



Yukon Legislative Assembly

Number 16

2nd Session

34th Legislature

HANSARD

Wednesday, May 17, 2017 — 1:00 p.m.

Speaker: The Honourable Nils Clarke

YUKON LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

2017 Spring Sitting

SPEAKER — Hon. Nils Clarke, MLA, Riverdale North
DEPUTY SPEAKER and CHAIR OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE — Don Hutton, MLA, Mayo-Tatchun
DEPUTY CHAIR OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE — Ted Adel, MLA, Copperbelt North

CABINET MINISTERS

NAME	CONSTITUENCY	PORTFOLIO
Hon. Sandy Silver	Klondike	Premier Minister of the Executive Council Office; Finance
Hon. Ranj Pillai	Porter Creek South	Deputy Premier Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources; Economic Development; Minister responsible for the Yukon Development Corporation and the Yukon Energy Corporation
Hon. Tracy-Anne McPhee	Riverdale South	Government House Leader Minister of Education; Justice
Hon. John Streicker	Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes	Minister of Community Services; Minister responsible for the French Language Services Directorate; Yukon Liquor Corporation and the Yukon Lottery Commission
Hon. Pauline Frost	Vuntut Gwitchin	Minister of Health and Social Services; Environment; Minister responsible for the Yukon Housing Corporation
Hon. Richard Mostyn	Whitehorse West	Minister of Highways and Public Works; the Public Service Commission
Hon. Jeanie Dendys	Mountainview	Minister of Tourism and Culture; Minister responsible for the Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board; Women's Directorate

GOVERNMENT PRIVATE MEMBERS

Yukon Liberal Party

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

OFFICIAL OPPOSITION

Yukon Party

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

THIRD PARTY

New Democratic Party

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

LEGISLATIVE STAFF

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

**Yukon Legislative Assembly
Whitehorse, Yukon
Wednesday, May 17, 2017 — 1:00 p.m.**

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

Prayers

DAILY ROUTINE

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

Tributes.

TRIBUTES

In recognition of International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia

Hon. Ms. Dendys: Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of the International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia, which is celebrated on May 17.

This day was first spearheaded by a Montreal-based organization that works to protect the rights of members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and two-spirited community. The focus of the day is to draw attention to the violence and discrimination experienced by this community throughout the world. We know, thanks to the tireless open-hearted work of the local members of the lesbian, gay, queer, transgender and two-spirited communities here in Yukon, that this discrimination is real, valid and threatens safety, security and full participation in society here in Yukon and around the world.

We are learning from our friends in these communities, thanks to their work, the events like last November's Tran Inclusion Forum hosted by All Genders Yukon and the Victoria Faulkner Women's Centre. We know that sexuality and gender identity are not the same thing. We know that gender is not binary. We know that we need to learn more from each other, ask questions and to get comfortable.

Most importantly, we know that discrimination and violence must end now. The theme of this year's campaign is "No Matter the Gender". The campaign works to highlight the lived experience of trans people. The campaign also aims to raise public awareness about the ongoing systemic challenges that trans people experience in everyday life.

Here in Yukon, our government is committed to ensuring the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and two-spirit Yukoners. We are taking steps in this session to ensure trans, two-spirited and non-binary Yukoners have equal access to Government of Yukon programs and services by amending the *Vital Statistics Act* and the *Human Rights Act*. We are also reviewing our internal procedures and talking to our partners to ensure other legislation, policies or practices do not discriminate against lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and two-spirited Yukoners.

Inclusiveness, equality and a respect for diversity are principles critical to our people-centred approach to wellness, one that will see all Yukoners thrive. This approach is

supported by the work of the Women's Directorate, which provides advice and analysis support to other departments on lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and two-spirited non-discriminatory, gender-inclusive language and gender-equality rights. The directorate has already taken steps to support the gender-inclusive approach where possible, including revising language in internal documents and updating our public gender-equality indicators website to include the experiences of trans, two-spirited and non-binary Yukoners.

The Women's Directorate will be working with our partners to hear what they think about what our government can do to support the inclusion and equality of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and two-spirited Yukoners in Yukon communities. Again, I want to thank these partners, advocates and community organizations for their tireless work and dedication.

Organizations such as Queer Yukon and All Genders Yukon, Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays Yukon, the Yukon Queer Film Alliance, the various gay-straight alliances and their allies do so much to fight discrimination and build up a healthy Yukon community for everyone.

In closing, I would like to ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia. Together we can work to ensure that members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and two-spirited community feels safe at home in Yukon, with the understanding that we will ensure their rights are upheld each and every day.

Mr. Istchenko: It's a privilege to rise today on behalf of the Yukon Party Official Opposition to pay tribute to the International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia, which takes place annually on May 17.

This campaign began in 2003 as a national day against homophobia. Over the years, and due in large part to societal progressions in Canada, this day has broadened in scope to include transphobia and biphobia. Today we celebrate our differences and stand up against discrimination faced by many Yukoners and people around the world. As we tribute this day, we promote awareness of the daily struggles faced by the LGBTQ community and inspire a shift to a more accepting and open-minded society.

Recent years have seen a rapid increase in awareness and acceptance across Canada and here in the Yukon. As people become more comfortable in their bodies, there has been a drive for acceptance for all. This change in thinking leads to a happier and more inclusive society and results in lower rates of depression and other mental health problems associated with discrimination.

While there is still a long way to go, advocates have worked hard and worked tirelessly to inform, educate and promote awareness worldwide. By using this day to celebrate and bring awareness to sexual and gender discrimination, we are able to come together with one voice to stand up against human rights violations and hatred.

We have seen strong support networks and alliances in our communities and in our schools, and we are beginning to teach our children to embrace one another for who they are. By teaching our children to accept differences at an early age, we are raising them to be welcoming and accepting adults. Together we are working toward healthy, socially inclusive communities, free from discrimination and bullying, while we reflect today on the need for an understanding and respectful community that is supportive of all Yukoners.

So we must continue to work together to ensure the rights of all Yukoners are respected every day.

Ms. Hanson: On behalf of the Yukon New Democratic Party, I am pleased to also pay tribute to the International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia.

So why do we need an international day against homophobia, transphobia and biphobia? The first clue is in the first word. While the rights of LGBTQ people in Canada are slowly — even as we witnessed just yesterday — being recognized in law, internationally it's a very different story.

Many people may find it hard to believe, but it was not until May 17, 1990 that the World Health Organization removed the classification of homosexuality as a mental disorder. In Canada, over the course of my working career — which, while it may be long, isn't really ancient history — I can attest to the fact that historically, even in the federal public service, it was a hostile place for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transsexual people. Until the 1990s, our federal government actively discriminated against people who were perceived to be gay. They were spied on, they were followed, they were interrogated, and the government fired them if they thought they were gay.

There are Yukoners who have experienced that, Mr. Speaker. In his press release today, the Prime Minister said, "Today, I ask Canadians and people around the world to fight hatred, honour love, and defend human rights for everyone. Together, we can build a world where all of us are free to be who we are and love who we love."

Former federal employees who were fired for who they were perceived to love are still waiting for the current government to fulfill its promise to issue an apology to former LGBTQ public service workers who were fired or discriminated against. May 17 is now celebrated in more than 130 countries, including 37 where same-sex acts are illegal.

This year, the International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia has placed a special focus on families, including the role of families in the well-being of their lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex or queer members and the respect for the rights of diverse families. The minister spoke of the theme and, to complement that theme, the motto for the International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia is "Love Makes a Family".

We are all part of families, and these families influence most aspects of our lives, shaping our identities, our values and the way in which we live. There are also many different ways of expressing family belonging. We may have close biological families, foster families, extended families and new

families that we create. One's family should be a place where one has security and safety, and we all want and need to be accepted and respected in our family and social environment. Yet families are often not safe. Young people who are experimenting with their sexuality or who identify as LGBTIQ are often placed at odds with family values and social expectations. Along with LGBTIQ, people who set up alternative families may experience stigma, rejection, violence and a lack of support. The failure to be protected and respected inside a family or community system is often complicated by social and religious beliefs, and it is almost always painful and distressing.

On May 17, we recognize and celebrate the fact that so many people are able to express their sexuality and their sexual and gender identity and make choices about family formations. We also celebrate the families and communities that support and embrace them. May 17 is a day to recognize that many people have neither families nor family and social support for their sexualities, identities and practices. As such, their sense of belonging and home is complex, difficult and unfulfilled.

As we recognize this day, we in Yukon reaffirm our determination to ensure that all forms of discrimination based on gender expression and gender identity are prohibited. We recognize this day as part of the ongoing commitment to dignity, social justice, equality and security for all members of our society — indeed all societies.

In recognition of National Road Safety Week

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On behalf of this government and the Third Party, I rise to acknowledge National Road Safety Week. From May 16 to 22, people all across this vast country are reminded to take precautions while they are driving and to commit to safe habits on our roads.

This is a week to highlight the importance of safe, sober and attentive driving for all drivers, passengers, cyclists, and pedestrians. Here in Yukon and across Canada, we aspire to maintain the safest roads in the world. This is an enormous job, but we make progress every year in improving road safety through continued education, awareness, legislation, technology, enforcement and community support. We still have a long way to go.

There are four big killers on the road that still require driver behaviour changes. They are: driving while impaired by alcohol or drugs; distracted driving; speeding; and aggressive driving. Changing these behaviours will make our roads safer for drivers, passengers and all road users. Today, too many lives are lost and individuals injured due to poor decisions made by the driver behind the wheel. Whether from driving impaired or distracted, driving too fast or too aggressively, or from not using seatbelts or helmets, the results are the same and the impacts are life-changing. These tragedies are preventable.

National Road Safety Week is a call to action. We are all responsible for safe driving behaviours. It's no coincidence that National Road Safety Week falls during Victoria Day

long weekend — a weekend where our roads and highways across Yukon experience higher traffic volumes, both from Yukoners and increasing numbers of visitors to the territory. The long weekend also brings with it a rise in the number and severity of accidents due to impaired driving, which continues to be an issue for Yukon drivers. To that end, Yukon government and Highways and Public Works continues to work with Mothers Against Drunk Driving, the RCMP and other local stakeholders to address this troubling problem.

In light of federal cannabis legislation, we will continue to work with our territorial and national partners to raise awareness that both alcohol and cannabis have the ability to impair a driver. That's what National Road Safety Week is all about. Again, it is a call for action and an opportunity to work toward a safer, more responsible future on our roads.

As if tackling the challenges associated with impaired driving weren't enough, we also have to deal with distracted driving. Distracted driving fatalities have surpassed alcohol-impaired fatalities as the number one killer on Canadian roads. According to the Canada Safety Council, you are 23 times more likely to crash or come close to causing a crash if you're texting while driving. We all need to understand that talking on the phone or texting while driving is dangerous. It's as dangerous as driving while impaired by alcohol or drugs. I cannot stress enough how serious of an issue this is and how severe the consequences are that accompany it. Your safety and the safety of others is the number one priority. Everything else is secondary. You know as well as I that we all live in a connected world where it can be difficult, if not impossible, to put down the phone.

As hard as it can be not to look at your screen or answer a phone call, I am here today to ask all Yukoners, especially young drivers, to leave the phone alone and do your part to help make our road users as safe as they can be all the time.

Together with the RCMP and Highways and Public Works road safety team, I would like to remind all Yukon drivers that anything that takes your attention away from the road is a distraction, and distractions can often have life-altering consequences. The RCMP are enforcing safe driving practices and will be increasing enforcement for traffic violations, including distracted driving, to help reduce road incidents.

While law enforcement will always be part of the solution, it is not the only solution. It is not enough, especially when it comes to the safety of our children. Motor vehicle collisions remain the leading cause of death in children across Canada. Carseats, when used correctly, can reduce the risk of fatal injury by 71 percent and reduce the risk of serious injury by 67 percent. By using a booster seat instead of a seat belt alone, you reduce the risk of injury to your child by 59 percent. Highways and Public Works values the importance of carseat safety and is dedicated to helping parents correctly install and use their child's carseat. This summer, we continue to promote carseat safety through our carseat safety program by providing education, free carseat safety inspections and assistance throughout the territory. Additionally, trained carseat technicians are available year-round for private car

seat safety consultations. This free program helps parents who want to make sure they are using their carseats as effectively as possible.

Safety in the commercial sector also continues to be a priority for this government. The RCMP, Highways and Public Works, and National Safety Code and carrier compliance officers — that's a mouthful — will be conducting the annual road check during National Transportation Week, which is the first week in June. This will ensure the safety of commercial vehicles. There will also be increased enforcement across the territory in all compliance areas.

In closing, I would like to wish all Yukoners a safe and fun-filled summer. The hard work of Highways and Public Works Transportation division will ensure that your summer travels are safe while you enjoy an unparalleled travel experience as you cross carpets of tundra or watch epic mountain ranges. Immerse yourself in the scenery. While enjoying all the north has to offer, please be mindful of construction zones, observe posted speed limits and be cautious of wildlife on the highway or in the right of way. While we are out enjoying the summer with friends and family, remember it is up to each and every one of us to take responsibility and make safe driving habits a top priority, not just this week during National Road Safety Week, but each and every time we get behind the wheel. Together we can put an end to so many needless tragedies.

Mr. Hassard: It's a pleasure to rise today on behalf of the Official Opposition to pay tribute to National Road Safety Week, which as the minister said, takes place this year from May 16 to May 22.

This week, Yukoners are reminded to keep our roads safe for themselves and for others by committing to be responsible and drive fully focused on the road and free of distractions. Here in the Yukon, it has been found that cellphone usage while driving occurs at almost twice the national rate. Unfortunately, this also means the risk of being involved in an accident as a result of distracted driving in Yukon also increases. A distracted driver is any driver whose sole focus is not on the road. Distractions lead to slower reaction time and impaired or lack of responsible judgment.

Cellphone use is a critical problem among distracted drivers, and according to the Canada Safety Council, texting while driving makes a crash, or near crash, 23 times more likely than that of a focused driver on the road. Likewise, talking on the cellphone is prohibited. A hands-free device connected via Bluetooth is permitted, although the safest way to travel is to simply not touch your phone until you have safely stopped your vehicle.

Distracted driving can go beyond using your cellphone for talking or texting. Drivers often use phones for the map or GPS feature. Navigation systems built into your vehicle can also lead to distracted driving. Have a passenger read directions or input directions before the drive begins. If you must do anything that would take your full attention off the road, safely pull over and put your vehicle in park.

Many people are seen texting, talking on the phone or listening to music and walking down the street. Please be cautious of your surroundings and pay attention. Pedestrians must be responsible for their safety as much as those behind the wheel.

This year the theme of National Road Safety Week is “Can You See Them?” The Canada Safety Council is urging all drivers to keep an eye out for those who may be distracted behind the wheel, and I urge all Yukoners to be responsible drivers and to help to do your part to bring the high rate of distracted drivers down in the Yukon. Let’s keep our road safe not just to avoid accidents for our own sake; we share the road with others, and they deserve our full attention as well.

Please be cautious of bikers, who share our streets and our highways, and watch for pedestrians. All it takes is a moment and that moment could be someone’s last.

In recognition of Whitehorse Connects

Ms. White: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was a bit surprised. I thought there were going to be another two tributes.

It’s a delight to rise on behalf of the NDP caucus to celebrate the phenomenon that is Whitehorse Connects. I was asked to volunteer for the first time in 2012 and I’ve never looked back.

Whitehorse Connects shows you the best parts of our community. The best way to describe walking into the room is to let you know that it feels like you’re walking into a hug. You’re greeted by the hustle and bustle of dozens of volunteers, local musicians on the stage, the smell of coffee, and many, many guests.

Connects allows people to connect with the community. There are no barriers, be they economic or one of sobriety. Kim Winnicky has worked hard to make sure that it’s a safe place that radiates respect for all people. That respect starts at the front door. People are greeted with hellos and smiles and then asked for their first names only, and if they have ever attended before. Why do we only ask for first names? Because it’s a way for organizers to know how many people come through the door and to find out if we’re reaching the community.

Appointments can be made at the registration desk for haircuts, foot care, massage, physiotherapy and other treatments depending on the day. It was while working at Connects that I learned the value of a haircut, because we all feel better when we look our best and that’s true for the entire community.

People start to line up more than an hour before the doors open in hopes of getting one of the haircut spots. When I started, haircuts used to be given at the Hellaby Hall by volunteer stylists and volunteers in charge of hair washing, and I can tell you it wasn’t ideal. That’s when Rick and Joy Karp saw the need in the community, and then they started donating their salon and staff time at Hair Sensations to fill that gap.

Imagine what walking into a salon being treated like a customer in a professional setting feels like for people who

don’t often get that chance, and you can see the difference on their faces. When the new owners, Chris and Lise May took over, they stepped right in and we’re grateful that they did, but none of this would happen without the efforts of Andrei Samson, who makes that magic happen. The ongoing contribution of this small business is immeasurable.

When photographers Gary and Brianne Bremner of GBP Creative Photo and Video started getting involved, a whole new dimension was added. Imagine, getting a photo of yourself, your friends or your family by people who really see you. The photos are incredible, but the reaction to these photos is precious. It’s a family affair, Mr. Speaker, because even after the arrival of little Mabel, this duo, with the help of grandma, Judith Meister, have made Whitehorse Connects part of their yearly outline.

Mary-Beth and Annabelle are the two very dedicated nurses who never miss Connects and they offer foot-care clinics to all who require them. They know everyone by name, and they are thoughtful and caring and no one leaves them without feeling valued. I was told that Annabelle has since moved on from that, but I am sure that the person who is replacing her will be fantastic.

The social justice clubs from various high schools have been hugely important in making Connects work. They make the coffee, organize the clothing and serve lunch. These teenagers are compassionate, hard workers who follow the examples set by their teachers, and yesterday there were 10 student volunteers. It’s an incredible sight to see.

When Whitehorse Connects originally started, it was hosted at the Old Fire Hall. The staff were always so accommodating and helpful. Steve Hare was a wizard on the sound board, and volunteers worked in what space we had. At the beginning, we didn’t really fill the room. People were cautious, if not a little suspect of what was happening, but they enjoyed themselves and then they told others, and then the numbers increased and then they increased some more until we had that place bursting at the seams.

