



Yukon Legislative Assembly

Number 54

2nd Session

34th Legislature

HANSARD

Wednesday, November 15, 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
Hon. Sandy Silver	Klondike	Premier Minister of the Executive Council Office; Finance
Hon. Ranj Pillai	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
Hon. Tracy-Anne McPhee	Riverdale South	Government House Leader Minister of Education; Justice
Hon. John Streicker	Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes	Minister of Community Services; Minister responsible for the French Language Services Directorate; Yukon Liquor Corporation and the Yukon Lottery Commission
Hon. Pauline Frost	Vuntut Gwitchin	Minister of Health and Social Services; Environment; Minister responsible for the Yukon Housing Corporation
Hon. Richard Mostyn	Whitehorse West	Minister of Highways and Public Works; the Public Service Commission
Hon. Jeanie Dendys	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

Ted Adel	Copperbelt North
Paolo Gallina	Porter Creek Centre
Don Hutton	Mayo-Tatchun

OFFICIAL OPPOSITION

Yukon Party

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

THIRD PARTY

New Democratic Party

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

LEGISLATIVE STAFF

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

**Yukon Legislative Assembly
Whitehorse, Yukon
Wednesday, November 15, 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 remembrance of Don Frizzell

Ms. Van Bibber: I am pleased to rise on behalf of the House to pay tribute to a long-time Yukoner, Don Frizzell. Don was born October 1, 1939 in Grand Prairie, Alberta and was the oldest of two sons. He grew up in Dawson Creek where he met and married Muriel Monk.

Don had always loved trucks and trucking — so what else to do but, along with a friend, buy a trucking company in Vernon, BC? During his time in Vernon, he got his pilot's licence and his love of machinery was turned to the buying and selling of planes. Don eventually sold his share of the business and moved to Williams Lake, BC and got involved with logging trucks and hauling big machinery. Awhile later, he took a position as terminal manager of the freight division of White Pass & Yukon Route in Whitehorse, Yukon. This was 1980. He later transferred to Dawson City as fuel plant manager, as well as worked at a family placer mine near Mount Nansen. Don made deals with a handshake and was quick to offer his help in any way he could. In 1986, they moved to Whitehorse where he and a partner took over the Esso bulk station, later to be known as Frizzell Petroleum.

Then on to something completely different — the Frizzells bought and operated Willow Printers. During this time, he was also contracted to open the Mackenzie Petroleum Agency in Whitehorse. As one can see, Don had a wide range of knowledge and interest in all he took on during his work career. He was also a board member of the Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board for several years, a member of the Yukon Order of Pioneers and also a strong member of the Masonic Lodge. He had joined the Masons as a young man in Vernon, BC, and had received his 50-year jewel and certificate.

Many people would never know that Don was a philanthropist. He gave quietly, often anonymously, and always generously. His wife of 57 years, Muriel, his three daughters Cindy, Sandra and Lorelee, and his grandchildren are left with many stories about their ventures through the years.

A Masonic funeral was held on July 6, 2017, and those who knew Don Frizzell will continue to speak of him and his contribution to our communities. His ready smile will be missed.

Please help me welcome a few guests today: Muriel Frizzell; Lorelee Frizzell; Cindy Wolsynuk; Jeff, Matt and Chase Wolsynuk; Sandra and Ralph Wohlfarth; Ulrike Wohlfarth-Levins; old family friends Tom and Mary Mickey; along with many members of the Masonic family and the Eastern Star family.

Applause

In recognition of National Addictions Awareness Week

Hon. Ms. Frost: Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today to recognize National Addictions Awareness Week, which runs from November 12 to 18 this year. This time is set aside each year to highlight issues and solutions to help address alcohol and other drug-related harm. Locally, it provides an opportunity for Yukoners to learn more about prevention, to talk about treatment and recovery, and to bring forward solutions for change.

I think we have all become much more aware of the seriousness of addictions with the arrival of fentanyl in the Yukon. Our territory is not exempt from the death sentence that this drug can give if used outside of a medical setting. It is important that we pay more attention than we have in the past.

Since September, Alcohol and Drug Services has employed a new opioid overdose prevention coordinator. The role of this part-time position is to provide training on how to use the take-home naloxone kit, liaise with the current distribution sites, distribute prevention materials and respond to questions from the public. We now have over 30 distribution sites for the take-home naloxone kit. Also, many public establishments have a kit on-site, including 14 schools across the Yukon.

The Yukon government has been actively engaged on the opioid issue since 2016 when fentanyl first became a concern in the territory. Health and Social Services supported the establishment of four working groups whose focus is on harm reduction, public awareness, surveillance, and health and social services reform. We have worked closely and will continue to cultivate strong partnerships with a broadening array of departments and organizations. We link with our national partners on this very important matter.

Health and Social Services, the office of the chief medical officer of health and partners are committed to continuing to improve rural addictions services and after-care. Along with supports to the Referred Care Clinic as a centre of expertise for opioid and addictions care, this will help to increase access to opioid substitution therapy and related social supports. We are moving toward integrating mental health services, child and adolescent therapeutic services, and alcohol and drug services to increase access to services for our Yukon residents. This will ensure that individuals receive timely and appropriate supports for their needs.

We are exploring opportunities to make navigating addictions treatment easier for clients, including cross-departmental work through the Department of Justice, Health and Social Services, and the Department of Education. We are also exploring on-the-land initiatives, examining how we can

provide innovative outcome-based, culturally based models of care. We continue to work with the Department of Education and our inter-agency, interdisciplinary working groups to identify substance use prevention strategies for both adults and youth.

Finally, this week is an opportunity to thank all those dedicated individuals and organizations who support Yukoners trying to deal with addictions in our communities.

It's hard, long work from all perspectives but is very essential and important.

Ms. McLeod: I rise today on behalf of the Official Opposition to recognize National Addictions Awareness Week. This is a week where, as a nation, we highlight the issues and possible solutions around the harmful effects of addictions. We all know people who suffer from addictions and the harmful effects that come as result.

It has been said that addictions are a symptom of a deeper problem and I am pleased that we are looking to provide enhanced mental health and wellness services. We can do more. Removing the stigma around mental health issues is a good path forward and I have seen improvements in this regard over time. Words matter and I commend all those working to encourage treatment and recovery from addictions and, of course, we're in full support of those people who are working to overcome their addictions.

We applaud the Yukon Public Service Commission and other agencies that work toward providing effective programs and services. Today, I would like to thank Tara Callaghan and Duane Esler from Alcohol and Drug Services in Watson Lake, who put together a week of activities to showcase alternatives and community support in the Town of Watson Lake.

Further, we thank the countless volunteers for their compassion and support for those suffering from addictions, including recovering addicts who put themselves out there and share their own experiences to help others toward the path to recovery.

Ms. White: I rise on behalf of the Yukon NDP caucus in recognition of National Addictions Awareness Week. Like my colleagues, I was looking at websites and articles talking about National Addictions Awareness Week, but I realized that although I do indeed believe that words matter, including removing the stigma around substance use, there are other words that reflect what is happening across Canada and in Yukon today. One word in particular would be crisis.

It has been said that the opioid epidemic is the single biggest health crisis faced by Canadians since AIDS in the 1980s. Just like AIDS activists before them, who stepped up to distribute condoms and clean needles when governments were in denial about the growing epidemic, the effort and harm reduction today has again largely fallen to volunteers and front-line harm reduction workers working for NGOs.

It's estimated that 2,458 people lost their lives to opioid overdoses in 2016 — estimated, because those are only the known numbers and they don't include losses in Quebec.

British Columbia is facing a frightening increase in overdoses this year and it's believed that, before the end of 2017, 1,400 people will die of overdoses in that province alone. To think that we're immune here in Yukon would be a mistake. This year alone there have been five confirmed opioid overdoses, with the understanding that this number is actually much higher. These lost lives represent mothers and fathers, aunts and uncles, brothers and sisters, sons and daughters. These lives had meaning, they had purpose and they knew love.

Mr. Speaker, the second crisis is maybe less visible, and that's the cost to the front-line workers and volunteers — that of trauma, burnout and loss. I grew up with Zoe Dodd and I looked up to her as a teenager. Now, as an adult, I'm in awe of the work she does. Zoe and her colleagues opened a safe injection site in Toronto's Moss Park in August of this year. Its three tents are set up every afternoon, no matter the weather, and open every day between 4:00 p.m. and 10:00 p.m. The effort in Moss Park has been led by 130 or so volunteers, and among them are people who use drugs, injection drug experts and 48 medical volunteers, which includes nurses, nurse practitioners and doctors. They have not only given their time, but they've raised money for the cause because this endeavour is currently being run solely on donations. I have been given an opportunity to see this crisis through the eyes of someone I know, love and respect. She has not only shared the heartache of loss — and there have been so many losses, Mr. Speaker — but she shares the successes.

On November 12, her post was so poignant — 90 days, 93 overdoses reversed. This week, I think of Zoe and her colleagues across the country who are working so hard to keep people safe.

Closer to home, I think about the paramedics and the outreach van workers, those at Blood Ties Four Directions, Many Rivers, the Salvation Army and the staff at Alcohol and Drug Services. Mr. Speaker, I could go on about what is missing and what needs to be done but frankly, I think the time for action is here today. No more talk, no more strategies, no more words — it's time for action.

Speaker: Introduction of visitors.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Mr. Silver: I would like to ask all my colleagues to join me in welcoming to the Legislative Assembly today from Ta'an Kwäch'än's Da Daghay Development Corporation, Mr. Ben Asquith.

Applause

Mr. Hassard: I would also like to ask members to join me in welcoming Ben's cousin who is here with him today, Mr. Chris Whyment.

Applause

Mr. Gallina: I just want to take a moment to recognize Gerard Tremblay, who is a constituent. It's encouraging to see

Gerard join us back in the gallery here today and take an interest in the business of this House. Gerard is being supported by an interpreter, Amanda Smith, who provides services to the deaf community.

Applause

Speaker: Are there any further introductions of visitors?

Are there returns or documents for tabling?

TABLING RETURNS AND DOCUMENTS

Hon. Ms. Dendys: Mr. Speaker, I have for tabling the interim report for the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, which we spoke about last week in a ministerial statement.

I also have for tabling the Yukon Geographical Place Names Board 2016-17 annual report.

Hon. Ms. Frost: I have a legislative return for tabling. On November 14, the Member for Takhini-Kopper King gave notice of Motion No. 203 regarding the federal disability tax credit. I have a formal response.

Speaker: Are there any further 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. Istchenko: I rise to give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to:

(1) continue to recognize the significance of the Porcupine caribou by lobbying the United States government and members of congress for protection of ANWR;

(2) continue to recognize the significance of the Shakkwak funding by lobbying the United States government and members of congress for the reinstatement of these funds; and

(3) continue to recognize that these two issues are of equal importance and the same time and effort should be put into addressing both concerns.

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

THAT this House urges the Yukon Hospital Corporation to uphold their patients' rights and responsibilities document by ensuring that patient and/or caregiver consent is given when transferring a patient to a community hospital due to bed shortage.

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

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Yukon Financial Advisory Panel final report

Hon. Mr. Silver: Earlier today, the Yukon Financial Advisory Panel released its final report. It contains a host of options that the Yukon government can consider to return its finances to a sustainable position. I want to thank the panel for their work over the last few months and also the over 800 Yukoners who participated. Thank you for being heard.

Next week, several members of the panel will appear as witnesses in this Chamber. This is an opportunity for the members of this House to ask the panel members questions directly. As a territory, we are facing financial challenges. Growth in spending has outpaced growth rates for revenues over the past 10 years — not debatable, this is a fact. As a result, the financial position of the territory has deteriorated. Now the financial report says — and I quote: “Early action is important...” It goes on to say: “The options open to the government are more numerous and the size of the fiscal actions are smaller the sooner concrete steps are taken.”

Do nothing was looked at as an option, but it is not prudent. Sitting on our hands and hoping for the best is not an option. The financial challenges are real and they must be addressed. Yukoners agree: “Do nothing” was not a preferred choice among those who participated in the public engagement. We have said from the beginning that we want to hear from Yukoners on the options that were put forward by the panel itself before weighing in as a government. Yukoners have said no to a sales tax. There will be no sales tax — no HST. There will be no layoffs of Government of Yukon employees. There will be no changes to the placer royalties either. This was a campaign commitment and we are not going to raise the royalties on placer miners. That said, Mr. Speaker, there are initiatives that can be undertaken to ensure that mining delivers more benefits to Yukoners.

At the Yukon Forum, we are already talking about changes to the resource royalty sharing arrangement under chapter 23 of the *Umbrella Final Agreement*. Improvements to the impact benefit agreements are another way that we are working to bring value to local people and to communities. By the same token, the options presented are not a list to be checked off. Moving on just some of these options will get us back to where we were. The task before us is deciding which ones and when. As we move forward, we intend to work with members of this House — of the Legislative Assembly — with the public and with the public service and a variety of stakeholders.

While we ruled out a couple of options immediately, we are also taking actions on other steps. The panel highlighted the decision our government made this spring to reduce the corporate income tax rates from 15 percent to 12 percent as a positive initiative to improve our financial bottom line. We are confident about the ability of our public service to respond with initiatives and innovative ideas for improvement and to focus on outcomes — not just activities — to meet the needs of Yukoners.

We are particularly interested in suggestions related to working more closely with municipalities and with First

Nation governments; the same applies to options that speak to more involvement with First Nation governments in infrastructure development. The suggestion of a comprehensive review of the health care sector is one that we have talked about internally for some time, and it has been highlighted by the panel as well. This is an initiative that we will explore with our health care providers.

I want to again thank all Yukoners for their participations in this process with the panel. Thank you to the panel for your work as well and thank you to Yukoners.

Mr. Cathers: In rising to respond to this as the Official Opposition Finance critic, I would like to first of all note and draw everyone's attention to the fact that the report by the panel has confirmed what the Yukon Party Official Opposition has been saying for months — government doesn't need to raise taxes or cut services to balance its books. It can balance the budget simply by restraining the rate of growth, and I would direct media and others to page 92 of the report.

When government talks about raising taxes and fees, what the Premier doesn't seem to appreciate or care about is that it worries people. Small businesses become more cautious about investing and people become more conservative with their own finances. The Premier's statements on this, in fact, have raised more questions than they have answered.

The Premier launched this panel with much fanfare and has been fond of saying that it will look at and fully consider the options. However, as we have noted and as media have noticed, there has been a lot of mixed messaging by the government, including the Premier contradicting himself by putting options on the table, saying they were off the table, putting them back on the table, and then ruling them out finally today. The Premier has been hiding behind the panel on some days and contradicting himself on others.

Seeing that he was willing to roll out options like increasing placer royalties, I remind you that, two weeks ago, we brought forward a motion asking the government to comfort Yukoners by ruling out a sales tax. At the time, the government refused to support the motion and amended it to say they would fully consider all the options available, when clearly they knew at that point that they were not going to implement a sales tax.

Today they finally ruled it out, as we have been asking for months, but the government's changing position causes uncertainty throughout the territory and within the business community. If people start to see that the government's position on a sales tax or any other policy changes — depending on who they are talking to or what day you ask — it creates uncertainty and discourages the private sector from investing, and that, Mr. Speaker, hurts economic growth.

The government has now finally ruled out public sector layoffs but, reading the report and hearing the Premier's comments, it appears that he is about to launch renewal round two. It also raises the question — if the government has already made up its mind that it would never consider certain options, why did they waste time and money of Yukon taxpayers in having the panel research, look into and write

about those options? If the government was not willing to consider certain options like increasing placer royalties, why didn't they just act transparently and rule those options out in the terms of reference for the panel. Why spend taxpayers' money and waste the panel's time looking at options that the government knew it was not willing to consider?

Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, I think this comes down to weak leadership and a lack of planning on the part of the Premier. Yukoners elected him and expected him and his government to be accountable for the government's financial planning. They did not expect the Premier to hide behind a panel until one year into the government's mandate. We hope that, with the release of today's report, we will see a turning of the page by the Premier. He spent most of the last year putting decisions off, pointing fingers, and hiding behind the panel since earlier this year. It is time for him to take ownership of the budget and future deficits and tell Yukoners what he is planning to do.

He also owes the public answers on the details of the government's plan. Having just received this 136-page report late this morning, we will be commenting in greater detail later, but a few glaring options that jump out and create immediate questions and concerns among Yukoners are whether the government plans to eliminate the fuel tax exemption for Yukon businesses, which would be a \$4-million hit to their costs, whether they plan to increase property taxes for rural Yukoners, whether they plan to increase continuing care fees, and whether the options the report has laid out around the privatization of health care and public/private partnerships are elements that the government is prepared to consider.

Again, in conclusion, I would just note that we are pleased that the panel has recognized in their final report that — as we have been saying for months — government does not need to make cuts to balance the budget. They simply need to restrain the rate of future growth.

Ms. Hanson: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the New Democratic Party caucus, I extend my thanks to the Financial Advisory Panel members who provided opposition members with a brief overview of the report late this morning. We look forward to a more in-depth conversation next week in this House. The Yukon citizens who participated in this review need also to be acknowledged. To date, they have only had an opportunity to offer their views. The actions taken by this government in response to the options set out by the panel will allow them to assess whether or not they have been heard by this government.

While we have only a had brief time to review the report, a few things stand out. The first is an observation as confirmation of how low taxes of all kinds are in Yukon. For instance, Alberta has the lowest taxes among Canadian provinces by a significant margin. If Yukon was to adopt the Alberta levels, the government's annual revenues would increase by \$40 million. Or, if we were to mimic our neighbours — the Northwest Territories tax system — we would generate \$30 million more annually. This shows how

ill-advised this government was in its pursuit of giving large corporations a 20-percent tax cut in the last budget. We're not talking about cuts to the small-business tax rate, but rather the reduced taxes on corporate profits of over a half-million dollars. These kinds of corporate giveaways have been shown to have very little positive impact on employment and they deprive the government of revenue needed to pay for essential services, like health care and education.

This reduction in revenue is also making Yukon more dependent on the federal government. The Financial Advisory Panel shows that our own-source revenues — the part of government spending generated in Yukon — has been decreasing since 2013. It dropped from 21 percent in 2013 to 15.7 percent in 2016. The corporate tax cuts that this government implemented in its last budget will only increase Yukon dependence on federal transfers. That's not the right direction for Yukon.

On health care spending, the report points to some solutions, such as privately operated surgical facilities, that we believe are not in the best interest of Yukoners. Private health care has been shown time and again to have higher costs to the public, and the treatments that would be taken on by private clinics are those that are less costly and allow for a profit margin, leaving the public system with costlier, more complex procedures. What the report does show is that per capita spending on physicians and capital costs are higher in Yukon than in most jurisdictions. With a renewed focus on alternatives to institutional care, these can get back in line with other jurisdictions.

The Yukon NDP has consistently advocated for better home care services so that Yukon can fulfill our commitment to aging in place. It is also a smart financial move; enhanced home care is a key component of getting our health care costs under control.

Mr. Speaker, there are many ideas contained in the 136 pages of the Financial Advisory Panel report. Some will be more controversial than others. We look forward to thoroughly reviewing the report and we look forward to engaging in detailed, principled dialogue with the government on how best to move forward on some of the ideas generated by the panel.

As we engage in the coming debate, I hope we can maintain our focus on what is best for all Yukoners, keeping in mind that what we desire for ourselves, we wish for all.

