



# Yukon Legislative Assembly

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## HANSARD

Wednesday, November 1, 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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Deputy Clerk	Linda Kolody
Clerk of Committees	Allison Lloyd
Sergeant-at-Arms	Doris McLean
Deputy Sergeant-at-Arms	Karina Watson
Hansard Administrator	Deana Lemke

**Yukon Legislative Assembly  
Whitehorse, Yukon  
Wednesday, November 1, 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 MADD Canada's 30<sup>th</sup> Project Red Ribbon campaign

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** I am pleased to rise today on behalf of the Yukon Liberal government in this House to recognize the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Mothers Against Drunk Driving — MADD — and their Red Ribbon campaign. Every year, Project Red Ribbon takes place over the holiday season from November 1 to the first Monday after the new year. This timing is not a coincidence. Unfortunately, this is a time of celebration, which also corresponds with an increase of impaired driving incidents.

For 30 years, volunteers in communities across Canada and the Yukon have distributed millions of red ribbons to the public to attach to their vehicles, keychains, purses, backpacks and lapels. Members of this Legislature and the public can pick up a MADD red ribbon at any of the six Yukon liquor stores and wear it prominently to demonstrate our collective commitment to sober driving.

Displaying this iconic red ribbon means two things. First, it serves as a reminder and as an appeal to drive sober during the holiday season. This reminder is all too important in the Yukon. Our rate of impaired driving has increased since 2014. We are five to six times higher than the national average and we have to do better. The second meaning for wearing these ribbons is that they serve as a tribute to honour all those who have been killed, injured or affected by impairment-related crashes. What makes these situations so tragic and difficult to accept is that impaired driving is not an accident; it is a preventable crime.

The Yukon Liquor Corporation is responsible for liquor in the territory. We must also ensure that social responsibility is a key commitment. This means informing Yukon citizens about the dangers and consequences that come when consuming liquor, and the importance of making choices to be safe and abide by the law.

My colleague, the Minister of Highways and Public Works, also strives to make Yukon's roads safe and my colleague, the Minister of Justice, strives to keep everybody safe. The Minister for Health and Social Services works at dealing with addiction issues.

Road safety is everyone's responsibility and it begins with each of us. We honour every life that is lost or changed

by an impaired driver. Please, let's work together to prevent these senseless tragedies from happening in the first place. Friends don't let friends drink and drive. Drinking and driving is deplorable, disgraceful, despicable, blameworthy, culpable, bad, shameful, repugnant, inexcusable, unforgivable, indefensible, unjustifiable, criminal, and just plain wrong — in all ways not cool.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Yukon government, I would like to extend our gratitude to the RCMP and our local MADD Whitehorse chapter. I would just like to acknowledge President Jacquelyn Van Marck, Carlos Sanchez-Aguirre, Bev Cooper and one of the founding members of MADD here in the Yukon, Jan Trim, and her husband Doug. We are honoured by your presence here in the Legislature today. Your dedication and tireless efforts are helping to save lives and we thank you.

*Applause*

**Mr. Istchenko:** I am pleased to rise in the House today on behalf of the Yukon Party Official Opposition to recognize MADD Canada's 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of their Project Red Ribbon campaign. Each year, millions of ribbons are handed out across Canada by volunteers for drivers and public to display on their vehicles or elsewhere as a pledge and a reminder for all to remain sober behind the wheel throughout the holidays and beyond.

I am hoping that the Minister of Highways and Public Works has partnered with them again to get those ribbons on fleet vehicles. I think it was a great thing.

Yukon's impaired driving convictions remain a lot higher, as the minister spoke about earlier, than the national average. The Red Ribbon campaign is increasingly important in the goal of all Yukoners to keep our loved ones and community members safe over the holidays. I am proud to see how many drivers take part in the Red Ribbon campaign each season and I look forward to seeing all drivers take the pledge to drive sober.

Road safety is a shared responsibility and this campaign has been raising awareness and reaffirming the importance of sober driving to Yukoners for 30 years. The Whitehorse chapter of MADD has worked for many years to eliminate impaired driving and to keep our communities safe.

I do want to thank the MADD volunteers who work tirelessly to save lives, getting those ribbons out during the holiday season and for all the work that they do during the rest of the year. I would also like to thank our local RCMP for their role in Project Red Ribbon. Your partnership with MADD is a very large part of ensuring the safety of Yukoners. I encourage everyone in this House and all Yukoners to make a donation to MADD this year. Get your red ribbon and display it proudly, and remember to remain sober while driving — always. Call a cab or call a friend, but don't drive. We are all at risk when someone gets behind the wheel impaired.

**Ms. White:** I stand on behalf of the Yukon NDP caucus to recognize and celebrate the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Mothers Against Drunk Driving.

For the past three decades, MADD chapters across the country have been raising awareness about the risks and the consequences of impaired driving through community initiatives and government lobbying. Our own Yukon chapter joined national ranks in 2003 in the promotion of safe, sober and responsible holiday driving.

While improvements have been made in the last three decades to reduce drinking and driving, it continues to be a deadly problem on Canadian roads. A 2016 report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention lists Canada number one among 19 wealthy countries for percentage of roadway deaths linked to alcohol impairment. The study found that while fewer people were dying from motor vehicle crashes in Canada, the proportion of deaths linked to alcohol impairment was 34 percent. That's higher than any of the other countries in the survey. For perspective, Israel had the lowest percentage, at 3.2 percent. This should serve as a warning to us as lawmakers that new strategies are needed to combat drinking and driving if we want to keep our roads safe.

The efforts of MADD are vital in keeping the message of sober driving top of mind during the holiday season, but that responsibility can't rest solely with them. MADD reviews legislation about impaired driving and produces a report card on each jurisdiction. Historically, the Yukon hasn't fared well on these assessments. As a matter of fact, we've done so poorly and have made such little progress in our battle against drinking and driving that, since 2009, we haven't been included in these cross-country reports.

My hope is that, with the renewed effort to address the harms of drinking and driving as a government, we will once again be relevant enough to be included in these report cards in a positive fashion as we continue to work with MADD to eliminate impaired driving altogether.

We thank all current and past board members of the Yukon chapter of MADD and, of course, all their volunteers for their continued efforts in Yukon.

**Speaker:** Introduction of visitors.

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** I have already introduced the folks from MADD and I thank them for coming. I just would also like to acknowledge Ms. Amanda Smith, who is the government's sign language interpreter. I would just like to welcome her here.

*Applause*

**Mr. Adel:** I always like to rise in the House and welcome one of my constituents. Bev Cooper, thank you for coming.

**Ms. White:** I thank my colleagues for allowing me to welcome two friends to the gallery. I originally met Jan and

Doug from when I had the coffee shop at the Canada Games Centre. It was through Jan's prompting and encouragement that I volunteered with MADD. I had the opportunity to stand on roadways; I had the opportunity to hand things out at McDonald's. What we don't always understand when we do the tribute is the sheer gargantuan amount of organization that goes behind the campaign, and the fact that the members we see here are constantly on the phone, trying to get volunteers.

I have a pitch to anyone, if they have some time and are interested. It's really fascinating to be on the side of the road with the RCMP or, if you're lucky, you can be in a place that's maybe a bit warmer, but I don't know that we've found any of those yet.

So Jan and Doug, it's lovely to have you here, because I don't get to say stuff like that to you all the time. Thank you for coming.

*Applause*

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

Are there any reports of committees?

Are there any petitions?

Are there any bills to be introduced?

Are there any notices of motions?

## NOTICES OF MOTIONS

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

THAT this House commends the Hon. Bob McLeod, Premier of the Northwest Territories, for showing leadership by standing up to the Government of Canada and defending northern interests, including the right of the territories to decide whether or not they develop their natural resources.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Canada to ensure all Yukon subcontractors are paid in full for their work on three duplexes in Ross River in summer 2017.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to continue to use the Yukon Forum to address joint priorities with Yukon First Nation governments.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to respond to the needs expressed by mobile-homeowners through a petition and a government survey by ending evictions without cause in mobile home parks.

**Speaker:** Are there any further notices of motions?

Is there a statement by a minister?

This then brings us to Question Period.

**QUESTION PERIOD****Question re: Mining legislation**

**Mr. Cathers:** Mr. Speaker, seven months ago, the Premier promised the mining sector that he would develop a collaborative framework to address industry concerns around timelines and reassessments for major projects. That was his promise. It was not a federal promise and we're not asking about an MOU. We're asking specifically about the Premier's promise for a collaborative framework that he personally promised the industry he would develop. We've been asking for an update all week on this collaborative framework, and the government has not provided an answer. Yesterday, he seemed to have even forgotten about their commitment.

Will the Minister finally tell us: What's the status of this collaborative framework that the Premier promised the industry seven months ago?

**Hon. Mr. Pillai:** I thank the Member for Lake Laberge for the question and the opportunity to continue to inform Yukoners as well as the Assembly on the work that's being done on this initiative.

We look forward to working with the Government of Canada and First Nation governments as we continue to implement the assessment process after Bill C-17 is passed.

As the *Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Act* is federal legislation, it is incumbent on Canada to provide clarity for all governments, industry and the public on the effect that the bill will have on existing projects in the YESAA process which we've continued to say. Although mining industry groups and companies previously lobbied for changes to Bill C-17, the Government of Yukon, First Nations and the Yukon Chamber of Mines issued a joint letter on March 16, 2017, confirming their united support for the bill. Industry stated that their concerns could be addressed through a collaborative framework with parties. The YESAA reset memorandum of understanding establishes a positive working relationship between the parties with respect to the future implementation and operation of YESAB. The parties are in the process of approving the memorandum of understanding. They have agreed on the framework — that has been completed — which creates an oversight group that will address YESAA matters. The reset MOU is a joint priority of the Yukon Forum.

**Mr. Cathers:** I appreciate that today we did get a little more information from the minister, but he still didn't directly answer the question. It's important to note that industry agreed to support the repeal of Bill S-6 through Bill C-17 in exchange for the commitment that the Premier gave about a collaborative framework around addressing their concerns.

Again, we specifically are talking about the collaborative framework that the Premier personally promised to this sector seven months ago, and unfortunately, yesterday, the minister said it's not about a time frame. Well, unfortunately, for people in the private sector, time frames actually do matter a great deal. They don't have the luxury that government has of taking more time and more time. They have great concerns about reassessments and timelines.

The Premier promised them that he would develop a framework to address these concerns. What we didn't hear in the minister's response about talking about talking is what the timelines are for actually developing this framework and fulfilling the Premier's commitment to this sector of the Yukon economy?

**Hon. Mr. Pillai:** I thank the Member for Lake Laberge for the question and I thank him for his 101 on the private sector. I have spent a lot of time in the private sector and certainly understand about timelines and how things work. I also understand what happens when government makes some decisions that completely disrupt an industry.

I remember his work on the housing file in my time in the private sector. He did a great job of destroying a series of projects because of listening to special interest groups. On Bill C-17, we are dealing with cleaning up the work that was done by our friends across the way and how they took it upon themselves to move forward without having all players at the table. Those other players were the Council of Yukon First Nations and certainly the federal government.

Are we in a time where we have some disruption because of what has happened? Absolutely, we do. The plan at this point is to have the players come to the table. Will there be disruption in the industry? There probably is and that is because of what has happened. Do I know the time frame on the execution of this work? No, I don't speak for the other two parties. I think after the work and the messaging from the Member for Lake Laberge on consultation over the last couple of weeks, I would say that I am going to go into it with an open mind and we will work to fix the problem that was left by our friends from across the way.

**Mr. Cathers:** Again, this government has been in office almost a year and they spend most of their time pointing a finger at the previous government while failing to take responsibility for their own actions. The minister, in attempting to bring up things from three years ago — when government actually listened to Yukoners — is an interesting deflection, but the minister knows the facts on that.

I would point out to the minister that, in this case, we are asking them about their commitment to people in the mining sector on developing a collaborative framework for dealing with these projects. They made a very specific commitment and people in that sector are frustrated by the fact that they have seen lack of action by the government. In response to their specific concerns, they are hearing platitudes and an attempt to blame the previous government, but there is no action by this government on its commitments to these Yukoners.

When will we actually see a timeline and when we see action on this file by this government?

**Hon. Mr. Pillai:** I think I hit a nerve over there with a little bit of a walk down history lane, but we will leave that for now.

Once again, part of our challenge is dealing with the lawsuit that took place with Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in, the lawsuit that took place with the Kaska, the Ross River Dena Council and the lawsuit on Bill S-6. All of these lawsuits have been

destabilizing. When we sit down with investors and mining companies across the country, the biggest thing is: “Thank God there was a change.” When you are in constant legal squabbles, people don’t want to invest, and if they don’t invest or you don’t invest, you don’t have projects.

Certainly what we are committed to doing here is not trying to ram through a process like we saw happen previously. I don’t want to continue to go into a blame game, but the reality is that something happened over the last couple of years. Our friends across the way created that situation. We are left here to fix the problem. I wish I could make it go into a series of actions that will lead to a resolution within a couple of days, but sometimes when you do the damage that was done, it takes longer.

At this particular time, I have committed to industry; my colleagues have committed to industry. We want to fix the problem — the remnants that have been left behind. We’re trying to rebuild the relationships. What I would say to the member opposite is that sometimes it takes a little bit longer to build those healthy relationships. He may not understand it, but we do.

#### **Question re: Internet connectivity**

**Mr. Kent:** On June 13 of this year, the Minister of Economic Development mentioned that an application to receive funding for a redundant fibre line had been submitted to Canada’s Connect to Innovate program. The minister further mentioned — and I quote: “... what we’ve heard from the federal government is that we’re probably looking at a September time frame to see if we’ve been successful on the funding agreement.”

As we are well past September, is the minister able to provide an update to the House on the status of this funding agreement?

**Hon. Mr. Pillai:** I thank the Member for Copperbelt South for his question on this topic. We feel that we’re coming to the end of the process. It would have been favourable to have the federal government conclude the process in September. I know that the members opposite, from their time in government, understand that sometimes the federal government takes a little bit longer than you would hope. In this particular case, we feel that we should be able to get a final answer from them in the short term.

Under the current situation, I hope we’ll be able to get some news out to Yukoners over the next while, but the process is still underway.

**Mr. Kent:** I thank the minister for his response. We’ll look forward to hopefully hearing some positive news from the federal government on this file.

At the beginning of the summer, the minister put out an expression of interest for the southern fibre optic route, which presumably would go through Skagway and connect with the Alaska fibre line. Last week, I believe it was — or perhaps the week before — he issued an expression of interest for the Dempster fibre optic route.

Mr. Speaker, given that these two expressions of interest have been put out after the application was submitted to

Canada, we’re curious what was asked for in that application. Is the minister willing to table the application to the Connect to Innovate funding program that was submitted to Canada?

**Hon. Mr. Pillai:** The expression of interest that was released in that process is currently underway. As the Member for Copperbelt South correctly identified, that has to do with the northern route. The expression of interest that was released for the southern route was to gather more information on this particular project.

I’ll draw the listeners’ attention to the fact that, when we came into office, we had a project that had been listed at \$40 million, and the idea was that the ownership for that particular project — a private sector company would own it. Just after that, the project then increased in value to \$75 million, I believe, approximately, if you take into consideration the 30 percent over the base price. We had a project almost double.

At that point, we as a government felt that we would undertake a very methodical process to understand all the information before a decision was made. That’s what we have been doing. The expression of interest on the southern route has been part of that matrix. As we see a process underway now — concluding, I think, on November 14 — that will provide us with more data. It certainly doesn’t affect the application that has been provided to the federal government.

**Mr. Kent:** As I mentioned in my previous question, we’re curious about what exactly that application to Canada looked like, and hopefully the minister will consider tabling that application here in the Legislative Assembly so we can get a sense for exactly what was asked for.

My final question for the minister is quite straightforward: Can he tell Yukoners when his government will make a decision on which route for a redundant fibre optic line will be the one that is chosen?

**Hon. Mr. Pillai:** First, I just want to apologize to the Member for Copperbelt South. The last part of the second question, the first supplementary, was: Will I table the application? I think what I would like to do is to not make a sudden decision here. I want to go back and speak with the officials about the contents of the application, understanding that there is no intellectual property there or particular items that would be inappropriate to table, but certainly we will endeavour to take on that process with respect to the question from the Member for Copperbelt South.

As for the time frame, it’s a commitment we’ve made to look at this redundancy. Certainly I would hope that our officials and our team can come to a conclusion within the fiscal year. That’s my hope. I think that we still have some work to do. If we want to look at actually building fibre density in the next fiscal year, it’s something we would have to talk about and make sure our budgets reflected that. That’s pretty broad. I apologize that I’m not giving a hard and fast date but, based on the process and the data that is coming in, that’s the way I would think it would go.

We certainly haven’t finished the EOI for the north so there is more data coming in. Of course, that may lead to

further questions. At this particular time, I'm hopeful — but based on the data we get.

**Question re: Salvation Army shelter and transitional housing**

**Ms. White:** When it comes to emergency shelter and transitional housing, we have seen proposals and plans come forward over a number of years from various groups, until the previous government committed to a partnership with the Salvation Army without a request for proposal. The project is now nearly complete a year after the anticipated opening date. The ribbon-cutting ceremony happened a few weeks ago, and the shelter is expected to open very soon. We're pleased to see an updated emergency shelter that replaces the previous one and we are relieved to see some transitional housing included — something desperately needed in our community.

Can the government tell this House what the final capital costs are for this project from all departments, including Health and Social Services, Yukon Housing Corporation, and Highways and Public Works? Who will hold the legal title of this new building?

**Hon. Ms. Frost:** I thank the member opposite for the question. Certainly, at this time, I'm not able to provide the details requested with regard to all of the costs. I do know that the infrastructure itself is in excess of \$14 million that was committed to previously. The ownership of that facility — I guess the transfer of that facility is with the Salvation Army. That was a previous arrangement. What we do control and have control over is the service delivery and the service program out of that facility. We're working quite collaboratively and in partnership with the Anti-Poverty Coalition, the City of Whitehorse, Kwanlin Dün, and Ta'an Kwäch'än. All of the organizations in our city are working around an effective model for shelter for the day programming, the transitional units and, of course, the shelter component.

**Ms. White:** Hopefully we will see the doors officially open soon. The Salvation Army has made much of the transitional supportive housing it will offer, the supportive programming and their offer of three meals a day, seven days a week. These are significant improvements of services for the new centre. But, Mr. Speaker, all of this requires operation and maintenance money.

Will the minister tell this House how much the government will be contributing to the operation and maintenance costs of the new Salvation Army and how much the Salvation Army will be contributing to their own operation and maintenance costs?

**Hon. Ms. Frost:** The Salvation Army Centre of Hope was expected to open this week and I understand that has been delayed a few days due to the fact that they don't have all of their furniture in place and the kitchen is not quite ready in terms of the tools that they require. That will happen very shortly for the day programming.

Who is paying for the O&M expenditures for the facility? Health and Social Services, in collaboration with our departments, have committed to \$1.2 million for the O&M

expenditures. That is a previous commitment that was there through the funding agreement. So Yukon government will provide operation and maintenance funds of \$1.2 million per year for a three-year period, and at any point in time there is a clause that a review would be conducted and analyzed to ensure that effective programs are being delivered.

Just for clarity, I previously said a number that was incorrect, so I will just correct that now — the total project cost is \$14.875 million.

**Ms. White:** A Housing First model recognizes the need for barrier-free housing. This model recognizes that, first and foremost, every individual has the right to safe housing. It also recognizes that barrier-free housing, where individuals struggling with addictions are able to access housing despite their condition, is the first step on a better path to wellness. In Ontario and British Columbia, managed alcohol programs recognize that controlled access to alcohol in a residential setting greatly reduces health issues and costly hospitalization for homeless people struggling with alcoholism.