So where do you go from there? Well, you move up in the world — all the way down to the Kwanlin Dün Cultural Centre. A new partnership has been created with the KDCC and it’s incredible. Whitehorse Connects has found its forever home in the longhouse, and with the generous donation of both the longhouse and the kitchen three times a year, Whitehorse Connects can only grow. The services continue to expand with the new addition of IT services and the housing navigators from various organizations. There is blood-pressure testing, immunizations, the Yukon public library is in attendance, and there is even so much more than that.

None of this happens without the core group of volunteers, ranging from the high school social justice students, to seniors, to the chefs in the kitchen, to the musicians who volunteer their time, the physios and alternative health practitioners. I especially want to thank the businesses that continue to support Whitehorse Connects.

Yesterday, Mr. Speaker, there were over 250 people in attendance. It’s incredibly hard to put the magic of these days

into a tribute, but I hope you get the idea. If you get the chance, you should join us because you will be better for it.

I would just like to take this opportunity — because we have some of the people who are responsible in the gallery. We have Rick Karp, who is with Hair Sensations — thank you for coming. We have Kristina Craig from the Anti-Poverty Coalition and Kim Winnicky, who makes it all happen. It is very nice to have you guys.

Applause

Hon. Ms. Frost: It's an honour today and a pleasure to rise to pay tribute to the countless men and women in our community who have worked tirelessly to put together the event known as Whitehorse Connects. It's an organization of volunteers, community, non-profit organizations and businesses really working together to provide opportunities for members of our community who perhaps would not, in some of their challenging lives, have some of the unique opportunities and pleasures — they don't experience on a daily basis — like we do.

It gives me an opportunity to reflect, in terms of my role in this government. As we look at our programs and services, we look at the strategies that we have in place as a government to really attempt to provide transparent services and programs for all citizens of our society, so that they are respected and given non-judgemental — we went through this whole review yesterday with human rights legislation, reviewing the rights of individuals. We're talking about human beings in our society. As I go through my portfolio with Health and Social Services and with the Yukon Housing Corporation, it resonates and reflects for me that the community members who access these services come from our rural Yukon.

Events like yesterday's Whitehorse Connects, which is a brainchild of the Yukon Anti-Poverty Coalition, is the offer to provide free services to those who are challenged in our community — those who would not have access to free haircuts, footbaths and the special things that make them feel special.

Members of our society — the homelessness in our society is pretty evident, and we really honour and acknowledge Whitehorse Connects for all that you do for that demographic group. I know we, as the Liberal caucus, appreciate that. Yesterday was another successful event, and I'm sure many more to come. Whitehorse Connects brings together a range of health and human services that people might otherwise not have access to. Services include: haircuts, foot care, immunization, blood pressure checks, physiotherapy, nursing or outreach, Internet access, food, clothing repairs, photography — just some of the few things that we take for granted as members of our society. We recognize that the Yukon Anti-Poverty Coalition connects and reaches out far into our community and brings about the connection and the building of relationships that we sometimes forget about. With those who have struggles on a daily basis, the ties we need to make — it is pretty evident that we have a lot of work to do.

While the Yukon Anti-Poverty Coalition has organized and spearheaded this initiative for many years, it's really the community that has come together to create the safe, inclusive space for those who need it. Whitehorse Connects will celebrate its ninth anniversary in October of this year and hosts three, sometimes four, events in the year. Since that date in October 2008, Whitehorse Connects has held over 24 events and welcomed over 5,000 guests. They estimate that more than 100 businesses and organizations have supported Connects days with volunteer hours and in-kind or cash donations.

More than 600 individuals have volunteered and many more have donated. Between 250 and 300 guests attend each event as the member opposite expressed. Newcomers to this group include a housing navigator and representatives of the Residential Tenancies Office. Really, I think we as a government need to connect to that process and reach out during these events. I look forward to that opportunity to connect the Yukon Housing Corporation, Health and Social Services and the programs we offer to try to bridge that gap.

This year for the first time, the City of Whitehorse brought its plans for the downtown and the Marwell area to consult with this unrecognized or otherwise hard-to-reach demographic group. What was truly amazing was that the guests felt comfortable enough to speak with the city engineers about their feelings about the plan. Whitehorse Connects has moved around a bit, but has entered into a long-term arrangement with Kwanlin Dün Cultural Centre to use their facilities. Just by way of feedback, what we've heard in terms of how special this is for some folks — the feedback received is that some participants speak about how they feel they are treated with dignity and respect through things as simple as eating off of a china plate or getting a haircut — being treated with dignity and pride is really important in making people feel welcome.

Whitehorse Connects has created this safe and welcoming opportunity. The stability of this event, the safe and welcoming space that has been created is the foundation of its success — that, and the people who spearheaded — I am very pleased, as was expressed by the member opposite, to welcome the organizers — the people behind the scenes who make this happen.

Welcome and thank you so much for all your contributions to our wellness and to the wellness of those individuals who may not otherwise have experienced such a special day. Thank you so much for your contributions. I thank the efforts of those volunteers in our community who are not here. I would like to thank this House for allowing me to pay tribute to their efforts.

Applause

Ms. McLeod: I rise on behalf of the Yukon Party Official Opposition to pay tribute to Whitehorse Connects, which is our own community-based event to bring goods and services to our vulnerable people. Whitehorse Connects began in October 2008 as part of Poverty and Homelessness Action Week in Whitehorse. Based upon similar events in other

cities, the events sees businesses, non-profits and other organizations come together to offer information, services and other goods and refreshments to those who have a need and a wish to participate.

Connects days attracts diverse groups of people who are happy to have the chance to take part in this wonderful event. After the success of the first Whitehorse Connects, the Yukon Anti-Poverty Coalition committed to hosting three events per year to support vulnerable Yukoners. Since then, the Old Fire Hall opened its doors to offer services such as haircuts, physiotherapy, massage, health care services, clothing drives, a photo booth and even more.

Meals and treats are provided, and music fills the halls throughout the day by local musicians. It is a welcoming space, free from judgment and full of warm wishes and hope. Every Connects day since its beginning has seen services expand as more people come together to donate their time, efforts and expertise to those in need. Volunteers take part from across the community and it is their efforts that make this special day possible for all. Businesses volunteer their time and services and make financial donations to cover expenses. It is truly an event that brings out the best in our community.

Whitehorse Connects has grown since that first Connects day in 2008 when they welcomed over 180 people through the doors. Today we see numbers closer to 300, and that number is sure to grow.

I would encourage anyone who has the time and enjoys seeing someone smile to take part in one of these days. It truly is a chance to witness all of Whitehorse connect to make someone's day wonderful. Mr. Speaker, I swear that when I get back to my home riding, I will endeavour to see that this day happens in my own community. I welcome all rural members to do the same thing, because I see this as a really worthy thing for all of Yukon.

Applause

Speaker: Are there any further tributes?
Introduction of visitors.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Ms. White: In the gallery, we also have two people who work with the Women's Directorate. We have Linnea Rudachyk and we have a summer STEP student — we heard that her office was getting created — and that's Jane Robinson-Boivin. Thank you for joining us today.

Applause

Mr. Istchenko: I would like to introduce Sally Wright to the House today. She has a cabin — a place, a residence on beautiful Kluane Lake. Welcome to the gallery.

Applause

Speaker: Are there any returns or documents for tabling?

TABLING RETURNS AND DOCUMENTS

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I have for tabling a copy of a letter to the Member for Watson Lake dated April 12, 2017. That letter is from me, as Minister of Justice and Attorney General, and from the Minister of Health and Social Services regarding a consultation period for the proposed changes to the *Vital Statistics Act* and the *Human Rights Act*.

Ms. White: I have for tabling a copy of *A Better Yukon for All: Government of Yukon Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Strategy* from 2012.

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 this government to uphold the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of all as defined by the United Nations *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* article 25 by:

(1) reviewing the social assistance rates for Yukon based on real costs for food and shelter;

(2) adopting a Housing First model when addressing lack of housing for vulnerable and at-risk people; and

(3) taking into consideration the goals set out in *A Better Yukon for All: Yukon Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Strategy* from 2012.

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: Community infrastructure development

Mr. Hassard: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. At this past weekend's Association of Yukon Communities AGM, we learned a bit more about the Liberal government's plan for investing in community infrastructure. The Community Services minister told us that this government will move forward with the infrastructure priorities that the previous government has laid out and will continue to utilize the Yukon infrastructure plan to guide investment decisions.

I appreciate that the minister recognizes all of the hard work already put in by municipalities, the Department of Community Services and the previous government. However, there are a few unanswered questions that I would like to put to the Minister of Community Services today.

Last year, the Yukon Party government committed that recreation infrastructure would be added to the list of priorities. Will the new government allow Yukon

communities to access the New Building Canada fund for recreation infrastructure?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the Leader of the Official Opposition for the question. Our goal is to make sure that all communities are safe, vibrant, active and sustainable. Part of that is to make sure that we have recreation infrastructure doing well in all of our communities, and we do intend to invest in that recreation infrastructure. I have met with all municipal governments and almost all First Nation governments to discuss infrastructure investments coming up.

When we saw the federal budget come out earlier this year, we noted that there were funding pots that were identified for recreation infrastructure. We haven't yet taken that decision, but what we're doing is working in partnership with First Nation and municipal governments to discuss how those infrastructure dollars will be divided out.

To answer the specific question, we're going to be investing in recreation infrastructure. I do not know at this time whether we will use the small communities fund or the Building Canada fund to do so.

Mr. Hassard: As municipalities plan for upcoming infrastructure needs, many of them begin to prepare themselves, consult their citizens and develop plans for infrastructure needs in their communities. Some of them even begin saving their own funds to help pay for infrastructure projects, whether they are recreation projects or not.

My question is, if a Yukon municipality is willing and able to come up with the necessary 25-percent contribution needed to access federal funds like the New Building Canada fund, will the Yukon government allow them to jump to the top of the priority list and help them access the funding themselves?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: It's an interesting question. One of the things that's sort of an assumption within that question is, if a municipality or First Nation government chose to advance the 25 percent, whether the federal government would assume that's 25 percent from the part that the territorial government would propose as opposed to part of the federal funds that come across. It's a rather complicated situation and I want to be careful here. I don't want to use Question Period to try to make decisions.

We are in close conversation with municipalities and First Nation governments, and also with the federal government. We are very lucky across the north — and this is due, in part, to the strong negotiation of the Association of Yukon Communities — to have a 75-cent/25-cent agreement, where 75 cents come from federal dollars and 25 cents from the territorial government. We are careful, if we enter into those discussions, that we don't alter that arrangement.

In either case, we wouldn't try to bump someone up the queue based on whether they have money or not. That's not anything we have entertained. At this time, I would just say that we are in conversation with our partners.

Mr. Hassard: We know that the federal government's infrastructure spending plans are leading to massive deficits and debt, but it's worth noting that the federal government has

considerably more capacity to pay off debt than the Yukon does. During the 2016 election, the Liberals said they were open to borrowing money and taking on debt in order to keep up with the federal infrastructure plans.

In what year of their mandate will the Liberal government begin borrowing money to keep up with the federal infrastructure spending?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Infrastructure is important to us. Investing in this territory is important to us. We have done our best to make sure that this projection is transparent. As we have worked through the budget process, what we noted was that the previous government had rather low dollar amounts — I believe it was \$175 million allocated for infrastructure investments. What we have stated in our capital budgets is that this number should be much higher.

What we are going to do, and what the Premier has discussed many times here, is we are pulling together a Financial Advisory Panel. We'll be having those conversations with that panel here with members of this Legislature — with members opposite and us — and with our partner governments in First Nations and municipalities to discuss how we want to invest in the future. No intentions to borrow at this time — thank you very much for the suggestion. We will be working to have a conversation first to plan it out and we will do so in partnership.

Question re: Carmacks recreation infrastructure

Ms. Van Bibber: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. For some time now the Village of Carmacks has faced significant challenges with their community recreation centre and, in particular, the skating rink. Over the past few years Community Services has been working with the village to plan for a new rink and possibly a new rec centre. There have been community meetings about this, and I understand that the Village of Carmacks has settled on a design for a new skating rink and is seeking financial support from the Government of Yukon.

How much money is budgeted this year to help the Village of Carmacks get to work on a new skating rink?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I would like to thank the Member for Porter Creek North for that question. Just this past weekend, I had conversations with the Mayor of the Village of Carmacks, with one of the councillors of the Village of Carmacks, and with the city manager of the Village of Carmacks. I put the city manager in touch with the Department of Community Services officials and we had a great conversation, and I was excited when I heard the president of the Association of Yukon Communities stand up and say that this was the best engagement that they had — or they acknowledged the strong engagement, that it was really refreshing, and I think that's a great start.

I will have to get back to the member opposite exactly about what dollars are in the budget. I look forward to answering further questions on this subject in supplementaries.

I will just leave it now to say that we're in strong conversation with the community. We're well aware of their interests in building a new rink and a new rec centre.

Ms. Van Bibber: This year's budget includes a specific line item of over \$13 million for the New Building Canada fund. This method of budgeting allows the department to identify an overall amount of money and manage a list of projects within that budget. This allows the department to be flexible with implementing capital expenditures due to the nature of infrastructure construction in Yukon. This also means the department has the flexibility to add projects as priorities change.

Engineering, planning and possibly construction of a new skating rink and community centre could begin this year in Carmacks. Will the minister deliver on this rec infrastructure priority for the Village of Carmacks?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: To answer the member opposite's question, no, that project is not on the list for this year's budget. I'm just trying to make that very clear for you. We had a good conversation with the Mayor of Carmacks and we recognize that this is a priority. It wasn't one of the projects that had its design work completed ahead of this budget session, so it's not one that we're working to include in the small communities fund at this time.

I think the member opposite pointed out — and it is clear — that, when it comes to infrastructure, we need to be very diligent about how we plan, go through the regulatory requirements and prepare. That way, when we build and do asset management — following up with those infrastructure projects once we invest — that way, we can be sure that the infrastructure will last and really deliver for our citizens in our communities. It's critical. That work was not done before we arrived and so that's not going to be happening this year.

Ms. Van Bibber: Thank you for that clarification that the Carmacks rink is not included in this year's budget.

Often the department is not able to deliver on all the projects they have in a given year, and that means some of the money lapses.

Can the minister commit that if the department won't be able to spend all of the New Building Canada money this year, they will allocate any unused money to the Carmacks rec centre instead of letting it lapse?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Thank you very much for that question from the member opposite. I'll go back to the answer that I gave to the Leader of the Official Opposition. We're not committing to using the small communities fund to pay for recreation infrastructure. The reason is that we see recreation and cultural infrastructure dollars in this year's budget from the federal government and we're in conversation.

Previously in this House during Question Period, I've stood up and I have stated that we will share that information with this House as soon as we have it. I'm hopeful that this will be within the next month or months. We are in close contact with the federal government, and they are working diligently to provide us information about those funds. I'm saying that we're not intending to use the small communities fund at this time.

But to the point that she raises — which is a great point: Will we make sure that those dollars are flexible and are used for priorities that have been previously identified? Absolutely, we want to invest in our communities. All communities matter.

Question re: Electoral reform

Ms. Hanson: As Canada marks its 150th anniversary, it's also a good opportunity to remember just how old our voting system is. Canada's and Yukon's first-past-the-post voting system was put in place before the Internet, phones or cars existed, and it has barely evolved since. The first-past-the-post system's main flaw is that it ignores the voices of many voters. The result is that in the last election, both in Yukon and at the federal level, parties with 39 percent of the vote got 100 percent of the power. In the 2016 election, the Yukon Liberals promised to create a non-partisan commission on electoral reform, to consult Yukoners on improving our voting system.

When will this government fulfill its campaign promise to establish a commission on electoral reform?

Hon. Mr. Silver: The member opposite is correct. We did make that commitment in our platform in the election process. We will be looking, in the very near future, to have these conversations. Right now we're looking internally to see if this is a select committee conversation. We made that commitment during the election process.

The last thing you want to do is make this a partisan exercise. We have to take a look at a larger community and we have to take a look at all options. We have committed to that. As soon as we have a date ready, then we will absolutely engage with the opposition parties and the greater public, Fair Vote Yukon and others to make sure that the terms and how we go down that road get defined in an open and transparent manner.

Ms. Hanson: The Premier has shown that if it is a real priority, he can create a commission quickly enough. He did it with his appointment of the Financial Advisory Panel, which we assume is non-partisan. He should also know that if this commission is to have enough time to consult Yukoners and to propose changes to our electoral system in time for the next election, it has to get underway soon.

Yukoners were disappointed, to say the least, when the federal Liberals broke their promise to bring in electoral reform just a few months ago. Like many Yukoners, we certainly hope the Premier is going to fulfill the commitment he just made again on the floor and that he is not going to follow the footsteps of his federal cousins.

Another democratic reform commitment made by this government in the 2016 election was to introduce fixed election dates. When will the Premier follow through on his promise to introduce fixed election dates in Yukon?

Hon. Mr. Silver: I don't know if the Leader of the Third Party thinks an election is coming sooner than later — she might have some more information that I don't know. Again, election reform is a very important issue to Yukoners. It is important to Canadians as well and we heard this very

often when we were campaigning door to door in the Yukon communities. We have committed to strike a commission on electoral reform to consult with Yukoners on possible options. I have made that commitment again here today in the Legislative Assembly. We remain committed to developing this commission — absolutely. Before beginning work on this issue, we need to explore potential options for electoral reform in the Yukon and we will review efforts being made in other jurisdictions.

As far as set election dates, we campaigned on this and we will stick to that commitment as well. We do have a five-year mandate right now. To make those decisions up front in the first Legislative Session, or even maybe in the fall, might be a little bit soon. Maybe the member opposite might beg to differ, but we made those commitments and we will stick to them.

Ms. Hanson: As the Premier remains committed, we remain committed to holding him to this commitment. There have been too many delays across this country on electoral reform. Our voting system is old and it ignores the voices of thousands of Yukoners. In the last election, for example, Liberals received an average of 673 votes per elected MLA. This number goes up to over 1,000 for the Official Opposition, while the Yukon NDP required nearly 2,500 votes per seat in this Legislature.

Mr. Speaker, every vote should count. We heard this from the government opposite. The electoral reform commission needs to be appointed soon, so that their work can be completed and their recommendations can be implemented before the next election.

Will the Premier commit to putting the electoral commission's work and recommendations to a referendum in time for a new system to be in place by the next election?