Hon. Mr. Silver: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the Leader of the Third Party for her comments, and to the Member for Lake Laberge as well.

What we see is a researched approach from the NDP, as far as moving forward and tackling some real issues here that are options. I look forward to the debate here on November 21 because there are some options on the table that we have had problems with as well. Again, this isn't an exercise in absolutes.

This is a process of determining action and giving Yukoners faith that the government will be moving forward on best outcomes with the least disruptions to programs and

services. To make the right financial decisions and financial corrections right now is a very sensitive point, Mr. Speaker — it is — and we need the representation of every single member of this Legislative Assembly to be working proactively on all of the recommendations and all of the options that have been considered by the Yukon Financial Advisory Panel.

For months, the Yukon Party has suggested that an HST is coming. We've heard it for months and we anticipate more of this style of opposition from the Yukon Party. We heard it again today. I guess they need a villain — the HST is off the table so they're picking another villain from there.

We urge them to work with us on these recommendations and on these options moving forward, because there are a lot of great suggestions in there. There are also a lot of things that on this side of the House that we're very concerned about. We would love to work, whether it's in a select committee or in some kind of way forward, with all members of this Legislative Assembly to look at proactively turning the page.

That's our approach, Mr. Speaker. I'm really excited about the next few weeks and months moving forward with the report from the Yukon Financial Advisory Panel. For the record, again — no HST; for the record as well, we really want to hear from the panel. We have questions, and I'm sure that members opposite have some questions as well, but I do want to thank Yukoners — the over 800 Yukoners — who have spent their time helping the panel move forward so we can get ourselves back on a financial footing that's solid.

Speaker: This then brings us to Question Period.

QUESTION PERIOD

Question re: Hospital bed shortage

Ms. McLeod: This morning, representatives from the Hospital Corporation were on CBC and told Yukoners that Whitehorse General Hospital is at 105-percent capacity right now. They went on to say that this problem has become more severe over the past year. In fact, the chief of medical staff's annual report said the hospital is at full capacity 60 percent of the time. This is compared to 21 percent just last year. Mr. Speaker, this is a crisis and we've been asking the minister for days what she is doing to help alleviate the problem, but all we get are platitudes.

Will the minister stop giving us vague talking points and actually give us a detailed plan to alleviate the bed shortage?

Hon. Ms. Frost: I would be happy to respond to that, and I want to refer back to the ministerial statement. It talks about fiscal responsibility, fiscal management, and what we are doing to address the bed shortages. What are we doing for continuing care? They want specific answers on how many beds we're going to free up this year, what we are going to do about expanded health care, and what we are going to do about getting the necessary supports in our communities?

I stated yesterday — and I'll state again — that we increased home care by more than \$750,000 last year and we will continue to do that this year. The question about the need for continuing care beds is one we all agree on — we all agree there's a need. We hear it from the hospital; we hear it from

the opposition; you're hearing it from me; we hear it from our communities.

The Official Opposition yesterday went through a short list of all the new beds the former government created. On the eve of the election, they assigned 10 beds to the Thomson Centre — a \$5-million bill for that project. We also have the Whistle Bend continuing care facility.

What are we spending on the new continuing care beds this year? \$68 million, Mr. Speaker — a new facility that the previous government didn't get off the ground until 2012 — and putting some financial perspectives around that implementation.

Ms. McLeod: I did not receive an answer.

The Hospital Corporation said that 40 percent of their patients should be in a different type of health care facility. The Hospital Corporation said this weekend that the solution to the shortage is more continuing care beds and the expansion of home care.

This morning, the Hospital Corporation said that Whistle Bend place — and I quote: "... couldn't come soon enough." We've asked the government for days what their plan is to alleviate pressures at the hospital and how many new continuing care beds they are creating. So far, we have received zero details and it's clear the government has no plan.

Despite this, the Liberals are going to pass a motion today to prevent the expansion of Whistle Bend place without having to plan to address demand for continuing care beds. That's their prerogative. But if you're going to cancel an old plan, then you better have a new one to replace it.

Mr. Speaker, will the government stop playing games in the middle of a hospital bed shortage and come up with a plan?

Hon. Ms. Frost: I'm going to maybe just make a statement. Perhaps the member opposite is not aware that this plan was put forward and put on the table in 2012 by the now-opposition without a budget attached to it — 150 beds, \$150 million plus an expanded O&M expense that we have not accounted for. So we are taking the due diligence as advised by the Financial Advisory Panel. We are working with our partners.

The question around the hospital — last month, the CEO of the hospital appeared in this House and, yes, he did raise the pressures. We are working with the hospital. We are working with an expanded care approach and we are working with our community partners as well, Mr. Speaker. We continue to work collaboratively with the Hospital Corporation and to look at the limited resources we have in the budget. We are not going to spend money that we do not have to create new positions, new beds, and new facilities, because the resources are not there. We will look at the Whistle Bend continuing care facility. In the future, it has always been there to expand. What we've said is that we are not going to build a 300-bed facility at this point in time because the budget does not allow for it.

Ms. McLeod: I would have appreciated a plan or at least a commitment to create one.

Mr. Speaker, when Whistle Bend place opens up to 120 beds in late 2018, we can expect a huge demand for these beds. How many beds does the minister anticipate will be filled right away?

Hon. Mr. Silver: Mr. Speaker, I want to remind the members opposite that we heard in the Legislative Assembly a few years ago that the Yukon Party was going to be opening up a 300-bed facility in Whitehorse — a 300-bed facility in Whitehorse. The numbers to justify that included all of Yukon. That is not a plan, Mr. Speaker. That is not the plan that we're moving forward on, and so we're moving on a new plan. That is 150 beds here in Yukon, here in Whitehorse. That facility, as the member opposite clearly knows, is designed to expand if those Whitehorse numbers need that.

We do have a pressure that the other government did not deal with. It is the other 150 that came from the rural communities and, on this side of the House, we believe in the collaborative method. On this side of the House, we believe in aging in place. We want our communities to have their elders in their communities. So we are not going to put a 300-bed facility in Whitehorse. We are going to work with what we have, which is the 150 beds, and I think the minister responsible is doing a great job doing that. We are going to work with this expanded concept of what it means to age in our communities, and we are working on that.

I guess the question that we keep getting asked by the Member for Watson Lake is: How many beds? I guess I would ask her as well: In 14 years of Yukon Party government, how many continuing care beds? We are working on that on this side of the House and, as those numbers come in, we, of course, will allow them to be available to the public.

Question re: Ross River infrastructure

Mr. Hassard: On Thursday, the Minister responsible for Yukon Housing Corporation told this House that the duplexes that the federal government was funding in Ross River had their construction put on hold. The minister stated that there were challenges with the contractor from Vancouver. She also stated — and I quote: "The failures result in communities suffering as a result of that misappropriation." I am curious if the minister provide us with a bit more detail on the misappropriation that she is referring to.

Hon. Ms. Frost: The Yukon Housing Corporation is working with the Ross River Dena Council. As pressured previously with the same questions: What are we doing for Ross River? How are we supporting Ross River? What about capacity in Ross River? What about additional resources for Ross River? We are doing a significant amount of work with the Ross River Dena Council. In fact, just a few days ago, we met with the chief and his advisors here in our offices to look at and address some of the pressures that the Ross River Dena Council has encountered. Part of that are challenges around some new builds in their community. What we have advised and what we have committed to doing is to work with them to address them.

If the member opposite wants specific details on a project that the Ross River Dena Council has contracted out to the private sector, they can go to the Ross River Dena Council and get that specific information. I can commit today that the Housing Corporation and this government will continue to work with the Ross River Dena Council to present with them the best options forward for the community for sustainability and advancing the interests of the community. The social well-being of the community is essential and important to this side of the House.

Mr. Hassard: Mr. Speaker, this question is based on words that came from this minister's mouth here last Thursday. She also told us that Yukon Housing Corporation had had various meetings with this contractor. She said that she had staff at every meeting with the Ross River Dena Council, its contractors and the Government of Canada.

Could this minister tell us when she first became aware of this misappropriation that she refers to? Considering that she has indicated that her officials have been involved in this project and have met with contractors, can she explain what she is doing to follow up with this issue?

Hon. Ms. Frost: I will reiterate that I have continuously met with the Ross River Dena Council. My staff, the Yukon Housing Corporation staff and Health and Social Services staff are at the table with the Ross River Dena Council. We are not there as negotiators. We are not there to speak for the Ross River Dena Council.

We're there to help to provide advice and guidance to them and to assist in their decision-making. The Ross River Dena Council will advance their projects with the guidance of the team that has been assigned to them. We are working with them diligently. We are working with them on all of the projects in the community. They have run into some challenges and we are there with them. We do not control what happens.

That project is funded by the federal government, as the member opposite would know, seeing as he has been to the community. He is the rep for the Ross River Dena Council and the Ross River community. He should be well aware that the federal government is responsible for these projects. We are there with the community.

My observation is that — and the notes and feedback received — they are very pleased with that participation, which they have not seen historically, nor have they seen in the past. They have been left out, they have not been supported, and I am happy to say that I will continue to be there to support them.

Mr. Hassard: It is very interesting to hear the minister say all of these things now because, on Thursday last week, she said — and I'll quote again: "The Yukon Housing Corporation provided some intervention with the Ross River Dena Council in collaboration to look at what we can do to bring that project back on line."

Mr. Speaker, could the minister please clarify: Is the Yukon Housing Corporation taking over responsibility for the construction of these duplexes?

Hon. Ms. Frost: No, we're not responsible and we won't take responsibility. We will be there to guide the Ross River Dena Council and their staff and will help to build capacity in the community.

Question re: Tax policies

Ms. Hanson: The Financial Advisory Panel report is out. It shows that Yukon taxes are among the lowest in the country and that our own-source revenues have been rapidly declining by as much as 25 percent over the last three years. This means that our dependence on the federal government transfers is greater today than it was just a few years ago, yet the Premier used his ministerial statement to reiterate that he believes reducing tax on corporate profits by 20 percent in his last budget was the right decision.

Mr. Speaker, we're not talking about taxes on small businesses; we're talking about taxes on corporate profits of over \$500,000.

Why does the Premier believe that cutting taxes on corporate profits — over \$500,000 — is the right decision when the territory's own-source revenues are already down?

Hon. Mr. Silver: I do appreciate the question from the member opposite. The NDP has been clear that they are not happy with us right-sizing the corporate and small-business taxes. Our intention is to make sure that we're competitive, with other markets that are within our jurisdiction, around our jurisdiction. That's what we have done by taking this small-business tax down a percentage and by taking the corporate tax down from 15 to 12 percent.

The answer is simple, and that is: with more corporations, more income tax, more economic development. That's what it comes down to.

If we take a look at one specific piece in isolation, as the member opposite is doing, that is one thing. But if we take a look at a complete system where we take a look at all of the other recommendations, I agree, the Financial Advisory Panel agreed and most economists agree that, by making sure that your corporate and small-business taxes are being competitive, that's the right thing to do for the economy.

Ms. Hanson: The idea that corporate tax cuts are a benefit is hotly debated among economists. What is not debatable is that it does decrease government revenues. Speaking of government revenues, the report contains a few innovative solutions that might be worth considering. It mentions that some Yukoners suggested a sugar tax, or a pop tax, that would help address the high health care costs associated with unhealthy foods and help promote healthy living.

The report also points out that most jurisdictions have a hotel tax that could help finance municipalities and the tourism sector; or a payroll tax for out-of-territory workers, similar to what exists in the Northwest Territories, which would generate more benefits from the mining industry, especially those companies that fly in workers from outside the territory.

Mr. Speaker, the Premier has already indicated which ones he won't consider. Will the government implement any of these creative solutions?

Hon. Mr. Silver: I am very appreciative that the Leader of the Third Party has come prepared to have conversations based upon the 100-page report. Clearly the opposition has done its homework, and kudos to them for bringing forth the representations of their base.

We are going to be looking at all these options. We had to come out in front and say the ones that are off the table. The reason we did that was we're going to have the Yukon Financial Advisory Panel sit here and appear as witnesses, and we want the conversation to be based upon what's left — and there's a lot left. There are a lot of recommendations there. The member opposite has hit on a few that we, as a caucus, have been sitting around having lots of conversations about. A hotel tax — that's a highly disputable — you're going to see a lot of people who are against that; you're going to see a lot of people who are for that and the same with the payroll tax. These are conversations about which I would love to know what the opposition thinks.

We have already spoken about how we're going to work with the opposition to get the opinion of the House. As you know, Mr. Speaker, a lot of these decisions would invoke the *Taxpayer Protection Act*, so that would be a referendum among Yukoners. If that was the direction we were going to in, it would have to be a conversation we would have with the full support of the Legislative Assembly in some kind of capacity. I'm willing to talk with the leaders of the two opposition parties on some of these more-scrutiny issues, as I like to call them.

Ms. Hanson: Thank you to the Premier for his remarks on that. When it comes to the carbon tax, the Financial Advisory Panel also points to a few options following its consultation with Yukoners. The panel said that business and municipal leaders have made it clear that they would like to see some of the revenue from a carbon tax used to provide grants for energy-efficiency measures and funding for climate change adaptation.

This could be done in conjunction with offering rebates to low- and middle-income Yukoners to offset the cost increase they face. Mr. Speaker, will this government listen to Yukon businesses and municipal leaders and use a portion of the carbon tax revenue to actually do something about climate change, while providing rebates to low- and middle-income Yukoners?

Hon. Mr. Silver: I appreciate the opportunity to speak about carbon-pricing mechanisms. We believe that putting a price on carbon pollution is an important element — one element of the *Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change*. We believe it's an important initiative. We support a nationwide price on carbon emissions because it is the most cost-efficient way to reduce emissions and to drive innovation forward to a low-carbon economy. That's what it is doing — carbon pricing being one action item of many to address the complex challenges of climate change that we, as Yukoners, see on a daily basis.

We are working with the Government of Canada on joint studies to assess the implications of carbon pricing on our unique territory and to develop potential solutions prior to committing to carbon pricing in Yukon.

We made a commitment, Mr. Speaker. We made a commitment to Yukoners to make this revenue neutral, to return all funds back to Yukoners and Yukon businesses, and we intend on keeping that promise.

Again, when we take a look at carbon pricing as a mechanism — that's just one piece of a bigger picture. I have some very learned ministers who could speak in volumes about this topic, about what we are doing with a whole-of-government approach with all of our departments, whether it's Community Services or Environment, or through the Executive Council Office, about how we are going to make sure that we reduce our emissions as a section of Canada, to make sure we are on the right side of history with this issue.

Question re: Forest fire management

Mr. Hassard: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have some questions regarding wildland fire management, third-party contracts and contracts with First Nation development corporations.

Mr. Speaker, I'm curious as to if the Minister of Community Services could explain whether or not the government is looking at contracting services such as wildland fire management to outside firms.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I guess I'll need a little bit of clarification, Mr. Speaker. If by "outside firms" what we mean is working with our communities and working with, in particular, our First Nation development corporations, who are able to address the capacity questions that we have in our communities — certainly we are working in partnership with those development corporations. I'll just wait for the supplementary to try to find out from the Leader of the Official Opposition if I have understood his question correctly or not. I'm happy to continue responding to this question.

Mr. Hassard: It is my understanding that the government has made commitments on this file in the past, but was unfortunately unable to meet its timelines. I am curious if there are any timelines for when decisions will be made on this file, and what is the government's plan with contracting out these services?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I thank the member opposite for the question and I am trying to track down exactly what he is after.

What I will say is that, just ahead of this wildfire season, we did sit down with the First Nation development corporations and talked to them about possibilities. We increased the number of crews that we had this year that we contracted out. We increased support for an additional trainee across some of the crews — or we made that offer. We talked about the importance — we luckily were able to hire all of the trainees that came through First Nation boot camp and we talked about the need to do more, so we set up meetings that would follow this past wildfire season. Those meetings are

now underway, I hope they will be fruitful and I look forward to them as we head toward the next budget cycle.

Mr. Hassard: We are happy to hear that the minister or the government is having those meetings. I would just like to get confirmation from the minister — if he could give us any updates regarding those meetings that have taken place or if, when those meetings are completed, we could get an update for this House on that.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: I think it is very interesting to look at the history of wildland fire management, relationships with First Nation development corporations and also with the Government of Yukon.

I had a great opportunity over the years to actually — before Da Daghay, it actually was 12028 Yukon Inc. and I had an opportunity to run the development corporation and expand it and work with First Nation individuals. I really understood how we need to support Community Services. This year, Economic Development, for the first time in the history of this government, funded through the department to the tune of about \$50,000 to train all of these individuals. I worked hand in hand with Da Daghay and Mr. Asquith — who is here with us today — to ensure that we have that capacity. I really appreciate the work by the minister and his team, who then provided opportunities for every one of those individuals. So probably it was a monumental movement forward.

I know that the negotiations that I was part of previously — led by Mr. Harper with the Selkirk First Nation — were certainly not as fruitful as what we've seen in the last 12 months. I look forward to continuing to work with you, minister, as we continue to expand the opportunities and understand the great conduit of growth that we can see through chapter 22.

Question re: Housing programs

Mr. Istchenko: Under this government's watch, the social and seniors housing wait-list has doubled. We've talked about this numerous times. We've asked for them to present a concrete plan, but we haven't received one. It is an issue for Yukoners.

Will the minister tell us today how many seniors and social housing units her government intends to build, start construction on or tender by the end of this fiscal year?

Hon. Ms. Frost: Pretty well the same lines of questioning from the Member for Watson Lake — how many houses, how many units, how many beds? We are, as I indicated, taking a proactive approach. We are working with our partners looking at our communities and the Premier hit home on the realities of this government and that we are not building a 300-bed facility in Whitehorse. We are looking at our aging-in-place model and we're working with our communities.

Mr. Istchenko: I will go back to the topic regarding social and seniors housing wait-lists. The minister has stated through a legislative return that the highest amount for social housing is in Whitehorse, followed by Dawson City and Watson Lake. The minister also told this House on Thursday that the current wait-list in Dawson is 10 people. I'm

wondering if the minister can tell us how many housing units her government is going to build in Dawson City and Watson Lake this year.

Hon. Ms. Frost: I can say that during the time that the Yukon Party was in power in Dawson City, they rejected an option to expand the McDonald Lodge facility to make it even larger. We built a new facility, but we didn't expand it to provide more beds.

What we are going to do is work with the Klondike Development Organization and other organizations in our community to address the needs in the communities. I have highlighted the pressures and, yes, there are a lot of pressures in Whitehorse. Why is that? It is because we bring our community members to Whitehorse and I know that for a fact because I have members from my community in the continuing care facilities. Our preference, and their preference, is to stay and remain in their communities.

The Member for Kluane has noted previously also: "What are you going to do about the St. Elias Residence and the seniors complex in Champagne and Aishihik traditional territory?" We will work with the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations and work with the community. I have committed to going there to meet with them and we will continue to do that engagement and dialogue to identify where the needs and the priorities are.

Mr. Istchenko: Would the minister agree to provide us with the housing wait-list broken down by community please?