Mr. Speaker, what are the new shelter policies to ensure that people under the influence of alcohol or drugs have access to housing as defined in the Housing First model and what role will Yukon government play to ensure that Housing First policies are followed?

**Hon. Ms. Frost:** I would like to thank the member opposite for the great question. Clearly, the Government of Yukon is committed to a Housing First plan. We have committed to the housing action plan and are now working on the implementation component of that. Working with our partners, we have ensured, in collaboration with the Salvation Army, that the consideration around access is really important. A barrier-free environment is essential — most definitely trying to look at programs and services offered in the new facility to ensure that accessibility will not differentiate based on race, creed or sexual orientation — because that seemed to have been a big question previously.

The programming and services are being done and designed with the user groups. There is an oversight committee consisting of folks from the Safe at Home initiative from the City of Whitehorse, Kwanlin Dün, and some NGO groups in our community, along with Health and Social Services to ensure that an effective transition model is in place so that clients who access these programs are successful transitioning in and out of various treatment facility programs and transition very successfully back into our communities.

**Question re: Mining legislation**

**Mr. Cathers:** I'm going to return to a topic I didn't really get an answer on before. The Premier promised the mining sector that he would develop a collaborative framework to address their concerns around reassessments and timelines. Though the commitment was made seven months ago, we have not seen any tangible action on this area. In response to our questions, we have seen government go to their talking points, playing the blame game and saying something about collaboration, but not providing any real

specifics. They are one year into their mandate — almost one-quarter of the way through.

Has the government had any meetings with industry to follow through on the Premier's commitment and to specifically discuss a collaborative framework? If so, when were those meetings held and who was in attendance?

**Hon. Mr. Pillai:** I want to thank the Member for Lake Laberge for giving us a reprise on this topic because there are some things I also wanted to share with him.

As we talk about the mining sector, first of all, in this reset, the three parties have come together. As we said, they've agreed on the framework and now they're going to move forward. At that point, I'll leave it at that.

Do we want to talk about mining? Let's talk about mining, if that's what this is about and if the Member for Lake Laberge is standing up for the industry. What has happened is that in the last year, the exploration expenditures in this territory have doubled. That's what has happened first of all and that's why globally this is being looked at as the destination. I will not take away from the work that was done before, but I can say this — this is factual. I can hear the snickers across the way, but this is factual: The legal barrage, the legal mess time after time after time that happened over the last five years and longer — but mostly over the last five years — led to fear of and risk to investing in the Yukon. The actions on Bill S-6 and the work that was done from across the way was also part of that.

What I will say is that at this particular time, we see a renewed interest in our mining sector. We are committed to working to alleviate the challenges that were caused by our friends across the way.

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

**Mr. Cathers:** Again, we see no answers from the government with regard to their own commitments. The Premier made a specific commitment to industry seven months ago and we're asking if there has been any tangible action to implement this commitment.

I do have to remind the member that, in fact, I believe the largest lawsuit ever filed against the government was filed against him earlier this year by an oil company.

I would again point out to the government that we're asking them about their commitments. It seemed that the mantra of this government has changed from "Be Heard" prior to taking office to "no one moves, nobody gets hurt." We are seeing a lack of any action on the commitment the Premier made to the mining sector.

Again, we ask: Have they had any meetings with industry to discuss the Premier's specific commitments? If so, when were those meetings held and who was in attendance?

**Hon. Mr. Pillai:** I'm glad that also was brought up. Thank you. Yes, it wasn't exactly against me, but it was a \$2.2-billion action from an oil company based on the fact that we committed to not let fracking happen in this territory.

My friends across the way would like to see the fracking begin but, no, we don't. I would also like to remind the member opposite that they might have filed a suit, but they actually also have paid the rent that was outstanding under the

previous government — not handing money back to them, but actually getting them to pay their rent so that taxpayers are respected here in the Yukon.

As for the actual dates of each meeting — there has been a series of meetings. I don't have each actual date with me. I can certainly table a letter that looks into that.

What we have committed to is a framework and a working group. That is the work that will begin. We can have the spin machine — the old Conservative cycle, which I know my friend from Lake Laberge loves to hit "push" on — but, at this particular time, what we have committed — we have talked to industry. Industry, in their conversations with me on Thursday night, certainly didn't seem upset with the process that is being undertaken. They understand that this is a mess that was left behind, and we are committed to fixing it.

**Mr. Cathers:** I am not going to spend a lot of time countering the member's rhetoric. He knows that the position that he attempted to tag on this side of the House regarding fracking is factually incorrect. I would point out to the member that we are asking this government about their commitments and what action, if any, they have taken to fulfill them. There is only so long that you can coast on the rhetoric that you are the new guy and that the people before you really did a bad job —

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

#### Point of order

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

**Hon. Ms. McPhee:** Mr. Speaker, I would ask the member opposite to choose his words a little more carefully. I understand that you have recently ruled on the context of rhetoric. He has used it twice now in this statement, which is not actually a question, but I assume there is a question coming, and that is inappropriate in my view.

**Speaker:** Member for Lake Laberge, on the point of order.

**Mr. Cathers:** On the point of order, I don't believe I contravened past rulings in my statement.

#### Speaker's statement

**Speaker:** I will take this under advisement.

Member for Lake Laberge, please continue with your question.

**Mr. Cathers:** Again, we are asking government for what they have done on their specific commitments. It does seem that this government has adopted an attitude of "no one moves, no one gets hurt" and that, in response to reasonable questions, instead of actually answering the question, what we hear from the government is an attempt to play the blame game and some talking points about collaboration and how they are working on things to make everything wonderful for everyone. But we are after answers for Yukon citizens.

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** Mr. Speaker, we keep on hearing from the member opposite that we are not answering the question. He got up twice now and asked six questions, and I



believe the minister answered his question. We talked about monies going toward exploration. We talked about the reset MOU. We talked about the working group. There is lots of work. There are meetings that are going on all the time. The difference is that the meetings are happening with the First Nations as well. We are not having one conversation with First Nations and another conversation with the industry.

With all due respect to the broken record from Lake Laberge, we have answered his question. We believe that our approach to mining is going to actually go to production — something that the other government could not do.

### Question re: Technology and innovation

**Mr. Kent:** I have a series of questions regarding Liberal election promises that were made last year around this time to the IT sector. Once specific one was — and I will quote from some of their election materials: “The Yukon Liberals will support a business accelerator program for technology companies.” Can the government update this House on the status of this promise?

**Hon. Mr. Pillai:** The accelerator program and building that sort of an ecosystem for the IT sector is something that our government feels very strongly about. We feel that, in order to diversify the economy and taking into consideration the different pieces that we have here that we can work with, we have very strong entrepreneurs, and we think we can expand the knowledge-based economy and it’s something that we have committed to.

At the current time, we continue to work in support of (co)space. We think they’re doing some really good work. It’s something that the previous government also believed in, in some of their early work. YuKonstruct as well — happy to have been part of some of that early work in their first couple of events. We think that is also another piece.

So at this particular time, there is business planning being done, a business model and planning being executed by (co)space, and we look forward to them coming forward, because we think a partnership such as this would be a key way to build a conduit for increased entrepreneurship and diversity in our economy.

**Mr. Kent:** I thank the minister for that response. Another promise that the Liberals made was the establishment of a new \$10-million fund for economic infrastructure through the Yukon Development Corporation to advance economic diversification and innovation. I know we touched briefly on this topic in the spring session, but I was hoping the minister would be able to give us a further update on the status of this election promise that the Liberals made and if he has an idea of what year local companies will be able to access this fund.

**Hon. Mr. Pillai:** A very good question from the Member for Copperbelt South — first, in taking on the role of Minister responsible for the Yukon Development Corporation, part of the work was to analyze what had previously happened. We saw some fairly robust spending on the due diligence for hydro projects. Sad to say, it didn’t even get us to the start line on any of those projects, but there was a lot of

good due diligence done, and someday we can dust off those reports if there’s ever an opportunity to do some hydro.

First and foremost is to take a look at our framework on how we roll money out in a more accountable manner — that’s the great work that I commend the board for the Yukon Development Corporation for. At this particular time, there’s a new framework and a challenge function that’s being put in place so we can ensure that dollars roll out in an appropriate manner. There’s about \$1.5 million that has been earmarked this year under the organization.

Once we get a framework in place — at that point, I will have the responsibility and obligation, as we committed to, to capitalize YDC over the next number of years. Hopefully in the supplementary questions, I can talk about the terms of reference and such.

**Mr. Kent:** One of the disappointing things with that response is that we asked a question about a specific Liberal commitment and the minister continues his blame game, which he has become quite proficient at here in this House.

Another Liberal election promise to the IT sector was to — and I quote: “... accelerate the completion of the fibre optic redundancy project.”

I know we touched on this earlier today, and it doesn’t look like the government has actually succeeded at accelerating this project.

Can the minister explain to us what has been done to accelerate the project and when he anticipates construction beginning on a redundant fibre optic line?

**Hon. Mr. Pillai:** I’m sorry if I have offended my colleagues across the way with my comments. Part of what I am being asked for is a series of solutions and actions, and sometimes there are some challenges and barriers. I’m trying to build context on the fact that the barriers and challenges were there, which then, of course, slow down some of the activities that I would like to undertake as we fix those challenges. Certainly I will try to frame it in a different way and still be able to give you and Yukoners a full picture of what we are undertaking.

I don’t know how I would be able to score in expediting the process of a fibre line. I know that we have talked a bit today — we certainly are working toward getting a project completed, and part of the project is the due diligence at the front end. Through project management — most people would say from a professional perspective — that front-end work is very important and actually takes up a large portion of the overall project.

I heard about fibre, as a citizen of the Yukon for years and years and years. I guess that if it takes us years and years and years, then we failed. But I hope that doesn’t happen, as I have said. We would like to make a decision during this fiscal year.

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

We will now proceed to Orders of the Day.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### GOVERNMENT PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

#### MOTIONS OTHER THAN GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

##### Motion No. 174

**Clerk:** Motion No. 174, standing in the name of Mr. Gallina.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to continue to be guided by the following priority commitments as it enters the second year of its mandate:

(1) implementing a people-centred approach to wellness that helps Yukoners thrive;

(2) making strategic investments that build healthy, vibrant and sustainable communities;

(3) establishing strong government-to-government relationships with First Nations that foster reconciliation; and

(4) fostering a diverse, growing economy that provides good jobs for Yukoners in an environmentally responsible way.

**Mr. Gallina:** Mr. Speaker, I am honoured today to bring forward Motion No. 174 that urges the Government of Yukon to continue to be guided by priority commitments as it enters the second year of its mandate.

These are the commitments that this Liberal government campaigned on and was elected by Yukoners to prioritize. You can see evidence of how our team is guided by these priorities by looking at the objectives laid out in the mandate letters to our ministers. Our four priorities guide the actions taken by this government each and every day. These priorities were one of the reasons I ran for office and for a place in this Yukon government. These priorities guide my direction as an MLA and I believe that they will move Yukon forward in a strong and sustainable way.

These priorities ensure government transparency and accountability. They provide a framework for showing Yukoners what we plan to accomplish during our mandate along with what we have already accomplished and why decisions were made. This vision is a fundamental shift from how previous government operated and holds us, as a government and as elected officials, to account.

I would like to begin by speaking to the first priority — our people-centred approach to wellness helps Yukoners thrive. This priority has guided many of the actions we have taken in the past 11 months, including: amendments to the *Dental Profession Act*; combating the opioid crisis in Yukon; increased mental wellness in Yukon; the creation of National Aboriginal Day as a statutory holiday; and other initiatives that my caucus colleagues will speak to throughout this afternoon.

This priority has guided my ongoing engagement with local community associations in the flourishing riding of Porter Creek Centre, including the Porter Creek Community Association, the Whistle Bend Community Association and

Friends of McIntyre Creek. It is important to me that I'm hearing from and supporting community associations as they work hard to help make Porter Creek a safe and vibrant community to live in where access to nature abounds.

This priority guides the work I do on behalf of my constituents. Over the past 10 months, I have ensured that I knock on doors and visit constituents regularly, that I attend community association meetings, host barbecues, meetings and constituency events and that I represent this government at social, business and community events. This government knows that we cannot effectively govern if we don't listen to or have the well-being of Yukoners at the forefront of every decision that we make.

Recently, this government brought forward a bill proposing amendments to the *Dental Profession Act*. The proposed changes expand the services that dental hygienists currently provide, effectively increasing their scope of practice. At present, only dental therapists are authorized to provide dental care to children through the Yukon children's dental program, which might include services such as cleaning, scaling and polishing prior to a dentist seeing the patient, even though dental hygienists are also trained and qualified to provide this care. Expanding the services that dental hygienists offer improves the services available for our children, which is an important part of overall wellness.

Another important initiative taken by this government with the wellness of Yukoners in mind is the work by the Minister of Health and Social Services and the Health and Social Services department to distribute naloxone kits throughout Yukon. Naloxone is a safe drug that temporarily reverses overdoses caused by opioid drugs, such as fentanyl or heroin. The purpose of naloxone is to buy time and potentially save lives before emergency medical personnel arrive.

Throughout the last year, the Yukon government worked with community partners to make take-home naloxone kits available for free at 31 sites across Yukon as well as to provide training for distributing these kits. Over 875 kits have been handed out to individuals. Unfortunately, there is evidence that fentanyl is present in Yukon and has resulted in overdoses and deaths in our territory. I'm proud of the work done by this government to put the safety of Yukoners first and to prioritize the free distribution of naloxone kits.

I'm similarly proud of this government to make the commitment to hire 11 new mental wellness workers in communities across the Yukon. These new positions will be able to provide assessment, screening and crisis management, as well as supportive counselling when needed. There will be hubs throughout the Yukon, which will provide specialist services to communities within a geographical location. I look forward to hearing from the Minister of Health and Social Services regarding the new mental health positions this afternoon.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to speak to the significance of National Aboriginal Day becoming a statutory holiday in the Yukon. I believe this is of great importance and it is a clear example of our priorities to be people-centred and to work in the spirit of reconciliation. May 8 was an exciting day in this

House as we saw the first law passed under our government — the creation of an annual statutory holiday on National Aboriginal Day, June 21, beginning in 2017. The bill to create a statutory holiday on National Aboriginal Day was brought to the House by the Minister of Community Services and it was unanimously supported by all Members of the Legislative Assembly. On that day, the Yukon government joined the Northwest Territories in leading Canada on this meaningful celebration of First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples. This step was so important to our Liberal government because we believe that honouring First Nation knowledge, language and culture is central to a modern Yukon and our government is proud to acknowledge that the way to move forward is together.

Mr. Speaker, when we look at the second priority — our strategic investments that build healthy, vibrant and sustainable communities — I think of the work that has been done in the past few months by the independent Yukon Financial Advisory Panel. When our government took office, it wasn't long before we realized we were facing significant financial challenges. It is a fact, Mr. Speaker, that over the past 10 years under the previous government, revenue growth of 1.7 percent per year in real dollars has not kept pace with spending growth of 2.5 percent per year.

The Public Accounts were tabled in this House yesterday afternoon and the Auditor General of Canada has confirmed the non-consolidated annual deficit for the year ending March 31, 2017 was \$5.4 million in comparison to the budgeted surplus by the previous government of \$9.4 million. Mr. Speaker, this is the third deficit in eight years. The Government of Yukon also had a deficit in 2010-11. When we look at what makes up this deficit, we've seen many unfunded commitments. These unfunded commitments were made by the previous government. They include: unbudgeted salary increases from a new collective agreement within the Yukon Employees' Union; \$3.5 million for new teachers and educational assistants hired without budgeted dollars allocated for them; \$4 million for payments due to meet pension solvency requirements for Yukon Hospital Corporation at \$3.5 million and Yukon College at \$500,000; \$2.6 million in unpaid bills for the construction of hospitals in rural Yukon and for Crocus Ridge residential construction; \$2.2 million for new continuing care beds at the Thomson care centre and McDonald Lodge in Dawson; another \$1.8 million for the new Salvation Army building; \$1.8 million for affordable housing; \$1.5 million for transition costs; and \$1.5 million to the MacBride Museum expansion.

Mr. Speaker, the Auditor General has also confirmed that our net financial assets are at \$88 million. The Premier and the Minister of Finance said yesterday that the 2016-17 Public Accounts confirms this government's financial projection.

In the last two years, the government's savings have gone from \$223 million to \$88 million, and this pattern needs to be adjusted.

Part of why I am here today is to look at how this Liberal government will address our financial situation while being guided by our principles. I am proud of the proactive steps

that this government has taken to address this issue through the establishment of the Yukon Financial Advisory Panel, which was tasked with outlining ways our government can move forward in a sustainable and fiscally responsible manner. The panel was not only tasked with presenting draft options for the government to consider as it moves forward to plan our financial future, but also to consult with municipalities, First Nation governments and Yukoners across the territory. During their engagement, the panel held over 60 meetings across the territory. When we consider our priorities, the creation of this panel speaks clearly to the priorities set out by this government. We are listening to Yukoners, and we care about building a truly sustainable future. This means addressing the government's current financial situation. I applaud this government for taking such a proactive approach to understanding how to best invest in order to build a healthy, thriving Yukon.

I would also like to highlight the work that has been by the Standing Committee on Rules, Elections and Privileges, of which I am the chair. I would like to thank all members of this all-party committee. Thanks to the work of this committee, I was able to introduce a motion in this House on October 5 that will ensure fixed dates for the Spring Sitting and Fall Sitting of the Yukon Legislative Assembly. Every fall, the legislative Sitting will begin in the first week of October, and in the spring of 2018 and in each year moving forward, the Sitting will begin during the first week of March. This important change will create predictability and certainty for the public service, contractors and members of this House. We heard from Yukoners that they wanted certainty around Sitting dates, and we have responded.

Mr. Speaker, our third priority is that our strong government-to-government relationships with First Nations foster reconciliation, and it speaks strongly to our government's commitment toward reconciliation. I am proud of the work that has been accomplished by our government to reinvigorate the Yukon Forum with four meetings held per year. So far in our mandate, we have held three meetings and we are on track to fulfill this important commitment. The Yukon Forum allows the Yukon government and Yukon First Nation governments to decide on joint priorities and to move forward together. Mr. Speaker, I know my Liberal colleagues will spend more time highlighting our commitment toward reconciliation. With that, I would like to turn toward our fourth priority.

Our diverse, growing economy provides good jobs for Yukoners in an environmentally responsible way. I have had the privilege of bringing forward many motions in this House, and I would like to speak to a few of these today as they pertain to this important priority of our government. On Wednesday, October 4, members of this government were honoured to stand and speak in support of the *Paris Agreement* on climate change. The motion that I brought forward reads — and I quote: “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 necessary actions to fulfill its terms.” This is an important motion that speaks to our priority of ensuring that economic growth in our territory is accomplished in a way that ensures the sustainability of our environment.

Climate change impacts all of us. Government MLAs spoke to the issue of climate mitigation and adaptation, the economic opportunity of clean growth and how climate change impacts the heritage and culture of Yukon. Our government believes that when it comes to climate change, doing nothing is simply not an option. I was proud to see the House unanimously agree on this motion.

Another important motion I brought forward concerning growing Yukon’s economy in an environmentally responsible way stated that this House urges the Government of Yukon to support environmental stewardship by developing initiatives that increase the use of renewable energy sources in Yukon.

I know that the Minister of Economic Development and Energy, Mines and Resources has been working hard with the departments to increase the use of renewable energy sources in Yukon. A focus of this is the continuing work by the Energy branch to work with First Nations to develop community energy plans. These plans evaluate how communities use energy and the potential business opportunities related to energy generation. The Minister and the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources are also working with Kluane First Nation, CanmetENERGY and ATCO Electric Yukon to determine the best method for integrating a high-penetration renewable wind energy system on to the Burwash Landing-Destruction Bay micro-grid.