Hon. Mr. Silver: I was in a very similar boat as the member opposite in 2011. I believe at that time, it was 25 percent of the popular vote to Liberals and very shortly after that, only one seat in the Legislative Assembly. There are lots of things to consider as far as electoral reform. There are also considerations — I think a lot of Yukoners and I believe everybody can agree with this — a lot of Yukoners voted for the people who are in this Legislative Assembly, not just the party as well. So we'll have a commission. We will have these conversations. These are good conversations to be had and I look forward to that time. I'm not committing to a referendum at this point, but I am sticking to our platform commitments, not the NDP's.

Question re: Beaver Creek infrastructure development

Mr. Istchenko: I want to stick to the theme here of community infrastructure. Recreation infrastructure is also very important in the community of Beaver Creek, so I am just wondering if the minister has had the opportunity to meet with the White River First Nation, the Beaver Creek Community Club and Beaver Creek residents to talk about infrastructure priorities for the community.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: To answer the specific question, I have not had an opportunity and I look forward to that opportunity. I have made a couple of trips west on the Alaska Highway, but we have not yet found a time when we could connect.

I also will commit that, when I go into the riding, I will do my best to contact the member opposite to alert him to that travel, because often there are community events that happen around that, and it's lovely to have MLAs there — the representatives of the ridings.

What I want to say here in the Legislature is that we recognize that recreation infrastructure is critical for the health and longevity of our communities. We do want to invest. We recognize that Carmacks needs a new rink. I know that — in conversation — they believe it's time to rebuild their rec centre at the same time. We're working to do things that we can right now to assist them with that. For example, with the Carmacks recreation centre, they noted that the Highways and Public Works yard is accessed in a way that's difficult for them. I walked down the hall, I had a conversation with the Minister of Highways and Public Works and we're seeing if we can find a solution.

I just wish to assure the members opposite that we take recreation infrastructure very seriously for our communities and we believe it will help to build local, long-lasting solutions.

Mr. Istchenko: I do appreciate the answer from the minister. The Beaver Creek recreation centre was a centennial project originally in 1967. It has had a lot of renovations and improvements to patch it up over the years but, unfortunately, it is coming to the end of its life and it can't be patched up much any more. Building a new rec centre in Beaver Creek is a major priority for the community, and it's one I also committed that I would advocate for on their behalf.

Will the minister commit to dedicating infrastructure funding toward a replacement of the Beaver Creek recreation centre?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: What I will commit to is sitting down with the member opposite and with the community of Beaver Creek — with members and citizens of the community and with the White River First Nation — to discuss their recreation needs.

I thank the member opposite for providing this information to me here today in the Legislature. We have identified across the territory a number of recreation needs. We want to have a solution that will look at the whole of the territory and try to invest so we have lasting recreation infrastructure. I'm happy it's my day and I get to stand up and say these things. This is a great file to be working on.

Can I just say that we have infrastructure dollars that are coming from our federal partners and we are ready to work with our municipal and First Nation partners to ensure that money gets to our communities and that we invest in our recreation infrastructure? I'm looking forward to working with all communities.

Question re: Building inspections

Mr. Cathers: Since last fall, there have been two cases in my riding where people have been evicted due to minor, non-safety-related building code violations or permit non-compliance. A third couple who have just been given an eviction notice contacted me this week.

In two of these cases, small-business owners in my riding were told they had to immediately evict their tenants, or else the building inspector would order ATCO to shut the power off to the business. Faced with an impact to their livelihood and their employees, both business owners had no choice but to evict tenants; neither wanted to do that. Prior to last fall, I had never received a single complaint of this type from constituents. Has the government asked the department to get tougher on enforcing the building code and, if not, will the minister commit to looking into this matter to get to the bottom of the situation and ensure that Yukoners aren't being unduly evicted from their homes?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I appreciate hearing this here. I am not sure — if there has been a letter sent to me, I haven't seen it. I would really like to get it. What I will say is that this is serious issue, and I would be happy to work with the department to get a response. When I first took the role as Minister of Community Services, I took the time to reach out to all members opposite and to go down to their offices to invite them — to welcome them — to share their concerns with me so that we could try to work on them. The notion here is that our job is to represent all Yukoners and to ensure that we have a fair and equitable system for all. I know the folks in the Department of Community Services are diligent, and I would be happy to pass this concern on to them.

Mr. Cathers: Evicting Yukoners from their homes is a serious decision to make. It forces families into a state of uncertainty as they scramble to find a new place to live. This is especially concerning, since in the instances I mentioned, the building code infractions appear to be very minor. As I stated, the frequency of these appears to have increased since the fall of 2016, and this is the reason why I previously raised the matter in debate with the Premier and at the Standing Committee on Statutory Instruments.

I think this is an issue that we as members of the Legislative Assembly should take a close look at. Will the minister support the Official Opposition's request to have the all-party Standing Committee on Statutory Instruments review building inspections to assess how regulations are being interpreted and enforced and to recommend possible changes?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: What I would like to request of the member opposite is that we start with sharing this concern with me as minister and us as a department, and then let's see where it goes from there. We have a building inspection department and they were at the Association of Yukon Communities AGM this past weekend. They were there answering questions. Maybe the member opposite could have shared that with one of his colleagues and we could have actually been working on it right there.

We also have a Residential Tenancies Office. Their job, as sort of a quasi-judicial body, is to try to work through

conflicts as they exist around landlords and tenants. I have had occasion to send files to them several times, and I know they are diligent. What I ask first is that we just share this concern across the floor so that we can work on it — through a normal departmental matter — and then see what follows up with that. I will try to answer the member's question at that time.

Mr. Cathers: After we made changes to the building code to make it easier to build a log home, we began the preliminary work of looking at changes to the appeal process for decisions made by building inspectors. Sections 6 and 7 of the *Building Standards Act* set out powers of the Building Standards Board, which include the ability for a person to appeal a decision by a building inspector. However, as of last year when we discussed this with officials prior to the election, the board had never heard a single appeal despite having been in place for decades.

Clearly the appeal process needs changes to make it workable, timely and effective. The Residential Tenancies Office actually has no jurisdiction in the matter the member is referencing.

People who have been evicted from their homes for minor non-safety-related violations are asking us to make the minister aware of the need to make changes.

Will the minister agree to support the Official Opposition's request to have the all-party Standing Committee on Statutory Instruments review building inspections to assess how regulations are being interpreted and enforced and to recommend possible changes to the act and regulations including revising the appeal process to make it workable, timely and effective?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: If I'm being asked to stand up and say if I will work with the members opposite to make sure that the building inspector's office and how they deal with appeals is timely and effective — absolutely, I will. That's not a problem. I stand up and I make that commitment to the member opposite.

What I'm asking back is that, rather than make a specific commitment about how that will happen, we just start with sharing the concerns so that we can give them to the department. Those officials are great officials. Let me just give a shout-out to those officials. I know they work hard. There are challenges and it is difficult. I will recognize that, when it comes to peoples' homes, there are concerns at all times. Let's work to resolve this issue through the normal approaches first and then let's see if we need to escalate it up to another level.

Question re: Securities regulation

Mr. Kent: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I too have a question for the Minister of Community Services.

In 2015, Yukon entered into the cooperative capital markets regulatory system along with a number of other provinces. The goal of this initiative is to create a national securities regulator and to foster more efficient globally competitive capital markets, increase protection for investors and strengthen national capacity to identify and manage capital-markets-related systemic risks.

By joining this system, the Yukon will need to eventually cede its direct regulation of financial securities to a national regulator. Some provinces have resisted this movement and are hesitant to give up control over their securities regulations. However, the former Yukon Party government saw the merit in the system and joined in.

My question for the minister is: Does he support the Yukon Party's decision to join this national initiative, or does he plan to chart a new course for securities regulation in the territory?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Like I said, I'm happy it's my day. What I will say is that we are supportive of most jurisdictions across the country for working toward a national set of rules. It totally makes sense for us regarding securities here in the Yukon. This government is committed to reducing red tape and regulatory burdens for small businesses while maintaining standards for business operations, various statutes, and regulations such as business securities and tax legislation, including provisions to prevent tax evasion. The territorial *Business Corporations Act* and *Partnership and Business Names Act* are examples of such legislation. In the Yukon, the *Business Corporations Act* provides for corporation ownership to be traceable to individuals.

Let me skip ahead. Maybe I will get it on the supplemental.

We are unaware of any circumstance where full compliance with Yukon law has been associated directly with tax evasion. In each media report, a careful review of the story shows that purported tax evasion has been driven by dishonest behaviour and not flaws in Canadian or territorial legislation.

Mr. Kent: When the Yukon joined the five other jurisdictions to establish the new system that I spoke of in my initial question, we agreed to make certain legislative and regulatory changes at that time. We, along with five other provinces, committed to pass uniform legislation no later than June 2018. Can the minister tell us if this legislative initiative is on track? Will he be tabling a uniform capital markets act in the Spring Sitting of 2018, or will he break this national commitment made by the Yukon government?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: We take security seriously. We don't plan to break any commitment. To share with the member opposite, the House Leader of the Official Opposition, the work is complex and has been delayed nationally. It's not on the same timeline as when I first arrived in this office. I will have to keep you informed about where things are landing.

As soon as it arrives nationally, we will do our work here. The folks in the department are queued up to go as soon as possible. There is work to be done here. We support the principle that all securities dealers, advisors and their representatives must act in the best interest of their clients. Yukon is a member of the Canadian Securities Administrators, which is working continuously on potential measures to enhance investor protection.

A proposed best interest standard was one of several suggested measures aimed at achieving this goal. As a member, Yukon will not abandon the goal of requiring

investor interest to be prioritized through legal means. This initiative is ongoing.

We are confident that, by continuing to work through the Canadian Securities Administrators, we will identify solutions that will achieve the appropriate balance regarding the interests of different stakeholders active in the financial markets.

Mr. Kent: During their time in power, the previous Conservative federal government and, in particular, successive ministers of Finance — that being Jim Flaherty and Joe Oliver — had made this initiative a priority for the federal government. Liberal provincial governments in Ontario and British Columbia have shown strong leadership in advocating for a national securities regulator. Some have referred to it as an important exercise in nation building.

Yet the current government in Ottawa has been dragging its feet, as the minister referenced in his response, in developing the requisite federal legislation. Will the minister lobby the federal government to do its part to move quickly and pass the necessary legislation to create a national securities regulator for those provinces and territories that wish to join?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I am certainly happy to speak with the federal minister. However, they are not dragging their feet. Our partners in the federal government are working diligently and with determination to bring this legislation forward. This initiative is ongoing. We are confident that, by continuing to work through the Canadian Securities Administrators, we will identify solutions that will achieve the appropriate balance regarding the interest of the different stakeholders active in the financial markets.

Mr. Speaker, there is some delay. I'm not here to characterize that in any way as foot-dragging. This is a complicated issue being worked on by several jurisdictions. We are working with those jurisdictions.

Speaker: The time for Question Period has now elapsed.

Speaker's statement

Speaker: The Chair will have two statements today. I'm sure you are waiting with bated breath as to what I have to say today.

Firstly, the Chair will now make a statement about the manner in which members refer to themselves and other members during proceedings. Yesterday, during second reading of Bill No. 5, the Member for Takhini-Kopper King referred to herself by name and then corrected herself. The practice of referring to members by their electoral district or another office held applies when members are speaking of other current members in this House. Members are free to refer to themselves by name.

During second reading of Bill No. 5, the Deputy Speaker intervened when the Leader of the Official Opposition identified the Leader of the Third Party by the pronoun "she" rather than as "Leader of the Third Party." The Chair will now clarify for members that the Deputy Speaker, who was

actually, I believe at that time, sitting as Chair of Committee of the Whole — or it was the Deputy Speaker, okay — does not represent a blanket prohibition against the use of third person pronouns. For example, members are not required to repeatedly refer to a member's electoral district or title held during the course of a single sentence or paragraph. As a rule of thumb, what I would say is that the longer a member has spoken without referencing another member, the more appropriate it will be to refer to the member by a more formal appellation or title.

As a rule, members should endeavour to regularly refer to one another in a formal manner in order to maintain decorum, eliminate any possible misinterpretation and to avoid creating a context that gives the impression that a member is being dismissive of another member.

Secondly, prior to proceeding to Orders of the Day, the Chair will also make a statement regarding the process by which members introduce visitors, other than the rubric Introduction of Visitors that is part of the Daily Routine. The current practice of this House is that members have risen on a point of order at any time during the sitting day other than Question Period to introduce visitors in the public gallery.

The current practice is problematic in two ways. First, rising to introduce a visitor is not a point of order. Second, these points of order can be raised at awkward times, often interrupting the member who has the floor in mid-sentence.

I have consulted with the House Leaders and I am pleased to inform the House of a modification to this procedure. From now on, a member who wishes to introduce a visitor will be required to send a note to the Speaker, Deputy Speaker, or Chair — whomever is presiding at that time — and that is understood outside the rubric of the Introduction of Visitors period.

At that point, the presiding officer will determine the most logical and least disruptive point in the proceedings to allow the introduction to take place. The process for introducing visitors varies across Canada. This modified process is similar to that which is practised in several Canadian jurisdictions. For members' general interest, I can advise that the new procedure most closely follows the protocol followed in the assemblies of Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island.

I can also advise that a cross-jurisdictional survey of our Canadian legislatures as well as of the House of Commons in the United Kingdom reveals a range of approaches, from there being limited or no tradition of recognizing visitors, to the Speaker introducing all visitors, to various other hybrid systems.

In my estimation, I suggest this new procedure is among the most flexible and accommodating of potential options, as it recognizes what I perceive to be the members' consensus of the importance of acknowledging fellow Yukoners and others who have attended to witness the business that is transacted by this House, contrasted with my duty to minimize disruptions of our proceedings. I thank members for their attention to this matter.

We will now proceed to Orders of the Day.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

MOTIONS OTHER THAN GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

Motion No. 23 — *adjourned debate*

Clerk: Motion No. 23, standing in the name of Mr. Adel; adjourned debate, Mr. Cathers.

Speaker: The Member for Lake Laberge — and I'll just confirm how much time you have — 12 minutes, 22 seconds.

Mr. Cathers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I won't use all of my remaining time.

I will just briefly, in speaking to this motion again, note that when we're talking about the subject of the *Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Act*, it's quite important to keep in mind the effect of this legislation and any legislative changes on Yukon citizens. While noting as I did earlier in debate on this same motion when we debated it on May 3 — we recognized that at this point in time — and the Official Opposition agrees — that moving forward with the amendments contained in Bill C-17 is probably the best course of action at this point in time because of the concerns by CYFN and individual First Nations with the process by which those amendments were reached and the issues that occurred with the Government of Canada's consultation with First Nations on those amendments.

But what is really important for all members to keep front and centre of their minds is that this legislation has an effect on Yukoners across the spectrum of Yukon society and the process in YESAA as it's spelled out has an effect on people — everything from, as I mentioned before, triggers previously being quite low for YESAA assessment — so that, quite literally, Yukoners wanting to put in a power pole off their personal property had to go to YESAB for an assessment — to the upper end of that situation where, because of the way the triggers were structured, there were some automatic executive committee triggers, such as a change of 120 days in production of a gold mine. In the case of Victoria Gold's Eagle project, if that project were to come to fruition, it would have been, according to the mine, roughly about four minutes a day in terms of estimated production. A change of that level would require an automatic executive committee screening, which is two years-plus, typically, in a timeline.

There are some areas like that in terms of the triggers that were problematic before amendments were introduced. I would note as well that the issue of reassessment that is currently contained in Bill C-17 is one that could affect over — I am trying to remember the exact number of projects, but I know it is over 50 projects that currently would be affected by that if the legislation were to pass without amendment. We certainly hope that change will be made because it would retroactively change the rules for those who have already entered the process.

In speaking to this motion, I just want to provide my thoughts on behalf of constituents and others across the

territory. It is important in YESAA to ensure that the process works well. The problem that previously existed of inconsistencies between how certain designated offices screen projects of a similar type is one that has not been fully resolved, even with the changes that were made in Bill S-6. It is important that members keep in mind and understand — and that the Yukon government members, in particular, when they are discussing with CYFN, individual First Nations, municipalities, stakeholders, businesses and individuals across the territory — that it is important to recognize that there were problems with YESAA. Some of those problems had proposed solutions contained in Bill S-6. In my personal opinion, none of those were in fact the perfect solution to the problems that existed, but it is important, when this matter is being discussed, to realize that there were problems that needed a solution, and if the proposed solution was not the right one or was decided on through a process that CYFN and individual First Nations had concerns with, it's important for everyone to keep in mind that until the legislation has been gotten right — so to speak — that problems exist that affect the lives of Yukon citizens. That includes everyone who is applying for agricultural land, a new residential land application or a lot enlargement. It includes placer miners who are typically, of course, small Yukon family businesses. It includes larger mines as well. While those larger mines or mineral exploration projects are, in many cases, not Yukon-based companies, typically most of their employees, in fact, are. Considering the effect that there has been in the past, through the effective rate — the regulatory process — notably on the Minto mine and on Alexco — has had an impact on when those companies have made decisions to lay off employees.

In concluding my remarks on this, I would note that the motion, as worded — since the amendment we proposed was not supported by the government — needs further improvement. There is more to it than this clause. It's important to recognize the fact that if Bill C-17 passes, there are additional changes that are required to YESAA to fix the problems that exist.

As I noted in my personal opinion, I thought some of the contents of Bill S-6 were not actually the right solution to the problems that were identified anyway. I do actually agree that there is room for improvement in that area.

In concluding my remarks, I want to remind members that there are a great many Yukoners across this territory whose lives and livelihoods, and the ability to feed their families, are impacted if the YESAA process isn't working well. While the original act structure — the intention of it, I think it's fair to say — was to allow designated offices some discretion in choosing how to assess things. The fact that there are certain patterns, and the ways in which designated offices have assessed projects have not been consistent in all cases. Different designated offices have, in some cases, assessed projects differently from others of a similar type.

It's important to find the right solution to ensure there is consistency and cohesion between how Yukoners applying to proceed with projects in different parts of the territory are

treated so that the basic set of rules is fair to all and assesses what it needs to assess, considers the environmental concerns and public input it needs to consider, as well as input from First Nations and others, including municipal governments.

It is important to ensure that we have an effective process, an efficient process, a fair process and a consistent process, because it does affect the lives of Yukon citizens each and every day.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: I'm very happy to stand in this House and speak on this important and timely motion. I thank my colleague, the Member for Copperbelt North, for putting it forward for us to discuss.