Hon. Ms. Frost: The wait-list — I have provided that information previously, and so I am just going to conclude by stating that the members opposite would well know that there were quite a lot of projects cancelled historically. The Member for Lake Laberge would know this very well — that 75 home care beds, extended care beds, were cancelled through Yukon Housing Corporation. Because that decision was made, it added pressure. So what did they do? Well, not a lot. They didn't do a lot. The Official Opposition went through a list yesterday, so they are asking me to provide that same list. You know what the lists are so I won't reiterate that list, but I will say here today that we are working, and we will continue to work, with an expanded home care initiative. Aging in place is important. We will work with our communities on a community-based model with each and every one of the communities.

Question re: Dawson City Airport

Mr. Istchenko: I have some airport questions for the minister. In the Spring Sitting, we asked a number of questions and received mixed messaging on the paving on the Dawson City Airport runway. At the gold show in Dawson City, the Premier even went so far as to wear a T-shirt that indicated that the runway would be paved. The Minister of Highways and Public Works is getting a reputation for being offside with his colleagues and, in particular, the Premier.

Can the minister confirm that the runway will be paved and that the tender will be issued by March 31, 2018?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: It seems like we are already in the summer reruns. Yes, I can confirm that we are going to pave the Dawson runway.

Mr. Istchenko: So the runway will be paved. I also asked when.

We are of the understanding that Transport Canada still needs to approve the approach slope for jet service. As the minister has confirmed that this project will happen, can he provide us with a written copy of the authorization from Transport Canada?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I thank the member opposite for recognizing how complicated this project can in fact be.

We are currently working with Transport Canada to make sure that we have covered all of our bases with respect to the airport paving. I know that previous governments have just said that they are going to pave the runway and didn't actually go through the process of actually trying to figure out how it was going to be done and how to roll it out. There is a lot of work involved there, Mr. Speaker. We are working through that process right now. It has been a very long and involved process. I never imagined 18 months ago that I would know as much about airports as I do today. It has been an immersion in the subject matter. I have found it very rewarding, personally. I thank the member opposite for the question, and I will take it under advisement.

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. 157

Clerk: Motion No. 157, standing in the name of Mr. Adel.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to engage with Yukoners about ways to increase winter tourism and diversify the industry.

Mr. Adel: This government recognizes that we need to diversify our economy in a sustainable manner so that more good jobs can be created for Yukoners. We also recognize that economic diversification cannot be achieved without targeted investment and vision.

The government is committed to supporting a strong and growing tourism sector — a sector that balances economic endeavours with environmental stewardship, a sector that includes growing participation from Yukon First Nations, and a sector that has the potential to operate at a higher capacity in every season of the year.

Yukon is a winter wonderland. There are so many opportunities for Yukoners and visitors alike to get out,

explore and be active. With more winter months than any other season, winter tourism presents an incredible opportunity to increase tourism throughout the territory through deliberate seasonal diversification. That's why we are hosting a summit on winter tourism on December 8. This is an opportunity for real collaboration. We want to hear from Yukoners — all Yukoners — about what is working and how we can build on that. The feedback will help to define opportunities and investments for sustained winter tourism growth and feed into the multi-year, goal-oriented strategy to sustainably grow tourism in the Yukon in the winter and all months.

The success of a tourism development strategy depends on our ability to work together with all our partners. That's why stakeholder engagement like the winter tourism summit is shaping the new strategies and paths forward. In fact, the summit will pilot the engagement modules that will be used in the new year to inform the new strategy. Participants will get out, try them out and also provide feedback to make them better. This is so important because, at the end of the day, this will help to develop a new tourism development strategy for all Yukoners.

I am pleased to have had the opportunity to table this motion and look forward to debate with my colleagues in this House on growing and diversifying the industry that is so important to so many Yukoners.

Ms. Van Bibber: It gives me great pleasure to rise today to speak to Motion No. 157, brought forward by the Member for Copperbelt North. As a year-round destination, there is still much to be done in Yukon, especially in winter tourism. Aurora viewing is a good start, but we do need further exploration into good quality winter tourism programs.

During my years promoting Yukon and tourism endeavours, I had the pleasure of travelling outside the territory to not only speak about Yukon but about my own business experiences. It was very interesting and consumed most of my winter season, as we were a summer business, open from April to September.

As a national aboriginal board member for the Canadian Tourism Commission — and I was also vice-chair at the same time for the Aboriginal Tourism Association of Canada board — it gave me the opportunity to help with Yukon, front and centre.

However, it was the Northwest Territories government that sponsored me to travel to Sweden and Finland as part of a circumpolar tourism group. One year's trip was in October and the next was in November. The timing of these trips opened my eyes to the possibilities and the opportunities of winter tourism.

I provided a presentation on the one day on aboriginal business and how our organization managed. I was very pleased to see many Sami who were there and part of the conversation. The next morning, I was asked to speak impromptu on what it is like to be a First Nation, or an Indian, in Canada. I was surprised, but I was also honoured to educate a whole group of people during this conference.

We also went dog-sledding. We had saunas. We walked, we explored the areas during our breaks, and we did team-building exercises outside in the snow. I learned a lot during these conferences about many tourism opportunities that we could have here in Yukon and about the potential for northern business ventures. I also learned that Santa Claus was alive and well, and he lives in Rovaniemi, Finland. They have built an entire industry around him, his elves and the workshops, and he is open 365 days of the year.

Following the conference, I asked some delegates if they would visit Yukon and see what we had and they said, “Why? We have everything you have. We have the white nights. We have the dark nights. We have northern lights, dog-sledding...” — and the list goes on.

So we’re not looking for tourists there. Sweden and Finland have taken great advantage of those wonderful aspects and natural beauty of their north and have developed a thriving winter tourism industry that attracts visitors from around the world and I see that potential for Yukon.

As the department is advertising our winter season under things to do in our Yukon winter, I see a lot of sports events. I appreciate and know all the hard work these particular sports events do and bring to our communities. We have had world-class skiing, curling and, of course, we hosted the Canada Winter Games in 2007. All of these events have brought focus to the north, especially with the Winter Games, as it was a pan-north effort, but this section is definitely for a certain group and there are certainly many more things that could be included on what to do in a Yukon winter.

Our festivals and carnivals also bring the communities together and bring in visitors, particularly during Yukon Sourdough Rendezvous held in February. One event that we host that is truly international is the snow sculpting competition. The sculpting work done by these artists, whether they are local or international, is extraordinary and a delight to view for families and those looking for activities during the winter carnival and our Yukon winter.

I believe that the Department of Tourism and Culture must encourage ways to generate more international interest during our tourism campaigns. The winter commercials are great and they look so inviting, but we must remember we are a winter country and a winter territory. If someone is paying money to come, there must be availability, consistency and good value for money. Comfort, good food and drink always add to a holiday as well.

So on that note, we support any efforts made to encourage and make Yukon the place to visit during the winter months. I fully support winter tourism.

Speaker: I have two notifications about introduction of visitors outside of time provided for in the Order Paper.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Cathers: I would just like to welcome to the gallery and ask members to join me in welcoming a constituent of mine. Her title at the Yukon Convention Bureau escapes me — Alida Munro — and as well, Allyn Walton,

who I believe is with the Tourism Industry Association of Yukon. I apologize for not introducing the other person, whose name escapes me at the moment.

As well, in keeping with the recent trend of introducing people who were just here, I would like to welcome Peter Turner, also a constituent and president of the Yukon Chamber of Commerce, who I believe is here for this debate, but has momentarily stepped out.

Applause

Hon. Ms. Dendys: I had asked to introduce them at the end of my presentation, but I will do so now.

I invited the members here today to come and be part of our debate on winter tourism, so I’m happy to see guests come into the gallery today — Alida Munro — thank you for coming, Sherry Blake and Allyn Walton. I know that they have already been introduced, but thank you so much for coming. We also have Kelly Fraser from the Wilderness Tourism Association. Thank you so much for coming.

Applause

Ms. Hanson: On behalf of the New Democratic Party caucus, I rise to speak to the motion that this House urges the Government of Yukon to engage with Yukoners about ways to increase winter tourism and diversify the industry.

I think the intent of this motion is laudable. Of course the New Democratic Party supports any and all initiatives to broaden our tourism sector, to deepen the impact of it on our economy and winter tourism, of course, is one that has incredible potential for growth.

I would suggest to the member opposite with respect that it’s more than just engaging with Yukoners. What we need to do at this stage of the game is actually work to develop a broad and renewed strategic focus on tourism as a key driver of our economy. For too long it has been sort of to the side and an add-on when people talk about tourism. It’s a nice thing, but nothing with a real focus to it and there have been a number of consequences to that.

On one hand, repeatedly in this Legislative Assembly, we’re told that tourism contributes a relatively small portion to our overall economy. My point of view, and the point of view of the New Democratic Party over the number of years, is: Why restrict it? Why restrict it to what it is now? That seems to be this vision of just keeping it there and therefore there is no argument made to invest or to increase Yukon government investments or partnerships with other sectors to grow this sector.

One of the reasons why you keep hearing me push hard for economic data — for looking at what the multiplier effect of every single tourism dollar is, not just in the summer months, but in the winter months — is so that we can make the case for serious investment in this potentially high-growth area because they don’t make Yukons anymore. There is no more wilderness — we hold some of the last vestiges of wilderness in the world. We have something that nobody else has and in the winter that clarion quiet is something that nobody else has. It’s amazing — the number of people who

comment about winter quiet in Yukon because the majority of the world live in very noisy places.

We believe that we need to do more than just engage. We actually have to take a strategic approach. We need to broaden that engagement to include experts — with those who do provide diverse opportunities to tourists across the Yukon and engage with tourism operators of all shapes and sizes because there is no one-size-fits-all tourism anything in the Yukon.

That's one of the reasons I talk about the multiplier effect of the dollar. When a tourist comes to the Yukon — whether they're coming here to go mushing or they're coming here to participate in paddling down the river in the summertime or they're coming here for aurora viewing, their tourism dollar touches many spots in this territory, and we need to know about that so we can know about how to grow them, so we can know about what their experience is. It's more than simply knowing how many people landed at the airport and how many people came in through our various points of entry into this territory. We would hope that when the Yukon government is talking about it and when the member who put forward the motion is talking about increasing tourism and diversifying the industry by increasing winter tourism, that will include pulling together a comprehensive list of all operators of all tourism sectors.

What I'm saying here, quite frankly, is that we, as legislators and as the government, need to recognize that tourism is an industry. As I said earlier, we talk like it's sort of a nice thing, but it doesn't really have any hard facts, any hard numbers or any hard business decisions. If you ask a tourism operator, they'll tell you that it's a business and they need to have data. They make hard decisions every day in order to make their businesses viable.

There's a tendency to think that only mining is the real industry in this territory. I'm constantly reminded of a TEDx talk a few years ago here in Whitehorse by a Dr. Norman Fraser from Scotland who was in the tech world. He spoke about the Yukon because he has been here many times. He said that one of the things that struck him was that — without diminishing the contribution of mining to this territory, imagine what else exists and what else you could grow here? When I heard him talking about that, it's basically saying to us to quit being constrained by what you know. This is where tourism and winter tourism hold such great potential.

It is good to see, as the member putting forward the motion indicated, another information-gathering exercise, but it needs to move beyond that. We know that despite the ups and downs in the world economy and despite the ups and downs in commodity prices, the tourism industry — particularly in an iconic place like the Yukon — has the potential to continue to see a steady rise, to be inoculated against the ups and downs or booms and busts. We need to know how and where to make those strategic investments to ensure to inoculate them to the extent that we can against the worst aspects of that.

As I said when I talked about the multiplier effect, we need to look at all factors when we talk about potential revenue from tourism and winter tourism in particular, from

airfares to hotels to vehicle rentals to the smaller costs that tourism operators carry, including advertising, groceries, fuel.

Mr. Speaker, in preparation for the discussion this afternoon, I spoke to an operator, and they identified to me that year-round — but particularly in the winter — there are concerns, and some of these concerns are long-standing.

We provide certain industries in this territory access to infrastructure dollars, but do we provide a commensurate level to the tourism sector — simple basic things such as road maintenance so that tourism operators can access their business locations or where they do business? People want to experience tourism in the Yukon. They don't all want to stay in downtown Whitehorse. There are costs associated with that, and those costs are commonly called “infrastructure costs”. We have no problem talking about putting \$250 million into roads to resources, but try to get a road plowed.

Mr. Speaker, there are questions about what associated supports can be provided to helping tourism operators augment the insurance rates. Some of those insurance rates for tourism operators are enormous because there are risk-mitigation factors that have to be taken into consideration.

There are so many winter tourism opportunities, and we were just talking about some of them this morning in our caucus — things that are opening up. When the road to Tuktoyaktuk was being proposed, it was proposed as a road to resources. Well, for the foreseeable future, those resources are going to stay where they are, but it is an amazing opportunity for winter tourism because I think that most of us would agree that driving the Dempster Highway — despite the wind storms — on those days when it's not so windy — it's probably a more level playing field, or a more even road, in the wintertime. We already know that there are extreme sport events that occur on portions of the Dempster Highway. Here is an opportunity to expand on adventure seekers within the Yukon portion of that road to Tuktoyaktuk, and we can work to entice visitors to Yukon in the winter so that they can fulfill that sea to sea to sea, because we're finally there as of today.

Again, the issue of road maintenance — and this a big road — as we've heard from industry — not the tourism industry but certainly other industries over the years — that the maintenance of the Dempster Highway is a big question, and it's a big impediment at times.

We have so many opportunities to grow our winter tourism opportunities. We know that some of them take cooperation and collaboration among levels of government. There has been significant work done over the last couple of years in particular by the Yukon Astronomical Society, which has been trying to work and encourage both the Yukon government — and its light pollution of the territorial government buildings — as well as the City of Whitehorse to find ways to reduce the light pollution so that we can increase night sky tourism. That night sky tourism, again, is an iconic feature of a place like the Yukon. There are very few places where that night sky comes alive like it does here. We've seen it out in the Veldt in southern Africa but it's not quite the same as here — or in the desert in Australia.

Mr. Speaker, my colleague from Porter Creek North spoke about some of the winter activities that have become traditions over the last 50 or so years — Rendezvous, the Yukon Quest, and hopefully the return of Frostbite. We have these new opportunities in terms of winter — combining winter tourism with sports federations, and seeing the growth of shoulder-season training here. We have the great success of the Montana Mountain biking trails in Carcross, but now we see the growth of snow-biking. Here's another winter tourism opportunity. For some people, like my colleague from Takhini-Kopper King, that's a passion. It's not a passion of mine, but it's a passion of many, so we need to find those ways of reaching out and identifying those opportunities to grow this segment of our tourism sector. Then we need to fit that together.

It is a puzzle, and all the pieces of that puzzle need to fit together to form a coherent and comprehensive tourism strategy. Winter tourism is not on its own. In some years, we don't get much of a winter, so let's make sure we have the balance for the shoulders.

Mr. Speaker, what I'm saying is that we do support the notion of increasing our winter tourism opportunities, that we need to have a strategic approach to that and that we need to be able to work together with all sectors of the tourism industry to make sure we can build a robust case for the needs to continue to have good, solid partnerships. Part of that partnership is investment by the Yukon government in winter tourism activities in the Yukon.

We're happy to support it.

Hon. Ms. Dendys: I'm pleased to rise to speak to Motion No. 157, and I would like to thank the Member for Copperbelt North for raising the important topic. I jumped at the opportunity to bring it to the House today.

The Government of Yukon is committed to supporting a strong and growing tourism sector because we all benefit from the industry, as this industry succeeds. Before I get into the specific motion, I would like to talk about Yukon tourism today and our plan to take it to the next level.

We have had a chance to look at the visitor survey data collected from January to June 2017. I'm pleased to report that the majority of the key indicators show continued growth. Here are some of the trends that we saw during the first six months of the year: air arrivals between January and June were up by five percent, so that's 3,800 people more compared to the same period last year, and up 17 percent compared to the five-year average. Retail sales between January and June were up five percent — that's \$15.9 million up, compared to the same period in 2016, and up 13 percent compared to a five-year average.

Rates of occupancy in tourist accommodations between January and June were up 2.3 percent compared to the same period last year. International border crossings between January and June were up one percent compared to the same period last year, and up five percent compared to the five-year average. International overnight visitation between January and June went down by one percent compared to the same

period last year, but was up 21 percent compared to the five-year average.

We know from previous data that approximately four percent of Yukon's GDP — gross domestic product — is attributed to tourism — the second-highest in Canada. Yukon businesses generate approximately \$250 million in revenue from tourism each year.

Tourism means more to Yukoners' economy than it does to the majority of other Canadian provinces and territories, but we know tourism means more than the bottom line. What does all of this mean to Yukoners? It means that 3,000 Yukoners are employed by the industry at an average hourly rate of \$21.73. These jobs are helping to support individuals and families across the territory. In fact, 11.3 percent of Yukon jobs are in the tourism industry. That is the third-highest proportion in the country.

For our local businesses, more visitors mean more revenues. This helps operators to pay their bills, hire more staff and grow their business. When we add everything together, it is clear that tourism supports the vibrant communities throughout the territory.

Yukon's unique cultures and communities also benefit from tourism. We are proud to celebrate the cultures that make Yukon so special. Our rich and diverse cultural heritage is important to residents and visitors alike. When tourism and culture come together, visitors are able to enjoy meaningful, authentic and respectful experiences. Tourism represents an opportunity to break down barriers and build understanding between visitors and locals. This is an area that can help around reconciliation in our territory and throughout the country.

I am impressed by the passion that the cultural and tourism sectors have for sharing Yukon with the rest of the world. I am excited by the potential that tourism offers Yukon First Nations to share their identity, culture and language through ancient stories, authentic products and meaningful connections to the land. As minister responsible, it is my honour to champion both tourism and culture because we need to continue working together.

As our tourism industry grows and more people come to visit our incredible territory, we will work together to ensure that growth is sustainable. While the industry and tourism visitation grow, our environment will be protected and Yukon's unique culture, identity and values will be preserved and will thrive. We also recognize that partnerships are critical to our collective success and help to ensure the industry is strong and prepared for growth. We are proud of the relationships we have with our partners, and we are committed to continuing to work to strengthen and build upon them. By working together, we can achieve our goal for growing tourism in the Yukon.

The time is right to take tourism to the next level, to explore what is possible and decide together how we move forward. That is why this government is working with our partners to develop a multi-year, goal-oriented strategy to sustainably grow tourism in the Yukon. We are providing opportunities for alignment and real collaboration because it

all starts with our First Nation governments, our communities, our industry, stakeholders and operators.

After all, this is Yukon's strategy — not the Yukon government's strategy.

At the end of July, we hosted a roundtable as a first step toward creating a Yukon tourism development strategy. The turnout was strong. In fact, 49 individuals representing 11 organizations, the lead of the municipalities, seven First Nation governments, three First Nation development corporations and five Yukon government departments participated. This reflects the diversity and wide range of tourism and cultural organizations from across the territory who want to work together to grow tourism. It also shows the passion and the importance of the sector to many Yukoners. Participants shared their stories, perspectives and experiences on a wide range of topics.

One of the key recommendations we heard was to establish a steering committee to help guide the initiative and provide advice on the development of the strategy. This was a great idea and I'm pleased to say that we are moving forward with that recommendation. The steering committee will be made up of representatives from a number of organizations and will meet at least five times between now and June 2018 to help keep the project on track and moving forward. The committee will provide valuable input to shape the new strategy that will help us fully realize the potential as a competitive travel destination.

