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HANSARD

Wednesday, March 21, 2018 — 1:00 p.m.

Speaker: The Honourable Nils Clarke

YUKON LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

2018 Spring Sitting

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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
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**Yukon Legislative Assembly
Whitehorse, Yukon
Wednesday, March 21, 2018 — 1:00 p.m.**

Speaker: I will now call the House to order.
At this time, we will proceed with prayers.

Prayers

DAILY ROUTINE

Speaker: We will proceed with the Order Paper.
Tributes.

TRIBUTES

In recognition of the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I rise today to commemorate the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. This day is recognized around the world annually on March 21. This day was first recognized by the United Nations after the slaying of 69 peaceful demonstrators during a protest against apartheid in Sharpeville, South Africa, in 1960. It is important that we never take this day for granted, recognizing that there is much work to be done here in Canada and throughout the world to ensure equality for all people and to stop the injustice and stigma that racism causes.

This year's theme promotes tolerance, inclusion, unity and respect for diversity in the context of combatting racial discrimination. The rights to equality and non-discrimination are cornerstones of human rights law and the Yukon *Human Rights Act* where racial discrimination is fundamentally prohibited. The act says that it is discrimination to treat any individual or group unfavourably on grounds such as: ancestry, including colour and race; national origin; ethnic or linguistic background; or origin. We are fortunate that our Yukon community is becoming more and more diverse. Every human deserves to be treated with respect and have their rights protected.

While diversity is celebrated and grounded in our culture as Canadians and as Yukoners, we still have work to do to repair past harms.

In particular, Mr. Speaker, our country has embarked on a process of healing from a history of residential schools and a destructive policy of assimilation, and as government, we are taking significant steps forward to advance reconciliation with Yukon First Nations. We acknowledge the legacy of pain and injustice experienced by indigenous peoples, both young and old, and the systemic issues that have resulted.

We are building constructive government-to-government relationships with Yukon First Nations and working to better understand how past actions continue to impact First Nation people today and the ways that we can move forward together. We are learning together and we see tremendous value in bringing more awareness to First Nation culture and history in the spirit of reconciliation. Revitalizing, maintaining and celebrating First Nation knowledge, language and culture is core to a modern, more inclusive Yukon — one that is free of

racism. Revitalizing and maintaining relationships with all cultures here in the territory are key to our success.

Let today, the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, be a good reminder to Yukoners and members of the House of the need for us to work together to end all kinds of racial discrimination and to promote harmonious relationships among people in the Yukon.

I would also like to note that, today, here in Whitehorse, dozens of people gathered over the noon hour to denounce racial discrimination, embrace inclusion and promote diversity. Thanks to all the speakers and to the Human Rights Commission and the Yukon Federation of Labour for hosting this snowy first day of spring.

Mr. Cathers: I am pleased to rise today on behalf of the Yukon Party Official Opposition to join the government in recognizing March 21 as the United Nations International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.

This year, the theme chosen to be recognized around the world is: promoting the tolerance, inclusion, unity and respect for diversity in a context of combatting racial discrimination.

As the theme would suggest, everyone in the world, regardless of race, is entitled to human rights, including equality and non-discrimination. However, there is still a global problem with violence, intolerance, bullying and more, stemming from racism. We are not immune to that here in Canada.

March 21 was declared the International Day for the Elimination of Racism in 1966 by the General Assembly of the United Nations in response to the Sharpeville massacre in 1960, where 69 people were killed and, according to an official inquest, more than 180 were seriously wounded by police during a peaceful demonstration.

Racism still exists across Canada, including here in Yukon. While efforts are ongoing and there is significant discussion across the country about the importance of reconciliation with First Nations and other indigenous Canadians, it is important to recognize that there is more work to be done, and that racism in Canada, as well as discrimination based on religion, are problems that affect all races and many religions.

There are still people who, instead of celebrating our cultural and ethnic diversity, choose to degrade and discriminate against their fellow community members. As Statistics Canada noted, police reports of hate crimes in Canada rose between 2014 and 2015 by some five percent — an increase in crimes based on race or ethnicity.

Crimes targeting black populations remain the most common type of hate crime related to race or ethnicity and, overall, 48 percent of all police-reported hate crimes in 2015 were motivated by hatred of a race or an ethnicity.

It should also be noted that discrimination against religion most predominantly targets Canadians of Jewish faith as the highest number overall, according to Statistics Canada. Significantly, an increase in crimes toward Canadians of Muslim faith and Catholic faith are also noted in Statistics Canada's report.

By choosing to work together to rise against discrimination based on race or religion, we can make our society stronger and celebrate and encourage diversity. In the Yukon, we celebrate the increasing diversity of our people and continue to take steps to prevent racial discrimination and ensure Yukoners' human rights are respected.

Our *Human Rights Act* says it is discrimination to treat any individual or group unfavourably on any of the following grounds: ancestry, including colour and race; national origin; ethnic or linguistic background or origin. We must encourage our children and adults to embrace differences and to accept everyone as equal. By promoting tolerance and equality in our homes, we can work to promote tolerance and equality among future generations.

The Yukon Human Rights Commission and the Yukon Federation of Labour held a rally at noon today to mark the importance of the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. Across Canada and around the world, similar events are taking place. It should be noted, as well, that on a snowy day like today, everyone who showed up to recognize the importance of this event is doing their part to draw attention to the importance of the issue.

I would encourage all members of this House, and indeed all Yukoners, to stand up together against racism today, and every day, and to promote healthy views without discrimination within your homes, within your communities and within your social circles.

Martin Luther King Jr. famously spoke of his dream that his four little children would one day live in a nation where they would be judged, not by the colour of their skin, but by the content of their character. These words have long inspired people to be the change they want to see, but there is much more work to be done.

Mr. Speaker, we must work to live together, and we can eliminate racial discrimination.

Ms. Hanson: On behalf of the New Democratic Party of the Yukon, I'm also pleased to pay tribute today to the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. As was mentioned, it took us six years after the Sharpeville massacre of 1960 to finally see a beginning of the recognition of the importance of drawing attention to worldwide racial discrimination.

The Sharpeville massacre was a defining moment in the struggle against the racist apartheid regime in South Africa, a struggle that went on for another 34 years. For those of us who would smugly say that the extremes of the South African system of separating blacks from whites could never happen in a country like Canada, the truth is that the apartheid system was modelled on aspects of the regime set up by Canada's 1876 *Indian Act*.

As Canadians — as Yukoners — we often view ourselves with rose-coloured glasses — more what we would like to be, not who and what we are. It is good to want to believe that we live in a country free from racism, but that is not the lived experience of many people. Despite our policies of multiculturalism, Canada is a society where inequality is

colour-coded. That inequality is manifest in many ways, from racial profiling of racial minorities by police and security officials to disproportionate rates of incarceration of aboriginal and black people — and I could go on. The statistics provide a different reflection — a different reality — that demands both government and individual action.

Time and time again, racism is used as a divisive tool to disunite opposition to unjust policies. Americans saw that played out in the 2016 election and its aftermath. In Europe, far-right political parties are bidding for power on anti-immigrant platforms. Canada and Yukon are not immune to alt-right racism — one only needs to look at the social media commentary or certain political leadership contenders in this country.

However, because of the immediacy of communications today, we have new tools to immediately and openly counter hatred and racially motivated discrimination and violence. Mr. Speaker, it does start with each of us searching our hearts and our actions to challenge how we foster an environment free of harassment and discrimination, to step up and speak out and to refuse to condone behaviour that undermines the dignity or self-esteem of anyone. Racial discrimination is not an abstract concept. At our very core as human beings, each of us can understand the wisdom of the words of J.S. Woodsworth. Who among us would dispute the notion that what we desire for ourselves, we wish for all.

Art is, by definition, political. Visual, spoken word and literary voices often capture the challenge and sound the imperative for us to deal with racial discrimination in all its forms. In that vein, I would like to offer part of a poem made popular by Bob Marley in the song, *War*. I won't attempt his Rasta version of this, but the words are important, and they speak to the theme of today:

"Until the philosophy which hold one race superior and another inferior is finally and permanently discredited and abandoned — everywhere is war..."

"That until there no longer first class and second class citizens of any nation; until the colour of a man's skin is of no more significance than the colour of his eyes — me say war.

"That until the basic human rights are equally guaranteed to all, without regard to race — this a war.

"That until that day the dream of lasting peace, world citizenship, rule of international morality will remain in but a fleeting illusion to be pursued, but never attained, now everywhere is war..."

And he went on to sing:

"And we know we shall win as we are confident in the victory

"Of good over evil — good over evil..."

In recognition of World Down Syndrome Day

Hon. Ms. Frost: I rise in the House today to acknowledge World Down Syndrome Day. This day of awareness was first declared on March 21, 2011, by the United Nations General Assembly. On that day, it invited governments, organizations, the private sector and individuals

around the globe to observe the day in order to raise public awareness of Down syndrome.

Down syndrome is one of the most common chromosome abnormalities in humans, affecting one in 1,000 babies.

It is caused by the presence of a third chromosome — a copy of chromosome 21 — giving a symbol of reason to choose this day. This day is coordinated by Down Syndrome International, an organization with the goal of promoting and ensuring quality of life and human rights to all persons with Down syndrome.

This year, the organization call to action video is: “What I Bring To My Community”. It is calling on all people with Down syndrome, asking them to share their stories about how they can and do make meaningful contributions and enrich the lives of those around them. It is a fundamental truth that all people have something positive to offer to their communities. Sadly, however, many are not given the opportunity to do so.

Here in our country, the Canadian Down Syndrome Society is calling on people to get up and dance on March 21. The group invites us to stop what we are doing today and to have a few minutes of fun activity at work with colleagues who may have different abilities, to demonstrate diversity or inclusivity in the workplace. Though there are no specific events planned here in the territory, I call on all Yukoners and members of this House to think about how negative attitudes can prevent people with Down syndrome from living their lives to the fullest.

Not all of us will know someone with Down syndrome, but most of us do. I am sure that we have someone close to us — I do — who has some form of intellectual disability. I encourage everyone to take a moment to think about the positive impact that person has had on us and our community. Our government is doing what it can to enhance the well-being of all Yukoners and believes in investing in our children to give them the best start at life.

It has been shown that early education and appropriate care can greatly improve the quality of life for people with Down syndrome. For this reason, our recently announced action plan for early learning and childcare has identified \$900,000 for children with special needs. It is my hope that efforts like this, as well as ongoing cooperation between our government and care providers, educators and families across the Yukon, will help to empower people with Down syndrome to contribute to their fullest abilities.

Ms. McLeod: I rise today on behalf of the Yukon Party Official Opposition to pay tribute to World Down Syndrome Day, which takes place annually on March 21. This date became the official global awareness day for Down syndrome as observed officially by the United Nations in 2012, although its roots began many years before.

The date holds much meaning, as its selection was made to signify the triplication of the 21st chromosome, which is the cause of Down syndrome. Today, we have the opportunity to raise awareness and to celebrate and showcase the abilities and accomplishments of people with Down syndrome. This is with the aim of creating a global voice for advocating for their

rights, inclusion and well-being. This day becomes increasingly significant to people with Down syndrome, their families and friends, and those who live and work with them. It encourages independence, self-advocacy and freedom. Further, it encourages education and awareness among others to ensure quality of life and human rights for all.

Today is about highlighting information about Down syndrome with the public and debunking the myths that stigmatize it. One in 750 people born in Canada is born with Down syndrome, regardless of the age of the mother or the race of the family. It is also a fact that 30 to 40 percent of people with Down syndrome are born with heart defects. That, of course, can mostly be corrected with surgery.

Most importantly, it must be conveyed that people born with Down syndrome are not necessarily limited. They are as diverse as the rest of the population with respect to their abilities, dreams and aspirations.

Ms. White: I stand on behalf of the Yukon NDP to celebrate World Down Syndrome Day. Because today is a day of celebration, it's a chance to celebrate the contributions and accomplishments of people with Down syndrome in their communities here and around the world.

Like everyone else, people with Down syndrome want to contribute to their communities, live valued lives and be included on a full and equal basis in all aspects of society. It's the job of the rest of us to be sure that those opportunities exist, from full participation in school as children, to employment opportunities and the ability to choose where someone wants to live as an adult. It's about self-determination. It's about the ability to make choices and to have those choices respected.

There are fantastic resources out there, Mr. Speaker. You can look at hundreds of thousands of photos being posted by people around the world on different sites celebrating World Down Syndrome Day. You can listen to the voices of those with Down syndrome as they share their own stories of successes in their communities.

I suggest that, if you need a reason to smile, go look at the World Down Syndrome Day Twitter account, and your day will be better for it. Mr. Speaker, today we celebrate the unique individuals in our community for all that they are, all that they will be and all that they share.

Mr. Speaker, happy World Down Syndrome Day.

Speaker: Introduction of visitors.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I would like my colleagues here in the House to join me in welcoming the executive director from the Yukon Human Rights Commission, Jessica Lott Thompson, as well as Gurdeep Pandher, who was one of the speakers at today's event.

Thank you both for all of the work that you have done with respect to bringing awareness to these very important issues on this day of recognition and celebration.

Applause

Ms. Hanson: I would ask the Members of the Legislative Assembly to join me in welcoming Yonis Melew to the House this afternoon.

Applause

Hon. Mr. Silver: I would ask all my colleagues to help me in welcoming a former Klondiker — and I know he will be back — Mark Wickham, who was working with Across The River Consulting. His organization worked in partnership with the Klondike Development Organization to bring affordable housing to Dawson City.

Applause

Ms. White: I ask my colleagues to join me in welcoming Colette Acheson, the executive director for the Yukon Association for Community Living. When she moved here from Lethbridge, Colette really showed me how important it was that people with disabilities have choices. You get to choose where you live, who you live with, what you do, and what work you do. It's the job of the community to support that.

The work that the Yukon Association for Community Living does is so valuable. I appreciate having you here today on International World Down Syndrome Day.

Applause

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Early this afternoon, we announced that we were making our support of the American Sign Language program permanent, and we have several members of the deaf community and hard-of-hearing community in the House with us this afternoon.

Please join me in welcoming Gerard Tremblay; Elke Kraemer-Tremblay; Clarence Barber; Susie Smith; Erin Jacobsen; Alex Rear; his sisters Louise Clethero, Glenella Hill and Lynn Rear. We have Neal Bird, Lisa Rawlings-Bird, Michael Bird, Pat Fenton. I have my deputy minister, Tom Ullyett; Ashley Kayseas; Bonita Tarr, who is with Diversity Services; and Cam Heke, who is manager of patient support at the hospital.

Please join me in welcoming them to the House.

Applause

Speaker: Are there any further introductions of visitors?

Are there any returns or documents for tabling?

TABLING RETURNS AND DOCUMENTS

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Today, I have for tabling a legislative return regarding a question posed on March 14, 2018, by the Member for Porter Creek North, including a list of approved projects under the small communities fund and the clean water and waste-water fund.

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?

Is there a statement by a minister?

This then brings us to Question Period.

QUESTION PERIOD

Question re: Children in care

Ms. McLeod: This morning, the CBC reported on some very troubling allegations about abuse in government-run group homes. Can the minister please tell us when she first became aware of these allegations?

Hon. Ms. Frost: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To respond: I was made aware of the concerns raised quite some time ago about the youth group homes. The department has been working for a number of weeks now on the concerns that were brought to our attention.

I can respond to further supplementary questions. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Ms. McLeod: Mr. Speaker, if the minister found out weeks ago, can she please tell us what actions she took once she became aware of these allegations?

Hon. Ms. Frost: I want to, first off, acknowledge the folks and the young people who have come forward to bravely bring their concerns forward. These are concerns and issues that are long systemic in our care homes, and it is not something that just arose six weeks ago.

What we have right now before us are some concerns that were brought to my attention — to the department's attention — and we are taking the necessary steps to ensure that we address them in a very diligent fashion. That means we are doing an independent review — not by the department.

We have taken some careful approaches to assess the situation and ensure that, whatever is happening within the group homes, we provide means and measures to resolve any issues that we are aware of, and we also took immediate action as soon as they came to our attention.

Ms. McLeod: Can the minister please tell us why she didn't launch a review of the territory's group homes until the media started looking into this?

Hon. Ms. Frost: I would beg to differ with the member opposite. That is absolutely not the case whatsoever. The department has been aware. As the member opposite knows, we are looking at a health review. We have taken a review of the group homes. We know there was a review done under the Yukon Party's watch many years ago in 2016. We are taking further action, and that means that we are looking at best practices.

We know that recently there were some concerns raised by the opposition with respect to the group home in Porter Creek, and those are things that trigger efficiencies and services and programs for us. So we are taking the measures necessary to ensure we provide the best possible service for all the children I am responsible for. As minister responsible, I care about what happens to our children. The issues that were brought to our attention may have been known historically, and the children may not have been listened to. I can assure the member opposite that I am listening and, in fact, I have

proceeded with meetings with individual youth who have raised this with me. I want them to know that they are heard, they have been validated and we are proceeding with the due process that will ensure that we address the systemic issues that have been long existing.

Question re: Children in care

Ms. McLeod: We know that the minister has known about this situation for weeks. Regarding the review that the minister launched only once she was aware media were looking into this, can the minister please provide this House with a copy of the terms of reference?

Hon. Mr. Silver: I believe the minister has responded that this is not something that just happened in the last week. This is something that we have been made aware of, and, as an opposition member in this House for years, I have been aware of this issue. I know the Yukon Party has been aware of this issue for years. There have been issues here with group homes. We're trying to expand, and the minister right now is working with stakeholders.

Some very difficult conversations with individual youth who have been affected by these situations — I'm confident that the department, over the last several months, has been working on this issue, and I'm confident that the review that is going to be set up by the minister and her department will get to the bottom of a lot of systemic issues that have been around for years.

Ms. McLeod: In the interim, while the review is ongoing, what direction has the minister given to the department regarding the management and operation of the territory's group homes?