In Old Crow, the Department of Economic Development is providing \$68,545 to Solvest Inc., which is partnering with the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation and Old Crow Development Corporation to test and look at the feasibility of a large-scale solar power generating project.

I know these initiatives and many more are in the works. I’m looking forward today to hearing more on these projects and many others from the ministers. I applaud the good work being done to help our communities increase their use of renewable resources and to transition away from diesel. Concerning our priority of a growing and diverse economy, I want to highlight that this Liberal government cares about and understands the priorities of Yukon businesses.

One of the first things our Liberal government did was reduce small business taxes. The Minister of Finance announced changes to the tax rates for Yukon businesses during the spring session of the Legislative Assembly. As of July 1, 2017, the tax rate for small corporations decreased from three percent to two percent, and the overall rate decreased from 15 percent to 12 percent. This government values the economic activity and good jobs that Yukon businesses provide. Lower tax rates will help create an attractive business tax environment in the Yukon and will support Yukon-grown companies.

On October 3, I brought forward a motion that urged the Government of Canada to ensure that changes to the proposed

small business tax did not have negative consequences on the growth of the economy. This motion was introduced in response to concerns heard from small businesses across the Yukon by all members of this government, as well as concerns I heard first-hand about proposed changes to the federal small business tax rate. Our government stood up for Yukon small businesses and will continue to do so.

Not only did the Premier write a letter to the federal Minister of Finance, but he also travelled to Ottawa to express the concerns of Yukon businesses. I was proud to bring this motion forward to reinforce this government’s commitment to represent the interest of small businesses in our territory.

Mr. Speaker, before I wrap up my comments today I would like to speak for a moment on why we believe these priorities are so important. Our priority stating our people-centred approach to wellness helps Yukoners thrive reveals our commitment to putting Yukoners first. We believe that wellness initiatives should be driven by Yukoners, for Yukoners. We do not want to be a government that decides what wellness means. Instead, we look to Yukoners to tell us what wellness looks like in their families and in their communities.

Our priority stating that our strategic investments build healthy, vibrant sustainable communities speaks to our belief that all communities matter. This government strongly believes that partnership should be built on the recognition that local governments and citizens are best placed to understand their own concerns and develop their own solutions.

Our government is committed to working with all communities to address key infrastructure deficits, the building of strong economies and to develop their business, industrial and human capacity in ways identified by each individual community. I know the Minister of Community Services will be highlighting the ways this government has been listening to Yukon communities.

Our priority stating our strong government-to-government relationships with First Nations foster reconciliation guides this government in all we do. I know it has been said many times by members on this side of the House, but it bears repeating: We believe in self-government agreements. They map the way forward for all Yukoners, not just for First Nation people. Our government understands that the way forward is together through relationships built upon cooperation, partnership and respect.

Finally, our priority stating that our diverse, growing economy provides good jobs for Yukoners in an environmentally responsible way speaks to the balance this government sees as vital to a sustainable future for our children and grandchildren to come. The development of our territory’s economy must not come at the expense of our environment. We believe that by working together, we can achieve both of these goals — a diverse economy that provides jobs for Yukoners and a sustainable, healthy environment. This understanding guides all of the decisions that we make.

It is an honour to bring forward this motion today and I look forward to hearing from my colleagues as they highlight how these priorities will continue to guide their work.

**Mr. Cathers:** In beginning my comments here today on this motion brought forward by the Member for Porter Creek Centre, it's interesting this motion makes reference to government continuing to do what it's doing. With all due respect to members across the floor, one of the concerns that we have had to bring to their attention repeatedly on behalf of Yukoners is that there are a lot of Yukoners who, when asked what the government is doing, have to come to the conclusion that it doesn't appear that they are doing very much.

The platitudes around things like a people-centred approach to wellness are all very well, but what Yukoners are asking for is for the government to take action and actually deliver on the promises made to Yukoners.

We have seen the Liberal government, during almost a year in office, spend a lot of time talking in platitudes and not talking much about specifics. As you will recall, Mr. Speaker, earlier this year, we were forced to point out to the government that, despite their commitments around increasing transparency in matters including financial management, they had actually taken the step of stripping down the budget highlights from 11 pages to a mere four pages and removing a lot of detail that they replaced with pictures and graphics that actually didn't provide much information.

Generally speaking, in the content of Motion No. 174, we don't see anything that we have a problem with in terms of the suggestions, but unfortunately — as with so many of the areas that we see from this Liberal government — we hear a lot of inoffensive platitudes about maybe doing something someday but, when we press for answers — as we did earlier today in Question Period — on what steps, if any, the government is taking to follow through on their own commitments — we see a lack of action.

As I mentioned earlier in Question Period, it certainly appears to us that the government's mantra has changed from, "Be Heard" prior to getting elected to "nobody moves, nobody gets hurt".

With one of the specific comments made by my colleague, the Member for Porter Creek Centre, I would note that he made reference to the Premier standing up for small businesses in Ottawa against the federal government's proposed tax hikes. I have to remind him that, in fact, that position softened from its initial steps. The evolution of that — and I am going to quote from the timeline in response to the Member for Porter Creek Centre's comments on his motion. On September 26, the Premier, in speaking to what many, including ourselves in the Official Opposition, had criticized us on an unreasonably short timeline for review of the federal government's new tax changes that were getting pretty tough on small businesses and threatening the retirement future and financial future of many small-business owners, including family farms across the country — we took a stand in favour of extending that timeline and against the content of the proposals.

But I am going to remind this House of what the Premier's stand started out as being and how it changed between September 26 and October 4. On September 26, the Premier said — and I quote: "Seventy-five days for a review, that might not be enough time." Not exactly a strong statement. Certainly, Mr. Speaker, that is nowhere near as strong a statement as we saw from the Premier of the Northwest Territories recently, who actually took a strong stand and came out clearly defending the interest of his territory against the federal government's unilateral action. What we see is about as weak a statement as we could get on that topic. There might not be enough time.

On September 27, the Premier said, in a letter to the federal government: In light of this, I would urge you to extend the consultation period to ensure those concerned had a full opportunity to share their views — again the Premier, in a letter to the federal minister.

On October 3, the Premier's colleagues — while the Premier was, I believe, meeting with the federal government, the government voted against debating the following non-partisan motion: "THAT this House urges the Government of Canada to extend public consultation on its proposed changes to tax law affecting small businesses, farmers, placer miners and medical practitioners, and to ensure that Yukon citizens have an opportunity to fully participate in the public consultation, including holding a public meeting here in Yukon as requested by the Yukon Chamber of Commerce as well as the Whitehorse Chamber of Commerce."

I would remind the Speaker and all members that this motion that we had brought forward on the first day of Sitting — we requested the consent of the House to debate this motion of urgent and pressing necessity. When the Liberals voted against debating it, we didn't move on to other business — or not too much other business. The House wrapped up after sitting for roughly about an hour and adjourned early for the day. The urgent business that members proceeded to, as other members who attended the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association parliamentary broadcast society meetings will recall, was nowhere near as important to most Yukon citizens and businesses as the matter that we proposed to discuss here in the House.

Moving on to the evolution of the Premier's position on the federal small-business tax hike, on October 4, the Premier said in the Legislative Assembly, as will be shown in Hansard, "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." He then went on to say, "All of the premiers agreed that we don't need to extend the 75-day period." The Premier supported an extension to consultation before he flip-flopped on that point. That is certainly something that, as we look across to the Northwest Territories, we do commend Premier Bob McLeod — as noted in the motion that I introduced earlier today — for doing what he believes reflects the best interests of his territory and his citizens, taking a strong stand in Ottawa and standing up to Ottawa making decisions unilaterally on matters that should properly be

within the control of the citizens and their duly elected representatives in the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Speaker, in responding as I was to the member's comments, I want to return more specifically to the motion. We see here in this motion a reference to commitments, again, that just don't say very much or provide much in the way of detail. Implementing a people-centred approach to wellness that helps Yukoners thrive — that may be an interesting starting point for ministers to stand up and read into the record all of their thoughts on what that might mean, but there's really nothing much that is tangible in that part of the motion. We see reference to making strategic investments that build healthy, vibrant and sustainable communities.

Again, not only would the current government be, as they say, continuing on that, but that is what the previous government spent 14 years doing — working with municipalities, working with First Nations, working with unincorporated communities and working with citizens to make those strategic investments that build healthy, vibrant and sustainable communities.

I'll just give an example of that to the members, because it's relevant not only to this motion, but to the Public Accounts that were recently tabled. I would point out to members that — while the government has attempted to paint the picture that there is somehow an operational or structural deficit here in the territory and to point to the previous government spending down the cash in the bank — I want to give them a few examples of that, which they either don't appear to be aware of or have deliberately glossed over when speaking to the public about the change in the financial position, as referenced in the Premier's press release about the Public Accounts.

There is a reference to the change from the government's net financial assets, which reached a high in fiscal year 2015-16 and have been reduced in the time since. I want to point out to the government members who may not be aware of it that, if you actually add up where those investments were made, as it notes in the Public Accounts, there has been a significant increase to the tangible capital assets. That includes — and I'm quoting here so that those listening may look it up themselves. If they're trying to deduce from debates between politicians where the meat of the issue is, if you refer to the Public Accounts for the last fiscal year — the Yukon Party was in power for the start of that fiscal year and for the remaining five months of the fiscal year, the Liberals were in power after the election.

I just want to note that, if you add up some of the investments made that drew down that cash position, we see \$27 million that was used by government to contribute to the Hospital Corporation to retire a Hospital Corporation loan. As I previously mentioned in this House — I made reference to the statements by officials during the Public Accounts Committee review of that area, back in, I believe, 2013. According to officials at the time, it resulted in an annual savings of \$1 million in interest costs that the hospital had previously been paying.

We also see as well, in the 2016-17 fiscal year, \$22 million was provided to the hospital to support the hospital expansion. In the previous fiscal year, there was an additional cash payment made that year of \$22.6 million to the hospital, supporting the emergency room expansion. That entire project wrapped up together included the expansion, the MRI and the construction of the new ambulance station on the Whitehorse General Hospital campus.

I would point out for members that it should be acknowledged that not only was the emergency room project completed on time and on budget, but the new ambulance station construction, which they managed and includes the new EMS dispatch facility, was completed on time and underbudget. Again, the Hospital Corporation — we commend the board and the staff and their contractors for their excellent work.

Moving to the other item that I have mentioned — the \$20 million that was loaned to the Yukon Energy Corporation through Yukon Development Corporation to support the addition of the LNG generator on their site, providing power for Yukoners and done of course in partnership with the Kwanlin Dün First Nation development corporation, as they were also holding a stake in that project. I would note that if you add up all of those amounts, the \$27 million given to the hospital to help them get rid of a previously existing loan, the \$22 million in cash given to them in the 2016-17 fiscal year toward their expansion project, the \$22.6 million in cash given to them in the 2015-16 fiscal year for the hospital expansion, and the \$20 million loaned to Yukon Energy via YDC that will see an interest payment being made to government during the life of the loan, that in total is some \$91.6 million, which is a significant portion just for those four items I mentioned explaining the reduction in the total cash in the bank. Those investments in health care and in ensuring Yukoners have stable and reliable power are ones that not only are not recurring annual costs, but they are sound investments in the future of the territory and ones that we believe were well made.

I would also note that a number of the commitments made here in this motion are very nice platitudes. They don't provide much in the way of detail, but they are points that are hard to disagree with. There just is not a lot of meat on this steak. It's mostly bone and gristle. We really are saying that there needs to be more evidence of action in this particular area.

Again, in speaking to this motion, I just want to note that the reasons we talk about specifics and the reasons we're critical of the government choosing to strip the budget highlights from an 11-page document down to a four-page document that is heavy with infographics is that it makes that information less accessible to Yukon citizens. Personally, I believe — and the previous government acted on this — that providing more detailed information to Yukoners about the financial decisions of the government is in the interests of more open and accountable government, more transparent government and allows people to be fully aware of the

decisions that their government is making and to agree with them or disagree on their own merits.

We have seen a number of areas that government typically refers to talking points, playing the blame game, and trying to rely on platitudes instead of tangible commitments when they're asked for details of what, if anything, they're actually doing. This motion as currently worded does leave those of us reading it wondering what, if anything, does that actually mean?

The investments that the Member for Porter Creek Centre made reference to — some of the work that the previous government did on programs like the microgeneration program and the independent power production strategy — I would remind members that those types of examples are the types of tangible, specific commitments and steps that we took during our time in government.

As I noted during debate previously in this Sitting with members on the issue of climate change, when the Official Opposition stands in opposition to a carbon tax, we are not, as members of the Liberal Party like to try to spin it, indicating that we don't think anything needs to be done on climate change. We are saying that we believe the incentive-based approach to addressing climate change has shown real success and programs including the microgeneration program, the good energy program with its rebates and programs like the investments in energy retrofits, are all specific, tangible, recent examples of how government has helped Yukoners, through incentives, take actions that actually not only better the personal situations of those people and households, but in fact contribute to economic growth — versus an approach such as a carbon tax, which we contend counters economic growth and makes it harder on those who are least able to afford those taxes — those being people on limited income, including senior citizens and people who are among the so-called working poor, living at or around the poverty line. We don't agree and are not about to agree with that approach.

As members know — and the reason why the tangible actions matter — the choice to table the largest budget in Yukon history is one made by this government. The decision not to restrain spending, but instead spend through \$80 million in our cash resources this year is one made by this government. Yet for Yukoners who are trying to parse through the details of what somewhat empty motions like Motion No. 174 actually mean, and are trying to understand what the Public Accounts say — I would draw Yukoners' attention to page 4 of the Public Accounts tabled by the Premier just yesterday: "The chart below illustrates the trend between revenues and expenses over the last ten years. The amounts are taken directly from the respective year's Public Accounts without reflecting changes in accounting policies over the years." I would note for Hansard that part was a quote directly from the text of the Public Accounts document.

The graph, entitled "2008 to 2017 Revenues and Expenses" with the total revenues shown in blue and total expenses shown in — I guess it is a shade of purple — will show that in almost every single year going back to 2008, the total revenues of the Government of Yukon were larger than

the total expenses. In 2008, the total revenues were higher than total expenses. In 2009, the total revenues were higher than total expenses. 2010 was the anomaly where the expenses were higher than the revenues. In 2011, revenues and expenses on the graph are basically even. That, of course, was the start of the last government's mandate.

The growth of revenues compared to expenditures actually increased during the last Yukon Party term in office. In 2012, total revenues significantly exceeded total expenses. It was the same for 2013 — the blue line showing total revenues was notably higher than total expenses. In 2014, total revenues are higher than total expenses. In 2016, total revenues are higher than total expenses and, in 2017, total revenues are higher than total expenses.

Again, Yukoners looking at trying to understand the trend — it is shown in the graph that the government tabled on page 4 of the Public Accounts, and it does disprove the government's rhetoric about the trajectory of spending over the past number of years.

There is a reason why specifics are important because, if you revert to platitudes like those contained in Motion No. 174 as currently worded — it talks about priorities, but again, we see that there isn't much meat on the bone. We have seen as well in the government's *Report to Yukoners* — which I would point out is another area where we asked the government how much they spent on what appears to be a bit of a political puff piece — sent to Yukoners and received by me in the mailbox and I assume by all or most Yukoners. It has the Premier's picture on it and it talks about commitments mentioned in this motion, such as "our people-centred approach to wellness helps Yukoners thrive." It talks again about other commitments in Motion No. 174: "our strategic investments build healthy, vibrant and sustainable communities." The third item on the *Report to Yukoners* is also the third item in the Member for Porter Creek Centre's motion that we are debating right now and it says: "our strong government-to-government relationships with First Nations foster reconciliation." Again, the fourth item listed in the Member for Porter Creek Centre's motion is also virtually identical to the fourth item in the member's motion: "our diverse, growing economy provides jobs for Yukoners in an environmentally responsible way."

Keep in mind that this document is very similar in text to the member's motion, but when you actually get to the specifics of what the government claims it has done, it's not very much to write home about and certainly not very much to write home to Yukoners about. Under the item — which is similar to bullet number four in the member's motion — about a diverse, growing economy providing good jobs for Yukoners, there are three items mentioned about what the government has actually done. One of them is reducing the tax rate for small corporations and, while we do recognize that as being a positive step, it also is not what the government actually promised during the last election.

One of those items in the *Report to Yukoners* — which again is substantively similar to this motion brought forward here today — one of the three things that the government and

the Premier are claiming as successes is bragging about how they didn't keep their platform commitment, but instead did something less. The other three so-called successes and actions — one of them talks about the independent Financial Advisory Panel, but again, as we have noted with the panel — with all due respect to the people on it — if they are not being given access to the books in detail, we really question the expenditure of one-quarter of a million dollars or so of the public's money.

It is quite possible that those people might be able to look at the same level of detail the minister receives and perhaps provide advice to the government to help them where they seem to be floundering on this. They haven't been given access to the books; instead, they have been asked to consult with Yukoners on whether they want taxes to go up, services to drop, people to be laid off, mining royalties to be increased or what they actually would like to see on that side, but it doesn't actually address the root of the problem, which is simply that there are many areas where government, through improved management and through careful financial decisions, can restrain the growth of cost.

I gave an example of one of those yesterday when responding to the Public Accounts as tabled by the Premier. I noted that financial leadership begins at home. It doesn't send a very good message to departments if one of the first steps out of the gate for a new Cabinet is for ministers and political staff to treat themselves to brand new iPhones and iPads. I would point out that it's also not necessary.

If you look into the past, for members opposite who may be wondering what we did in government, and wondering if we're being critical of them for doing something that we also did, that is not the case. I would point out to members that, during the last five years, the last term in office, from 2011 to 2016, my work BlackBerry was a hand-me-down unit until it died, and then I donated my old personal BlackBerry, which was a Curve2 unit, so the taxpayers wouldn't have to buy me a new one. I had a hand-me-down iPad. Financial responsibility and the message sent to departments about spending on the little things begin at the top.

Returning to another part of the motion here — the member's motion references strong government-to-government relationships with First Nations foster reconciliation. Generally speaking, we agree with that basic concept but, if you look at their report card to Yukoners, they list three things they've actually done in almost a year since the last election. One of them is establishing National Aboriginal Day as a statutory holiday. We voted in favour of that. The previous Member for Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes, Mr. Kevin Barr, was the person who first proposed it in the Assembly. The government voted for it and brought it forward, but it's not a lot. It's one of these symbolic gestures that we recognize there is value to, but there needs to be more action than just action on symbols.

Of the other three so-called successes, there's one that talks about holding Yukon Forum meetings. A good step, but what was the outcome? Item number 3 in their report card is signing a memorandum of understanding around improving

mineral exploration and development but, as we mentioned in relation to that very topic earlier today, our repeated attempts to get answers from the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources and the Premier on what, if anything, they have actually done to deliver on that commitment have come up with a refusal to provide timelines or even answer whether there have been meetings about that topic and who was involved in those meetings.

Again, I'm going to move back to item 2 in the member's motion: "making strategic investments that build healthy, vibrant and sustainable communities" — again, very similar to the bullet on the *Report to Yukoners*, paid for with an unknown amount of taxpayers' money, since the Premier would not provide that information before.

Of the four so-called successes under them, one of them is implementing a community dog-spay fund and a voluntary surrender program. Now that, I'm sure, is a valuable initiative, but if that's one of your top four action items when you write home, it's really not the most remarkable action.

In the other four commitments or so-called deliveries from the government, there's a reference to reducing energy costs and greenhouse gas emissions in 2016-17 through building upgrades and replacing diesel fuel with hydro or propane. Well, Mr. Speaker, I hate to be rude, but I do have to point out that I think all of the investments they were referring to were investments made by the previous government in the 2016-17 budget.