On December 8, we are hosting a summit on winter tourism. Yukon is a winter wonderland for residents and visitors alike and, with the long winters and impressive infrastructure, it presents a unique opportunity to increase tourism in the territory. In the tourism sector, winter begins in October and ends in April. Last winter we saw that both air arrivals and international border crossings were up eight percent compared to the previous winter and 16 percent compared to the five-year average. Retail sales were up four percent compared to the previous winter and 12 percent compared to the five-year average. Overnight visitation was up eight percent compared to the previous winter and 20 percent compared to the five-year average.

We know winter tourism is a significant opportunity for continued growth. That is why we want to bring people together for this summit. We want to hear directly from people on the ground about what is working and how we can build on that, but we also want to hear about the challenges and the trends that are emerging related to winter tourism so that we can be ready — so that year over year, quarter after quarter, we are working together toward sustainable growth in winter tourism.

The summit will help define opportunities for sustained winter tourism growth. This action will not only fulfill a key mandate letter commitment, but will also feed into the Yukon tourism development strategy. The success of the tourism development strategy is rooted in our ability to achieve alignment and collaboration — this is key. That is why stakeholder engagement, including the roundtable and the

winter tourism summit, is shaping the new strategy's path forward.

During the summit, participants will have the opportunity to pilot the engagement modules that will inform the new strategy. This will give participants a first look at our next phase of the engagement on the strategy, which will begin in the new year. We are committed to engaging First Nation governments, communities, tourism industry organizations, businesses, municipal governments, First Nation development corporations, business organizations, non-governmental organizations, other Yukon departments, and the public on this new strategy.

My goal, as minister, is to see that everyone will be able to see themselves in this new vision going forward. It is important that we hear directly from Yukoners because this is your strategy.

Now, on a one-government approach, government does have a role to play in supporting the industry because tourism is complex and it involves and affects a number of different departments. I always say that as the Minister of Tourism and Culture, you have to have a lot of friends around that table. So that is what I'm counting on with my colleagues. From territorial parks and campgrounds to airport and highway infrastructure, from training, education and arts, heritage and tourism to economic development and research, from licensing requirements to immigration programs, government departments need to work together to support the growth in this sector.

We were pleased that several departments joined the roundtable in July, including Economic Development, Energy, Mines and Resources, Highways and Public Works, Community Services and Environment — but we also need to work with a number of non-governmental organizations, and this requires strong relationships between all levels of government and these organizations. By working together, we can build a modern, competitive tourism sector that will provide a sound economic future for all Yukoners.

There are a number of departmental initiatives underway to strengthen the diversity in the tourism industry. Travel Yukon is how we welcome and introduce the world to our home.

The Travel Yukon website was in need of redesign to make it more engaging for visitors and easier for operators to use. We also wanted to tell the Yukon story in a way that better aligns with what user research has recommended. We embarked on an exciting mission to redesign the Travel Yukon website and recently launched the result of our work.

The new customer-centric website will engage potential visitors with a compelling storytelling environment that will guide them from the first moment of inspiration to considering Yukon as a vacation to booking their trip. The new site is visually stunning and represents a wide range of stories and themes with a new style, tone, look and feel that will capture the interest of potential visitors. Technological advancements will also help us track key performance indicators and improvements in customer relationship marketing will allow

users to create profiles, which will help us get to know them better.

Based on the information, we will be able to enhance the website in order to continuously improve the user experience. We will also be able to send customers targeted information. This means we will be able to push the right content to the right people at the right time. The redesigned website will support our marketing efforts to increase awareness and the likelihood of visiting the territory, and features a flexible architecture that enables us to adjust the site to meet future requirements arising out of the implementation of the tourism development strategy.

The site better supports the Yukon tourism industry and that is great news for visitors, operators and stakeholders. That is why this is important. A strong growing tourism sector creates meaningful work for Yukoners. One of the reasons that we are committed to engaging with Yukoners about growing and diversifying the tourism industry is because the tourism industry workers are at the front lines. They hear directly from customers about what they want and are leading the way forward, creating and developing exciting new products and experiences for visitors.

One example is the Aurora 360 flight. When the Yukon Astronomical Society learned of a product for consumers to view the northern lights from the air, they wanted to bring the concept to the Yukon. They approached the Department of Tourism and Culture and Air North, Yukon's airline, and together we have formed a partnership to offer the first-ever Canadian aurora-watching flight.

Limited to just 78 passengers, the Aurora 360 flight will depart from Whitehorse on either November 24 or 25, depending on the aurora forecast. Viewers will see this one-of-a-kind experience with spectacular, unmatched views of high-altitude aurora at 36,000 feet. There are still a few tickets remaining, I'm informed, and I would encourage anyone to go to Air North's website for more information.

This is an exciting time for tourism in the Yukon. We have great potential as a travel destination to attract more visitors, provide more revenues to local businesses and instill even greater pride in Yukoners. It's by working together that we are going to get there. The territory is filled with so many opportunities, innovation and absolutely hard-working people who are bound by passion for sharing our extraordinary gifts with the rest of the world, who take pride in the outstanding natural beauty of our land, who protect and promote our rich cultural heritage, our history and diverse forms of artistic expression. The time has come to take it to the next level. Together, we are embarking on a made-in-Yukon plan that will take us there.

I was just at a conference last week in Calgary and got to listen to a number of speakers. One of them was Senator Murray Sinclair. He said: "If you take away one thing and you remember one thing from this conference, or what I say today, think about this: think outside the box, but inside the circle." That was one of my big take-aways from that conference.

I believe that's what we're doing here in the Yukon right now in developing this strategy. It is something that has never

been done before — by bringing all partners together, all stakeholders together, to build a common vision that we can all see ourselves in and that we will work together to achieve.

I again thank the member for bringing this motion forward and for the comments that have been made by other members of this House. I take your comments seriously. We will absolutely be working toward building those into our strategy and welcome the input from any member of this House to be part of building the strategy. Again, you are all Yukoners and you need to see yourself in this vision as well, as we go forward.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity to speak to Motion No. 157.

Mr. Istchenko: I'm almost sure I am more excited to speak to this motion than the Minister of Tourism and Culture. My previous business was in tourism. I want to thank the Member for Copperbelt North for bringing forward this motion. I put motions on the floor just about every session or legislative Sitting about tourism, and we've debated motions. For me, I'm in agreement with all the speakers here today. It's time to move forward. I think a lot of work has been done.

When I decided to get into business — I was having a hard time working for the Department of Highways and Public Works so I decided to start my own business, and I was going to start a snowmobile tour business. I phoned up my buddy who was a really successful business owner and I said: "I'm starting a snowmobile tour business." He said: "You should probably come and work for me in the summer so you can make some money so you can pursue your snowmobile business." Well, that's what I did. I was a fish guide for many years and I did a lot of work in the summertime, but it afforded me the opportunity to develop my winter business. My winter business must have been successful because, if you go to the airport today, the snowmobile videos on the screen are still from my business. I would encourage the Minister of Tourism and Culture to update the videos. That was a long time ago.

What I want to talk a little bit about there today is winter tourism and economic diversity, a strategic approach — and the minister spoke a little bit about the steering committee setup. The minister, in her final comments, said "all stakeholders together". I'm going to disagree little bit because, when I first got elected, one of my priorities on the doorstep was to increase tourism, work with Parks Canada and work with all of our partners. I had been elected for about 15 minutes, and mayor and council had dissolved. Our mayor had quit and our CEO left. It was challenging for a couple of years to get things back in order. Things did get back in order, and now we have a mayor and council. We didn't have a chamber of commerce. I was the last president of the chamber of commerce in 2006. It was a monumental task.

I started working basically at the ground level. Today, we have a very active chamber of commerce. We have our mayor and council. We're working together and we have been working together for a while. Next week, once I find two more documents for the ministers for the House, I will be

tabling quite a few reports and quite a few documents. They're all related to tourism and opportunities and access that stem from the 100-and-some-odd page document that the Village of Haines Junction did in 1988 with the then MLA for Kluane, Bill Brewster. I will table all of those, and I am going to read from a document — the Kluane destination development forum that Tourism held in 2014. By way of background, I'm just going to read about a few of the stakeholders who were there and then I am going to highlight a few of the businesses that have grown since then.

We had the First Nations there; their development corporations were there. We had every business in the area — there were 30 businesses there. It looks like we had 15 government employees from the different departments — from Community Services, Economic Development, and Tourism and Culture to Highways and Public Works. We had Brent Liddle, who is Kluane Ecotours, and he's probably the first guy in the Kluane area — I remember as a kid — doing tours in Kluane National Park. Parks Canada representatives were there — some great stuff. We had the local artists and artists in residence were there. We had the glacier flight tour companies there. We had James Allen there, and James was just starting his business and the minister was just at a conference with him.

I remember James asking me questions about how I made a go of it, and I gave him some ideas and some contacts. To see how his business has grown since 2014 is incredible.

In the Village of Haines Junction, everybody was engaged in this. They wanted something to move forward, and the local chamber of commerce — just about all of the business community was there. Sally Robinson from the Alaska Highway Heritage Society was there. Another key one who was there was Teena Dickson from Dickson Outfitters, but she had just started Who What Where Tours and was doing the odd trip to Kluane. I think she goes every day now. It is incredible how things have grown. We had Ying Li from Arctic Colour Tours, who is originally, I believe, from China. She was looking at the northern lights opportunities.

One of the things that the department had done in the day — and the ministers were there, and I am looking forward to the steering committee that was set up — I would just hope that, for next steps, we move forward. I want to quote a little bit from the development forum. We had a guest speaker whose name is Cheryl Chapman. She was the owner of Aboriginal Affects Consulting, and she is a sustainable community and tourism development consultant from Williams Lake, BC. She was also a training and development manager with Aboriginal Tourism BC. I know that lots of people in the past had gotten hold of her, and she was a wealth of information. Some of the key messages, when she put her presentation forward, for a strong tourism industry were that: you need products and product development; you need the market and market development; you need people and people development; and you need partnerships. Communities achieve tourism success when they have that. Her presentation was incredible. She had a good understanding of how the tourism industry works and how it is changing: a solid vision,

strong leadership and clear understanding of roles; effective partnerships, and dollars and cents financing; the ability to provide visitors with what they want — unique experiences, quality products — and support from residents, and local governments and businesses. You need that support from the residents if you are going to develop product. Planning makes a difference. She said that you need to determine the viability and strategic focus — tourism is not for every community. It is for our community, and that is what we have. Kluane has been built on that.

Planning gives the community control — carrying capacity, the kind of visitors, the locations, the impacts — and it will identify and capitalize on opportunities. It matches the products and experiences in our community with markets, and it addresses the obstacles to overcome.

Some of the things that she had just highlighted when she was speaking were that you have to embrace differences of opinion and build trust in your working groups, and recognize that everyone is trying to achieve the same goal — winter tourism — but may have different mandates or opinions on how to get there. Not everybody is a snowmobiler; some like skiing — but still, the main goal. Don't be afraid to invite new people — and this is why I was so happy for Cheryl to speak because she was new to our community. She said things that we all wanted to hear. She said that partnerships take time. We need to utilize existing organizations and consider complementary mandates. She spoke a little bit about Aboriginal Tourism BC — some of the workshops and manuals and how we could get hold of them. Then she said that community champions are necessary and needed to be supported. Community champions are the catalyst behind forward movement — someone like me who keeps pushing that mandate. It gets people interested in the industry and in business.

Then, one of the key points that the Leader of the Third Party brought up is access to funding. It is necessary, and not all proposals will be successful, but don't give up. Use your resources and contacts and find someone to assist you with writing proposals.

Then she highlighted again — and it is kind of a theme when you go to anything — that not everybody is in favour of tourism. Not all community members will want to have tourists in their backyard. So consider ways to deliver an experience that doesn't infringe on residents. We have so much land and lots of space — I don't think that is a tough challenge.

Then we had keynote speakers from the development corporations — the First Nations spoke, Parks Canada spoke, Tourism Yukon spoke, and the Tourism Industry Association of Yukon spoke — lots of people got out. Then the community tourism session that was facilitated by Cheryl — she took the lead in the group through a discussion exercise and asked the following questions — like I said, I will be tabling all of these documents so that the members opposite and the members on this side can read through them and find synergies — whether it is in Dawson or Watson Lake or in Mayo-Tatchun — but I think they are all the same. In this, she

said, "What are the next steps needed to move tourism forward in the Kluane area?" Businesses and the village need to participate in and become members of a chamber of commerce in order to connect business, develop partnerships, communicate better, have a collective voice, support capacity building, and identify community champions.

Well, the good news today is that we have a very active chamber of commerce. That was a success that came from that. Product development is required to deliver experiences to tourists, and other agencies want to play a role. Government needs to work with community in order to move forward. The Tourism Industry Association will attend meetings, if community invites them — always gets them there.

Wilderness tourism — Parks Canada will help with training and building capacity in individuals to provide services to visitors. Parks Canada has changed so much in the past little while. I will speak a little more about that toward the end.

Tourism Yukon will make available their programs and offer capacity development and training support for economic growth. There are a lot of programs that Tourism has — and a lot of opportunities — and they were there.

The Kluane corporation and Champagne and Aishihik First Nations can support development through their development corporations. The Kluane National Park Management Board will engage with the chamber to help them with access and regulations.

Some of the other comments that came were to involve Yukon College and to create an inventory of all the operators and businesses by activity type. People talked a lot about developing a resort village, and that is sort of what we are. You come into a small area and the only place to stay is in that small area — there are some outpost cabins here and there. There was also: opening an Outward Bound school, holding more events and conventions, and branding the region as; "Yukon, Canada's playground". I always like to say, "Kluane, extra larger than life" — just one step above the Tourism Yukon slogan — which is an awesome slogan, by the way. There was also creating an artist-in-residence program — and we have that now — and developing more infrastructure to support overnight stays, private campgrounds — that is just an example — and being more proactive in promoting events through online resources and actually building something new — a trail to promote a partnership. Well, on November 29, all of the community members are getting together to talk about trails — awesome — and we have the maps done and we're moving forward.

In the next steps moving forward, what kind of support do we need? That was another question. We need to find funding — find and support community champions, educate, inform and involve the community on tourism development, map and video trails as trail resources to inform the public — we spoke about that.

A lot of things are being done. A community is built on volunteers. It is a lot different from what you see in downtown Whitehorse, but in our communities are volunteers. What can an individual do to move tourism forward? Even if not a

tourism operator, the local Ranger patrol, and local snowmobilers go out and just pack trails so the kids have a place to ride or the tourists who come have a place to go.

As we move forward, I'm just hoping that when the steering committee — I was at a Chamber meeting this week — I believe it was on Monday — with the chamber of commerce, and there are some representatives who are going to sit on that steering committee. I would encourage them — and I am going to send all of these documents to them — to have a quick review so that we don't just hear all of this again as we move forward, and hear what is in those documents, but don't move forward. I am encouraged that they asked me to be a keynote speaker when they do this and I would love to talk about tourism and opportunities.

As we move forward, I sure hope that we do take those next steps and new innovative ideas — what the communities want. A good example would be — when this was happening, my friend who I grew up with, Shane Oakley — his wife became *Dr. Oakley, Yukon Vet*, which is a very popular show on Discovery. I was emailing back and forth with the guy who helped me get started in my business, and he just got bookings to come for the summer, because he watched *Dr. Oakley, Yukon Vet*. The thing that always perplexed me when I was the Minister of Environment was wildlife viewing. I didn't realize before I was elected that wildlife viewing is in the Department of Environment, but it's also in the Department of Tourism and Culture. Are the departments connected and contacting? One of the mandates for me was connecting and contacting. Opportunities from basically free advertising on a TV show — one of the anchor tenants for *National Geographic* — are opportunities as a government that we can work with.

The Leader of the Third Party brought up dollars and cents. She mentioned the Montana Mountain riding and I remember telling them: "There's \$500,000. It's in the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources. It's for resource roads." Now it has changed — the dollars change. There's a rural roads upgrade program, but there's a resource roads program. Well they applied for that. Is mountain biking a mine? No, it's not. It's a different industry. It's a tourism-related industry, but they applied through that, and I encouraged operators in my neck of the woods that there's a fund that they can apply for. It was normally undersubscribed for many a year.

What came out of a lot of these — and the conversation I had with the local chamber of commerce when it came to promoting winter tourism — was access. These documents — you'll see the need, or the wish, for access to Kluane National Park. Before I was elected, I was on the Kluane National Park Management Board, and we facilitated the Parks 2010 management plan. One of the things that came out of the Parks management plan was a kind of yurt-style cabin in the national park that people could rent. That's coming to fruition this year. We all know how government works. It doesn't happen overnight and things take time.

Another thing that came out of that was there was zero access for boats — motorized access — from the Dezadeash

River bridge to the Lowell Glacier. That opportunity is there now. Parks Canada listened to the community and now you can actually fly into certain locations and then fly back out. Before, you could only fly in or fly out. We are Kluane National Park; we're a World Heritage Site in the Kluane area.

The tourism operators and the business communities always talk about access and land. Since land claims were settled, now the First Nations have their sections of land. I know there's some great work going on with Champagne and Aishihik First Nations and the Kluane First Nation right now. I'm looking forward to some of the opportunities that come out of that. They being co-managers of a national park in the Kluane area for the development — and the motion talks about economic diversity and winter tourism, so that's exactly it. We have eight months of winter or something like that. We talk about some people who say last year we had 11 months of winter and one month of summer, but we deal with what we get.

The parks management plan is up again for review. I encourage the local chamber of commerce and the business community to — this is exactly what you need to be engaged with this plan. I'm pretty sure the board — I don't know; maybe it's just because I left volunteering in the community. The board had fallen apart too, but I believe it's up and running again — Kluane National Park Management Board. They have members again and they're going to be reviewing that plan.

I think this is an opportunity, as we move forward, with everything we do for the Yukon Territory as a whole. I just like speaking on behalf of the business community in my riding. The business community in my riding, the local chamber of commerce, I remember the conversation they had was: "Can somebody from Burwash be a member of the Chamber of Commerce?" Right away, everybody said that anybody who wants to be a member of the chamber of commerce — let them. The more numbers, the better — so we have businesses from Beaver Creek, Long Ago Peoples Place — which is another great successful First Nation business. I can only see him growing his business.

As we move forward, I think we all need to be engaged. What I commit to today is just to keep pushing and working for the tourism industry. My door is always open and my phone is always on too. I have some experience in the industry. I think my experience started when I was a young child, running the only grocery store in Haines Junction and being in business.

I look forward to this motion being passed today. I was encouraged by the words from all members who spoke. I thought I had run out of time too, but that's all I have, so thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Hutton: I welcome the opportunity to rise and speak to Motion No. 157. I would like to thank the Member for Copperbelt North for bringing the motion forward. I would like to thank all the members opposite for their passionate and

eloquent remarks in support of tourism. It's encouraging that the support is coming from all sides of this House today.

The Yukon has a lot to offer visitors and locals alike, and it's important to consider how we can work together to increase opportunities for people to see and learn about all the great things this territory has to offer. It's also important to consider how we can expand tourism opportunities beyond a traditional summer rush and into the off-seasons, especially winter. As mentioned by the Member for Kluane, I've heard it said that we don't have spring, summer, fall and winter; we have eight months of winter and four months of tough sledding.

We know that winter offers many unique experiences that are culturally enriching and that speak to the special connection that Yukoners have with our natural environment.