Hon. Ms. Frost: In response: clearly if there is an issue of this magnitude raised with the department, we would take it very seriously, and we are. We are looking at ensuring that resources are in place for the youth who have come forward.

We ensure that our programs and services, if they need to be adapted, are being adapted. We are looking at doing an internal review. The review will then define challenges and allow us to then shift programs and services to align to the service needs of those clients whom we have an obligation to serve.

We are taking this very seriously, and I can assure the member opposite that the department staff is doing an amazing job in addressing the concerns that are before us.

Ms. McLeod: The minister has alluded to providing adequate resources. Can the minister tell us what those adequate resources are — just for our assurance that they are being provided?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I just want to return to something that was said earlier with respect to the terms of reference. I wouldn't want there to be a misunderstanding about the lack of terms of reference with respect to this situation.

The *Child and Youth Advocate Act* grants the authority to the Child and Youth Advocate to conduct whatever investigation or review she deems necessary. Obviously, she is an independent officer of the Legislative Assembly of the territory here. The arm's-length organization will conduct an

independent and impartial review while protecting the rights of youth. As such, the organization does not require a set of terms of reference, unlike the inspection that is happening at the Whitehorse Correctional Centre, in which the legislation gives the minister the authority to appoint an inspector. Clearly, that person needs a terms of reference, but not necessarily in this case.

Question re: Children in care

Ms. Hanson: This is a very disturbing situation, and what we're seeing here, unfortunately, is a repeat of history.

I had started with a series of other questions, but the comments by the ministers opposite give rise to the fact that we are seeing a reprise of a situation with the Liberal government in 2001, when there were serious allegations with respect to the management of group homes. At that time, an NDP Member of the Legislative Assembly, Dave Keenan, requested an independent inquiry into serious issues and requested that those reports be made available. He was refused by the Liberal then-government.

Am I hearing from this government that they are not going to make those terms of reference available and that they're not going to make a full and independent report available to citizens through this Legislative Assembly — not through the minister?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I clearly have been misunderstood. The Child and Youth Advocate is an independent officer of this Legislative Assembly. Her office is an arm's-length organization. She has the authority under the *Child and Youth Advocate Act* to conduct the review that has been announced and is ongoing. She does not require separate terms of reference in order to do this work. The authority is in the legislation.

Ms. Hanson: That is precisely why I tabled the motion I did yesterday — to reinforce the importance of the independent aspect of any investigation. When we hear through the media that staff have reported some of the behaviours and incidents that have occurred in some of our group homes to their supervisors, and the response of the department has been that it has been dealt with internally, that raises serious red flags. When serious concerns or complaints are brought forward about the treatment provided to individuals in the care of government — in this case, teenagers — these concerns should never be dealt with internally, but must be examined or investigated by an independent body. No service provider should be investigating itself.

Does the minister believe that the current process of internal investigations is the right way to address complaints of abuse against children and youth in government care?

Hon. Ms. Frost: Just to clarify what my colleague, the Minister of Justice, stated earlier, we are not doing an internal review of ourselves. What we are doing is — we went ahead many weeks ago to look at some of the systemic issues and concerns that have been brought to my attention. I met with the youth in question many weeks ago to hear him out, to hear what he had to say and to let him know that I am concerned. I

am deeply concerned about what is happening. I am deeply concerned about historic issues and concerns in residences like this. I am concerned about what is happening.

The only way to address that is by taking an independent review that will advise and define what we do in the future. How do we do that? We do that by getting the feedback. My desire is for the independent review to provide that neutral lens that would give us feedback, give me the direction that I need — rather than having an internal review. It does not make sense. That would be absolutely wrong if we did a review and an audit of ourselves.

Ms. Hanson: I agree with the minister, but until 6:30 p.m. on Monday, those reviews were occurring internally. It was only on Monday night that an external, independent review was announced.

The situation before the House today shows the weakness of Yukon's whistle-blower legislation. Staff who witnessed these abuses of power and authority are scared to come forward, and the department has clearly told staff that they are not to talk about this crisis to the media; yet the minister has known about this for at least a month — more, now — and took no action until the story was about to break in the media. It is shocking that the mistreatment of youth in care was not enough to get this government moving, but a story in the media was.

When will the minister responsible for Family and Children's Services send a clear message to government staff that they will not be penalized for reporting abuse or mistreatment, whether they do so through the media, the Child and Youth Advocate or any other means?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Again, I am clearly being misunderstood or not being listened to with respect to the situation that we are talking about — allegations in the media and reports from the media are important. They inform our community, but they are not necessarily the truth. An independent investigation is occurring with our own Child and Youth Advocate, the person who has expertise in this area. That independence is necessary for this to be moved forward.

In addition, I don't think that the member opposite is saying that nothing should be done by the department at the same time. It is clearly not an investigation. Protection of these children and protection of the requirements of the minister and of that department are being looked into, and absolutely — these need to be addressed, because they haven't been for a ridiculous amount of time.

Question re: School replacement

Mr. Cathers: The Premier and his Liberal government have developed a habit of refusing to answer reasonable questions about the budget in Question Period. We have asked simple questions about how government is spending taxpayers' money, but when we ask, ministers typically dodge the questions and tell us to wait until Committee of the Whole, just like the Premier did yesterday.

Two days into Committee, my colleague asked the Minister of Highways and Public Works for details on what was happening with Holy Family School, since it is listed in

the government's five-year capital plan. The minister said that the government was going to build a new school. The next day, the Minister of Education threw her colleague under the bus and said that he was wrong, and that they haven't decided to build a new school. It's disturbing that even the Minister of Highways and Public Works isn't clear on the details of his own capital plan.

Does the Premier understand that there is a growing concern among Yukoners that the Liberal government does not seem to know what is in its own budget? If the Premier, as Finance minister, isn't paying attention to the finances, who is?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: What is disturbing is this question. I think I was very clear in saying that the decision about Holy Family School might be a replacement, it might be a renovation, or it might be a retrofit. Any misunderstanding of that by the members opposite, unfortunately, is their own. I have said it many times; my colleagues have said it. I think that is clear.

Mr. Cathers: I'm not sure what world of denial the minister is living in, but two ministers rose, and they contradicted each other on this issue. When we ask the government a question in Question Period, they say to ask in Committee. When we ask in Committee, they apparently give us incorrect information.

We were told by ministers that everything in the five-year capital plan was going forward. The Minister of Highways and Public Works told the media that everything in the capital plan had been approved by Cabinet. We saw this week, in the span of 24 hours, that the government went from planning to build a new school, to no longer building a new school and maybe just renovating it.

Can the Premier tell us how his five-year capital plan is supposed to allow Yukon contractors to confidently plan for the future, when the Premier and his ministers can't seem to agree on what is even in the capital plan and contradict each other on the details of it?

Hon. Mr. Silver: There is not much more to say on this issue, other than this is the question that was asked yesterday by the Yukon Party, it is being asked again today, and the Minister of Education has been very succinct in her messaging.

Really, unless there is another question, I guess the Yukon Party is going to continue to ask the same question over and over again, but we have been very succinct in our message back, and the Minister of Education has been forthright with information.

Mr. Cathers: The Premier is right on one thing — the government has been succinct in their messaging, but they haven't actually answered the question. We haven't heard the breakdown on the \$40-million item that we asked the Premier about yesterday — and in an area where the Minister of Highways and Public Works said that everything in the capital plan had been approved by Cabinet and assured the public that the document provided certainty and predictability for Yukon businesses. But one day, he told us that there was a major project in the capital plan, and the Education minister was

quick to contradict him and said that no decisions, in fact, had been made on the project.

What is the point of having a five-year capital plan if it changes, depending on which day it is and which minister you are talking to? Can the Premier tell this House what else in his five-year capital plan is actually still up in the air?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Before these questions came to this Legislature, and before the Committee of the Whole came to this Legislature, we also had a conversation about the five-year capital plan. At that point, I rose and talked about the importance of staying in contact with our communities to talk to the public and to keep some flexibility. What that means is that we placed in there, on the approval of Cabinet, that these projects would be coming but that there were still aspects of the projects to be determined. We can alert the building community that there will be projects on the way. We can alert them that they will be, for example, including the school, but we're not yet at the point of deciding whether that will be a replacement or a renovation of that school. That will be taken in consultation with our citizens and our communities.

What I want to say is that I rose here and I talked about providing the certainty and the flexibility so that we can be inclusive of our communities, our municipalities and our First Nations as we work through and identify those capital projects in all of our communities.

Question re: Aviation system review

Mr. Hassard: I have some questions for the Minister of Highways and Public Works. The Erik Nielsen International Airport has been undergoing a master planning exercise, so I'm curious if the minister can tell us today if this work has been completed and, if not, when we can expect it to be done.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I really am grateful for the opportunity to address the work that this government is doing in airports. We're spending a lot of time and energy improving our airport infrastructure, and this planning exercise is one such initiative that we are currently undergoing as part of our commitment to review the territory's airports and aerodromes and to enhance economic activities.

To improve community safety, Highways and Public Works commissioned a Yukon aviation system review. The review is completed by a third-party consultant that was intended to help guide future investments and operations in the public aviation infrastructure in the Yukon. The report makes several recommendations regarding required investments in the aviation network, as well as contentious recommendations regarding closure or divestiture of the five existing airstrips.

There is valuable information in the report. I have said before that no airports are going to close. We will use this review, in consultation with stakeholders, to develop a long-term strategy for Yukon aviation and the network.

Mr. Hassard: I'm not sure that the Minister of Highways and Public Works knows what I'm talking about, but I'm talking about the ENWIA 2040. We have heard a number of concerns from industry on how the work was

proceeding on this. One of the issues raised was for an assessment of current airport spending to identify efficiencies.

I'm curious if the work was undertaken, and, if so, what efficiencies were identified by the government?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Part of the work of the 2040 document that the member opposite is referring to has to do with long-term planning for our aviation system. There was a report that was done many years ago — in about 1999. It was called the 2020 panel review. It was drafted in 1999 and came out in 2000, and subsequently, about a year later, 9/11 happened and changed forever the way our aviation traffic works and basically rendered a lot of the report obsolete within a year of its drafting.

So the Aviation branch has now been grappling with that and has implemented almost 70 percent of the 2020 report, and now we're into the next phase. We're into 2040, and that work is ongoing, but we have some more conversations to have with the aviation industry. I have spoken with them over my tenure here at Highways and Public Works. I have heard their concerns, and we're going to be talking with them over the coming months to delve into this 2040 and plan the future of our aviation industry and our aviation network in concert with industry over the coming months and years.

Mr. Hassard: We have also heard from industry that they would like the opportunity to give input into this exercise before any final plan or final report comes out.

Could the minister let us know if there will be a draft report for stakeholders to review? When could we expect to see that report?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: We have been talking to the same people, obviously. I have heard the same concerns; I have been talking to industry, and they have made their concerns known to me as well. I'm more than happy to provide documents that will help guide our discussions going forward.

The airports in our territory are community infrastructure. They are a very important piece of our transportation network that is owned by all communities. There are aviation companies that use them on a daily basis to do their business. We have shipping companies bringing stuff into the territory. We, as citizens, travel out of this territory on a daily basis to do our business down south. Our airports provide us a window — two and a half hours from downtown Vancouver — making this a very competitive place to live and do work.

These are very important pieces of our transportation network that connect us to modern business — to the business communities across southern Canada and the world.

We are going to work with our partners in aviation and the community to make sure our airports are working really well. We're doing that already. We have baggage-handling equipment going in this year that will help facilitate the way we use our airports for our citizens to get their baggage in good fashion and quickly. These are some of the initiatives we're taking.

Question re: School replacement

Mr. Kent: I have some follow-up questions for the Minister of Education on her school revitalization plan. As

mentioned, the Department of Education's 2016 annual report, which the minister signed off on, stated that the school revitalization plan was to be finalized in the summer of 2017. The minister provided us with what we thought was the final list last fall; however, over the past few months, the list has changed, even though the criteria outlined in her annual report is basically the same as the criteria she outlined yesterday in Question Period.

Will the minister provide us with the updated list she is now working from?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Yes, Mr. Speaker. When the list of school revitalization projects is complete — because I have asked that the department go back and make sure it is an accurate list.

As we know, Holy Family has been moved up that list because of the current enrollment and capacity at that school. I would be happy to provide the list.

Mr. Kent: It will be interesting to get a time frame from the minister on when that list will be finalized.

We understand that renovations and replacements have to be staggered in order to meet the available resources. With respect to the amended list, can the minister tell us if she met with the school councils of each school before determining the order in which they would be renovated or replaced? If she has not met with them, I would be interested in hearing the reasons why she chose not to.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: What is important to remember is that the government is currently developing a long-term capital plan that will include Yukon schools to ensure that all of our buildings are safe and available for many years to come and for the safety and comfort of our student and school communities.

Consultation — the discussions with the school communities as part of that process — is appropriate and will be done. We are in the process of doing that work.

Mr. Kent: I am curious why that work wasn't done beforehand, as three schools have been prioritized simply by their appearance in the five-year capital plan. I would have expected that consultation to have occurred before that prioritization was done.

The minister has mentioned that the work is still underway with developing the final list for the school revitalization plan. Can she let school communities know what process they are to follow to be added to the list?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Mr. Speaker, this is not a contest. It is not a matter of, "Can we please have our school replaced before the next school gets replaced?" There is a process. The former Minister of Education is well aware of what that process has been, and there are no drastic changes here. It is an ongoing process. There is no such thing as, "Here is the list, and it will never change."

School enrollments, we know, have changed over —

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Could I answer the question?

Speaker: The Minister of Education has the floor.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Thank you very much.

The schools that are currently being considered in this overall plan include Christ the King Elementary, Holy Family Elementary, Kluane Lake School, Selkirk Elementary, Takhini Elementary, Whitehorse Elementary, and the Wood Street Centre. They are based on a revitalization plan that is, in fact, fluid; it will change based on the enrollments.

We have neighbourhoods that are growing; we have children who are moving into neighbourhoods; we have schools that had pressures in the past that don't have pressures anymore; we have schools that have never had pressures that have them because of the way the population here is growing and the way in which neighbourhoods are expanding.

This is an ongoing process; the work happens all the time. I am happy to provide the member opposite with the information he is requesting when we have a list that will be available soon. It will not be concrete.

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. 253

Clerk: Motion No. 253, standing in the name of Mr. Hutton.

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

THAT this House supports the development of a strategy that addresses climate change, energy and the green economy as an effective mechanism to support economic diversification and environmental stewardship.

Mr. Hutton: I would like to start by acknowledging that we're standing or sitting on the traditional territory of the Kwanlin Dün First Nation and the Ta'án Kwäch'án Council.

I am pleased to rise in this House today to introduce motion No. 253: "THAT this House supports the development of a strategy that addresses climate change, energy and the green economy as an effective mechanism to support economic diversification and environmental stewardship." It's quite the mouthful, Mr. Speaker, but this is a big issue.

The Yukon landscape has changed, and it will continue to change in this lifetime and for future generations. Mayo-Tatchun residents, particularly the elders, have lived through temperatures that our children may never experience. Wildlife species, birds and insects are all claiming new habitats in places not previously occupied. Complex river systems are carving new paths as glacial sources retreat. Small lakes are drying up. New pothole lakes are forming as the permafrost melts. Invasive species like the mountain pine beetle and the aspen serpentine leafminer have made their way northward and are significantly impacting our forest resources.

In the north, climate change isn't just a theory or a phenomenon to study. It's real. It's the frost heaves on our highways and the cracks in the shifting foundations of our buildings.

I was born and raised in this beautiful territory and, over my lifetime, I have travelled the highway between Mayo and Whitehorse too many times to count. I have noticed the change. The change is undeniable.

Climate change is having real and lasting impacts on our communities. Yukon people are extremely adaptive and resourceful, Mr. Speaker. Just like the landscape we live in, we are changing too. Most of us are just getting older. We're examining the ways in which we build and explore the development of more sustainable sources of energy. We're monitoring and studying these changes around us so that we're better able to make informed decisions about the actions we take now and into the future.

Evidence-based decision-making is critical as we move forward with addressing the impacts and challenges caused by our changing climate.

All Yukoners have a part to play in helping to address these impacts. Yukoners have made it clear that the environment is of utmost importance to them. Everything that we do every day impacts the air that we breathe, the water that we drink and the land that we depend on. We want to provide our children and grandchildren with healthy ecosystems and a stable and healthy environment. We want future generations to have the tools, safeguards and equipment needed to maintain not just a strong economy, but also a strong and healthy environment.

Yukon is an active member in climate change action for our region, for our nation and for our global world. We participate internationally through the Arctic Council and by supporting Canada's commitment to the United Nations international climate change agreements.

Nationally, Yukon took part in shaping the *Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change*. Regionally, we're working with our northern neighbours and the federal government to establish a northern adaptation strategy.

Mr. Speaker, here in the Yukon, we are leading a coordinated strategy to reduce our emissions, to adapt to the current future impacts of climate change and to consider opportunities to grow our green economy. We know that, as our population grows, so does our need for energy.

Our challenge is to lessen our carbon footprint while, at the same time, ensuring economic stability. We can take action to reduce our reliance on non-renewable energy resources and reduce our overall energy consumption. The Climate Change Secretariat leads the Yukon government's actions to address climate change. That is the responsible body to ensure coordination and collaboration across all government departments.

Yukoners continue to ask what they can do for their environment. We are very fortunate, because we have information and resources available to us. Yukoners know that doing their small part leads to big results for all of us — for

example, installing low-flow shower heads, switching to energy-efficient LED lightbulbs, proper disposal of waste at home and in community landfills.

Many Yukoners have accessed funding through rebates offered through the Energy Solutions Centre, such as retiring old appliances, insulation upgrades, upgrading water and heat recovery systems and retrofitting. These actions taken by Yukoners, along with the programs and services offered by the Yukon government, business and industry, are having a positive impact on our environment.