There is a reference to expanding government online services — another of the distinct so-called successes — which includes the corporate online registry, permit hunt authorization applications, harvest reporting and online ATIPP requests. With the exception of one of those items that I am not sure when it was initiated, all of the other items were initiated by the previous government and yet we're a year into this Liberal government and we see a motion urging them to continue doing some fairly high-level commitments without any tangible action.

Last but not least on the report card: "our new school curriculum includes specific changes reflecting Yukon First Nation perspectives supporting our commitment to reconciliation." That's great, but that is again building on work done by the previous government and we've also heard a number of concerns about other matters related to the curriculum from Yukoners, including many parents who are not happy with the choice to move away from letter grades in earlier years.

Last but not least, moving to the top one commitment on the member's list is "implementing a people-centred approach to wellness that helps Yukoners thrive." As I had mentioned briefly earlier in this legislative Sitting, if you look on page 1 of the government's *Report to Yukoners*, we see six items listed as things they have done. Two of them relate to changing one piece of legislation that they didn't even consult properly on. The third one relates to making naloxone kits available to deal with fentanyl and that is one that we see as a valuable step but, again, if that's from your highlights of what you've done in a year, it's certainly not changing the world. It



is itself a good initiative, but if it's the top of your list, you need to think about what you're doing.

Another one on the list is the government slapping itself on the back for increasing tax rates and there is reference to the Salvation Army Centre of Hope, which again is a project of the previous government that was not well-managed in its later stages by the current government and costs escalated. Again, we do, of course, support that specific commitment. Last, but not least, they are talking about expanding the HPV immunization program.

If this is the report card on a year in office, I think this government needs to step up its game and realize that they are potentially a quarter of the way through their mandate, depending on when they call the election. The sand is fast running out of the Liberal hourglass, and Yukoners are asking for tangible action, tangible commitments, transparency around timelines, transparency around government spending, a return to giving the public more information through budget highlights and other documents and, ultimately, asking for less platitudes, more action.

I would like to make the following constructive amendment that I will propose to members.

*Amendment proposed*

**Mr. Cathers:** I move

THAT Motion No. 174 be amended by:

- (1) deleting the phrase "continue to";
- (2) deleting clause (1) and replacing it with "taking action to ensure that there are community addictions workers in Yukon communities";
- (3) deleting clause (2) and replacing it with "reviewing the medical travel reimbursement rates to ensure that rural Yukoners are not losing money when they are required to travel for medical reasons"; and
- (4) adding the following clauses after clause (4):
  - "(5) rejecting the option of implementing any new taxes;
  - (6) eliminating the small business tax;
  - (7) immediately developing a collaborative framework that addresses the mining industry's concerns regarding timelines and reassessments of major projects;
  - (8) ensuring the RCMP have appropriate resources;
  - (9) ensuring that every Yukoner receives back all of the extra money they pay as a result of the carbon tax;
  - (10) adopting by 2018 the recommendations of the Procurement Advisory Panel;
  - (11) tabling a plan to balance the territorial budget;
  - (12) taking Bill No. 6, *Public Airports Act*, out for proper consultation; and
  - (13) working with municipalities to determine their infrastructure priorities and investing in those priorities."

**Speaker:** It has been moved by the Member for Lake Laberge that Motion No. 174 be amended in various ways, but in any event, I have had an opportunity to review the proposed amendment with Mr. Clerk. I am of the view that it is procedurally in order.

It has been moved by the Member for Lake Laberge:

THAT Motion No. 174 be amended by:

- (1) deleting the phrase "continue to";
- (2) deleting clause (1) and replacing it with "taking action to ensure that there are community addictions workers in Yukon communities";
- (3) deleting clause (2) and replacing it with "reviewing the medical travel reimbursement rates to ensure that rural Yukoners are not losing money when they are required to travel for medical reasons"; and
- (4) adding the following clauses after clause (4):
  - "(5) rejecting the option of implementing any new taxes;
  - (6) eliminating the small business tax;
  - (7) immediately developing a collaborative framework that addresses the mining industry's concerns regarding timelines and reassessments of major projects;
  - (8) ensuring the RCMP have appropriate resources;
  - (9) ensuring that every Yukoner receives back all of the extra money they pay as a result of the carbon tax;
  - (10) adopting by 2018 the recommendations of the Procurement Advisory Panel;
  - (11) tabling a plan to balance the territorial budget;
  - (12) taking Bill No. 6, *Public Airports Act*, out for proper consultation; and
  - (13) working with municipalities to determine their infrastructure priorities and investing in those priorities."

The motion, as amended, would read:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to be guided by the following priority commitments as it enters the second year of its mandate:

- (1) taking action to ensure that there are community addictions workers in Yukon communities;
- (2) reviewing the medical travel reimbursement rates to ensure that rural Yukoners are not losing money when they are required to travel for medical reasons;
- (3) establishing strong government-to-government relationships with First Nations that foster reconciliation;
- (4) fostering a diverse, growing economy that provides good jobs for Yukoners in an environmentally responsible way;
- (5) rejecting the option of implementing any new taxes;
- (6) eliminating the small business tax;
- (7) immediately developing a collaborative framework that addresses the mining industry's concerns regarding timelines and reassessments of major projects;
- (8) ensuring the RCMP have appropriate resources;
- (9) ensuring that every Yukoner receives back all of the extra money they pay as a result of the carbon tax;
- (10) adopting by 2018 the recommendations of the Procurement Advisory Panel;
- (11) tabling a plan to balance the territorial budget;
- (12) taking Bill No. 6, *Public Airports Act*, out for proper consultation; and
- (13) working with municipalities to determine their infrastructure priorities and investing in those priorities.

**Mr. Cathers:** In introducing this constructive amendment, I would just like to note that we're trying to put some meat on the bone and put some specifics to the government's commitments. The platitudes may have worked in getting the government elected but, a year into their mandate, with the sand running out of the Liberal hourglass, we are hearing from Yukoners that they want to see specific commitments and tangible action, and they want to know what the government is doing to follow through, both on its specific promises and the high-level commitments for which they haven't actually seen a plan and action to back up the talking points they heard a year ago today on the doorstep.

We're proposing adding a number of things in the amendment to Motion No. 174. I would note that, in doing so, we're proposing deleting clauses 1 and 2, not because we disagree with the concepts, but because there's really nothing there. It's a statement like saying, "I like motherhood and apple pie." What does that actually mean in terms of delivering results for someone?

In part, through this proposed amendment, the proposed new clause 13 would effectively put more meat on the bone in terms of the approach to working with communities by specifically saying to work with municipalities to determine their infrastructure priorities and investing in those priorities. I would just note for the member — and I heard the Member for Takhini-Kopper King musing about the content of the motion off-mic — that if she has other suggestions to add to this list, we would be receptive to a friendly subamendment — if she has other good ideas to add to it — subject, of course, to specifics of what she would propose. I would extend that offer as well to the members of the government caucus — if they wanted to add more items to this to actually demonstrate a plan and make specific commitments to Yukoners, we would be receptive to a subamendment to lengthen the list and make specific commitments.

I just would note here that the fundamental point in us making this proposed amendment to Motion No. 174 is: put some details in to back up the words; give us some evidence of what you are going to do; make specific commitments to Yukoners; tell them what the timelines are for implementing both your high-level commitments and the specific commitments — such as the Premier's commitment from seven months ago that we tried and failed to get a detailed answer to during Question Period on what the government is actually doing to follow through on the grand words.

The theme for today's amendments, if you want, can be that platitudes are not enough. I just want to note that the specific things we have suggested adding include responding to what we are hearing from Yukoners who are concerned by the government's talk of introducing new taxes and their Financial Advisory Panel's talk of implementing new taxes such as a territorial sales tax. It is also prompted by concerns we have heard from Yukoners about federal changes. One thing that a lot of grassroots Yukoners are starting to become concerned about is how much more tax they may have to pay between the actions of the federal Liberals and the territorial

Liberals and they want answers from this government about what they are looking at doing and what they aren't.

That is why we have suggested in here specific options, including rejecting and limiting new taxes, and eliminating the small-business tax, which, of course, would help the government follow through on their election commitment. It, as well, would ensure that Yukoners receive back all of the extra money that they pay as a result of the carbon tax. If the territorial government wants to change its position and instead stand up to Ottawa and oppose a carbon tax, rather than rolling out the welcome mat for it, we would of course consider that an acceptable alternative and an acceptable friendly subamendment to this motion — if they wish to instead decide that they are going to oppose the federal carbon tax and its imposition.

The amendment to Motion No. 174 also asks the government to make specific commitments to ensure that the RCMP have appropriate resources. I would note that, in reference to the comments made by the Member for Porter Creek Centre in introducing this motion, as well as in the government's self-produced report card to Yukoners where they mention naloxone kits as one of the — I think there were 16 things that they said they actually have done in the past year.

The naloxone kits are a positive step, but another very important thing — crucially important, in fact — for the government to do is to take the issue of the RCMP's resource pressures more seriously than they have to date and to commit to providing them with the appropriate resources to respond to the increase in fentanyl and other opioid use to allow them to respond to the increase in drug-related crime that is occurring, as well as to cope with the pressure put on their resources as a result of the recent spike in homicides that has occurred in the past year.

As well, the proposed amendment includes a specific commitment to develop the collaborative framework that the Premier committed to seven months ago to address the mining industry's concerns regarding timelines and reassessments of major projects.

Again, I have to point out — as I did earlier today during Question Period with the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources — that now that members are in government, they may feel like people are just going to have to wait until they take the time to get to where they want to be, but when government fails to take action and when they adopt the philosophy of "no one moves, nobody gets hurt" and they don't take action, there are people out there in the real world whose lives are affected by the government's inaction, and they are asking not only for action, but for the government to make tangible commitments on when they are going to take steps to fix those problems.

When they hear government talking about improved relations with other levels of government and speaking to possible results from that, certainly people welcome that commitment, but when a commitment is not followed up with action and when they don't see results coming from that commitment a year into the government's mandate, they do

start to get impatient and ask when we are actually going to see the results of this commitment — or was it just a promise that is going to be forgotten by the government, or acted on so late that those people have had a cost to themselves as a result of not having the problem fixed? This constructive amendment would urge the government to develop a collaborative framework to immediately move forward with their commitments to Yukoners working in the mining sector.

There are also references to asking the government to do exactly what they committed to a year ago and adopt the recommendations by 2018 of the Procurement Advisory Panel. This is yet another area where we've heard from the government no real commitments on when they are going to implement all of those recommendations. We have seen some action taken but, in fact, among those actions — as brought forward by one of my colleagues earlier — is that we have actually seen a weakening of the rules around local and Yukon content that Yukoners have contacted us about. They have expressed concern with the fact that it has actually made it easier on some contracts for Outside companies to bid on Yukon projects when that, in fact, was identified as a problem by the Procurement Advisory Panel. The Procurement Advisory Panel told the previous government, the public and the Liberal Party that there needed to be more done to ensure that Yukon companies were actually located and operating here in the territory.

We had supported that recommendation. The current government had promised to act on it, but in fact they have gone in the opposite direction in some areas — that is what we are hearing from Yukoners — by actually weakening those rules and making it easier for Outside companies to bid on those contracts.

Of course the importance of balancing the territorial budget is something that the government is attempting to outsource to the Financial Advisory Panel — or to hide behind the panel — and buy themselves some time to figure out a plan or maybe a plan to reach a plan on the budget. Again, as we have noted in the past, we have given some specific examples of where they could make improvements. We have noted areas such as capital spending where they have planned to increase capital spending significantly beyond what the previous government had projected. While investments in capital spending can be beneficial to the economy, the somewhat strange thing about our friends in the Liberal Party is that they seem to think that increasing capital spending by \$25 million is worth imposing a \$28-million sales tax to take that money from Yukoners first, so that after they add the administrative costs of the program, they can then give that money back to Yukoners in capital projects. We believe that lower taxation and leaving that money in the pockets of ordinary Yukon citizens and companies would be a more effective use of that money and would result in more than \$25 million of investments in the economy. Best of all, people and companies would have the ability to have more choice in choosing what they want to invest in rather than having government taking their money and then choose for them. That is why we have included that proposal.

Number 12 is of course, yet again, giving the government an opportunity to fulfill its platform commitment to Yukoners that they be heard by taking Bill No. 6, the *Public Airports Act*, out for proper consultation. That is something that we have urged the government to do on a number of occasions. The Premier and his colleagues know that the Minister of Highways and Public Works did not hit a home run on this one and fumbled the ball in terms of consultations with industry and the stakeholders. Rather than even living up to the minister's past words on ministers accepting responsibility for the little screw-ups and doing the right thing, apologize for them and fix the problem, instead we saw the government reverting to a defensive/combatative tone on this and insisting on plowing through. But we are giving them an opportunity to reconsider their ways on this and to take that bill out for proper consultation.

Of course, last but not least, is working with municipalities to determine their infrastructure priorities and investing in those priorities. As noted, that is to give a more specific commitment than the vague commitment included in the Member for Porter Creek Centre's motion.

Last but not least, I missed mentioning earlier that deleting the vague clause 2 and "... replacing it with 'reviewing the medical travel reimbursement rates to ensure that rural Yukoners are not losing money when they are required to travel for medical reasons'" is an important one. It is one that my colleague, the Member for Watson Lake, attempted to get answers on from the Minister of Health and Social Services and did not see the issue treated seriously. I would point out that, while the government may, as part of their practice of playing the blame game, say the rates are what they are at when the previous government was in power, the last time those rates were increased was when I was Minister of Health and Social Services. That was back a little over 10 years ago now.

They did provide a positive value for some time but, as we first brought to the minister's attention in late winter, early spring, there's a need to review these rates, as well as the policy, for treatment outside the territory. Some of those structures and some of the provisions and the regulations have not been reviewed or addressed for awhile and, while they did work well for a great many years, the longer something has been in place at its current rate and structure, it does increase to the point where people start having issues with how it is translating into effect as they are dealing with it. We have heard from Yukoners who would like to see the policy reviewed and the regulations reviewed and we're encouraging the government to do exactly that, so including that reference in this motion.

At the top of the motion, the change we're proposing is urging the government to do what they said they would and take action to ensure that there are community addictions workers in Yukon communities — another area where we've heard the commitments and the talking points, but Yukoners are waiting to see some action from this Liberal government.

As noted, if the Member for Takhini-Kopper King or members of the government caucus would like to make a

constructive subamendment and add other specific tangible commitments, we would be open to considering them. I hope the government would be willing to have constructive input from this side of the House, although so far in this session, they have seemed to have more than lived up to the Minister of Highways and Public Works statement, said during one Question Period, about how they take no advice from members of the Official Opposition.

I hope the government has adopted a more humble approach today and will consider this constructive amendment as a positive addition to the motion.

**Hon. Mr. Pillai:** I thank the Member for Lake Laberge for bringing forward his proposed amendments to the motion. I appreciate that, at all times, the member will use the tools within this Legislative Assembly to attempt to advance a specific agenda that he believes is important for citizens of the territory. That's the system that we have.

He acknowledged early on that we were elected a year ago and that we were elected with a vision. The vision is spelled out in these four enduring priorities. As we stand today, as the Member for Porter Creek Centre brought forward this motion last week, and as we have begun debate on it here on the floor of the Legislature, the notion is that we will move forward in the Yukon as a government — and I hope as a Legislature — under these enduring priorities. It is my hope that the members opposite — if they wish to make amendments, they would do it on the enduring priorities and that we would use the discussion in this Legislature today, as the member opposite suggested, to add detail and specifics.

In fact, I don't disagree with all the things that are listed here and I, in fact, when I speak to the main motion — or I hope to rise to it again today — I will try to address some of the specifics within my role here as a minister and an MLA. I will try to add some of that detail. I heard some of that detail quite specifically from the Member for Porter Creek Centre.

I just want to talk for a second — the Member for Lake Laberge finished off by saying that we don't take advice from members of the Official Opposition. I disagree. I think we do take advice and I think that it is important that in this Legislature we elevate above sort of the partisan nature that is often here because our job is to represent Yukoners. I can cite specific examples even with the Member for Lake Laberge, where he has sat with me and provided some advice. I haven't taken it all — that is for sure — and we will often disagree. I respect the diversity of views.

I just want to talk about amendments for a moment, Mr. Speaker. We discussed this somewhat yesterday and I am looking back through my own records, but each time I have proposed an amendment to a motion from a member opposite, I have taken the time, ahead of time, to sit down with that member opposite, discuss the amendment, alert them that that is my intention — have a little back and forth, a little discussion. So I again extend the offer to the Member for Lake Laberge that if he wishes to bring forward amendments — as he says, in a constructive and friendly manner — then a great

way to do that is to, ahead of this Legislative Assembly Sitting, bring them on over. Let's have that discussion.

In this case, while I appreciate that our job is to take action, that action should be considered. It should be built on engagement with the notion that we are representing Yukoners and with this higher value at all times, build on some sort of vision — the vision that is laid out here in the original motion. So while we appreciate the approach that the member opposite is attempting to take here, I feel that the original motion is truer to listing off the vision, which we will then share with Yukoners, as to how we are taking action within that vision.

**Mr. Istchenko:** It's a pleasure to rise today here to weigh in on this discussion, for lack of a better term.

Before I talk about the amendment, I just want to talk about the motion itself and the four things that are in the motion: implementing a people-centred approach to wellness that helps Yukoners thrive; making strategic investments that build —

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

#### Point of order

**Speaker:** Minister of Community Services, on a point of order.

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** I am very happy to hear the Member for Kluane's notion on the main motion when we are debating the main motion — I would love to hear that. At this point, I am hopeful that what we can hear are his points of view on the amendment as proposed by his colleagues so that we can deal with the amendment that is before us.

**Speaker:** Member for Kluane, on the point of order.

**Mr. Istchenko:** I was just going to put into context the reason that we made the amendment by first speaking about how vague the motion was itself.

#### Speaker's ruling

**Speaker:** I will allow you some latitude, but I tend to agree with the Minister of Community Services in that, generally speaking, pursuant to Standing Order 35(b), you ought to be confining yourself to the subject matter of the amendment at this time, with the understanding that you have the ability to provide your comments with respect to the main motion at a later time in the proceedings.

**Mr. Istchenko:** I hope not at a later date. I was hoping that we could finish this one today.

Basically, what I wanted to get to are the four things outlined in the original motion. I believe that, since I was elected, I have been doing that as the MLA for Kluane. I believe all of us have. At what level? The members opposite might disagree.

To put a motion forward like it says — it doesn't say a whole lot. By putting these amendments forward to actually highlight the actions that the government said they were going to do — that is the reason we put these amendments forward.

I look forward to speaking later about the original motion, but I have to tell you, Mr. Speaker, that the original motion

doesn't say very much. This motion, after it's amended, actually details what needs to be done — the work committed to by the government.

I'm not going to say much more on that. I sure hope the members opposite support these amendments because they are basically things that need to be done for Yukoners.

**Speaker:** Is there any further debate on the amendment?

Are you prepared for the question on the amendment?

**Some Hon. Members:** Agree.

**Some Hon. Members:** Disagree.

**Speaker:** In my opinion, the nays have it.

I declare the amendment defeated.

*Amendment to Motion No. 174 negatived*

**Speaker:** Is there further debate on the main motion?

**Hon. Ms. McPhee:** I don't disagree with the Member for Lake Laberge. Tangible action does matter. I'm going to spend a bit of time this time this afternoon explaining what tangible action looks like in the departments for which I am responsible. I am very happy to rise to speak to this motion today and I thank my colleague, the Member for Porter Creek Centre, for bringing it forward. It certainly has been an eventful year for us all since Yukoners elected our Liberal government to office last fall, and it's appropriate to consider how we move forward in our second year of our mandate. It's also worth considering how we got here.

Yukoners voted for our Liberal government because they wanted change. They wanted change in how government operates. They wanted to make it more open and accountable for Yukoners. They wanted to change how government engages with the public to ensure that Yukoners are part of the conversation around decisions that affect them. They wanted to know that their money is being spent wisely, and they wanted change in how government manages money and to make sure that Yukon has a sustainable financial future.

