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HANSARD

Wednesday, April 4, 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, April 4, 2018 — 1:00 p.m.**

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

Prayers

In remembrance of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King

Speaker: Today, the Chair would like to briefly reflect upon the 50th anniversary of the assassination of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King on April 4, 1968, on the balcony of the Lorraine Motel in Memphis, Tennessee.

Dr. King was the pre-eminent leader of the United States civil rights movement in the 1960s and a Nobel Peace Prize laureate. My wife, one of our sons and I had the honour and privilege of travelling to Montgomery and Selma, Alabama, last year where we witnessed first-hand the inspirational history of the struggles and peaceful civil disobedience of — among others — Rosa Parks, Ralph Abernathy, Martin Luther King and now-congressman John Lewis, who was then a member of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee. He is now a 31-year congressman representing Georgia's 5th Congressional District and still faithfully serving his constituents.

Dr. King's observations and rallying exhortations have served as an inspiration to me in my career in law in the Yukon as well as, I'm sure, to millions of others in attempting to incrementally and concretely advance the dialogue on social justice, civil rights and equality.

A review of the messages I have chosen to share with the Assembly today reveal their wise universality and ultimately their enduring hope and faith for a more just society now, over 50 years since Martin Luther King's passing.

I would finally note, in advance, that some of these quotes are not gender-neutral, as they are historically contextual, but in my view, this does not detract from their inspirational and impactful themes.

These are some of the quotes: "Human progress is neither automatic, nor inevitable."

"Every step toward the goal of justice requires sacrifice, suffering and struggle; the tireless exertions and passionate concern of dedicated individuals."

"Change does not roll in on wheels of inevitability, but comes through continuous struggle."

"Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly."

I like this one just for public service: "Everybody can be great... because anybody can serve. You don't have to have a college degree to serve. You don't have to make your subject and verb agree to serve. You only need a heart full of grace. A soul generated by love."

Members may know that the night before Dr. King was assassinated, he provided part of a sermon on April 3, 1968, at

the Bishop Charles Mason Temple in Memphis, Tennessee, and it had some rather ominous foreshadowing: "Well, I don't know what will happen now. We've got some difficult days ahead. But it doesn't really matter with me now, because I've been to the mountaintop. And I don't mind. Like anybody, I would like to live a long life. Longevity has its place. But I'm not concerned about that now. I just want to do God's will. And He's allowed me to go up to the mountain. And I've looked over. And I've seen the Promised Land. I may not get there with you. But I want you to know tonight, that we, as a people, will get to the Promised Land. So I'm happy, tonight. I'm not worried about anything. I'm not fearing any man. Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord."

I think he was in danger often, so it wasn't unusual for him to say words like that. That was the day before his final day.

The final quote I have is: "How long? Not long, because the arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice."

Thank you for your kind attention.

DAILY ROUTINE

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

Tributes.

TRIBUTES

In recognition of Daffodil Month

Mr. Gallina: Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today on behalf of the Yukon Liberal government to acknowledge Daffodil Month for cancer awareness. The yellow daffodil is a sign of spring. Spring has been challenged here in the territory this year, but nonetheless, the daffodil is a sign of renewal and a sign of hope. It is also the symbol used to remind people of the importance of continuing the fight against cancer. Nationally, the next 30 days are dedicated to inspiring Canadians, encouraging them to renew their efforts to support the fight and always to show hope that cancer, with our support, can be beaten.

Almost every Yukoner has been touched by cancer, in a friend, a neighbour, loved one or themselves. Cancer doesn't discriminate, and in 2009, I lost my mother to this horrible disease. She fought a brief but courageous battle against small cell lung cancer. At first, we were hopeful her time with us would be extended, as this form of cancer often responds well to treatment; however, in a sad turn of events, my mother's body rejected both chemotherapy and radiation treatment and she passed away only a few weeks after her initial diagnosis.

According to the Canadian Cancer Society, over 200,000 new cases of cancer and over 80,000 deaths from cancer will have occurred in Canada in 2017. Half of all new cases will be lung, breast, colorectal and prostate cancer. One in four Canadians will die of cancer, which is the leading cause of death in Canada and is responsible for 30 percent of all deaths in the country.

In Yukon, around 150 new cases are diagnosed each year and one in three deaths in Yukon is cancer related. These

statistics are staggering and I think it would be hard for me to find a member in this House who hasn't had a friend, family member or co-worker who has not been impacted by cancer. I'm glad to say, though, that it's not all bad news. The mortality rates for all cancers combined have been decreasing in Canada. Together, prevention and making healthy choices are key to reducing the risks of this terrible disease. The single most important thing anyone can do to reduce their risk of cancer is to live smoke-free, maintain a healthy body weight, protect your skin and eyes from the sun, eat well, move more and drink less alcohol.

Tobacco use is the number one cause of cancer worldwide. The three northern territories have the highest rates of smoking compared to the rest of Canada. It is important to note that in Yukon, we do have the lowest smoking rate among the three territories.

I would like to briefly mention some of the programs and initiatives currently in place in the Yukon that are part of cancer control systems that include prevention, screening, diagnostics, treatment and end-of-life care, such as ColonCheck Yukon, which is a screening and awareness-raising program aimed at preventing colorectal cancer. This government actively delivers smoking prevention and cessation programs that include the Kickin' Ash program designed to help community organizations in schools address the issue of tobacco use by young people. We administer QuitPath, a smoking cessation program that offers one-on-one coaching, weekly drop-in visits and resources, such as free nicotine patches. We now have a new tobacco prevention campaign.

Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to say that these programs have had very positive results. It's important to support Yukoners in their efforts to quit smoking, while educating our territory's youth on tobacco prevention. In Yukon, lung cancer is the most common cause of cancer death, so the results of these initiatives are encouraging. Also, this government participates in the annual radon awareness campaigns and radon exposure reduction programming in Health and Social Services workplaces. The department is collaborating across government with the Yukon Lung Association to reduce radon in homes and buildings across the territory.

In closing, I would like to thank all the dedicated care providers who are working collaboratively to offer the best care to Yukoners, which includes community health nurses, physicians, hospitals, home care providers, family and friends, local organizations and referral cancer centres outside Yukon.

In particular, I would like to recognize a few dedicated volunteers and community contributors. Mary Mickey wasn't able to join us today, as she's organizing volunteers at Wykes' Your Independent Grocer grocery store, but Mary is the reason why there's an active Daffodil Days campaign here in Yukon. She has been volunteering at this for decades and has also won many awards for her service in Yukon, including the Commissioner's Award.

Kari Johnston is also a long-time Daffodil Days campaign volunteer and a significant community contributor, who resides in Haines Junction.

As well, there are 45 volunteer sellers, 27 workplaces — including our Cabinet office, which purchased 173 bouquets of daffodils — and seven Yukon communities, with Barbara Abel in Old Crow with the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation, Corrine at the Vi & Cor's Food Basket in Atlin, Bobbie-Lee Melancon in Mayo, Paul Derry in the Bonanza Market in Dawson, the St. Elias Seniors and the Little Green Apple in Haines Junction, Patrick and Dee with the Tagish Community Centre, and the nurses at the Watson Lake nursing station.

Applause

Ms. McLeod: I am pleased to rise in the House today on behalf of the Yukon Party Official Opposition to recognize Cancer Awareness Month, also known as Daffodil Month in Canada.

Throughout the month of April, we honour and lend our support to Canadians who have been affected by cancer. Because of the indiscriminate nature of the disease, there are few people in our country who have not been touched in some way by cancer. Throughout the month, you will see people don the daffodil on their lapels to show support and raise awareness for cancer and cancer research. Volunteers work year-round to raise funds to support research and services for cancer patients, survivors and families. Activities and fundraisers ramp up in April, and efforts are focused around donations through pin sales. The daffodil has become a symbol of hope, solidarity and respect, and it's a wonderful way for people to contribute in some way toward the cause.

I would like to recognize the hard work done by volunteers here in the Yukon who have, since 2013, worked to raise money for the Yukoners cancer care fund. This incredible fund is backed by Yukoners and the Yukon Hospital Foundation and has been an integral part of cancer care in the Yukon for five years. Fundraising dollars remain in the Yukon, helping Yukoners directly through gifts of money to help them through their treatments. Anyone wishing to donate to the Yukoners cancer care fund will be issued a tax receipt for any amount over \$20.

Last year, a new April tradition was born — Denim Day. Celebrated on April 10 this year, Denim Day is comprised of another pin drive, with funds going directly to the Yukoners cancer care fund. With many thanks once again going to Karen Forward, president of the Yukon Hospital Foundation, this initiative will continue annually with her help and that of many other volunteers. You can purchase your Denim Day pin at Angellina's Toy Boutique, Climate Clothing, Seasons Galleria, 3 Beans Natural Foods or the Yukon College Bookstore.

I would like to encourage all Yukoners to take part and support Daffodil Month in some way. Buy a daffodil, buy a Denim Day pin or make a donation to the Yukoners cancer care fund. No matter how much you are able to give, your support will go a long way to help Yukoners with cancer get through a difficult time in their lives.

Ms. White: I rise on behalf of the Yukon NDP to recognize April as Daffodil Month, the Canadian Cancer Society's annual awareness and fundraising campaign.

The seemingly fragile daffodil will appear despite snow and slush, wind and rain. They will break through the harsh, cold earth and emerge with yellow crowns and feisty vibrancy. They are the perfect symbol of resiliency. With a capacity to recover quickly from difficulties, they have an inherent toughness.

It makes perfect sense that the daffodil was chosen as the symbol of hope and resiliency by the Canadian Cancer Society because, despite their beauty, those little flowers are tough. The daffodil is determined and vibrant, just like the hundreds of thousands of volunteers across the country who never give up to make this a successful campaign year in and year out. The daffodil is tough and resilient, like the hundreds of thousands of individuals who have been touched by cancer. Because, despite setbacks like early crops or frozen flowers, the daffodil campaign just keeps on keeping on, one step at a time, just like the people and families that they support.

Today, Mr. Speaker, we celebrate those affected by cancer and thank those who lend their time to help. Today, we celebrate resiliency, determination, hope and toughness.

Speaker: Introduction of visitors.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Gallina: I would like members to join me in welcoming a few people to the gallery here today. Mathieya Alatini is in our Cabinet offices and she has joined us for our tributes and business here today.

Gerard Tremblay is a constituent being supported by Amanda Smith.

Finally, Kari Johnston, who I recognized in the tribute — an avid community volunteer and supporter of the daffodil campaign for many years.

Thank you for joining us here today.

Applause

Hon. Ms. Frost: I would like members of the House to welcome my husband, Roger Hanberg, today. I just want to acknowledge Roger for his contribution to the community and also for being such a great supporter — your dedication to Ride for Dad and your contribution to cancer fundraising efforts in Yukon, and also for being such a great support.

Applause

Speaker: Are there any returns or documents for tabling?

TABLING RETURNS AND DOCUMENTS

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I have for tabling the *Yukon College 2016-17 Annual Report*, financial statements and auditor's report, which are tabled pursuant to section 16(3) of the *Yukon College Act*.

Mr. Istchenko: I have a letter for tabling today to the Minister of Health and Social Services. It is in response to a petition that was sent to me by the community members of Beaver Creek, Destruction Bay and Burwash Landing about their doctors — with the petition attached, with 120-plus signatures.

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

Are there any reports of committees?

Are there any petitions?

Are there any bills to be introduced?

Are there any notices of motions?

NOTICES OF MOTIONS

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Canada to immediately adopt and implement the final report of Canada's special envoy to Myanmar which stated that in light of clear evidence to support the charges that crimes against humanity have been committed:

(1) Canada should signal a willingness to welcome refugees from the Rohingya community in both Bangladesh and Myanmar, and should encourage a discussion among like-minded countries to do the same;

(2) Canadian development assistance to the Rakhine State and the whole of Myanmar should be increased and should focus on the needs of women and girls, reconciliation and the steps necessary to ensure the safety, security and civil rights of the whole population, including the Rohingya. Special attention must be paid to the need for an emergency response for both Myanmar and Bangladesh; and

(3) individuals, organizations and companies deemed to have been involved in a breach of international humanitarian law or other laws related to conflict, including breaches of the Rome Statute and the UN convention on genocide should, in addition to the processes set out above, be subject to targeted economic sanctions. Canada should be actively working with like-minded countries to identify the individuals or parties that should be subject to such sanctions, which are likely to have more impact if multilateral in scope. Canada should also continue its arms embargo and should seek a wider ban on the shipment of arms to Myanmar.

Speaker: Are there any further notices of motions?

Is there a statement by a minister?

This then brings us to Question Period.

QUESTION PERIOD

Question re: Bluesky Strategy contract

Mr. Kent: On June 8 of last year, the Liberals sole-sourced a \$40,000 contract to Bluesky Strategy, an Ottawa-based lobbying firm. This contract and a subsequent one in September of last year for \$14,375 were for — and I quote: "... preparation for the Fraser Institute survey." Can the

Premier tell us what the government received from this firm for this expenditure of almost \$55,000 in taxpayers' money?

Hon. Mr. Silver: I don't have a note at my fingertips with regard to this particular contract, but I have no problem doing a return or response to the member opposite. This does bring up the concept of the lobbyist registry, and I believe that in order for citizens to have confidence in government decisions, they do need to know who is meeting with whom as far as elected officials, public officials and even, for that matter, members of the opposition. We are committed to making interactions between lobbyists and public officials more transparent.

Mr. Kent: Mr. Speaker, the head of Bluesky Strategy is listed in the federal lobbyist registry as a representative for the Yukon, and the principal representative of the client is the Premier's chief of staff. According to the registry, months before Bluesky Strategy was awarded a sole-source contract of nearly \$55,000 for the Fraser Institute survey, Bluesky Strategy met with the federal Environment minister on behalf of Yukon on March 22, 2017. Can the Premier tell us what the purpose of that meeting was and what was discussed?

Hon. Mr. Silver: As to what transpired with meetings of federal government representatives, I am not going to speak to that, but what I will do is give information to the members opposite as far as our interactions with Bluesky. The members opposite act as if Bluesky only works just for the Yukon government. What we will do is get some response to the questions.

Again, this does raise the question about a lobbyist registry. The previous government was pushed by opposition — both by me and the NDP — on lobbyist registration. Yukon is one small jurisdiction, but it does not have legislated lobbying registration. I believe Prince Edward Island and the three territories are the only ones left to not have this legislation. I believe that Prince Edward Island's legislation is waiting for royal assent, so they are actually moving forward on this as well.

We are committed to making those interactions between lobbyists and elected or public officials more transparent. We are reviewing the experiences of other jurisdictions as we speak to examine the effectiveness and efficiencies of options for Yukon to achieve the objective of a lobbyist registry. I will get back to the member opposite as far as any interactions that we have had with Bluesky Strategy and look forward to having more conversations about this government doing what the last government failed to do.

Mr. Kent: I would have thought that the Premier would have been more familiar with this activity. As I mentioned, his chief of staff is listed on the federal lobbyist registry as the principal representative of the client. According to the federal lobbyist registry, Bluesky Strategy was registered to lobby on Yukon's behalf as early as March 21, 2017. However, when we looked at the contract registry, the earliest contract we could find for Bluesky was given out on April 1, 2017. Of course, this begs a couple of questions. How much money was given to Bluesky for their involvement in the March 22 meeting with the federal Environment minister? Why is that

information not on the contract registry? Has this government paid this lobbying firm or had them do anything else on its behalf that is not reflected on the Yukon contract registry?