The *Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Act* is a unique and innovative piece of legislation that was developed through a partnership of the federal government, the territorial government and the Council of Yukon First Nations. The act flows directly from chapter 12 of the *Umbrella Final Agreement* and it creates an effective process that engages and represents the interests of all Yukoners to assess the effects of projects and other activities in the Yukon that might affect Yukon.

Mr. Speaker, the partnership that created this act is something Yukoners should be proud of. It reflects the kind of respectful government-to-government relations with Yukon First Nations and other levels of government that our new Liberal government is working hard to reintroduce to the territory. Moving forward, we believe that a healthy collaborative relationship with the First Nation people of Yukon, built on cooperation, partnership and respect, is the path toward reconciliation.

By collaborating with First Nations, we can chart a course that balances environmental protection and sustainable economic growth that will benefit all Yukoners. Part of that is respecting the partnership that gave life to this act. As I said, it is time for us to tend to the relationship and renew the vital partnership between the Yukon government, Yukon First Nations and the federal government that ensures we are all moving forward together in the interest of all Yukoners.

It is important that we recognize and uphold the right of Yukon's First Nations to be consulted on the decisions and activities in this territory that might affect them, a right enshrined in the Constitution. It is important for our relationship with Yukon First Nations, and it is important for the industry and investment in this territory.

Discussing the process around the previous amendments to YESAA contained in Bill S-6, the president of Casino Mining Corporation wrote to the federal Minister of Aboriginal Affairs to express his company's concerns — and I quote: “concerns regarding the fragility of intergovernmental relations in the Yukon surrounding Bill S-6 and the negative impact this is having on the territory's mineral industry.”

He goes on to say, “It is imperative for Casino that the *Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Act* (YESAA) has the broad support of all governments... to ensure the confidence... in the YESAA process and to facilitate investment in the territory.”

The president then made clear that, in his company's eyes — to provide greater certainty for the mineral industry, YESAA needs — and I quote again: "... the full support of all levels of government ... and encourages Canada, Yukon and Yukon First Nation governments to engage, work collaboratively... to address the issues surrounding Bill S-6."

That's exactly why this motion is so significant, Mr. Speaker. It is about working collaboratively with all levels of government, including Yukon First Nations, to restore confidence in the YESAA process and thereby bring certainty back to the territory's mineral industry and make it a safe, attractive place for investment.

The Yukon Liberal government has been working diligently since we were elected to renew more respectful relationships with Yukon First Nations.

Earlier this year, all Yukon First Nations with final agreements, the Council of Yukon First Nations, members of our Cabinet, and I as Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources signed a mining memorandum of understanding to set the goals and priorities and process to improve the management of mineral resources in Yukon. This mining MOU commits the parties to work collaboratively to review and improve legislation and policies for licensing of all phases of the mining life cycle and coming up with solutions together.

The MOU also commits the parties to working collaboratively to review and improve legislation and to develop recommendations to address issues related to licensing and the management of mining projects both on and off settlement land.

Over the last six months, I have had the opportunity to speak with a series of mining companies, organizations that work with mining companies — whether they are legal firms or investment firms. I've had the opportunity to sit with the CYFN leadership and discuss this with the Grand Chief.

I think that we started discussing this motion — and in the beginning stage, there was a bit of confrontation on how we approached it. On our side of the table, we wanted to talk about what had happened to get us here, and I think on the other side of the table — and rightfully so with the opposition — they had spoken with industry members who were still concerned about these issues. The Member for Lake Laberge just touched on that.

The Third Party had some points that they would address to probably align a little bit where we were going, from our standpoint. I don't think that today that is really going to add a lot of value to the key direction that we need to go in.

One of the most impressive things that has happened so far in my role as Energy, Mines and Resources minister is that during the PDAC, the Prospectors and Developers Conference, in Toronto this year, I had the opportunity with some of my colleagues to meet with not only a series of companies, but also different firms that work to support these companies.

What is very interesting when you have an opportunity to speak with some of these organizations — big law firms that do corporate law, but really help to facilitate and understand

what happens in Yukon. It's very impressive that they have a very keen understanding about what exactly is going on in many jurisdictions. I guess in many ways that is their job.

What you quickly find out is that they have a very clear understanding of what's happening from a regulatory regime. They have a very clear understanding of what is happening when you look at infrastructure and capacity. They also have an extremely clear understanding of what is happening from a government-to-government relationship. Certainly in this country, when it comes to the relationship between the provincial or territorial government and First Nation governments, they have a very good understanding of what the climate is.

When I had the opportunity to discuss with at least one very key firm about what was happening in the Yukon, you could tell — there was actually a very important individual from the former federal government who sat in that meeting, a former Cabinet minister who held the biggest portfolios in Canada under the Harper government. There was a refreshing conversation with him about what is happening and how key it is to have appropriate government-to-government relations and positive government-to-government relations. But the other thing that happened in that meeting was that one of the individuals who sat at the table said to me, "You folks are funny in the Yukon because I had a meeting with the previous government and members of the previous government and the one thing they said is that — no matter if it was going to be governed by the individuals across the way, the Third Party or us — the Yukon was in good hands." That was pretty refreshing. I don't even know who said it — it could have been the former minister; it could have been the Leader of the Official Opposition — but it showed a sense of class in how we operate. It certainly sent a message and I think that this is the tone I want to undertake today.

We have an opportunity to be a jurisdiction where, in this particular case and on this issue, we can all come together. I understand from the discussions I have had in this role, Mr. Speaker, what the impetus was toward the changes — some. Not that I agree with him, but I understand. This has been the high topic at many tables. The Member for Lake Laberge is correct. Under Bill S-6, it is actually over 80 times that the 49.1 clause has been used.

I had a discussion today with CYFN leadership about this and actually, in some cases, First Nation governments have used section 49.1 — the first time it was ever used.

Some of the tools have a place, but the challenge is, I think it's fair to say, that we all know as a group of legislators that it was how we got there. People want it; industry was asking for particular changes and we didn't take the time to have all the conversations we needed to have. When that happens, in some cases, it might be a bit of a shortcut but, at the end of the day, you don't get any further ahead.

What is happening now — I have mining organizations that come to me — whether the chamber or the KPMA, mining individuals or mining companies — and they ask, "What happens after this moves through? What happens after Bill C-17?" The 49.1 clause, as one of the examples, which

doesn't trigger reassessment — when this clause is gone, what is going to take its place? What is your answer for that as Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources?

I pondered that over and over again, and I will answer that today. We are in a position where, as quickly as possible in a show of unity in this Legislative Assembly, we need to support coming up with appropriate, respectful solutions. Even if a clause such as 49.1 has been used, it wasn't put in place in the right way. What has really happened is we are now moving back, steps upon steps. We are in a challenging situation. You are right. I don't exactly know how we make sure that not only resource companies, but municipalities that are dealing with landfills — I think the Member for Lake Laberge is probably accurate, in that he is usually very well-versed when he comes in on some of these points. I would say that his point about whether it will be a power pole or other things — those are things that really tie people down in some cases.

We do want to move forward and try to fix those issues. When it comes to timelines, which was another point that was touched upon, we have had long discussions about timelines. But the challenge in these cases is that, all of a sudden, within the resource industry, you have boom and bust. When it is "boom", which it is kind of moving toward right now, and you're in a First Nation government and industry and others say that "this First Nation government isn't moving along quickly enough, we need our timelines tight." Well, can you imagine, Mr. Speaker, when two people are sitting in an office in a small community in the Yukon and a company shows up and drops 7,000 pieces of information in front of you — you have this finite amount of time to analyze everything and that's the reason things get tied up.

In my previous role of working with a self-governing First Nation, the amount of YESAA activity — whether from placer, land development, quartz or whatever it may be, or not even in a mining jurisdiction — we had to respond to was mind-blowing. Part of what we have to do, as a government, is support the fact that we need to be able to put the right capacity in place — support the right capacity in place.

I agree that we have to make sure that we have a balanced approach that one jurisdiction is not providing support or services where there is inequity. What we have to do, on this particular issue — we have a real opportunity.

This morning, as I said yesterday, I did have an opportunity to speak with leadership at CYFN. The focus of that conversation was about people rolling up their sleeves as we work together — potentially at the memorandum of understanding table — and continue to get that good work done. I also, in that discussion, stated that today I would move forward on an amendment to the motion. I felt that there could actually be a very good opportunity for all of us together in the Legislative Assembly — potentially we could meet the needs of everybody and everybody could get together to support it.

I am not going to do justice to the response to that, but I would say that it was extremely positive — and it wasn't positive for the Liberal government or the NDP government

or for the Yukon Party. It was about a group of people in another government saying, "That's pretty amazing that everybody over there is actually going to put aside political maneuvering and positioning to actually move this forward." What I will carry on with is the amendment.

I have just a couple more points. We are already starting to witness the results of this new respectful approach to working collaboratively with First Nations — and we are. If there was a concern about government changing, there has been a commitment of about \$130 million in the last four and a half months. All of the people who are making those decisions know exactly what is going on in the jurisdictions before they commit that kind of money. The world's biggest mining companies are once again interested in Yukon as a place to invest — not that they weren't five years ago. Kinross and other companies have also looked to invest previously. The Yukon Chamber of Mines has written to me to express their support of the passage of Bill C-17 in its current form as part of their commitment to continue to develop a positive working relationship with the Council of Yukon First Nations. I talked to some of the leadership from the board just this week — on Monday — and I was very excited to see that relationship between the Council of Yukon First Nations and the Yukon Chamber of Mines as they work together as well.

It's important, as I talk about that MOU table, to understand that I also have an obligation to the Chamber of Mines to be part of that conversation. It is government-to-government, but also making sure that we have sessions where everybody is at the table together. In the interest of seeing all parties support the motion, I have an amendment that I would now like to introduce.

Amendment proposed

Hon. Mr. Pillai: I move:

THAT Motion No. 23 be amended by adding the following after the words "Parliament of Canada":

"and THAT this House supports establishing a collaborative framework as a means to advance Yukon discussions on ensuring a development assessment process that is both responsive to development interests and concerns and that honours the intent of the final and self-government agreements."

Speaker: The amendment is in order.

It has been moved by the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources:

THAT Motion No. 23 be amended by adding the following after the words "Parliament of Canada":

"and THAT this House supports establishing a collaborative framework as a means to advance Yukon discussions on ensuring a development assessment process that is both responsive to development interests and concerns and that honours the intent of the final and self-government agreements."

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Motion No. 23, if the amendment is accepted, now would read:

THAT this House supports the efforts of the Government of Canada to restore confidence in Yukon's environmental and socio-economic assessment process through amendments contained in Bill C-17, *An Act to amend the Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Act and to make a consequential amendment to another Act*, now under consideration by the Parliament of Canada; and

THAT this House supports establishing a collaborative framework as a means to advance Yukon discussions on ensuring a development assessment process that is both responsive to development interests and concerns and that honours the intent of the final and self-government agreements.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that the amendment improves the motion. It is looking forward and really speaks to our inclusive approach to governing. We want to send a united and unanimous message to the Government of Canada and to the Senate, which is now considering this bill. It also speaks to the work ahead of us. I hope to be supported by all Members of the House on this bill.

Before I finish, as we move forward, I sincerely take the Member for Lake Laberge's offer. I think he understands the set of tools. I'm looking for those tools as we move forward. I think that if we support this today, we should try to take all of our knowledge on this particular file and pull it together to come up with solutions.

Mr. Hassard: I agree. I would like to thank the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. I do believe that this amendment certainly improves the original motion.

As we indicated previously, the issue of reassessment and timelines is definitely an issue for the mining industry. It has been argued by the Leader of the Third Party that other parties who may have to go through the YESAA process also care about these issues as well.

As we highlighted in our remarks, addressing these concerns was a priority of ours during discussions on this amendment. We believe that the mining industry has raised some valid concerns on this issue. As I made clear, certainty is essential for this industry when we are looking to promote investment in our territory. Again, that is why we were interested when we saw the government, along with CYFN and the Chamber of Mines, commit to a collaborative framework to address these concerns. That is why we originally amended the motion to include reference to that.

It is our belief that if this House is to send a message with respect to this act, it should also reference concerns of the mining industry that the government has committed to look at. As we know, at the time we proposed the amendment, the government and the Third Party disagreed and voted against our amendment, which borrowed its language from the government's press release.

However, giving credit where it is due, the government didn't want to turn this into a fight and I should once again

make it clear — neither do we. At the time of our proposed amendment and again today, I want this House to know that our proposed amendment was friendly, and I thank the Premier for meeting with me after our original debate on this motion to discuss our concerns. I think the Premier genuinely listened and came back with new language to address some of the concerns of the Official Opposition.

With respect to this amendment, we asked the government to include the words "and concerns" after the word "interest." We believe that this inclusion captures the industry's concerns with timelines and reassessment, and so we are happy to see it in this amended motion. Because of this, we will be able to support this motion as amended.

I did, however, want to address one additional concern that we have heard from industry, and that is the issue of grandfathering with respect to Bill C-17. In our read of the act, we see no provisions that allow companies that entered into the YESAA process after the passage of Bill S-6 to continue through the process, based off the rules of Bill S-6.

Generally, legislation of this nature allows for the provision of grandfathering so companies that have made expensive investment decisions to enter an environmental assessment process don't find that the rules have changed mid-game.

We believe that the grandfathering provisions are fair and must be considered in these discussions so as not to create uncertainty in the industry. For example, Mr. Speaker, when Bill S-6 passed, it included the following provision for section 39: "39. (1) Subject to subsection (2), the *Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Act*, as it read immediately before the day on which this Act receives royal assent, continues to apply to a proposal for a project that was submitted before that day.

"(2) Section 46.1 and subsections 56(1) to (1.3), 58(1) to (1.3) and 72(4.1) to (4.4) of the *Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Act*, as they read on the day on which this Act receives royal assent, apply to any project in respect of which the evaluation, screening or review has begun before that day but no decision has yet been made, and the time limits, including any extensions, that are referred to in those subsections are counted from that day."

Bill C-17, however, states — and I quote: "Section 39 of the *Yukon and Nunavut Regulatory Improvement Act* is replaced by the following:

"Ongoing projects

"39 The *Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Act*, as it read immediately before June 18, 2015, continues to apply to a proposal for a project that was submitted before that day."

As I stated, we believe that the way this reads implies that any proposal for a project submitted after June 18 and before royal assent of Bill C-17 will not be grandfathered in. I did bring this to the attention of the Premier. He listened to my concerns and I was encouraged that he agreed. I just ask that, in his discussions with the federal government, the Premier please raise this concern with the responsible ministers and

officials so it can be rectified in the legislative process of Parliament.

I thank the Premier for listening to us on this and working with all parties in this Legislature to come up with language that could be accepted by all. I would just like to say thank you, Mr. Speaker, because the Official Opposition will be supporting the motion as amended.

Ms. Hanson: On the amendment, the New Democratic Party caucus would also like to thank the Premier and the minister for following up after the debate of May 3. That debate had a disappointing outcome, so we appreciate the efforts made by the government to try to find a way to bring all three parties together on this with a view that we seek unanimous support from this Legislative Assembly in indicating to the federal government that we do want to see Bill C-17 passed, and that we do want to see the integrity of the Yukon environmental and socio-economic assessment process made whole again. Bill S-6 clearly did not do that and it caused considerable concern.

I want to say and I do say that the NDP will support the motion. I did express to the Premier that I do have an underlying concern that, as much as the language in this speaks to honouring the intent of the final and self-government agreements, all parties spent many, many years translating the language of the development assessment process chapter into YESAA. That legislation was barely off the drawing board — the ink was barely dry and the process had barely begun — before a five-year review process was launched. We were reviewing something that hadn't even had a chance to get going. It hadn't gotten its legs under it, and then the parties all came together and found agreement on 99 percent of the recommendations of that review of a process that had barely begun. We had a territorial government of the day that decided that they would undermine the integrity even of that process and put forward amendments.

As I said this on May 3, the outcome of that whole debacle was that Yukoners understood that what was negotiated in the final agreements is about the new relationship and that YESAA applies not just to First Nations and not just to Yukon government and not just to mining companies. The public is invested in this. When we talk about establishing this collaborative framework, it is not, as the CYFN said during the response to the Bill S-6, intended to try to assist rushing complex projects through assessment processes. We know that will have negative impacts on our environment, our economy and our communities. We all witnessed that this week — a reminder of that when we went to Faro.

It is not responding to the cyclical pressures. Every government is susceptible to this — every government — whether it's the Yukon government, the federal government or First Nation governments. They are susceptible to the cyclical pressures of, "We are going to make it this time. The boom is on us." That is why we need to ensure that whatever collaborative framework is developed here — and we are going to have discussions on a development assessment

process — it has to maintain its independence. Yukon First Nations signed on to that. Yukon government signed on to that, and Yukon citizens — First Nation and non-First Nation — expect it. They expect no less than maintaining the integrity of the independence of the environmental assessment process in the territory.

We support the idea of working together, of course, but we certainly do seek a strong statement of commitment from this territorial government that when we are talking about this, we are talking about maintaining the integrity of an independent, arm's-length entity. This collaborative process is not intended to try to influence how YESAB makes its decisions as an independent body. I am asking for that to be on the record, because I think it's very important. We have witnessed over the last 20-some years governments of all stripes, federally and territorially — well, mostly two stripes — undermining the integrity of what was negotiated.

It's really important. I said to the Premier and I said to the minister that I do support the idea of the process, but I am concerned when we talk about this in the context of the changing environment because we're now on the cusp of another boom. Well, that's not what drives us and it is certainly what should not be driving us if we look down the future in terms of the integrity of our environmental assessment process, territorially and federally.

So the NDP caucus is pleased to support the motion as drafted. We're not going to try to change anything at all, but we just want to have it on the record that if there is any sign from any party — we're fearless on this; I don't care which level of government tries to move away from the independence of this body, we will speak out.

Speaker: Are you prepared for the question on the amendment?

Some Hon. Members: Division.

Division

Speaker: Division has been called.

Bells

Speaker: Mr. Clerk, please poll the House.

Hon. Mr. Silver: Agree.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Agree.

Hon. Ms. Dendys: Agree.

Hon. Ms. Frost: Agree.

Mr. Gallina: Agree.

Mr. Adel: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Agree.

Mr. Hutton: Agree.

Mr. Hassard: Agree.

Mr. Kent: Agree.

Ms. Van Bibber: Agree.

Mr. Cathers: Agree.

Ms. McLeod: Agree.

Mr. Istchenko: Agree.