We need to look at how we can attract people to these experiences in a way that generates economic opportunities for locals, including in our many diverse communities. Yukon features incredible natural history and wildlife viewing opportunities. Diverse cultures — 14 different First Nations out there, each one of them with their own unique and distinct culture, traditions and practices that would be wonderful to share with the rest of the world out there, not to mention the historic sites and some of the unique businesses that have been created by our First Nation partners.

One of the most important steps, I feel, toward developing winter tourism is to increase awareness of these opportunities, sites and businesses. Tourism-oriented directional signage and interpretive signage within the highway corridor plays an important role in helping travellers locate businesses and sites of interest. Yukon communities and rural businesses often want their signs strategically positioned along the main highway corridors to attract visitors, but we need to improve our signage so that it is more effective and informative for visitors travelling through our territory.

While multiple stakeholders — both within and outside government — have interest in highway signage, highway signage placement is the responsibility of Highways and Public Works. They have an established sign application and permitting process. The Department of Tourism and Culture serves as an advocate to ensure businesses know the process and to help explain the industry signage needs.

The department has also agreed to help identify signs for Yukon businesses that no longer operate so that they can be removed. This is especially important for those seasonal businesses that are closed in winter, which isn't always reflected in the accompanying signage. Our government departments are working together to support the signage needs of business and communities across the territory in a way that helps visitors stay informed and access what they are looking for. Over the past year, the Department of Tourism and Culture has worked with officials from the Tagish Advisory Council on options to improve Tagish community signage along the Alaska Highway and the south Klondike Highway. Last summer, directional signage was installed along the

Alaska Highway for the Da Kų Cultural Centre and visitor centre in Haines Junction.

The department continues to work with Parks Canada and the Department of Highways and Public Works on the installation of new Parks Canada signs along the north Alaska Highway bordering Kluane National Park and Reserve. In addition to tourism-oriented directional signage managed by Highways and Public Works, the Department of Tourism and Culture is responsible for interpretive signage throughout the territory. Tourism and Culture's historic sites coordinates the scenic drives program, which interprets Yukon's history, culture and geography through point-of-interest signage along highway routes, rivers and historic trails. Currently there is wayside signage at over 100 locations.

The department works closely with the Department of Environment on site development and signage planning to ensure environmental and wildlife viewing messages are integrated with the historical and cultural messages on interpretive signage developed by the Government of Yukon.

By working together, government can ensure its signage engages visitors and locals alike. Viewing wildlife is a popular activity for Canadians and reflects the value Yukoners place on our natural environment. In winter, you have animal tracks that are stories that can be shared with our visitors, contrary to the fleeting glimpses that they may get of something as it dashes off the highway in the summer.

There is much more opportunity to educate and enrich people in the winter.

Yukon's wildlife and ecosystems are recognized and valued, and this supports efforts to maintain Yukon's biodiversity. That's why it's so important to consider resource management decisions from a one-government approach. The Yukon government established a Wildlife Viewing Technical Committee in 2007. Their goal was to update the 1990 *Strategic Plan for Wildlife Viewing in the Yukon*. One of the driving forces behind the update came from chapter 16 of the *Umbrella Final Agreement*, which requires Yukoners to consider the non-consumptive uses of our wildlife when making management decisions regarding our resources.

The current strategic plan builds on earlier efforts and reflects the short-term and long-term interests of all departments. It also holds the potential for new partnerships between governments, organizations and communities. The strategy is intended to encourage Yukoners to consider developing wildlife viewing and the nature appreciation program for visitors, school groups and others and to collaborate with the Yukon government while doing so. The committee works on highway interpretive signage and trail interpretation initiatives throughout the territory. These interpretive signs highlight Yukon's natural history, and wildlife viewing opportunities are geared toward the travelling public — many of whom are tourists.

The committee is made up of representatives from the departments of Environment, Energy, Mines and Resources, and Tourism and Culture — another example of a one-government approach. The Department of Environment's mandate regarding wildlife viewing and nature appreciation

programs primarily focuses on local residents. It is recognized, however, that tourists to Yukon have a strong interest in wildlife viewing and nature appreciation and, when in Yukon, they do benefit from participating in Environment Yukon's programs.

The Department of Tourism and Culture, which participates on the steering committee, ensures that tourists' interests are taken into consideration while new and exciting tourism opportunities continue to grow. Today, the departments work closer together than ever to ensure that our natural environment remains protected.

As we look toward winter tourism, there are plenty of ways to expand nature appreciation opportunities. One example that has already been mentioned by several members is aurora viewings, which are very popular and a huge economic benefit to the Northwest Territories and Nunavut. We have beautiful displays of the aurora borealis here in the Yukon as well, and we should work on expanding opportunities for visitors to see them. One other advantage we have is our wilderness out here. We don't have the light pollution that so many other places have, so you do have the opportunity to view the northern lights in an almost completely dark environment.

There are also unique photo opportunities that occur in the winter. When our sun hangs low on the horizon, even the smallest members of our communities can cast long shadows.

I also know from speaking with my constituents in Pelly Crossing, Carmacks and Mayo that there are plenty of opportunities for winter tourism partnerships with First Nations. Yukon First Nations have winter cultural practices and traditions that they want to share with Yukoners as well as visitors to the territory. I believe many tourists would love the chance to visit traplines and fishing camps in the winter to see how these traditional practices continue today.

There are many opportunities like this that we need to explore and would have many benefits for our communities. It's important that we have discussions about these opportunities with First Nations, with communities, with local businesses and with Yukoners.

I'm very pleased that officials from the Department of Tourism and Culture will be travelling to the communities to engage with Yukoners on winter tourism opportunities. My constituents will be happy to know that they will have an opportunity in January and February to engage with officials to discuss their ideas for winter tourism and explore possible partnership opportunities that will help boost the economy throughout the year and increase off-season revenue.

Expanding winter tourism will create economic opportunities in our communities while offering people a closer look at the diverse cultural traditions of Yukoners. I'm excited to see the outcome from public engagements and the creation of a Yukon tourism development strategy.

I totally agree with the Leader of the Third Party that the Yukon is a unique, one-of-a-kind great wilderness area that no other country has. We need to educate people across the world about this wonderful land and what it has to offer.

When I was a young man, too many years ago, my father told me to buy land because they weren't making any more but they were making people every day. I would offer that same advice to my son and grandson today. If you get a chance to buy a piece of this Yukon, absolutely do so.

I obviously am in support of this motion, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: I welcome the opportunity to speak to Motion No. 157 today. I thank the Member for Copperbelt North for bringing this forward. I appreciate the opportunity to speak to this motion.

The Minister of Tourism and Culture and I have been working closely on files and, under my role as Minister of Economic Development, I feel a huge responsibility in the work that's going to come forward to increase our sector as we look to diversify.

I'm pleased to rise in support of the motion by the MLA for Copperbelt North. By engaging with Yukoners, we can harness their ideas, ingenuity and energy to achieve the goal of growing tourism. By working together as one government, we can better deliver services to the tourism industry and to our visitors during every season of the year.

By developing a goal-oriented strategy for Yukon, we can see real progress and increase the benefits to tourism for Yukon citizens. Partnerships are critical to ensure the tourism industry is strong and prepared for growth. We are proud of the strong partnerships that we have with our industry, and we're always working to build and improve them further.

Government has a role to play in supporting the industry, because tourism is complex and involves and affects a number of different departments. From territorial parks and campgrounds to airport and highway infrastructure, from training and education and arts, heritage and tourism to economic development and research, from regulations and licensing requirements to land development, government departments need to work together to support growth in the sector.

The Yukon government has experience working together on cross-government initiatives, but it is no longer just enough to bring different departments to the table once a project is identified. That is why we are committed to a one-government approach.

For tourism, this means bringing people together as early as possible to help determine projects and priorities that support the needs of stakeholders. This ensures that government is working as one entity to support initiatives and policies to involve all parties earlier in the planning stage to actually help identify projects.

We were pleased that, in addition to the Department of Tourism and Culture, several other departments joined the tourism roundtable meeting in July, including Economic Development, Energy, Mines and Resources, Highways and Public Works, Community Services, and Environment. As the Yukon tourism development strategy moves forward, a working group of deputy ministers is forming to provide a one-government response to problem-solving issues —

challenges and opportunities that will arise throughout the engagement phase.

An example of an issue we have already heard about — especially in relation to growing winter tourism — is the availability and condition of outhouses. While outhouses are often the topic of jokes, they are actually a key part of tourism infrastructure in the territory. Certainly we have heard that. As the investments into Carcross have grown, which was touched upon with Montana Mountain, as well as in the Southern Lakes district, these are some of the key pieces of infrastructure that my colleagues continue to press on, ensuring that the appropriate funds and planning are put in place to ensure that we see new development in that sector.

Four Yukon government departments — Tourism and Culture, Environment, Community Services, Highways and Public Works — share responsibility for this type of infrastructure. Stakeholders cannot be expected to know the internal workings of government in order to find the correct department or branch to address these issues. That is why a one-government approach solution is key. When my colleagues and I go to Carcross to meet with members of the community, with business owners or with the First Nation or the development corporation, certainly that is part of it — ensuring that information that flows to one minister is shared and that we continually keep in contact — sort of the cross-pollination of strategy that you need in order to be effective to grow this industry.

I am pleased to report that my Deputy Minister of Economic Development and the Deputy Minister of Tourism and Culture meet regularly to discuss issues of common concern to facilitate a one-government approach between these departments.

Land use planning is another key element when we think about our long-term strategy for tourism. The government is committed to growing Yukon's economy while protecting and promoting our rich cultural heritage. Land use planning touches many different departments, and that is why it is so important to consider any decisions from a one-government approach. Intergovernmental working groups support this approach in a number of different areas, including regional land use plans and local area plans.

The Department of Tourism and Culture provides advice to these groups about potential tourism, heritage and cultural values found within the planning areas and potential mitigation strategies. This ensures that all land use planning discussions take tourism and heritage into account.

The Department of Tourism and Culture participates in YESAA processes by reviewing project proposals and providing input to assessors on both tourism and heritage matters in Yukon. This role is to provide information to the YESAB assessor regarding potential impacts and mitigation on tourism and heritage matters. Staff review YESAA applications and non-YESAA applications — such as Yukon land applications, agricultural land applications and land use permit applications — and make comments from a tourism and heritage management perspective.

Staff also review various park management plans and other types of plans, such as wildlife management plans and habitat protection area management plans. All of this is done from a tourism, cultural and heritage perspective. Visitors are drawn to our beautiful wilderness landscapes, wildlife viewing and incredible archeological and historic sites. The celebration of our heritage is an important element being considered as part of the creation of the new tourism development strategy for Yukon.

Through the years, there have been a number of archeological and historic sites that have been influential in the land use planning process and have also had tourism benefits. Historic sites provide for the preservation, management, development and interpretation of our historic sites, trails and heritage rivers for the enjoyment of these sites for visitors and Yukoners.

Projects such as Fort Selkirk, Fortymile, Canyon City and the Yukon ice patches have been factored into local planning initiatives and, at the same time, generate tourism opportunities. By working together, we can grow our economy and support more jobs in the territory while ensuring our heritage and cultural resources are protected for years to come.

We work collaboratively with governments, industry, communities and all of our partners to develop a stronger economy, healthier communities and people and instill environmental stewardship. Of critical importance is the need to work in partnership with First Nation governments and First Nation development corporations. At last week's International Aboriginal Tourism Conference in Calgary, hosted by the Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada, the keynote speaker, Senator Murray Sinclair, spoke about the importance of tourism to the indigenous people of Canada, saying that by telling our stories to others, we are telling them to ourselves, to our young people, and that our unique stories need to be part of what tourism is about.

By working together, we can build a modern, competitive tourism sector that will provide a pathway to reconciliation, a celebration and preservation of First Nation identity and a sound economic future for all Yukoners.

I would like to pass on a couple of comments and thoughts concerning some of the activities that have been undertaken throughout the last number of months. I would like to commend my colleague, the Minister of Tourism and Culture, on the strategic approach that is being undertaken for the tourism sector and the input that has come from stakeholders through that process. It was very refreshing to see the level of activity and the number of people — not just the stakeholders from Whitehorse, but from across Yukon. What was interesting was that members of my Department of Economic Development and I had just returned from the PNWER conference in Portland, Oregon, and we had our visitors here from PNWER just last week.

Of the two take-aways, one would be — the Government of the Northwest Territories was in attendance in Portland. At the time, Premier Bob McLeod came to do an opening, and then we also had an opportunity to share some words. What I

took away was the very focused approach that the Northwest Territories government has taken toward enhancing their winter tourism product and having an opportunity to work with my colleagues and share information with my colleague, Mr. Wally Schumann, who is in charge of economic development. We discussed that. They're very active in it. The whole conversation that the Premier of the Northwest Territories shared was about his childhood in the Northwest Territories and what it means — sort of a First Nation approach and story to the northern lights.

It was a room full of very influential CEOs, university presidents — about 1,500 people in attendance. That was what they wanted to key in. What it has shown is that for the last 10 years, the Northwest Territories government has committed to travelling to Asia and continuing, year after year, to work on their strategy, and now they're seeing the effects of it. It has turned into a very robust winter tourism market.

We have lots of work to do and that's why our minister is pulling together a plan so that we can harness all these great pieces that need to coalesce to move forward. The Member for Klwane touched upon it. There have been a lot of great mini-conferences and discussions and dialogue, but what is our plan to move this forward?

Just a couple of things I'll share — commitments that we have made through the Department of Economic Development — right now, through the North Yukon REDI program, which is focused on the north, and in the Mayo-Tatchun area, we're funding a tourism strategy, which is being led by the community, but hopefully will also focus on the winter tourism market. In Dawson City, we continue to look at how we can look at the shoulder season — which is key and something I think about a lot — and so do my colleagues — how do we enhance that shoulder season by providing more activities and events and conferences, not just in Whitehorse but also in communities like Dawson? They're working on that.

To touch on PNWER, that's something we spoke about last week. Part of the reason in the ministerial statement is that we're excited. We're bringing 100 to 150 people from northwestern North America to the Yukon during the shoulder season. That's where we want to focus. We have phenomenal numbers in the Yukon when you look at occupancy rates in hotels. We had the opportunity to work with the larger player in the Yukon and focus on those numbers quite a bit in the private sector — we have good numbers. In the shoulder season, that's where we have that opportunity.

I will share with the people who are here representing the tourism sector that part of what I'm focusing on in my role is to go out and actively and aggressively speak with the private sector about building more hotel space. We need more hotel space. We need to ensure that we grow but, if we're going to grow, we need places for people to stay. That's what we're starting to hear, that the private sector is starting to see that opportunity, not just in the summer, but in the winter, and we're quite excited about some of the things that we think we'll see in the short term in the private sector, which will add

to the overall impact that tourism will make, both summer and winter.

I also share that we are funding and supporting a Kluane-centric strategy and conversation. I will be reaching out to the Member for Kluane to talk about how we look at that corridor, taking into consideration some of those new players that have really expanded, and they're doing quite well. How do we have them align with an overall strategy, and that's right from Mendenhall — really, in the member's backyard — right from Mendenhall all the way up to Beaver Creek — aligning and certainly just trying to ensure that there's more activity.

I had a great conversation with the owners of Talbot Arm just this weekend, and that's it: How do we ensure that those 30-plus rooms are filled? How can we have more events in small communities like Destruction Bay, where you can bring a group of people in, which makes an enormous impact on their businesses in the shoulder season?

We're very excited; the Department of Economic Development is waiting for the overall strategy. We're going to continue to move the dial on some of these smaller projects. We really think that this is the place that we can see our economy grow. We are excited, of course, with other areas of the economy, but certainly this one is somewhere that we think probably has the area to grow, and we align that both with what we are seeing in agriculture. We are pretty excited about that as well.

We are going to continue to strategically use our funding and work with our partners on these aspects, and then try to align our financial resources inside the department — to push that way. The Member for Kluane touched on one particular asset, and that's owned by the former Chief of Champagne and Aishihik First Nations, James Allen, and certainly one thing we've seen is — part of what we had the opportunity to do was — the First Nation government was extremely innovative in that it put together its own resource fund, and that resource fund was broken up into 10 segments that could be deployed at certain times to either enhance the amount of capacity that was being hired or to ensure that some of those business could carry on. Looking at some of those, there were good lessons from some of the innovative development corporations and First Nations.

I think I will leave it at that. Thank you, Deputy Speaker, for giving me the opportunity to speak this. I thank the Member for Copperbelt North for bringing this forward. I am really excited to work on this sector. It seems like we all can align and agree on this one, so those are always fun ones to work on.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I would like to thank the Member for Copperbelt North for bringing this motion forward and I would also like to thank all the members of the Legislature who have stood up today and spoken in support of this motion. It is nice to see where we align. Of course I respect when we have diverse views and we don't, but it is good to note when we share a vision.

Increasing winter tourism and diversifying will bring significant benefits to Yukon communities. The Department

of Tourism and Culture works closely with other departments and I've worked closely with the minister — and the Department of Community Services — to support communities across the territory. I know I've travelled with her to many of our communities to discuss this initiative.

My work as Minister of Community Services is to support vibrant, sustainable, resilient communities. Winter tourism adds to the diversity of economic opportunities for our communities.

The Carcross Commons development is a wonderful example of how working together can make a real difference. The commons is drawing tourists and visitors to Carcross, creating business and employment opportunities for local residents and adding to Yukon's inventory of tourism products.

I was in Carcross just this morning with the Minister of Highways and Public Works, as he and Khà Shâde Héni Chief Carvill made an announcement about infrastructure there for the Nares bridge, and afterwards, we sat down with Chief Carvill to talk to him, his council and some of his staff about issues in Carcross. The first one that he raised was about the numbers of visitors who are coming into Carcross. He pointed out — and I have heard this as well from the minister — that the Carcross visitor centre now surpasses Whitehorse in the number of visitors that it gets in the year. It has the most visitors in a year.

It is a great model, and I know the Minister of Tourism and Culture has looked at how this might be expanded out to other communities. I have heard her have conversations in Watson Lake, in particular, about that as an opportunity.

I just will note as well some of the pressures that come, and I will talk about them. I was sort of chuckling when I heard the Minister of Economic Development talk about outhouses. I will talk about that very issue in a moment here.

This development in beautiful Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes has been an inspiration to other small Yukon communities and demonstrates how tourism can be a driver of community and economic development with benefits, opportunities and challenges far beyond the tourism industry itself. Yukon government departments are working together with the Carcross/Tagish First Nation and Carcross Tagish Management Corporation to ensure that government services are keeping up with the growth that Carcross has been experiencing.

This summer, for example, officials from the departments of Tourism and Culture, Community Services, Highways and Public Works, and Economic Development travelled to Carcross to meet with business owners, residents and our government partners to assess concerns and needs. A number of issues were identified and I am pleased that we are working to ensure that they get addressed.

Here are some examples. The cross-cutting team is working to ensure that the frequency of garbage pick-up and removal around the visitor information centre and the parking lot will be increased. This is to address concerns about litter and cleanliness. It has just happened that, with all the pressure of people visiting, there aren't enough places for people to put

their garbage and we have to figure out how to get that service sorted out.

The *SS Tutshi* memorial structure has been identified as needing maintenance and repairs, and the Department of Tourism and Culture is considering next steps to get work done in the spring of 2018.