Hon. Mr. Silver: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the questions from the members opposite, and we will have the answers to his questions in either a legislative return, or we could even meet with the Leader of the Official Opposition.

Question re: Children in care

Mr. Cathers: Over a month and a half ago, the Minister of Health and Social Services became aware of a specific allegation of abuse within government-run group homes. We have been asking the minister for two weeks why she never reported these allegations to the RCMP and have been met with a lot of evasive answers. Yesterday, the Minister of Justice implied that the Minister of Health and Social Services is not required to report abuse allegations to the authorities because the Minister of Justice claimed that minister is the authority.

It seems that the Minister of Health and Social Services did not do anything with this information because it wasn't until the original CBC story aired that the RCMP started looking into this serious allegation.

If the minister had done her job and reported this when she first became aware, the RCMP could have started their investigation much earlier.

Can the Minister of Justice tell us why the government sat on, and seemingly did nothing about, these abuse allegations until they found out the media was about to run an embarrassing news story?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I simply don't accept the preamble to this question. Some of what the Member for Lake Laberge says is correct, and much of it is incorrect. They are assumptions based on their perception, or his perception, of what occurred in this situation. As a result, I'm not sure how to answer the question, but what I can say is that the RCMP are independent from the government. They are required to carry out their business when matters come to their attention, and I have every faith that they are doing that.

Mr. Cathers: When the government repeatedly refuses to answer the questions, then we are left having to ask again. It's clear that, when the Minister of Health and Social Services became aware of these specific allegations over a month and a half ago, she should have taken action. Unfortunately, it appears from all of the information made available publicly that it wasn't until the eve of a media story that the government rushed out a press release to try to address the issue and cover their political hides.

The Health and Social Services website states very clearly that all Yukoners are required by law to report suspected child abuse. From the Minister of Justice's statements yesterday, she seems to think that this law doesn't apply to her colleague. Nothing in the act suggests that the Minister of Health and Social Services is exempt from the legal requirement of reporting allegations of this nature.

Again, Mr. Speaker, why did the Minister of Health and Social Services not report these allegations to the RCMP when she first became aware of them?

Hon. Ms. Frost: At this point, I would like to state that we did take immediate action, although the member opposite may not agree with that, and it is quite evident that they don't agree with the process. The suggestion that we didn't take action is absolutely inappropriate.

We respect the confidentiality of the individuals who have come forward. We absolutely respect the requirement to ensure that all children in our care are given the support they require to be safe and to be acknowledged and respected — and we have done that. The decision was to proceed with the Child and Youth Advocate, an independent authority — to look at their expertise and to conduct a review and find out what is happening and look at recommendations.

The members opposite well know that this is a long-standing issue within Family and Children's Services — under their watch. They shake their heads. It was under their watch and we are doing something about it and we will continue to do something about it. We will continue to work with our staff, work with the individuals who have come forward and work with our children to make this a better place, to make our society a better place, a more welcoming place. In fact, we will look at opportunities to provide further input from everyone involved.

Mr. Cathers: The Minister of Health and Social Services can dance and weave all she wants on this file, but the serious issue at hand is that it appears the minister did not live up to her obligations under the law. Finding out about the allegations over a month and a half ago and then not reporting them to the authorities is not good enough.

The government told us yesterday that the minister is the authority — which is not correct — so she wasn't obligated to do anything once she found about these allegations, it appears — according to their logic.

How can Yukoners have faith that the government will take any action on the review currently being undertaken of group homes when the minister didn't even take action when she found out about these specific allegations, she did not report them to the RCMP and it's very questionable whether she's living up to her obligations under the law?

Hon. Ms. Frost: I'm very happy to respond to that question. Most definitely, I take this seriously. We all do. Members on this side of the House take the allegations very seriously and we are acting.

Now, I did meet with the young person. We have involved our staff. We brought this to the attention of the staff within Health and Social Services and Family and Children's Services. Subsequently, they met with the youth. They proceeded with doing an internal review of all the incidents specific to the allegations. Now the member opposite may not agree with that, but he would not know. Perhaps he has raised some specific concerns with respect to allegations.

We all have an obligation in this House. If any wrongdoing is noted, then we all have an obligation to reveal that. If the member opposite has some information that has not

been revealed, then I would recommend that he does so. The Child and Youth Advocate will conduct a review of the process. We are taking the proper steps and procedures to ensure that happens. If there is wrongdoing, then most definitely the authorities would be involved in conducting the investigation.

Question re: Alcoholic beverages labelling

Ms. White: In November, we saw the introduction of new labels on liquor and beer sold at Yukon liquor stores. The Northern Territories Alcohol Study, funded by Health Canada, was to research the impacts of warning labels on the drinking habits of Yukoners. The study had the support of the Yukon chief medical officer of health, who noted the higher-than-average alcohol consumption of Yukoners. The initial labels linked cancer to alcohol consumption — a link to cancer that is widely accepted in the medical community.

After complaints from the liquor and beer industry, this government quickly backtracked on what they saw as possible litigation and removed all labels, including those warning of alcohol consumption during pregnancy. Why did this government decide to backtrack on the labelling after veiled threats of litigation from the industry, rather than support this important research?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I thank the member opposite for the question and the opportunity to speak to it. I will respond as much as I can now, and I hope in supplementary answers to get more information out. But from my perspective, we are supporting this study.

The researchers came across Canada and looked for jurisdictions to carry out the study. The Yukon and the Northwest Territories as a control case were the only jurisdictions that said: Yes, let's please do that. We have had labels here for over 25 years warning about the risk of drinking while pregnant. So we wanted to get more evidence about how effective those labels and other labels would be. We began that study. We were concerned about the possibility of litigation and we chose to adjust based on that.

I'm happy to answer supplementary questions. I'll get deeper into it as we go further.

Ms. White: In February of this year, the government announced that, in fact, labels would be back on a limited range of products. The principal investigator for the study from the Canadian Institute for Substance Use Research called the impact of the new labels as watering down their research considerably. The new labels only address standard drink size and low-risk drinking guidelines. The labels to address the risk of drinking during pregnancy were noticeably absent.

We have learned through the researcher, not the government's news release, that small producers and local producers would be excluded from all labelling, although it was not clear what the definition of a small producer was. Given the popularity of small producers, and certainly local producers of beer and spirits, why were they excluded from this study — even further diluting the study?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: What I want to say is that the types of labels that we were most concerned about aren't the

low-risk drinking guidelines and the standard drink guidelines because we recognize that alcohol has harms here in the territory, and we want to help inform all Yukoners about those harms because we want to ensure that, as people consume, they are aware of the risks that are there — so that is a great thing. We did choose to exclude small producers.

There are all sorts of complicating factors, which are going to be difficult to respond to here in a minute and a half, but the complicating factors lie around — when you get to the standard drink size, every different bottle has to be labelled differently and, in conversation with the researchers, we looked to try to simplify it somewhat. We looked to do it on sort of the large producers, and I can get a definition for the member opposite on what we use as small producers here. I think it's by regulation. I will endeavour to find that information. We are happy to be carrying out the study and gathering evidence so that we can help Yukoners to be informed about how to drink safely in the territory.

Ms. White: It's unfortunate because, at this point, it appears that no information is being gathered. A recent visit to the liquor store revealed that, except for a random bottle or two, there are no labels on products. There are no labels with cancer warnings. There are no labels with standard drink size or low-risk drinking guidelines, and not even labels about risks of drinking and pregnancy that have been on bottles and cans for years.

We know that national drinking statistics place Yukoners at the top for alcohol consumption. We also know that, in the Yukon, fetal alcohol spectrum disorder numbers are high and continue to be high.

This government has taken one step forward and two steps back on liquor labelling.

Why did this government remove the warning labels around the risks of drinking and pregnancy — labels that have been in place for years, long before this recent study?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Again, I thank the member opposite for the question. It is because we are working with the researchers and they are setting up. So they needed to come and do an exit survey, stop the study and it will restart. When it restarts — I have had the conversation with the president of the Yukon Liquor Corporation and my understanding is that the Yukon long-standing labels warning about drinking while pregnant will be part of the study. That is what I understand will be happening, so I will check on that, confirm that and get back to the member opposite, but I thank her for raising the question. I think it's important for all of us that we look at harm reduction and social responsibility around alcohol, and labels are one of the ways that we want to get evidence to see how effective it is as a tool.

Question re: Alcohol and drug services

Ms. McLeod: In the fall, we asked the Minister of Health and Social Services about drug and alcohol services in the communities. For example, we raised the fact that, according to the government's website, someone in Mayo has to call Dawson City to reach a community addictions worker.

The new complaint we have heard is that the government's website no longer even contains the information telling Yukoners how to seek support, where to seek support or even contact information to talk to someone. Mr. Speaker, as you know, there is a serious opioid crisis affecting Yukoners, and they need to know how to seek supports if they require them.

Can the minister tell us why this important information was removed from the website?

Hon. Ms. Frost: I am not sure specifically where or when this was removed from the website, but I would be happy to check into that.

I can speak to the substance use services that are provided in the communities. The mental wellness and substance use services in all of our communities are now provided through a mental wellness hub and strategy that was rolled out recently. The member opposite would know that we just opened up a hub in Watson Lake that provides for some very specific supports and services to provide support for drug and alcohol counselling and mental wellness supports. We are also working with our indigenous communities to ensure that there are local traditional practices and land-based healing integrated into that model.

Ms. McLeod: We went to the minister's website to the section called "Mental Wellness and Substance Use Services", and on the page we clicked on — on the link that says "find out more about counselling services", it says "page not found." When we clicked on the link that says "find out more about education, prevention and awareness", it says "page not found." We clicked on the link that says "find out more about what services are found in the communities" — "page not found". We clicked on the link that says "how to find out about treatment options" — "page not found". Finally, we clicked on the link to learn about withdrawal management, and again, "page not found".

How are Yukoners who are in urgent need of these services going to find this information if the government is not sharing it?

Hon. Ms. Frost: I want to note that our objective is to get the information out to the Yukon public. If these concerns that have been raised are factual, I will ensure that we address that. Most definitely, our objective is to ensure that we provide a one-window approach to mental wellness and substance abuse and use in Yukon, recognizing, as noted, that we have a fentanyl crisis on our hands.

We are integrating the model to the mental wellness hubs. We have supports in every Yukon community, so if the Yukon public is attempting to access information on the website, I would recommend that they go to the hubs. They are now located in every Yukon community and we have staff in all of our communities. We have social workers identified in all of the communities; as well, we have our health centres that are all staffed. The objective is to ensure that we provide the services that are required in Yukon and I will certainly look into why the information was not on the website.

Question re: Procurement policy

Mr. Hassard: Yesterday, we saw the government put out a news release and it said: “The recommendations of the Procurement Advisory Panel have been implemented.” The panel had 11 recommendations and there were 37 action items that the government had responded would address these recommendations.

Can the Minister of Highways and Public Works provide a document that shows how all of these action items were implemented?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I am more than happy to talk about procurement this afternoon. It is a topic that has been near and dear to my heart for many months now, and I know that the Department of Highways and Public Works has been working very hard and diligently on this file.

We have committed to addressing the Procurement Advisory Panel’s reports by the end of 2018, and we are more than happy to do that. When that work is complete and we are all finished, we will certainly table the document that shows all of the good work that we have done. There has been a lot of it — even now. We used the exceptions under the *Canadian Free Trade Agreement* recently. We had \$60 million in seasonal contracts out the door by March 31, which was a tremendous effort on the part of this government. It was an extraordinary number of contracts out the door by March 31 — more than double what this territory has seen in the past. I am very proud of that work on the part of the department.

This Government of Yukon is committed to reducing barriers to First Nations and local businesses in securing government contracts. We have started that work. We will achieve a variety of goals, including open, transparent and fair procurement processes that generate economic benefits for Yukoners. I am more than happy to talk about this all afternoon.

Mr. Hassard: Well, that is very interesting that the minister puts out a news release yesterday saying that the recommendations have been implemented; yet today, he says that they will be done by the end of 2018.

Mr. Speaker, recommendations 5 and 6 focused on training and skill development for YG staff who deal with procurement. Is there now an organizational model in place that ensures procurement is conducted by the staff with appropriate expertise? What training or skills development has been provided to staff?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I have said this before, and I will say it again right now this afternoon, that we plan to go above and beyond the panel’s recommendations by incorporating Yukon First Nation governments’ perspectives and aligning with recently approved trade agreements — like the *Canadian Free Trade Agreement*. We just got the exceptions under the free trade agreement by March 31 — we got those out the door — and 10 companies were given the chance to benefit and make some money from government contracts without any competition. We set the criteria and the companies were invited to bid on those contracts to make sure we got

maximum benefit for Yukon people. It was really exceptional work.

We have already added a fair wage schedule clause to our construction tenders and we have created standard templates for use in public and invitational tenders when buying goods. We have developed and published standard clauses for value-based procurements for First Nation capacity building, including northern experience and local knowledge, to help local companies in planning for tenders and to improve response rates to tenders. We have increased forecasts for upcoming tenders over \$75,000 in the tender forecast. We have added access to closed tender documents and created a three-week minimum tender period for all public procurements. We continue to meet regularly with industry associations. We have made presentations to community-based vendors. There is so much good work here, and I really relish the opportunity to talk about it more.

Mr. Hassard: That was quite a laundry list of things that had nothing to do with the Procurement Advisory Panel. Maybe I will make the question a little simpler for the minister and maybe he will have a better chance of answering it.

Is the news release correct, or is the minister correct on this one? We have read the news release saying that the recommendations have been implemented. Can the minister tell us: Have they?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: This government promised to tender seasonally dependent contracts well ahead of the construction season. In the Budget Address, we committed to having \$46 million in seasonally dependent contracts out the door and tendered by March 31. We actually hit more than \$61 million in tenders.

I’m happy to report that we have fulfilled this commitment to Yukoners — one of the things that was under the Procurement Advisory Panel — and we have made good on that. I’m more than happy to talk about it again, if you have any other questions.

Question re: Ross River infrastructure

Mr. Hassard: I’m wondering if the Housing minister could provide the House with an update on the new six-plex in Ross River and on when teachers will be moving into this new facility.

Hon. Ms. Frost: I can’t answer that question right now, but I would be happy to provide a specific response on when those units will be occupied. My understanding is that they are on target to open in the coming weeks.

Mr. Hassard: Can the minister update the House on whether the plan to turn over the existing teachers’ housing units to the Ross River Dena Council is still moving forward? Has the RRDC agreed to take those units?

Hon. Ms. Frost: I thank the member opposite for the question. We are working with the Ross River Dena Council on the transfer of the staff housing units that are coming vacant. That is still being discussed with the Ross River Dena Council.

Mr. Hassard: Mr. Speaker, I'm curious if the minister could tell us in the House today if the government will commit to provide the Ross River Dena Council with funding to ensure that, when those units are handed over, they are in good shape?

Hon. Ms. Frost: We are committed to working with the Ross River Dena Council and Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada on solutions for housing in Ross River, much as we are doing with the Liard First Nation and with other Yukon First Nations. Housing is a major issue for Yukon First Nations. We know that there is a housing shortage. We know that, in Yukon communities, housing is a bit of a challenge and we will continue to work with the Ross River Dena Council and their funding partner, Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada, to ensure that solutions are found for the housing issues in Ross River.

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. 267

Clerk: Motion No. 267, standing in the name of Mr. Hutton.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to work with the parties to the *Final Recommended Peel Watershed Regional Land Use Plan*, dated July 2011, to complete a Peel watershed land use plan based on the final recommended plan.