Ms. Hanson: Agree.

Ms. White: Agree.

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

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

Amendment to Motion No. 23 agreed to

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

Hon. Mr. Silver: I'm pleased to rise today on the motion as amended. I believe our government supports this repeal. It is an important day in this Legislative Assembly. I'm very pleased to partner with Yukon First Nation chiefs and the Yukon Chamber of Mines to provide a united voice that supports the repeal of the four amendments to the *Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Act*. We are also very pleased to have the support of the Official Opposition and the Third Party on this motion.

I honestly believe that working together in this House benefits all Yukoners. I'm very proud to serve as Premier in this Legislature, particularly when members are able to agree on the best pathway forward for the territory. We're very confident that our united voices are going to be well-received by the Government of Canada. Standing together on this issue gives us strength.

I look forward to passing this motion as amended today with all members' support and, in doing so, sending a clear message to the Senate: move forward on Bill C-17 in the House of Commons. I think it's crucial to resetting the relationship between the Government of Canada, Yukon and Yukon First Nations. Improving these relationships is a priority for the federal government, and progress on this issue will support that commitment. As we have seen today, that is a commitment that we have all shared here in the Legislative Assembly.

I look forward to working with the federal government and Yukon First Nations to implement the bill once it is passed. We are committed to participating in discussions to ensure that all involved parties have a thorough and common understanding of how the bill will be interpreted.

It is integral that Yukon First Nations, industry and government collaborate and foster respectful, responsible relationships. It is extremely encouraging to have a positive and effective working relationship with the federal Liberal government and a government that is listening to the opinions of Yukon First Nations — and Canadian First Nations, for that matter.

Here in Yukon, our government is listening to Yukon First Nations and what we have witnessed here today is the collective agreement that every MLA in this Legislature also believes in that statement — that we are all listening to First Nation governments, we are all listening to industry, we are all listening to the concerns for our environment and for our economy. I really do truly appreciate working in collaboration with the two opposition leaders. I think it's a big day when we

turn the page on a big topic that has been discussed in this Legislative Assembly for a long time now. It's good to see this.

Bill C-17 is a federal bill that affects all Yukoners and I believe supporting Bill C-17 will benefit every single one of us. With that, again, thank you very much to everybody who supported the amendment and to the collaboration and the work of the leaders of both opposition parties, and I look forward to passing this motion as amended. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Ms. Hanson: I just want to say again, as I said earlier, that we thank the Premier and the minister for working collaboratively, working in cooperation — I'm tired of collaboration, quite frankly — with the other parties.

I understand the importance of this getting through the Senate, and I think it will become incumbent upon the Liberal government to ensure that, even though they will espouse that they are independent, they do signal to the Liberal senators — that's why I just said they would espouse — that there is no such thing. They are Liberal senators nonetheless.

I would also urge — just as a suggestion again in the spirit of the cooperation that has been demonstrated this afternoon — the Premier, the Leader of the Official Opposition and the Leader of the Third Party to agree to jointly send a letter to the Yukon senator as an olive branch. The Yukon senator was the senator who introduced the amendments we now know as Bill S-6 in the Senate, and I think it would be a good sign that times change and we would like to signal to our Yukon senator that we also look to him, to say to his colleagues, partisan and non-partisan, in that Red Chamber that it's time to do the right thing and ensure there are no impediments or slowing down of the passage in that Chamber when Bill C-17 hits it.

Speaker: Is there any further debate?

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

Mr. Adel: I would like to begin by thanking all members of this House for their cooperation in amending this motion and moving it forward. It's my honour to stand in the House, in the 34th Sitting of the Legislative Assembly of the Yukon Territory, to wrap up this debate on the amended motion.

In any process, consultation is the key — consultation between different orders of government, in line with the spirit and intent of working together. That is what we have seen today, and I hope Yukoners, constituents and all people of the Yukon see a lot more of this as we move forward.

The Liberal government has made repairing relationships a priority, and this amended motion represents another step in repairing relationships with Yukon First Nation governments and the Yukon environmental and socio-economic assessment process. This motion sets us on a course toward reconciliation, to acknowledging the final agreements and the First Nations'

integral role in sustainable resource development, as well as other projects that come forward. It's not just about mining.

It will have a major impact on the future of the Yukon's mining industry by providing a more stable economic environment for investment. We have chosen to govern and to work together alongside one another, and we are committed to working in collaboration with Canada and First Nations.

This motion is an example of governments moving forward together, working in partnership to better approach our life in the north. We have come full circle with this. We have worked on a resolution, or this motion, to help improve trust at all levels of government, to improve our path toward reconciliation, to create an economic, stable investment environment in the Yukon for all people moving forward here who want to work in the Yukon, develop a mine, develop a business, or whatever they choose.

The motion, as amended, if passed, will move us forward as we endeavour to make the Yukon a better place for all Yukoners.

Speaker: Are you prepared for the question?

Some Hon. Members: Division.

Division

Speaker: Division has been called.

Bells

Speaker: Mr. Clerk, please poll the House.

Hon. Mr. Silver: Agree.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Agree.

Hon. Ms. Dendys: Agree.

Hon. Ms. Frost: Agree.

Mr. Gallina: Agree.

Mr. Adel: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Agree.

Mr. Hutton: Agree.

Mr. Hassard: Agree.

Mr. Kent: Agree.

Ms. Van Bibber: Agree.

Mr. Cathers: Agree.

Ms. McLeod: Agree.

Mr. Istchenko: Agree.

Ms. Hanson: Agree.

Ms. White: Agree.

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

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

Motion No. 23, as amended, agreed to

Motion No. 21

Clerk: Motion No. 21, standing in the name of Mr. Gallina.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to continue its discussions with the Government of Canada and the State of Alaska to lobby the United States Congress to restore funding to the Shakwak highway project in order to support this vital northern transportation link.

Mr. Gallina: Mr. Speaker, this is a timely and important motion for this House to discuss. American funding is crucial to ensure the continued quality and safety of the Shakwak highway. Next month, the Premier will be travelling to Washington, DC. This will be a significant opportunity for the Premier to bring attention to some of the international issues of importance to Yukoners.

One of these issues is ANWR. Two weeks ago today, this House unanimously agreed to support the Vuntut Gwitchin people and the Gwich'in people in their efforts to protect the sacred calving grounds of the Porcupine caribou herd. It is my hope that we will also find unanimous support for this motion about funding for the Shakwak highway. Demonstrating to our friends in the United States that we stand united in our support will only strengthen the Premier's message while in Washington.

To properly understand where we are at when it comes to the Shakwak project, a little history is in order. The Shakwak road connects the Haines Road to the Alaska Highway at Haines Junction and continues on through Destruction Bay to Beaver Creek and to the Alaskan border. This section of the highway is the only all-season road link from the southeast Alaska panhandle to the Alaska interior, and the portion heading north from Haines Junction is the only all-season road link connecting Alaska to the Lower 48 states.

The highway is called "Shakwak", from the Tlingit word meaning "between the mountains". Unfortunately, the name is rather poignant as the territory now finds itself between a rock and a hard place when it comes to funding the ongoing upkeep of the highway. Let me explain. In 1977, the Canadian and American governments negotiated the Shakwak agreement to improve and maintain this highway. The deal was that the United States would pay the costs of reconstruction to an agreed-upon standard from funds allocated by the US Congress while Canada would manage the reconstruction, provide the land and construction materials and maintain the highway thereafter.

This agreement has been effective for most of the time since it was signed 40 years ago, and it always depended on the United States Congress allotting a portion of its transportation bill specifically to funding work on the Shakwak project. Prior to 1991, earmarks for Shakwak totalled \$46 million US. In 1991, the first major new federal transportation bill in the post-interstate highway system era was passed — the *Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act* — ISTEA — of 1991. ISTEA allotted \$15 million US per year for Shakwak. In 1998, the United States introduced the *Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century* — TEA-21 — which saw the per-year Shakwak funding increase to \$18 million US. Later in 2005, President George Bush signed into law the *Safe, Accountable, Flexible,*

Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users — SAFETEA-LU — which included \$30 million US earmarked for Shakwak. I think it's fair to say that as we learn every day that history has been kinder to President Bush than anyone could have expected.

Of course, President Obama famously campaigned on a message of change, and change certainly occurred in 2012 when he signed the *Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act*, MAP-21, which earmarked an unprecedented zero dollars for Shakwak. The local media even noted that the government at the time was taken by surprise by this notice.

Up to 2012, the total American funding for Shakwak totalled \$460 million US, but there has been no additional funding since then. Apparently moving ahead in the 21st century doesn't include looking back at the roads built and agreements made in the 20th century.

The Shakwak agreement is not yet complete because there is construction work on the highway that has yet to be completed. This includes paving the remaining section of the Haines Road, paving from Haines Junction to Destruction Bay, stabilizing extensive permafrost between Destruction Bay and the Alaskan border, and paving from Destruction Bay to the Alaskan border.

What has happened since 2012? In 2013-14, the Yukon Party government budgeted \$17.5 million for Shakwak, the largest item in the transportation capital budget, but not the \$26 million spent the previous year as well as the \$40 million spent in 2006. In 2013, the previous government spent less than \$10 million at \$9.915 million on Shakwak and not the \$17.5 million budgeted. The following year, 2014-15, the Yukon Party government budgeted over \$23 million at \$23.25 million but ended up spending less than \$13 million at \$12.887 million.

This pattern of overbudgeting and underspending is another reason why the Yukon Liberal government has made strategic investments in the Department of Finance in order to increase capacity, include more Yukon-specific information, and create more accurate budgeting to show Yukoners the true cost of government — but I digress.

Four years ago, the government claimed to have had \$48 million left over in the American Shakwak funding and, in 2014, MAP-21 expired and was replaced by the *Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act*, the FAST act. The FAST act does not expire until 2020 and, like MAP-21 before it, contains zero dollars for Shakwak.

In the meantime, the outstanding work on the Shakwak is estimated to cost between \$280 million and \$300 million to complete. Now in office, we see the Shakwak reserve fund is down to less than \$7 million at \$6.7 million and will run out this year. We have budgeted the majority of this for permafrost rehabilitation between Destruction Bay and the Alaska border this year. This work should lead to a contribution of \$3.8 million to this year's GDP along with 40 jobs for the Yukon economy, but hundreds of millions of dollars in paving remains to be done.

Here we are, with major costs looming for the future of the Shakwak project and no more reserve funds. That's the history, Mr. Chair.

What's clear moving forward is that securing funding is crucial to the reconstruction and rehabilitation of Shakwak. A lack of funding will severely impact our ability to improve the highway and mitigate the permafrost degradation of this key transportation link. This stretch of road is not only, as I mentioned, the only link between the Alaska panhandle and the Alaska interior — and includes part of the Alaska Highway itself, the only land link between Alaska and the Lower 48 states — but it also supports mostly US traffic.

Americans account for well over three-quarters of the traffic on that highway. It is clearly an important transportation line for our friends in Alaska, as well as their counterparts in the Lower 48, given the significant commercial transport of goods and resources in and out of Alaska along the north Alaska Highway.

Ensuring the highway is up to standard and continues to be improved reduces the cost of commercial transportation by saving travel time and decreasing wear and tear on transportation equipment. The road also supports tourism into Alaska and those in Canada and those coming from the Lower 48 states. The many years of work that has gone into Shakwak since the agreement was struck in the 1970s have been crucial for ensuring this stretch of road is safe for the many thousands of people who travel it every year, both for work and for leisure.

That work has demonstrated what a successful Canada-US partnership can accomplish, and it is important that we try to renew this historic partnership. That is why we are debating this motion and I look forward to hearing what my colleagues in this House have to say about it.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Istchenko: It is with great honour that I get to sit here. I'm happy to rise today to speak to this motion forwarded by the Member for Porter Creek Centre. I want to speak to the importance that this section of highway has for Yukoners, Alaskans and tourists alike. I'll get a little more into that in a bit.

Once again, I want to lend my voice to the chorus of encouragement to the United States Congress to restore funding to the Shakwak section of the Alaska Highway through its transportation bill.

I'm going to go a little bit more in depth for Hansard purposes, so I can show to my constituents the work I have been doing, as I have done in the past.

We know it was removed from the United States' budget in 2013, after 3.5 decades of funding for the reconstruction and maintenance of the Shakwak sections of the highway on that side of the border. The Yukon Party, after I was elected — I was the Highways and Public Works minister, and the information, being briefed, came that the funding is going to be drying up here. There was a change in government — and I'll speak a little bit to that a little bit later — in the United States with the federal government, and they didn't line up

with the Republicans in Alaska, so we have seen zero dollars. I have heard that a few times here already.

The Yukon Party government lobbied for the reinstatement of this crucial funding to the transportation bill since its removal. I'm very blessed, and I will be glad to mention this person's name in the House today. He was one of the longest-serving senators in Alaska — I believe it was 30 years. His name was Randy Phillips. He owned an octagon cabin in my riding, not far from my house, actually. Randy has been a wonderful ally to me. He read my quarterly brochure that I put out on what your MLA is doing, and he came on Canada Day and said, "We need to talk; I think I can help you."

He was the one who helped me get in touch with Lisa Murkowski and Congressman Young — many of the legislators. He had direct lines to them with direct phone calls back and forth. That is where we started. I started getting in contact with them. I sat down at meetings with their officials when they came through. The government hired a lobbyist in Washington to work for us. We met with the then-Conservative government. Every time we went to Ottawa, it was a priority for us. We brought that forward, whether it was the Foreign Affairs minister or anyone who was going to Washington.

I sent letters to the US senators for Alaska and the Governor of Alaska, requesting reinstatement of this fund. I followed up this year, after the election, with the above-mentioned, as well as the Canadian Ambassador to the United States in a separate letter to our Canadian Minister of Foreign Affairs. Today I want to read these into the record for Hansard purposes.

On October 5, 2015, I sent a letter to the Hon. Lisa Murkowski of the United States Senate, the Hon. Dan Sullivan of the United States Senate, and the Office of the Governor.

"Dear Senator Murkowski:

"I noted with interest that President Obama recently visited Alaska. By all accounts, President Obama was kept quite busy, exploring your beautiful state. I am writing to inquire if the Alaska Highway Shakwak funding was on the agenda and what the result of any discussions might be. The Alaska Highway remains the only highway linking Alaska to the lower 48 states.

"As you know, Yukon has lobbied federal representatives in Washington, D.C. to reinstate Shakwak funding into the transportation bill. Yukon government has excellent working relationships with all Alaska state legislators as well as yourself and the Alaska federal delegation. I was hoping there was an opportunity to raise the need for the Shakwak funding with the President to continue to support the longstanding linkage as key arctic infrastructure for Alaska.

"Thank you and I look forward to hearing from you on this critical matter."

After the election, getting back into my role in opposition, on March 14, 2017, I wrote another follow-up letter to: Hon. Lisa Murkowski, United States Senate; the

Hon. Dan Sullivan, United States Senate; and the Hon. Bill Walker, the Office of the Governor.

"Dear Senator Murkowski, Senator Sullivan, and Governor Walker:

"I'm writing to follow-up on my letter of October 5, 2015, in which I outlined the importance of the Alaska Highway to Yukon and Alaska, and inquired about the status of the Alaska Highway Shakwak Project funding.

"I would like to once again bring to your attention the critical importance of the reinstatement of the Shakwak Project funding into the transportation bill. This integral infrastructure is not only a key component to our northern economy, tourism, transportation and recreational capacity. It is also a strategic asset to security and sovereignty of the United States, being the only access by land between the Lower 48 States and the Pacific Command bases located in Alaska. In addition, the Alaska Highway serves as a supply route for oil and gas development in Alaska, and an improved highway system through the Shakwak Project would provide safer travel to the more than 1,000 vehicles that use the Shakwak section of the Alaska Highway every day during the summer months, the majority of which is constituted by American traffic.

"Unfortunately, the lack of secured funding for reconstruction and maintenance places the future of the Shakwak corridor, the only highway to Alaska and the Yukon's largest trade route, in jeopardy. I am appreciative of the exemplary working relationship between Yukon and Alaska in past years, and am hoping that with the change in government at the federal level, there may be an opportunity to bring forward this critical matter for review.

"Thank you for your attention to this inquiry, and I look forward to your response."

Then, on March 28, 2017, I wrote a letter to the Hon. Chrystia Freeland, our Minister of Foreign Affairs in the House of Commons.

"Dear Minister Freeland,

"I am writing today to make you aware of the Alaska Highway Shakwak Project, a critical piece of infrastructure connecting Canada and the United States, and to ask that you work with the U.S. to have funding reinstated for the reconstruction of this corridor.

"By way of background, the Shakwak Agreement has been in place since 1977, for the reconstruction and maintenance of the Shakwak portion of the Alaska Highway from Haines Junction, Yukon to the Alaska Border and extending down the Haines Road. As per the agreement, the U.S. agreed to pay the cost of reconstruction, while Canada would manage the reconstruction, provide land and granular resources, and provide maintenance.

"Unfortunately, the previous U.S. administration stopped including funding for this project in late 2012. This means that the funding available for reconstruction of this corridor is almost completely exhausted. However, there are major capital improvements required for this part of the Alaska Highway and the lack of secure funding for reconstruction

places the future of the Shakwak corridor, Yukon's largest trade route, in jeopardy.

"The Shakwak portion of the Alaska Highway is an integral transportation link to the North and a key component to Yukon's economic infrastructure. Additionally the highway serve as a supply route for oil and gas development in Alaska as well as a strategic asset to security and sovereignty in Canada and the U.S. An improved highway system through the commitment of funds to this project would provide safer travel to the thousands of vehicles that travel the highway daily during the summer months, the majority of which is American traffic.

"I am appreciative again of the good working relationship between Canada and the US in past years and hope that it can continue. Given that the new US administration has demonstrated interest in supporting capital projects of national importance to both of our countries, such as Keystone XL, there may be an opportunity to bring forward this critical matter for review. By raising this with your counterparts we may once again see the US contribute much needed funding to this critical piece of infrastructure.

"Thank you for your attention to this inquiry and I look forward to your response."

I want to talk a little bit about the strategic importance and I'm going to get a little bit more in depth than the previous speaker on this. There are four key parts to the strategic importance of this — national defence, energy security, tourism and our transportation and trucking. With national defence — the Alaska Highway is strategically important to the US, as it is the only access by land between the Lower 48 and the Pacific command bases that are located in Alaska. Eighty percent of all goods and commodities, including military material, are shipped to Alaska by sea through the port of Anchorage. A long-term distribution in the port operations in Anchorage would seriously disrupt DOT logistics. DOT relies on the Alaska Highway as an alternative route for the Lower 48. I believe Economic Development did a study a few years back and if the marine traffic was down we would see a truck on the Alaska Highway every two minutes heading to Alaska.