I would like to discuss some of the things that our Liberal government is doing right now to address climate change in our territory: retrofitting government buildings; ensuring that new construction builds are better insulated; ensuring that new construction builds are more energy efficient; and providing incentives for new energy sources, such as solar panels, biomass stoves and boilers, in partnership with other stakeholders.

We're looking at new ways to adapt to changes in infrastructure, such as highways and buildings being affected by thawing permafrost. We're gaining a better understanding of what food security means as it relates to climate change. We're supporting local agriculture options and initiatives for Yukon farmers to maximize local production.

Mr. Speaker, carbon pricing is a very unpopular subject for certain members of this House. However, it is an opportunity for Yukoners to play our part in the battle against climate change. This government plans to support this federal initiative by providing a rebate to Yukoners. That's what we promised during our 2016 election campaign, and that's what we'll do.

We know that heating buildings and transportation are the biggest sources of emissions in the Yukon. We know that, in the north, we're experiencing a much more rapid rate of change, and we need to be able to adapt to these changes. It's time for us to establish some serious mitigation and adaptation goals to ensure they are tracked accurately and to ensure that we report our progress toward these goals.

The Auditor General of Canada recently provided significant recommendations to the Yukon government. This government agrees with those recommendations and we're taking action on them. There were four major recommendations put forward. The first was to prepare a comprehensive, territory-wide risk assessment to prioritize commitments to manage the impacts of climate change. The second was to develop climate change commitments that are time-bound and costed. Commitments to reduce greenhouse gas emissions should indicate the intended level of reduction.

The third is to make consistent public reports on progress on all commitments and all expenditures associated with meeting these commitments. Fourth: carry out concrete actions in a timely manner to adapt to the impacts of climate change. Recommendations from reports need to be implemented. Information must be made available to decision-makers and explicitly incorporate climate change actions into directives, policies and processes so that they are integrated into decision-making.

I am proud to stand with a government that supports a climate change action plan, a government that is working in conjunction with their federal counterparts, a government that considers best practices for mitigating climate change, and a government that has current and future Yukoners' interests at the forefront of their decision-making.

I would like to thank the staff in the Department of Environment, the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources, and the Department of Economic Development for their contributions and hard work and for taking the lead on this initiative.

This is a whole-of-government approach, Mr. Speaker; we all have a part to play in it.

I would like to thank all the members of this House for the opportunity to introduce this motion today.

Mr. Istchenko: Mr. Speaker, I thank you for the opportunity to rise today on this.

Yukon and the rest of the north feel the effects of climate change in a much more significant and profound way than the rest of Canada. Recognizing this, the Yukon's Official Opposition very much supports real concrete action by all levels of government, business organizations and individuals to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, as well as measures to help us adapt to our changing economy.

During the last territorial election campaign, the Yukon Party proposed actions that would actually help reduce our greenhouse gas emissions, while also creating economic opportunities for individuals and businesses in Yukon. We also outlined our opposition to the carbon tax, because we do not believe that it will be an effective policy to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in Yukon. Beyond that, we also believe that it will cause significant harm to Yukon's economy, while making life harder for Yukon families.

The carbon tax is intended to penalize individuals and families for their use of fossil fuels so as to make them choose alternatives. However, Yukon — and indeed all of northern Canada — is without these alternatives and is in a much different position from southern Canada; therefore, we believe the north needs different measures and tools from what are needed in the south. We don't have as many options to not use fossil fuels in the north as they do in the big cities.

For example, in southern Ontario or BC, it is reasonable that a person can take public transit to get to work or go to the grocery store as an alternative to driving. In Yukon, for a family living in Mayo or Marsh Lake or Beaver Creek; however, this alternative is not available.

Likewise, in a cold climate, heating our homes is not a luxury; it is actually a necessity. As an example, last winter, when temperatures throughout the territory were dropping past minus 20 degrees Celsius, the territory was hit with a major malfunction at one of our hydroelectric dams. Although many houses and buildings in the Yukon Territory are heated by fossil fuels, a significant portion is also heated entirely by electricity.

Without a secondary option of diesel or LNG generators, many Yukoners would have been unable to heat their homes

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

In addition to the impact on families, we are concerned about the impact of a carbon tax on our economy. The Yukon is reliant on the energy-intensive resource extraction industry to fuel our economy. Although Yukon is blessed with a vast mineral potential, the cost of conducting business in northern Canada is already more expensive than other jurisdictions throughout the world. In an industry that is driven by the markets, companies are constantly evaluating projects based on factors such as the cost of fuel and the shipment of their goods.

Recently, we have seen a major Canadian gold producer warn that a carbon tax would negatively impact the viability of their project in Nunavut, while also deterring future investment in the area. We are also concerned that the carbon tax would negatively impact the economy and mining in the Yukon. Considering the impact on families and our economy, it is clear why we are concerned about the carbon tax in the Yukon. We also have a range of other concerns, such as the impact of a carbon tax on our municipalities, our First Nation governments and other levels of government. The Yukon Liberal government has heightened these concerns with their refusal to provide information about how the carbon tax will affect Yukon or about their role in implementation. This is despite the fact that they signed on to the agreement.

All of that said, we do believe that the Yukon can and should be a world leader in action to address climate change in a way that reflects our northern realities. The Yukon Party has proposed actions and proposals to do that and would support further action to that end. For instance, we support the development and expansion of renewable energy projects in Yukon, whether that is the wind project championed by the Kluane First Nation, the biomass project championed by the Teslin Tlingit Council, or the development of the next major hydroelectric project. There is room for growth on our strong record of renewable energy in Yukon.

We support providing families and business with incentives to adopt renewable energy projects for their homes or their buildings to reduce their dependency on fossil fuels. We know that many of the Yukon's large buildings are old and inefficient and would like to see more incentives to conduct energy retrofits. Yukon government buildings, in particular, are some of the most inefficient. These incentives would help the environment, but would also help with creating jobs and economic activity in the construction industry.

All of these actions have proven track records in the Yukon of actual measurable reductions in greenhouse gas emissions. In fact, I note that the Energy, Mines and Resources minister has highlighted a number of good initiatives from the previous government in this House, such as the very popular good energy rebate program, the residential energy-efficiency incentive program and the commercial energy-efficiency incentive program.

Mr. Speaker, there are tremendous opportunities to take more action in this territory, including increasing the use of renewable energy sources in the Yukon.

On that note, I would now like to introduce a very friendly amendment.

Amendment proposed

Mr. Istchenko: I move:

THAT Motion No. 253 be amended by adding the words “and THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to support environmental stewardship by developing initiatives that increase the use of renewable energy sources in Yukon.” after the word “stewardship”.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Member for Kluane:

THAT Motion No. 253 be amended by adding the words “and THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to support environmental stewardship by developing initiatives that increase the use of renewable energy sources in Yukon.” after the word “stewardship”.

I have had an opportunity to review the proposed amendment with Mr. Clerk and can advise that the proposed amendment is procedurally in order.

Now the proposed amended motion is as follows:

It is moved by the Member for Mayo-Tatchun:

THAT this House supports the development of a strategy that addresses climate change, energy and green economy as an effective mechanism to support economic diversification and environmental stewardship; and

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to support environmental stewardship by developing initiatives that increase the use of renewable energy sources in the Yukon.

Member for Kluane, you have 20 minutes on the proposed amendment.

Mr. Istchenko: I won't have much to say on this. I just want to speak a little bit about developing initiatives that increase the use of renewable energy. I spoke earlier about some good examples with the Kluane First Nation's wind project, the Teslin Tlingit Council's biomass — or the development of the next major hydroelectric project here that we can grow, and grow our strong record of renewable energy in the Yukon. I believe we're almost — 98 percent — renewable energy as it is.

Looking at some of the programs that the previous government developed — the good energy rebate program, the residential energy-efficiency incentive program or the commercial energy-efficiency incentive program — they speak to the fact that they work. They are good initiatives, and I think there are more out there, as we listen to Yukoners and work with Yukoners.

I'm curious to see what members opposite have to say about this friendly amendment to the motion.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: I appreciate the opportunity to speak to this amendment, as has been tabled by the Member for Kluane. The undertaking to ensure that we have renewable energy sources in Yukon, over and above what is already here, is some of the key work that we're looking at undertaking through our work with the Yukon Development Corporation, as well as the Yukon Energy Corporation.

The member opposite touched on two examples, one being the Kluane wind project. That particular project is one where there was early work done. In this year's budget, there's approximately \$950,000 that's sitting in the Energy, Mines and Resources budget, which is money that would be allocated toward that work.

One of the challenges is ensuring that we have an independent power production policy in place. That's certainly something that I have directed officials to have completed by the end of this calendar year, which then gives us the opportunity to work on being able to put a price structure in place that respects the ratepayer, as well as the individuals who are championing the project. This is sort of a key mechanism, and it is work that has been ongoing, but we're coming to a point now where we have to conclude that. That is part of the conversation that continues to happen with Kluane First Nation and their development corporation.

Secondly, there's biomass. I spoke to this last week, Mr. Speaker. It was a theme. The Third Party had identified some questions for me concerning renewable energy and where we're going as an energy corporation, as well as some of the initiatives. There was a mail-out sent by Yukoners Concerned. I have spent some time over the last couple of days; I have had at least one evening when I have had a chance to go out and sit down with individuals who were handing out those flyers, and go through each one of those items that were identified and explain the initiatives that match some of those undertakings. That's some of what I'll speak about today.

Just going back to, specifically, the wording on this, where it focuses on renewable energy — the reason I like much of the wording here is the fact that we have the Teslin agreement. Where we're at on the Teslin work is that we're supporting it. We're in the midst of finalizing some funding through our IRIE. We spoke about IRIE here. It is a program and initiative that's coming out of the Yukon Development Corporation. We capitalized it to the tune of \$1.5 million last year; that's the money that we're flowing to a series of different initiatives, which I'll touch on now. Again, it's in the budget for next year.

The IRIE program is really about renewable energy. It's a renewable energy initiative. This is a place that gives us the ability to match up these renewable energy programs such as the Teslin biomass or even, if needed, the Kluane project.

Other projects that we are undertaking as well — right now, we have an exciting one in Old Crow. We're switching over all of the bulbs of the streetlights to LED. Many may think that this is just a small bit of activity and wonder how that would really reduce some of the use of diesel. Actually, it's 4,500 litres of diesel that does not have to be shipped into

Old Crow on an annual basis. That's substantial. It's cost-saving. It's the right thing to do. It certainly falls in line with some of our work.

Teslin is also interested in that. That is certainly something that we're looking to commit to Teslin. We would love to work with the Member for Pelly-Nisutlin on that initiative, ensuring, once again, that we can reduce some of the energy use in that particular community.

This doesn't go without saying that an all-government approach is key to this. As we spoke about yesterday, I think even today — if not today, then earlier this week — the drills are turning on the Robert Campbell Highway where we have a great Yukon company, Midnight Sun, partnering with Ross River, using one of our programs that is giving us the opportunity to look for some data on geothermal. That is also the work that we had undertaken earlier with Ta'an Kwäch'än Council through Energy, Mines and Resources. Specifically, I want to thank the people at Yukon Geological Survey who have driven both of those programs.

This, again, is an ability to look at these renewable energy sources in the Yukon. How do we expand on those?

I do want to thank the members opposite for their early work. It was touched upon by the Member for Kluane. He said — maybe that next big hydro project. Well, certainly, Midgard Consulting, which was brought in, and some other consultants — there was money spent. I have to go back to my budgets. I think approximately \$4 million was spent updating some of the plans, looking at shortlisting a group of potential hydroelectric sites, narrowing them to about 10, then doing a cost analysis with the lens of a narrow eye on it.

Also, what I think is important is that you don't get those projects done unless you have a meaningful partnership. What we found was that there were a lot of strong feelings about how that project was undertaken and the fact that there was a real challenge to get partners to a table to move forward. We also have to respect the fact that, in many of those cases, there were substantial impacts that would have happened within those traditional territories. The information that I have been provided with — whether it be from Selkirk First Nation or chief and council or Na Cho Nyäk Dun — is that there are some real concerns on those projects.

So do I think that we're going to see another big hydro project in the near future in the Yukon? I can say on the record here, from meeting with every single nation to date, I just do not see us moving on a path in the short term where that is a potential — based on what I'm hearing from the nations. I won't speak on their behalf, but that is the information that has been provided to me, and that is what has been stated at the table.

We'll keep that documentation. If there is a time to go back and update the work of Midgard — but really, now, that is \$4 million of sunken cost up on the shelf.

We will continue to work on other potential projects on renewable sources. We're excited about the work that Trudy Kwong is doing with Northern Energy Capital on their work concerning the Haeckel Hill project. We have had multiple meetings, and we think that there is a great match. We're

taking all of this data that they're providing us, and that is helping us to frame how you come up with an IPP that is going to work.

As much as we think that Yukoners have waited — and I can imagine the challenges my predecessors have had on IPP. Inevitably, we have been in a place for a long period of time where the costing of IPP has been the real challenge. People want to do the right thing, but how do you ensure that you can take on those costs? Are Yukoners ready to take on those extra costs? Is the government ready to take on those extra costs? That is what you have to grapple with.

What we are happy about is that part of the backstop process that we're seeing from the federal government — and some of the innovation on their funding agreements, I think — is going to make this a more attainable process. So how do we work that out and how do we help our partners? So we have also moved to sign a series of MOUs with Liard First Nation, with Teslin Tlingit Council and others. That really helps us to define their priorities, get ready to become partners in their projects and then identify what their needs are.

It's the same thing that we have done with the Vuntut Gwitchin. We're excited about the solar project. We're in constant dialogue with them. We're getting ready to be there to help support them financially and also from an expertise perspective.

So these are things across the Yukon right now. Any time I get to talk about the good work from the people of the Yukon Development Corporation — specifically, I want to thank Mr. Geoff Woodhouse, who is over there right now as the senior policy analyst, doing a tremendous amount of work. I'm working also with Shane Andre, who has done a massive amount of work on this, to focus on renewable energy sources and to look at how we can build a portfolio across the Yukon of these projects.

I would be remiss if I didn't also touch on the fact that we're excited to see what's going to happen within Carcross/Tagish traditional territory. We're in the midst of flowing funding to help with data collection. Standard data collection on wind is usually at least two years of data collection. We're in a position to help to fund them; they can get the data collection and come back to the table and then start to see if there's a real project there — we hope there is — and that will lead to the Carcross Tagish Management Corporation working with Yukon Development Corporation, in concert, to build infrastructure. That could lead to a couple of things.

I have talked to members across the way, and they're also very supportive of this. Do we look at having the ability to provide another energy source to our grid? Do we have an opportunity for a new market? The new market would be Skagway. So taking into consideration how we can reduce — even though Skagway is across the border, in another country. It is still basically in our jurisdiction and only an hour and a half away. How do we ensure that our strategies here reduce the amount of fossil that's burned there? In the summertime, it is significant when you have those cruise ships coming in, hooking up and refuelling, and they are in harbour. You can

see the smoke on the rock walls as you go into Skagway, and maybe we can be part of the solution to reduce those emissions.

I am certainly excited to talk at any point about this and to look to reach out and continue to work with communities like Beaver Creek. Dialogues continue, and there are multiple projects underway, such as solar infrastructure being put in place in Haines Junction. The Member for Kluane will know well — there are good friends and constituents of his, some elders who spend a lot of time in Klukshu looking even for those small communities where, all summer, they are inevitably running on diesel — but is there an opportunity to put some solar infrastructure in place there as well?

We are looking at basically going from north to west to east to south — all communities right now. We are excited that we have the opportunity to work with them. We are talking solar; we are talking wind; we are talking geothermal; and we are putting the funds in place to take this on. I think that we have a very ambitious, robust approach to how we are going to have a portfolio of different energy sources.

As stated, many of those sources really focus on off-grid. We have some opportunity on the Haeckel piece and on the Carcross piece to be able to feed into the grid, but we are going to have pressures, and that is going to be a discussion that we are going to have here. With an increased and robust economy comes greater demand. I have had some really engaging conversations this week with individuals. As we talk about a low-carbon economy, we have to take into consideration the impact of some of these new initiatives.

I know that the Member for Kluane was a great champion of looking at how to put electric car infrastructure in place when he was Minister of Environment. When we take into consideration what the impact is, household per household, not only do we have to support the idea for new innovation and technology — such as electric vehicles — but how are we going to produce that extra — potentially 30 percent more energy per household — if we have docking stations at our homes? We have to take that and then take the grid into consideration.

Those are conversations on a long term that we are going to have on April 6. I am very happy that we are pulling the first meeting together on April 6 and 7 with the Yukon Development Corporation, the Finance department, Aboriginal Relations, Yukon Energy — all of the stakeholders are coming together so that Yukon Energy can understand the financial challenges and opportunities within the Finance department, bringing the Yukon Development Corporation into the middle, with people understanding where our priorities are. The work that the Department of Environment is doing on the ministerial working group — which we are excited about — is really focusing on updating the 2009 *Energy Strategy for Yukon*, but also our *Climate Change Action Plan* — taking all of that, putting it together, and having the discussion so that all areas dealing with energy understand where we have to go together, what our limitations are and what our opportunities are, ensuring that we put that together and overlay it on the 20-year IRP, and maybe look at

those out-years and take into consideration how innovation and technology will inevitably affect some of our long-term plans — and looking at our opportunities.

I think I would be remiss if I did not put on the table today that the Minister of Community Services is really championing some of the things that he is hearing from his constituency — and also our fear and threat when it comes to wildfire. Forestry, of course, falls under the portfolio of Energy, Mines and Resources. We are having dialogue with our team there. How do we enhance our biomass opportunities?