Mr. Hutton: I rise today in support of Motion No. 267. The Peel watershed is not just a Yukon treasure, but ranks among the great wilderness areas left on the entire planet. I was very fortunate during my long career to get many opportunities to see this vast and beautiful country — mostly by aircraft. In the 1990s, the federal government green plan did a waste management cleanup and gave me the opportunity to work with crews to go out and clean up 5,000 empty barrels, 2,500 barrels that were partially full of fuel — all of these things that were hauled out by mining companies during the 1980s and then abandoned when the flow-through shares disappeared and they actually had to pay to haul the stuff out of there themselves, instead of being on the taxpayers' hook.

I proudly took part in the long and thorough consultation process, which took many years to complete and was extremely comprehensive in scope. I was very happy to see the recommended plan in its final version and was fully in support of it. Needless to say, I was appalled and dismayed, along with thousands of other Yukoners, when the government of the day — the Yukon Party — hijacked the

process at the 11th hour and tried to substitute a completely different version.

Yukon people and all Yukon First Nations stood together to try to right this process. The end result: a series of court cases, ending with advice from the Supreme Court of Canada to get the planning process back on track. I'm disappointed with the time and money that has been wasted. However, I am extremely encouraged that our Yukon Liberal government will implement the new final plan, once it is complete.

I can think of no better legacy to leave future generations of Yukoners than this vast and beautiful watershed that encompasses the Wind, Bonnet Plume and Snake rivers as their crystal clear waters make their way north to the mighty Peel. What a gorgeous land, Mr. Speaker. Sheep, grizzly bear, moose, caribou, wolves — you name it and it lives in this watershed. The scenery is so beautiful that it can make your teeth ache for the sweetness, and your heart pounds loud amid the vast silence of this awesome land.

There are many elders in my communities who supported this plan from the very beginning. Unfortunately, too many of them are no longer with us. They didn't get the opportunity to see the plan come to fruition, and for that, I am truly disappointed.

One of these elders who is still with us deserves special mention. I speak about a man from my own community — Jimmy Johnny — who has become the voice of the Peel. He speaks for the land, the water, the animals, fish and birds that have no voice. Jimmy has been a great champion of protecting this watershed — so mahsi' cho to you, Jimmy.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank all of those Protect The Peel supporters who have persevered all of these many years. I truly hope that this plan is completed and that implementation begins during our current mandate. I believe Yukoners have waited long enough and we need to get this good work completed.

We have heard from the public and stakeholders that land use planning is a critical step in enabling economic development and being responsible stewards of the land. We know that Yukoners care deeply about the Peel watershed, and we are committed to working with our First Nation partners to finalize a regional land use plan for the Peel watershed and create certainty for the region.

In 1998, I had the opportunity for a trip of a lifetime. I joined the fine company of some Na Cho Nyäk Dun citizens of Mayo on a journey into the Peel watershed. We were going to meet a group of youth and elders from Fort McPherson at the halfway point, spend a day or two visiting and then carry on to Fort McPherson. Chief Billy Germaine, his son Jeremy, who was 16 years old at the time, Stuart Moses, Eddie Olsen and Brian Herrington were joined by me and Jack Smith. Greg Guttman from Whitehorse was our wonderful mechanic. We left from the beginning of the Wind River trail at the Hanson Lake cut-off between Elsa and Keno. We followed what was left of the Wind River trail, a Cat road constructed to haul freight into the Peel River in the 1960s. North to Fort McPherson — we left about mid-March, and 12 days later, we arrived in Fort McPherson. The beauty of this landscape

cannot be overstated. Even in the winter, the landscape is majestic and awe-inspiring, albeit in colours of only white, blue and grey.

We can leave future generations of Yukoners a fantastic gift, an opportunity for them to decide how best to manage this spectacular and awesome area of our Yukon. As our planet's resources continue to dwindle, I can think of no better objective than to try to preserve this wilderness, as there is still much for us to learn. As pressure continues to mount globally for every resource, we need to think about some of the Peel watershed's most important resources: clean air, clean water, abundant fish and wildlife — all resources that are becoming scarcer and more important to protect, not just here in the Yukon, but everywhere on our planet.

Currently, 12.7 percent of the territory is protected. This includes national and territorial parks, habitat protection areas and land set aside for protection by First Nations. Management plans are in place for four territorial parks and seven habitat protection areas. Together with Inuvialuit, First Nation and regional land use planning partners, we are making progress on plans for a number of parks and habitat protection areas. Tombstone, Kusawa, Coal River Springs, Qikiqtaruk and Herschel Island, Ni'iinlii Njik, Horseshoe Slough, Devil's Elbow and Big Island, Nordenskiöld or Tsâwnjik Chu, Lútsâw Wetland, Ta'tla Mun, Old Crow Flats — these are more than just names or spaces on a map. These are ancient and spiritual places. They tell the story of our past and they are critical to the sustainable health and biodiversity of our future.

The *Final Recommended Peel Watershed Regional Land Use Plan* identifies 36,905 square kilometres to be protected. Approval of this plan would increase Yukon's protected area by 7.6 percent, for a total of more than 20 percent of the territory. These territorial parks and habitat protection areas do more than just preserve culture and conserve ecosystems. They are a testament to our commitment and dedication to managing this land together.

These joint planning teams are important vehicles for cooperation and reconciliation. Through the establishment and co-management of these important places, we are honouring natural and cultural heritage, bringing our shared agreements to life and ensuring a sustainable future for all our children to enjoy.

It is also important in terms of the biodiversity of our territory. The Yukon government is working collaboratively with federal, provincial and territorial partners to identify a pathway toward achieving Canada's biodiversity goals and targets by 2020. Canada Target 1 recognizes that protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures are cornerstones in conserving biodiversity. Nationally, Canada is committed to conserving at least 17 percent of terrestrial areas and inland water by 2020.

Pursuant to the final agreements, regional land use planning is the primary means to identify new protected areas. A protected area is a prescribed area where conservation is the primary objective within the area and where management direction reflects a largely non-industrial landscape. Yukon has several types of protected areas: national parks, reserves,

national wildlife areas, territorial parks, habitat protection areas and special management areas.

Many protected areas in Yukon were first recognized as special management areas in First Nation final agreements. More recently, protected areas are being identified through the regional land use planning process, including the *Peel Watershed Regional Land Use Plan*. The decision that was received from the Supreme Court of Canada is an important step in getting Yukon's regional land use planning back on track. The Supreme Court judgment instructed the parties to return to the stage of government consultation with affected Yukon First Nations and communities.

There is much work that needs to be done now, Mr. Speaker, as we respectfully re-engage with the First Nation governments of Na Cho Nyäk Dun, Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in, Gwich'in Tribal Council as well as the Vuntut Gwitchin and other stakeholders and communities to develop this plan to guide the future use and development of the Peel watershed.

My colleagues had a very successful meeting with leaders from all four First Nation partners in Dawson City on January 29, 2018. We committed to establishing a respectful and collaborative consultation process. Community consultations are anticipated to begin this summer. We are committed to ensuring that the completed plan is consistent with the final agreements and the judgment by the Supreme Court of Canada.

We have continued the prohibition on issuing new mineral and oil and gas subsurface rights in the Peel watershed to enable the planning process to conclude without adding further complexities. We support the final recommended plan and look forward to implementing a final plan that all partners support.

Mr. Speaker, I have outlined my rationale for supporting this motion and for supporting the Peel plan. One of the reasons I ran in the last election was that I wanted to be part of a party that supported the plan. The motion today is also an opportunity for Yukoners to hear from the Official Opposition about where they stand on the protection of the Peel watershed and the final recommended *Peel Watershed Regional Land Use Plan*. We know that in the 2011 election, they steadfastly refused to tell Yukoners what they were going to do in the Peel. By the time the 2016 election happened, their position opposing the Peel plan was well known. They were in court spending thousands of dollars a day fighting Yukon First Nations over the Peel. Yukon government spent more than \$650,000 on outside legal fees fighting other Yukoners in court. This might be the most that the Government of Yukon has ever spent on outside lawyers in a single case.

On December 1, 2017, the Yukon Party caucus responded to the Supreme Court of Canada decision. They said in part, and I quote: "We respect the Supreme Court's decision and recognize its impact on the Land Use Planning process outlined in the Umbrella Final Agreement." Next quote: "Based on the Court's decision today, we understand that mistakes were made by the Government of Yukon and respect these findings."

Mistakes were made. Mr. Speaker, I think we can all agree on that. I hope the members of the Yukon Party will elaborate on what mistakes they were referring to and who made them. Perhaps they were referring to events in 2009 when the Yukon Party government blocked the Department of Environment from making a submission it had written to the planning commission. These events were confirmed for the public record by the Member for Lake Laberge in a radio story.

Perhaps they were referring to the decision I mentioned earlier, when they refused to be clear with Yukoners about where they stood on the Peel during the 2011 election. Perhaps it was the decision to rewrite the Peel plan and come up with a new plan based on the infamous eight principles. Perhaps it was the time in 2013 that the Yukon Party government deleted numbers from its report on public consultation on the *Peel Watershed Regional Land Use Plan*. This was revealed by a local newspaper through an access-to-information request. When this came to light, one of the Yukon Party ministers noted for the public record, and I quote: “The numbers don’t matter.” Perhaps it was the previous government’s approach to consultation — the issue that was really at the heart of the Peel court case. Perhaps that was the mistake the news release was referring to.

The previous government’s litigation-not-consultation approach led us all the way to the Supreme Court. All Yukoners are interested in hearing whether or not the Official Opposition will acknowledge those mistakes today.

Today’s motion is also an opportunity for the public to see if the Official Opposition has learned anything from its mistakes. Going back to the statement from the Yukon Party in December 2017, it would appear they still don’t support the Peel land use plan, and in today’s vote, we are going to get that information on the public record one way or the other.

It’s a straightforward question: Do members of this House support the Peel plan?

The Yukon Party said in December that it has concerns about the — and I quote: “restrictiveness” of the plan. It sure sounded like they continued to oppose the plan. We’ll see today when we vote. With that, Mr. Speaker, I will conclude my remarks.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mahsi’ cho.

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Speaker: Minister of Community Services — introduction of visitors outside of the time provided for in the Daily Routine.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Mr. Speaker, thank you. I’m wondering if we could welcome to this House — I believe it’s the new executive director of the Yukon Conservation Society, Mike Walton; outreach coordinator, Julia Duchesne — I’m sorry, I don’t know everybody’s name, but I know there is the executive director of CPAWS here, Chris Rider. I know there’s a young woman who spoke to the Minister of Environment and me about climate change — I apologize that

I don’t remember your name — and my own constituent, Ms. Wendy Morrison — if we could just welcome them.

Applause

Mr. Hassard: It’s a pleasure to rise today to speak to Motion No. 267. I certainly am here to listen to all three parties to see what they have to say.

Last year’s Supreme Court decision provided clarity on chapter 11 of the *Umbrella Final Agreement* and I think that’s a good thing for Yukoners. We have said that before and we will continue to say it: This decision set out a process and a path forward for the government.

The Official Opposition always respects the *Umbrella Final Agreement*, the First Nation land claims agreements and First Nation self-government here in the Yukon. I believe today’s motion is in line with the process and the ruling of the Supreme Court.

It’s clear that the government has to go forward with this and we certainly aren’t going to try to stand in the way of that. We do note that the Liberals did commit themselves to accepting the final recommended plan during the 2016 election. Again, I believe this motion is supporting that campaign commitment.

That being said, the concerns the Official Opposition has had with the recommended final plan still remain. We worry about the amount of land in the territory that can no longer be developed and what impacts this may have on future generations of Yukoners. We also have questions about future land use planning processes. How will those work and what is the path forward on those? We also have questions about the cost of implementation related to the final recommended plan.

As you know, Mr. Speaker, there are thousands of legitimately held mineral claims in the region, and we would like to know whether the government plans on compensating the claim owners for any direct or indirect expropriation. We would also like to know how much this will directly or indirectly cost the taxpayers of Yukon.

These are questions and concerns that we continue to have, and I think they’re very important questions. Before the government gets mad at us for raising these questions, I would just like to remind them that we, too, are here as elected officials on behalf of Yukoners. These are legitimate questions we have heard from Yukoners. They are important questions, and it’s fair for Yukoners to ask them.

As MLAs in this House, it is our job to raise these questions on their behalf. I would like to be clear. These questions won’t affect how we vote on today’s motion, which we will be supporting, as we believe it is in line with the Supreme Court ruling. However, I would like to propose a friendly amendment that I believe captures the questions we have with respect to the final recommended plan without taking away from the government’s objectives on this file.

Amendment proposed

Mr. Hassard: Mr. Speaker, I move that Motion No. 267 be amended by:

(1) removing the words “to work” and replacing them with the words “as it works”; and

(2) adding the words “to also provide details on the costs of implementation to taxpayers and provide information on how future land use planning processes will work” after the words “based on the final recommended plan”.

Speaker: There is a proposed amendment to Motion No. 267. The copies will be distributed and I will have an opportunity to review the proposed amendment with Mr. Clerk.

It has been moved by the Member for Pelly-Nisutlin that Motion No. 267 be amended by:

(1) removing the words “to work” and replacing them with the words “as it works”; and

(2) adding the words “, to also provide details on the costs of implementation to taxpayers and provide information on how future land use planning processes will work.” after the words “based on the final recommended plan”.

I have had an opportunity to review the proposed amendment with Mr. Clerk and can advise that the amendment is procedurally in order; therefore, the proposed amendment would have the motion read as follows:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon as it works with the parties to the *Final Recommended Peel Watershed Regional Land Use Plan*, dated July 2011, to complete a Peel watershed land use plan based on the final recommended plan, to also provide details on the cost of implementation to taxpayers and provide information on how future land use planning processes will work.

Mr. Hassard: Mr. Speaker, I think I have captured the reasoning behind this amendment in my earlier remarks. As I have said before, regardless of how the debate on this amendment goes, we will be supporting the motion, whether it is amended or not. I do think the amendment is very important. As I have stated earlier, the concerns that we have with the final recommended plan relate to the costs of implementation and the expropriation of the mineral claims in the area. I have talked about the questions we have on the impacts of future land use planning processes. Again, I think these are important questions and I think that they can be addressed while still capturing the intent of the original motion.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: I would like to thank the Assembly for this opportunity to speak to this amendment. I would like to thank the Leader of the Official Opposition for putting this amendment forward. I will thank him, but I will state that we will not be supporting the amendment and I will identify some of the reasons why we will not.

First of all, it's clear from the amendment before us that the Yukon Party is hoping to avoid, really, a vote on a clear question about whether or not they support moving ahead with the recommended Peel land use plan. If we want to talk about cost — we are sitting now with about a \$650,000 bill. That is

approximately over half a million dollars in legal fees that was spent and then another \$105,000 that has been identified as a cost through the process for Berger's firm through the Supreme Court ruling.

Once again, this amendment is truly a distraction from a very simple question. So we take into consideration that they are really focusing on cost, but external legal costs alone — not to take into consideration the internal costs that were taken and the people power — the people time — to take on this undertaking.

The Yukon Party, of course, has its turn every two weeks to bring forward things that they want to debate and certainly focusing on, perhaps instead of us debating things like daylight saving time — if this is really key, they can bring that forward. Not to say that daylight saving time and the Member for Kluane's motions aren't important — but certainly, if this is something, maybe they could take this forward and have that discussion.

What we really want to know from this is: Does the Yukon Party support the Peel plan? That is what we're really trying to get an answer on today. I will state, before concluding — because we really just need to get on with this debate and discussion — a few pieces. One is that truly, Mr. Speaker, the goal today was to — we wanted this to become water under the bridge. We will take care of the fees. We will, of course, have the responsibility of covering the \$650,000 that is in place from external fees. We will take on working with the partners and stakeholders to move the plan forward. This is our responsibility and we understand it.