Energy security — the Alaska Highway is of critical importance to the construction of the proposed Alaska natural gas pipeline. Good highway access will have a large impact on construction logistics costs. The highway also plays an important role in resupply for oil production on Alaska's North Slope.

Tourism is important to Alaska's economy and a large number of US citizens visit Alaska each year via the Alaska Highway. I believe when Economic Development did the survey, between 80 and 85 percent of the traffic on the north Alaska Highway is American traffic. Visitors to Alaska need a safe and well-maintained highway in order to sustain the tourism industry.

For trucking, Lynden Transport of Seattle, Washington comments that reconstruction of the Haines Road and the north Alaska Highway is critical to truckers carrying the goods between the Lower 48 states in Alaska. Bringing that

part of the route up to the same standard as the rest of the highway will enable truckers to complete deliveries on time, reduce energy costs and extend the life of vehicles. It is an instrumental to trade, tourism, jobs and access to medical care and all other necessities of life.

A little bit of history: the Alaska Highway and Haines Road, collectively known as the northwest highway system, were constructed by the United States Army and civilian contractors hired by the United States government during World War II for the defence against Japanese invasion of Alaska. In 1945, following the war, the northwest highway system was transferred to Canada. After the transfer, Canada focused its maintenance and upgrading efforts on the portion of the Alaska Highway south of Whitehorse, Yukon's capital, since few Canadian residents lived north of the city.

The northern section of the Alaska Highway and Haines Road fell into disrepair and, in 1955, since these highways were so important to the United States and Alaska, discussions between Canada and the US commenced on upgrading the northern sections.

In 1973, Public Law 93-87 established a program to upgrade the northern sections of the Alaska Highway and the Haines Road in Canada, under the title "23 U.S. Code § 218". The program was subject to the negotiation of a suitable agreement with Canada. We heard earlier in 1977 that the Shakwak agreement was signed by the Canadian and United States governments. The agreement set out terms and conditions under which upgrading 325 miles of the highway would proceed.

The goal of the Shakwak program was, and continues to be, the reconstruction of the north Alaska Highway and Haines Road to a modern, all-weather, two-lane paved highway to be funded by the United States with year-round maintenance of reconstructed highway to be finished by Canada. Program funds have been authorized in surface transportation legislation in 1973. It wasn't one of the most recent ones, but I think the member opposite spoke to the most recent one being the MAP-21 bill. That's a little bit of the history of it.

I want to talk a little bit now, Mr. Speaker, about the terms of the agreement. This is important because the options that Highways and Public Works and the government of the day can look at for funding for this as they move forward, and the way the agreement is stated — I'll talk about the terms — it does affect it.

Canada is to reconstruct the north Alaska Highway and the Haines Road to standards agreed to in writing prior to commencement of the reconstruction. The United States is to pay Canada the cost of reconstruction out of funds appropriated for that purpose by the US Congress. These are actually US funds appropriated in the United States of America that are actually spent in Canada, which was signed into this agreement, which is incredible. Canada was to provide the necessary right of way for the reconstruction for the period of 25 years from the agreement coming into force and thereafter until five years after either party shall have notified the other that the right of way is no longer required

for the purpose of the highways, whereupon the agreement shall cease to have force and effect.

Canada was not to impose or permit any highway toll to be charged for the use of the highway by vehicles or persons, and Canada is not to levy or assess, directly or indirectly, any fee, tax or other charge for the use of the highway by vehicles or persons from the United States and does not apply to vehicles or persons from Canada.

Canada was to grant reciprocal agreements of vehicle registration and driver's licence in accordance with agreements between responsible authorities in each country. Canada was to maintain — and I'll get into the maintenance of it a little later — the highway after construction while the agreement remains in force and effect. Canada was to provide access to natural construction material such as gravel, rock and earth fill to be used for reconstruction. Canada was to arrange for the reconstruction to be performed under contracts awarded by competitive bidding insofar as possible and without regard as to whether the contractors are American or Canadian. Canada was to supervise the reconstruction and obtain the concurrence of the United States related to program and administration of the work.

I said I was going to speak a little bit about the maintenance costs, and this is key with this being the last year. We heard it from the Member for Porter Creek Centre that this is the last year — the last of the money. I believe that the Department of Highways and Public Works in the past managed the money quite well. You have a short season. I worked for Highways and Public Works and worked on the Shakwak project for many years running a patch crew that patched those sections that fell apart. You have a short window for construction up there. The rain picks up halfway through the summer and it rains and rains and rains up there. Sometimes you don't get to spend those funds, and there are reasons for it.

When you want to look at it — I'll pick the year 2007-08, and these costs are per kilometre. In 2007-08, the maintenance costs per kilometre — for one kilometre in the Shakwak area; the part with the permafrost and reason why we need more funding — is \$2,706 per kilometre per year. Resurfacing was \$9,364 per kilometre. Capital, which is construction, is \$2,838 per kilometre. That is \$14,970 per kilometre for that stretch with the permafrost-related issues. On a stretch in the Haines Junction area where there is no permafrost between Haines Junction and Whitehorse, for example, in 2007-08, maintenance costs were \$1,265 per kilometre, and resurfacing was \$32 per kilometre. The total is \$1,294 per kilometre as opposed to the O&M of \$14,970 per kilometre. You can see the difference. The expenditures per kilometre on the summer maintenance activities related to the surface conditions of the highway are five to six times more for the Beaver Creek section than the Haines Junction section that does not have permafrost.

I want to talk a little bit now about what needs to be done because I think that is really important. The residents of Kluane and my constituents drive it every day. The Department of Highways and Public Works has put a lot of

time and effort into that section, and they deserve the utmost respect for the maintenance and the reconstruction — the engineers. I am hearing from constituents that the road is better. If you talk to the residents of Beaver Creek, when they head south to Whitehorse, the road is better than when they head north to Tok or to Anchorage when they go to get supplies once in a while through the states.

The Haines highway still has earthworks, drainage structures, gravel base, coarse and interim asphalt surface treatment — it's basically 100-percent complete. The asphalt portion of it, I think, is 64-percent complete. I think the member opposite spoke a little bit about that. I think there is still 63 kilometres of asphalt — I can almost know it like the back of my hand, I drive it so much — that needs to be done. It has BST on it right now.

On the north Alaska Highway, all of the bridges have been completed. Of the asphalt and concrete paving, only two percent has been completed. That is the hundreds of millions that the member opposite spoke about. There is 100 kilometres of asphalt and concrete pavement still to be completed on the stable section of the highway, and that is the good section when you leave Haines Junction and you get to Destruction Bay. There is going to be repeated restoration of the 218 kilometres that the member spoke about earlier. That is what is what they are focusing on this year. Every year you drive over it, the permafrost gets you again.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, you can see that there is an inherent need for this funding to be continued, and one of the things that I always said to the department when I was the minister — and I know the previous minister, and with the questions the Premier would ask in the House — was that, if we can't get this money reinstated — this is how important this is — I just talked about the O&M costs on that — that is going to take monies away.

We're the kind of people in the Yukon where we believe everybody needs a fair shake and to be open and accountable and everything we hear. It is going to take away from Highways and Public Works budgets, for example, in your riding, Mr. Chair, or in the Premier's riding. There will be less funding and there is going to be more O&M — meaning that when the last of the Shakwak is spent, they are going to still have to fix a portion of the road in anyone's riding, so there is going to be less to pick from. This is why it's important.

I'm very, very encouraged to see the comments from the Member for Porter Creek Centre that the Premier was going to address this when he goes to Washington.

I just want to talk a little bit about the motion that I put forward. I put one forward earlier in this Sitting: "THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to consider a bipartisan mission with the Official Opposition to Alaska and Washington, DC, to lobby the United States government to reinstate Shakwak project funding."

I understand how being in a new government — I'm glad to see that they're looking to move forward with going to Washington to meet. I know that, in previous governments, the Premier has brought members from different political parties down there. ANWR was a good example. I think the

previous MLA had that opportunity to travel with the Government of the Day for hot topic items, for lack of a better word.

I am encouraged by the Premier going, and whatever information that we have on this side that I can for him — to help him moving forward. I think it's a little bit of an exciting time. Maybe it's not such an exciting time to be an American right now — I'm not going to get into that — but we do see that the government in Washington now is aligned with the government in the State of Alaska. We know how it works. I think the Leader of the Third Party mentioned something about someone's cousins in Ottawa, so you have an opportunity now for a little bit better.

Randy Phillips explained this to me — the old senator. I didn't understand what the MAP-21 bill was — and I don't think many in here understand how American politics work and how it works between Congress and Senate. "It's a big plate," he said to me. He said, "Every state puts on that plate..." It's called the *Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act*, and it's a funding and authorization bill to govern the United States for surface transportation spending.

The State of Ohio wants to do another interstate. Alaska wants money for Shakwak. Everybody wants something and it only goes so far, but they have their lobbyists and they get in there, but everything is on this plate. The money we're asking for is a small decimal point in the States. It's not like we're asking them for 100 percent of their budget. He says they start picking, and when you're not on the right side of the government, sometimes your stuff gets picked out early. Sometimes you trade and it goes back and forth. We've been kind of stuck in that for the last little while.

I'm very encouraged to see, moving forward, that both governments are both lined up. I think this is so important for the Yukon and for us Yukoners. It's very important for my riding. When I spoke a little bit about the strategic importance — and I mentioned this when I talked to Senator Murkowski. I said that we have the Arctic Ocean opening up, the Northwest Passage opening up and we have trade. With that, me being a Canadian Ranger, I explained to him that my fellow Rangers across the north — the eyes and ears of the north — see this. We see a trawler dumping waste. We see that security is so important there with the link of that and the only road access is the Alaska Highway. That's how important it is to national security for Canada and national security for the United States of America. The United States is one of our allies and they been our ally for years. We work together when it comes to sovereignty issues.

I guess in closing, my interest in reinstating the Shakwak fund goes beyond my former position as the Minister of Highways and Public Works. As the MLA for the Kluane riding, I represent the area of the Yukon in which the Shakwak corridor lies. My constituents rely on this.

I want to speak a little bit about that — on their daily highway activities. Taking time off from work in January — minus 44 — and postponing their trip so it warms up to the minus 30s so they can travel that 300 miles to Whitehorse to go to the doctor, to go to the dentist — unlike the modern

amenities with more of a population based here. We can take five minutes or 10 minutes to run down to get our eyeglasses. That's a day trip in my riding. Having a decent stretch of highway to drive is so key and so important. It has to do with everything from fire to ambulance and to goods and services. We rely on it. It takes them to work and home. It provides that tourist traffic to help to drive economic benefits into the area. It's the road home for residents of Beaver Creek — I said that — visiting Whitehorse. The highway is an integral part of our northern economy here in the Yukon. Beyond that, it is also key, as I said — and I'm going to reiterate it — to tourism, transportation, national security, and, of course, recreation.

Alaska is and will always be our key vacation spot for American travellers. I've seen this before — the dream of hooking up to a travel trailer and heading north is alive and well. We're seeing them all drive through Haines Junction right now where they're going back to Alaska for the summer. The fact is, more than 85 percent of them are Americans who are heading north. This tourism aspect of the highway travel is a large driver of the economic benefits in my community. I ran a hotel for years and an outdoor tourism business, and I understand how key this is for our restaurants, our private campgrounds and our public campgrounds that are very popular, motels, bed and breakfasts. Why wouldn't you travel the Alaska Highway for the view of the most beautiful riding in the Yukon — of Kluane? I just wanted to make sure everyone was paying attention — that's good.

The Shakwak corridor is a strategic asset to everyone. I'm just hoping that when the Premier has the opportunity or when the minister has the opportunity to meet with their Alaska counterparts, I would be more than happy to come with them to provide my assistance to anything. I have a pretty good working knowledge of this file. When the Premier gets back, I will be quizzing him as to what was said and what he heard.

For that, I'm going to pretty much sum up. I think I have talked enough about this. This isn't the first time. It's probably not going to be the last time I stand up in this House to support the constituents of the great riding of Kluane and work hard for them. I'm going to be very interested in listening to other comments from other members. I want to thank the Member for Porter Creek Centre for this motion. Of course, this party will be supporting it.

Ms. Hanson: I thank both the Member for Porter Creek Centre for bringing forward the motion today with respect to restoring funding for the Shakwak highway project, as well as the Member for Kluane, whose lived experience of living and driving the north Alaska Highway over his whole lifetime is pretty evident in the comments that he has made this afternoon. His experience living and working in the region as well as his ministerial experience — he and I, I think, were both reading the same document. I think I would commend — the minister and the Member for Porter Creek Centre no doubt have already looked at it, but it's a very informative document that was prepared by Highways and Public Works in June 2011, which really provided a status report on the Shakwak highway project. I found it most interesting because I have

been driving that highway since 1978, and I can't tell you that the end part of it has improved much since 1978 despite the former minister's comments.

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Ms. Hanson: The last time I drove it was about a year ago.

The reason why I think it's important that we need to ensure that we find a way, as a territorial and Canadian government, to encourage our American Alaskan partners in this project to continue providing funding is that there is still work to be done.

I found it interesting when I was trying to find background on the Shakwak project that I found a briefing note that was prepared by a lawyer named Brad Gilman in Washington, DC. It was to a member of the American government, Mark Earnest. He was reporting on a meeting with a representative of the Yukon Executive Council Office in December 2012. It has been clear for quite a long time that the Yukon government has been seized of the importance of ensuring that we work toward getting the ear of the national government of the United States as well as, as the Member for Kluane said, continuing the good relationship with the Alaska governor's office.

The importance of this project can't be understated. The amount of money that has been spent — we often focus on the amount of money that has been spent by the American government.

It's true, according to the briefing note that was prepared by our own Highways and Public Works, that since 1977, the American government has contributed approximately \$490 million toward capital improvements. What is also interesting to me is — and I don't think we very often pay attention to this — that in the same period, Canada and Yukon have spent an additional \$1.5 billion on improvements and maintenance of the remaining portions of the Alaska Highway. You can't get there unless you have the front end fixed.

It's really important that when we speak to our counterparts in Washington or Juneau we are making sure that they understand that it's a hole. You can't have part of a highway and then leave the rest of it if the strategic objectives for Canada, Alaska and the United States — all of the four partners here: Alaska, Yukon, the Government of the United States of America and the federal Government of Canada — want to see this northwest region of the continent remain linked to the Lower 48.

I think that it's important that we reiterate again that there is significant work to be done. The remaining part is probably the most challenging part — the issue around permafrost and permafrost rehabilitation. We are doing — and I say "we" collectively — a lot of good applied research on how we build in an area with permafrost. The whole challenge, as the Member for Kluane identified, is that we have to first stabilize and rehabilitate that area between Destruction Bay and the border, which is a pretty long way, about 145 or 150 miles. That's going to cost a significant amount of money. Once we get it stabilized, presuming that we can do it in the estimated

length of time of about seven years, we would want to make sure that we have the necessary funding to ensure that we have the maintenance completed.

I don't think anyone should underestimate this huge challenge. It's a classic example. We may have a disbeliever in Washington, but we should maybe get the president to drive a mile between Destruction Bay and Beaver Creek. He might then believe that melting permafrost is a sign of something more than hubris — it's actually climate change.

Even the notion of the significant technical challenge that this presents might be intriguing for some. I think we also recognize that building and doing the work in that kind of scenario is a multiple factor. It's not just a bit more. I am told it's five times more expensive to build and maintain a highway in those kinds of permafrost conditions.

Those are things we need to take into consideration. I am sure that the Premier and whichever minister goes with him — his delegation — will lobby on this part. I am glad that we will be lobbying on behalf of this. I certainly will echo the fact that this is a government too that will talk about lobby registering. We will be registering, I am sure, as a territorial government in Washington and then we'll come back and establish our own registry.

So we certainly commend this motion and look forward to seeing it passed today.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I thank the member opposite for the flag on the lobbyist registry. We could have a good talk about that at some point in the future, but this afternoon I want to talk about a road — not just a road, Mr. Speaker, I want to talk about the road — not the road of Cormac McCarthy fame — not yet — but the Alaska Highway. It is 75 years old this year — 75 years old. It has had a life-altering impact on the territory. It has shaped the territory in countless ways. It has disrupted communities and it has also knit our communities together. It has also shaped our relationship with our neighbours in BC and, most importantly, in Alaska.

A quarter-century of collaboration in trade and tourism and strategic interests between the US and Alaska has rolled up this highway. This ribbon of gravel, BST, asphalt and concrete is Alaska's land access. We've shared this responsibility for three-quarters of a century. Since 1978, Washington has paid to improve the north Alaska Highway. Between Haines, Alaska and the border of Beaver Creek is 520 kilometres long. That stretch services Burwash and Beaver Creek and several people and communities across the north Yukon. It is also an essential land portal for Alaska to Tok, to Fairbanks, to Anchorage and to Haines, Alaska itself, and points in between. Washington and Juneau know how important this portal is to Alaska. It is essential.

Over the last 36 years, Washington and Juneau have spent \$460 million to make this an all-weather two-lane highway from the state's southern border at Haines to our northern border at Beaver Creek. Alaska contributed \$38 million to this project. Washington contributed \$422 million. Those are 2011 dollars.

It is not just Americans keeping this road in shape. Canadians — Ottawa and Yukon — have spent more than \$1.5 billion maintaining this road from Dawson Creek to the Alaska borders. The road has been improved. It is not finished. We still have to pave some of the Haines Road. The cost is estimated at \$15 million. Paving from Haines Junction to Destruction Bay — a section that is not extensively affected by permafrost — is estimated to cost another \$65 million. Stabilizing extensive permafrost between Destruction Bay and the US border is estimated at up to \$120 million Canadian. Work could be had at a premium, given the state of our respective currencies. Finishing the paving job from Destruction Bay to the US border is estimated to cost another \$140 million Canadian. These are big numbers. For those keeping track, that's up to about \$340 million Canadian to finish the job that began 75 years ago. That is an estimated \$15-million worth of work every year for the next 20 years — a little bit more than that, actually.