We proposed a vision of a strong, modern Yukon that is guided by the priority commitments contained in this motion. Despite the fact that an amendment has been dealt with here this afternoon, I think it's worth repeating that the priority commitments contained in this motion are what Yukoners voted for. These priority commitments are also in the mandate letter that we have all received and that I received from the Premier in my capacity both as Minister of Justice and Minister of Education.

Today, I will speak to both of my portfolios and the work that has been accomplished since we took office some 11 months ago. Over this short time, we have begun the hard work that's necessary to bring about the change that Yukon needs and that Yukoners asked for and to address the many issues that we learned about when we arrived in office.

Mr. Speaker, as Minister of Education, this includes my commitment to lifelong learning and the commitment of this government to the same. In the mandate letter that I received from the Premier, I was given direction to work on a number of matters, work with my colleagues, work with community

partners, and reach key goals. I will outline them and just some of the work — just some of the work — that is being done by this hard-working department and the government that Yukoners elected to reach those goals.

One of the issues of my mandate letter is to implement a new student-centred approach. I heard a comment from the Member for Lake Laberge about that today — I take no issue whatsoever. This is not something we started. Certainly it's something we support and have moved forward. I am happy to report that the implementation of the revised curriculum and the student assessment practices is underway in Yukon schools. The new curriculum is student-centred and focuses on multi-disciplinary skill development. It provides many opportunities to integrate local content and Yukon First Nation ways of knowing and doing through all subject and grade levels. The redesigned Yukon curriculum is being phased in gradually over the next few years — beginning with kindergarten to grade 9, two months ago in September 2017, and will continue with grades 10 to 12 next September. The emphasis here is that, in every grade and across all subjects, students will learn about the life in northern communities and Yukon First Nation ways of knowing and doing while developing the skills that they need to succeed throughout their lives.

I was told and directed that we should review the teacher hiring practices with the Yukon Teachers' Association, and that work is happening. The Department of Education is working with both the Public Service Commission and the Yukon Teachers' Association to address YTA concerns regarding hiring practices for teachers, and this work is ongoing. I think this is an excellent example of needing to build a team, needing to build a one-government approach, and needing to work with our partners to solve problems. There is no one solution to one single problem. There are many ideas that can be shared, and, appropriately so, here is this great example of the Department of Education, the Public Service Commission and the Yukon Teachers' Association coming to the table to resolve questions.

As minister, I was directed in my mandate letter to work with the Yukon Housing Corporation to initiate a new approach to staff housing that increases opportunities in communities for all government workers, including teachers.

As a one-government approach, the Department of Education is again working with the Yukon Housing Corporation and other affected departments to develop innovative options for providing staff housing in the communities, including private sector and mixed-market housing models. This is incredibly important. The historical way of doing things has sometimes left government workers without a place to stay or without appropriate housing and we want to resolve that by having innovative solutions to those problems. I want to thank my colleague, the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin, for her cooperation and work as the Minister responsible for Yukon Housing Corporation on this initiative.

Another key goal is to complete the planning for the new francophone secondary school with the Commission Scolaire Francophone du Yukon, or the CSFY. During the election last

fall, our Liberal government committed to working with CSFY to plan for a new francophone secondary school. That work began immediately following our being sworn in as a government and we are committed to building relationships based on cooperation and negotiation rather than litigation. The government's relationship with Yukon's francophone community is no exception. We have continued that work at a dedicated pace. Our Liberal government will continue to work with the CSFY and the francophone and Riverdale communities, francophone families, neighbouring schools, school councils and the City of Whitehorse on this project, with a targeted completion date of late 2019.

Another key is to enhance the community involvement in school governance. This work is being done. Funding has been provided to the Council of Yukon First Nations and the First Nations Education Commission to enhance Yukon First Nation involvement and participation in the Yukon education system and in the governance of schools. The Department of Education is working with a number of Yukon First Nations on the implementation of education agreements that provide for the sharing of responsibility over certain education matters in First Nation traditional territories. I have met on many more than one occasion with the CSFY and the Catholic Education Association of the Yukon on this and other issues and will continue to listen to their ideas for improvements.

Another key is to reduce the economic and social disparities between Whitehorse and communities through training, education and literacy programs. The Department of Education is negotiating a new labour market transfer agreement with the federal government in order to increase the flexibility that government has in funding, employment and training programs with a view to improving these services in communities. This will help the government better meet the diverse training and employment needs of Yukoners and Yukon communities. I appreciate that perhaps the Member for Lake Laberge does not think these are specific enough commitments or specific enough descriptions of the actions being taken, but I submit to this House and to all those listening that that is exactly what this is — a list of things that are being done for and on behalf of Yukoners by this Liberal government.

Another key in the Education portfolio is to work with Yukon College and the Minister of Health and Social Services to provide an annual intake for the college's licensed practical nursing program. The Department of Education has worked with Yukon College and the Health and Social Services department in developing a proposal to begin an annual intake in the program in September 2018 pending Management Board approval.

Another key factor is to work with partners, including the Minister of Tourism and Culture, Yukon First Nations and Yukon College to develop an indigenous fine arts program at the Yukon School of Visual Arts — also known as SOVA — in Dawson City.

An academic program review of the SOVA program is scheduled to take place and, as far as I know, is soon to be underway during this current academic year. The Yukon

government and Yukon College believe that such a review is necessary. We need to figure out where we are before we can determine curriculum changes or improvements that will be made at SOVA. SOVA must be a great success. This government is very keen on that being the case. We expect and hope that students from all over Canada and the world will come to experience Dawson through visual arts and contribute to that community in a great way.

Another key goal is for me to work on the Yukon university and make sure there is programming that meets the range of Yukon's educational needs. The Yukon government is investing \$1.53 million in Yukon College as part of a joint federal-territorial funding initiative for the construction and innovation of an innovation commons, formerly known as the library — now a much broader learning space for students — and the completion of electrical upgrades at the Ayamdigut campus.

The Department of Education is working closely with Yukon College to complete and begin implementation of a joint Yukon government-Yukon College university transition work plan. In July, we announced that the Government of Yukon is working with the Government of Alberta to ensure Yukon College meets established institutional standards through the Campus Alberta Quality Council, or the CAQC and that, as a college, it will move forward toward providing Yukon-made degree programs through that process. We will continue to work with the council to provide ongoing quality assurance services for the college's future degrees, beginning with a new bachelor of arts degree program in indigenous governance.

Another key goal is to work with the Health and Social Services minister to ensure seamless services related to childcare, early childhood development and education. The Department of Education has completed year two of the early intervention pilot project that offers targeted literacy and school readiness support to grade 2 students at seven Yukon schools. The department has also worked with the Department of Health and Social Services on negotiations with the federal government and other provincial and territorial governments regarding childcare, early childcare development and early learning.

Early childhood education plays a major role in the emotional, social and physical development of young children, and ultimately is the best foundation for a lifetime of learning. I look forward to continuing to work with that department and all my colleagues on that initiative.

In this first year, it has been a privilege to work collaboratively with parents, teachers and other education partners, including First Nations and communities, to ensure our students are able to realize their aspirations and contribute to a healthy future for Yukon. I look forward to continuing this collaborative work to strengthen Yukon's education system, something I feel very passionate about.

Mr. Speaker, as Minister of Justice, my work is to protect Yukoners and respond to the needs of victims while providing rehabilitation and reducing recidivism and addressing issues

related to disabilities, mental health and addictions that contribute to incarceration — no small feat.

Additionally, as the Attorney General for the Yukon, or the government's chief legal advisor, I am tasked with ensuring our laws meet accepted standards for equity, fairness, and respect for the rule of law. My top priority in this capacity is to work with police, justice stakeholders and First Nations in our system and in our justice system and ensure that it provides a fair and a balanced approach.

This past May, I informed the RCMP M Division leadership of Yukon's policing priorities for 2017-18. These priorities were developed based on recommendations given by the Yukon Police Council, as well as information analysis provided by the department. The Yukon Police Council, Mr. Speaker, is unique in Canada, and I am grateful for the advice from the Yukon Police Council in setting this year's policing priorities, which reflect our government's balanced approach to justice.

Although all of this year's priorities are important, I have asked the RCMP to emphasize continued training for RCMP members in sexualized assault and domestic violence investigations while working with community partners to ensure investigations are conducted with skill, expertise and compassion.

In this role as well, I have been directed to work with my colleagues and community partners on a number of key goals for the department that include crime prevention and, through environmental design, an approach that will be of interest to many rural and remote communities. This is an important initiative and the Department of Justice is currently in the planning phase of this project. It is an important step for every community in building partnerships with communities. Options on how to proceed with public safety and environmental design to address community safety issues are being developed and considered, and the costs associated with implementation of those are being worked out. It is something I hope we can proceed with quite quickly.

I am working with the Minister of Health and Social Services and the Minister responsible for the Women's Directorate and other community partners to improve services for victims of violence and sexual assault in the Yukon. Mr. Speaker, I think you will know how important this topic is to me — both personally and as the minister. Officials from the Department of Justice, the Women's Directorate and the Department of Health and Social Services are working to develop a model for improved coordination of sexualized assault response in conjunction with the members of the Sexual Assault Response Committee and other partners throughout the community. A proposal outlining next steps and proposed changes is currently being developed, and I look forward to reviewing the proposal with my colleagues in the very near future.

Project Lynx — Yukon's multidisciplinary approach to coordinated service for youth and child victims of crime continues to strengthen the procedures for improved access and supports victims and their families. A recent forensic interviewing training course will assist practitioners to

complete interviews in line with the national best practices for child and youth advocacy centres.

Victim Services recently hosted a training session on the neurobiology of trauma, which will assist service providers to better understand the impacts of trauma on victims, especially those who have experienced sexualized violence.

Yukon officials participate in a federal-provincial-territorial coordinating committee of senior officials — a working group on access to justice for adult victims of sexual assault.

I recently attended a meeting of the federal-provincial-territorial ministers responsible for justice and public safety and ensured that Yukon's priorities were considered in the discussions.

The ministers agreed on substantive reforms to the criminal justice system that support Yukon priorities and have the potential to improve the lives of indigenous and marginalized people who come in contact with the Canadian criminal justice system. Mr. Speaker, in fact, that is the goal of many of these reforms. All ministers across the country are keen to see that be the case. The meetings included discussions on addressing delays in the criminal justice system, the overrepresentation of indigenous peoples, violence against indigenous women and girls, and several federal initiatives. It was very rewarding to be part of the process that will result in meaningful reforms for the Canadian criminal justice system — not only the Canadian criminal justice system, but that will have a very real trickle-down effect for our own Yukon.

In particular, Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Yukon, I supported positive and substantial changes to benefit indigenous and marginalized people who come into contact with the criminal justice system. During our discussions, I emphasized our commitment to work with Yukon First Nations to develop culturally relevant correctional programming and alternative environments for those with addiction or mental health issues. Additionally, I strongly stated that our entire justice system needs to improve its response to victims of sexualized violence significantly and soon.

There have been a number of other opportunities for the work to be done on behalf of Yukoners through the Department of Justice, including Crime Stoppers, and changes to the land titles system so that the Kwanlin Dün First Nation land can be properly registered in that system without the loss of title. There have been a number of plans to enforce alternative correctional therapeutic environments, including work with the Kwanlin Dün First Nation to utilize Jackson Lake camp and others.

I completely agree, Mr. Speaker, that tangible action matters. While I think I have given you a list of extensive tangible actions with respect to the two departments I'm responsible for, I do have many, many more, and I would be happy to share those with the members opposite if that would be of assistance. These are just some of the many issues that our Liberal team has been working on, Mr. Speaker, on behalf of Yukoners and we will continue to do so.

**Mr. Istchenko:** I am a little bit disappointed that the vote didn't go our way when it came to the amendments, like I said before. I guess my first comment on the motion, like I said earlier, is that it is just vague and it is not well-defined. In this respect, it's actually very similar to how this government has approached the first 12 months.

As you know, Mr. Speaker, the government is just wrapping up the first 20 percent, or almost one quarter of their mandate. We know they took a record amount of time to bring back the Legislature for the first time but, even with that, it doesn't appear that they're ready to hit the road running. In fact, people around the territory and the government are starting to refer to this as the longest transition from one government to another in history. I think a lot of this is because the Liberal government has been vague or unforthcoming on what it has done or even plans to do — as you'll remember, for over a week.

I am just going to talk about one of my responsibilities as a critic for one of the departments. I'm pretty sure just about everyone in the opposition here could get up and have a long conversation about different departments, but we asked the Minister responsible for Yukon Housing Corporation to tell us how many housing units that her government was intending to build this year, and unfortunately we were never able to get an answer beyond a few vague talking points.

We also pressed the minister for a week for the current social and seniors housing wait-list. Again, we never got an answer until CKRW reported it. The number that CKRW discovered was that, in just one year under the Liberals, the wait-list had doubled. I don't need to tell you that this is a large increase. We followed up and asked the minister what she was doing to address the housing wait-list that had doubled under her watch. Again we were unable to get a straight answer from the minister.

Another topic I want to address is Ross River housing. During the election, the Liberals referred to this as an emergency situation, and I believe one of the ministers just used the word "priority". It sounds like it's a priority, right? So they promised that they would build housing units in Ross River and dedicate funding for it, but they haven't. We asked the minister how many housing units she would build in Ross River, and she replied by saying that the Liberals would not sink any more money into that community.

What we have seen here, at least on the issue of housing, is a lack of a plan, and I think that goes to follow with just about every other department — and it's their plan — the real lack of anything from all of the government. They aren't doing themselves any favour by sticking to these vague and unspecific statements. They have had 12 months to come up with a plan. I think many Yukoners would have expected them to have a plan before the election but, for whatever reason, we have yet to see the plan.

I want to move a little bit back into housing and take the opportunity to highlight a number of housing investments that the previous government undertook. I believe the minister has

highlighted these in the House for us, but that's not what we're looking for. We're looking for a plan moving forward.

I would also, I guess, thank the minister because she recognized the Yukon housing action plan, the eight-plex that was built in Teslin for \$2.5 million in 2011. That same year, a seniors complex was put on the Whitehorse waterfront for \$10.9 million, a 20-plex was built in Dawson for \$5.2 million, a six-plex was constructed in Faro for \$1.9 million, and a 12-plex in Watson Lake was built for \$4.7 million. All of those projects — these houses house hard-working Yukoners and their families in those communities. In 2012, four units were built in Ross River for \$1.2 million, and four units were built in Carmacks for \$960,000. I just listed 2011 and 2012 — and I believe that 2011 is when we were elected. That's what we did in our first couple of years. These projects not only helped to address housing needs in these communities, but they created jobs for Yukoners in the process.

I could go on to some of the successes in 2014 with housing and in 2015, but the minister highlighted our great successes in Question Period. Every single one of these units built in 2011 has housed hard-working Yukoners in need or on a fixed income. They are important, as the rent is geared to income, which helps a significant segment of our society. Those are real, tangible actions — actions that show leadership, address a need, employ Yukoners in the meantime, and alleviate the pressures that are felt across the territory.

These are the types of things the government should be focused on — not feel-good statements or, as we've heard in this House before, platitudes, but what you're actually going to do.

We've said all along that if the government would present a plan on these issues and discuss it with us, we would be more than happy to debate it and support it, maybe, if it made sense. It's really hard, as the MLA, to sit here and encourage the government to continue to do more of the same and not address issues such as the growing housing crisis in the territory. I believe that in their platform, they talked about rural seniors housing. I'm not sure if it was staying on the housing topic. Have they even had a chance to meet with the St. Elias seniors and the community and the First Nations to move forward so we can keep our elders and seniors in our communities longer?

I don't have a whole bunch more to say on that. I'm just disappointed that this motion came forward. It's quite vague. I was sort of looking forward to getting into some of the amendments that we put forward, but it doesn't look like we're going to do that today. I just wanted to highlight the fact that the motion is weak and I won't be supporting it today.

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** Thanks for the opportunity to rise to speak to the motion. Just following up, for the Member for Kluane, as he was speaking, he was discussing not being able to support it. I appreciate that there's an interest for more details. I think that's what we're trying to do here, through this debate — provide those details. I'm left wondering whether —

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



**Quorum count**

**Deputy Speaker:** Mr. Cathers, on a point of order.

**Mr. Cathers:** Pursuant to Standing Order 3(2), there does not appear to be quorum present.

**Deputy Speaker:** Order, please.

According to Standing Order 3(2), if, at any time during a Sitting of the Assembly, the Speaker's attention is drawn to the fact that there does not appear to be a quorum, the Speaker shall cause the bells to ring for four minutes and then do a count.

*Bells*

**Deputy Speaker:** I have shut off the bells and I will do a count.

There are 10 members present. A quorum is present. We will now continue debate.

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, just to begin, I would like to acknowledge that our role here as members of this Legislature is a deep responsibility that I know we all take strongly.

As I was saying, the Member for Kluane, in his comments about not supporting the motion because it is too vague — however, I still hope in my heart that the members who are here support these enduring priorities. I would happily debate whether they wish to adjust them. That part is what I would look for in this discussion, but I will take this opportunity to stand up and speak because the members opposite have asked and because I think it is a great point that we should talk about — what actions constitute these enduring priorities.

I had the privilege within the Department of Community Services to bring forward our first piece of legislation, which was to institute National Aboriginal Day as a statutory holiday. To begin, I would like to acknowledge that it was the consensus of this Legislature. The Member for Lake Laberge noted that it was my predecessor, Mr. Kevin Barr, who introduced a motion in this Legislature to begin the work toward celebrating National Aboriginal Day. I think that is a significant piece of legislation. I will describe it in moment, but I think it is important to acknowledge that it did not come from one side of the House or the other, but that it came from all of us.

The Member for Lake Laberge referred to it as “symbolic”. I will look back in the Blues to understand exactly what he said, but it was about if that was all it is. I think it is symbolic and I acknowledge that, but I think it is much more than just symbolism. I think it is us celebrating our history — our shared history. I only moved to the territory a couple of decades ago, but I still feel like I share in the history of transportation in this territory, the history of the gold rush and certainly in the history of the First Nations — the people who have been here for time immemorial — and I think it is really an important moment.

I was hoping to celebrate National Aboriginal Day like everyone else here in the territory, but I got called away on ministerial duties. At that point, I was co-chairing national committees on French language along with Minister Joly, and

so I could not be here on June 21 this year. Just ahead of that, in the days leading up to it, there was the opening of the Carcross Learning Centre within my riding. Along with many Yukoners, I went to witness as that centre opened. The first thing that they did was to raise the totem pole. As it was being raised, all the carvers who had been involved in carving that totem pole that was being raised at the front of the Learning Centre breathed life into the totem pole. Again, it was symbolic and substantive.

As that totem pole was raised, all of us there could feel — just having that moment of being able to bear witness to the building coming to life. After that, when we went in and the celebration continued, there was a ceremony where — at each corner of the building, on the four pillars — one of each of the moieties implanted a handprint high on the pillars and, again, life was breathed into that building. I just found it an incredibly moving moment, and I thought it was great to be there, present for a piece of Yukon history that was taking place.

Just after that, I travelled to Gatineau to chair meetings of the ministers responsible for French language and, because I was co-chairing, I was asked to give a bit of a speech. There was a reception at the Canadian Museum of History, which was just about to be reopened. I don't know if you know the setting, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but it's a very grand hall. It's full of totem poles from the west, and you're looking across the Ottawa River at Parliament.

What I didn't realize before I was asked to say some words was that I was going to be speaking to several hundred delegates. I was seated next to the new Ambassador from France, who had just arrived days before this. I asked her where she was living and she said that she is the neighbour of the Prime Minister.