Of course, if you review the IRP, one thing was touched on in a very short period of time — only a month in the job — so walking in on a Friday and seeing 64 separate slides about where an IRP was going, with three separate scenarios, was seeing that there was no biomass as part of that. No biomass was ever there — so really, making sure that we work with the Wood Products Association, ensuring how we can have a real marriage between having concrete actions to reduce our risk on fire and at the same time, maybe produce a fuel that can be used on our biomass.

Some of the work that we have done even on small projects — when you look at Yukon Gardens, where we have food production, biomass and training opportunities and, all the while, diverting some of that food production to the food bank. It is that kind of innovation. I want to thank the team from our Agriculture branch as well as Economic Development for putting that together.

As you can see, Mr. Speaker, I absolutely agree with the Member for Kluane and the Yukon Party on this. This is a fantastic amendment. This is the work that we are doing. We have touched on it all along, and I'm excited, and our team is excited to support this amendment and work collaboratively here in the Legislative Assembly today.

Ms. Hanson: I will just speak very briefly on this amendment. I am pleased to see the amendment to the motion, as put forward. I do believe that the overall motion still begs the question of what the strategy is, but I am sure we will come back to that when we get into the main debate of the motion as amended.

In response to the minister opposite's comments, I am encouraged by the words that he just spoke with respect to a series of initiatives and actions that are taking place. I'm hopeful that this signals the development of a coherent and consistent objective of this government with respect to Yukon's energy and energy development, and that we will then see the withdrawal of items such as establishing oil and gas fora to discuss oil and gas exploration and development in north Yukon, because it is absolutely inconsistent with the notion of developing a renewable energy future and is inconsistent with the reality of climate change in the north, as the Member for Mayo-Tatchun so clearly outlined.

We're hopeful that the notion of the amendment made by the Member for Kluane with respect to supporting the environmental stewardship by developing initiatives that increase the use of energy sources in Yukon will also facilitate

the conversation that challenges the status quo — that any renewable energy sources that are developed will automatically require subsidy, when we absolutely forget, every moment of every day, that we are subsidizing to massive millions and billions of dollars across the planet, and certainly within Canada, with respect to the fossil fuel industry. We have made a commitment as a country and as a subregional government to eliminate those fossil fuel subsidies. When we start getting these on a level playing field, we will start realizing what the real costs of developing energy are. That is part of the conversation that we would like to see as part of a strategic approach to developing energy in this territory.

So we look forward to the passage of this amendment to Motion No. 253 and to a full debate on the merits of the motion, as amended.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I will speak briefly to the amendment, and then, once the amendment is done, I will come back to speak to the main motion.

Just a couple of points: We totally support renewable energy, and we are happy that the amendment is here. The two things I wanted to try to express are that when we think about the three Rs — reduce, reuse, recycle — renewable energy is kind of like the third R, the recycle R. You really want to also try to get to the front Rs, which are to find ways to reduce your needs around energy and to find ways to try to make your energy use as efficient as possible. When you are thinking about your economy, those are great investments, because they pay back so well. Yes, of course, we support renewables. We also want to keep some focus up front on those other types, but, of course, we support the amendment.

The other thing that I wanted to talk about was that, when the Member for Kluane rose to speak about this, he talked about how we are 98-percent renewable. That is true of our electricity here in the territory. What it is not true of is our heat use and how that energy is used here in the territory. There are some renewables on heat but not nearly as much. When it comes to transportation we have very little. We have to think of the whole energy picture. I thank the Leader of the Official Opposition for talking about trying to see coherency and consistency and how it works as a package. I think we support that, as well, to try to come back with a cohesive plan.

As Yukoners think about the issue, they often think about electricity. I hope we can advance that dialogue here and across the territory, so that we are talking about all forms of energy use.

When we listen to the Chamber of Commerce, for example, they talk about roughly hundreds of millions of dollars a year on fuel use, which is basically a leak to the economy. The quicker we can transfer to a low-carbon economy, to eventually a no-carbon economy, then the more local we can make our economy and the better we will all be.

Mr. Cathers: I would like to thank the Member for Kluane for bringing forward this amendment to the motion to strengthen it. I think that the point highlighted by my

colleague in this motion of the importance of renewable energy is a big part of how the Yukon as a territory can act constructively.

I want to acknowledge the work of all of the Yukoners who have been part of changes within the past 15-or-so years that have actually increased production of renewable energy in the territory. I just want to acknowledge their work in speaking in favour of this amendment and speaking to the importance of building on that good work to continue to increase the use of renewable energy in Yukon. Those include the microgeneration program that we launched a few years ago, which, based on my understanding from department officials, has now seen 145 Yukon projects that technically are small projects by individual citizens and homeowners that are producing renewable energy, primarily through solar, but also through wind. Some are looking toward hydro, although that is not quite as simple as installing solar panels.

I would like to thank all of the government staff who worked on the microgeneration program for their efforts and the Yukon citizens and Yukon companies who have been part of increasing this production of renewable energy. I would also like to thank the staff of Community Services, in this case, in addition to the staff of Energy, Mines and Resources, who I mentioned before, for their work on what was then Bill No. 80, the bill that expanded the rural electrification and telephone program to allow for projects on the grid to borrow money under that program to install renewable energy systems.

I would also like to note other renewable energy that doesn't produce electricity but has reduced fossil fuel consumption and, as the Minister of Community Services made mention, the importance of looking at that. I would like to acknowledge the work of the late Bill Bowie in Dawson City for the work on the Dawson biomass project, which led to a reduction in the consumption of fossil fuels there. Those types of projects, whether they are producing electricity or are replacing fossil fuel sources, are all valuable additions to our Yukon energy picture.

In speaking in favour of the amendment brought forward, I just wanted to acknowledge the good work that had been done by government staff in the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources, the Department of Community Services, the Department of Environment, the Yukon Energy Corporation and the Yukon Development Corporation — the many, many staff who have been involved in that work — and the many Yukoners outside of government who have been part of both the *Climate Change Action Plan* and the energy strategy, including the good energy rebate program and the microgeneration program of which I spoke, as well as the work on the biomass projects in Dawson City and now in other areas.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I will commend the amendment to the House. I hope to see it passed and to see the government move forward in building on the work that was done on the *Energy Strategy in Yukon*, which I signed in 2009 — it is time for that to be updated, now that it is 2018 — as well as building on the *Climate Change Action Plan*, which has seen

good work and good results, including through the addition of the Mayo B hydro project to the electrical grid, with which government more than met its commitment to increase the production of renewable energy and did so years ahead of schedule. But we believe that there is more work to be done and plenty of opportunity for Yukoners, by working together and involving all levels of government and involving Yukon citizens and companies, to do more to increase the use of renewable energy here in the Yukon and to reduce our consumption of fossil fuels.

Speaker: Is there any further debate on the amendment?

Amendment to Motion No. 253 agreed to

Speaker: Is there further debate on the main motion as amended?

Mr. Adel: Thank you to my colleague from Mayo-Tatchun for bringing this motion forward today.

During the campaign, we were clear about the need to balance economic diversification with environmental stewardship, so it's appropriate to discuss how to achieve the balance in a comprehensive way that includes energy and the green economy. It's also a plan for addressing climate change.

Here in the north, we can all agree that we need to address climate change, because we see the effects of it more and more each year. We all share the same air; we all drink the same water. We all experience the extreme fluctuations and temperature changes across the seasons. The temperatures in the Yukon are rising at a much higher rate than anywhere else in Canada.

Climate change affects everything we do — how we build our roads, our homes, our schools and the power we produce and use. The costs, both financially and to our health and well-being, will continue to escalate dramatically unless we start to mitigate the effects of climate change.

Imagine in 20 years if air conditioning were to become the standard for new construction builds. How would we produce more power to run these units without creating more greenhouse gases? What would the costs of new green power sources be? The demands of climate change will need to be planned in the long term so that we can deal with financial pressure of our changing climate.

Mr. Speaker, climate change is a two-edged sword. On the one hand, the cost of not preparing for the change can be very high. On the other hand, opportunities for new economic growth are huge. Our one-government approach is suited to the type of collaborative action needed to reduce the impacts of climate change. Nationally, we are part of the *Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change*. The framework is both a commitment to the world that Canada will do its part for climate change and a plan to meet the needs of Canadians. A key commitment under the framework is developing a northern adaptation strategy. We are working with the federal government and our

neighbouring territories to establish the strategy in a way that will ensure long-term climate change resilience.

In the Yukon, our Climate Change Secretariat is leading the government's actions to address climate change with cross-government strategies to reduce our reliance on non-renewable energy and energy-consumption sources. The secretariat collaborates across government and outside of the government to identify and outline common goals to address climate change, ranging from simple things like using low-flow showerheads, switching to LED lights and upgrading appliances to more energy-efficient units, to larger scale initiatives like retrofitting government buildings, installing solar panels and high-efficiency biomass boilers.

We can help address climate change by reducing our personal consumption as well. In the Yukon, our largest sources of greenhouse gas emissions are home heating and transportation. Our Energy Solutions Centre continues to provide information and incentives to help individuals reduce their energy consumption and adopt more energy-efficient practices. The little things add up, Mr. Speaker. We need to keep doing the little things even as we align our efforts toward achieving the big goals.

One of these big goals is the opportunity for economic growth with innovative green technologies. The Ottawa-based Smart Prosperity Institute report specifies the clean tech industry will reach \$2.2 trillion worldwide by 2022 — with \$3.6 trillion worth of investment available between now and 2030.

Our own federal government just announced a \$700-million investment over the next five years to help Canada grow our clean tech industry. Now, here in the Yukon, with the creation of our new innovation hub, the opportunity for northern solutions and innovations in the emerging clean tech sector are very exciting. This is a group of people who are coming together in an environment where — who knows what would come out of there.

The potential for private industry and First Nations to partner with government has never been better. Independent power production legislation is one avenue for private investment in clean power and technology. We can move forward with geothermal, solar, biomass and wind power. The Teslin Tlingit Council has already installed 10 biomass boilers for heating government buildings, and this initiative is just a start. The additional employment and training opportunities available for jobs in the industry could be run through Yukon College and provide additional job streams for our graduates, so that they can stay in the Yukon.

Climate change can be embraced to build capacity in our workforce, to develop new tech for export and to protect the great quality of life we have in the Yukon. Rather than fearing climate change, we need to both meet its challenges and recognize the opportunities it provides — and we need to do it together. Our all-of-government approach can assist Yukoners to transition to a new way of dealing with climate change and to move into the future.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I am very happy to rise today to talk about this motion, as now amended. I thank the Member for Kluane for putting forward the amendment.

It is important somehow that we get the economy and the environment working together. It is critical. A lot of times when we, as politicians from all stripes, work on issues, we tend to work on a very short cycle. Our ways of thinking and our ways of responding are often very reactionary to situations that arise. The issue of climate change, by its very nature, is a very long-term thing. It is a situation that is going to be with us for a long time, and the effects creep up.

In the north, we feel the effects so much more than elsewhere on the planet, simply because of the reality of sea ice, as it turns out. What it means is that, for us in the Yukon, we are warming up at twice the rate of the rest of the planet. If you take our winters, it is four times the rate.

So we need to find ways to diversify our economy and to think about stewardship and sustainability. I have been teased about that word recently, and I hope I don't get teased again — I think it's a very important word.

When I was researching to speak about this motion today, I went back to the Speech from the Throne. I looked at it and listened to the words of our former Commissioner, who talked about the need for leadership and taking real action, and about a long-term stance on environmental protection. This was to address issues like climate change. He noted that a strong first step toward that goal was to ban fracking in the Yukon.

Mr. Speaker, it's important that we think about the long term when we think about issues like climate change. If we do it right, we create a more sustainable economy, a more sustainable social fabric, more sustainable culture and, of course, a more sustainable environment. I think of that as a smart economy.

I want to talk just for a moment about renewables. As I rose to speak on the amendment — and I thank the Member for Kluane for raising the amendment — it's important to note that, here in the territory today, we have a lot of renewable energy that is wasted. Every summer, we spill energy at our hydroelectric facilities here in Whitehorse. It is energy we don't use. If we get some way of storing energy, then what we can do is make all renewables more effective. When we think about renewables, one of the great solutions is to come up with seasonal storage, and that will make all those renewables better.

I have spoken many times here in this Legislature about the importance of getting beyond just renewables and getting to how we have efficient use of our energy and how we can get away from energy use in the first place. That is why I still stand to say that retrofits are our best investment. Earlier this spring, I attended national community meetings on sustainability, and I saw what some other communities are doing — not just some retrofits. There are communities like Markham and Bridgewater that are looking at retrofitting the whole of the community — all of it. That's the sort of investment we need to get toward.

The reason this is so important is because, of course, it's one of our major sources of emissions. We get to bring down

our greenhouse emissions but, at the same time, we're going to increase jobs — jobs in all of our communities; we're going to have healthier homes, and we're going to improve the pocketbooks of all building owners. That includes homeowners and, I hope, also renters. If the cost of heating the building is lower, then that's also good for our renters. It's also good for our industries that own buildings; it's also good for our schools; it's good for our government buildings — it's just good all the way around.

This year, we're investing \$11.7 million on retrofits. We are building toward \$30 million a year. I think that is a super important investment. I think we all agree on that type of investment, because I saw it in everybody's platform. It was there. I am encouraged because, in the Liberal platform, it had the highest number, which was \$30 million. We need to get there.

I thank the Member for Mayo-Tatchun and his comments about new builds, and the Member for Lake Laberge talking about the building sector. Here in the Yukon, we have turned a corner over the last decade. Our building community now gets it. We are building super green buildings, and the idea is to just bring down heating costs from the beginning. That is a great way to go.

I would also like to give a little shout-out. I mentioned earlier — when I rose to speak to the amendment — about transportation and how that is a more challenging problem for us, as we are — as the Member for Kluane noted — more distant, and so then we have more of a dependence on transportation, but there are some solutions. Just last month, the Village of Mount Lorne introduced an electric vehicle charging station to go with their solar panels. It is terrific. I want to shout out to Mr. Mike Bailie. He said in the press, "It's kind of like the egg before the chicken kind of thing." I had a good conversation with him, and we talked about how we can build on that and start to get renewables out there around transportation.

I would also like to talk for a moment about agriculture, Mr. Speaker. The Chamber talked about the fossil fuel leak to our economy that costs our economy hundreds of millions of dollars a year. The more we can get off of fossil fuels, the better we are going to be for economy and the more we can create a local economy — great. One of the pieces that are just as important as our use of fossil fuels is our dependency on food brought up the highway. When we think about climate change as an issue, one of the things that it can do is create flooding in the spring that can cut off the highways, or wildfire, which cuts off the highways. The more you can have food security here by developing local agriculture, the more resilient we are to those impacts of climate change.

At the same time, as we invest in agriculture, that means we are going to build our local economy. It also means that we are going to have healthier people, because we are going to have local food. What is super encouraging is that over the past couple of decades, we have doubled our level of agriculture and doubled it again. I am encouraged by the work of the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources and how his Agriculture branch is investing for the future to make us more

sustainable here in the territory. I think that is another thing that all members of this Legislature can get behind.

A place where we disagree is on carbon pricing. I thank the Member for Kluane for his comments, but I am going to respectfully disagree. My concern with the notion — we do have a dependency on fossil fuels here right now. If we don't get off of fossil fuels, then what happens is we keep leading ourselves toward danger and problems. We have to break that cycle. Is the way to do that to say, "We are too cold here. We need to not have something like a carbon price, which is a national program"? No, I don't think so. If I go to Toronto, they will also say that they are colder than someone who lives in Washington, and someone in Washington will say they are colder than someone who lives in Miami.

The point is that it is a shared responsibility of all Canadians. As Yukoners, I think we are ready to stand up and take that responsibility. As a government, we have made a commitment to rebate the money that comes from that carbon pricing and goes back to Yukoners and Yukon businesses. Then Yukoners and Yukon businesses will be able to use that price incentive to find a way to bring down their dependency on fossil fuels. It will help move the whole of the economy in a fair way.

The last point I wanted to talk about is about wildfire. Today is the first day of spring; there is a snowstorm happening outside. Every day that there's slightly more snow in the winter, I get kind of happy at first, because it means that the risk of wildfire drops if we have a wet spring — that's a great thing — but I get nervous if it's too much snow, and it increases the risk of flooding. Flooding and fire are the two biggest issues we face, and wildfire in particular is a very large risk. The Department of Community Services deals not only with structural fire and how we deal with fires in our communities, but also wildland fire.

We need to find ways to bring down the risk of wildfire for all of our communities. All of our communities live in the boreal, and we all have an exposure. It is important that we prepare to deal with wildfire when it comes and prepare to deal with emergencies when they come. For climate change adaptation — we understand those risks are increasing, so we need to increase our efforts and have continuous improvements on those fronts. We also need to look for solutions about how we can reduce our emissions. How can wildfire do that? As it turns out, one of the ways to reduce wildfire is to reduce fuel-loading, and if we reduce fuel-loading, suddenly we have the opportunity for biomass.

I have been in conversations with the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources and the Minister of Highways and Public Works to talk about how we can take this environmental liability and turn it into an economic opportunity.

So I am supportive of the motion overall. I believe in this as a deep issue for us as Yukoners, and that we need to be thinking for the long term. I thank the Member for Mayo-Tatchun for bringing the motion forward.

Ms. White: In speaking to today's motion from the Member for Mayo-Tatchun, there were concerns that were voiced when we had the Auditor General here and when we had the ability to have the public event. One of the concerns that was highlighted — when we were talking to the departments, they talked about how the strategy was going to be developed and released in 2019, but we didn't know if it was in January 2019, June 2019 or December 2019.

So 2019 has 12 calendar months. From right now, it could be anywhere from a year to 18 months when it gets released. Maybe it'll be released in six months, but we don't really know. The reason why this is a concern to us is that, at this point in time, government had been working off something called the *Climate Change Action Plan*, which was created in 2009. When that was created, there was a commitment that there would be regular progress reports. We saw one in 2012, and then we saw one in 2015. As everyone in this House knows, there was an election in 2016.