Unfortunately, today that shared responsibility has run out of momentum and money. As the members on the bench opposite well know, the cost-sharing project has ended. In 2017-18, the last \$6.7 million will be spent. That money will contribute \$3.8 million to this territory's GDP and it will contribute 40 jobs to our economy. Then it will be gone.

The existing legislation funding transportation programs, the *Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act*, lasts until 2020. Shakwak is not included in that legislation. So here we are. The territory lacks resources to maintain the permafrost-ravaged highway by itself. If funding is not found, the highway will probably deteriorate. We have a Washington law firm lobbying on our behalf. That effort has been in place for several years and our MP, Larry Bagnell, has been in Washington lobbying for resuscitation of the Shakwak funding. I have reached out to our American partners, but joint elections in Alaska, Washington and here at home have introduced some new players to the field. We are all building our new relationships and figuring out our roles, trying to get these things going. I have every confidence I will soon have a chance to sit down and discuss issues of joint concern with my American partners. Chief among them will be this Shakwak project.

Our Premier is travelling to Washington to meet with American officials. Again, Shakwak and the north highway will loom large in that discussion, I have no doubt. This is a legacy infrastructure project. It is important for the Yukon, for its communities, for its people, for its businesses, for this government, but it is equally important to Alaska, to Washington, to Juneau, to our neighbours' economy and strategic interests, as my friend across the way has noted. It is important that our neighbours, our long-term partner, restore its funding to this shared causeway to prosperity.

Twenty-five years ago at the 50th anniversary, the future of the highway looked bright. There was an enormous celebration that year. It was internationally promoted. I was lucky enough to be part of that. I jumped on a bus — buses were common back then; they are less common on the north highway today. I travelled north through Haines Junction to

the Burl Shack, I went to restaurants all up and down highway, talking to people who made a living on that highway, as has been mentioned earlier this afternoon. I ate at their restaurants, I saw their tourism facilities, right up to the border and then beyond, to salmon bakes in Tok, to hotels and restaurants and tourist facilities in Fairbanks and the borough.

As I said, Mr. Speaker, the future looked bright. Those investments and infrastructure were and are dependent on this highway and on its continued funding. My colleague across the floor has spoken about his efforts with Randy Phillips and other Alaskan officials. It is important that we all work together on this file, because this is not a partisan issue — this is a Yukon issue; it is an Alaskan issue.

This is an essential conduit for trade, continental defence, energy, people and goods. It is as important today as it was 75 years ago. In fact, you could say it is more important. More than 80 percent of the traffic is bound for the US. This is a fact. Also a fact is that this territory cannot go it alone. Maintaining this road is expensive — very expensive — and we have a lot of work to do in a short season to keep it open and serviceable. This Liberal government is going to continue to lobby, argue, cajole, discuss and persuade our partners in Ottawa, Washington, Juneau and Victoria to keep this important asset open and safe.

I have enjoyed hearing what this House had to say on this matter this afternoon. I look forward to working together, all of us, on this issue for the benefit of all Yukon communities and all Yukoners and also with our partners and allies in Alaska.

Hon. Mr. Silver: I would like to thank the Member for Porter Creek Centre for bringing up this issue today in this motion and also the comments from all Members of the Legislative Assembly who spoke to this today. As the member opposite from Kluane can attest, this is a situation that has been discussed in a lot of great detail in the last few years and not necessarily for the best of reasons.

The Shakwak account has dried up and there are still hundreds of millions of dollars of work to be done and the funding that comes from the United States, as discussed here today, under the Shakwak agreement is pretty much empty now. It is an issue that I have raised a few times since being elected, since 2011. In 2012, the previous Government of Yukon found itself in a situation that wasn't necessarily optimal with the United States discontinuing funding on the project. To date, as noted, this funding has not been reinstated. I do appreciate from the member opposite from Kluane the history that was relayed today in the Legislative Assembly.

It's a tall order, admittedly, to get something put back on the table that has been cut, but we are certainly going to make our best attempts and I am going to take up the member opposite on his offer for any information and communications with Alaska, and we will be talking about that. I know that the Minister of Highways and Public Works had a couple of good conversations today with the member opposite with that topic in mind, so I do appreciate that.

I think I'm pretty much reiterating a lot of information that has been related here today. There are millions of dollars a year for our highways construction companies on this project and we believe that it's absolutely worth trying to get this money back on the table.

Next month, as mentioned, I am travelling to Washington. This topic and ANWR protection are going to be on the top of my priorities list. Being the chair for the year gives me an opportunity that we wouldn't necessarily have outside of that. We're going to use that chair position and the connections that I made to do our best and put our best foot forward, and when we come back, we will present what we heard to the members of the Legislative Assembly.

Luckily for us, we do have an ally with the State of Alaska who also wants to see this project move forward, so the US and Yukon, particularly Alaska — we share many common interests, outlooks but also challenges. Yukon engages with the United States and with Alaska on the basis of a long-standing partnership.

The first time I ever travelled to Alaska, the comments that I got from folks that we were hanging out with is that they wanted the two to just annex from all of North America and become our own country, although the students we were talking to there didn't even know where Dawson was, but that's a whole other story. That speaks to education for you.

The Yukon and Alaska partnership includes many mutual benefits such as reciprocal fishing licences, licence fees for residents, coordination on highways and transportation issues, shared histories, family links, emergency management — just to mention a few. Yukon is going to take a strategic approach and will continue to engage with the United States to benefit Yukoners. We will continue to build the relationship with Alaska on the basis of economic development, on the basis of infrastructure, climate change, and education.

The Yukon continues to engage with the United States on federal issues such as border security and trade through the Council of the Federation and also the Canadian federal government. As in Canada, the American federal government and the United States hold various levels of jurisdiction. This profoundly shapes our strategy for engaging both. We have budgeted amounts remaining right now for Shakwak that total \$6.7 million — Canadian — for 2017-18 to complete the program's identified highway improvements. This work should lead to a contribution of \$3.8 million to this year's GDP along with 40 jobs for the Yukon economy. We're developing a long-term construction and maintenance strategy that will ensure that the Haines Road and the north Alaska Highway continue to get annual upgrades to maintain a safe highway.

Estimates to complete the construction of the Haines Road and the north Alaska Highway range from \$280 million to \$340 million — Canadian. The high price tag is due, as we've spoken in this Legislative Assembly, to the unique challenges of construction on a highway that has deteriorating permafrost. Thawing permafrost causes severe distortions on the road surfaces as well as significant cracks along the road shoulders. This creates safety issues for highway users and

increases the costs for transportation of goods. Yukon's highway maintenance costs are over six times higher in those permafrost areas than in non-permafrost areas. The Yukon government will access federal funding where available to help offset costs associated with the work on the north Alaska Highway. We will work closely with Alaska state and congressional members to advocate for Shakwak funding in future US highways legislation.

The reality is that the current American act funding transportation programs lasts until 2020 and does not include funding for Shakwak. The Shakwak agreement is a Canada-US cost-sharing agreement first proposed by the United States and has been in place for 36 years. It recognizes the fact that the citizens, the business community and Government of Alaska rely heavily on this land link through Yukon and the rest of North America.

The goal of the Shakwak agreement is to upgrade the 520-kilometre stretch of highway comprised of parts of the north Alaska Highway and the Haines Road to a modern, all-weather, two-lane highway.

In closing, the purpose of the motion today is to highlight the importance of this issue to our government, and I think we have made this point very clear. It is a tall order to see funding restored, but we will absolutely do our best and, based on the comments that I have heard in the Legislative Assembly today, it sounds like we have yet again another unanimous motion — hopefully — being passed here in the Legislative Assembly. We hope that taking this Legislature's commitment and desire to Washington can help to propel our issues on to that nation-to-nation stage.

Thank you to all of my colleagues here in the House for this debate today. I look forward to voting on this motion.

Speaker: If the Member for Porter Creek Centre now speaks, he will close debate. Does any other member wish to be heard?

Mr. Gallina: I am proud to have brought this motion forward here in the House today. I would like to thank members for their contributions toward the discussions that we have had on this topic. I would like to thank those who have and continue to maintain our Yukon transportation routes. As I and other members have discussed today, this is a very significant transportation route. It supports tourism, commercial transport and national security and contributes tremendously to the quality of life of those residents who use this portion of the highway each and every day.

We have heard of the challenges in securing funding from the US government and the impending impacts of depleted resources within the territory to continue to fund this project. Then there are the challenges with the road itself. My intent with this motion was to bring this House together to be able to show those stakeholders that we in this House stand united in finding a solution to this vital northern transportation route.

With that said, I will close my remarks and thank this House for the opportunity to bring this forward.

Speaker: Are you prepared for the question?

Some Hon. Members: Division.

Division

Speaker: Division has been called.

Bells

Speaker: Mr. Clerk, please poll the House.

Hon. Mr. Silver: Agree.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Agree.

Hon. Ms. Dendys: Agree.

Hon. Ms. Frost: Agree.

Mr. Gallina: Agree.

Mr. Adel: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Agree.

Mr. Hutton: Agree.

Mr. Hassard: Agree.

Mr. Kent: Agree.

Ms. Van Bibber: Agree.

Mr. Cathers: Agree.

Mr. Istchenko: Agree.

Ms. Hanson: Agree.

Ms. White: Agree.

Clerk: Mr. Speaker, the results are 17 yea, nil nay.

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

Motion No. 21 agreed to

Motion No. 18

Clerk: Motion No. 18, 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 hold the Yukon Forum four times annually.

Mr. Hutton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

As the Member for Mayo-Tatchun, representing the communities of Mayo, Pelly and Carmacks, which are all on the traditional territories of Na Cho Nyäk Dun, Selkirk and Little Salmon Carmacks First Nations, I am extremely happy to bring this motion forward for debate before this House.

The Yukon is in a unique situation, nationally and internationally, when it comes to the evolution of responsible public government in the territory and the emergence of self-governing First Nations. We, here in this House, the Yukon government and self-governing First Nations, share a common goal of improving the lives of all Yukoners, and we recognize that we are most effective in achieving this goal when we work together. We are partners in governance and the path forward is based on respect and cooperation.

The Yukon Forum is a significant initiative that has been symbolic of the cooperative nature of governance in this territory since it was established in 2004. It provides a means for the Premier, the Grand Chief of the Council of Yukon First

Nations and chiefs of Yukon First Nations to come together to discuss issues, identify opportunities and formulate priorities for addressing areas of common concern. The health of the Yukon Forum speaks directly to the health of the cooperative relationship between the government and First Nation leadership. Unfortunately, over the past several years, that relationship has not been very healthy.

While the Yukon Party government deserves credit for participating in the creation of the Yukon Forum, their approach to First Nation relations in recent years demonstrated a preference for litigation over negotiation and for confrontation over cooperation. This approach did not nourish the relationship between the government and the First Nations. More importantly, it did not serve the interests of Yukoners. Now we need to reflect on our responsibilities, as the representatives of our citizens, and work to renew and strengthen that relationship. We need to move in a new direction toward a brighter future.

Yukoners want to see a modern Yukon, where the Yukon government and FNs work collaboratively for the benefit of all Yukoners. We, the Liberals, understand that strong, effective, transparent government-to-government relationships are absolutely necessary in modern Yukon. We are committed to a renewed relationship with the First Nation people of Yukon, built on cooperation and partnership, respecting the self-government agreements. These agreements are the map for the way forward for all Yukoners, not just First Nation people, on the path toward reconciliation.

Working to revitalize the Yukon Forum and holding four meetings per year is one step on the path forward, and it is an important one. The *Cooperation in Governance Act* enacted in 2005, the year after the Yukon Forum was established, calls on the Premier to participate with the Council of Yukon First Nations and Yukon First Nations in four meetings of the Yukon Forum per year.

After many years of this key relationship breaking down, it's important that the Premier answers this call and returns our territory to the path toward reconciliation. Holding the Yukon Forum four times a year was one of our campaign commitments. It directly reflects our priority of building strong government-to-government relationships with First Nations to foster reconciliation.

We made other commitments too, including making National Aboriginal Day a statutory holiday in this territory. We delivered on this promise with our very first piece of legislation, joining our friends in the Northwest Territories in recognizing this significant day as a statutory holiday.

We will celebrate this new statutory holiday for the first time next month. Once again, we are showing the rest of Canada that the north is leading the way on this and many other issues. It must be noted that this House was united in its support of that legislation. We showed that we can work together to give voice to the people of the Yukon and foster strong working relationships. We are stronger together, sharing our history, celebrating our strengths of diversity and inclusivity and working in partnership toward a healthy and prosperous future.

I know that my colleagues and I on this side of the House have been working diligently since we came into office to renew the government's relationship with First Nations and foster strong government-to-government relationships with Yukon First Nations. I am happy to say that the results are already starting to show. In January, the Yukon Liberal government and First Nation governments held the first Yukon Forum meeting since we took office. It was a resounding success. Yukon First Nations noticed and appreciated our new government's cooperative and respectful approach. We signed a declaration affirming our commitment to working together in the spirit of reconciliation and collaboration. The declaration also included the creation of a joint five-year action plan to address common priorities in a collaborative and transparent manner. These are concrete steps on the path forward toward a better future for all Yukoners, and it is only the beginning.

The next Yukon Forum meeting is scheduled for later this month, and we look forward to continuing the productive discussions we have been having with our First Nation partners. Holding four Yukon Forum meetings per year is not only called for in the *Cooperation in Governance Act* — and one of our campaign promises — it's the right thing to do. It's important for Yukon's social, cultural and economic development and advances our shared efforts toward reconciliation. Having open and frank discussions with First Nations on a regular basis will allow us to collaborate on initiatives that bring real benefits to First Nation communities. I represent three of those First Nation communities, but I know that all of the people in Mayo-Tatchun want to see this important work carried on in the future. I look forward to the open and frank discussion we will have about the Yukon Forum as we debate this motion.

Mr. Hassard: It is truly a pleasure to rise today to speak to Motion No. 18. As I have said many times in this House as well as outside of this House, that I and the Official Opposition certainly support improved relationships with any level of government, whether First Nation governments, municipal governments, federal or international. For that reason, we do support this motion.

Continuing to work with First Nation governments regularly is a good thing, and we think that by continuing to work together, governments can advance a number of issues that are important to Yukoners.

I know that this House has recognized my home town of Teslin in several debates, and I think that Teslin has rightfully been recognized as maybe the envy of the Yukon in its ability to work together — the First Nation government of the Teslin Tlingit Council, the Village of Teslin and Yukon government as well — to ensure that projects undertaken in Teslin are done in such a way that as much economic benefit as possible stays in the community of Teslin.

Having lived through those experiences, I understand the importance of governments working together and having good relationships. We hope that this will help see positive progress toward economic growth, job creation and prosperity for

families. If governments are talking to each other on a regular basis and sharing ideas, then I think we will see a strong economy.

Mr. Speaker, I will be very brief. I believe this is a very good motion. There is certainly nothing there to criticize so, as I said, we support the idea of having direct relationships with First Nation governments on a regular basis and will be voting in favour of this motion.

Ms. Hanson: I thank the Member for Mayo-Tatchun for bringing forward this motion. The New Democratic Party caucus supports the motion and the notion that the Yukon Forum should continue on the track it seems to be on since the November 2016 election, which is to fulfill the requirements set out in the *Cooperation in Governance Act*, which was put in place by Premier Fentie of the Yukon Party in an attempt to follow the work that was done in 2002 in establishing the intergovernmental forum, which is the forum that sees all three parties to the First Nation final and self-government agreements — Canada, Yukon and each First Nation that has an agreement — participate in that intergovernmental forum.

When we look at the purpose — I believe the Member for Mayo-Tatchun outlined the purpose and unique nature of the arrangements in the agreements we have in Yukon. The whole language that was used in that bill spoke to — and I quote: “the evolution of both responsible public government and self-governing First Nations” — keeping in mind that the *Cooperation in Governance Act* was done at a time just as Yukon was entering into the early implementation of the devolution transfer agreement in 2005, when the last First Nation final agreement that was finalized had been ratified.

The idea of having an intergovernmental forum — in this case, the Yukon Forum — is vitally important. It does provide a collective opportunity, but it must be said that we need to be mindful that the relationship established in these final and self-government agreements is in effect a bilateral agreement. It's not a collective agreement among all First Nations and the Government of Yukon, and the Government of Yukon cannot try to sidestep its obligations to enter into or to deal with each self-governing First Nation.

With a First Nation self-government agreement or First Nation final agreement, the definition of government is Yukon and it's either Na Cho Nyäk Dun or Selkirk or Little Salmon Carmacks or any of the 11 First Nations. It's not with the CYFN collectively or the CYI as it is in the UFA.

As much as we've watched the evolution of that collectivity post negotiations, keeping in mind that the Council of Yukon Indians and the successor organization, CYFN, was structured to conduct negotiations, all of us who have taken part in conversations over the last 20-some years have witnessed the internal discussions about what role and function CYFN plays. So it is a good sign in my view that, just as we see at the federal level provinces and territories coming together to work cooperatively in the Council of the Federation even though there are strains at times, similarly we see that First Nation governments recognize — at the regional level, the CYFN and at the national level, the AFN — that

there are times and opportunities when it is important for that collectivity and for collective interests to be reflected.

I just want to make sure that we are under no illusion that the Yukon Forum is a substitute for effective intergovernmental relationships on a bilateral basis between the Government of Yukon and each of the 11 self-governing First Nations, to say nothing of the three First Nations that don't have final agreements or self-government agreements, and which do have very important relationships dealing with the public government — with Yukon government.

We will stand in support and encourage the government to make sure that the work is done that is necessary to make these fora productive and useful over the course of the next few years. We would encourage the government to make sure that because the matters that are being discussed at these fora are of importance to all Yukon citizens, that there is regular sharing of information of the priorities that are being undertaken at these fora, because as governments representing both First Nation governments and the Yukon government, the decisions that potentially could be taken have an impact on all of us. So it's also very important that the political representatives of those two levels of government realize how important it is to communicate fully and openly with all of their citizens.

We support this and we thank the Member for Mayo-Tatchun for being on board.

Hon. Ms. Dendys: Mr. Speaker, we are committed to effective government-to-government relationships with First Nations in implementing land claims and self-government agreements and supporting the path to self-determination of all of those First Nations without agreements as well, so I thank the member opposite for raising that concern with us.

The modern-day treaty process in the Yukon was launched by the delivery of *Together Today for Our Children Tomorrow* in 1973. Throughout the years that followed, the *Umbrella Final Agreement* and subsequent final land claims and self-government agreements were concluded by 11 of our 14 First Nations. We are proud of all of our self-determining nations, our treaties and the accomplishments.