The amendment does muddy the waters. Two specific things come to mind as I look at it. First of all, we're going to always take into consideration the cost of what we do on behalf of all Yukoners — that's first and foremost. That's what we do through the budget process. You see this now as we're deliberating in the budget process here, where you have seen the Third Party touch upon the fact that there are departments that have come into this Assembly to report and debate their budget that we have not seen in years and years and years — many years, almost half a decade for one.

We want to have those discussions. We want to stand behind the numbers. We want to look at our cost, and that's something we will do.

I don't think we need to add in the specific amendment to this particular motion. That's just something we do, and we understand that's our fiduciary responsibility as members of the Legislative Assembly.

When we talk about future land use planning processes that will work, you have to understand that what we have really tried to focus on — and I'll touch upon this again this afternoon — and some of the key work is that, once again, we're going back to try to rebuild trust in relationships. With the said First Nations that we work with, we're trying to sit back at the table and define how we move forward and do it in a very respectful way. Some of that work is determining what future land use planning processes will look like.

We have also taken the opportunity to meet with the Land Use Planning Council. They came into our Cabinet office. I

and the Minister of Environment had the opportunity to sit and discuss with them about rekindling the relationship, respecting the work they do and, in turn, getting advice from them in understanding what they have learned from these processes over the last number of years. We're excited to work with them. They are extremely passionate about the work they do. They have some phenomenal expertise on that particular council and great individuals who have worked with the organization in technical roles for a long period of time. I thank them for giving me the opportunity to go to the Westmark and speak at their last set of meetings — when you look at the turnout and the experience in the room — a decade, if not centuries, of experience in the room from land departments from across the Yukon.

Speaking with these stakeholders — there are people here in the gallery today who we continue to highly respect and work with, and to sit down with in the Cabinet office to talk, whether it be the Yukon Conservation Society or CPAWS and, at the same time, being able to sit down and have real appropriate and respectful conversations with the Yukon Chamber of Mines and others, bringing people together and having tough and respectful conversations.

All of that work, in turn, will really help us define, as we go forward — always respecting the fact that the *Umbrella Final Agreement* and the work under chapter 11 ties that decision-making to the nations we have sat with and continue to work with. I think we're very close to having our senior liaison group identified from the nations, as well as from our departments. I think we may have one or two spots that are just being confirmed, and then they can continue with that work.

It's hard to predetermine, and it's inappropriate to predetermine, exactly the detail of future planning processes at this particular time because it would undermine the relationship-building and the trust-building that we have engaged in. For that portion, it would be against the commitment that we made to restore the trust in the process, to even support this. Truly, we have tabled this today. Yes, of course, from a political standpoint, we want an opportunity to have everybody on the record here today. Yes, we do; of course, we do. Do we understand that there are going to be many challenges? Absolutely. My colleagues across the way know them well.

I know and feel that, with creative approaches — which I know we are already getting from industry — and with true respect, we are going to get to a place that is going to work for the partners. I think it is important too — I know it was touched on earlier today, speaking of the Fraser Institute — I'll just close out.

When you look at what happened this year with the Fraser Institute — this goes back to the fact that it talks about the 8,000 claims — which was touched upon by the Leader of the Official Opposition — but it also talks about cost. When you think about cost to Yukon, we have over half a million dollars on external legal, but when you look at how we rated globally this year, as a jurisdiction, when it comes to — and I have an obligation to speak to this in my Economic

Development responsibility and Energy, Mines and Resources — the one place where we saw a significant slide was where Yukon ranked lowest in uncertainty concerning protected areas.

When you are looking at investment attraction, the activities of the previous government and the Supreme Court case becoming a national and global story on protected areas, we were ranked 59 there. That is really what we saw slide, so as we became a better place globally to invest — which we did, and that really came about because of our stability in relationships and an overarching respect in our relationships bilaterally with groups and bringing people to the table together — that is why every two or three days on social media, another financial outlet is commending the fact that Yukon is a place for cash flow, for deal flow and for investment — even in a shaky investment world across North America.

Those are the things — that is part of what we are trying to get this Assembly to state together. If the Opposition really wants to support their concerns about the mineral industry, we need them to support this without this amendment today, to at least show that we have stability back, no matter what has happened over the last number of years, no matter how much discord has scared investment away. Now, all of us in this Assembly — the same way that we all unanimously supported the work around C-17 — let us do it again, let us restore confidence so that we can continue to build this economy the way it is building.

I will leave it at that, Mr. Speaker, and look forward to voting on this amendment. Thank you.

Speaker: Is there further debate on the proposed amendment?

Are you prepared for the question?

Some Hon. Members: Division.

Division

Speaker: Division has been called.

Bells

Speaker: Mr. Clerk, please poll the House.

Hon. Mr. Silver: Disagree.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Disagree.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Disagree.

Hon. Ms. Dendys: Disagree.

Mr. Gallina: Disagree.

Mr. Adel: Disagree.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Disagree.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Disagree.

Mr. Hutton: Disagree.

Mr. Hassard: Agree.

Mr. Kent: Agree.

Mr. Cathers: Agree.

Ms. McLeod: Agree.

Mr. Istchenko: Agree.

Ms. Hanson: Disagree.

Ms. White: Disagree.

Clerk: Mr. Speaker, the results are five yea, 11 nay.

Speaker: The nays have it.

I declare the amendment defeated.

Amendment to Motion No. 267 negatived

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

Ms. Hanson: I thank the Member for Mayo-Tatchun for bringing this motion forward today. I have to say that having this debate today on getting on with the Peel reminds me of that old proverb, “The truth will set you free, but first it will make you miserable.” I can tell you that, after hours and hours and hours of discussion in this Legislative Assembly, many hours in rallies around the territory outside of this Legislative Assembly attempting to get government to respect the final recommended Peel plan, it does feel that we should be getting on with it, as opposed to simply debating this motion yet again. We have the final recommended Peel plan; we have the Supreme Court decision; we need action by the Yukon government.

I understand the sentiments of the motion that is before us, and I do support it. That is what we worked toward for many years. I echo some of the comments — or paraphrase the comments — from the Member for Mayo-Tatchun, that oftentimes the personal is political. I reflect on the fact that, before I was even selected as the Leader of the NDP or before I was elected as an MLA in this Legislative Assembly, I made my own independent submission to the Peel land use planning commission. Actually, the essence of that submission is reflected in an article that was published in *The Parliamentarian* in 2011 from the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, which I will table — and it is online — as part of the proceedings today.

I do that because I think that it is important, as much as I find it painful that we’re still dealing with this process, still dealing with this land use plan — the Peel land use planning process that commenced in 2004 — and we’re talking about it in 2018. When we made commitments as governments — the Yukon government, federal government and the 11 First Nation governments — to complete land use plans throughout the territory, we said that we, together, would complete eight regional land use plans, and we’ve done one, the north Yukon land use plan in 2009 — which many people would argue is about intensity of land use as opposed to a comprehensive or regional land use plan, given the way that the Vuntut Gwitchin agreement was designed and negotiated by the Vuntut Gwitchin, in terms of the withdrawal of so much of the area — the traditional territory — from oil and gas and so many other pressures, and the designation in that land claim of significant protected areas, including at least one national park. The fact that we’re still moving incrementally toward a process that may help us define how we’re going to give effect to a regional land use plan that parties agreed to and the Supreme Court has reinforced is frustrating.

I just wanted to point out, because I wanted to reflect from my own personal perspective — which I will share in a moment. The Member for Mayo-Tatchun made a comment about the importance of land use plans to identify protected areas. I would argue that chapter 11 of the final agreement does much more than just simply identify protected areas. Over the course of the last number of years, there have been a number of conferences and discussions about land use planning. Most recently, a couple years ago, there was a big summit. At one point, I had some concerns that there was an attempt to try to undermine the regional land use planning process, but I felt confident by the end of that conference that the integrity of the land use planning process is strong in the Yukon.

I wanted to reflect on some of the comments that have been made over the past, particularly with respect to northern land use planning. It has been the subject of a lot of discussion. The Auditor General commented on it in 2010 in terms of the imperative of completing northern land use planning, and a noted land use planner, Steven Kennett, said — and I’m quoting from a quote I did two years ago, when I had a motion in front of this House, urging the then-government to work with First Nation governments to establish, as an overarching priority, the development of a land use planning strategy with the objective of completing regional land use plans throughout the Yukon, in order to: support sustainable and responsible development; to reduce conflict resulting from the use of ad hoc policies and decisions; to provide certainty to the resource sector, tourism sector and other economic stakeholders and civil society interests; to facilitate a greater linkage between regional land use plans and the Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Act; and to achieve the objectives and principles set out in chapter 11 of the First Nation final agreements and the principles set out in common law.

Much as we saw just in the last little while, that motion was amended to be, as I said at the time, banal, and passed. The overarching notion is that we take seriously what is contained and what is set out with respect to both the imperative of regional land use planning and the fact that, without it being done, we are doing exactly as other jurisdictions have done, which is lurching forward in an ad hoc manner and creating potential conflict that does not need to be there.

As I said, Steven Kennett says: “Without direction from an integrated regional plan, decisions made through resource allocation, project review, and regulatory processes tend to focus on objectives and standard-setting for specific activities or sectors, rather than on achieving defined cumulative outcomes. As the extent and intensity of activity grow, the alternative to outcome-based management at the regional level is a future determined by the unintended and sometimes undesirable results of a multitude of uncoordinated individual actions.”

He also said that we have seen the consequences of that around the globe. Integrated regional planning is therefore much more than drawing lines on a map. It plays a pivotal role

in managing cumulative impacts by settling and achieving objectives that respect limits. That's a very important concept, Mr. Speaker.

I wanted to say that because I think that, in general, we have to keep a bigger picture of the implications of the commitments that we made in the final agreements. We have pretty much reiterated — over and over again, for those of us who sat through the initial court hearing and the court of appeal here in the Yukon, and then watched the proceedings on television with respect to the Supreme Court.

With respect to the Peel, I think it is important to reflect — as the Member for Mayo-Tatchun has said — on what the Peel land use planning process was about and what it wasn't about. One of the things that struck me — and I'm just going to quote, if I may. Again, members will have access to the source of the quotes.

In 2009, in my submission — I had been thinking about this for quite a long time before that — in the context as that chapter was being negotiated.

I can say that the personal is the political. I can tell you that, when I was considering getting involved in politics, I had people say to me, “No, you shouldn't get involved in this process.” The reason I chose to do that, Mr. Speaker, is because I believe that what you say in public should be what you say in private about an issue. I was prepared to put on the record — I sat in this Legislative Assembly; I sat in that gallery, watching members down here talk about supporting, in principle, the Peel land use plan. Since the beginning, the New Democrats have said that we support the plan.

I argued that the Peel River watershed land use plan created both a challenge and an opportunity for us as Yukoners, because I think that we do view the world through our unique lenses. I do it through the lens of a New Democrat, so my personal lens and my political lens are the principles that guide me as a New Democrat. These principles are cooperation, equality, sustainability and community. I didn't see them then, nor do I see them now, as being just words.

I said at the outset — and I say it again, because I think sometimes we lose it in terms of name-calling across the way — that it is important to be clear that New Democrats have a long history, both in and out of government, in terms of supporting responsible mining and exploration. Keep in mind that it was the Yukon NDP that put in place and established the mining incentive program. It was the New Democratic Party that actually — some people may say this is not a good thing — reopened the Faro mine, established small-business incentives, tax credits and reconstructed the highway to class standard between Whitehorse and Skagway, which allowed year-round transport to facilitate shipment of ore and subsequently open up the focus on tourism.

I come at this from a view of wanting to provide a balanced approach to sustainable development of the mining industry, with an obligation to ensure that the environmental policy that we put in place is representative of the full range of values that are important to Yukon people. That's why, when I looked at — and I still look at this through the lens of the party that I am part of — as a representative of the people for

Whitehorse Centre — I acknowledge — and I think we all do now, even my colleagues who over time have sometimes been challenged by this — that the commitment made to complete land use plans is part of Canadian law and the Constitution. I think that, when we make these kinds of commitments, we have to enter them seriously and treat the results with respect.

When I look at the Peel land use plan, I look at the mandate and who the people were who put that plan together, I often have to remind myself, and remind others, that the Peel land use plan — it was a group of people much like you and me. As I said in my submission to the land use planning commission, what I was touched by was that the authors of the recommended plan were fellow Yukoners. They are parents, grandparents, friends and neighbours.

Although they did rely on experts in many fields, including mining, environment, tourism, traditional knowledge — many other technocrats as we would call them today — the final recommendations were made with a commitment to a basic and common-sense approach that I still think — eight years later — is profound. Yukoners asked us not to respond based on our labels as miners, as environmentalists, as tourism operators or as politicians, but as parents. They asked us to consider — and this is in their letter of transmittal back to the commission — how you would explain the decision — governments, all of them — that you take in response to the recommendations made by the commission to your grandchildren. When I read that, it struck me.

I think they worked hard — and we saw this over time — to avoid setting up confrontations between and among interests. You saw the fact that they got one plan and achieved what we call the “mutual disgruntlement factor” — made everybody angry. So they went back to the drawing board and they came back with another approach — the final recommended plan.

As I understand it, the basic premise of this plan is that it preserves Yukon's options. The commission said — and I quote: “We can always decide to develop in the future, but once the decision is made, we cannot return to a pristine ecosystem and landscape — not in our lifetimes and not in the lifetimes of our great-grandchildren. Better, in our view, to go slow. Going slow has many advantages, including the possibility that we may be able to do things better and with less expense in the future. Changes in techniques, knowledge, technology, and, perhaps, attitudes can open windows of opportunity for development.” They said to be cautious and to preserve options; the commission did not call for existing mining claims to be extinguished.

I think what I am saying is that the commission offered Yukon an opportunity that few, if any, other jurisdictions or places in Canada or the world have. I think the plan that they put before the respective governments is intended to help us visualize and achieve the kind of future we want.

The Peel land use planning commission — this is where I feel that my colleagues in the Yukon Party have missed the point over the last number of years — was not charged with dealing with a number of serious public policy issues that are

the responsibility of government. It was not charged with dealing with the issues of how or if there were any matters to be dealt with concerning outstanding claims. It is true that the previous government did allow for a staking rush to occur. It did allow over 4,000 claims to be staked in that region during the time when people were saying, “Look, the planning process is beginning. We should not be doing that because then you may create a false sense of expectation when we have a free-entry staking system in this territory” — antiquated, Victorian-era mining laws.

In my submission to the land use planning commission, Mr. Speaker, I stated that it is not the job of the land use planning commission to address the implicit policy issues raised by the recommendations of this or any other land use plan. What is clear is that a public discussion is past due on what Yukoners, as owners of Yukon land and resources, should demand in exchange for allowing access to and the extraction of those resources. The Yukon government must hear calls to address the competing demands for access to land for staking of mineral claims and for other purposes, whether they are residential, recreational, wilderness outfitting or tourism. Rather than fostering false divides in the community that is Yukon, the Yukon government can play — and I still think it can play — a leadership role and open a dialogue within Yukon.