Since that point, there hasn't been a progress report on the *Climate Change Action Plan* because, as is their ability, the government has decided that they are going to develop a new strategy that talks about a green economy, climate change and energy. I don't disagree with those points, but my concern is that the last progress report we had — and will have had on climate change — was in 2015.

If it takes until December 2019 for the new strategy to be released and it takes two years at least for that to have a progress report, we're talking about a timeline of 2015 until 2020-21 before we have a progress report on how we're meeting those goals. One of the things that the Auditor General was really clear on was that you can't say that you have a strategy if you don't have measurable goals. They can't be airy-fairy; they have to be concrete. How did you reduce greenhouse gas emissions? How did you improve the mitigation purposes for Yukon with climate change?

Those are some of the concerns I have about a strategy being developed in 2019. It's just like — what do we do between now and when that strategy is released, and what do we do between now and when that strategy has a progress report?

So I don't disagree with the existing energy programs — I don't. I am someone who is a vocal advocate of those programs. It turns out that my own Facebook posts about light bulbs really helped out when they were being sold at Home Hardware, so I was asked to keep talking about light bulbs every time they became available, which I was happy to do. I am someone who accessed the home improvement loan through Yukon Housing to do energy retrofits to my own home, and for years, I talked about how \$35,000 wasn't enough — with \$35,000 you couldn't do a full energy retrofit of a house. Prior to the last election, it was extended to \$50,000, which was great.

If we want to talk about incentivizing, and we want to talk about facilitating people making those decisions, which I don't disagree with — then we have to ask ourselves if a \$100 rebate on an approved window to a maximum of \$1,000 per home is enough. At my house, I have more than 10 windows.

When I renovated my house, \$35,000 — and I live in a duplex — allowed me to add six inches of insulation and new siding, but I didn't tackle my windows or my doors. I did not insulate my attic, and I did not insulate my basement. When the program was extended, I invested in an air-source heat pump, because I believe that we need to have early adaptors to be able to move toward clean energy disruptions.

A recent hero of mine is a fellow by the name of Tony Seba, and he lectures on clean disruptions. If you have an opportunity, his talks about disruptions in energy are fantastic. They are super inspiring. What he says is that we're reaching a crux — and it's quite easy. If you go talk to the Energy Solutions Centre, they have had such a big uptake on solar installations that the one fellow who is charge of those is run ragged — and that is amazing. That is absolutely phenomenal because that means that people are seeing the value of installing solar on their roof and taking advantage of that.

I don't question the rebate program, for example, for retiring appliances. Absolutely, we should want energy-efficient appliances, and it's great, because if you retire your refrigerator or your freezer, they will take it to the landfill, and you will get \$50. You can also apply for a rebate — that's great. All those things are important, but what I actually think we have to look at is: How do we make some of those bigger changes more accessible for the general public, and how do we make some of those bigger changes accessible for businesses?

When I was in Vancouver for the mineral roundup, Tesla released the announcement that day that they had created the first electric transport vehicle — a transport vehicle that does not run on fossil fuel but runs on battery packs. That is phenomenal. If you watch any of Tony Seba's lectures, you will know that we are getting closer and closer to that point where, all of a sudden, renewable energy and energy products will become more affordable. We see it already. People who installed solar panels 20 years ago off-grid paid a heck of a lot more than someone who is installing them now, so we already see that change.

When we talk about a strategy being developed — and based on the Auditor General's report and the ability to talk to all those four departments that were audited within the Legislative Assembly — it became clear that 2019 is the goal, but we didn't know when — from January to December is 12 months, which makes quite a big difference. With progress reports every two years — the last one we had about the climate change action plan was 2015, so that's a lot of years without us doing measurements.

One of things I want to know from government is: What are we going to do in the interim? How are we going to know we are achieving the goals and what goals are we setting between now and this strategy being developed? What goals is the Department of Environment setting? What goals is the Department of Highways and Public Works setting? Are we going to purchase more electric cars? Are we going to make sure that there is a no-idling policy that is enforced? Are we going to make sure that we look at more charging stations?

Maybe we are going to add charging stations to the parking lot of this building. Wouldn't that be fantastic?

I don't disagree with our existing programs; what I do question is whether they go far enough. We heard the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources talk about the really fantastic things that communities are driving, such as the Kluane Lake wind project and the Old Crow solar project. What I want to know is: What energy projects is the Yukon government going to drive? What new renewable energy is going to come online with the Yukon government leading, whether it is through the Yukon Development Corporation or the Yukon Energy Corporation? I want to know what the Yukon government's actions are going to be.

I think that, absolutely, we need to be talking about partnerships and supporting communities as they make those changes. A couple of years ago, I got to go to the Yukon Wood Products Association. They had a two-day conference about the opportunities of biomass in the territory. We know that there is a new boiler being installed in Yukon College, and we know that there is one being tested right now in Ottawa that will go to Watson Lake. It's both an energy generator and a heat unit, so that's going to be really fascinating, but how do we look at things on a larger scale? How do we, maybe, incentivize a pellet industry? Maybe it's making sure people have more access to firewood. Maybe it's making sure people have more wood appliances in their homes.

There is lots of potential and lots of opportunity, but the biggest question that I have is: What do we measure between now and when the strategy comes out? More importantly, what do we measure between now and when the first progress report on that strategy comes out? By my calculations, we are not looking at it any sooner than 2020 or 2021, which will mean six years since the last strategy had a progress report. We know that, based on the Auditor General's report, we can't really have action plans without clear, measurable targets.

As government goes toward developing this new strategy that is going to address climate change, talk about renewable energy and the green economy, I want to know what government is going to do differently. How are we going to measure whether we are reducing our greenhouse gas emissions? We talk a lot about adapting to climate change, but I want to know what we are going to do to mitigate climate change. I appreciated it when the Minister of Community Services said that the diesel that gets burned in Skagway affects us — because it does — but the diesel that we burn in the Yukon affects everyone else as well.

I want to know what Yukon is going to do. What are we going to do to mitigate climate change, and what are we going to stop climate change? Whether it is building super-insulated houses, whether it is having electric vehicles — I still dream of the day of an electrical Alaska Highway where all of those old road stops that have closed down because now your car can go a lot farther than 250 kilometres on a tank of gas become charging stations for electric vehicles. Wouldn't that be something else? Then we would have the economic

development; we would have people along the highway again, but we would have the ability to do it in electric cars. Of course, just like Tony Seba says, it is changing, and those electric cars have the ability to go farther. There are ones being tested now in northern climates, so there is opportunity.

Mr. Speaker, I would love to know what is going to happen between now and when that strategy is released and, importantly, how we are going to measure what is happening between now and when that strategy, years after its implementation, finally gets its first progress report.

I love talking about energy and the future, and I look forward to hearing some answers.

Hon. Ms. Frost: I would like to speak to the motion as amended. I would like at this time to thank my colleagues for their input and their comments. I look forward to working with our partners on this strategy for climate change, green energy and looking at our efficient economies as well. Our goal is to look at striving to ensure that we focus on environmental stewardship and sustainability and, as members have mentioned, looking at efficiencies in how we conduct our businesses in the future.

Yukon's landscape is changing. Most of us in this House have seen or heard of drastic, evident changes in the landscape in my own Vuntut Gwitchin traditional territory, where we have heard of lakes draining as a result of climate change, affecting long-traditional practices of our people — so the sustainability and changing environments and changing a way of life for our people.

Our elders have lived through winter temperatures changing and drastic changes, and they have seen a lot in their time. Our children may never experience this, and they will see, as we go forward, adaptive measures that they will be accustomed to. Wildlife species are claiming habitat in places that they have never seen before. We have seen significant changes with migratory routes shifting. We have seen water systems that are taking new paths as glacial sources retreat, or invasive species, like pine beetles and other unknown types of invasive species that are found in our forests and on our highways and that are wreaking havoc on our environment.

In the north, climate change is not a theory. It's visual, it's real, and it's things that we see on a daily basis. We hear of this frequently, and we see this in our highways, and we see it in our communities. We see it in three specific communities that experience some significant permafrost challenges.

We have noted that the Ross River, Vuntut Gwitchin and Burwash Landing traditional areas have seen the most drastic changes in climate that affect their building infrastructure and that affect the highways. As good stewards of this land, we want to ensure that we adapt accordingly. By doing that, it will ensure that the changes in our adaptive measures ensure sustainability for long-term food security, which is huge. It's huge for us; it's huge for our people and for all Yukoners. It's essential to maintain a way of life.

We know that trappers and elders in our communities — and we had some guests in our gallery a couple of days ago from Kluane country. The Dickson Outfitters have

experienced significant changes in that area. I'm sure they would be happy to share their stories as well, having had generational responsibilities in that area as stewards of the land.

Like the landscape we live in as Yukoners, we are also changing when we change how we access the land, how we go on the land. ATV use is wreaking havoc on our lands. We know we have to change accordingly, change our rules and policies. We know with more and more roads and easier access — we know things are changing, and we're modifying the way we build our roads. We're modifying the way we build our infrastructure. Finding new ways to travel and exploring more sustainable sources of energy is essential. We are monitoring and studying the changes around us so we can make informed decisions about actions we take.

We are not doing this alone; it is done in partnership with our First Nation partners, with our businesses and stakeholders. We are currently in the process of engaging our businesses and stakeholders and the public throughout this year, as we look forward to our strategies. As Yukoners take part in addressing impacts of climate change, local traditional knowledge and observations are essential to support environmental stewardship. Together, we write our story on how we can mitigate effects and adapt to climate change here at home.

Yukon is an active member in climate change action for our region, our nation and our global world. We participate internationally through the Arctic Council, through the Gwich'in Council International, by supporting Canada's commitment to the United Nations international climate change agreement. Nationally, Yukon's perspective was part of shaping the *Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change*. Here at home, we are leading a coordinated strategy to reduce our emissions, to adapt to current and future impacts of climate change and consider opportunities to grow a greener economy.

I'm happy to note that I personally have been actively involved. I'm happy to say that I participated in a project that built an R86 green value home in the Yukon — the most energy-efficient home in the Yukon. We just went ahead and did a smaller project that ensured that we looked at alternative energy sources in the Yukon.

As members of this House and members of the Yukon, we all do our part to ensure that we participate in looking at alternative energy sources, ensuring we practice good measures in addressing energy efficiencies. We know that our economy and population continue to grow and will require more energy. At the same time, we want to ensure that we lessen our carbon footprint. We have significant pressures on our economy right now. We have some new mines coming on; we have some other initiatives happening and we want to ensure that we provide resources and supports and get the necessary input with our strategic partners.

The strategy on climate change, energy and green economy is a collaboration with all of our partners — with Yukon and transboundary First Nations, the Inuvialuit and Yukon municipalities — to address climate change, energy

needs and green economic growth in Yukon. The strategy will replace the existing *Climate Change Action Plan* and *Energy Strategy for Yukon* — an adaptive strategy that aligns with a more sustainable process and goals that we want to attain in the coming years.

We held a very positive first meeting with our partners on February 9 to discuss this new strategy and how we work together in its development. We will be engaging businesses and other stakeholders and the public throughout 2018 as the strategy takes shape. The broad engagement process will help us develop and implement our response to changing environments and economic conditions.

We know now that we are in the process of developing a water strategy for all of Yukon, and the water strategy is really to adapt to climate change and impacts and effects of mining on our traditional use areas. In the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in country, for example, there are significant pressures there. We want to provide supports and policies that govern what we do going forward. As things change and as our environment changes around us, we want to ensure that we adapt to that.

There is a national and global shift to address climate change throughout transitioning to low-carbon economies. Our intent is to be a part of that shift by supporting clean energy and resilient infrastructure. This work supports our collective efforts to build healthy, sustainable communities in an environmentally responsible way in Yukon, while building on the infrastructures. As my colleague from Takhini-Kopper King had mentioned, let us look at some solutions and greener energy, greener buildings and homes that will eliminate some of the greenhouse gas emissions.

The federal government has asked the Yukon government to identify a list of priority projects related to climate change and energy in Yukon. As part of the engagement on the strategy, Yukon government will also solicit input from project partners on projects that will help address climate change and lessen the carbon footprint.

The strategy presents an opportunity to address some of the previous recommendations made by the Auditor General of Canada. The reports that we have received most recently addressed some challenges and some shortfalls that perhaps weren't addressed historically. We want to do better; we want to ensure that we do better as we go forward; we want to build on the previous recommendations and have significant advancements in our relationship with First Nations, with our partners and with our communities to reduce the footprint and seek to implement some of the recommendations.

Yukoners have entrusted us with a mandate to govern the territory in fulfilling this very, very serious responsibility that I have an obligation to do, as my mandate defines. We must lead with respect, seek necessary input and be as open and transparent as we can in seeking the input in developing initiatives and innovative projects. As Minister of Environment, my overarching priority is to ensure strong environmental management, and that is an integral part of our efforts to build a prosperous and diversified economy. Diversifying requires more energy, which will need to be balanced. As noted, we want to ensure that is done by way of

good stewardship and good responsibilities and good input by all of our partners — that we all commit to that.

The realities of climate change require a good understanding of our emission levels and active strategies to reduce impact on infrastructure and communities. As noted in the previous reports, those are some of the shortfalls that were noted.

Yukoners see a healthy environment with sustainable wildlife and populations and opportunities to enjoy the wilderness as fundamental to the social and economic well-being of our communities. That is what Yukoners want to see and that is what we want to see as we go forward into the future.

As Minister of Environment, I have been tasked to establish greenhouse gas reduction targets to accurately track emissions and report on performance in relation to the targets, and that has been defined in the Auditor General's report as well.

I will work with my colleague, the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, on renewable resources and lessening energy consumption. I will work with my colleagues to integrate risk assessment and mitigation actions related to climate change in government policies and processes and projects.

We are working together as departments — we are not working in silos — and we are working to find solutions collectively. We're reaching out beyond government into our communities and with all of our partners to seek their input. I will work with Minister Streicker from Community Services to collaborate on waste management and recycling programs to reduce waste.

We are making some major efforts, Mr. Speaker. As good stewards of this land, we are looking at our full intent in addressing our platform and that is to address our energy goals — climate change goals — providing adequate support for Yukon businesses to shift to a more diverse and sustainable economy. We are responding to the recommendations from the Auditor General of Canada, as I stated. The strategy is an opportunity to address a number of the recommendations to improve how we respond to climate change.

Our intent is to produce a state-of-play document alongside release of the strategy. It is noted that the strategy will be coming out in 2019. The strategy is intended to look at prioritizing our needs and dedicating resources to adaptation. The Climate Change Secretariat is leading Yukon government's actions to address climate change. This office is housed under the Department of Environment, but it doesn't do its work alone. It works very closely with all the departments and our partners.

Working across government, looking at major reductions in energy consumption is huge for the Government of Yukon. We work to install — as stated previously — energy-efficient appliances, retrofitting and adapting how we build our infrastructure in the Yukon and what we do with existing infrastructure that has been here for 30 years and doesn't meet the current National Building Code standards and doesn't meet the current emissions standards. We want to ensure that

we look at retrofits to align with the targets we have established for ourselves.

We're in the final stages of reviewing potential impacts, and we want to ensure that we are open to public feedback — that we're open to shaping the future of the Yukon. We know that, in the territory, heating buildings and transportation are the biggest sources of emissions, and we also know that temperatures are rising in the Yukon, as stated by my colleagues. We're seeing more snow; we're seeing more fires; we're seeing more intense heat; and these are all things that are stressing all of us and stressing the economy, the environment and the way of life of the people.

We know it's time for us to look to establishing some serious mitigation and adaptation goals. We want to ensure that we report back, as noted by colleagues. We want to keep moving forward on the plan and get it done, as we stated, but we also need to note that taking action is crucial for making informed decisions. Input is also crucial to that. We're bringing this back to Yukoners.

At this point, I really want to thank my colleagues and thank the Member for Mayo-Tatchun for bringing this forward and acknowledge everyone for their contribution. It's important that we take this under consideration, as we all have the same objective and goals in mind, which is to ensure that we provide for the necessary processes and direction on a new strategy for climate change and green energy in the Yukon.

Hon. Ms. Dendys: I rise today to speak to Motion No. 253, now amended. I would like to thank the Member for Mayo-Tatchun for bringing this motion forward and the Member for Kluane for bringing forward the amendment. I would also like to thank all the speakers who have spoken to this motion today. It's very important to all of us as Yukoners.

My intent is to speak to climate change impacts to heritage and also what we have heard from Yukoners throughout the tourism development strategy consultation. I would like to make a few comments about that.

The effects of climate change can be clearly seen in the north, especially on Herschel Island. Herschel Island is Yukon's first territorial park. It is part of the traditional homeland of the Inuvialuit and served as an American commercial whaling colony in the 1890s. Because of its unique location and diverse cultural history, Herschel Island remains a special part of Yukon's rich heritage.

A dozen historic structures still stand — several from the whaling era — and they have all been restored or stabilized by the Historic Sites unit. I spoke about this during the last Sitting — around the great work that our staff at Historic Sites do on behalf of all of us Yukoners. I was privileged to have the opportunity to see this work first-hand during the visit to the island last August during my last year as Minister of Tourism and Culture, which also includes heritage, archaeology and palaeontology. This visit was the most significant in terms of viewing the impacts of climate change on our heritage sites.

Researchers have been based on Herschel Island for many years, studying the effects of climate change. Climate change

is a national and global challenge, particularly in the Canadian Arctic. The impact of climate change on Herschel Island can be clearly seen. The permafrost is melting more frequently, and more intense storms are occurring, with higher water levels remaining longer within the historic whaling community. Storms are also causing shoreline erosion, affecting one of the historic warehouse's foundations. Our Historic Sites unit has had to do so much work around that one warehouse to ensure that it remains. The shoreline erosion is so significant that it represents a severe long-term threat to the island and its historic structures.