Signage on the Carcross pavilion building has been improved to better communicate to visitors that washrooms are located there. The Department of Community Services is installing additional and larger signs. I got an amazing note from one of the businesses in Carcross. They wrote to me and gave me sort of a video note expressing their concern about the washrooms. We know that this is a good news problem to have, in the sense that tourism is increasing. We need to address that challenge so that we make sure that our visitors are well taken care of and that our residents of Carcross are well taken care of, as well as the citizens of the Carcross/Tagish First Nation.

This interdepartmental coordination and support for our community will be ongoing and is a great example of our one-government approach. The Department of Community Services has initiated a community development team, which will include representation from Tourism and Culture. We will work to improve coordination of delivery of Yukon services in Carcross and we will work in all communities.

The Department of Tourism and Culture will continue to monitor the needs of Carcross Commons tourism businesses and will work closely with other departments to ensure concerns are addressed. This is truly a great approach, and I'm happy to see it in action. It's helping to create a positive change for the community and a strong path forward.

The Government of Yukon supports many projects that provide long-term, sustainable economic and social benefits to Yukon communities through the community development fund. These projects include a wide range of initiatives from infrastructure developments to the support of community events and more. They often involve priorities related to growing the tourism and cultural sectors. Tourism and culture are important economic drivers for the territory, as many have spoken about today, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Attracting more visitors means providing more revenue to local businesses and more jobs to communities, but we must also ensure that such projects have long-term viability for our communities and that they provide the opportunity for meaningful community engagement.

Recent projects supported through the community development fund include structural upgrades to the Mayo Legion hall. The hall is a historic site and a prominent landmark on Mayo's waterfront. I talked to a historian working with the Na Cho Nyäk Dun First Nation and we discussed this very project. The long-term goal of this restoration project is to develop a community programming facility offering cultural programs and contributing to the expansion of the tourism sector in the region.

Upgrades to the Binet House museum in Mayo — the fund will cover upgrades to the interior of the museum and

annex. Additionally, a new exhibit was created last year with funding support from the Department of Tourism and Culture.

Hosting of the Gizeh Shriners ceremonial event by the High Noon Association — this event was held on May 25 to 28, 2017 and attracted 178 delegates, many of whom extended their stays to visit other parts of the territory. The Yukon Convention Bureau estimates the economic impact for this event to be over \$316,000. Such events support the endeavour to market Yukon as a destination with the national meeting incentive conferences and events sector.

Support for the traditional watercraft of Canada's north project tour — as part of this project, the Yukon First Nations Cultural and Tourism Association brought together elder visitors, youth, indigenous master boat-builders and apprentices from across the north to construct four traditional watercraft vessels. I think many of us from the Legislature went down to the Yukon River to watch the launch of that.

Mr. Speaker, I'm going to give a few other examples — not necessarily from the community development fund, but just examples of how we can and are expanding tourism into the winter and shoulder seasons and diversifying our economy.

As I rode on my winter bike here this morning, I went past a bus in front of one of our hotels and it was being loaded with a bunch of young skiers and snowboarders and they were heading to Mount Sima. We have a program where Mount Sima is opening early, and they are bringing in athletes to train from across the country because we have the ability to provide snow and the right terrain for these athletes to do early — and sometimes late — season training. It is just a great opportunity for the shoulder season.

It brings me to the point — I have been in wonderful conversations with the Minister of Tourism and Culture, talking about sport tourism and the opportunities in the territory. Yesterday, I had the opportunity to stand up in the Legislature and talk about an initiative that we're working toward to build a full-sized rubberized track and artificial turf here in Whitehorse. I know that this suddenly opens up the opportunity to host, one day, the seniors' games, the Canada 55+ Games. I would love to host them here because I know those folks — when they come here, they stay in our hotels and they spend a lot of money. The Yukon has a reputation, Mr. Speaker, of being really the team with the greatest spirit — the mighty Yukon seniors. It's terrific.

I will also note — just a shout-out to a Yukon entrepreneur who has started the kick-sled revolution. I have mentioned it here in the Legislature before, but it is another great winter sporting opportunity. Within my own community of Marsh Lake, we had an opportunity nearly two years ago to host what I think was the first fat bike race, and I would just like to put a shout-out for all those people who came out because it was really warm that day and the trails weren't hard-packed enough for them and they slogged around the trails of Marsh Lake.

In just listening to the Minister of Tourism and Culture talk about cultural tourism and the opportunities that it presents for us here in the Yukon — it's not just about winter,

of course, but it is about how visitors want to engage with the local scene, the local food, the local history, the local relevance, and definitely the local culture. I think there is this wonderful opportunity.

I think several members have spoken today about the treasures that we have here in the Yukon that we can share, and there are many more. Done well, projects such as these can contribute to tourism as a sustainable industry, protecting and preserving Yukon's heritage, providing jobs to communities and creating opportunities to share our cultures. The Department of Tourism and Culture supports projects that have the potential to diversify and grow our economy. It's an exciting time for tourism here in Yukon, Mr. Speaker.

Development of a multi-year, goal-oriented strategy for growing tourism in Yukon that aligns government, industry and stakeholder priorities so we can collectively make better investment decisions that sustainably balance tourism growth, environmental stewardship, and the socio-economic benefits the industry provides — all will lead to strengthening and diversifying our economy.

I am looking forward to next month's summit that the minister referenced in her remarks today. We have great potential as a travel destination to attract more visitors, provide more revenue to local businesses and instill even greater pride in Yukoners. It's by working together that we will get there. Again, I commend all members of the Legislature for their support to the Member for Copperbelt North's motion.

The territory is filled with entrepreneurial, innovative, hard-working people who are bound by passion for sharing our extraordinary gifts with the rest of the world. They take pride in the outstanding natural beauty of our land. They protect and promote our rich cultural heritage, our history and the diverse forms of our artistic expression.

The time has come to take it to the next level. Together, we are embarking on a made-in-Yukon plan that will take us there.

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

Does any other member wish to be heard on this motion?

Mr. Adel: I thank my colleagues and members opposite for all their constructive comments today. It's an exciting time in the Yukon. It certainly is someplace we have to go forward with. When we first moved here, my oldest daughter's first, what she called "real", job was with TIAY. It was through her that I saw what a vibrant sector of our economy Yukon tourism had available for us. It's there; all we have to do is expand on it.

Some of the other things — the member opposite from the Third Party was talking about hard facts. How do we engage? I'm just going to wrap up here today a little bit by talking about some of the tools that the Minister of Tourism and Culture and her department have put together to make this happen.

The tourism sector is an important contributor to Yukon's economy and needs reliable and current data to plan and deliver our visitor services. Our visitor exit surveys provide important in-depth information from the people who choose the Yukon as their travel destination. Economic data — this is what we need for investment. We make fact-based investments in this government, in our approach to doing things, and we're starting to get this information here. It's not new; we have been doing these surveys since 1992. Our exit survey questionnaire is modelled after Statistics Canada's international travel survey, which provides a full range of statistics on international travellers.

A new up-to-date survey is needed approximately every five years. That's where we get our hard numbers. The 2017-18 visitor exit survey, which has just recently been launched, will give us an estimate of the number of visitors, help us better understand visitor behaviour and the characteristics of visitors and their trips, and provide an estimate of visitor spending. From there, we have a metric where we can see where we can do better.

Current and reliable data helps government and industry plan, develop and make informed marketing and investment decisions to compete successfully in the international and domestic markets. The valuable visitor information is used by territorial, First Nation and municipal governments, regional and economic development bodies, as well as providers of tourism services and experiences. The department uses the information to develop and deliver marketing industry services and visitor services programming.

As well as other communities, First Nation governments, organizations and tourism business owners use it for marketing, product development and research decisions. Given the importance of the survey to the department and the industry, it is necessary to take a one-government approach to its delivery. This survey will run from November 2017 to October 2018. A year-long period of data collection enables us to develop a picture of visitor characteristics throughout all of the seasons. The summer is the Yukon's busiest season for now. We have seen tourism growth in the winter and shoulder seasons. It will help identify the places where we can grow this sector of our economy. I am sure the minister's team is looking at that and working very hard on it.

The survey will help us to better understand and support this new growth. Between now and the spring of 2018, surveys will be conducted at the Whitehorse airport and at hotels and motels in Beaver Creek, Dawson Creek, Whitehorse and Watson Lake. The survey at the hotels will capture information from visitors travelling by road during the winter months. From spring to early fall, surveys will be conducted at the Whitehorse and Dawson City airports and at highway pullouts on outbound — exit-bound — highways throughout the territory. These include routes close to Watson Lake, Carcross, Haines Junction, Beaver Creek and Dawson City.

The Yukon Bureau of Statistics worked closely with the Department of Highways and Public Works to ensure their interviewers could connect with visitors in airports and on

roads. Interviewers will intercept a sample of people who are leaving the Yukon by air and road and will conduct face-to-face interviews as they depart the Yukon. This one-government approach provides the interviewers access to critical exit points and enables them to connect with as many visitors as possible. The Yukon Bureau of Statistics plans to collect data from 8,600 visitors during the 12-month period of data collection. The Bureau of Statistics provided valuable insight into how to structure and frame the survey to get the best information possible from our visitors. Questions asked will provide information about where the visitors come from, how they arrived here, what they do while they are here and how much they spent while they were in the territory.

The Yukon Bureau of Statistics is using a random sampling method to ensure that the data can be used to generalize more broadly about visitors' travel behaviour in the territory. It will take a few months for the bureau to analyze the results following the end of the data collection. We estimate that the results of the survey will be made available in early 2019, and a detailed report will be published later in the year. The results will be published online in summary reports and presented at numerous conferences, meetings and community discussions. The department also runs custom analysis of survey results for clients, media and other government colleagues. This valuable service to stakeholders would not be possible without our one-government approach to the visitor exit survey.

This is an exciting time for tourism. The minister and her team are developing a strategic plan which will help us move forward into the future to make us even stronger and better at what we do. We have a great potential as a travel destination to attract more visitors, provide more revenues to local businesses and instill even greater pride in Yukoners. It is by working together that we will get there.

We will get there. The territory is filled with entrepreneurial, innovative and hard-working people who are bound by passion for sharing our extraordinary gifts with the rest of the world. We take pride in the outstanding natural beauty of our land. We protect our rich cultural heritage, our history and our diverse forms of artistic expression. The upcoming summit on December 8 will showcase our strengths and will help us to improve our product as we show it to the world.

The time has come to take it to the next level. Together, we are embarking on a made-in-Yukon plan that will take us there.

Speaker: Are you prepared for the question?

Motion No. 157 agreed to

Motion No. 32 — adjourned debate

Clerk: Motion No. 32, standing in the name of Mr. Adel; adjourned debate.

Speaker: For the record, Mr. Adel, Minister of Health and Social Services, Member for Watson Lake, and Member for Takhini-Kopper King have participated in this debate so far.

Is there any further debate on this motion?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: A year ago this past summer — I will refer to him as “our surgeon”, Dr. David Storey, wrote an open letter, entitled “Whitehorse General Hospital is in crisis”. In this letter, Dr. Storey shared his heartache and frustration. The crisis was that our acute care hospital was being used to provide continuing care beds. The hospital wasn't designed to provide continuing care — of course, it can deliver that care, but that's not what it was designed for, and it's an expensive way to provide continuing care — and surgeries were being postponed. Access to acute care was under pressure, and Yukon's health care was being compromised overall.

The issue had been building to a crisis for years, so how did we not see it coming? My sense is that elected officials did see it coming but left it unaddressed until it became a crisis. It is critical that we not do that again, and I will talk today about how we plan for the future but, for a moment, let me talk about the Whistle Bend continuing care facility.

This facility is an important and critical part of the solution that we now seek. We need continuing care beds for people who need more care and are unable to stay in their homes. The vision for this facility is that it will be a vibrant community, one that offers the specialized care that many people need. I would like to thank the Yukon Party for taking the decision to build continuing care beds.

The basic issue was that the hospital beds were being taken by Yukoners who needed continuing care. So we did see it coming; we just didn't respond in time. While I thank the Yukon Party for deciding to build the continuing care beds, I will say that it should have happened earlier and maybe, as a result, they completely missed the consultation and public engagement piece. For myself, when I was a city councillor, we had meetings pulled to us to talk to us about consultation regarding the choice of location, the size and the distribution around the territory when the zoning issue came before us. We did try to redirect citizens to talk to the Yukon government, but they expressed to us concern that there was no consultation.

It's good that we are getting the 150 beds at the Whistle Bend continuing care facility. Over the past year, while the Hospital Corporation was waiting for the Whistle Bend continuing care facility to be built and opened, the hospital also took a decision to try to address the concern or the pressure on the acute care needs of the hospital. We've had many discussions about that here in the Legislature, and I thank the Minister of Health and Social Services for standing to respond to those questions. Over the weekend, the Hospital Corporation issued a letter, and it's titled, “Open letter to all Yukoners: Ensuring a hospital bed or service is available when you need it”.

Earlier today during Question Period, the Member for Watson Lake referenced this letter, I believe. I'll quote from it somewhat here. One of the things that the letter states — and again I quote: “We must use all hospital system beds and resources to full potential.” Basically, the choice or the direction that the Hospital Corporation has taken regarding the

pressure on surgeries and acute care is to try to utilize all of the beds across the territory, including all three hospitals, to alleviate the pressure. We are all working toward getting the Whistle Bend continuing care facility online, but we recognize that there still is some time before that happens and so the hospital has taken that decision. I think, again, it's in response to the overall crisis of the pressure of continuing care patients utilizing a resource that was designed for acute care.

Again I'll quote from the letter, Mr. Speaker: "The solution to this particular issue is not more hospital beds, but rather more health care options, both in terms of facilities and community supports that meet the needs of Yukoners." I'll try to reference that as I discuss aging in place. Overall, we are still playing catch-up to match the need with the facilities available. We know that we already need to be planning for the next stage, and that is what I think the members opposite — the members of the Official Opposition — have been posing questions about, and that is what I think the whole purpose of aging in place is all about — it's planning for the next phase. While we need to get the 150 continuing care beds at Whistle Bend online as soon as possible because they are overdue, we also need to be thinking about the future.

The first beds that we will possibly build if there are new beds that we are building are the Whistle Bend continuing care beds. That's the 150 beds. I think what we should be talking about is: What are the next steps beyond that?

Planning for the future takes time. Planning, design, engineering, program development — all of these things take time — years, in fact. We need to make sure that we're not caught behind again with families struggling to find appropriate care for their aging loved ones.

Before I talk about that planning and what it means for communities, let me discuss how the demographics in the Yukon are changing. According to the Yukon Bureau of Statistics, Tagish is the oldest community in the Yukon. I have to look it up, Mr. Speaker, but it's my belief that the average age of residents in Tagish is 10 years older than the average age in other communities — 10 years. While we don't have specific numbers, it's likely that Mount Lorne and Marsh Lake also join Tagish as some of the oldest Yukon communities — not oldest as in the age of the community itself, but rather the age of our citizens within those communities. So in my riding of beautiful Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes, this is a relevant and important issue. As I spoke with Southern Lakes folks, it was their highest priority issue. I appreciate the opportunity to stand and speak to this motion.

I also have some personal experience with this topic. A few years ago, my wife and I asked my mother-in-law about her preference as she ages — if I give her age here, she would kill me. She loves her home in downtown Whitehorse and she told us that she wants to age in place. We have been making some modifications to her home — railings beside the steps, improvements to her bathroom — so that she can continue to live in her home, hopefully for years to come. It's an important issue, and I bet that, for all of us here in this Legislature, this issue would be important for us personally

and one we all look forward to working on with Yukon government and everyone else here in this Legislature.

The demographics are clear in the Yukon. We're getting older — in all of our communities, not just in Whitehorse. As we age in all of our communities, we need to be thinking about what sort of services we should be providing — where and how.

Yukon used to be a younger and more transient place, with young people moving to the Yukon for a few years and then moving away as they got older. Now, people move to the Yukon, love it and stay. Many even bring their parents here to join them. As our demographics shift, we have to adjust to deal with this new reality.

As others have stated in this House, it is expected that 30 percent of our population will be over 55 by 2030. I'm sure that's more in my riding. It's a reality that is to be celebrated. I'm not complaining. Multi-generational families, elders living in our communities — these are goals we want to achieve in every single community here in Yukon. As a government, we want to support this shift and encourage and enable people to age the way they want to age.

I will say that earlier today, Mr. Speaker, I was concerned when I heard the Minister of Health and Social Services stand to speak to this issue and she said, quite rightly, that we need to work with our communities — and I heard laughter from across the floor. I think that's inappropriate. All communities matter and solutions shouldn't be focused on Whitehorse, surely. While we need to, of course, include Whitehorse, we need to work with all of our communities.

One of our government's key strategic pillars is to build thriving Yukon communities, recognizing local needs, local interests and local solutions. Aging in place is a huge part of that goal. Let me talk about planning for the next phase.

The Yukon Liberal government believes that the next phase has to be in the context of communities — all Yukon communities. It can't just mean putting people in Whitehorse. That takes people further away from their loved ones, further away from their families and support systems, all of which help them stay active, positive and healthy as long as possible. It's not saying there won't be many people who do come to Whitehorse, but we need to look at solutions across the whole of the territory in all Yukon communities.

I'm going to quote from my colleague the Minister of Health and Social Services when she spoke about aging in place, that we would take a broader view of health that "encompasses healthy lifestyles, housing, transportation, community connections and age-friendly planning."

What I think we need to do is to see health and wellness as a spectrum. At one end of the spectrum is acute care. As you move down that spectrum, you have continuing care, then we would move to things like home care but, beyond that, we also need to move all the way to things like active living. I referenced earlier in the previous motion, talking about the seniors games and ElderActive. I think this is incredibly important. The more we can help our citizens to stay thriving, the longer they stay in their homes. This is a smart move. We've heard from the Yukon Financial Advisory Panel,

which has pointed out that the cost of health care is going up and we need to look at it. If we do our planning right and we move that spectrum down, the more we move toward wellness and away from acute care, the less we will have to spend toward acute care and the more money we will save overall. It's a win-win. Wellness is part of a larger picture of care that incorporates a broad range of programs and activities.

Let me talk for a moment about home care. Home care allows people to stay in their homes for longer and still receive the services and care they require. It is not quite all the way to the wellness end or the active living end of the spectrum, but it is much further away from acute care, although it should be done in coordination with acute care. As I have noted, home care is cheaper than moving people into a live-in continuing care facility.

This year, this government committed an additional \$770,000 to home care. That's more than a 10-percent increase to home care funding, so they can do more of the excellent work they do. I would like to do a shout-out to the home care folks. Home care allows people to stay in their homes as long as possible and home care also alleviates pressures on the Hospital Corporation. The Hospital Corporation and home care staff have an excellent working relationship and support each other to achieve an excellent standard of care. It is not done in isolation.

I took a look to try to see how much of that money is going into our communities. Roughly one-quarter of those dollars goes straight into the communities. Of course some of home care's spend is centralized service that goes to all residents — so it is for all Yukoners, but very specifically, more than one-quarter is going into our communities.

Another important aspect of community-based wellness is recreation centres in communities that have seniors programming. These programs bring our elders together to participate in activities they enjoy with their communities, which helps seniors stay well longer. In communities people support each other and this promotes wellness, independence and a higher quality of life. We need to support our communities as they aim to support each other.