This is what we heard from the Financial Advisory Panel last year. It was a clarion call to balance expectations. I say, Mr. Speaker, and I will say it again: this is not the first time any jurisdiction has had to deal with it. The Schwindt Commission dealt with it in northern British Columbia, and what we need to do is balance the needs and balance the interests here. A mineral claim is not an ownership of property. It provides access to the minerals owned by the taxpayers through the Crown. It is up to government to determine and set the principles. The Schwindt Commission — and I would really encourage members opposite, with the short time that I have, to look at the Schwindt Commission. Look at the principles there because we want to avoid moral hazard. We do not want to be suggesting that simply by staking claims, you are owed compensation for anything.

Hon. Mr. Silver: I thank my colleagues in the House for the conversations so far. I thank the Member for Mayo-Tatchun for his motion urging the Government of Yukon to work with the other affected governments to complete the Peel watershed land use plan based on the final recommended plan.

We heard comments from folks here about attending rallies. I think one of the very first issues that hit my plate as a politician in Yukon was exactly this issue. It has been a long ride — that is for sure. Moving forward, for me, a real milestone moment was my absolute pleasure to be able to attend the water ceremony in Ottawa outside the Supreme Court when the decision on the Peel was being released. It was many years of hard work, and that feeling was palpable that day in Ottawa — the severe weather was also very palpable.

I sat in this House in opposition for five years, and I did watch — as Yukoners watched, as Canadians watched and as the global village watched — this issue move through the judicial system to the Supreme Court. Full credit due, the Yukon Party did admit that mistakes were made in a December 2017 press release. We are extending from there to move forward. This is the opportunity that we have in front of us to move forward and for all parties to say yes — to stand here united on this motion and to rally behind land use planning and say yes to land use planning and to say yes to the Peel decision and the Peel final recommended plan.

With the unanimous support of this motion, being able to turn the page for us to start moving forward on a common footing, we can have a common approach and a common agreement that we all agree on — that we all believe in the sophistication of modern treaties and this will set us apart from other jurisdictions — and that the land use planning that we will continue to move forward on now will ensure the maturity of governance in the Yukon.

This is an opportunity for us to say, yes, all the chapters of the *Umbrella Final Agreement*, the self-governing agreements and the final agreements are going to bring us together as a community — all Yukoners. This Liberal government knows that Yukoners do deeply care about the Peel watershed. We are committed to working with First Nation partners to finalize a regional land use plan and to create certainty for the region.

I’m happy to report that this progress is underway. Those will be my comments today — to talk about where we go from here. We’re underway toward the approval of the Peel land use plan, which was based upon the 2011 final recommended plan of the original Peel Watershed Planning Commission.

At the end of January, the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, the Minister of Environment and I met with the representatives of the affected First Nations to move this process forward. We had a very successful meeting where we confirmed our collective support of the vision and intent set out by the final recommended plan. I do appreciate the Yukon Party, the Official Opposition, bringing forward amendments to speak about where we go from here with other issues, but the intent of this motion has to do with the fact that, government-to-government, we need to start down a pathway again together. We need to give assurances to all the governments in the Yukon — municipal governments, First Nation governments and representatives of the federal government — that we are all ready, willing and able to move forward. But those conversations with the affected First Nation governments have to happen first and foremost.

We committed to establishing a respectful and collaborative consultation process that’s guided not only by the *Umbrella Final Agreement* and by the court decision, but also guided by our unwavering commitment to build strong government-to-government relationships with the First Nations to foster that reconciliation.

I’m pleased to report that a committee of senior representatives of all parties has been established and is

working to guide the planning process through consultation, through approval and implementation. Community consultations will start this summer. As the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources also noted earlier, I am also grateful to the chiefs for their patience and support as we advance this important work.

All of our governments are very eager to finish this process and to move into the implementation phase of the Peel land use plan. I'm looking forward to working with First Nations to approve a plan that has their support and the support of all Yukoners. Collaboration with the First Nations and all Yukoners is absolutely a key commitment of this government, and we know that solutions and decisions reached collaboratively are much more effective than unilateral solutions.

The land use planning process we are advancing for the Peel is built on this platform of collaboration, on a platform of community input and on a platform of doing what is best for all Yukoners. The Supreme Court of Canada decision provided us the opportunity to reset the course on land use planning and we are going to fully seize that opportunity.

We have heard from the public and stakeholders that land use planning must take a balanced approach, enabling economic development on the one hand, while responding to the concerns of the stewards of the environment on the other. With this Peel reset, it is satisfying to know that we are now going in the right direction and we are moving there together.

Our government supports the responsible development that delivers local benefits to people and communities of the Yukon. Land use planning is a very critical tool in this endeavour and it's a place where Yukoners, industry and other stakeholders and governments — they can all have a say on how we balance environment stewardship with our efforts to strengthen and to diversify Yukon's economy.

Improving the land use planning process is also a key priority stemming forward from the Yukon Forum. The forum agreed to convene a workshop this spring to carry out a review of land use planning in Yukon and chapter 11 of the final agreement in particular. The workshop will be informed by the Supreme Court judgment, which has allowed us to reset regional planning. Our government recognizes the need to work with all planning stakeholders, and especially the Yukon Land Use Planning Council, to make improvements to the common land use planning process. We are definitely a committed partner in the improvement of land use planning processes to ensure that it works for all parties.

I would like to take this opportunity to reconfirm my government's commitment to implementing final and self-governing agreements. I can hear the words of Chief Joseph as I read about her commitment as well as her mandate. We understand how vital these agreements are and how they offer a much-needed pathway toward collaborative nation building, environmental protection, sustainable economic growth and most importantly, reconciliation. We are committed to improving the land use planning chapter of the final agreements and approving a Peel land use plan with First Nations and we look forward to advancing a new chapter of

Yukon history together with Yukoners and with Yukon First Nations — one that's based upon reconciliation, as we mentioned, collaboration and, of course, trust as well.

It's an honour to serve Yukon in this Legislative Assembly. The thing that sets us apart from other jurisdictions is our modern treaties and our ability to use YESAA, the acts that are given and federally constituted acts of the UFA, the *Umbrella Final Agreement*. I have seen, in my community in Dawson, the pursuits of these chapters increase the benefits of society in general, not just of First Nation citizens but of all citizens. Again, for us to have an opportunity now — all parties in the Legislative Assembly — to say that it's time to turn a page, and to look toward finishing the land use planning process, and to move on, Dawson City being the next obvious choice in that planning process, and to make sure that as we do move forward, we move forward together.

This is the most important piece. I have been beaten up by the Leader of the Third Party as far as agreeing to the concept in principle. What I mean by that is — I respect the democratic process, Mr. Speaker. If you set up a commission and you set that commission up to do the good work, to establish some forward progression in these chapters and to actually get the land use process going, you have to make sure you do that in a process where everybody is working together and the individuals who are going to be on these land use planning councils and commissions have the ability to forward these important initiatives. I think that is the most important piece.

When you have committees and councils that are made up of representation from different governments, it is really important to have great dialogue and great trust and rapport with these governments to make sure that, as we move forward, the individuals who are going to be picked for these commissions are not strangers — they are not strangers in their approach and they are not strangers in their beliefs.

I really believe — this is a really important point before I sit — that the conversations that happen in the Yukon Forum foster those relationships so that a trust is built. When a trust is built, the democratic process has such a better conduit to move forward on. I'm really proud of the work done by the government, by the ministers, by the chiefs, the councillors and the public servants in all governments in those Yukon forums.

We started with a process of trying to get some easy wins — have some conversations on some easy topics. I want to give that shout-out and that credit to Grand Chief Johnston for his wisdom to coordinate that for our first year in the forum. As we get into more complicated conversations and as we get into some issues that have been plaguing the Yukon for years — for generations, one might say — it is so important that we hit these conversations with trust, with respect and with rapport. I really believe the Yukon Forum is doing that.

To be able to see the conversations before we sit down — it's great to see everybody getting back together in the room and getting caught up on what everybody is involved with on a personal level, and to have to sit there with the Grand Chief and to take some time to get everybody in their seats because

there is so much dialogue going on and there is so much camaraderie — that is such an important piece. It might sound like a small piece but, as we put people together for commissions, as we put people together for councils, as we move forward — pushing the boundaries of modern treaties — that is such an important piece. It is such an important piece to make sure that, as we do it, we're all coming at it — as much as we possibly can — from a united front and making sure that our decisions are affecting all Yukoners.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the members from the two opposition parties for their comments. I want to thank, of course, the Member for Mayo-Tatchun for his motion here today. If you have an opportunity to pick his brain again on the story of his trip through the Peel, it's a good one, if you have that opportunity.

With that, I hope to pass this motion unanimously.

Ms. White: I thank my colleagues. If this is the last time that I have the opportunity to talk about the Peel watershed, then I am going to take this opportunity.

I want to acknowledge that we have guests in the gallery. Bobby, I don't know your last name for sure, so I will just leave it at that. It's lovely to have them here.

There have been days and days when we have been in this Assembly and there have been hundreds of people in the gallery. On my very first day of work in this Assembly, I had to learn how to talk over the beat of drums outside because of the hundreds of people who rallied. Every day that we started the 33rd Legislative Assembly, and that we ended, there were hundreds of people outside this gallery because of the importance of the Peel watershed.

It was hard. The Premier is going to agree that it was hard, but the NDP never wavered. In the 2011 election campaign, my colleague for Whitehorse Centre said that we would accept the final recommended plan as it was written. We never wavered from that; we never did.

I was trying to figure out how many pages we spoke for in the 33rd — how many questions we asked about the Peel. I can go through the books. We asked a lot.

In 2012, it was suggested by the then-government that, if we hadn't been, it didn't count. So in July 2012, my colleague and I were supposed to paddle — just in case anyone wants to know, we don't have the skills to paddle. The Wind River was very high and the decision was made that, if a third of the caucus was to be swept out and have to be helicopter-rescued, it would be inappropriate, but we went anyway. We flew in to McClusky Lake. I can also tell you that there's a stream that doesn't have a name between McClusky Lake and the Wind River. I have dubbed it "Dry Mouth Creek" because the sound of it caused me so much anxiety that I couldn't actually eat anything. I couldn't chew crackers, because I just didn't have enough saliva to process them. So "Dry Mouth Creek" is what I call that section.

We ended up going where that creek meets the Wind River. There are rocks in my office, if anyone wants to see them. When we came back from that trip, I gifted everyone in my office a photo, which I can still look at on my iPad, and

rocks from the area. The Member for Mayo-Tatchun talked about the Cat road. This is one of the reasons why we talk about intensity of use and the importance of protecting a space like the Peel. I hiked in the summertime on that Cat road. You could still see it. You could easily see the scars. They were still there. It wasn't grown back. So when we talk about the intensity of use and the importance of protecting space, it's also understanding that those roads are still there in that area.

In 2012, we went in. I don't think that someone has to go into the Peel watershed area to be able to talk about its importance. I have said over and over again that I believe the importance of the Peel watershed isn't just a Yukon issue or a Canadian issue; I actually think it's a world issue. I really thought that the people who had opinions in Düsseldorf — that was important. The Premier will understand why I referenced that because, at the time, the then-Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources told us that those opinions didn't count because they weren't from the territory.

In 2012, I can remember — and the Premier will remember — we were invited by Peel elders to go to Cache Creek on the Dempster Highway to hear stories. I think it was 2012 or 2013 — one of those two years. It was a beautiful day. It was a little bit cold, so it was earlier in the year. There were maybe little bits of snow left on the ground, and we got to hear stories. There are three members in this Assembly right now who listened to the stories, because we went and I appreciate that.

We got to hear the stories about why the Peel was important. We got to hear about growing up on the Peel. We got to hear about the land. They were great stories. I was told at that point in time by someone who was then chief and is a chief again — he said that First Nation people were patient and they were just waiting and that they would react when they were finally able to and, true to his word, it happened.

There are all sorts of things. We can talk about the changing of technology. I have used this reference before. When I was 21 and I went to Paris, I carried 80 CDs and they weighed 4,000 pounds, and now I have an iPod. We can even talk about my phone, where I have connection to more than 80 CDs and it weighs less than a wallet. Technology will change and that is what we said when we were originally having these debates and conversations.

There is all this potential. Like many, I went to meetings: the ones at the Gold Rush; there was a really big one at the High Country Inn — and we have leadership now that has changed within the two environmental organizations that supported the First Nations, but they have stayed true to what the efforts were and what the desire was. That is really important and it is fascinating, because some members in this Chamber don't know how loud drums can be outside these walls, but I can tell you that, at the beginning, when you were green and you weren't really sure what was going on, it was really hard to get over that, to talk. I used to sit in the back row, so I was even closer to the drums. If you can imagine that, on your first day of work, there were hundreds of people in the gallery and there were hundreds of people outside, and

that happened for five years. There were people who were rallying here.

I appreciate that we brought this motion forward, because I think it is important. I am happy to say, of course, that we 100 percent support this. I appreciate where government is coming from on this, but one of the things that I think bears mentioning — and I have talked about it in Environment debate before — is the woodland caribou, and particularly the boreal population that actually touches into the Peel area. There was a recovery strategy for the woodland caribou boreal population that was released in 2012. There are boreal caribou in the Jackfish area. One of the things I want to know is, when the consultation happens on the plan, is the government thinking about proposing any boundary modifications?

They could be things, for example, including changes to allow greater mining access, or — in the case of the boreal caribou at Jackfish area — increases to protected areas to help support species at risk. That is one of the things I want to know, and we don't have to have that conversation now, but I look forward to being told about it and I can ask in Environment debate.

One of the other things is that I appreciate that the Premier said that conversations have been happening with First Nations and getting ready, so I just want to know when the intended consultation period is going to start and how long it is expected to go for and, more than that, when we get to have the party at the end of that one, when it has been accepted and the plan is in place.

I appreciate what the Premier said about land use planning and I appreciate what the Member for Whitehorse Centre said, that there was the expectation when we, as Yukon government, signed the final agreements with First Nations — that we made the commitment to eight land use plans. Some of the conflict we still see in the territory today is because we don't have land use plans. The land use plan was supposed to identify what could be developed, what could be industrialized and what needed to be protected, but because we haven't — and not “we” in this room, but “we” as government members and those before us — done that work.

It is not easy. When the Member for Whitehorse Centre talked about how, at one point, when the Peel Watershed Planning Commission came forward and everybody was angry — it almost sounds like success, because no one was winning. No one felt like their side was at a disadvantage compared to the other, because everyone was unhappy.

I look forward to having the conversation about future land use plans and when those happen but, more than anything, I think that even having the six members in the gallery right now and those who were here before and left is a testament because, over the years, there have been hundreds of people who have sat in those seats because of this issue.

I just wanted to make sure I had an opportunity to talk about my love of the area, but even if I never had a chance to go, it wouldn't have been diminished, because I think that if there is someone in Hong Kong who can imagine wild spaces and that wild space will exist, how honoured I would be to know that I was part of keeping that wild space wild.

I thank my colleagues for the opportunity to talk. I thank the Member for Mayo-Tatchun for bringing it forward. I look forward to government making the announcement of when that consultation will happen and, more than that, I look forward to when that final recommended plan is adopted.

Speaker: I can't forgo this serendipitous opportunity to indicate that my grandfather's family on my mom's side was from Düsseldorf, so there you go.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Before I begin, I want to thank the members from the Third Party. I think today gave an opportunity for the Leader of the Third Party to identify the activity that she undertook and her passion toward this important issue, and I also appreciate the comments from the Member for Takhini-Kopper King, touching upon the work and the efforts that were put in place. As a Yukoner I just want to thank them for the work that they did undertake over those years. Having been an individual who has taken on some issues in different political platforms and forums that were not at times that popular, I always appreciate anybody's work at that time. I know it was probably a lonely road in here, as you supported that. I want to thank the individuals across the way for that.