Again, during my visit, I witnessed metres of the shoreline erode right before my eyes during a two-day period on the island. The Yukon government is working on solutions to those problems. We are looking at ways to increase ventilation under the historic buildings and considering new foundation systems for the historic buildings near the shoreline.

We will be increasing our archaeological work on the island to capture a strong record of the first people of the island in case the water levels rise, limiting research in this area. We will need to continue with our palaeontological research as the shoreline changes, often exposing fossils of ice age animals as old as 100,000 years.

I raised all of the challenges at Herschel Island and the work that is being done there at the federal-provincial-territorial ministers meeting that was held in Montreal last August. It was a great opportunity to speak first-hand to issues raised by other areas within our nation and to speak first-hand about the mitigation efforts that we're taking within the Yukon. It's challenging enough under normal climactic conditions to preserve and protect built heritage, but more extreme fluctuations in weather, melting permafrost and changes in water levels and river flow all contribute to making historic sites vulnerable to climate change.

I know that the member opposite raised Fort Selkirk with me in the last Sitting with regard to that specific historic site. Fort Selkirk is a designated Yukon historic site and one of the most historically significant sites in the Yukon. It is co-owned and co-managed by Selkirk First Nation and Yukon government as part of the *Selkirk First Nation Final Agreement*. The site has been actively preserved since the early 1980s. The Fort Selkirk First Nation and the Yukon government invest more than \$200,000 each year to preserve and maintain the site.

The 2013 spring river breakup caused major erosion along the riverbank at Fort Selkirk. The school house had to be moved back 10 metres from the riverbank for its protection. An engineering report issued in 2014 identified river ice jamming downstream of the site and the fluctuations in water levels during the spring breakup as a primary cause for the bank erosion. Following recommendations in the 2014 report, spring breakup continued to be studied. The riverbank was monitored using time-lapse cameras in 2014, 2015 and 2016. The Historic Sites unit has been collecting bank erosion data since 2012, and results show that minimal erosion has occurred since 2013. The Historic Sites unit continues to

monitor the situation and will take appropriate steps to ensure the protection of the site and its structures.

While we are relieved that further erosion has not occurred, we are wary that the site remains vulnerable. The engineering work done in 2014 outlined two options for bank protection, both of which would have a significant cost, and both would have a major visual impact on the river, which is a character-defining element of Fort Selkirk. This demonstrates the kinds of dilemmas that heritage managers will be facing as climate change worsens over time. Other historic sites in the Yukon are being monitored, particularly those along rivers and lakes. Water levels are assessed, moisture content in the soils below historic buildings is checked, and structural systems are monitored annually. Again, I witnessed some of that work happening at the Lansing Post historic site. The Na Cho Nyäk Dun recently signed an agreement between Yukon and Na Cho Nyäk Dun.

Protecting historic structures will take innovation and new approaches. These are challenges but, with the north facing more severe climate change impacts than other parts of the world, Yukoners are developing expertise and technologies that can lead to business opportunities in helping others to mitigate and adapt to climate change. I had the opportunity to speak about the mitigation efforts of the Yukon at the federal-provincial-territorial meeting of ministers responsible for heritage last August.

While climate change is having a negative impact on Herschel Island and Fort Selkirk, it is actually opening doors for archaeologists to make important new discoveries in other areas of the Yukon. Yukon ice patches are some of the most important archaeological sites of their kind in the world, and the Yukon government strongly supports this initiative. In fact, the department has been working collaboratively on the ice patch project with six First Nation partners since the project began in 1998.

Thanks in part to the documentary *Secrets From The Ice*, which aired on David Suzuki's *The Nature Of Things*, the world is starting to learn more about the Yukon ice patches and their significance, not only to Yukon, but throughout the world. The Yukon ice patches within the traditional territory of the Carcross/Tagish First Nation represent a series of internationally significant archaeological sites. Throughout the millennia, woodland caribou gathered on these patches during summer months, making them critical areas for indigenous hunters. Hunting weapons that missed their marks became trapped in the snow and ice. Due to climate change, ice patches are melting and revealing remarkably preserved ancient hunting tools and other artifacts.

Fragile, organic tools seldom seen at archaeological sites are recovered annually by small teams of archaeologists and First Nation researchers. I had a chance to go up with the researchers last summer to check out some of the ice patches. I got to go to six of them and explore and do some of this work alongside our archaeologists. It was fascinating and something I wish every single person in this House and every Yukoner could experience.

More than 100 artifacts have been recovered from nine archaeological patches, with the oldest dating back more than 7,500 years. Recovery of these artifacts provides significant and authentic new insights into First Nation technology, cultural exchange and utilization of the landscape. This not only benefits archaeologists, but indigenous communities, which have a new opportunity to celebrate and rediscover their past.

Due to the significance of these rare and fragile finds, Yukon's ice patches are receiving increased international awareness and recognition. Just recently, we were very pleased that the federal government added the Yukon ice patches in Carcross/Tagish First Nation traditional territory to Canada's tentative list for UNESCO World Heritage Sites.

While recovering these artifacts is a wonderful opportunity, the melting is occurring too quickly. If archaeologists arrive at the ice patch at just the right time, when an artifact has melted out, but has not yet deteriorated, it can be saved. Too often, this is not the case. Archaeologists are salvaging what they can, but many more precious artifacts are lost each year.

Once again, Yukoners are developing expertise. Yukoners are on the cutting edge of the new field, ice patch archaeology, and Yukon is well-positioned to share its knowledge and expertise with the world. I am so proud that government, First Nations and industry are working together to safeguard these incredible discoveries, because Yukon's heritage is the legacy of our past, where we live today and what we'll pass on for our future generations.

This was something that was raised at the federal-provincial-territorial meeting last August. It was really great to be able to speak first-hand about what we're doing in the Yukon and to showcase that work.

In terms of the Yukon tourism development strategy — in terms of our heritage — this is what makes us so special and unique within Yukon. That is why, as part of the Yukon tourism development strategy engagement process, we are talking to Yukoners about how to sustainably grow tourism, because tourism means so much more than simply jobs for Yukoners and revenue for businesses. It represents an opportunity to share and educate and promote our rich culture with the world, which can support the process of reconciliation for First Nations as they showcase their culture with fellow Yukoners and our visitors.

We are committed to working with First Nation governments, development corporations, NGOs and industry partners to sustainably grow tourism as a key component of Yukon's economy. Sustainability is the key to this process, because mismanaged tourism can have a devastating consequence. Mass tourism can lead to the damage of our cherished historic sites that we're working so hard to protect and the loss of cultural artifacts. It can negatively impact our environment and our residents and change how we live in our communities.

We must work together to ensure the growth is sustainable. While climate change poses challenges for protecting our heritage resources, it also provides the

opportunity to work and learn from one another. As officials are engaging with Yukoners across the territory, they are hearing about the importance of environmental stewardship. This is something that is a key theme that's coming out throughout all of our communities throughout the Yukon — as well as about the need to ensure that our pristine landscapes are preserved and protected for generations to come. They are also hearing about new product development opportunities associated with indigenous tourism and ecotourism and heritage sites.

Climate change is not a battle we can win on our own. We'll all have to work together and consider all aspects of climate change.

Mr. Cathers: I appreciate the comments that have been made this afternoon by members from all caucuses regarding the importance of taking steps to increase the use of renewable energy sources and the importance of building on the work done in terms of both the *Climate Change Action Plan* and the energy strategy. I just want to make a few additional comments now that we're back to the main motion.

While supporting the need to do more work in this area and to refresh both the *Climate Change Action Plan* and the energy strategy, I want to thank all of the staff and past staff of the Yukon government who have been involved in working on these strategies and the projects under them. There is a wide range of actions that have been taken across government.

Those include the area of the Yukon government's vehicle fleet — looking for opportunities to purchase more energy-efficient vehicles, including the work that has been done in exploring the feasibility of the smart cars.

There has been work done as well within the area of the good energy program. I appreciated the comments of the Member for Takhini-Kopper King, recognizing the benefit of the rebates under these programs. Coming up on almost nine years after the good energy program was launched, it is certainly an opportune time to review the program and its structure. It has been effective in reducing fossil fuel emissions in the territory and helping people reduce their electrical consumption, as well as fossil fuel consumption.

I would like to again thank everyone who has been a part of that program.

The energy retrofits programs, done through several agencies, including Yukon Housing, have been beneficial in improving energy efficiency. As the Minister of Community Services acknowledged — those programs have paid real dividends in terms of reducing the consumption of diesel fuel for heating. The work that was done, as well, on the microgeneration program has, in fact, been more successful than anticipated when we launched the program a couple of years ago.

I would just note and invite the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, perhaps if he speaks to this motion — or perhaps at a different time — to just provide the House and the public with some information on the long-term plan for this program — whether changes are being made to its structure, whether the rate will remain stable, whether there

are going to be any significant changes either up or down in terms of the support the program provides to Yukoners.

Returning to other areas, I would like to thank department staff and Yukoners for their work, which includes the expansion of the rural electrification program to allow on-grid Yukoners to borrow money under rural electrification for solar and other renewable energy projects. That has been an important part of seeing the 145 projects that have proceeded here in the territory.

I would also like to acknowledge the Member for Kluane for bringing forward the motion and thank him, as well as past Environment ministers like him, for their work on the *Climate Change Action Plan* and the elements under that program.

As well, the opportunities — both the ones that have been pursued, such as the Dawson biomass project and the opportunity for expanding biomass — are areas that we are supportive of government evaluating and looking toward.

I appreciated and was glad to hear the Minister of Community Services talking about the benefits that increasing local food production can have for reducing our energy consumption. The Yukon's dependence right now on food from outside the territory is one of the significant sources of fossil fuel emissions. We are very dependent on that link to the south, and most of the Yukon's food is relying on basically just-in-time delivery being shipped to local grocery stores.

It should be noted that, due in part to changing business models and the Alaska Highway link south being in better shape than it was back in the 1980s, for example — there was a time when Yukon probably had more food in the Whitehorse area, especially at the then Kelly Douglas warehouse. Now the population has increased and the transportation system has become more reliable, but there has also been a consequential reduction in the need for local grocery stores to stockpile food from outside the territory.

On the positive side — as the Minister of Community Services acknowledged — we have seen increases in local food production throughout Yukon's agriculture sector, and that is something that I have been pleased to support and help out where I could. I would really like to acknowledge the work of farmers, market gardeners and processors across the territory for what they have done to increase local food production.

I would also like to acknowledge the importance that groups such as the Yukon Agriculture Association, the Fireweed Community Market, gardeners and the Growers of Organic Food Yukon have played in helping develop the industry and being a useful structure and not only working with government but supporting individual farmers, market gardeners and processors in their activities.

The change that occurred over a decade ago in Yukon at the request of the Yukon Agriculture Association — they purchased a mobile abattoir and provided Yukon, for the first time, with certified, inspected abattoir services in the Whitehorse area. That was an important step. An even more positive step is the private abattoir that has now been built by one of my constituents in the Grizzly Valley area. I hope that

this will be successful and continue to have the support of government in ensuring that meat inspection services are available to allow them to function and to help the red-meat sector, in particular, of Yukon's agriculture sector to have easier access to processing services and create more opportunity for that sector to flourish.

Returning briefly to energy-specific ventures — I just want to note that, while I personally welcome some of the initiatives that government is talking about for pursuing increased renewable energy opportunities, I would also like to throw in a note of caution around that area. While I will be supporting this motion as amended, the issue of the cost of individual renewable energy projects is an important consideration. Ultimately, whether the costs in Yukon are paid by taxpayers or paid by ratepayers who are paying for electricity, in most cases, it is coming out of either public dollars or out of people's pockets. At a certain point, if there are costs that are not fully being recovered — if there are subsidies in place, ultimately, someone has to pay for that.

When government is proceeding with projects, including community energy projects, I would encourage them to be mindful of the input costs for the materials, the total life-cycle costs and benefits of those projects and to be transparent with the public about what those costs are and how those costs are being covered — whether they are being passed on to ratepayers or are being paid for the public.

It is very important, in my opinion, that electricity rates be kept low and affordable for Yukon citizens. We have seen in the case of Ontario — which, fortunately, was already a cautionary tale in terms of green energy policy when we were developing the microgeneration program. Ontario — with no doubt good intentions — went down the road of trying to revolutionize green energy and increase the renewable energy supply in Ontario and entered into some unaffordable contracts for renewable energy production from independent power producers. This had a big effect on the rates paid by customers in Ontario. As members will no doubt be aware, this resulted in Ontario coming up with a term that is entirely new in Canadian vocabulary — at least in recent decades — that of “energy poverty”. That term refers to people who, because of unaffordable electricity rates, are placed in a situation where — there have been far too many situations of Ontario citizens talking publicly about the fact that they have been unable to afford the increase to electricity rates and have had to make the choice between — in some cases, quite literally — whether to continue to pay the mortgage and put food on the table or pay the power bill.

While supporting government going down the road of increasing renewable energy, I am providing the cautionary note of saying that it is very important not to write any blank cheques or enter into any areas without fully understanding both the costs and the benefits of any of these projects. It is important to be publicly transparent about what those costs are and who is paying the costs for any projects that are not, for the time being, fully cost recoverable when they are developed.

Mr. Speaker, with that, I do support this motion and agree that there is room for government to refresh both the *Climate Change Action Plan* and the energy strategy, and I commend my colleague, the Member for Kluane, for bringing forward the amendment to increase the use of renewable energy sources in the Yukon. That is something that — I think it's fair to say — all of my colleagues and I can get behind; however, as I said before — and will emphasize again in conclusion — it's very important that the costs of projects be fully considered and that government be transparent if any of those projects are not fully cost recoverable in terms of who is paying for those additional costs, any subsidies being provided by government and why government believes that those costs are appropriate.

One related matter that I meant to mention — I would also welcome it if the Minister for Energy, Mines and Resources, Yukon Development Corporation and Yukon Energy Corporation could provide updates, either this afternoon or at a date in the future, on what steps government, through Yukon Energy Corporation, is looking at doing as far as the opportunity to upgrade or operate the hydro facilities here at the Whitehorse dam. As the minister will be aware, the Energy Corporation has identified the opportunity to increase the output of those facilities through newer technology that will improve the efficiency of those turbines and their production.

Also, what steps are being taken in terms of the life-cycle review of the Mayo dam and what government and its energy corporation are looking at doing in that area, including whether there are steps that can improve the efficiency of Mayo A?

The minister also made mention of Skagway and ships consuming diesel fuel there. It sounded like the minister was indicating that government is, once again, considering the possibility of a transmission line connection to Skagway. I would welcome — as I'm sure my colleagues would — information on what talks, if any, the government has had with the Government of Alaska related to the possibility of doing this — whether government is looking at doing new studies in this area or is using the information done in a study from a few years back related to the feasibility and cost of connecting to Skagway. Is the municipality of Skagway still looking at the possibility of developing a West Creek hydro project and exporting hydro to Yukon in the winter, at our time of peak load, while using it themselves in the summer to meet the needs of cruise ships?

If the government and Yukon Energy are looking at the possibility of connecting to Skagway, is the government currently looking at any of the potential hydro projects in that area that were identified in Yukon Energy's 20-year resource plan? Specifically, I would ask the question about Moon Lake because, if that project is proceeded with, it does have some effects on a Yukon-based business operating in the area, the owners of which are constituents of mine and would appreciate advance notice from government about whether or not government is looking at doing a hydro project in the Moon Lake area.

With that, the only other remarks I would make before ceding the floor — I note that I appreciate the comments that the Minister of Community Services made about the potential for reducing the risk of wildfire, in terms of harvesting wood to reduce the fuel load around the communities.

As government progresses in that area, we welcome clarity about what is being contemplated because I, along with many others, recognize that the Yukon is at risk of a wildfire event. If something were to occur on a large scale, we would be in a difficult situation. There is some potential, certainly, in those areas for reducing the risk of Yukon communities, but, equally so, Yukoners are very attached to the wilderness beauty. If there is a contemplated selective harvesting in the area or fire breaks or some other types of harvesting of coniferous trees near communities being contemplated, people would like to know about it so they can have their views on it considered and have a full understanding of why government is looking at proceeding down a certain road before they find out that it's a done deal.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I will conclude my remarks and look forward to this motion presumably passing the House this afternoon.

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

Does any other member wish to be heard at this time?

Mr. Hutton: I would like to thank the Member for Kluane for the amendment. It is a refreshing and, dare I say, progressive change of heart by the members opposite.

I would like to take a short trip down memory lane on the topic of climate change and where it fit on the priority list of the previous Yukon Party government. I will start with a quote from 2005. The quote begins: "... let's bear in mind that the climate change that we're experiencing here is primarily occurring because we're the recipient of changes in lifestyle in other areas of the world. The prevailing winds move everything up to the north and we are the recipient. You might even refer to it as a cesspool of waste from other areas of the world." This was the former Yukon Party Minister of Environment in this House in 2005. The view then was that climate change is created somewhere else, and there is nothing we can do about it. Carbon pricing won't work, for example.

It's hard to believe, but it got worse from there. You skip ahead to 2009 and here's another quote: "I personally think that the jury is still out to a degree as to causes. I tend to think that if you go back millennium — and perhaps thousands of years — and you can do that through monitoring patterns, rings of trees and all sorts of different ways — you find that there is a natural cycle. I think — I won't say 'logical conclusion' because it is always arguable — can you really say that man has caused the problem? I think not." That was the Yukon Party Minister of Economic Development in 2009.

As recently as nine years ago, the Yukon Party government was still questioning whether or not there was a link between the actions of mankind and global warming. To its credit, the Yukon Party did develop a climate change

strategy that same year. We were the last jurisdiction in the country to do so, I believe.