Let me talk for a moment as we enter into this planning phase for aging in place about how we will engage and consult with Yukoners. I have spoken personally with the Minister of Health and Social Services, and I know she has a plan to travel to all communities and to engage with Yukoners — to talk to them — about how we can build this spectrum of care. I think this is an incredibly important piece of the process, and done right — done early like this — ahead of the next phase, so that if Whistle Bend continuing care facility comes online over the next several years, by the time its full build-out is in place, we will have that strategy ready for aging in place. I know how dedicated the Minister of Health and Social Services is to this issue, and I know how much time she focuses on it.

Mr. Speaker, we will go out and we will engage with Yukoners. We will talk about aging in place. It is a spectrum of options. As much as possible, we will try to move that spectrum toward the side of wellness that will include home

care. I know that within my own department that EMS is working to be supportive of home care and to provide more supports. How can we help Yukoners to stay healthy in their homes as long as possible? We will contemplate more beds. That is in the fullness of this aging-in-place strategy that will be considered, I am certain, and we will consider where those beds should be placed around the territory so that they provide aging in place as much as possible. I don't expect that it will end up being every single community, but I do expect that it will take a whole-of-territory look and consider all of the communities.

I will just conclude, Mr. Speaker, that it is important that we get more continuing care beds. I think that is critical. That is why the Whistle Bend continuing care facility is part of this motion. I thank the Member for Copperbelt North for bringing it forward. This notion that we will develop those 150 beds — we know it is needed. It has been needed for a long time.

My wife works with the hospital and I have known for many years — she has expressed to me directly that this has been a long-standing, ongoing concern. I am glad that we are now getting those 150 beds. I wish that we had done more consultation around it — or that the Yukon government had done more consultation around it. I wish that there would have been more financial planning around it and that those numbers would have been in our out-year budget, so that we weren't faced with having to introduce those.

I state that it is incredibly important that we get them for the very reason that there is the crisis with our acute care facilities right now. The best solutions going beyond that will be to work with our communities and to talk about a full spectrum, to ensure that we talk with health professionals, stakeholders and find solutions that offer alternatives and ways to transition between wellness, home care, continuing care and acute care.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I look forward to providing an aging-in-place strategy, which will allow seniors to age in place to the greatest extent possible.

Ms. Van Bibber: I rise today to speak to Motion No. 32 brought forward by the Member for Copperbelt North. This motion is very broad and covers many aspects of the aging and care of Yukoners to create solutions, to promote aging in place and the full spectrum of care, keep to only 150 beds at Whistle Bend — solutions that offer alternatives and transitions between home care and full-time care — and providing community-based services that allow seniors to age in place. This is a huge task. We all know the stats that Canadians and, in turn, Yukoners, are aging. I know the expense and extent to which we need professional caregivers will rise as our population becomes older and we'll need the use of medical services and care, and continuing care in a facility.

This is not a fun part of our lives for anyone — for the patient, the family or the medical community. We're all trying to find the solution that fits one particular case and it can be confusing. I had a quick immersion into the world of continuing care with someone in our family — from the

diagnosis to the long-term acute care, non-acute stay in hospital, to a bed finally becoming available at Copper Ridge Place. It was stressful and it was all-consuming and everybody had a doctor's opinion, but during that four-month period, we were met with compassion, kindness and we worked together to find solutions as quickly as was possible. It was a daunting time and it was frustrating as well, but it is necessary as some patients cannot live at home any longer due to dementia, Alzheimer's or a chronic illness.

Aging in place is a wonderful concept and this is what was going on with this elderly couple as they appeared at face value to be all right. Little did our family know that one partner was trying their best to cope with and accommodate the other's failing health without telling anyone and without asking for help.

When we did find out, it was difficult to hear and understand once that help was asked for, but it was out of love that one wanted their partner home and to provide the care they thought they could give. It had become untenable, and it was realized that it was too difficult to continue, even with support like light housekeeping, meals provided by the family and a good community program. Only when the cry for help came did we realize that it wasn't sustainable.

In another case, another relative of mine received home care and remained at home as long as possible. She wanted to age in place. A home care worker came in to do light cleaning, grocery shopping and prepare light meals, but the home care workers were continually changing, and each time the patient needed daily care, she had to reintroduce her worker to her specific needs and show them where things were located. It was a strain and it was stressful not having a regular home care worker whom she could get to know and be comfortable with so that she could spend her time trying to be well.

Fortunately, she was in a position to hire her own care, but many cannot do that and are at the whim of changes and upheaval. I don't believe every one of us will end up in continuing care; however, for those who do need extra or specialized care due to certain illnesses, it should be as available as possible.

I also don't believe we can foresee the future, but we know that those initial 150 beds in the works are definitely needed, as was stated, due to our aging population. As such, let's not close the door on future needs. To pass a motion stating to keep the beds in the development only at 150 is short-sighted. Perhaps there might be a need for a wing that can add an additional 30 or 40 more beds.

Respite care is another vital part of the aging-in-scene scenario. I just spoke with a constituent who had taken her husband to Copper Ridge Place for a respite placement for two weeks. The caregivers need help as well. It can be overwhelming. Dealing with erratic behaviour, staying up throughout the night, aiding in personal hygiene, facing aggression or frustration, as well as working to establish a routine through trial and error are just a few occurrences that can take their daily toll on members and caregivers — family members.

It can be a challenge for caregivers to recognize that they can't do it any longer. They feel like they are losing their loved ones. They do want them at home as long as possible, as a caregiver remembers the way it used to be. I know from experience they'll even want to take them home, which is not possible. It can also be unsettling for them to experience from the outside how their partner or family member is being taken care of in a care unit. There is learning for all parties.

As I said, it's an honourable concept to age in place, but each individual case, depending on the health issues, cognitive health issues and support systems, is so different.

Even if all the steps are taken to age well in place — safety features added, meals provided, medicine delivered, oxygen provided, light housekeeping, grocery shopping, personal care, and the list goes on — one can see that it takes many hands to make sure someone is safe in their home. Constant care and scrutiny is needed to ensure that one person is all right at home where there might not be anybody else in that home. This type of care is not without cost either.

Another constituent of mine wanted to add some care to the elderly. She is retiring soon and has worked many, many years in the medical field. The knowledge is that, if you can keep people moving, they stay healthier and are more apt to be able to function better. Her goal of walking with people to ensure they are safe and steady, as well as getting the benefits from moving, is wonderful. It's such a simple concept. But the cost of service is not included in any program, and she is finding it difficult to get referrals and make it work, so we are continually looking for ideas for her.

The Minister of Health and Social Services yesterday mentioned, in one of her answers, a holistic method to provide funds to a new innovative idea so that aging in place can work. In the good old days, we used to care and house extended families as best we knew how with what we had. Now that everyone leads such hectic lives and cannot or will not devote time to senior or geriatric care, we're in a new realm of aging in place.

The seniors themselves sometimes don't even want to burden the families — in most cases, this is true. I rest easy knowing that the Yukon is a wonderful place to age and that those who are in need get the best care and comfort as anywhere in Canada. There are always different models and different ideas that will have to be addressed and, as time moves along, I hope Yukon will be ready, but I will not be supporting the motion as it reads.

Ms. Hanson: I had not intended to speak to this motion, mostly because I thought it was a fairly self-evident motion and it wasn't much more than providing a base for speaking points, which we've heard lots of this afternoon. I have to say, though, in response to the Minister for Community Services, that I rise because what he said scared the bejesus out of me.

If this government is thinking, planning and projecting that it will need a new 150-bed care facility at any time in the future, that is a complete and abject failure of our health care system.

One of the things that are missing from this conversation is historical context, and the minister did speak — you can look at the Blues — about: We will plan for that next phase. We will have that next phase when we need that next phase.

Mr. Speaker, I sat in this Legislative Assembly and heard first about 300 beds and then I heard that, no, that was not acceptable because there had been no consultation. Then we started raising questions about evidence, about information, about best practices elsewhere in terms of caring for people on the whole continuum of who may need continuing care, one of the big things that we found is that — first of all, let's just step back. This is a territorial population of about 38,000 people.

We are spending more money — both in our acute care facilities and our currently planned institutional care — per capita than just about anybody else anywhere. When you start looking at the optimal size for a care facility, Mr. Speaker, the optimal size and location become really important parts of this conversation.

The previous government wasn't that interested in having that conversation, but I can tell you that citizens were. I can tell you that I attended more meetings over the last three or four years of people who brought in experts who the government didn't want to hear — people who had done studies and had done practical application of what it means to provide quality care on the continuum for people as we age. We are all going to do it — hopefully.

The optimal size was — first of all, integrating it into existing facilities or community centres, not isolating it; secondly, ensuring that it was no more than 110 beds. So we're already more — because once you get that big, Mr. Speaker, what do you have? Look at the hallways. Look at the design. This is not a home. It doesn't matter if we call them pods or units or whatever — this is an institution.

I heard the minister speak about the aging population, and I'm so tired of these hoary myths. We're not talking about a grey tsunami. Other health economists have talked about it more as a grey glacier. When you look at Statistics Canada — and I have in front of me an age pyramid of the population of Canada in 1961, 2011 and 2061. So if we're planning to spend hundreds of millions of dollars, based on projections of what today — we know the baby-boomers. They're going to boom out and boom back, and then it goes back in. The curve goes in.

When we make major capital expenditures, we are making them for a very long time. There are significant implications to paying out huge amounts of money for a facility that will be a white elephant. To suggest that you want to build more for a population, none of the projections for growth in this territory would support that.

There are other things that, when we keep talking about how the aging population is driving up the costs of health care across the country, are also contrary to what health economists have provided as evidence. You can look at the work of Robert Evans. You can look at the work of other economists at UBC — the costs and the drivers for those costs on a per capita basis are not the aging of the population, but the factors that can be controlled by health care providers and policy-

makers. This is where it comes down to political will — the increased diagnostic tests and higher consumption of ever-more costly drugs and the increased use of specialists.

Many people who work in the area of health care — and particularly health care as we look at it for seniors — say that what we have allowed to happen is this specialized delivery system — drugs, doctors and diagnostics. Those are the cost drivers. You can look at any piece of research across this country and you are going to find the same thing. There was huge resistance in the previous government — where it came from I was never sure — to broaden the scope of non-physician health professionals. But it is changing, Mr. Speaker, across this country. The issue of broadening the scope of non-physician health professionals, whether that is pharmacists — and we have had some conversations in this Legislative Assembly about that already — nurse practitioners — dragged kicking and screaming as the last jurisdiction in Canada. We are still not breaking down the barriers to develop community-based clinics where you see nurse practitioners as your primary health professional. They can deliver many of the services that we currently go to physicians for more effectively and more cost-effectively, and we can do this at a cost that is lower than what we are paying on the many fee scales that we have for our GPs and our specialists in this territory — the GPs in particular.

There is a real challenge, and it is not going to go away, but it is certainly not going to be achieved by buying into the current crisis that we are in. You know what? We make really bad decisions. It is a phrase called “shock doctrine”. You create a crisis and then you say that the only way out of it is to spend more money on this solution. Well, I think that the government has to make sure that we don't buy into the shock doctrine. Yes, there is a mess right now, but there are alternatives.

One of the alternatives is to push back and say, “Is it necessary to tear down old buildings?” Macaulay Lodge — some people like it. Well, fine. Find the people who are comfortable in Macaulay Lodge and allow them to stay there as part of their continuum of care. But the assumption built into the planning for Whistle Bend that you must automatically tear down these old facilities — my goodness, when we looked at the plan that was provided not to the Legislative Assembly, but it was on the website for a nanosecond — that initially had the 300 beds — it included tearing down Macaulay Lodge and then tearing down Thomson Centre — really? You just have to shake your head about who is making these proposals. That was in there, and we still have a copy of it, thank God. It did disappear.

The call for taking a more strategic approach didn't originate with this government. The YMA, I mean — goodness, gracious, last year — the Canadian Nurses Association and the Canadian Medical Association were all part of the Council of the Federation when they met here. They were all lobbying the federal-provincial-territorial leaders to get together to develop a common seniors strategy. That was echoed again in November when the Yukon Medical Association met, and they talked about again — and I'm

quoting here: "... starting with a comprehensive needs assessment for the full range of seniors' housing and care." And there was: "... a need for a longer-term vision and a plan for seniors continuum of care, from quasi-independent to supportive living, to supportive homecare to hospital care..." and that those "... levels are matched to the individuals' needs."

He said — this is Dr. Hanley speaking at that YMA meeting in November — that it will need and require re-thinking some of our health care practices in a medical system concentrated on intervention and cure, because there is no ultimate cure for old age. So then we have to decide, in collaboration with the person, what interventions are reasonable, and are all expensive diagnostics reasonable or necessary at all times? But assumptions are made when there isn't that conversation, Mr. Speaker.

This morning, one of the comments that were made in response to a question I asked of the Yukon Financial Advisory Panel. This question was with respect to the continuum of care issues because there are a number of recommendations around health care in here. We talked about what the cost price points are. We said roughly \$5,000 a day for an acute care bed, roughly \$1,000 — which I think it is a bit more than that here — for the long-term care bed, and he said a fully functioning and fully served home care — like when you're offering 24 hours a day — \$500. Now that is high compared to what is across the country, but think about it Mr. Speaker. Why would we be going for acute care more when we can't have acute care? Well, it's not acute care in either of the two hospitals because they really are long-term care — or keeping somebody in their home with better coordination.

So Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to end with — Members of the Legislative Assembly — at least the Leader of the Official Opposition, the Premier and the Minister of Health and Social Services got a letter today from Seniors' Action Yukon. I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, that over the last few years, I have been very impressed with the thoughtful and detailed research that this group of citizens has been doing to think through the whole range of issues that affect people as we age in place.

The letter indicated to the minister that Seniors' Action Yukon is a group of older adults who are concerned about issues related to health care, housing, social services and other issues impacting their lives. They go on to talk about their response to some of the issues raised in this Legislative Assembly and in the letter from the Hospital Corporation. They have similar questions to what my colleague had raised — questions about the situation at the hospital, but they also raised some issues that I think need to be factored in and should be part of any discussion as we move forward and think about the issues that are subject to this motion.

Their first point, Mr. Speaker, in response to the Whistle Bend proposal as first put out — and then as it ultimately rolled out — because no seniors groups were consulted, no physicians groups were consulted, no nurses groups were consulted, nobody was consulted — so the seniors, when they caught wind of this, said: "Well, then we should start doing

our own research," and started talking to people across the country. Indeed, because these are all well-educated folks — you don't just lose your IQ because you get to be 65 — these folks were reaching out to Europe and North America and other places, getting best practices. I can tell you that they had fascinating workshops and webinars.

Their first thing is increasing home care services and other support services to help maintain people staying at home, with added support services to the family, speaking to the point made by the Member for Copperbelt North. There are some good people, no doubt, working in home care and all the spectrum of services associated with it, but until they have the support and the continuity of planning so that the services are provided with a continuity — human beings are not widgets, so to have different people coming every day doesn't work in a human context. That's a senior management challenge; that's a ministerial challenge to ensure that home care is transformed in this territory.

They echo a commitment that was made in 2006, Mr. Speaker. In 2006, when my predecessor was diagnosed with leukemia, the then-Premier visited him in Vancouver in the hospital, and Todd said to him, "When are you going to make some palliative care beds in the Thomson Centre?" and he said, "I'm making that commitment to you." Then he came back and announced the election, and we still don't have the palliative care beds in the hospital.

I would question, Mr. Speaker — and we have questioned this Legislative Assembly — the idea of locating palliative care on the other side of town when your pharmacy is right here. You need immediacy. When your medication needs to be changed right now, that palliative care physician needs to be able to change it now, not wait for two hours or three hours. So convert some of the administrative or program offices in the hospital or Thomson Centre to accommodate beds, and palliative is one of them.

They also raised the question that we have been asking — and I think it's useful — is utilize the space above the new emergency wing or the old emergency wing for additional beds as an immediate solution, so if there's a crisis, deal with the immediate crisis, but don't project that crisis out. Deal with it so that you don't have a crisis down the way.

To echo what the minister has been saying — they say explore alternative approaches with family and community members to provide care in rural communities. Explore the training of local home care workers or personal support workers by Yukon College in rural communities. We won't keep people in the communities unless they have trained support. Speaking to what the Member for Porter Creek North said — families can't do it all anymore. We're expecting both family members to work.

The statistics, Mr. Speaker — and I'm not going to go into them right now, but I have in the past and I have recently — in terms of who's caring for people are huge. Much of that is not reported in terms of the minimal tax relief that's there for people.

Develop a nursing program at Yukon College — it's great that we have an LPN program. That's not a nursing program.

We're talking about creating a huge demand for nurses. The minister will no doubt outline in short order — or at least when we do the spring budget, she'll be identifying the number of nursing positions that will be required to staff that facility. It's costly. When and if we look at the cost of having nurses coming to work in the Yukon communities on contract, the travel cost, the contract cost — why aren't we training our own?

A novel approach is perhaps the notion of developing a comprehensive plan for the Yukon with all these services under one regional plan to coordinate long-term planning between the Yukon Hospital Corporation, home care, long-term care and palliative end-of-life care. The Hospital Corporation acknowledged that there have been caps in discharge planning. That's an understatement. There's lots of room for improvement.

I think that we need to be cautious in projecting the reality of the current crisis into the future. In any crisis situation, you deal with it; you get on with it, but you also keep your eye on the long-term objective. The long-term objective is not to be having people institutionalized; it's not to have people having to stay in acute care facilities.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I won't take too much time from this House but, first of all, I appreciate all the comments that have been made so far. It's important for me to just take a few minutes to make reference to the Leader of the Third Party, because I'm concerned that she has misunderstood some things or something that the Minister of Community Services said. I know this because we have talked about this as a Cabinet; we have talked about this as a caucus. I hope that I can reassure the member of the Third Party that everything she has said here in the House today is something we agree with. We're not talking about a phased-in anything with respect to Whistle Bend, and any discussion of phases was not in reference to that at all.

The continuum of care of is, of course, critical in consideration of solving these kinds of issues. Community care and care in communities — there is no one solution to any challenge. There is a web of options that will help us resolve these issues. These are big conversations — conversations that you've heard the Premier say that we hope to have with everybody who is in this House, with Yukoners and with everyone who is interested in this issue. It is a huge issue.

Continuing care needs to include home care, it needs to include aging in place with supports and it probably needs to include new models of living — things we haven't thought about yet; things that have been tried in other places and other jurisdictions across the world and are great solutions to challenges that we face.

There is simply not a huge resistance here on this side of the House, as the Member for Whitehorse Centre has noted. In our point of view — in this Liberal government's point of view — we need to figure out what it is that Yukon citizens need and want for their aging and then figure out how to achieve those goals. Those are pretty simple, like simple

sentences, but they are enormous issues that will need all of our energies. Everyone is in this House to try to solve them in order to make the lives of Yukoners better and more fulfilling, so that they can age the way they want to.

The last thing I will say is that you will not see huge resistance here from alternative medical practitioners, alternative medical caregivers and licensed practical nurses. Other options that have been noted, Mr. Speaker, are all part of this conversation, so I thank you for the opportunity.

Mr. Cathers: In speaking to this motion, I just want to note, first of all, that most of the motion is not something that we disagree with. However, as my colleagues, including the Member for Porter Creek North, have noted we will not be supporting it because of the specific commitment to keeping Whistle Bend place to 150 beds. I want to clarify that I'm not saying to the government that they should necessarily add the 150-bed potential expansion to it that had been contemplated. What I am saying is that for a government that prides itself — allegedly — on evidence-based decision-making, it's important to do the work to identify what the options are.