I want to thank the Member for Mayo-Tatchun for bringing Motion No. 267 forward for debate in the Yukon Legislative Assembly. I am happy to have the opportunity to speak to the work that we're doing to deliver on yet another one of our commitments to Yukoners.

The Premier has provided direction through my mandate letter to work with the Minister of Justice and the Minister of Environment and to collaborate with First Nations on steps toward accepting the final report of the original Peel Watershed Planning Commission. We know Yukoners have much invested in the Peel watershed. We heard it on doorsteps throughout our campaign, and daily we see the bumper stickers on peoples' vehicles, and we are all aware of the legal proceedings that resulted when the previous government made the decision to approve a substantially different plan in 2014.

I think it's important to also touch on that, as much as it might come as a shock to some, when you go back and hear how Yukoners reflect on their concerns or disenchantment with the process that was underway, not only is it because of the many amazing attributes of the Peel, but it was the process for many as I walked up.

Whether it was the constituents I represent who live on Ponderosa or Grove, what you heard on the doorstep was their concern for a process that was so immense — the personal commitment that people made to the process for Yukoners of all backgrounds — to put into a process and then in turn to see the results. When we were speaking to Yukoners during the last election, certainly as it is today, it was then front and centre.

The court battle has cost Yukoners — I think it is important to put it into Hansard here, because those numbers are now coming in: for external legal costs, \$550,000 in the last three years, and \$105,000, which was the Supreme

Court's direction that the Government of Yukon pay some of the legal costs of the First Nation governments that were involved. That total of \$650,000 is the legacy that has been left here. If we want to talk about the taxpayer, that is the legacy that has certainly been left for Yukoners as well.

The *Final Recommended Peel Watershed Regional Land Use Plan* put forth in July 2011 by the Peel Watershed Planning Commission designated 80 percent of the region as a conservation area with no development allowed and 20 percent as an integrated management area with limited management development that would be allowed. Between July 2011 and January 2014, the government under the Yukon Party took it upon themselves to make changes so significant that this spiralled into legal battles that we have just touched upon and which were touched upon by my colleague, the Member for Mayo-Tatchun. The final result of this was the Supreme Court of Canada decision, which instructed the parties to return to the stage in the process that will initiate government consultation with affected Yukon First Nations and communities.

We are looking forward to working with our First Nation partners through this process. It was touched upon by the Member for Whitehorse Centre. There was a sense that I got when she touched upon: Get at it. I have to say that, on January 29, the Premier, the member from Old Crow and I, along with representatives from the Yukon government, travelled to Dawson to meet with leaders of all four of our First Nation partners. Representatives included: Chief Charlie of Vuntut Gwitchin, Chief Joseph of Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in, Chief Mervyn of the First Nation of Na Cho Nyäk Dun and the Deputy Grand Chief Peterson from the Gwich'in Tribal Council. At that point, we identified a timeline. We identified each party's commitments. We talked about the scope of work that had to be done. We then disseminated the short-term actions and the long-term actions and people committed to that. I just want to clarify for the Legislative Assembly, as was stated by the Leader of the Third Party: Come on; get on with it. Once again, this is about respecting the individuals who are at the table together. We have committed as a group — collectively — to a timeline, commitments and next steps. That is underway — nobody has veered from that. I will leave it at that.

For those who are closely watching this, I can state that we are moving at the pace that was agreed upon, and we are meeting the objectives that we have also agreed upon as a group. We are moving at the pace that was agreed upon and we are meeting the objectives that we have also agreed upon as a group. So we're moving forward in the appropriate manner.

We made the commitment at the meeting to establish a respectful and collaborative consultation process, as required by the *Umbrella Final Agreement* and the judgment by the Supreme Court of Canada. In addition, we have committed to establishing a senior liaison committee, which will guide the process through consultation, approval and implementation. This committee has been established and we anticipate the

community consultation, as stated by the Premier, would begin this summer.

One of our government's key goals is to build thriving Yukon communities, recognizing local needs, local interests and, of course, local solutions. To accomplish this, we are expected to work collaboratively with our First Nations for their benefit and for the benefit of all Yukoners. At this point, I am pleased with our continued efforts to comply with the final agreements.

I have heard themes today touched upon from opposition members of concern, really not just for the public dollar or the public purse, but also for industry. I have also heard the Third Party touch upon some of the historic legacies that were left to help build the Yukon economy — factual information about highway builds or mineral projects. In touching upon both groups, I'm saying that we stand for the economy and historically we have done some great things.

I think we have to touch upon what we have brought to this Legislative Assembly just over this Sitting. We have talked about the ATAC road — talk about when the rubber hits the road on that one. We are sitting down, working with our First Nation partners and using the framework that has been identified through the *Umbrella Final Agreement*. I'm always shocked — I always see there is always a bit of off-mic on this one. There seems to be some dissatisfaction, but once again, I think that is what this is about. It's about taking into consideration the values of the parties, looking forward and figuring out you can work together within a framework.

Not only are we committed to ensuring that we get this process in place, but also, in the interim, some subregional work that is being done as well because we are making up for so much time that has gone by without having all of the regional plans in place — so trying to respect people's priorities in each community — which is difficult, whether it's land use or small local area planning that we're trying to do. In the Member for Lake Laberge's riding, we're trying to make sure that things that were left behind that people didn't really want to take on — that planning — that we're taking it on now. Whether it is the Hot Springs Road or Fox Lake or Shallow Bay or what's happening in the Stewart or Southern Lakes — the list goes on and on and on of things that we are also focusing on because they are all really important to many Yukoners as well.

The land use planning process is one of the key ways that Yukoners, industry and other stakeholders and governments can all have a say in how we balance environmental stewardship with our efforts to strengthen and diversify the Yukon's economy. This is why we're committed to working together to finalize the land use plan for the Peel watershed.

It is especially satisfying to know that we are now going in the right direction because, of course, we're going there together. This is how the land use planning process was intended to be under the final agreements. We are supposed to make and implement these decisions together. I'm confident that this process can be collaborative, open and in line with the objectives set out by the final agreements. We are committed to accepting a plan that reflects the vision and

intent of the Peel Watershed Planning Commission's final recommended plan.

The Supreme Court of Canada's decision closed a chapter of Yukon's history that was based on litigation. The court decision opened the door to greater collaboration and a dialogue on the implementation of final agreements. It has also provided us with the opportunity to reset the course and make progress on regional land use planning in other areas where plans have not yet been completed.

Now, together, we are beginning a new chapter based on reconciliation, collaboration and dialogue. We believe that the final and self-government agreements are instruments for collaborative nation building, environmental protection, sustainable economic growth and, most importantly, reconciliation.

The Peel decision and next steps were also discussed during the December forum, as was touched upon by the Premier. Under the joint priorities of the Yukon Forum, we are committed to working collaboratively and respectfully with First Nations to implement the final and self-government agreements, including chapter 11 on land use planning. The forum agreed to convene a workshop to carry out a review of the land use planning in Yukon and chapter 11 of the final agreements in particular.

Some of the discussion topics for that workshop include the establishment of priority areas for regional planning, funding opportunities and challenges. The discussions will also include how the lessons learned from previous regional land planning processes can be applied to the chapter 11 process.

I'm happy to report that we're working with our First Nation planning partners and the Yukon Land Use Planning Council to re-establish the Dawson regional land use planning process as well. This work involves the development of new terms of reference to guide the Dawson commission and to prepare for a successful planning outcome. I expect that a new Dawson Regional Planning Commission will be appointed within the next sixth months. We are also continuing to collaborate with First Nations on local area planning in rural communities and other planning initiatives to promote orderly development and to resolve competing land uses.

At this time, I just want to thank the individuals at Energy, Mines and Resources who have been working diligently to prepare for this process as well as many of the other processes that we have touched on today. This is a very robust portfolio of activity that is underway. I would like to thank the teams that are there in Energy, Mines and Resources for all of their work, support and preparation that they do so that my colleagues and I have the best possible information at our fingertips and are properly prepared for the discussions that we have with our important partners.

Our government recognizes the need to work with its planning partners and the Yukon Land Use Planning Council to make improvements to the common land use planning process to ensure successful outcomes. Land use planning is an incredibly important part of how we collectively manage land and ensure our communities thrive. All governments are

committed to building on chapter 11 to ensure it is implemented in the spirit and intent of the final agreements.

I think Yukoners support the direction we are going on the Peel and on our First Nation relationship approach. We are focused on consultation, not litigation. We want to see the motion come to a vote today. Yukoners deserve to know where their political parties stand on this important issue.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Once again, I want to thank the Member for Mayo-Tatchun for bringing this important issue to the Assembly today.

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

Does any other member wish to be heard on Motion No. 267?

Mr. Hutton: I would like to thank my colleagues on this side of the House, the members opposite and especially the members of the Third Party for their passionate and eloquent remarks on the Peel.

I have already spoken about the importance of the Peel watershed, especially for future generations. As I said, the beauty of this landscape cannot be overstated, but the ugliness of the previous government's approach also can't be overstated.

The Member for Whitehorse Centre mentioned 2004 to 2016 — 12 years of the Yukon Party government. It's truly a shame how much time and money has been wasted around the Peel watershed plan. Years and years of consultation where Yukoners, stakeholders and others participated in the process in good faith in the hopes of finding a mutually agreeable plan for the area — years that were wasted when the Yukon Party government completely disregarded the input of Yukoners.

Many elders in my community supported the plan from the beginning and believed they would see the plan implemented. Unfortunately, many of these elders are no longer with us and they have gone to their final resting place not knowing what happened during this process, and that truly does make my heart heavy. Fortunately some are still with us, like Jimmy Johnny, and I would like to thank him again for being a steadfast voice for the Peel watershed. Mahsi' cho to all the elders who spoke on behalf of protecting the Peel watershed. I would also like to thank the Protect the Peel supporters and all the organizations that have been steadfast over these last 12 years in pursuing this goal of protecting the Peel watershed. Their perseverance over all these years is inspiring and commendable.

In terms of money, the Yukon Party government spent over \$500,000 fighting against Yukoners over the Peel. \$650,000 would have been much better spent on implementing the final plan rather than trying to convince Yukoners that their plan wasn't right. The Yukon Party caucus has admitted, however reluctantly, that mistakes were made. The highest court in the land has confirmed that. Conspicuous silence during the 2011 election, interference with the work of public servants, unilateral rewriting of the plan at the eleventh hour, hiding numbers, litigation over consultation — there

were many mistakes made. We hope the mistakes around the Peel land use plan are all in the past now. Our Liberal government is proud to be moving on to the next chapter in this important story.

There is still much work that needs to be done as we respectfully re-engage with the governments of the First Nations of Na Cho Nyäk Dun, Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in, Vuntut Gwitchin and the Gwich'in Tribal Council, as well as all stakeholders in communities, to develop this plan to guide the future use and development of the Peel watershed. We really do look forward to conducting this important work.

Speaker: Are you prepared for the question?

Some Hon. Members: Division.

Division

Speaker: Division has been called.

Bells

Speaker: Mr. Clerk, please poll the House.

Hon. Mr. Silver: Agree.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Agree.

Hon. Ms. Dendys: Agree.

Mr. Gallina: Agree.

Mr. Adel: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Agree.

Mr. Hutton: Agree.

Mr. Hassard: Agree.

Mr. Kent: Agree.

Mr. Cathers: Agree.

Ms. McLeod: Agree.

Mr. Istchenko: Agree.

Ms. Hanson: Agree.

Ms. White: Agree.

Clerk: Mr. Speaker, the results are 16 yea, nil nay.

Speaker: The yeas have it. I declare the motion carried.
Motion No. 267 agreed to

Motion No. 25

Clerk: Motion No. 25, standing in the name of Mr. Gallina.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to research, develop and implement a Yukon early childhood strategy (childcare, development and education), in consultation with early childhood education and health care professionals, parents and First Nation governments, in order to improve developmental and educational outcomes.

Mr. Gallina: I am pleased to introduce and speak to Motion No. 25 in the House today. As the MLA for Porter Creek Centre, I look to bring forward issues of importance to

constituents and a reoccurring issue is that of the future of our children.

As a father of four, I can say many things about children, but I think we can all agree: Children are our future, it takes a village to raise a child and children are our best investment.

Early learning and childcare is a long-standing focus of government and non-government agencies throughout the territory, the country and around the world. New approaches and strategies to ensure children are getting the best start possible are constantly being theorized, researched and put into programming.

In Yukon, programming identified by an early learning childcare framework is targeted at children from birth to 12 years of age. This programming is offered through the Department of Health and Social Services and the Department of Education, as well as through organizations such as the Child Development Centre, and through a variety of non-government organizations, businesses and organizations outside of the Yukon government.

A Yukon early childhood strategy will see a coordinated approach to integrate all areas of health and well-being for Yukon's children. This Liberal government is committed to not working in silos. We are committed to taking a coordinated, one-government approach to developing the strategy. The strategy has been identified as a commitment by the government and was part of our election platform because of its importance to improving outcomes for Yukon children and families.

I would like to share a story that a Porter Creek Centre constituent recently shared with me that speaks directly to the importance of planning for early childhood services and the impacts of efficient program delivery. This constituent's child was attending a preschool program, and the teacher was concerned because the child was nonverbal and experiencing difficulties interacting with other children. When the parents were told this, they were concerned and, being new to the community, they asked the teacher for suggestions for getting their child evaluated. The preschool teacher suggested that they contact the Child Development Centre in Whitehorse and, after a brief time on the waiting list, the child underwent hearing, speech, behavioural and other developmental tests. After a comprehensive evaluation, it was determined that the child was verbally delayed and would require services in order to meet the developmental benchmarks for the child's age in order to prepare for elementary school. The child, who was now three years old, began to be seen by Child Development Centre specialists regularly. Although they were concerned, the parents were assured by the Child Development Centre staff that the child was receiving the services needed through this crucial time of development. The family continued to access programming and services and, when the time came for this child to begin kindergarten, the child was speaking at an age-appropriate level and was able to interact with peers and adults in the school, the community and was happy to start school.

This story has a happy ending and is just one example of a Yukon child's future that has been made brighter because of

access to early childhood services. The outcomes for this child and for the family would have been very different if not for their ability to access these services. I have shared this story because the services and programming that are planned for and provided to Yukoners matter. They matter to individuals, they matter to families and they matter to our children.

Mr. Speaker, it is crucial that the development of an early childhood strategy is well thought out, that it includes input from stakeholders — operators, staff, families and First Nations — and that is what this Liberal government has undertaken. The Yukon government has begun to seek input from experts and program officials in the areas of health, education, family services and a variety of other social areas.

Departmental staff have engaged with a number of First Nation governments and stakeholder groups in a first phase of engagement, which concluded in October 2017. All First Nation governments and six early childhood stakeholder groups were contacted for the purpose of seeking input regarding the priorities of early learning and childcare. Staff attended engagement sessions on the traditional territory of some of Yukon First Nation governments, and submissions were received by e-mail and mail. As well, stakeholder groups, representing parents, operators and educators have met with departmental staff.

Participants have begun to identify several common priorities, including increasing quality, accessibility, affordability, inclusivity and flexibility to early childhood programs and services. Participants have expressed an interest in keeping programs and services as community-centered as possible, as they are essential components to ensure staff retention and maximize children's developmental abilities.

The development of a culturally and developmentally appropriate curriculum that is linguistically inclusive and sensitive to the needs of individual communities was a common priority of many of the First Nation governments and stakeholder groups that have been met with.

In Yukon, many early childhood educators encounter challenges in accessing training opportunities for professional development. Through a coordinated strategy, Yukon will invest in educational and professional development of early learning educators. These front-line workers are instrumental to the development of the minds, hearts and bodies of our children.