In 2017, the Auditor General of Canada weighed in on the efforts of the previous government to address climate change. The report card was not pretty. The Auditor General said — and I quote: "... the commitments in its action plan and progress report were weak. For example, many of the commitments did not include milestones or completion dates." Also, another quote is: "... they took limited concrete action. In our opinion, the benefits of gathering information are fully realized only when the information is used to take action in a timely manner." One more quote begins: "We were told that although some high-risk areas were specifically identified through the research and analysis, the commitments were based on whether they could be done." In other words, Mr. Speaker, "Let's not do that because it would be a lot of work."

I could go on, but the Auditor General's report confirmed what most Yukoners already knew — climate change was never very high on the priority list of the previous government. In more recent history, the Yukon Party's opposition to a carbon tax demonstrates that the more things change, the more they stay the same. This is despite the fact that groups such as the Mining Association of Canada support a carbon tax. The Member for Kluane has said that carbon pricing won't work. There is no evidence to support that comment.

Another quote is from the Mining Association of Canada: "Establish a broad-based carbon price that is applicable to all sectors of the Canadian economy." A second quote is that it is "... the most effective and efficient means of driving emissions reductions..."

It is hard for Yukoners to take the Yukon Party seriously on climate change when it offers nothing but criticism and, at the same time, provides no alternative plan.

We were elected in part, I believe, because of our focus on balancing the economy and the environment, and that is how we intend to move forward.

We intend to develop a strategy that addresses climate change, energy, and the green economy as an effective mechanism to support economic diversification and environmental stewardship.

The previous government saw them as separate plans; we see them as one. As a government, one of our enduring priorities is: our diverse growing economy provides good jobs for Yukoners in an environmentally responsible way — a major difference from those before us. The Auditor General of Canada's report audited the actions, commitments and initiatives undertaken by the Government of Yukon between July 2006 and July 2017. The report presented four overarching recommendations outlining that there are improvements to be made in Yukon's approach to climate change, and our government fully supports the OAG recommendations.

Climate change is a priority for this government. Our efforts include the development of a new Yukon strategy for climate change, energy, and green economy. As part of that,

we are in the early stages of establishing partnerships with First Nations and municipalities so the strategy reflects the needs, concerns and ideas of all Yukoners. In collaboration with our partners, the commitments and targets in the new Yukon strategy for climate change, energy, and green economy will be supported by clear milestones, completion dates and associated costs. We expect to seek public feedback into the strategy in 2018 so that it can be released in 2019.

Regarding comments from the Member for Takhini-Kopper King — while we wait for the new, updated coherent climate and energy strategy, we will, in the interim, measure the performance and report on programs like the energy retrofits.

Climate change affects us all. It impacts our traditional ways of life, our wildlife and our environment. We're working to set the foundation for effective, targeted climate action, as it is vital for Yukoners today and for future generations. We all contribute to the problems that are causing climate change, Mr. Speaker, and I truly believe that the vast majority of Yukoners know this and want to be part of the solution as well.

Yukon has always pulled its share of the weight, and it will be no different when it comes to doing our part to mitigate and adapt to our changing climate.

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

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: Agree.

Mr. Kent: Agree.

Ms. Van Bibber: Agree.

Mr. Cathers: Agree.

Ms. McLeod: Agree.

Mr. Istchenko: Agree.

Ms. Hanson: Agree.

Ms. White: Agree.

Clerk: Mr. Speaker, the results are 18 yeas, nil nays.

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

Motion No. 253, as amended, agreed to

MOTIONS OTHER THAN GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

Motion No. 233

Clerk: Motion No. 233, standing in the name of Mr. Gallina.

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

THAT this House supports construction of the new francophone high school in Riverdale.

Mr. Gallina: The motion today is pretty straightforward, and I hope it receives unanimous support in this House. Given the fact that it was the previous government that selected the current location of the new school, I assume the Official Opposition will be in support of this motion. Given what I have heard in recent years from the NDP, I have no reason to believe that they would be opposed to this motion.

As a government, we are beginning a three-year funding project for construction of a new francophone high school to be built in Riverdale. The location for the school was laid out in 2016 by the previous government and articulated in a news release dated May 10, 2016. It was titled — and I quote: “New proposed location for francophone high school.” This was a joint news release between the Yukon Party government of the day and the Yukon francophone school board. It went on to say — and I quote: “The... joint construction subcommittee has recommended the site of the old F.H. Collins Secondary School as the new proposed location for the Francophone high school.” It continued with the then-Minister of Education saying: “We agree that this is a more viable location for a new French First Language high school... We will work with the neighbouring schools, the community of Riverdale and the City of Whitehorse as we move forward together. We appreciate the progress we are making with the Yukon Francophone School Board.” The news release went on to say: “The Riverdale skateboard park site was also considered as a possible location for the new school. However, after evaluating this site, it was determined that it did not meet the minimum requirements for a new school.” Finally, the release concluded — and I quote: “The proposed location in the area between the new F.H. Collins Secondary School and Selkirk Elementary School offers advantages such as simplified site work needs, more space and flexibility for the design of the school and proximity to existing busing, through-traffic and parking.”

Mr. Speaker, this current government has not made any changes to the location of the new school since taking office. The Member for Copperbelt South made a comparison on March 7 in this House about the motion that we are debating today to one debated last fall about coal development. The motion last fall from the NDP asked the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources to intervene directly in the middle of an application process and reject an application for coal mining. The minister said, correctly, that there was no way he was going to do that.

The motion before us is a statement about political principles. We respect all application processes as we move

forward with the francophone high school. We support the francophone high school in Riverdale. We support it proceeding this year, and that is why we have put money in the budget. It's not clear that the Yukon Party does, given their public statements. The debate today certainly does not ask the government or a minister to intervene and direct the Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Board — or YESAB — one way or the other. It simply lets the public know where we stand.

If you follow the logic that the member opposite advanced on March 7, the government wouldn't budget any money for a project until it had gone through and been approved by YESAB. That would add at least a year of time for each project, possibly longer. We don't support that thinking, Mr. Speaker.

I believe the questions recently from the Member for Copperbelt South were simply an attempt to distract from the issue at hand, which is: Does the Yukon Party still support putting the new school in Riverdale?

It was very interesting to see the Yukon Party members talk about the integrity of the YESAA process. It reminds me of the time the Yukon Party government began construction of the F.H. Collins Secondary School on the eve of the 2011 election, without YESAB having even completed its assessment. The headline in the local paper referring to the Yukon Party government of the day and its actions was: "Breaking ground and the law". Continuing to quote the article: "In going ahead with construction of the new F.H. Collins school, the Yukon government is breaking the law, says the Yukon Socio-economic Environmental Assessment Board." Apples and oranges, Mr. Speaker — apples and oranges.

We are committed to building a new French first language high school in Riverdale. The new school and its community spaces will provide a modern, flexible learning environment for students to use. We are continuing to work with the Francophone community on planning the construction of this new school. Unfortunately, there have been some delays, as we have to ensure the site is ready for building, including confirming that the remediation work was successful, and that it is safe to proceed. Once we have confirmation, we will update the construction timeline for this project. We are looking forward to beginning construction of the new school and have set aside \$3 million in the 2018-19 fiscal year.

The Yukon government has consistently committed to planning, designing and constructing a school, with the full completion cost to the Yukon government of no more than \$20 million. There is currently \$7.5 million from Canadian Heritage, in addition, to do it.

The conceptual design for the school has been completed with the agreement of the Commission scolaire francophone du Yukon. After many years of fighting with the francophone community in court and racking up \$3 million in legal fees in the process, the previous Yukon Party government changed its mind near the end of its mandate and agreed to get to work on building a new francophone high school and picking a

location for a new school. With that, they selected Riverdale as the location.

We are continuing with the course set by the previous government. There have also been other recent questions in Question Period from the Official Opposition that, I think, leave some people wondering whether they still support this project and its location. Again, the Member for Copperbelt South questioned whether a new bridge to Riverdale was needed, for example, before the project could proceed. I know that during the last election campaign, the Yukon Party included that significant commitment in its election platform. That was followed closely by a response from the Mayor of Whitehorse who said that a new bridge wasn't on the city's top 10 list of priorities. This is a classic illustration of the relationship the former government had with its municipal counterparts — but that's a debate for another day.

The opposition has also raised many questions about the budget for the new project, implying that it is too high. Again, today is the opportunity to clearly state whether they support the project and its current scope.

I'm happy to see this project going ahead. It demonstrates what has been achieved when we focus on negotiation instead of litigation. The \$3 million spent in court by the previous government would have been better spent on education, but that day has come and gone.

We're happy with the budget in place to be moving on this project and finishing work on F.H. Collins as well. I hope all members are in support of this motion.

Mr. Kent: It's my pleasure to respond to the motion brought forward by the Member for Porter Creek Centre today. As he said, it is a very straightforward motion that just asks this House to support the construction of a new francophone high school in Riverdale.

I will just take the House back even a little bit further than when the member opposite talked to it, and it was in 2013. At that time, I was the Minister of Education and had some conversations with new members of the francophone school board, and we made some decisions at that time to look at the potential of adding a wing to the new F.H. Collins School to house francophone students. That is where a lot of this work began. I believe the Member for Takhini-Kopper King was at the meeting, as well, at École Émilie Tremblay with the francophone community, and there were some good conversations — and some tough conversations by the francophone community — about the potential of locating a wing attached to the existing F.H. Collins high school.

Work continued from there with my successors as ministers of Education. There was actually a planning committee set up that I chaired as the MLA for Riverdale North at the time, looking at the entire school reserve around F.H. Collins, bordered on the south by Selkirk Street and the Selkirk Street Elementary School, all the way through to the skateboard park. The member opposite is correct; there were a few different options looked at for the location of a stand-alone francophone high school. Again, that initial project had changed and the scope had changed into the stand-alone

school, and again, a number of potential sites on what we will call the F.H. Collins education reserve, for lack of the actual number that the educational reserve is — but we did it; we landed on the site that the members opposite are pursuing.

Again, we stand by the choice of that location and the work that we have done with the francophone community to come up with that location. Unfortunately, when the demolition of the old F.H. Collins high school happened, there was some hydrocarbon pollution underneath, and that has caused some delay in getting it done.

To the member's point about whether we support the school and the budget — it has come up a number of times in Question Period in the fall and again this spring. I think one of the things that the Minister of Education has talked about is that the budget is essentially the budget. It is \$27.5 million, which includes a portion for community space, funded by the federal government for community space. It is going to be a fantastic facility for the francophone community and especially those kids at École Émilie Tremblay now and who are trying to make the decision whether or not they want to go to the French first language high school or move on to a different high school. For many in the past — obviously, by the enrollment numbers, many of those students move on to other high schools, primarily F.H. Collins. Again, that is something that played into the decision, I think — to locate the school there so they could be close to some of their friends and others in the community, whether they are francophone or in French immersion or anglophone Yukoners who are going to F.H. Collins. Again, I commend those who put in an awful lot of work coming up with the decision to build in this location.

As the Member for Porter Creek Centre mentioned, there have been delays in getting this project off the ground, but the budget has remained static. We have seen the number of students go from the recommended 200 in the functional plan to 150, based on what I believe the minister said was an additional consultant's report. We do have the functional plan. I don't believe that there is a copy publicly available of the consultant's report, so perhaps the minister would agree, if she doesn't have it with her today, to provide that to us at some point in the future so that we can take a look at it.

There is going to be inflationary pressures on this project so, with the budget remaining the same, the cost of building that same facility is going to go up. There is going to have to be some cuts made somewhere, I would assume, so those are some of the things that we would be interested in hearing about. Are they going to cut down on the square footage? What kinds of plans are there for the school so that, two years after construction was contemplated to start — what kinds of changes are being planned so that it will still fit within that budget envelope, given cost increases that normally happen with construction projects? That is something that we would be interested in hearing about from the minister either today or when there is an opportunity during Committee of the Whole to talk to her and her officials.

Again, there are lots of aspects to consider, but the bottom line is that we do support the location of the

francophone school in Riverdale, and we do support the building of the francophone school. As the member opposite mentioned — and I will repeat it again — this initiative to build a new francophone high school in Riverdale was started by the previous Yukon Party government. I was part of that government and I was involved, as I mentioned, at a couple of different levels — first as Minister of Education and then later on as the MLA for Riverdale North — which is, of course, your riding, Mr. Speaker, and is a riding this school will be bordering. It is very important to constituents in that riding.

When we talked a couple of weeks ago, on March 7, this motion from the Member for Porter Creek Centre was third in line that day. I did ask a question in Question Period about the YESAA process. The YESAA process with respect to this school is ongoing, as members know. I asked the Minister of Education specifically, on that day, to comment on the Member for Takhini-Kopper King's motion that she brought forward last fall — Motion No. 169. The motion asked the government to make a decision on the Division and Corduroy mountain coal exploration project. That project was, at the time, going through the YESAA process and the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources said that injecting himself into the assessment process before the work was complete was — and I quote "... really disrespecting the government process." I asked why it was okay for the government to ask this House to vote on something that is the direct subject of what YESAB is assessing right now when it wasn't appropriate to do it last fall.

When I asked that question, the Premier stood up and answered at the time. Just to quote from his response: "The YESAB designated office issued an information request on February 22 regarding alternatives to the project. As the proponent, YG is developing a response." We have since, in the last two weeks, seen the response sent, and I will speak to that in a moment.

He then said: "We support strongly an environmental and socio-economic assessment process that upholds the principles of independence, fairness and transparency as laid out in the YESAA legislation." Again, that was really contradicting what I believe that we, as members of this House, were being asked to potentially vote on — though we didn't get to it — later that afternoon.

In my follow-up question, I said: "Contrary to what the Premier just said about respecting independence, fairness and transparency, he has to understand that this project is still under assessment. It has not been completed. There has not been a recommendation sent to the decision body which, of course, will be the government."

I asked if the minister or the Premier would ask their colleague from Porter Creek Centre to "... either adjourn debate or seek unanimous consent of the House to stand down on this motion until after the YESAA process has finished."

I think we owe that, as legislators, to the individuals who are engaged in the YESAA process. This isn't just the YESA board and the Yukon government, as the proponent and the decision body, going back and forth — there are others who are making comments on the YESAA process as we're going

through it, and we're hoping that those comments will be reviewed by the YESA board and respected by the YESA board — so I think that is really the point that I was trying to make.

The Minister of Education, in her final response, mentioned — and I quote: "I'm pretty sure that the member opposite is not suggesting that a YESAB application could go in without indicating a location for the building." Of course not, Mr. Speaker — we know that when you're putting in a YESAA application, you have to include the location. Again, as I mentioned earlier, we respect the location that has been chosen. What we have some problems with, with this motion, is that there is an ongoing process and that the Premier said we need to uphold the principles of independence, fairness and transparency. If this motion was to come before us after the YESAA process was complete, we would absolutely support it as is, or if it had come to us before the YESAA process was initiated, we would support it.

What we're asking the government to do — and I'll spell that out a little bit later on in my talk — is just to respect to the YESAA process and the assessment that is currently underway. We need to respect the Ta'an Kwäch'än Council. They, on February 12, 2018, put in their comments with respect to this project. They talked about a number of things when they wrote to the assessors. Of course, all these documents are available online on the YESAB website, under this project. They had concerns over air quality and health. They had concerns over what they called the "soundscape". They had concerns over environmental sustainability and local economy. They had some concerns over culture. The one that is specific to the location is their concern over traffic congestion.

I am going to read that excerpt from this letter into the record here today. Again, this is from the Ta'an Kwäch'än Council to the designated office here in Whitehorse that is conducting the assessment of this project. It says: "Additional traffic congestion stemming from *Project 2018-0002* will result in adverse effects on environmental sustainability, air quality, health, soundscape and the economy. A recommendation from the *2017 Traffic Impact Assessment* calls for either expanding the existing bridge or constructing a new bridge across the Yukon River to alleviate the peak traffic volumes resulting from the area's existing and proposed schools...The Proponent maintains that while project alternatives were considered, this site was chosen as the most viable because of construction cost savings and access to existing infrastructure... However, there is no indication of how the direct and indirect costs of traffic bottlenecks or bridge construction, were addressed during the consideration of alternatives." Here is the important part: "Therefore, TKC recommends that a detailed comprehensive review of project alternatives be completed by YESAB assessors."

So that leads me to the initial information request that the Premier spoke about two weeks ago here in Question Period.

It's the one that came from YESAB to the proponent, the Government of Yukon, on February 22. In that, they asked for some additional information from the government, and to

please submit a more detailed analysis of alternatives to the project — in other words, why the Riverdale site was chosen over all alternatives — as well as alternative ways of undertaking or operating the project — for example, alternative ways for students to access the school, such as a drop-off site on the other side of the river. Again, this is from the YESA board.

Further, they went on to say that, according to table 7, in the traffic impact assessment 2 document, the project will contribute to the failure in 2024 of the Lewes Boulevard and Hospital Road southbound left turn lane during the morning peak hour. Again, it references these traffic studies. According to section 8.1 of the traffic impact assessment 2 document, capacity is constrained north of Hospital Road in the a.m. peak hour and we interpret this to mean that the Robert Campbell bridge is near or over-capacity during the a.m. peak hour.

The additional request for information: How will this affect emergency access to the hospital from the downtown area? That was number two. Number three is: If our interpretation is correct, how does the current capacity issue of the Robert Campbell bridge affect emergency access to and from Riverdale? Number four is: If our interpretation is incorrect, please explain what is meant by downstream capacity constraints.

The Yukon government, on March 12 — so five days after we talked about this in Question Period — did respond. The Premier said they were preparing a response, and five days later, it did go in. The detailed analysis of alternatives to the project was provided. The answer from the proponent was that CSFY worked with the Yukon government to assess alternative sites for the school during the project's initial development stages. These alternative sites included École Émilie Tremblay education reserve land, a wing of the Porter Creek Secondary School, the skateboard park on the Riverdale education reserve land and Whistle Bend education reserve land. They did provide to the assessors the reasons that those four potential sites were not appropriate.