If the government is contemplating providing for another 150 beds, as seemed to be indicated by at least one of the speakers from the government during debate on this motion, if they're planning on building for a similar number but locating those in communities, then the question that really has to be looked at or should be looked at before a decision is made is what is the comparative cost of those alternatives. If continuing care facilities are being built in individual communities, such as we heard the Minister of Health and Social Services claim before having to retract her comments that they just built a continuing care facility in Carmacks — if there are continuing care facilities built in Yukon communities, the elements that have to be looked at include the total cost and the ability to hire staff and to keep them in rural communities for those facilities.

There have been past examples such as one under the NDP with the correctional facility in Teslin where government has with the best of intentions opened up new facilities in rural communities and then had difficulties operating and staffing those facilities. That entire picture needs to be looked at, rather than leaping before you look on the basis of what we all know was an entirely, purely political commitment made by the Liberal government to cap the Whistle Bend facility at 150 beds. The basis by which they reached that — if I may be so bold as to suggest — seems to us to have been more about disagreeing with the government of the day than coming up with an alternative vision. I want to emphasize that I do support the idea of looking at where supports can be increased in rural communities, but government should not be, at this stage, ruling out the option of expanding Whistle Bend by up to 150 beds if that turns out to be the most feasible option down the road.

I just want to also note that there has been a lot of debate recently about continuing care. I know that it is difficult for staff at the Hospital Corporation as well as undoubtedly the board and people who are not directly employed — who work

there — including doctors as well as other employees like nurses, technicians for things such as the MRI and CT scanner, as well as pharmacists and lab technicians and home care attendants and anyone whom I am missing.

I just want to thank them and thank as well the staff of the Continuing Care branch of the Department of Health and Social Services for the work that they do each and every day in providing compassionate health care services in continuing care facilities to Yukon citizens. I want to relay to them as well my personal confidence in the good work that they do. I would also like to acknowledge, as we have previously, the fact that for the board and staff of the Hospital Corporation as well as their contractors, the fact that they finished completing a new ambulance station on time and slightly underbudget and now have finished substantial completion on the Whitehorse hospital expansion — one of the largest capital projects in recent history in the Yukon — and done so on time and on budget. It is a not insignificant accomplishment. While they are dealing with the pressures at the hospital in terms of occupancy of beds, that is doubly notable.

Again, as I have stated in the past, I am concerned that the Premier and the Minister of Health and Social Services and the government collectively do not seem to be taking the hospital situation seriously enough. It is important to note for anyone listening and those reading Hansard later that the bed pressures at the hospital have gotten substantially worse. I will certainly not disagree that the Whistle Bend facility, in retrospect, should have been started earlier than it was, but as members can understand, of course, every government looking at it — and there was a bit of a changeover in government between the Cabinet under former Premier Fentie to the Cabinet under former Premier Pasloski; there was a significant changeover in terms of the caucus of the day. In those times, everyone looking at the cost of Whistle Bend was trying to ensure that they were coming up with the most financially responsible alternatives for Yukoners.

It is important to note that now the problem with the bed pressure at Whitehorse General Hospital has become substantially worse in recent times and since this government has taken office. According to the hospital's documents, which the government finally relented and released after six months of being asked for them, the hospital, as of the year ending in March 2014, was at or over capacity 4.2 percent of the time at Whitehorse General Hospital. We have now seen, according to the chief of medical staff's report, that it's 60 percent of the time this year. That is triple compared to a year ago.

One of the ministers — the Minister of Community Services, I believe it was — made reference to the previous government acting to open more beds at the Thomson Centre and Birch Lodge and the cost of those facilities. We agree that those costs were added during the 2016-17 fiscal year because we heard very clearly and listened to physicians, including my constituent, Dr. Storey, who the Minister of Community Services referenced as well as other members of the Yukon physician community and other health care professionals — he told us that government needed to do more before Whistle

Bend was opened. We listened to that by acting to open Birch Lodge and add more beds at the Thomson Centre. Those temporary actions, while I firmly believe they were the right decision to make at the time, are not enough to address the bed pressure at the hospital prior to the opening of the Whistle Bend facility, which is why my colleague, the Member for Watson Lake, as our critic for Health and Social Services, stood in this House repeatedly, day after day, asking the Minister of Health and Social Services to tell us what her plan is for alleviating bed pressure and for opening up continuing care beds.

Unfortunately, we have seen — as has been a pattern with this government — a reliance on platitudes, such as talking about aging in place, without actually telling us the details of the plan. I would like to commend the Minister of Community Services for the fact that he gave us an answer that my colleague, the Member for Watson Lake, had asked on more than one occasion — the details of how much of the government's budget on home care is spent in communities outside Whitehorse. The Minister of Community Services was forthcoming with the information that we have been trying for days to get from his counterpart, who is responsible for that area. I do appreciate that information. I would also like to give the Minister of Community Services and his department credit for the work that is being done by Emergency Medical Services through their pilot project in providing additional services that support seniors in their homes.

As I mentioned before, we would appreciate more details on exactly what is occurring in that pilot project, but I would like to commend the minister and his department for taking a step in this area. It is something that we were exploring prior to the end of the last mandate. That is because steps that have been taken recently in other Canadian jurisdictions to have staff of EMS paramedics, during a time when they're not occupied by emergency calls, checking in on seniors and assisting with medications and that type of thing which, where implemented well, has been shown to have a demonstrable effect on improving the health care outcomes.

I would appreciate more details on that but, as a general note, I would just commend the minister and his department for taking a step in that area and encourage them, if it turns out that there needs to be refinement of that model, to refine the model rather than abandoning it. The success of this model in other jurisdictions has really changed health care outcomes for the better and is a very positive step here in Yukon.

I would also like to note that when there's talk of aging in place and facilities in communities — again, I want to emphasize the fact that I certainly support looking at the idea of improving health care facilities in communities outside of Whitehorse, but again, the very key factors that have to be considered are the capital costs, the O&M costs, the needs of the community, and the ability to actually maintain and manage and staff that facility. Last but not least — especially with higher levels of care — it needs to be taken into account that if there's a need for someone to be closer to the more advanced facilities of Whitehorse General Hospital for emergency care, those facilities simply don't exist in most

rural communities, so the fragility of the patient and the ability to provide lifesaving interventions with access to the full surgical team at Whitehorse General Hospital is also a factor that needs to be considered and costed out.

It's easy for government to speak in terms of platitudes, and we have been critical of the current government for giving us a lot of platitudes, but not much action, and quite frankly we will continue to be critical until it changes and we see action in areas. But where we do see steps, such as the one I referenced from the Minister of Community Services in EMS, we will commend them for good decisions and good actions when those occur.

It's important to note, as has been made reference to by several speakers, I believe, and certainly in recent days within this House, that according to hospital information, about 40 percent of the people who are providing the current bed pressure are what they refer to as ALC or alternative level care patients. Keeping the people from providing that pressure at the hospital is two-fold: one is with some of the patients — improving enhancements in the area of home care could potentially keep them from ending up needing the acute care services — and then having continuing care beds for those who need the more advanced level care on an ongoing basis is a more cost-effective option and it frees up those acute care beds.

The hospital has been struggling with bed pressures. I appreciate the clarification and the accountability that the corporation has demonstrated to Yukoners through measures including the letter it issued on the weekend explaining why some patients had been relocated to hospitals other than Whitehorse. While I certainly sympathize greatly with the families in those situations, it is important to recognize for the staff and physicians and other health care professionals at Whitehorse General Hospital that they are dealing with a difficult problem when the bed pressure occurs and they're forced to make decisions that consider the needs of multiple Yukoners who are calling on their services. While I would acknowledge, as they have, that things are not always done perfectly, generally speaking they do an excellent job.

I think it's worth noting two things with regard to the Hospital Corporation's annual general meeting that they held earlier this fall. The first thing I'll note is that they didn't have anyone who attended to complain about services they received at Whitehorse General Hospital. They may have received complaints through other venues, but it's notable that there's not a crowd of Yukoners expressing concern with how the hospital operated things.

I would also note that showing, in my opinion, the lack of importance that this government has placed on the needs of the Hospital Corporation, the Minister of Health and Social Services was not there, no member of Cabinet attended, and there was not a single Liberal MLA or staff member in attendance at the hospital AGM.

We have heard from officials of the Hospital Corporation and the chair. They have talked about some of the cost increases, including that the president and CEO noted that the cost of chemotherapy has roughly doubled over the past three

years. We have seen and heard about increases in the pressures at medical imaging and the lab. The fact that the hospital's current funding agreement in staffing is based on a 75-percent occupancy model, while they're currently operating at an average of 96 percent — those are areas that demand increased O&M funding.

As I have said before — but unfortunately, I'm forced to say it again — the government did not heed our cries seriously enough on this issue. We told them in the spring that we were concerned that they had not provided the hospital with enough funding, based on our understanding of the hospital's cost pressures prior to leaving office. Unfortunately, the government chose to treat this as a political issue rather than recognizing that the reason we made those comments was our sincere concern about whether government was meeting the health care needs of Yukoners.

I'm not going to spend much time talking about the government's Financial Advisory Panel report today. We'll get into that in greater detail later, but, because of comments made by other members, I just want to point out that one of the things that are very concerning in the report is the talk where it makes reference in the report to reallocating health spending to social spending as having a positive indicator on health and wellness. I want to note and emphasize to the government with as much emphasis as I can possibly place and muster to these words that they need to understand that you can't simply cut acute care spending and reallocate that spending to other areas without having dire consequences for Yukoners.

We agree that, yes, investments in improved fitness, improved nutrition and other steps that improve diagnostics — all of the things that, through reducing obesity, reducing the incidence of people developing diabetes, through early interventions that diagnose problems at an earlier stage so earlier action is possible at an ultimately lower cost to the system — all of those steps are areas that can be taken, but those preventive measures need to be taken first before you can cut the funding for the acute side of things.

In the current situation, I do have to take issue with the leader of the NDP's comments on this. There is a need to respond to the hospital bed crisis, and that includes more O&M funding to address their current needs. Whether that funding can be reduced at a later date, or the rate of growth decreased if there are more continuing care beds opened up and fewer people needing acute care — that's something that would have to be evaluated. It's important to recognize that the need for hospital funding is now.

I also need to note that the Minister of Community Services made reference to — in responding to criticism that has come from this side of the floor about the lack of a plan by government for responding to the bed pressure at the hospital, the minister seemed to suggest that the Minister of Health and Social Services' plan was to travel to all communities. Well, that is laudable to travel to all communities to hear from them and talk to them, but there is still a need for action.

Unfortunately, one of the things that this current government does not seem to realize is that, along with people

calling you “minister” when you take office, it is not all sunshine and roses and people telling you how glad they are to meet you. In government, if you don’t take action when action is needed, it has real-world consequences for Yukoners. You do not have the luxury of spending an entire mandate coming up with a plan to do something.

The government has wasted the first year of their mandate with little action on a number of critical files, including on health care. I will again emphasize — and I fear that once again it will fall on deaf ears, but I am going to say it again: The government needs to increase the O&M funding for the Yukon Hospital Corporation to meet the current pressures. They need to take that request seriously, and they should provide that money now to meet the needs of Yukon citizens.

We will identify on another day areas where the government could save money that they are not using as efficiently as they could be and still be within a balanced budget, but the government needs to make health care a priority and treat it seriously by investing in Yukon Hospital Corporation’s current O&M and capital needs because, as noted in their own budget, they have identified the fact that their current capital allotment is not enough for some of the important capital projects that they wish to undertake. I think that any Yukoner looking at those documents that are now public would see that the hospital has not made unreasonable requests.

Mr. Speaker, with that, I will conclude my remarks.

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

Does any other member wish to be heard on this motion?

Mr. Adel: I thank my colleagues who spoke to Motion No. 32, on aging in place. As I mentioned in my opening remarks, this is a broad issue that means something different to all of us. It affects all Yukoners directly and indirectly, and the impassioned points raised by the Leader of the Third Party do not fall on deaf ears on this side of the House. There are some great ideas there.

To my colleague from Lake Laberge, I would like to say something here — and this is a direct quote out of the motion: “keeping the Whistle Bend continuing care development at 150 beds;” — semicolon, Mr. Speaker, not a period. It is not an option that is completely out of line if it is proven the need is there — semicolon.

I have heard from my constituents and other people talking on the street that there is a gap in housing for seniors trying to age in place. We were talking all day today about acute care and going completely to continuing care. Pre-institutionalizing our aging population is not an answer. It’s an expensive stop-gap. We need to have a serious conversation and have a serious plan for moving forward for helping people to age in place that is cost-effective and doesn’t use up all our resources.

Forty-five years ago, when I was in my first year of university, a sociology professor said to me, “By the time you’re in your senior years, people are going to want a private

room, a private bathroom, 24-hour care, medical and everything provided by their governments.” He just turned to the class at that point and said, “That is unsustainable. We have to be better than that. We’re small enough and nimble enough and we have enough people in this room with some great ideas that we can make it work without pre-institutionalizing our people.”

Our people need places where they have the ability to be independent without the burden of looking after a single-family home — places that include hospitality service, personal care services for adults, places where First Nation investments and private partnerships can provide supported living in our Yukon communities. Our communities matter. We hope to incorporate this in the type of service provision in the overall delivery of supports for people wishing to age in place.

I go back to the 150 beds again and the semicolon. We do not use this as just a solution for where we need to put our people. We have to be better than that. Our government has adopted a people-centred approach to wellness that helps Yukoners thrive. Caring for our aging population is central to this approach. These services are required to help the fastest-growing segment of our population in the territory. Over the last decade, the number of Yukoners between the ages of 60 and 74 has grown by 88 percent. I’m one of them.

The Yukon government has planned for the expansion of beds to a level that we feel will serve the needs of our aging population going forward. However, we know from speaking with constituents across the territory the expansion of institutional beds is only one way to address the growing population of Yukoners.

Managing the expectations for the delivery of services to all Yukoners is at the forefront of our planning, as we establish services through agreements that support aging in place for individuals and families. That means respite. That means home care. That means palliative care. I have been through this whole process with my own family. My wife works in the field. We hear about it all the time. It’s something we have to be very cognizant of.

Aging well and being healthy in one’s own community is one of the main directions. As my colleague for Community Services said, it’s part of the spectrum we encourage. We’re living longer; we need to be more active. We need to take a little ownership of this continuing care spectrum, the main direction that our current government is committed to moving forward with. This incentive encompasses a broad spectrum of government departments, including health, housing, highways, public works and community services, to name a few.

I appreciate the Member for Watson Lake raising concerns about how the current government is planning to achieve our objective to facilitate a better model for aging in place. This motion was introduced on October 4.

I quote from Hansard — the Member for Watson Lake: “Tell us how this government is going to enhance home care, spend the additional money for home care, allow for better transitioning to continuing care, and why their view of

building a suite of continuing care facilities can be best for Yukon, given their assertion that the Yukon's financial resources are strained.”

We're not building a suite — I'll say that again: We are not building a suite of continuing care facilities. We are looking for solutions in the community, based on working with the groups we have, working with the medical community, moving forward. It's a more collaborative approach. It's a one-government approach, working within the departments.

It would seem unfortunate — and I quote again the Member for Watson Lake from Hansard on October 4 that we cannot support this motion. To be hung up on a semi-colon and a period, based on when we need to move forward to put Yukoners first, our aging population and their care as one of our big priorities, then I think that's being short-sighted, and I encourage the members to think hard about not supporting this motion. It is broad, but we have to start; we have to move forward. Let's get the wheel turning.

Since that time, the Minister of Health and Social Services has answered questions from the members opposite, which I will quote from Hansard from November 7, 2017. This quote goes on for a little bit.

“The questions that have been asked with respect to continuing care, aging in place, collaborative care models, health care models — we have done some really good work over the course of the year building a foundation for this government and building our relationships with the First Nations.

“Expanded scope of care, rural care... there are heightened pressures in our communities in rural Yukon.

“The question was asked of what we were going to do in the Yukon. Clearly we are looking at our partnerships. We are looking at working with the Hospital Corporation. We are working with Health and Social Services. We are working with non-profit organizations. We care about what is happening in Yukon. We care about Yukon people and we care about our patients. We are taking the necessary supports and the necessary cues from our partners. We are working toward addressing the long-term needs of Yukoners.

“With respect to what we are going to do on identifying numbers of beds and addressing the pressures, through Committee of the Whole we heard from the Hospital Corporation that there are pressures... this is a long-term pressure on the hospital and on health services and we are working to resolve that.”

Over the last number of weeks, the Minister of Health and Social Services has announced an additional \$771,000 for enhanced home care services in the Yukon, in our communities and in Whitehorse. Through the provision of home care services throughout the Yukon, we are looking at enabling Yukoners to remain in their homes. A point from the Leader of the Third Party — more cost-effective, they're happier, the families are happier.

We are looking to enabling Yukoners to remain there while providing supports to be healthy and vibrant in their own communities. Our home care program and our dedicated

support is about trying to balance a budget, balancing a health budget, an infrastructure budget and providing O&M services and supports to the communities.

Planning for the impact of the rapidly growing demographic of our aging population on Yukon's present and future resources will require some initiative. It will require some ingenuity. It will require some sober thought. It will not be easy, but this is why we are asking communities what they feel they need because their priorities will help the government develop a comprehensive delivery of services that serve Yukon citizens in all communities.

We recognize that it is important to state for the record that our whole-government approach will ensure that this important work is done with Yukoners and various stakeholders in mind, ensuring that theirs are the voices that are heard most loudly. It's imperative that we incorporate ideas from Yukoners in the planning and delivery of services that will allow our aging population to age in place with the security, comfort, and support of their families and communities.

I have appreciated hearing from my colleagues in the House about the impacts and challenges surrounding the Yukon's aging population and collaborating to look for solutions to those challenges in order that we can ensure that Yukoners of all ages continue to thrive.

Mr. Speaker, I will end with a quote from my colleague from Takhini-Kopper King from Hansard on October 4: “If we want to talk about the best way to spend our health care money, let's talk about making it accessible for where people live.”

I encourage all members of this House to support Motion No. 32 and look at the bigger picture.

Speaker: Are you prepared for the question?

Some Hon. Members: Division.

Division

Speaker: Division has been called.

Bells

Speaker: Mr. Clerk, please poll the House.

Hon. Mr. Silver: Agree.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Agree.

Hon. Ms. Dendys: Agree.

Hon. Ms. Frost: Agree.

Mr. Gallina: Agree.

Mr. Adel: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Agree.

Mr. Hutton: Agree.

Mr. Hassard: Disagree.

Mr. Kent: Disagree.

Ms. Van Bibber: Disagree.

Mr. Cathers: Disagree.

Ms. McLeod: Disagree.

Mr. Istchenko: Disagree.

Ms. Hanson: Agree.

Ms. White: Agree.

Clerk: Mr. Speaker, the results are 12 yeas, six nays.

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

Motion No. 32 agreed to

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

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

Motion agreed to

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

The House adjourned at 5:17 p.m.

**The following legislative return was tabled
November 15, 2017:**

34-2-83

Response to Notice of Motion No. 203 re: federal disability tax credit

The following document was filed November 15, 2017:

34-2-29

*Yukon Geographical Place Names Board 2016-2017
Annual Report (Dendys)*