Along with training concerns, this government has worked to address wage and retention issues. Currently, Yukon is one of the few Canadian jurisdictions without an early learning and childcare curriculum. This can result in inconsistent outcomes for children as they transition into the primary education system. Investments in a culturally appropriate childcare curriculum promote consistent, positive outcomes for children that will prepare them for a lifelong journey with education.

Mental health of young children is another component of this strategy. We know the incredible impacts that care and quality of care have on children as their brains rapidly develop to understand the world around them. Through this strategy, we will seek to offer more training opportunities to caregivers

and early learning workers to better identify attachment issues, mental health issues and to strive to create a learning environment better able to adapt to a child's unique needs. Improving mental health supports in the territory is a priority for this government and this extends to early childhood.

Inclusive care opportunities is another important factor to this strategy, ensuring gaps are closed for all young learners and allowing a child's support system to provide the appropriate services at the right time — giving them the best start possible. To support this work, it is important that early childcare providers have the resources they need to buy the adequate learning resources.

As we look to improve outcomes for Yukon children, it is important that we seek to be innovative. As a smaller jurisdiction, Yukon has the ability to implement new practices that make sense for Yukoners as a way of ensuring that this strategy is as impactful for children, families and communities as possible

The work for a Yukon-specific early childhood strategy has begun, and I commend my colleagues, the Minister of Health and Social Services and the Minister of Education, for their dedication to this initiative and to Yukon's children. I look forward to the continued work on a strategy that supports healthier children and healthier families and improves the developmental and educational outcomes for children in our territory.

Ms. McLeod: I would like to thank the Member for Porter Creek Centre for bringing this motion forward today. Generally, I believe that we have a duty in the House to support initiatives that would promote the well-being of Yukoners. Of course, we agree that there is no better way to promote the well-being of people than to ensure that they are given the best possible start in life.

The motion urges the government to research, develop and implement a Yukon early childhood strategy that would include aspects of childcare, development and education, although the member opposite has just advised us that this work is already underway. That's great. It's good we have an opportunity to talk about it now.

I think there is a lot of work to do in this regard. I think the motion is well intended. I think it's good to ensure that we bring together the groups mentioned in the motion to discuss these issues. Governments, parents, and education and health professionals working together to find ways to ensure that childcare, development and education have the best interests of our children front and centre is, of course, important.

I believe we do see a bit of this already in many early childhood services and initiatives here in the Yukon. As I mentioned, there is still work to do to ensure services are provided throughout the territory in a consistent manner that would ensure that they are accessible in all communities. We are fortunate in the Yukon to have a wide range of private sector organizations dedicated to early childhood education, development and childcare. Each of these aspects can be found in the mantras of many local organizations, and they have excelled in the delivery of programming for many years.

The idea of an early childhood strategy is not new. Because there is not a government-researched and -developed strategy does not mean that ideas are not already being implemented in the community. Organizations that have been working toward the common goals of education and development have been doing a wonderful job by providing and fine-tuning the delivery of those services by collaborating with caregivers, educators, health care professionals, parents and all levels of government.

The link that may be missing is that there is no common strategy that all organizations can access, implement and follow if they wish. This is where government action can be beneficial. Here in Whitehorse, families benefit greatly from the services provided through the Child Development Centre, and this is an example of an organization that provides the ultimate care and service in childcare, early childhood development and education. However, because the organization is specialized and focuses mainly on different developmental challenges and aspects, it does not offer these services to all children unless a referral is made for a child who requires certain specialized services.

There is a range of programming that is delivered through daycare centres and day homes throughout the territory. It would be wonderful for operators to be able to build on this programming and deliver a more succinct and strategic plan with the children they care for.

The implementation of an early childhood strategy within government would ensure or could ensure that children across the territory have better access to the services that are readily available to families in Whitehorse. It would likely ensure that there are consistent guidelines followed across registered daycares and day homes.

I would like to see more training opportunities being offered to caregivers to allow them to provide the best possible care in education to children and to ensure consistency across businesses and organizations.

Now, with that, I would like to thank the Member for Porter Creek Centre for bringing forward the motion for debate today. As I mentioned, I think it's important to bring together groups referenced in the motion. However, as written, the motion unfortunately does leave out a couple of important groups and isn't inclusive of different types of families as a result — and the first being that of municipal governments.

As members know, especially in our communities, our municipal governments can and do play an important role in supporting our families and our children, and that can range from community events to recreational after-school activities. All of these initiatives play an important role in how our children learn and how our children develop. I think it's important to include references to them as partners who will be worked with on this initiative.

The second group that I think is unfortunately left out of the motion, as currently worded, is caregivers. Right now, the motion identifies parents, which is absolutely important. Any discussion about our children ideally involves the parents but, as you know, Mr. Speaker, not all family units are the same.

There are children being raised by grandparents, there are children being raised by aunts and uncles, and the list goes on. I don't think the motion was worded to intentionally exclude those families or those children from the discussion. That is not what we are saying. We are saying that, as worded, it implies that those groups won't be part of the discussion.

I am going to propose a friendly amendment to ensure that we can capture the groups I have mentioned above. I think this new wording will help to ensure that all stakeholders and groups are included in these discussions going forward, and I think that is a goal that we should all support.

I would like to propose the following amendment.

Amendment proposed

Ms. McLeod: I move:

THAT Motion No. 25 be amended by inserting the words "caregivers, municipal governments" after the word "parents".

Speaker: It has been moved by the Member for Watson Lake:

THAT Motion No. 25 be amended by inserting the words "caregivers, municipal governments" after the word "parents".

I have reviewed the proposed amendment to Motion No. 25 with Mr. Clerk and can advise that the proposed amendment is procedurally in order. As a result, the new motion with the proposed amendment would read as follows:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to research, develop and implement a Yukon early childhood strategy (childcare, development and education), in consultation with early childhood education and health care professionals, parents, caregivers, municipal governments and First Nation governments, in order to improve developmental and educational outcomes.

Ms. McLeod: I would just like to take a few minutes to talk about the motion in the context of this amendment and the importance behind the proposed changes. As I mentioned, I don't believe that these bodies were left out intentionally by the member, and I think we all want to be clear on that. I think that the amendment does expand on the spirit of the motion, which is: Let's work with everyone involved to support our children.

The idea of a strategy to encompass childcare, development and education is important to the whole of Yukon. In order for government to ensure that the whole of Yukon has the opportunity to take part in consultations and planning, there are groups aside from those listed that must be included. The term "caregivers" is simply an all-encompassing term, and this could include guardians. It could include foster parents, grandparents, godparents or whatever the family situation may be. The term itself will extensively cover a number of people who were left out of the original motion.

Also as discussed, there was no mention of municipal governments in the original motion. Without the mention of municipal governments, the motion ostensibly limits the reach

to Yukon communities. Even here in Whitehorse, the City of Whitehorse plays an important role in the development and care of our children. Any family that utilizes the services at the Canada Games Centre can attest to that.

As I said, the motion is good. We support it, but we just want to address the issues that I have mentioned above, and I think these additions improve the motion. I don't think they take away from the spirit or intent of it. They are certainly brought forward as friendly amendments, and I hope the members of the House can support them.

In the member's earlier remarks, he did reference a very narrow scope of persons whom they talked to in the development of the work that they have done so far, which makes it even more important for us to expand the scope.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, by ensuring that the government reaches out to all groups involved with early childhood education, there will be no shortage of knowledge and input to make this strategy a success and something that will work for Yukoners.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I thank the member opposite for the amendment as proposed. I think that when the list was originally given and with the original wording, we weren't trying to be exhaustive. I think this adds to the motion and appreciate that it was brought forward. I think it is always important that we are engaging with our communities and trying to make sure that we are reaching out to those people who are affected and have an important voice on this issue.

I appreciate the amendment as it has come forward, and I believe we are supportive of it.

Amendment to Motion No. 25 agreed to

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

Ms. Hanson: I am pleased to rise to speak to the motion presented today by the Member for Porter Creek Centre. I don't think that it should come as a surprise to anybody that early childhood strategies, childcare development and education — it is something that the NDP holds as a vital building block for all Yukon children, families and communities.

We have been encouraging the government to develop a strategy for a long time. On the first day of the Sitting, we tabled a motion — and I will just reiterate that because I think it does go a bit further. I reiterate our support for the notion of the importance of childcare in the Yukon. We urged the Yukon at that time to fulfill their stated commitment — as the Member for Porter Creek Centre had said — to a Yukon early childhood strategy, and we asked them to consider amendments to the *Child Care Act* and to its regulations to reflect current knowledge and best practices in early childhood development and to consult and include early childhood and childcare professionals, parents and First Nation governments in planning and implementation.

So we're not that far off, Mr. Speaker. We have said in the past, and will continue to say, that our commitment as

New Democrats is deep and long with respect to childcare. It was the NDP that brought forward the original *Child Care Act* in 1990. I will just reiterate what the *Child Care Act* was to do. It says in the preamble that: "Recognizing that comprehensive child care services are supportive of healthy families, healthy communities and a healthy economy..." The objects of the act were to: foster the development of quality childcare with parental and community involvement; support a range of childcare programming in the Yukon communities; and recognize and support the aspirations of Yukon First Nations to promote and provide culturally appropriate childcare services.

There is a legislative framework for what is being proposed today, and I think it's important that the government acknowledge that it does exist because otherwise it looks like they are not aware of that legislative framework. Nothing so far has indicated that there is that acknowledgement. It is important, as we move forward, in terms of recognizing comprehensive universal childcare services, to recognize how essential they are in the support of healthy families and healthy communities. We have to do that by ensuring that there is quality childcare and a range of childcare throughout the Yukon.

A number of people in this room, Members of this Legislative Assembly, have had children involved in childcare, have served on boards of childcare centres — I certainly have with a not-for-profit childcare centre — and know the challenges of delivering quality childcare to kids and ensuring that staff are adequately compensated for this most important job. It is one of the most important jobs that I think exists.

One of the challenges that we face is that we are not, in this territory, guaranteeing childcare workers that which is reflective of the education, the training and the skills that they have. Every time we lose a childcare worker to a better paying job is one too many. We also have to ensure that whatever childcare system we put in place in the territory has rigorous health and safety and program standards to ensure the safety and protection of our children and the staff caring for them. It is not enough for us to say that we need to look after ensuring that the government-licensed buildings are safe, but it still rankles me that it is April and, last year, when the Auditor General identified that daycare centres had radon in them, we had a notion that we would be getting some agreement that we might look at putting that as a licensee requirement for licensing of daycares where our kids are going to be — we still haven't got that as a condition and it is being worked on someplace in the system.

It is absolutely important that, as we think about a childcare strategy, we think about the whole child and the importance of healthy outdoor activities. It is important that our children are not inside all day. When we talk about the universality of daycares and the universality of access, it is important that when we license daycares, we don't just go by the narrow definition that says they have to have access somewhere at some time to outdoor activities. How many times do we see little kids tethered together in downtown

Whitehorse, walking three or four or five blocks? Where are they when it is -20 degrees? When your kids are little, you had some chance with them to get outside a little bit, but if you have to walk five blocks to someplace to play outside, I question that.

Our communities throughout Yukon need the support of this government to look at creative ways to fund and provide the best daycare possible. Every time a worker in a community must leave that community due to the lack of daycare — whether a community nurse or a teacher or anybody else — that is one too many. It is a hit on our economy because they not only leave, but they take with them their families, their skills and their contributions to that community.

We believe that there needs to be serious consideration when we look at the strategies of all elements. We have got the federal government beginning to look at providing some money over a period of time and so far, our response is to use it to look at this existing system of income support, as opposed to looking at what we really mean by childcare. There are models across this country. We need to be looking at them and we need to be building on them.

One of the challenges that we face is that if we keep building on what we have, we're not going to be innovative and we're not going to be addressing the real needs of kids. We have data in this territory. We have data on the kids in this territory, throughout the territory, and in particular, in Whitehorse — the early childhood development index — that indicates that we are not serving our children well. That has significant implications for long-term educational outcomes.

Research in Quebec was done by Pierre Fortin, who is an economist out of Quebec. He identified that whatever the income level of their families, five year olds who have attended early childhood daycares are less likely to be cognitively or behaviourally vulnerable than those who have not been in licensed care. The reduction in the risk of vulnerability is largest for children from low-income families but still significant for those from middle- to high-income families. Early and intensive attendance at daycare eliminates the cognitive differences between children of low- and middle-income socio-economic status at least until grade 6. In other words, there is no evidence so far that cognitive gains from childcare attendance fade out. Early childhood care attendance significantly reduces the risks of internalizing problems for children of mothers with elevated maternal depressive systems — a frequent occurrence in low-income families.

We're not, in the Legislative Assembly, experts, but we have access in this territory to experts. The *Child Care Act* set up the Child Care Board and it says — and I quote the act: “There is established a board to be known as the Yukon Child Care Board consisting of not less than seven members appointed by the Commissioner...

“The Commissioner... shall appoint the members of the Board from persons nominated by Yukon First Nations, child care groups, licensed child care services and parents.”

“The functions of the board are... to encourage the development and support of child care services which meet the needs of parents and children in the Yukon; ... to make recommendations to the Minister on any matter pertaining to child care; ... to review any policies, programs, services or administrative procedures of government departments in matters pertaining to child care; ... to advise on the planning, development, standards, co-ordination and evaluation of child care services in Yukon...”

It's noticeably absent. The Member for Porter Creek has put forward a motion on behalf of his government that speaks to developing a strategy, but has ignored a key legislated body that should be leading that strategy — an arm's-length body. He has talked about a whole bunch of work that has been done internal to government. Has the Yukon Child Care Board been included in that? I think not.

It's my understanding that, as of 4:00 p.m. this afternoon, they had not. So the Yukon Child Care Board, whose mandate I have just read out, hasn't been involved in any of this discussion. In light of that, I would like to propose an amendment to this motion brought forward by the Member for Porter Creek Centre. The amendment would be quite simple.

Amendment proposed

Ms. Hanson: I move:

THAT Motion No. 25 be amended by inserting after “Government of Yukon”, “direct the Yukon Child Care Board to”, and after the word “develop”, replace “and implement” with “make recommendations to the government on a”.

Speaker: We have a proposed amendment to the motion as amended.

I have had an opportunity to review the proposed amendment with Mr. Clerk and can advise that it is procedurally in order, with proposed grammatical and stylistic changes, which I will tell you all about right now. You are all waiting with bated breath, I'm sure.

It has been moved by the Member for Whitehorse Centre:

THAT Motion No. 25, as amended, be amended by inserting after “Government of Yukon” the words “to direct the Yukon Child Care Board”; and replace “and implement” with the words “make recommendations to the government on”.

I believe that the motion as amended would read as follows:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to direct the Yukon Child Care Board to research, develop and make recommendations to the government on a Yukon early childhood strategy (childcare, development and education), in consultation with early childhood education and health care professionals, parents, caregivers, municipal governments and First Nation governments, in order to improve developmental and educational outcomes.

Leader of the Third Party, on the amendment.

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Speaker: Does the Government House Leader have a request?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Perhaps it is inappropriate procedurally, but I'm wondering, Mr. Speaker, if we could have a few moments to have a conversation about this — whether that would be in the form of a break or some version of that. I'm sure the Leader of the Third Party could also make such a request.

Speaker: Is it the wish of the House to recess for 10 minutes?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

Speaker: The House will recess for 10 minutes.

Recess

Speaker: Order, please.