CSFY ultimately determined the site of the old F.H. Collins building on the Riverdale education reserve land to be the most suitable space for the project, due to a number of factors. Again, these factors that are laid out in this publicly available document are all factors that we agree with: the ability to share the tech education wing and to share a common school bus drop-off and pickup spot, and to reduce costs by tying into the IT systems. There are existing underground utilities at the site that could be used and close proximity to the high school French immersion programming at F.H. Collins, where many French first language students currently attend high school.

There were other questions the government did answer that the assessor asked. That was March 12. On March 15, the YESA board came back with an additional request for information. In that, they said: "In your March 12, 2018 response to the YESAB information request dated February 22, 2018, you state, 'the traffic impact assessment broke down the traffic for the Francophone Secondary School into Phase 1

and Phase 2, but the numbers they used are incorrect. They estimated 175 students will attend the Francophone Secondary School in 2024, while the Government of Yukon's recent calculation is 86 students at this school by 2024.”

So I think it would be helpful — obviously, we're dealing with a number of traffic impact assessments, and then we're dealing with what is said in the functional plan versus what — I believe the minister said — an independent enrollment consultant provided. So again, we have seen the functional plan. If we could see this additional consultant's report — because the numbers that are provided by the recent calculation are quite different from what we saw in the functional plan. So it would be great to work off of those documents that the government has access to.

We obviously don't expect a copy here today, but if, at some time, we could get a copy of that document, it would be helpful for us to see.

The second additional information required is in the francophone secondary school traffic impact assessment executive summary stated that there have been four recent traffic impact studies of the Lewes Boulevard corridor. So I'll just give the dates. There was one in January 2017 by Yukon Engineering Services and Opus International Consultants. There was one in 2016 by Bunt and Associates. There was one in 2014 by Yukon Engineering Services — and I think that was more the F.H. Collins traffic impact study when the construction of the new high school was being done. Then Yukon Engineering Services and Associated Engineering did an impact study on May 31, 2018. So the designated office was looking for copies of these traffic impact studies. This was, as I mentioned, March 15 — last week.

So I think, to be respectful to the work of the YESA board and to be respectful to those who have provided comments, like the Ta'an Kwäch'än Council, who are looking for some assurances — as I mentioned, we are in the middle of the YESAB assessment. I don't think it is a designated office one. Assuming the government can get back on these additional information requests, then hopefully the assessor is able to issue their recommendation soon. The Member for Porter Creek Centre did mention the \$3 million in this year's budget. From the briefing that we had on Education, we understand that there won't be any construction scheduled for this next fiscal year. There may be some ground prep and other activities. If I'm incorrect, I welcome the Minister of Education or others on the other side of the House to correct the record if there is construction slated for this year. But my understanding is that it's not anticipated to start until next year. So, hopefully, most of this work can be done later on this summer.

In my experience, when it comes to issuing decision documents on government projects, the government can turn them around fairly quickly. They proved that last year on a number of highway construction projects that were turned around in just a few days. So I don't buy the argument that the Member for Porter Creek Centre is making, that if we don't somehow support his motion today, that it will delay construction of the school. I don't know where he is coming

from. If that's not exactly what he was alluding to, then perhaps he can correct the record when he closes debate or when he speaks to the amendment that I'm about to move.

Amendment proposed

Mr. Kent: Mr. Speaker, I move:

THAT Motion No. 233 be amended by removing the words “in Riverdale” and replacing them with the words “following the completion of the Yukon Environmental and Socio-Economic Assessment Board assessment and the issuance of a decision document.”

Speaker: I have had an opportunity to review the proposed amendment with Mr. Clerk and can advise that it is procedurally in order.

It has been moved by the Member for Copperbelt South:

THAT Motion No. 233 be amended by removing the words “in Riverdale” and replacing them with the words “following the completion of the Yukon Environmental and Socio-Economic Assessment Board assessment and the issuance of a decision document.”

Therefore, the proposed amended motion would read:

It is moved by the Member for Porter Creek Centre:

THAT this House supports construction of a new francophone high school following the completion of the Yukon Environmental and Socio-Economic Assessment Board assessment and the issuance of a decision document.

Mr. Kent: Mr. Speaker, I thank you for reading how the amendment fits into the original motion.

Again, as I stated off the top, our party supports the location of the francophone high school. We support the building of the francophone high school. We have asked capacity questions and budgetary questions over the past while trying to ensure that, once the school is complete, it is large enough to handle enrollment numbers for the foreseeable future so that we are not putting up portables or thinking about renovating the school shortly after it is opened.

As I mentioned during conversations on the original motion, my concerns are with the integrity of the YESAA process. I don't think it's fair to those people who take time to provide their comments to the YESA board, or to the assessors, that we, as legislators, prejudice the work that they are trying to accomplish right now.

I did read into the record excerpts from the back-and-forth with information requests from YESAB to the government as the proponent. Again, I understand from staff in our office that, as of this afternoon, there has been a response from the proponent that the Yukon government uploaded, dated March 21, 2018. It spells out the first request to quantify the level of uncertainty associated with traffic predictions, which was to please describe the method used to calculate the number of students expected to attend the francophone secondary school in 2024. The enrollment formula is spelled out here that must have been used by the consultant, and it mentions that this model of projecting school enrollments for planning purposes over the past nine

years has proven to have a high degree of accuracy when actual enrollment has been compared to the projected enrollment, and then the government has attached the four traffic studies that I referenced as part of that additional information request.

I think that is great; it is a back-and-forth between the assessor and the proponent, just like any project proponent would have to do. I don't think that we would bring forward a motion to support any other private sector project that was undergoing a YESAB assessment.

I will go back to the Premier's comments on March 7, where he said, "We support strongly an environmental and socio-economic assessment process that upholds the principles of independence, fairness and transparency as laid out in the YESAA legislation."

I hope the members opposite will recognize this amendment for what it is. Again, it is not us trying to delay the project. If the project is going to be delayed because we don't support the member's motion as it is today, then I would certainly like to hear how it will be delayed. I am sure the minister or members opposite could explain that to us, because it doesn't seem to me that it should have any effect. The government, as the proponent, is doing a good job of responding in a timely manner to information requests and providing the YESAB assessors with the information that they need to do their job.

What we are trying to accomplish with the amendment to the member's motion today is just to let them know that we respect the process as it is laid out; that we respect those commenting on this assessment — such as the Ta'an Kwäch'än Council and the excerpt I read from their comments, and they don't feel like they are wasting their time — and that there is a motion that has come from the Legislature that it has to be in Riverdale. I don't think that is a message that we want to send to the public, and we don't want to send that to other proponents — that this might be a way for them to get support for the projects that are undergoing YESAB assessments.

I know that is not what the government's intent was here today. I just want us as legislators to be responsible and respect the YESAB process. Let them do their job; let them issue a recommendation.

Then the government, as the proponent and the decision body in this case, can issue a decision document. That is how everyone else has to go through the YESAA process. I think that the Yukon government should as well.

So again, just to conclude my remarks on this amendment and turn the floor back over — just to summarize what I've said today — we obviously did a lot of work. This government continued that work with the francophone school board and the francophone community on the location of the high school. We support the building of the high school. We have some questions about the budget and the fact that it is a hard number — so what changes are going to have to be made to deal with the inflationary pressures? I'll bring those questions back to the floor of the House when we're in Committee of the Whole, discussing Education.

Again, as legislators and MLAs in the territory, we just want to respect the process that is in place — the YESAA process — as it is, and allow the designated office of YESAB to conclude their evaluation of this project and bring forward a recommendation. Then the government, as the decision body, can make a recommendation. I'm not 100-percent sure, obviously, that members will support this amendment, but I hope they do, because I think it doesn't diminish what we're talking about. The members opposite have a lot of Hansard now after my conversations here today about where we stand on the location of the school and the project itself. Again, I hope that we'll vote to support this amendment as is and support and uphold, as the Premier called it, the principles of independence, fairness and transparency as laid out in the YESAA legislation.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I thank the member opposite for stating that the Official Opposition supports the site of Riverdale. However, in proposing this amendment, what the member has done is to remove Riverdale from the motion and to talk about following the completion of the Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Board assessment and the issuance of a decision document.

What the motion talks about is not — it doesn't say, as the member just stated, that it has to be in Riverdale. What the motion talks about is that this House supports the new francophone high school going in Riverdale. That is the question that is being asked today. It is not about whether we as a government, or Members of this Legislature, are pre-judging the work of the Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Board. Our intent is, in all ways, to respect the assessment process. We will ensure that the effects of the project will be managed throughout its construction and operation, wherever that is.

The assessment process is underway now, and however it falls out, then we will see the results of that, but to say we support the location is very different. The members opposite say they support the location and yet move an amendment to strike that.

All Yukon government projects — like the demolition of the F.H. Collins school and the remediation work that took place on-site — are proactively managed to ensure the safety of the public. Remediation of the site has occurred, and groundwater continues to be monitored, and the test results we have received to date are promising.

Traffic studies have taken place and show a minor amount of increased traffic due to the addition of the school in this area, and we will address concerns as they are identified. We are working with the Yukon Environmental Socio-economic Assessment Board to make sure it has the information it needs to assess the project, including updated studies and predicted student numbers.

Mr. Speaker, when I happened to sit down with the Minister of Education and the Minister of Highways and Public Works to meet with the French community — who are advocating around the location of the school and also giving us their sense of the type of facility needed in order to provide

education in the French language — one of the things that we discussed was not only the pressures that might come if there are too many students, but also the pressures that might arise if there are too few students. One of the challenges that you have in designing a school — and what we seem to be talking about only in this Legislature — is if it reaches growth and gets too large, but, in the balance of trying to understand how to design a school well, you also can run the risk of having an empty school, and students then don't feel like they have a community, and the risk can be that they continue to move to other schools, where they have cohorts. One of the advantages of being close, but not attached, to F.H. Collins school is that they will have a collegial environment to have friends and cohorts nearby and the ability to populate the French school well.

The amendment, as it is presented today — if it had talked about, for example, amending to add words about following the completion, I would still have some concerns, because I believe that we should be supporting the construction of a new francophone high school in Riverdale now; I don't believe that we need to say it is a certainty. I don't believe that is what the Member for Porter Creek Centre was suggesting. I think his words were that they support the construction of a new francophone high school in Riverdale, and, effectively, the Member for Copperbelt South is suggesting altering that notion. If they had added after the words “in Riverdale”, rather than removing them, I think there would be some room for discussion.

My concern is that we are trying to use this motion today to see whether there is support for a French high school in Riverdale. It has nothing to do with YESAB. We will at all times respect the assessment work that goes on. We believe in that process; we believe in its fairness, and we believe in our role.

There are multiple roles at times when you are a proponent and a decision body. That's fine. We have had to navigate that in the past. We have to navigate it now. We need to be careful, at all times, to be providing the full information that we can and then evaluating the recommendations that come from YESAB.

Having heard the arguments by the Member for Copperbelt South, I don't support the amendment as proposed. We are asking whether or not they are able to support a French high school in Riverdale. I will take the Member for Copperbelt South at his word when he states it. I hope, as well, that his actions would follow that up. I don't think that the amendment as proposed is bearing that out, but we'll see through this debate on the amendment.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Like my colleague from beautiful Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes, I too am a bit troubled by the amendment as presented. It's stripping the geographic location out of the original motion under the guise of staying true to the YESAA process, but the two principles are conflated, and they shouldn't be. We can have a discussion about the location of the school in Riverdale and our support for such a location without actually bringing YESAA into it. I think that

fusing these two ideas together is — well, I don't think it's necessary, and I don't think it's helpful in bringing clarity to the completion of the school, which is necessary for the French community.

As my colleague, the member from Porter Creek, noted thoroughly earlier, we inherited the location of this school — the concept and construction model. It was all laid out in May 2016. We support the project we have inherited and the location. We always have. We know how important this school is to the French community. Canada is a bilingual country. Providing an education in either French or English is guaranteed under the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*.

Through this motion, we want to have a discussion about the location in Riverdale and the importance of the school to the French community and how to advance that and give an expression of our support for the school and the location. The members opposite seem to be reluctant to give that. They're hiding behind the coat-tails of YESAA to do so. I'm a bit surprised by that. I don't know why that is the case. We can certainly give our support to a geographic location while — as my friend across from me here has said — we can still respect and live by and live within the rulings of the YESA board. To fuse these two things together is just not conducive to these discussions.

So I can't support the nomination, but I am more than happy to discuss why, and I'll continue to do that.

As I have said, providing an education, in either French or English, is guaranteed under the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. This government has every intention of living up to the obligations that we have to everyone who lives in our community, including the YESA board. We will do everything we can to meet those obligations. It is in this spirit that we are building a new state-of-the-art school for our francophone community.

The history of this project has been long and, at times, unnecessarily acrimonious. It has taken some work to build a new relationship based on trust and understanding. When it comes to these relationships, trust is, by its very nature, tenuous; it's fragile, especially in the beginning. It is a gift that is tested continually by our actions. I am very glad to have been involved in this process.

The amendment would strip the location out and put a process — YESAA — before the needs of the French community, of this government and of the students of the school. Let's wait. The member opposite has said that, well, you can pivot and this and that. He knows very well how construction projects work, how we have a very short construction season and how we worked within that very short season. A one-week delay can mean all the difference between getting a foundation in or starting that site work this year or pushing it to next year and delaying the project far down the road. When you start to play around with words and conflate a delay with an ongoing environmental process that is necessary and will be adhered to, I'm not sure exactly what the end goal is.

We, of course, accept the assessment process and will ensure that the effects of the project will be managed throughout its construction and operation. All Yukon government projects — like the demolition of the F.H. Collins school and the remediation work that took place on the site — are proactively managed to ensure the safety of the public. Remediation of the site has occurred, and groundwater continues to be monitored. The test results received are promising.

We have met all of our obligations owed to the French community and to the environmental obligations on the site, and we will to YESAA as well. Traffic studies are complete. We're working with YESAB to make sure that it has the information it needs to assess the project — as the member opposite has noted — including updating the studies and predicting student numbers.

We are clear, Mr. Speaker. We support the francophone high school in Riverdale, and we are continuing with the course set by the previous government in, I think, May 2016. We haven't made any changes to the location of the new school since taking office.

We have assessed it, we have done our own reviews, and we have tested it. The member opposite has brought to light this afternoon some of the efficiencies and some of the benefits of having it in Riverdale. The site location next to the high school allows a campus model. We have access to tracks, shops and bus infrastructure — the list goes on. Even the bells of the schools can be coordinated to benefit a greater whole. You get efficiencies out of it. Not only that, but the French community has been very clear about its support for the site in Riverdale because of its own students. It wants to enhance the collegiality of the students and build a common culture. They want their children to be able to have a wider friend group, and they think that can be achieved through the work in Riverdale.

As the member opposite knows, we support a strong environment and socio-economic assessment process that upholds the principles of independence, fairness and transparency as laid out in YESAA legislation. He has also said that, and it's absolutely true, but that doesn't mean that you cannot have a discussion about the site in Riverdale because of the YESA study that's currently ongoing. It just means —

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: That's a good point. This motion does not disrespect the YESAA process. I must state that I take issue with the notion that it does.

The debate today does not ask the government or a minister to interfere and direct the YESA board in any way or another. It simply lets the public know where we stand. If you follow the logic of the member opposite, the government wouldn't budget any money for any project until it has gone through and been approved by YESAB. That would add at least a year of time to each project, possibly longer. We do not think that this is appropriate.

It also gags discussion on any project, which, again, is not in the public's interest. I don't think it would be good for the

public to do that. For many reasons, this motion is not a good one. It is not well-considered or well-thought-out. It seems to be just a dodge to avoid any discussion of the location in Riverdale. I can't, in all good conscience, support this.

I will say that, because of our conversations and our relationship-building with the French community, we know that they need more space. They are looking forward to having this project continue and brought to fruition. They don't want any delays. They're very concerned about this. In our conversations, the Member for Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes, the Education minister and I have met with the French community, and they were very clear in those discussions how important the school is and how important it is that we finish the school as quickly as possible. We are working very closely with our officials in Education, with Highways and Public Works and with the community itself to make sure we deliver a school on time and on budget in Riverdale.

We believe that we can do that within the timelines that we have set and within the budgets we have set. The relationship is building and improving as we go on. That is important. As I've said, that trust is tenuous. It's based on actions. It's based on us doing what we said we would do. One thing that was very important to the people of the French community was that they have a school in Riverdale. We certainly support that, and we would do ourselves a disservice if we actually watered that down by taking the geographic location out of our motion this afternoon.

So with that, I'm going to take my seat and move on.

Mr. Hassard: That was a very interesting bit of information that we heard on this amendment from the Minister of Highways and Public Works. I think that one thing he did have right in that bit of information was about being confused. It's pretty easy to see who the person is who is confused in the Legislature today.

He said that this amendment strips the geographic location. Wow. The YESAB submission says that Riverdale is the location. So I'm not sure where, in the confusion, Riverdale got stripped. It's still right there in the YESAB submission. It's just not in the motion.

He talked about the amendment with respect to the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. The amendment certainly does not say that it wants to infringe on anyone's rights or freedoms — so again, some confusion there.

He talked about the amendment taking away trust. Well, we have a YESAA process that we all have to deal with. We need to trust the YESAA process doing its work — so, more confusion.

The minister talked about the amendment possibly causing delays in the project. The project cannot proceed without a decision document from a decision body. The motion here today is not going to affect that decision document in any way, shape or form — so again, confusion that this amendment could cause a delay in the project moving forward.

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

Debate on Motion No. 233, and the amendment, accordingly adjourned

The House adjourned at 5:30 p.m.

The following legislative return was tabled March 21, 2018:

34-2-111

Response to oral question from Ms. Van Bibber re: infrastructure funding (Streicker)