Here I was, from the Yukon, and in that moment I had a chance — and because we were that day celebrating National Aboriginal Day — although we were there to discuss the French language, I talked about how the strength of our history and our diversity of cultures, including our diversity of languages, made us all stronger as Canadians. I could talk in very vivid terms about what I had just witnessed, and I think that, in that moment, I had an opportunity to take a piece of the Yukon and share it with the rest of the country, and I think that was appreciated. That is built on this notion of National Aboriginal Day as a first piece. As a tangible action, it felt both symbolic and substantive.

Mr. Speaker, the second piece of legislation that I have had the opportunity to bring forward to this Legislature as Minister of Community Services is the *Act to Amend the Dental Profession Act (2017)*, which, earlier this session, was given royal assent. At its heart, it is about keeping our kids healthy and well, keeping them smiling, and it's about making sure that the children's dental program, which has been going on for decades — 40 years maybe, or more. I think, Mr. Deputy Speaker — correct me if I am wrong — that it might have even been you who mentioned to me that you remember something about this early on when you were at school.

This act allows us to overcome some challenges and some rules around our dental hygienists and gives them the opportunity to work in a safe manner with our kids so that the hygienists can work to the full scope of their practice — a small thing, but such an important thing.

I would like to acknowledge that it too got support from everyone in this Legislature. My recollection was that, again, it was consensus — again, it crossed party lines — and I feel like I'm on a roll. I'm just looking forward to whatever piece of legislation I bring next, and I will do my best and hopefully will also again get the support of everyone in this Legislature. I don't know that this will always be true, but that's my goal.

I want to talk for a moment about midwifery — again, an issue that I think all political parties have spoken about as being something that's important. It has been many years that this issue has been discussed, and I'm happy that we're getting tangible action moving forward on this. It's not legislation, of course. It is going to be regulatory in nature. However, it still will be as complicated, in my mind, as a new piece of legislation because there is so much to sort out and to get right. The Minister of Health and Social Services and I have met now many times with not only the midwifery association of the Yukon but also other medical professionals ranging from nurses to OB/GYNs to nurses and we have been in discussion. It's important because we understand that the birth of a child is both figuratively and literally life-altering.

As we bring life into this world, we want there to be safe and sustainable options, especially in our communities, and that's why I'm very pleased to state that, just over a month ago, we developed the midwifery advisory committee and that we will be working over the next year or so to develop the regulations so that we can have a publicly funded midwifery profession integrated into our health care system. Overall, the outcome that I think we are seeking is accessible midwifery that provides increased choices for Yukon women in maternity care and an integrated, safe, cost-effective, affordable and sustainable system for maternal and infant care that results in positive health outcomes for all Yukoners.

Another thing that we have done that I have been involved with as Minister of Community Services — again, a privilege on my part — was to support the North American Indigenous Games. The North American Indigenous Games are not just about sport; they are also about culture. I would like to acknowledge that the Department of Tourism and Culture and the Minister of Tourism and Culture also were instrumental in being supportive of the North American Indigenous Games. We sent 176 participants, including athletes, coaches and mission staff. I think it's one of the biggest teams we've sent.

When you get to these games — we're coming from a small jurisdiction. It's certainly not one of the biggest teams, but what I will say about our team is that they had a huge amount of spirit and their voices were ringing out. It was quite something to watch them come to life to represent in a very positive way this territory and to strive.

I remember talking with several young athletes who were inspiring to me. I won't name names, but I'll just sort of name

sports for a second. There was a young wrestler who was talking to me about a sprained finger and about her matches and what that meant to her. There was a young distance runner — I couldn't believe he could still stand up for the number of pins that he had managed to trade to go alongside one of his medals that he had won at the games. It was really quite inspiring.

From there, I had the opportunity to go to the Canada Summer Games. I just want to give a shout-out, not only to our athletes but to all of the parents, families and coaches who went along in support of those teams. It was quite a nice moment for me as a minister who believes in sport as something that will help to improve the wellness of our communities — to sit alongside of these family members and put on a Yukon toque to cheer alongside of everybody for our athletes to do well. As someone who has been to that level of sport before, here's what I will say, Mr. Deputy Speaker: I think we're shaping the future leaders of the Yukon.

Let me move on to talk about our communities. Let me come now to the point that I made earlier when I stood to speak to the amendment. I would like to acknowledge that I will work with all communities. We will work with all communities, including municipalities and First Nations to determine their infrastructure priorities and investing in those priorities. I'm pulling that language very deliberately. It reflects one of the amendments. It's a little bit broader. I hope that the Member for Lake Laberge will see that as a friendly addition — that I don't just refer to municipalities but also to First Nation governments.

We do want their priorities to be addressed and we are investing in the Yukon. Along with the federal government, this summer, we announced \$600 million in new investment in infrastructure over the next 10 years to invest in our communities. It will help to build rinks, improve the energy efficiency of our buildings in our communities, add transit and reduce our off-grid dependency on diesel, and this is on top of the investments that we will place on roads, water, waste water, et cetera.

One of the members opposite noted that we are increasing our investment year over year. We need to develop this with a long-term plan and, as I stated earlier, in partnership with our communities. We want local solutions to local problems.

Helping our communities to plan is very important. We know that municipality governments, in particular, have increasing pressures coming on them around water, solid waste and fire protection, so we are working with our municipal partners. This year alone, we invested \$18.2 million through the comprehensive municipal grant, and that is at the end of its five-year life cycle, so we have been sitting down with a team from the Association of Yukon Communities to discuss that formula. I hope in the next budget cycle to present it here. I am hopeful we will see some increases and, through that, provide more investment in our communities and more certainty for our communities.

One of our communities in the territory is the francophone community. I have already mentioned their importance to us. They represent five percent of our

population, but 14 percent of Yukoners are bilingual. Fifty percent of our kids — around half of our kids — are now enrolled in French immersion. It's quite something.

This year, we negotiated to, over the next three years, triple the funding in French language here in the territory. That's going to allow us to invest in, for example, their number-one priority, which is around health care. We have already started. We just spoke about *Tel-Aide*, which is a 24-7 French language health care provision service.

In this Legislature, we have discussed many times in recent weeks the importance of engagement, about listening to Yukoners and getting out there and talking with Yukoners. I would like to let you know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that in my role under the Yukon Liquor Corporation, over the next year, we will bring forward the *Liquor Act* and we will begin engaging with Yukoners now, with our licensees, our producers, NGOs and all orders of government on that review.

Finally, I would just like to say that, in this position, it isn't just about the actions that we take, but it is about the way in which we conduct ourselves and I will continue to try to conduct myself with respect in this Legislature.

**Mr. Hutton:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to my colleague, the Member for Porter Creek Centre, for bringing forward this motion.

As we move into the second year of our mandate, it's a good opportunity for our Liberal government to reflect on our accomplishments to date and how our work will be guided by our priority commitments moving forward. These commitments reflect the values of our Liberal government and are focused on improving the lives of all those in our territory.

Yukoners elected the Yukon Liberal Party because they wanted change. They wanted to be heard and they wanted an inclusive, accountable government that: balances economic diversification with environmental stewardship; builds strong government-to-government relations with First Nation governments based on cooperation, partnership and respecting self-government agreements; supports local solutions for local concerns; fosters healthier living for all Yukoners; and is open, transparent and accountable to Yukoners.

We are changing how government operates so that it is guided by the priority commitments that are found in this motion. Those commitments are: our people-centred approach to wellness helps Yukoners thrive; our strategic investments build healthy, vibrant, sustainable communities; our strong government-to-government relationships with First Nations foster reconciliation; and our diverse, growing economy provides good jobs for Yukoners in an environmentally responsible way. All four of these commitments are equally important to our Liberal government. All four of these commitments complement one another and together they reflect the kind of government that will create a strong future for our territory and benefit all Yukoners.

As the Member for Mayo-Tatchun representing the communities of the Na Cho Nyäk Dun, Selkirk and Little Salmon Carmacks First Nations, I am particularly interested in the priority to build strong government-to-government

relationships with First Nations that foster reconciliation. Renewing our relationships with First Nations is critical for the future of our territory. I have spoken several times in this House about the need for reconciliation and I will continue to do so because it must remain at the forefront of our minds as legislators and as Yukoners.

Two weeks ago in this House, I brought forward a motion for debate that this House endorses reconciliation among indigenous and non-indigenous people as fundamental to redressing the legacy of residential schools and other historic wrongs. It is crucial to building a stronger Yukon in which the world views of First Nation and non-First Nation people of the territory are understood, respected and valued. I was pleased to see that motion receive the unanimous support of this House and I thank all of my colleagues and all of the members opposite who spoke and offered their thoughts on this important issue. All Yukoners should be proud that their elected representatives are united in their endorsement of reconciliation. We should all keep in mind the responsibility that comes from that endorsement. It will take more than words to make progress on the path to reconciliation, and our actions need to reflect our commitment to redressing the wrongs of the past by working together toward a brighter future for our territory and our country. Our Liberal government has been acting in the spirit of reconciliation and will continue to do so as we move into the second year of our mandate.

The first bill our Liberal government passed into law since taking office made National Aboriginal Day a statutory holiday in the Yukon, and kudos to Kevin Barr for his hard work on this issue and bringing this forward. By passing this law, we delivered on a commitment we made to Yukoners during the 2016 election campaign and we are proud to have done so.

It was truly inspiring on June 21 to see all Yukon residents celebrate alongside our first peoples all the amazing history, language, tradition and culture that has enriched our lives in this great territory. I look forward to seeing these celebrations continue and grow in the years to come. As I've said before, establishing National Aboriginal Day as a statutory holiday was a symbolic step toward reconciliation. With this symbolic step, we've joined our sister territory, the Northwest Territories, in recognizing National Aboriginal Day as a statutory holiday. The north is continuing to provide an example for the rest of Canada by leading the way toward reconciliation.

For this, we should be proud and we must continue to lead the way. We must continue to build strong government-to-government relationships with Yukon First Nations. A key part of this and a priority of our government is the reinvigoration of the Yukon Forum. During the spring session of the Legislative Assembly, I brought forward a motion that this House urges the Government of Yukon to hold a Yukon Forum four times annually. By providing a means for the Premier, the Grand Chief of the Council of Yukon First Nations and chiefs of Yukon First Nations to come together to have open and frank discussions about areas of common

concern, the Yukon Forum is symbolic of the cooperative nature of governance in this territory.

The health of the Yukon Forum speaks directly to the health of the cooperative relationship between the government and the First Nation leadership. I won't discuss the detrimental effects of the Yukon Party government's preference for litigation over negotiation with First Nations. We're all aware that, over the past several years, the relationship between the government and First Nation leadership has not been very healthy.

There is much work to be done to repair, renew and strengthen that relationship. Our Liberal government is committed to doing that work to repair, renew and strengthen that relationship, because it's critical to the future of this territory. Our Liberal government prefers negotiation over litigation and cooperation over confrontation. We believe maintaining an open dialogue is the key to finding common ground and advancing our shared goal of improving the lives of all Yukoners. We recognize that we're most effective in achieving this goal when we work together, and that's what the Yukon Forum is all about.

Since it was created over a decade ago, the Yukon Forum has met a total of eight times. Three of those eight meetings occurred since the Liberal government was elected last year, and one more will occur next month. These meetings have been instrumental in rebuilding trust and fostering cooperation between the Yukon Liberal government and Yukon First Nations. The first meeting of the year occurred on January 13, little more than a month after our Liberal government was sworn into office. That meeting set the stage for a strong working relationship between Yukon and First Nation governments. Government leaders signed a declaration entitled *Working Together* that affirmed our commitment to work together in the spirit of reconciliation and collaboration and to remain committed to constructive relationships that contribute to and promote good governance for all Yukoners.

The declaration also included the commitment to create a joint five-year action plan that identifies common priorities and ensures a clear plan for implementation options that are collaborative and transparent. That first meeting was very promising, Mr. Speaker, and demonstrated the collective understanding among governments in the Yukon that we are partners in governance and the path forward is based on respect and cooperation.

At this year's second meeting of the Yukon Forum held in May, government leaders committed to work together on a number of shared priorities, including: fiscal matters; cooperation on justice, education, health and heritage initiatives; implementing the land claim and self-government agreements; and ensuring that Government of Yukon's legislative agenda respects the agreements and considers First Nation priorities. This meeting demonstrated the effectiveness of the Yukon Forum as a venue for government leaders to come together to discuss issues, identify opportunities and formulate priorities for addressing areas of common concern.

This year's third meeting of the Yukon Forum took place in September in the beautiful community of Champagne.

Government leaders approved an action plan based on the previously identified joint priorities to address long-standing and complex issues that are deeply important to Yukoners. The joint priority action plan reflects a lot of hard work and reaffirms our government's commitment to working together in the spirit of reconciliation and collaboration.

It also speaks to how productive the Yukon Forum can be when the parties come to the table in good faith with an interest in cooperation and collaboration to find tangible solutions that create healthy, vibrant and sustainable communities in Yukon.

The Grand Chief of the Council of Yukon First Nations called the meeting in Champagne, which led to the approval of the joint priority action plan, pivotal and said — and I quote: "If it wasn't agreed upon by the leadership, really at the end of the day I think the forum would have probably dissolved because we've been in this process for many years. It's been agreed to since 2006 to have this opportunity and I don't think if we barred the results or if the feeling of the spirit and intent in the room wasn't there we would have went away and done our separate things, but I feel really optimistic that we are moving ahead in the right direction."

Those are encouraging words from the Grand Chief. There is still a lot of work to do to strengthen this government's relationship with Yukon First Nations, but I too feel optimistic and I believe that all Yukoners should be optimistic as well that we are moving ahead in the right direction.

Moving ahead requires that we need to stand together with First Nations on the issues that are vital to their life. One of the most important issues for the Vuntut Gwitchin revolves around the protection of the Porcupine caribou herd calving grounds in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, ANWR. Porcupine caribou are culturally important and provide an essential food source for the Gwich'in nations. For many years, the herd has been threatened by the potential oil drilling and development in ANWR, and in light of recent events in the United States, the threat has increased significantly.

In response to this, I tabled a motion during the Spring Sitting of the Legislative Assembly that this House support the efforts of the Vuntut Gwitchin people and the Gwich'in people of the Northwest Territories and Alaska in lobbying the United States congress for the protection of the sacred calving grounds of the Porcupine caribou herd in order to preserve the health of the herd and the well-being of our northern communities.

I was very pleased when that motion received the unanimous support of this House and I would like to once again thank the members of the Official Opposition and the Third Party for their support of the motion.

I would also like to thank my colleague, the Premier and Member for Klondike, for his work in raising this issue in Washington, DC, when he travelled there in June. It is important that our Premier voices the concerns of Yukoners on the national and international stage and I commend him for doing so in the case of ANWR.

I also want to thank the Premier for delivering his ministerial statement in this House last week in light of the most recent attempts to allow drilling in ANWR as part of the US federal budget. As the Premier said during that statement — and I quote: “For those seeking to open ANWR for drilling, there are many, many steps still required and the Yukon government is committed to fighting against this at each step.”

I also want to thank my colleague, the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin, for her continued work advocating for the protection of calving grounds alongside the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation and our NGO partners, most recently when she travelled to Washington, DC in July. This work has been done by three generations of this family and I think all Yukoners owe them a great thank you for the work that they have done to try to protect the Porcupine caribou.

Beyond ANWR, my colleagues have been working hard to build relationships with First Nations in my riding of Mayo-Tatchun and I know my constituents appreciate the great engagement they have had with ministers of our Liberal government. My colleagues — the members for Mountainview, Porter Creek South and beautiful Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes — have all been to my riding on a number of occasions. This summer, the Member for Mountainview, in her capacity as Minister of Tourism and Culture, visited Mayo, Keno and the Lansing heritage site, and I thank her and her department for working together with the First Nation of Na Cho Nyäk Dun on developing a management plan for the Lansing heritage site.

The member for beautiful Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes has visited Keno once, Mayo and Pelly Crossing twice each and Carmacks three times since he became Minister of Community Services. My constituents truly appreciate his frequent visits and the relationships that he is building with our municipalities.

The Member for Porter Creek South, in his capacity as the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources and Economic Development, has been to Mayo and had two meetings with the First Nation — Na Cho Nyäk Dun chief and council — on a range of issues.

I thank my colleagues for their work in Mayo-Tatchun and look forward to continuing to work together with them to build relationships and address the needs of the people of Mayo, Pelly Crossing, Carmacks, Keno and Stewart Crossing. The dedication and commitment of my colleagues gives me confidence that our increasingly strong government-to-government relationships with First Nations will foster reconciliation.

I would like to take some time to touch upon some of the other priority commitments contained in this motion. The first commitment is our people-centred approach to wellness helps Yukoners thrive. A key component of our people-centred approach to wellness involves healing, Mr. Speaker. In order to properly redress the legacy of residential schools and other historic wrongs, to help all of those in our communities and support mental wellness, we must help our people heal. One of the best ways to address this is through land-based healing,

provided on First Nation land and in partnership with First Nations.

That is why I tabled the motion in this House that this House urges the Government of Yukon to provide funding for land-based healing programs in order to benefit all Yukon communities. I was also pleased to see that the Department of Health and Social Services’ 2017-18 budget allocated \$150,000 to evaluate land-based healing programs. In partnership with Yukon First Nations, our Liberal government will use the funding to explore service-delivery model options for land-based healing programs and culturally appropriate program evaluation frameworks. I know that when the mental wellness implementation team recently travelled around to the communities, many First Nation representatives expressed a strong interest in developing land-based healing and cultural supports specific to each First Nation. Land-based healing is the desired approach to improve mental wellness, and we need to support this.

In order for Yukoners to thrive, they also need to have access to mental health support. Our Liberal government is committed to improving mental health services, especially in rural Yukon. That is why we are hiring 11 new mental health workers to serve rural Yukoners. I am extremely encouraged, Mr. Speaker, by the fact that three of those mental health workers are designated for Mayo, Pelly and Carmacks.

Additionally, a new community hub for mental health workers will be established in Carmacks to provide specialist services to the people of Mayo-Tatchun. This is good news for my constituents, and I thank the Minister of Health and Social Services for her work on this very important initiative and for her ongoing work with the First Nation people in Mayo-Tatchun on wellness strategies in our communities.

I also look forward to continuing to work with the minister on issues around health centres in Mayo, Pelly Crossing and Carmacks. Another one of our priority commitments is that our strategic investments build healthy, vibrant, sustainable communities. The community development fund is dedicated to community investment, and I am very pleased to note that nearly \$200,000 in total funding from the community development fund has gone toward the relocation and renovation of the Parish of St. Mary with St. Mark Anglican Church in Mayo. It is an important historic asset in Mayo. It contains a priceless collection of beaded moose hide, duffel altar hangings, a memorial stained-glass window and a distinctive handcrafted baptismal font made from a hollowed-out Yukon burl. I encourage all Yukoners to visit the parish in Mayo and see this beautiful collection.

The Village of Mayo has received community development funding to complete upgrades to Binet House Museum and annex buildings. Another great community development fund project in Mayo is the structural upgrade to the Mayo Legion Hall that is being led by the First Nation of Na Cho Nyäk Dun. The restoration of the legion hall represents pride in the history of Mayo and will provide a community gathering space in the downtown core to carry out and demonstrate cultural activities.

We are engaging with Yukoners across the territory about the issues that matter to them. We will continue to engage Yukoners and we will continue our work to deliver on our commitments and improve the lives of Yukoners.

**Hon. Ms. Frost:** I'm proud to stand today to speak to the priorities of our government and how they guide our work, what we have done and where we are going. The key pillars of our priorities as a Liberal government — our commitment to Yukoners, people-centred approach to wellness, healthy, sustainable and vibrant communities, strong government-to-government relationships, diverse, growing economies in an environmentally sustainable manner — are all very important to me as a representative for the Vuntut Gwitchin riding, and as the Minister of Environment, as the Minister of Health and Social Services and as the Minister responsible for the Yukon Housing Corporation.