Ms. Hanson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the other members of the Legislative Assembly for their indulgence in terms of the opportunity to have a conversation with members from the government side.

I would like to seek the unanimous consent of the House to withdraw the proposed amendment to the motion as amended.

Unanimous consent re withdrawal of proposed amendment to Motion No. 25, as amended

Speaker: Do we have unanimous consent for the Leader of the Third Party's request?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

Speaker: Unanimous consent has been granted.

The proposed amendment to Motion No. 25, as amended, is withdrawn.

Amendment withdrawn

Speaker: We are returning to Motion No. 25 as amended.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Mr. Speaker, I rise today in the House to speak about this motion. I would like to thank my colleague, the MLA for Porter Creek Centre, for his motion. As a father of four young girls, this is a topic of great interest to him and the Gallina girls and our government as a whole.

We have had an opportunity, following the presentation by the Leader of the Third Party, to have some discussions with respect to amending the motion that is on the floor, as amended. I am suggesting yet a further amendment, and I will just get right to that and we can make comments with respect to that in a moment.

Amendment proposed

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I move:

THAT Motion No. 25, as amended, be amended by adding the following after the word "outcomes": "and urges the government to engage with the Yukon Child Care Board pursuant to their functions set out in section 4(4) of the Yukon *Child Care Act*."

Speaker: There is a proposed amendment to the motion as amended.

It has been moved by the Member for Riverdale South:

THAT Motion No. 25, as amended, be amended by adding the following after the word "outcomes": "and urges the government to engage with the Yukon Child Care Board pursuant to their functions set out in section 4(4) of the Yukon *Child Care Act*."

I have had an opportunity to confer with Mr. Clerk and advise that the proposed amendment is procedurally in order. Therefore, the amended amendment would read as follows:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to research, develop and implement a Yukon early childhood strategy (childcare, development and education), in consultation with early childhood education and health care professionals, parents, caregivers, municipal governments and First Nation governments, in order to improve developmental and educational outcomes and urges the government to engage with the Yukon Child Care Board pursuant to their functions set out in section 4(4) of the Yukon *Child Care Act*.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I'm pleased to put forward this amendment today after having conversations with other Members of the Legislative Assembly and members of the opposition — particularly the Third Party — with respect to the ability to add a concern or express a concern now in this motion that was expressed by them with respect to the concept of recognizing the role of the Yukon Child Care Board. Clearly, that was something already in the mind of the Member for Porter Creek Centre when he brought this motion in. We had several discussions about the broadness of the intended motion. What we have done here with respect to this amendment is to add some specifics, and that is certainly agreeable to us.

The Yukon Child Care Board plays an important role. There are other boards, other groups and other professionals who deal with Yukon childcare, early childhood education, training of early childhood educators, services provided through Health and Social Services, pre-kindergarten programs, a number of them. We intend — and the Member for Porter Creek Centre intends — to have as broad consultation and work as possible.

My amendment now recognizes that the Yukon Child Care Board has a specific function set out under the legislation, which I was certainly aware of, but the amendment now will provide some opportunity and specifics with respect to engaging the Child Care Board. Their functions are set out in section 4(4) of the Yukon *Child Care Act*, and they are a critical component with respect to the opportunity to have access to their expertise and to their work. They certainly have a function under that legislation, as well, for the purposes of advising the minister — and in this case, the government — on all aspects of childcare.

Some of our conversations involved the idea of whether or not childcare was broad enough. We have been clear here in this Legislature and in our discussions with our colleagues

that as broad an engagement as possible is what we're seeking. We have talked in the past about imaginative and creative ideas, responses and, hopefully, outcomes with respect to how we can best deal with our most precious commodity here in the territory — children, and how we can best prepare them in the early years. What we know from research is that between zero and the age of three — in other research, it is between zero and five years of age — children who have vast experiences, who have a variety of experiences, who have access to play and who have the opportunity to develop and engage early become better learners as they go through life.

As a result, I am looking forward to speaking to the motion further, but our submission here is that we properly will add these words so that the full scope of what we intend in this motion is visible, not only to the Members of this Legislative Assembly, but to the general public, to the Yukon public and to those professionals who work in the area of childcare.

Ms. Hanson: I just want to thank the minister for her words and for the proposed amendment. I think it does go a long way. Structurally, I think, the whole motion now is kind of inelegant. It does generally capture the intent, and I think it does leave open — the minister has made reference to educators and that — through the Child Care Board and others the engagement of professionals at Yukon College who are teaching the early childhood education programs, as well as those who are involved in the Network for Healthy Early Human Development — a project under the Partners for Children initiative.

I hear and appreciate the intention to be as broad in scope as possible when we look at what is involved in early childhood development because it does cover a broad scope. Then, as we get into both the intention of the motion and further debate over the coming months about what is involved in a comprehensive, modern childcare system in Yukon, then we can have some conversations about “how” and “who”, but this is a good start.

Speaker: Is there any further debate on the proposed amendment to the motion as amended?

Amendment to Motion No. 25, as amended, agreed to

Speaker: Returning to the main motion as amended twice.

Mr. Adel: I am happy to rise today to speak to the motion as amended. As brought forth earlier, my colleague from Porter Creek Centre has brought forward this motion and we are all happy that he has. He and his family — although I will mention that I have five children who have gone through the system here, and I understand the importance of early childhood development and where it takes them in their future.

Children are our most precious resource. As adults, parents, guardians and those in government who are

responsible for making decisions about our children, we must strive to ensure that they are nurtured and cared for. Early development in children is strongly influenced by a child's surroundings from the prenatal period through the early years of a child's life, both at home and when their parent or parents return to work and they are cared for in a day home or a daycare facility, or by caregivers.

As a key component to this broader Yukon early childhood strategy, I would like to take a moment to discuss what this Liberal government has accomplished through increases to the direct operating grant, which is a significant way that the government shows support for daycares and day homes across the territory. Through this funding, we provide licensed daycare centres and family day homes with money to assist in day-to-day operating costs such as building expenses, hot meal programs and wage enhancements.

Funding for this program was left stagnant for 10 years by the previous government. Daycare operators were left to their own devices with respect to covering the costs — costs for our children — our most precious resource. During the 2016 election campaign, constituents, stakeholders and interested groups came forth in droves to tell us of all the problems they have faced to cover expenses and they have continued to bring these concerns to this Liberal government over the last 17 months. Mr. Speaker, we heard and we listened.

My colleague, the Minister of Health and Social Services, worked diligently on this file. The minister advocated and negotiated on behalf of daycare operators and came back with an increase to the direct operating grant of approximately \$1 million per year. She did this work swiftly in collaboration with the federal government —

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Point of order

Speaker: Member for Watson Lake, on a point of order.

Ms. McLeod: I am of the opinion that the member is not speaking to the motion — Section 19(b) in the Standing Orders.

Speaker's ruling

Speaker: In my view, this motion, even as twice amended, is really very broad, as it pertains to early childhood education or support for health care professionals and parents. It is broad, so I will continue to listen to the Member for Copperbelt North. In my view, he is still within the subject matter of what I perceive to be a pretty broad motion.

Mr. Adel: Mr. Speaker, she did this work swiftly and in collaboration with the federal government and the territorial First Nation governments. This increase is aimed to assist with operating costs, including wage increases for employees, to encourage more Yukon workers to enter the childcare field.

This year, I am proud to say we expect to provide approximately \$4.4 million in funding to childcare programs in Yukon through the direct operating grant program.

Operators, stakeholders and previous opposition members of this House have long called for an increase to this important funding, specifically around contributions to employee wages and training opportunities.

I am sure we can all agree that the quality of care our early learners receive is paramount to their lifelong success. Attracting and retaining qualified, engaged caregivers is a large part of this success. Children thrive in the right environment. Government support for early childhood providers is paramount, which is why we are providing an opportunity for Yukon childcare operators to recruit staff and to deliver quality services through this increase to the direct operating grant.

After funding was announced, one of my constituents called me to tell me that the daycare her three year old attends announced to all preschool parents that this funding would be going toward helping a new music program for the children.

As a father and as a grandfather, I know first-hand that we want what is best for our children. That phone call was one of the better ones I have received in my role as MLA for Copperbelt North because I understand the positive impact that this funding will have on families in this daycare and on countless families across the territory.

The effects of this funding are real and with good news like this, we see this money in action, improving the lives of our children. This is just one example of how a daycare chose to use this new funding, as each daycare and day home in the Yukon has unique needs.

In rural Yukon, there are long-standing issues around finding employees to work in daycare centres along with concerns about space and building repairs. This government has listened to daycare operators, providers and families, and we have taken action to address these concerns. We want to stabilize childcare in these communities that are seeing higher demand for daycare as well as additional pressure on their already stretched resources. For this reason, rural programs specifically will receive a 34.5-percent increase through the direct operating grant.

We believe this additional funding is essential to help manage staffing concerns. The size of this increase is indicative of the support that these programs need, some of which are the only option for working parents in these communities. I would like to be clear that this work is ongoing and that we are committed to continuing our support and collaboration with rural daycare providers.

A serious issue affecting buildings and residences across the territory is the presence of radon. Last year, the Minister of Health and Social Services made Yukon a national leader in radon prevention when she implemented mandatory testing in licensed daycare centres and day homes in the Yukon. This past winter, the Department of Health and Social Services worked with First Nation governments and stakeholders to offer free testing services as well as help with mitigation efforts when unsafe levels of radon were found.

This speaks to the importance of the health of our children to this government and is but one piece of a larger

effort to protect and support children across the territory. Healthy bodies support healthy minds and hearts.

In closing, I commend my colleagues — in particular, the Minister of Health and Social Services — on the good work that they have done for children in the Yukon. The Yukon early childhood strategy will further guide the government and I look forward to working across government as we create and implement this important strategy.

Mr. Cathers: In rising to speak to the motion this afternoon, I would like to first of all begin by thanking my colleague, the Member for Watson Lake, for the constructive amendment she moved as well as the constructive suggestions brought forward by the Third Party. In speaking to this motion as amended and then subsequently amended again, it is unfortunate, as one of the members noted in speaking to it, that the wording is done in a way that it is now a rather clunky motion. Considering the government took the unusual step of calling for a lengthy recess to bring forward an amendment, it is quite strange. It seemed that we spent — I think it was close to half an hour of a recess, which is again a highly unusual step on a Wednesday afternoon to call for a recess, let alone to waste a significant portion of the House's time in doing so. It is unfortunate that —

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Point of order

Speaker: The Member for Porter Creek Centre, on a point of order.

Mr. Gallina: I think the Member for Lake Laberge, being critical of the break taken, isn't actually speaking to the motion, as amended.

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

Mr. Cathers: I don't think I'm straying any further from the motion than the previous speaker, the Member for Copperbelt North, was in his comments.

Speaker's ruling

Speaker: What I would say in a general sense — and the House Leaders can meet at some point in the future — but what I would say from a previous life is that if some modest amount of time can be used in order to reach some sort of consensus to bring a motion forward on a Wednesday, I see some intrinsic value in that. I understand the Member for Lake Laberge's point with respect to perhaps being procedurally unusual in past legislatures. I am a servant of the House, of course, but in my view — House Leaders can discuss this — I'm prepared to provide some modest time during a Wednesday if it leads to some work to potentially improve a motion.

Those are my extemporaneous comments, for whatever they're worth.

Mr. Cathers: In speaking to this motion, as amended and then re-amended, I do have to correct some of the inaccurate comments that were made by some of the Liberal

members, including the Member for Copperbelt North in his statements. If one were to listen to him, one would be left with the very incorrect understanding that government had not been working with or supporting Yukon childcare operators and Yukon parents over the years.

While we in the Official Opposition caucus welcome a renewed strategy and a new look at early childhood education, as well as day homes, daycares, et cetera, it really would not do service to the public record if anyone were left with the inaccurate impression that would be created by that member's incorrect statements this afternoon. The Yukon government, under the existing structure, does provide some of the most generous support to childcare operators and to families anywhere in the country. Many of those supports and increases — the last time there was a significant increase in those areas, I believe, was when I was Minister of Health and Social Services. We did announce at the time significant increased investment in the direct operating grant and in the childcare subsidy. We agree that there is room to build on the work that was done, but it is important that one not be left with the inaccurate impression that this is the first time government has actually looked to an early childhood strategy.

The fact that government, in bringing forward this motion in the first place, did not see fit to include municipalities — I appreciate that they did recognize the error of their ways when my colleague proposed her constructive amendment — my colleague, the Member for Watson Lake. The fact that the government itself, again having far more resources available to the members of the government — the Liberal caucus — than are available to all of the members of the Official Opposition and the Third Party combined, didn't actually realize that they have legislation that sets out a mandate for the Yukon Child Care Board, or chose not to incorporate the board in the original motion, is quite odd.

It really does speak to, again, the question that has come up in so many areas and so many files, of the government having a bit of a haphazard approach to government — again, a quarter of the way through their mandate — really seeming to not only not have their feet under them, but really not knowing what they are doing.

The fact that the motion, in considering whether they would accept an amendment or propose another one themselves, required a break of about a half hour of this House's time this afternoon is again something that, while it may be procedurally in order, I would have to disagree with the view that it is a valuable new practice to start taking large amounts of the House's time to not engage in debate. The past practice —

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Point of order

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

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I don't think it is for the member opposite to agree or disagree with a ruling from the Speaker of the House. He is required to abide by it, as are we all. Frankly,

I think he should keep his comments to the motion, and we can hopefully proceed to a vote.

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

Mr. Cathers: I wasn't commenting on the ruling issued by you. It seems to me that this is just a dispute between members because the Government House Leader doesn't like the points I'm making.

Speaker's ruling

Speaker: I will continue to hear from the Member for Lake Laberge on the motion as amended. You have heard my comments about whether or not there ought to be some time provided on Wednesdays.

As I said, I will take some guidance from House Leaders on that topic, but, for now, I will hear the Member for Lake Laberge on the motion as amended.

Mr. Cathers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, in speaking to the motion, as amended, the fact is the motion, as twice amended now, lays out a bit of an odd structure to the motion. What we don't hear from the government, when they did relent and agree to the changes that would include the Yukon Child Care Board, as viably suggested by the Third Party — what we don't hear from the government is what this process looks like, since they're changing from what the original vision apparently was, since the original motion completely ignored the fact that there are municipal governments and only made mention of First Nation governments, and the fact that the original motion also didn't make any reference to the fact that there are caregivers who are not parents, when in fact they are everything from grandparents — as I believe my colleague, the Member for Watson Lake mentioned — to legal guardians who are not the biological parents, to people who are caring on a temporary basis or perhaps on a daily basis for children?

What I mean in that regard is that, based on the last statistics that I saw in the Yukon, most children were receiving a form of childcare not provided within the licensed system through supports such as grandparents and family friends and others who would care for the children on a formal or informal basis. While that is a separate part in the licensed childcare system, the voices of these people and their concerns are also valuable.

In terms of when government is considering whether support is being provided to Yukon parents and caregivers, those people deserve to have their voices considered as part of that overall picture as well and to not be a forgotten segment of this.

Speaker: Order, please.

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

Debate on Motion No. 25, as amended, accordingly adjourned

The House adjourned at 5:30 p.m.

The following sessional paper was tabled April 4, 2018:

34-2-50

Yukon College 2016-2017 Annual Report and independent auditor's report (December 9, 2017) (McPhee)

The following document was filed April 4, 2018:

34-2-45

Petition from community members in Beaver Creek, Destruction Bay and Burwash Landing, letter re (dated April 3, 2018) from Wade Istchenko, Member for Kluane to Hon. Pauline Frost, Minister of Health and Social Services (Istchenko)