ensure that happens: the partnerships with Yukon Housing Corporation, accessing appropriate programming and funding, realigning, if necessary, the resources that are available to allow our aging population to remain in their own homes and adapt the homes accordingly, as expressed by others previously.

As expressed by others previously, the statistics have revealed that, in 2016, 26 percent of our population was over 55. By 2030, we're looking at about 30 percent. I would like to also note that aging in place is really about supporting healthy aging and aging well. Generally it takes a much

broader view of health and encompasses healthy lifestyles, housing, transportation, community connections and age-friendly planning. I don't believe we've ever had this conversation about rural Yukon or what's required in rural Yukon, and that's exactly what we need to do now. In the coming weeks, we will be reaching out to every community in the Yukon, as part of an existing services planning exercise, to seek input into what aging in place means and the kinds of supports and services Yukoners want to see.

We have heard from the member opposite; we know what's happening in Watson Lake. We know there are challenges there, but we also have the same significant issues in every one of our communities.

Our staff at the Yukon Housing Corporation, home care, mental health, regional services and community nursing will be facilitating these discussions in the coming months. The process will involve community discussions and public meetings, as well as working with existing partners, agencies and stakeholders to identify and prioritize needs.

The housing action plan also looks beyond Whitehorse. It looks at alternative housing supports. Objective 1(c) under the pillar of "Housing with Services" refers to investigating and recommending options and programs to help those with disabilities and seniors to age in place and live independently in their own homes.

This may include programs or assisted living arrangements that currently don't exist in Yukon. By this, I mean housing that may include hospitality services and personal care services for adults who live independently but require a little more assistance.

There are other support programs available that we need to perhaps consider when we look at our partnerships with other governments. Our overall intent is not to limit the scope of this mandate but just to look a little longer, a little further into the future, to look for housing, look for health, and look at how we age well in place, in our own communities and our own homes.

Not one size fits all, as we've heard. Once this information is compiled, we will be in a better place to inform further decision-making on aging in place and to identify solutions that align with best practices elsewhere in Canada. We do aim to do that. We are looking at implementation and designing a strategy that will best align with needs of Yukoners in rural Yukon as well as Whitehorse. As indicated, the resolution speaks to the fact that we have sufficient facilities in the City of Whitehorse to accommodate the needs and the demand, but we don't have that in rural Yukon.

Rural communities do present challenges for aging in place. We also know that there are a number of current initiatives already underway, including housing options and programs for individuals in rural communities. One of the initiatives we just proceeded with this past fall was with the community of Little Salmon Carmacks. Another example is Yukon Housing Corporation's rent supplement program, where seniors have access to ensure they can afford rental accommodations on a fixed income. Whatever we need to do to find the innovative solutions, we will do that. We're

looking to dialogue, and work has already been established and is underway to address some of the challenges.

The primary purpose of this legislation will be to protect the health and well-being of the elders, the older adults in our communities — particularly our vulnerable citizens. We have the Housing First model; we have options available. If it's not sufficient, then proposed new legislation may be included.

At this point in time, basic standards and requirements for long-care facilities and community-based services are delivered in a person's residence. We know that some of these facilities and services are there. Is it good enough? What we're hearing is that it isn't good enough. We need to reach out further.

We have similar legislation and initiatives across the country, and we're looking at doing research to establish and define best practices and not to design unique initiatives in the Yukon when other jurisdictions have taken the bulk of the work and designed very effective models. Formal targeting engagement on this legislation is perhaps to be expected this fall — this aging-in-place model.

As many of you know, there are a number of other initiatives offered through Health and Social Services that relate to support aging in place. Some of those include the Whistle Bend care facility, including the new community hospice palliative care unit.

The Whistle Bend continuing care facility — it's a great facility. As described, it's creative, it's innovative, it's state of the art, and it's intended to provide a home-like facility for the residents who occupy that space. I'm proud of that, as is everyone else here.

However, we do need to look at, as described by the member opposite — as we build facilities in Yukon and perhaps future infrastructure, O&M expenditures and costs associated with that certainly need to be considered. We cannot enter into further agreements and arrangements without accommodating for the O&M expenditures in our long-term fiscal planning. It doesn't make sense for us to do that. We need to start looking at partnerships and looking at working with our communities, and perhaps the private sector is a way of the future. Perhaps working with our First Nation communities and our corporations is a way of the future. The communities will advise us as to the best solution going forward.

New federal funding for enhanced home care and mental health services are some of the other initiatives that are currently in our service area that we are considering or that we have funding for, and we're looking at implementing some of these initiatives — renew territorial e-health investment project funding for home health monitoring and remote patient care, and that's in collaboration with the Hospital Corporation. So reaching out and working with our partners is essential — and enhanced discharge planning for patients in partnership with Yukon Hospital Corporation.

As we take the patients in, we don't just intend to release them to the communities. We intend to release them with a care plan — a plan that will demonstrate that we are a government that is responsible and responsive. As the

Hospital Corporation, the Yukon government, Health and Social Services and Yukon Housing Corporation, we will look to find the solutions so that the patients who leave the hospital have a care plan in place as they go back to the communities. That has never happened before. We released the clients from the hospital and we didn't take an after-care plan that is really essential to long-term success of aging well.

Other shared services for vulnerable people delivered with partners such as Kwanlin Dün and the new Salvation Army Centre of Hope, transition housing and emergency beds will address some of the immediate pressures as well. We do have an aging population in our city that perhaps does not have accommodation. They are confronted with some social challenges that we are obligated to provide support to.

In closing, I want to thank the members opposite for the opportunity to speak to the work of my department today and the direction we are going with respect to aging in place. I can appreciate that this is an area that is most timely for us and of special interest to all Yukoners. As government, it is an area that we want to build on and possibly create new opportunities to balance and build upon unique community needs and strengths. We want to involve our partners, communities and individuals in helping us craft solutions going forward because clearly it is not solely a Government of Yukon responsibility. It takes all of Yukon.

As expressed this morning at the mental wellness forum, it takes a whole community to raise a child. The child will eventually become an adult and eventually age. We want to ensure that we have the services available for every one of who are in here — that we have choices and options made available to us as we become older adults in our communities.

I want to age well. I want to go home to my community of Old Crow. Will there be services available there? Possibly not, but that's the dream and that's the desire — that we provide services to Watson Lake, to Haines Junction. As we heard earlier, what are we doing with the seniors facility in Haines Junction? Why have we not provided supports to Burwash Landing? Why have we not provided supports to other communities that are needed? We've done that. We are reaching out into the communities to hopefully bring some of that back out to — I guess to seek the partnerships — I just have to apologize if my voice is kind of — I'm really quite sick today, so I apologize if I'm — I'm just not well today, so I apologize.

So that's where I want to end. I just want to say that our responsibility as Yukoners, our responsibility as a government is to provide the services so that our citizens — our older citizens — can age well in a place that they choose to be home. Whether it would be in Watson Lake, Carmacks, Haines Junction or Old Crow, it has to be a choice and the services have to be there for them when they make that choice.

**Speaker:** Order, please. Thank you.

The time being 5:30 p.m., this House now stands adjourned until 1:00 p.m. tomorrow.

*Debate on Motion No. 32 accordingly adjourned*

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

**The following sessional paper was tabled October 4, 2017:**

34-2-29

*Yukon Arts Centre 2016/2017 Annual Report (Dendys)*