Mr. Speaker, we, the Liberal government, are committed to making Yukoners' lives better through our people-centred approach to wellness. I would like to thank my colleagues for their kind words and their commitment to ensure that we have a strategic approach to investing and building a sustainable Yukon economy and sustainable communities. How can that happen? That can only happen through reconciliation, through our commitment of balancing and growing our environment and our relationship with Yukon First Nation people.

It is my privilege to be the Minister of Health and Social Services, the Minister of Environment and the Minister responsible for the Yukon Housing Corporation. I take each and every one of these portfolios seriously and, with the support of my colleagues in the department, we have been able to accomplish quite a bit in our first year, despite what perhaps is being said outside of these walls by the opposition.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to start by talking about how my work as minister responsible for Health and Social Services, Yukon Housing Corporation and Environment is guided by these priorities.

Over the past year, we have been successful in building programming, increasing supports and offering Yukoners the services they need in a more efficient and cost-effective way. I am pleased to share a few successes. Our department has created a midwifery advisory committee tasked with examining policy and regulatory options to govern the midwifery profession in Yukon. Mr. Speaker, Yukoners have been clear throughout our engagement process and discussions with our local community organizations that midwifery in the Yukon is important, so we are making this a priority. This work has all been in collaboration with my colleague, the Minister of Community Services.

The Champagne and Aishihik First Nations have been advancing in the delivery of early learning, and we are pleased to have provided funding for the development of a new daycare facility included in an expansion of the Da Kų Cultural Centre.

We are committed to working with Yukon First Nations to support the advancement of the implementation of the self-government programs and priorities. We have shown our

commitment to this through the Yukon Forum and through our funding and support of community-led solutions for early learning and childcare.

Youth are an integral part of the fabric of Yukon. It is important that we provide programming and services based on their needs and that we continue to engage with our youth population to determine what those needs are. Through our work, we recognize that youth can be actively engaged on smartphones and social media. We have launched a nine-week pilot project featuring a mental health app to evaluate how hand-held devices can help introduce self-help skills and mental health information to youth in our territory.

The more we support our young people and our young leaders, the stronger they will be to take on more advanced leadership roles in our communities. Mental health and wellness have been identified as a major priority by communities, Yukon First Nations and our government. We look forward to continuing the ongoing work in collaboration with communities to develop solutions, supports and programming that meet their needs, based on our people-centred approach.

Mr. Speaker, across the country, Canadians are working to address the opioid crisis and the devastating impact it has had on our families. To date, we have worked with community partners to make naloxone kits available at over 30 sites in the Yukon. Yukoners have been clear about the need for these kits. We also train those who distribute the kits to ensure that users fully understand how to administer the kits. Over 870 individual kits have been distributed to date. We continue to monitor opioid-related deaths and Emergency visits and use of the take-home naloxone kits. A comprehensive opioid surveillance plan is being developed. We are taking the opioid crisis very seriously, and our team at the Health and Social Services department and the Department of Education are working collaboratively, using the Yukon Liberals' one-government approach. We have also developed a drug awareness campaign targeting youth so that they are equipped with information and a stronger understanding of the risks associated with opioid use. In addition to the aforementioned supports, we recognize the importance of addressing the opioid crisis and, as such, we have hired an opioid naloxone coordinator. Having the proper resources in place is incredibly important in ensuring that the supports and expertise required are available to everyone and that the solutions are there for Yukoners.

I also want to highlight today that mental health experts are critical to ensuring that Yukoners are properly supported and that we are serving our most vulnerable people. We have created a new Mental Wellness and Substance Use branch to implement a more collaborative approach, including broadening the continuum of services to meet more diverse needs to increase the efficiencies.

I am pleased to say that we are currently recruiting eight new mental wellness and substance use counsellors, two mental health nurses, and one new mental wellness and substance use therapist. We are integrating mental health services, child adolescent therapeutic services, and alcohol

and drug services to increase services to Yukon residents, which allows our commitment to Yukoners to deliver a people-centred approach to wellness that helps Yukoners thrive.

In addition, we have completed research on the prevalence of fetal alcohol spectrum disorder, cognitive and mental health disorders, and substance abuse issues in Yukon's corrections population.

Working collaboratively through our one-government approach with the Department of Education and Department of Justice in the Yukon has proven to be beneficial in meeting the needs of Yukoners.

Today, I am proud to say that, in my role as a health minister, I will chair the FASD federal-provincial-territorial ministers working group. I want to further highlight that our one-government approach has brought together eight territorial departments and several community agencies to develop an FASD plan. The public and community engagement for the first steps of the plan is currently underway. We have invested \$500,000 to support the key priorities identified in the FASD inter-agency advisory committee.

Because we know how important prevention is, we continue to expand maternal and prenatal community-delivered supports to all Yukoners. FASD awareness supports and prevention continue to be a priority for this government, and we will work diligently with our community partners and our national and federal counterparts.

The Whistle Bend continuing care facility, with an opening date planned for the fall of 2018, was a project our government evaluated and made changes to in order to better serve Yukon's aging population. These changes ensure that our rural communities are not left behind, as was the approach of the former conservative Yukon Party government. This government remains committed to collaborative solutions that promote aging in place.

Our human resource planning and program design is taking place with special attention to supporting our Yukon College graduates in the health care field. This new facility will provide state-of-the-art design with specialized input from long-term care staff, elders and seniors, among other stakeholders.

Just last month, we completed the Salvation Army Centre of Hope with an increase of 25 emergency shelter beds and 20 transitional-living units. This is a perfect example of department collaboration and provides good insight into why my portfolios of Health and Social Services and Yukon Housing Corporation work best together. This facility opened its doors in October and they are working on the day programming component of their service delivery as we speak. The transitional living units fill a much-needed gap in the territory's housing stock and provide those persons a transitional plan.

The most important thing that we can do is meet our Yukoners where they are at. The department and I are working to make sure that this new people-centred approach is at the forefront of everything that we do. The Housing First

approach with the involvement and collaboration of community organizations is better aligned to provide services to the Salvation Army clientele. This is a testament to doing things differently.

Last winter, we supported Kwanlin Dün in adding 10 new beds to the Whitehorse emergency shelter capacity by providing funding to open a temporary shelter.

Rural communities cannot be forgotten. For the past 14 years, our rural communities have not been provided the supports they needed, nor have they been heard. We are proud to share that we have provided supports to Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nation to open a pilot shelter in Dawson City in the spring of 2017.

Our work continues. We are working collaboratively with Yukon First Nations and other orders of government and our stakeholders. Health services in the north need to meet Yukoners needs. We work with the Hospital Corporation, as you heard during Committee of the Whole. We have recruited an orthopaedic surgeon and a pediatrician to improve Yukoners' access to health care in the territory. This will reduce wait-times, provide direct access to care and reduce costs by limiting the number of out-of-territory physician visits required as well as the number of out-of-territory medical travel visits.

Health care costs in this country are high and will always be on the rise. We are proud of the new agreement that we just signed with the Yukon Medical Association valued at \$6.9 million for five years. That contributes to improving the delivery of front-line health services to Yukoners through a collaborative care model.

We have worked with the Department of Education to expand the grade 6 immunization program to introduce free HPV immunization to Yukon boys and older, at-risk males. This is incredibly important as gender-based immunization for women will not solely address the HPV in our communities.

Colorectal cancer is the second highest cause of cancer that is in the Yukon for men and the third highest for women. Our government has launched Yukon's colon cancer screening and awareness campaign to address this.

Our government listened to Yukoners, and we recognized the archaic policies of the conservative Yukon Party government with regard to the LGBTQ-two-spirit community. To carry out the Liberal government's commitment, we are conducting a review of legislation policies and practices to ensure that the Yukon government meets the rules and social standards of the LGBTQ-two-spirit communities in a non-discriminatory fashion. Our government has removed the requirement for sex-reassignment surgery before a person can change their sex on their birth registration through amendments to the *Vital Statistics Act* approved by the Legislative Assembly this spring. We have heard from the LGBTQ community, including parents, and we are working to address their concerns and to provide the support this community is asking for. Our vision is a healthy and safe Yukon for all.

We have awarded more than \$300,000 to six organizations to support the prevention of violence against

indigenous women and girls. This relates directly to our priorities, which state that our investments contribute to healthy and vibrant sustainable communities.

This government also understands that Yukoners need homes, safe places and places to thrive. In my role as Minister responsible for Yukon Housing Corporation — even though it is very integrated with Health and Social Services, I can point to many great accomplishments. I am proud to share that the houses that are under construction — the Yukon Housing Corporation is working on the next five-year strategic plan for housing in Yukon. That would be the Yukon Housing Corporation Board along with the staff.

We are participating in the Safe at Home plan — a community-led action plan — to end and prevent homelessness in Yukon. A key component of the Safe at Home plan, and a priority of this government, is implementing the Housing First care model. I spoke often of this model in this House because it will radically change the way homelessness and Yukoners receive supports. As planning has begun on implementing our Housing First care model we have hosted two forums this past spring and summer to begin this work. Beyond planning, we have also extended the municipal matching construction program with an additional \$1 million available in 2017 and 2018.

Through the same program, 19 additional housing projects have been approved. These projects are of the creation of individual sites, 18 of which are in Whitehorse and one of which is in Dawson City. These projects will provide much-needed housing in the territory. We are also working hard to improve existing Yukon Housing Corporation stock. So far this year, we have completed exterior energy upgrades to nine staff and social housing units. We have also converted two single-family units into duplexes resulting in four newly renovated units. This allows the housing stocks that we have to be more energy efficient and cost-effective.

Energy assessments on social housing have been completed in Carcross, Teslin and Haines Junction, allowing us to continue to make our best efforts on evidence-based decisions on addressing the deterioration of our aging housing stock.

In Watson Lake, the affordable housing construction program is supporting the development of a new affordable housing duplex, providing two new housing options in that community. In Carmacks, we are proceeding with the construction of four units on senior social housing. The tender for the design and construction of these units is expected in late winter of 2018. We are working with the Ross River Dena Council to transfer up to five residents in the community.

In Whitehorse, we are providing a half-million dollars so that 10 new units in a 360° Design Build multi-residential building on Hawkins Street will have affordable rents for the next 10 years. We anticipate this project to be completed this spring.

We have released “Looking for Housing”, a one-stop-shop website that provides valuable information to those looking for housing services and those looking to rent or buy a home. This is a brand-new initiative in the Yukon. Our homes

and communities need to be safe and Yukoners have been clear about the value of having space and places to enjoy our beautiful territory.

Our greatest space here in the Yukon is our environment. I’m very proud and honoured to have been given the position of the Minister of Environment. Our team has had ongoing engagement and partnership with First Nations on a variety of issue, including those regarding the protection and responsible use of our land.

We are working together on shared interests, which has resulted — and will result — in better outcomes for all Yukoners. The strength in partnership with indigenous people contribute to traditional and local knowledge being implemented into land planning and management. The Arctic National Wildlife Refuge and its protection is incredibly important to the people of north Yukon and continues to be supported by my colleagues in this Liberal government. This last spring, this House unanimously passed a motion in support of ANWR and we continue to support the activities and interests of the Vuntut Gwitchin Government, which is actively lobbying to protect the sacred calving grounds of the Porcupine caribou.

I would also like to take this time to address the relationship between our wild and domestic animals in Yukon. We have the *Animal Health Act*, which addresses the relationship that we never really looked at in the past due to potential lack of regulations on how the wild and domestic animals interact with one another. We have started the process. Our government, with the input from Yukon First Nations and key stakeholder groups, and in partnership with Yukon Energy, Mines and Resources, are developing the new regulations needed to properly protect and preserve our animals. It will reflect what we heard from our engagement. It is designed to support the developing agricultural industry while also protecting the herd.

The Yukon landscape is changing. Our government has chosen to take a hard-line approach to addressing the impact of climate change in our region, our nation and our global world. Nationally, Yukon’s perspective played a part in shaping the pan-Canadian framework on clean energy and clean growth. Regionally, we are working with our neighbours to address a northern adaptation strategy. The secretariat is leading Yukon government’s action to address climate change while collaborating and coordinating across the government and across Canada. Together, we can write our story on adaptation.

To wrap up, I want to just say thank you to all of my colleagues for their input together. Mahsi’ cho.

**Ms. White:** I thank my colleagues for the opportunity to speak today. Before I even get into the points of this motion, there are a couple of things that I want to say first. We would hope that, based on all of the speaking notes that you have had, it has been broader than just the platform commitments or the mandate letters. It is critically important, I think, that we look outside. A year ago things look different. The financial state of the territory looked different. What we



thought we could accomplish — each of us — every party and our different platforms, it was maybe different from the reality. My hope is always that when you make decisions or you are looking at solutions, I am hopeful because we have often talked about how you are looking for solutions. I hope that when we are looking for those solutions, we look outside of just the mandate letters and that we expand on the platform.

The platform was a collection of ideas, but if an entire government mandate is based only on the platform and it doesn't expand, then it will be too narrow because circumstances change in the territory. The circumstances for our people who live here — the financial circumstances — it is hard to tell where we are going to be even two years from now. My hope is always that you can look at that mandate letter, but that you expand out from there because if we just look narrowly like that, my concern is that there won't be the flexibility or fluidity that is required in government to address those issues.

I fundamentally believe that the needs of the communities will change. The needs of the people will change, and it is really up to you as government to make sure that you can meet those changes.

Instead of talking from this motion perspective and coming at it from a perspective similar to the government's side, I just want to highlight some of the concerns that I have. That is just based on — I told Chuck at CHON FM this morning that I was an expert on the opposition side now because this is my sixth year. I have a lot of familiarity with what that means. I tell people all of the time that at the NDP office, people don't really come to see me when things are going awesomely. They don't start off and come in and say: "Hey, Member for Takhini-Kopper-King, things are really fantastic and I want to tell you about them." What happens when people come to see me is they highlight —

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

**Speaker:** You can self-identify.

**Ms. White:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

What happens when people come into my office is that typically people come to see me when they are in times of crisis. What I would like to highlight today are just a couple of the areas that, underneath the points in this motion, are things that I would put out there for government to maybe take a look at. These are from the very personal experiences of the people who I meet on a daily basis and this is what I have dealt with for six years.

It wasn't different before with the other government. The issues still existed. The challenge is that the issues continue to exist and sometimes you might not even know that they are there because you maybe haven't had that opportunity to have that conversation with someone who is going through this. What I am giving you right now is just an overview of things that I have noticed in the past six years. You can take them however you like, but this is the encouragement to expand from the mandate letters — expand from the platform.

When I look at the first point — a people-centred approach to wellness that helps Yukoners thrive. I appreciate the idea. That is what every government should do, but I think

about the individuals who are hoping to travel to support sick family members when they are medevaced out of the Yukon and are then denied travel in times of crisis. I am not sure if people are aware, but there is not really an appeal process for that.

You can't contact the department and say: "Well, I disagree with this. If my loved one is going for open-heart surgery and there is the possibility that they will die, although they've been medevaced from one institution to another, it does not mean that a family member shouldn't be there." I would like to put out medical travel as an issue.

I think about the individuals who are forced into precarious living situations. Either they're not able to find affordable rent — so it's great — and I mean it's interesting to listen to the media right now question about why there are so many people on the Yukon Housing wait-list list. I can tell you. We have six housing navigators in town and for the first time ever, people are getting help making housing applications, because if you haven't had an opportunity to help with a housing application then you don't know what those six pages look like and they are daunting. Why has their number doubled? I can tell you my thought — it is because for the first time ever, people are getting help making those applications.

Out of the 200 people on the wait-list right now, I know first-hand that within my riding I have seniors who are in their own homes who I have helped fill out those housing applications because they can't stay in those homes. They can't maintain them, they can't shovel the driveway, and they can't navigate the stairs anymore. So the list — yes, it looks really big, but I think we can dig into the list and try to figure it out. How do we adapt that?

I also think about the people who couch surf. I think about the women I worked with in corrections because when they were released they didn't have an ARC to go to and they didn't qualify for Kaushee's, so what that meant is that they went into housing that wasn't safe. They went back into old patterns because they just needed a roof over their heads. That was one of the very first things that I said in 2011 — the one thing I wanted was to make sure there was transitional housing for women leaving corrections. I can tell you today that there still is not transitional housing for women leaving corrections.

I think about the individuals who are transferred from one hospital to another hospital in a different community. They're transferred away from family, friends and support. I understand that the hospital is full, but what is the criteria and how do we make that decision? How do we decide that one person from outside Whitehorse should go to Watson Lake and one person from inside Whitehorse should go to Dawson City? I don't know what the answer is, but I can tell you that it's problematic.

I think about the nurses in communities who are leaving their jobs due to lack of support and job burnout. In 2012, I met one of the nurses in Beaver Creek who works for six months of the year. She's leaving her job now — one of the two nurses in Beaver Creek — and that causes me great

concern because she has been working up there for years. So what was the straw that finally she said she couldn't do it anymore? Are we doing exit interviews? Are we finding out what was the catalyst to that change because she is committed to her community, but she's not going to stay in that job.

I think about the families who want mental health services for the Yukon children or teenagers, not only in rural Yukon but in Whitehorse as well. I don't know if the House is familiar with this, but there is an age requirement for mental health services. I have friends who have young children who are not in double digits and who have tried self-harm. They can't get help because they don't fall within what the blanket says is when mental health services should be available. I want you to look at that because that's really important.

I think about the number of suicides that have happened in the last couple of years — even in the last couple of months. They have such an impact in the community and it's on the young people and it's on the old people and we know now that suicide — it can be anywhere. How do we approach the wellness that includes suicide prevention and supports for the survivors of communities? How do we make sure that those communities are supported? So after a traumatic incident like this, it's great that we can send counsellors in for a short amount of time, but the pain isn't gone three days later. It resonates.

We have talked a lot about the pebble in the water here and how it keeps on going out. Well that kind of tragedy in a community — it just spreads — so how are we going to address that? I mean, I have some ideas for some of these, but let's be honest, I don't have all the solutions. No one in this room does, right? We have this fantastic public service and I would suggest that they have got some solutions if they are given the opportunity, so maybe we should look that way too.

So on point number two about making strategic investments that build healthy, vibrant and sustainable communities — I am going to hazard a guess that this should be any government's goal — of any political stripe and any colour — because if that wasn't the goal of government, then I would probably say we are doing a pretty bad job. I have questions about what that looks like. You know, what do I think that looks like? The people who come into my office — what does it look like for them? I would say easy access to health and mental health services because we talk about red tape for industry, but we don't talk about red tape for people. If you can't be your best advocate, Mr. Speaker, this system will chew you up and spit you out and then you come to my office and then we help. I'm a red-tape cutter for medical services.

People think it is easy access to quality, accessible and affordable daycare. My sister — I use her as an example all the time. She left a good-paying job because it didn't pay well enough for two young children to be in daycare. She got a job and she drives bus and one kid has gotten older and is in full-time school and the other one rides the bus and it works better, but affordable daycare should be one of those things.

There are things about seniors. I talk a lot about my seniors complex and if anyone wants to visit with me one

time, I would love to take you there — they're fun and we can have tea in just about any unit. There's the concept about there being services for seniors to age in place. I didn't realize when I first got elected that I was going to talk about bathrooms for the first two years of being a politician. The reason I say that is because the bathtubs in the seniors complex were higher than my knee on the outside and when you got in, they were even deeper. How do we expect someone in their 80s to get in and out of their tub? It was a huge fear for people, so I want to make sure that we have services for seniors and that the buildings are built for aging in place. But, more than that, if we increased access to home care, then a lot of the people who are in the hospital right now who don't need to be there could still be at home.

When I was at a conference in Sri Lanka, there was a man from Jamaica and he was talking about how he was getting ready to give his presentation and he didn't have time to write it on the plane and he was going to write it when he got to Sri Lanka. He was shocked that he had to pay for Internet in his big, fancy hotel on this trip. He said that in Jamaica — in what is viewed as a Third World country — Internet is free and it's accessible anywhere on the island. He said that they as government made the decision that connectivity was really important.

I would suggest that if we want people to access the Aurora school online, or we want people to build up the technology fields and ideas, we need to make sure that there is access to Internet. In that same breath, the cheapest way to access Internet is through a cellphone now, so how do we make sure that we can support the technologies in communities?

I think about safe roads. I, like the Premier — and I'm sure many members in this Chamber now — have driven every road there is in the Yukon. I recently replaced my windshield because of some of those drives. I can tell you I am glad that it is not full of cracks right now. Safe roads are really important and that means making sure that they get plowed when stuff happens and we all know that. We do a tribute every year to Highways and Public Works when the plows are out because it is a really critical service.

It is making sure that they are safe — safe in summer and in winter — and making sure that people can get around. One of the things that we highlighted — and the previous Member for Mayo-Tatchun made this really important point. Recreation — we can talk about the soccer complex as an example — cannot only happen in the City of Whitehorse. Recreation has to be available in all communities. Carmacks — I want them to have an ice rink. They have wanted an ice rink for a really long time. I want Dawson City to have their complex. It is about the concept that, if you want healthy communities, healthy families and healthy kids, then you make sure they have access to activity. When I had the coffee shop at the Canada Games Centre, there could be naysayers and they would come in summer and say: "This place isn't worth the money. It was a terrible idea." My challenge was: "Well, why don't you come back in winter, and we will talk about this in the middle of November. Come and take a look

in the middle of November.” What we saw with the Canada Games Centre is that it gave families who weren’t naturally active the ability to access recreation easily. I would put a pitch out right now that if we really want people to be healthy, then we need to make sure that it is affordable for seniors, because when the rates went up and the ElderActive group couldn’t help people anymore as they were, a lot of seniors stopped going. I know about frozen shoulders and about mobility going down because, when the seniors used to use the pool — they can’t use it anymore because they can’t afford to go. That is important to me.

We talked before with the previous government about how great YuKonstruct is, and I agree. Well, we have schools with shop facilities around the territory, but they are not open year-round and they are not available to the communities. So how can we broaden that out? How can we make sure that — instead of those shops sitting empty, they are available all year-round? How can we make sure that schools in communities become focal points for social events when there is no community centre? How do we make that available? How do we make that open and accessible? I am not sure that people in the city of Whitehorse even know that they can call and book a classroom in a school. They can. You can access schools. They are community spaces, but no one knows that because we don’t tell them about it.

Things have changed a bit, but the protection through the appropriate reimbursement in support and training for emergency workers — so volunteer firefighters and ambulance staff. For a long time, I was on the side of the conversation saying that people can’t afford this equipment on their own. How do we make sure that they don’t have pay for it? That was a circular conversation. So you have the ability; let’s make sure that the volunteers aren’t paying out of pocket to be able to do that.

We talk about transportation. Understanding that Greyhound is changing their model because they are a business — a for-profit business — what is really critically lacking in the territory is community connectivity and public transportation. When the Husky Bus formed, that was pretty amazing. I remember having an initial conversation — and he wasn’t sure that his business would go. We said: “Well try it. See what happens.” It is now a successful business. How can we encourage other things like that? If someone was going to look at — for example, in Keno-Mayo, we are going to go down a different part of the highway. If we included things like medical travel, we would encourage people, instead of driving themselves, they could take this safe transport. We would remove the risk of them travelling by themselves on the highway or, better yet, if you don’t have a car or a driver’s licence or the ability to pay, now government can encourage business but can also make sure that people can get to medical appointments.

A high school in every community — wouldn’t that be a dream? — so that students would not be sent away at a critical time in their development or they don’t have to come into the big city — I have talked to students in rural communities about how that didn’t go so well. Then, if a family chooses or

a student chooses to come into town, how do we make sure they have the supports to do well? That is not a new issue; that was an issue when I was in school. That is still an issue, and I’ve been out of school for a couple of days, for sure.

I think about housing in communities, and I think about how, as a community, you encourage new housing. We know in Mayo, for example, that people want to build but there is no real spot to do that right now. So how do we encourage new housing and projects in communities? If we have some of these mines talking about opening up, how do we make sure that, instead of having fly-in and fly-out, we have investment in the communities we’re working near? Those are just some of the ideas for that one.

Priority number three was establishing strong government-to-government relationships with First Nations that foster reconciliation. When the truth and reconciliation recommendations came out and there started to be a shift nationally, that felt so good. That felt really, really good. I can tell you that in 2011, when I used to go to community events, there was no acknowledgement of the traditional territory where that event was being held. I remember when that shift happened, and I remember the first time I was somewhere and it was said. I was blown away because finally it was happening. I appreciate that the Premier, in his first speech, acknowledged where we were standing, because that hadn’t happened on that level.

I do appreciate that National Aboriginal Day is a holiday. I do. I hope that we can work together and encourage Ottawa to follow suit — because wouldn’t it be great if, federally, they looked at what we were doing here? I honestly can’t expect anything less from you guys than this point.

Mr. Speaker, government members and colleagues on this side, the point I want to say is that no one has all the solutions. When questions are asked and the answer is, “It’s not in my mandate letter” or “It wasn’t in our platform” — but the issue exists — I’m just asking you to expand your scope. I just want you to look a little further. Maybe have a conversation with someone you haven’t talked to before, because when the questions are coming from the opposition — and the Premier knows this, because when he asked questions, he asked questions because they were coming to him. The same thing is happening on this side. I can for sure say that it’s happening for the Third Party, and I’m sure it’s happening from the Official Opposition — and it must be interesting for them to have that kind of approach that I had to go through.

My request is to look outside. Broaden your perspective and know that, when points are being made, it’s not confrontational. It’s really asking to just expand that scope. So don’t just look at the mandate letters and don’t just look at that platform. My plea to you is to look outside.

I appreciate the motion. I appreciate the Member for Lake Laberge’s use of the rules on multiple occasions. I thank the Speaker for the opportunity to speak, and I thank my colleagues for the opportunity to speak as well.

**Mr. Adel:** It's an honour to rise today to speak on Motion No. 174, brought forward by my colleague from Porter Creek Centre.

I would like to take my time today to discuss this government's priorities and how they have guided the work that my fellow colleagues and I have accomplished in this last year.

I would like to start by speaking specifically to the first priority. Our people-centred approach to wellness helps Yukoners.

Mr. Speaker, this priority is of great importance to me and it has guided our team to accomplish work that is truly focused on people, on Yukoners and their families. Taking a people-centred approach means people are at the centre of every decision we make as a government. These decisions aren't just for today; they are for generations out. We have to keep that in mind as we govern.

A few of the topics under this priority I want to highlight today include aging in place; the steps this government is taking to improve access to mental-wellness support; to propose presumptive and preventive legislation for PTSD in the workplace; and legislation passed this spring that makes it illegal to discriminate against a person on the grounds of gender identity and gender expression.

These actions taken by this government are truly working to ensure that Yukoners have the proper supports they need to ensure the health of themselves and their family members.

Recently in this House, I had the honour to bring forward a motion for debate on aging in place. This is a matter of importance to my Copperbelt North constituents. This motion urged the government to create solutions to promote aging in place and a full spectrum of care by keeping the Whistle Bend continuing care development to 150 beds, working with Yukoners, health professionals and stakeholders to find solutions that offer alternatives and transitions between home care and full-time continuing care. We don't need to pre-institutionalize people. It's important that we take all of those things into consideration.

Providing community-based services that allow seniors to age in place to the greatest extent possible is an important issue. I applaud the government for committing to find solutions that allow Yukoners to age in place. Over the last decade, the number of Yukoners between the ages of 60 and 74 has grown by 88 percent. It's nice to know that I'm in a growing part of the population.

In the mandate letter that was given to the Minister of Health and Social Services by Mr. Silver, our Premier, the minister was tasked to work with Yukoners to create solutions to promote aging in place and a full spectrum of care — both public and —

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

#### Point of order

**Speaker:** Order. Member for Lake Laberge, on a point of order.

**Mr. Cathers:** I apologize for interrupting the member, but he did just refer to the Premier by name. Of course, that is not in keeping with the Standing Orders.

#### Speaker's ruling

**Speaker:** That's a sustained point of order, Member for Copperbelt North.

**Mr. Adel:** I apologize, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** Yes, thank you. Proceed.

**Mr. Adel:** — and to the Premier.

Both public and private aging-in-place solutions — while keeping the Whistle Bend continuing care development at 150 beds.

I fully support this direction, Mr. Speaker, because I believe it is important that the government do all possible to find solutions for Yukoners who want to age in place, whether that means aging in their homes or in their own communities. It is important that Yukoners have access to care, and we support that need.

It can be very challenging for family members to care for aging relatives. The more supports that are available for families with options, such as home care in our communities and neighbourhoods, the better for everyone.

I appreciate the efforts that are being made by the Minister of Health and Social Services to collaborate with Yukon communities, to work together to continue to address the important issue of aging in place by speaking with Yukoners and communities themselves.

I also want to highlight the steps this government is taking to improve access to mental wellness support. I am proud to support this government's decision to hire 11 new mental health workers for Yukon communities. Mental health is so important; I doubt there is a single person in this room who has not been impacted by mental health issues. These 11 mental health positions mark a major step forward in the government's dedicated work to improve mental health services in rural Yukon. I know that the department has been working hard to recruit eight new mental wellness and substance abuse counsellors, two mental health nurses and one new mental wellness and substance abuse therapist.

I want to applaud the department for their good work. I also applaud the steps that are being taken to ensure that all of these new positions will be integrated to work collaboratively with supports already on the ground, such as community health nurses, home care workers, regional social workers and First Nation staff. I was pleased to hear the Minister of Health and Social Services elaborate recently on how recruitment is underway for these positions and that the community hubs will be created in communities across the Yukon, including Dawson City, Haines Junction, Carmacks and Watson Lake. These hubs will provide specialist services to communities, generally including mental wellness and substance use counsellors, mental health nurses, child and youth counsellors, and therapists. The communities of Old Crow, Mayo, Ross River, Carcross and Teslin will all receive a mental wellness and substance use counsellor, and this person will be a

dedicated resource in the community. This person will be a connection point to specialized services throughout the community hubs as well. This is a great step forward as a territory in saying that we are serious about addressing mental wellness and there's no longer room for stigma. Mental wellness is important, and I am proud that this is a priority for this government.

Another recent step that exemplifies the government's commitment to a people-centred approach to wellness that helps Yukoners thrive is the recent Bill No. 8, which addresses PTSD in the workplace. Bill No. 8 fulfills an important commitment of our Liberal government to improve the prevention of PTSD in the workplace and presumption for emergency response workers. Bill No. 8 has two parts.

Part 1 proposes amendments to the *Workers' Compensation Act* to provide the promised PTSD presumption for emergency response workers. This proposed change will ensure that all emergency response workers diagnosed with PTSD will not need to verify that the injury is work-related as that would be presumed. It's time to work to reduce the stigma around PTSD and encourage workers who may be struggling to seek the help they need.

Part 2 proposes amendments to the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* to permit the creation of regulations aimed at preventing psychological injuries, including PTSD. The amendment addresses feedback from the public that more emphasis should be placed on preventing psychological injury in the workplace. This bill will ensure that the prevention of physical and psychological injuries is given equal emphasis in the workplace. I want to thank the Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board and the minister responsible for the good work that is being done to bring this legislation forward.

I also want to applaud the Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board for the awareness campaign they have been running that aims to let Yukoners know that all workers are covered by the board and they are all eligible for benefits, including treatment if they suffer a professionally diagnosed psychological injury, such as post-traumatic stress disorder, at work.

I'm proud that this government signed a moratorium of understanding on mining with First Nation chiefs, committing all parties to work together for a strong economy. I urge the government today to continue down this path.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to speak to two motions I had the pleasure of bringing forward to the House on the fourth priority of this government — our diverse growing economy.

The first motion I want to speak to is Motion No. 31, urging the government to continue the work for small-business owners and the Yukon Financial Advisory Panel to reduce small-business taxes. One of the first things our Liberal government did was to reduce corporate taxes from 15 to 12 percent.

Lower tax rates help to create an attractive business environment, as we spoke to earlier today, and that helps the Yukon grow. I am confident that this government will

continue to work tirelessly to ensure that small businesses in the Yukon are taxed less and receive increased support.

I'm proud to support the work as vice-chair of the community development fund. With approximately a \$3-million budget, we receive requests from all over the Yukon to help fund the projects that will benefit stronger, more vibrant communities. As the member opposite of the Third Party was saying, this is where we help support sports and vibrant communities in doing things that maybe they can't accomplish on their own, but we can give them a leg up.

We have met four times since January and have approved many projects in communities across the Yukon, from Old Crow to Mayo to Whitehorse to Carmacks. Approved projects include an exciting range of initiatives, upgrading sports complexes, revitalizing historic churches and supporting the construction of the Yukon's first mosque.

With the dedicated support of the economic unit staff and the Minister of Economic Development and the Minister of Community Services, important and valuable community projects receive the support they need.

I would also like to highlight the work I've done through boards and committees, of which I am chair. I am proud to participate in the important work of appointing passionate and skilled Yukoners to boards and committees that help shape the Yukon and move it forward.

Since taking office on December 3, this government has taken action on the priorities that we put forth when we first started, and I urge the government to continue this good work. I want to applaud all members of this House and my colleagues for the commitment and heartfelt effort that goes into making the Yukon a better place for all Yukoners.

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** We don't have a lot more time here today, but I did want to get on the record and speak to this motion. I want to thank my colleagues on both sides of the House for their comments today.

Mr. Speaker, I want to start back with the fact that it is the one-year anniversary of the election, pretty much. I would like to again thank the Member for Porter Creek Centre for bringing forward this motion.

A year ago today, everybody in this House — everybody who is sitting here now — was probably getting pretty nervous — down to the wire of the election campaign. Members on both sides of the House — several questions running through their minds. Chief among them was basically: Would we have a job? If you told me today that you weren't nervous, well, I would have to call a point of order on you. It's one of those things where, if you aren't nervous, maybe you shouldn't be in this job.

Also the questions have been: What capacity? What's going to happen with the team that you campaigned with? Some people in this Chamber waited well into the evening of November 7 to find that answer, not getting final confirmation until a few days afterward due to the required recount for one riding. At the end of the process, voters elected, for the first time since 2000, a Yukon Liberal majority government, and

we're very thankful and grateful for the opportunity and that responsibility.

As we near the end of the first year in office, we do want to thank the voters for affording us the privilege. Providing the public with an update on our progress to date is absolutely an honour as well, and that was the purpose of today's debate. As I look back on the last year, I'm very grateful for that opportunity to serve, and I'm pleased with the headway that we are making in implementing our agenda.

While we waited for the outgoing administration to vacate the office spaces, we went to work on transitioning to a new government. Staff was hired, a Cabinet was put together, mandate letters were drafted, ministers were given priorities to guide them in their work and we released those letters publicly so that Yukoners could see exactly what the ministers were tasked with for their priorities. We took the time to reorganize our platform commitments into four principles that you see reflected in this motion today.

One of the first challenges we were met with was the state of the books, and I'm not going to go into that too much here today. We have talked about it a lot already. We knew that it wasn't as rosy as was being told. Over the past 10 years, the government revenue growth of 1.7 percent of real dollars was not keeping pace with the spending growth of 2.5 percent per year. We did hear the members opposite dispute those numbers in their speech today, and we urge them to talk directly to the Financial Advisory Panel. That's where the numbers came from and it would be an interesting debate to have maybe even here in the Legislative Assembly — maybe get them to appear as witnesses, and the member opposite can ask them directly where they got their numbers. I would relish that debate.

Suffice to say, we created a new unit in the Department of Finance based upon the situation we found ourselves in. I wanted to, as the Minister of Finance, speak a little about that today. We believe that every government program must be reviewed periodically to ensure that it meets the needs of Yukoners. Program evaluation, in our opinion on this side of the House, is the cornerstone to sound public management and it allows for governments to make decisions about policy and program that are based upon evidence.

A program evaluation unit will help us to make the right investment decisions regarding existing programs and services. We're excited about that. Evaluations of various types have been occurring throughout government for some time. However, there has not been a coordinated, consistent approach or methodology.

We announced this spring that this coordination and leadership will now be undertaken by the Department of Finance. The reference to the lack of an overarching policy on program evaluations has also been mentioned previously in Auditor General reports.

Program evaluation functions are common in other jurisdictions, Mr. Speaker, and they usually reside within the Department of Finance. As the evaluation function matures within an organization, programs can be designed from the start for effective evaluation, ensuring that outcomes are

clearly stated, data is identified to support performance management, and a regular monitoring process is established to help maximize the efficiency and the effectiveness of the programs and investments.

It all sounds very riveting, but it is very important financial oversight that we in the Yukon Liberal government believe in and have made happen in the first year of our mandate.

Sound financial management involves making policy and program choices based upon evidence of success, directing resources toward those initiatives that prove effective and redesigning programs where evaluations show intended outcomes are not being achieved, or where resources are not being used as efficiently or effectively as they could be.

We have also changed the way that we do the budget itself. There will be a main budget in the spring and a very minor adjustment in the fall, instead of the previous method of the main budget in the spring and then tens of millions of dollars being added again in the fall. We also intend to actually spend the capital dollars we budget. This is going to be an ongoing process, but this is our goal.

For many years, the previous government routinely announced larger and larger capital budgets, but failed to actually spend that money every year. So in other words, more accurate budgets are on the way. The spring budget will always be accompanied by the annual economic forecast — another new initiative. The issue of the territory's finances will certainly be at the forefront for the foreseeable future.

Another accomplishment of our government has been to fix the Sitting dates of this Legislature in the fall and in the spring — a small procedural change that will end the uncertainty around Sitting dates that has been a hallmark for a long time. The public and thousands of public servants will know well in advance, instead of weeks in advance, when the Legislature will be in session. Of course, there is the debate about spring break and people trying to prepare for that. You can't pick a legislative session based upon a spring break, but what you can do is make sure that people can make their plans by having a set date. More important to that process is making sure that we get all of our finances in place and do the accountability piece up front on a steady date. With a steady date, people now know how to prepare for that date.

Last week, officials from the Yukon Housing Corporation appeared in this House. They were the last of the three major corporations to do so within the first year of our mandate. This will continue to occur annually. In recent years, this wasn't always the case. We strongly believe in being open and accountable with regard to arm's-length corporations like the Hospital Corporation, the Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board, the Yukon Development Corporation, and the Yukon Energy Corporation.

Mr. Speaker, the piece of legislation that I have to say that I'm most proud of — and it has been mentioned here a few times — is that of making National Aboriginal Day a statutory holiday. I've spoken in this Legislative Assembly before about the summer previous, when I met with the Grand Chief of the Council of Yukon First Nations and I told him

that I hoped to see him at the ceremony the next year, if we had the opportunity to form government and make that a statutory holiday. That came to pass. One of my proudest moments as a Premier was in marking National Aboriginal Day in Dawson City with the people of the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in, with Chief Roberta Joseph and also with Grand Chief Peter Johnston and his family.

This item of course speaks to our strong government-to-government relationships with First Nations, which fosters reconciliation. Resuscitating the Yukon Forum is another promise that we made and that we've kept. It was on life support when we arrived. We met regularly with Yukon First Nation governments at the table and not in front of a judge.

After coming to office, it was a priority of mine to meet with all the Yukon chiefs within the first 30 days of our mandate. I believe I met with all, but I did miss one of those chiefs in that time frame. I apologized directly to that chief and have met with that chief regularly since. Over the last year, I have continued to meet regularly with First Nation leaders of all the nations, of all the governments, across Yukon.

**Speaker:** Order, please, Mr. Premier.

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

*Debate on Motion No. 174 accordingly adjourned*

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