This is a Yukon strength that the rest of Canada looks to with hope. Our Liberal government has committed to building a stronger government-to-government relationship with all 14 First Nations. Today the Yukon Forum is on stronger ground. On January 13, 2017, just over one month from the day we were sworn in as MLAs and a new Cabinet, we held our first Yukon Forum with our Yukon First Nations. This was an emotional day for me. This is the day that it really settled for me that this is really happening, that we have an opportunity to do something different.

I can only describe the day as a day of ceremony. It felt like a celebration to me. It was warm; people were so grateful for being brought together without so many rules. I have been to Yukon forums in the past, and it was very restrictive. We weren't allowed to invite many people, so we didn't have many of our elders or youth in the room. This was very much a different day. I looked into the eyes of the elders and I could

see their hopefulness. I spoke to Sam Johnston, I spoke to Percy Henry and I spoke to Judy Gingell, and they were hopeful. They absolutely approved of the coming together of our governments to honour our commitments to each other. They acknowledged that we had work to do on both sides.

It is a top priority to meet up to four times per year in the Yukon Forum, which I see as a tool to work together. We also made a commitment to make it a meaningful and action-based process. It wasn't just about the fact that we were having a meeting. We wanted outcomes; we wanted it to be productive.

On that day, a ceremonial potlatch bowl was presented by the Grand Chief to sit on the meeting table as a symbol of our mutual pledge to work together for a stronger Yukon. When that bowl was presented, I think for many of us it was an emotional and very symbolic gesture that was made and will be forever in my memory as a day of renewal. It is very much a symbolic bowl of putting those ideas into that bowl and working together.

I would like to quote Council of Yukon First Nations Grand Chief Peter Johnston when he said that, "The Yukon Forum is an important opportunity to allow the respective parties to have constructive dialogue on governance-related topics. The declaration reaffirms our commitment to work together, government-to-government, on mutual priorities to create a better Yukon for everyone." I will speak a little bit about the declaration a bit later.

A quote from Kwanlin Dün First Nation Chief Doris Bill: "I'm hopeful that our relationships with the new Yukon government will support true partnership on Yukon First Nation issues. A partnership that reflects our positions and speaks in a collective voice that incorporates and accommodates First Nation issues and concerns. Today, I heard that Yukon First Nations are willing to do their part and I'm optimistic that Yukon will as well for the benefit of First Nation and all Yukon citizens."

The commitment to building stronger connections is one that I believe in. When I canvassed door-to-door throughout Mountainview and throughout the Yukon during the election, many people spoke of their desire to have their Government of Yukon repair the relationship with Yukon First Nation people. Many people talked to me about their desire for modern treaties to be implemented in the way they were intended to be. The insight gained at the doors reinforced our campaign commitment to make this one of our enduring priorities. We know that this is how we will build a stronger, modern Yukon with stronger, more vibrant communities. This is how we will build a stronger economy.

On the day of our first Yukon Forum as a Liberal government, we entered into a declaration entitled *Working Together*. This is what it said:

"We, the representatives of governments of the Yukon, hereby affirm our commitment to work together in the spirit of reconciliation and collaboration. We remain committed to a constructive relationship that contributes to and promotes good governance for all Yukoners.

"In particular, we commit to the following.

“Participate in up to four meetings of the Yukon Forum per year as agreed to and schedule the dates of the meetings in advance, unless otherwise agreed.

“Conduct the meetings in order to facilitate frank discussions, debate issues and learn about the positions and interests of others and have substantive outcomes. We recognize that these discussions may be contentious at times, but they will be respectful.

“Treat the discussions that take place at the Yukon Forum and related working groups as confidential unless otherwise agreed.

“Ensure the Yukon Forum is solutions-focused at a political level and does not limit the options available in any negotiation process.

“By the next Yukon Forum, create a joint five-year action plan that identifies common priorities and ensures a clear plan for implementation options that are collaborative and transparent. The plan may be refined or updated as needed.

“Provide directions to officials to carry out specific duties and activities as agreed.”

All members of Cabinet signed and all chiefs. It was truly a historic day.

This year’s Yukon Days, held in Ottawa in February, was built on a collaborative approach. We put our commitment into action right away. Together, members of Cabinet and Yukon chiefs met with federal ministers to advocate for programs, services and funding that respond to Yukon needs. There was strength in a united voice. It is an example to the rest of Canada. Yukon First Nations lead the country in self-governance.

During this Yukon Forum, we had the pleasure of hearing elders speak — including Judy Gingell. This was quite an honour, to be a new minister representing Government of Yukon, to hear the history from this perspective and to know fully that we have a tremendous opportunity to breathe life back into our agreements and to fulfill our commitments. At the end of that day, we were blessed with Elder Percy Henry’s address to us. He was asked to speak at the beginning of the proceedings that day, and he declined because he said that he wanted to hear all of us before he spoke. He said that he liked what he heard. He talked about the strength in the shaft of an eagle feather and that it was time for us to come back together and stand in unity and strength, like the shaft of an eagle feather. He talked about the importance of bringing the spirit back into our work. This is something that I personally am committed to and I know that we, on this side of the House, are very committed to.

I really look forward to our next meeting on May 26, and I know that it will be a very productive day. I may not be able to be there for the entire time, as my son is graduating that day, but I’m really looking forward to the outcome and the presentation of our collective priorities. As we stated in the declaration, we will be bringing our five-year action plan forward on that day and it will likely be amended as we go forward. It will be a document that has life — that has meaning.

I really thank you for hearing my words today and my commitment to the Yukon Forum and how very important it is to us as a government.

Hon. Ms. Frost: It gives me great pleasure to speak to the House today on the Yukon Forum. As the Member for Mayo-Tatchun highlighted, the Yukon Forum was established in 2004 in an MOU between Yukon government, Yukon First Nations and Council of Yukon First Nations, and this relationship was formalized in 2005 through the *Cooperation in Governance Act*.

Taking the words from the Leader of the Third Party, CYFN does not represent all Yukon First Nations, so really we need to take that into consideration as we move forward in reconciliation and in building our relationships. We have done that very successfully with our last session of the Yukon Forum, where all members of Yukon, whether they were self-governing or not, represented themselves at the Yukon Forum and advocated for their interests. The founding document and the foundation of the Yukon Forum and the *Cooperation in Governance Act* really define and set some parameters and the foundation for us. That’s what we’re hoping to build on as we move forward.

Our Liberal government, as we committed to by way of the last agreement in the first Yukon Forum that we had with Yukon First Nations and the Grand Chief, really set the tone for what we’re hoping to address and accomplish going forward.

In the next five years, we want to move forward in the spirit of cooperation and collaboration. We’ve debated now for 16 days in this House. During that time, a lot of words we’ve used to express and describe where it is we want to go and some of our vision for Yukon are: transparency, cooperation, collaboration and looking at trying to find synergies and connections with industry, with First Nations and with our NGO groups.

In terms of committing to establishing priorities on particular issues of joint concern, like the Shakwak project, like the legislation — perhaps the proposed legislation that we have on the table for amendments — Bill C-17 got us to a point where we went off track. Where we are today shows that we are attempting to work in good faith and bring some conclusion to the otherwise chaos that had happened previously.

Generally, the terms of the Yukon Forum, as it’s defined in the governance process, attached themselves to the intergovernmental forum. The bilateral agreement with the Yukon First Nations and the Government of Yukon really set the tone and priorities for what we needed to do as respective governments to move on to the next formal trilateral debate and discussions, and that was the intergovernmental forum.

In early years, perhaps that was successful, but most recently we have not had a Yukon Forum. As we have laid it out in the *Cooperation in Governance Act* of four times a year — we have not seen that happen. Our goal is to set the dates, set the time, set the priorities and make our commitments, and we aim to do that.

We look forward to working and meeting in partnership with Yukon First Nations and meeting with the Yukon Forum and, subsequently, we are hoping that we can trigger the intergovernmental forum and bring more federal ministers to the Yukon to engage with us here on the respective traditional territories of Yukon First Nations.

The historic relationship, as described by my respective colleagues, wasn't built on reconciliation and collaboration. It was really built on a bit of an adversarial position in that they were positions that were put on the floor with Yukon First Nations. We were not always agreeing — and that's okay, because that's how we structure ourselves. We need to disagree, and sometimes we agree to disagree. The objective is, if you are only going to meet once every four years, you need to be awfully clear on how and what you are going to do to occupy that space in time, that three-hour period, and pick those agenda items that you know you have collectively agreed to.

The early years, the cooperation arrangements and management agreements were really tied heavily to the northern strategy trust projects and funding that the federal government allocated to Yukon government. Yukon First Nations wanted to have access to some of that funding. They wanted to look, through the implementation of their self-government agreements, at how they could get access to some of the federal resources coming into the Yukon, whether through the northern strategy trust, northern housing trust, or First Nation housing initiative funding. There were always barriers — walls that, as Yukon First Nations, we perhaps had to work a little harder to get the resources, despite the fact that the self-government agreement is very clear and the tone that was used in these self-government agreements and the final self-government agreement implementation plan speaks in volumes about it in section 6 of the self-government agreement implementation plan. I'm going to refer to the one that I'm most comfortable with, and that's the Vuntut Gwitchin agreement: "Where Government has concluded a self-government agreement with another Yukon First Nation which includes provisions more favourable than those in this Agreement, and where it would be practical to include those provisions in this Agreement, Government, at the request of the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation, shall negotiate with the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation with a view to amending this Agreement..."

This is basically saying that if there are conflicts with inequities in services and programs in Yukon, there has to be a means by which to resolve some of the differences, so we can then address some of the major discrepancies the Leader of the Third Party highlighted, and that we can't demonstrate that we support one First Nation over another. There are provisions that speak to the power of enacting laws of local or private nature on settlement land in relation to the following matters — and then there is a whole list of matters.

The important piece to that key message is that Yukon First Nations — and I'm going to generalize — own surface and subsurface rights of about 25 percent of the Yukon, plus we have heritage resource rights. First Nations are enacting

heritage laws that govern how they would like to be engaged with on traditional, historic artifacts that are found, like the "long ago person found" in the Kluane region.

The powers to enact laws based on the generalizations of 25 percent of the Yukon means that the Government of Yukon has to cooperate and collaborate with Yukon First Nations. We cannot have conflicting laws or practices in how we govern. I believe my respective colleague here spoke about reconciliation and the message that we received from the elders who spoke. This really spoke volumes to us about the fact that we needed to look and work on reconciliation — be open enough that we can negotiate in good faith with Canada and with the Yukon government and with the First Nations, and perhaps identify processes by way of proper work plans, proper timelines and outcomes.

Historically, in identifying key priorities for agenda items for the Yukon Forum — as I'm speaking, I'm referring to my own experience in trying to get items on the agenda representing Vuntut Gwitchin — the inconsistencies or the lack of cooperation was not done in good faith. Oftentimes we were at odds and thus the Yukon Forum didn't materialize. It didn't evolve into what we expected it to under the governance act that we signed off on in good faith.

Going on further, we have other initiatives. We just signed off on the Aboriginal Day celebration. Plus, we attended Yukon Days in Ottawa with Yukon First Nations. Really that was our first attempt at reaching out to Yukon First Nations to bring them to the table with us so that we could take into consideration their traditional knowledge and their understanding. It gives us a bit of an academic understanding of what their needs are.

We recognize that the 14 Yukon First Nations with the seven distinct languages are significant contributors to the Yukon economy. The governance base alone equates to approximately \$300 million, and then you have your corporations on top of that which contribute that same amount of money to the Yukon economy. They own businesses, they own airlines, and they have joint venture arrangements in the Yukon. It really, I think, progresses and moves us forward when we start looking at true cooperation and true collaboration and defining parameters in the signed intergovernmental protocols agreement that was just signed by Yukon First Nations. The Premier set the tone to allow for that to happen so that we're not ending up in legislative challenges as we've seen in our agreements.

The other piece that is really important is that when we went through a review of our self-government agreements in Yukon — we, being Yukon First Nations, and I am now speaking as the MLA for Vuntut Gwitchin — we looked at the final and self-government agreement implementation deliverables. In there, we defined some very specific parameters around a cooperative arrangement, potential for growth and development of Yukon opportunities. Working diligently to resume our relationship with Yukon First Nations is clearly — we have a new day, a new time, a new government and new partners. As a Liberal government, we have taken this, hopefully, to the finish line with Yukon First

Nations and really set the tone to reconciliation — and looking then at defining objectives, coming away with common files, a common vision and extracting from those agreements that we have signed on to ask: What are the opportunities? What can we do to enhance the mining sector? What can we do to look at defining some clear parameters around the mining legislative initiatives in the Yukon? It only makes sense for us to cooperate, collaborate and jointly define the parameters. These are some of the factors that we will consider in our discussions with Yukon First Nations through a Yukon Forum.

I am sure not everyone has read the self-government agreements or the implementation plan, let alone the five-year review, but most certainly I have lived and breathed it for 20 years. In those 20 years, we fought, we negotiated and we have attempted various avenues — so much as signing off with Yukon government and Premier Fentie back in the day — with the hope and dream that we would advance collaborative governments in the Yukon. As the third order of governments, our agreements are protected under the Constitution.

Section 35 defines our rights and principles — our inherent right in the Yukon is paramount in that the laws of general application — should the First Nations decide to write their own laws, they will prevail over other laws — laws of general application, meaning that Government of Yukon laws will not have an effect on Yukon First Nations' traditional areas if they so choose. That is why we need to start working in good faith with Yukon First Nations, Yukon businesses and business venture opportunities and look at opportunities to make this Yukon a great place — an attractive place for industry to want to come and work — rather than get caught up in the bureaucracies. Trying to implement a YESAA process perhaps that we continuously, through Government of Yukon — we have our views, and the bureaucracy sometimes moves in whole other direction than what we're hearing from our partners. As partners in the Yukon, we have 14 First Nations — 11 are self-governing, and we need to be proud of that fact because, in all of the jurisdictions across the country, we are the envy of the country because of our legislative processes and the processes that we have in effect, following through on bridging that gap.

As significant contributors to our Yukon society and economy, I think that we really do need to work on a government-to-government basis. We need to work on ensuring that we make this a better Yukon. We look at the Yukon Forum as one venue to bridge that gap and provide some significant opportunities.

Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to conclude that this is really a great day for me to speak on behalf of my constituency of Vuntut Gwitchin and to also speak from my own experience and as a senior official working for Yukon First Nations and trying to implement and establish the Yukon Forum successfully, and now that I have the opportunity to engage as the Minister of Health and Social Services, Minister responsible for Yukon Housing Corporation and Minister of Environment, it's indeed a honour to say that to the Yukon, to

Yukoners and to Yukon First Nations that the commitment to hold Yukon Forum four times a year is a great opportunity for us to build the economy of the Yukon successfully.

Hon. Mr. Silver: I'm very pleased to be standing here to speak to Motion No. 18. I want to thank all my colleagues in the House today for their comments and what seems to be unanimous consent for this motion. I'm going to give a few facts here so we can allow the Member for Mayo-Tatchun to close us up and get to a vote.

Mr. Speaker, as known by everybody here in the Legislative Assembly, the forum was established in 2004 under a memorandum of understanding between the Government of Yukon, the Council of Yukon First Nations and the Yukon First Nations. In 2005, the *Cooperation in Governance Act* formalized this relationship.

As stated in both our platform commitments and in my mandate letter, as Minister responsible for Aboriginal Relations, it is a priority of this government to hold a revitalized Yukon Forum up to four times annually, as agreed with Yukon chiefs. As you know, Mr. Speaker, the Yukon Forum is a place to work collaboratively with Yukon First Nations on the shared priorities, through open and respectful dialogue and open and respectful discussions.

There have been four Yukon Forums held since 2012; the most recent was held on January 13, 2017. That most recent forum was held by our Liberal government, and we look forward to holding four annually.

At the forum just over a month after being sworn in the office, my Cabinet ministers and I signed the intergovernmental *Working Together* declaration with the Grand Chief of the Council of Yukon First Nations and Yukon First Nation chiefs.

That declaration — and I quote: affirms “our commitment to work together in the spirit of reconciliation and collaboration.” I'm very pleased with the progress that we have made so far.

The declaration also commits us to working together to — and I quote again: “... create a joint five-year action plan that identifies common priorities and ensures a clear plan for implementation options that are collaborative and transparent.”

At the next Yukon Forum, which is scheduled for May 26, we will be discussing joint priorities identified collaboratively by Yukon First Nations and Yukon government and the recommendation process to develop a five-year action plan.

There are two more Yukon Forums that will be scheduled for this fall and then winter of this year. As we know, there is \$100,000 set aside in this budget and in future budgets to come for Yukon First Nations and for the councils, to hold these forums. I'm definitely looking forward to the next forum next month, and I do want to thank all of the folks working behind the scenes — Aboriginal Relations and also the executive director, Shadelle Chambers for all of her work as well on the CYFN side of things and just all of the conversations that have been had government-to-government

over the last couple of weeks, as we've been working on this five-year action plan. It's some great work.

One thing we have heard from the Minister of Tourism and Culture is about the potlatch bowl and how she is never going to forget — I won't forget any time soon, that's for sure. It's such a busy forum when everybody is in there speaking their minds. There is so much action going on. Percy Henry got up and you could hear a pin drop. It speaks to the respect that the Yukon has for its elders in general. It's a little hard to understand Percy sometimes, that's for sure, but everybody paid every bit of attention to every word. We were hanging on every word. It was a powerful moment that I will never forget. It was a privilege being the Premier at a Yukon Forum such as that.

With that, Mr. Speaker, thank you very much for your indulgence and I look forward to getting this to a vote.

Speaker: Very briefly, Member for Porter Creek Centre.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Gallina: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just wanted to introduce to the House my beautiful wife, who has joined us for the remaining minutes of this session. Welcome.

Applause

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

Mr. Hutton: I would just like to thank all members of this House for their support today. This is a tremendously important process that is taking place. As a born-and-raised Yukoner who lived here my entire life, in 1992, when the land claims were signed off, I was really hopeful this was going to be the next stage in the process. It saddens me that I have had to wait almost half my life for this opportunity. I know all my First Nation friends and neighbours feel exactly the same way.

Minister Dendys expressed it well when she talked about the atmosphere in that forum. It was really heart-warming and it was absolute honour to be part of that process — to stand there with First Nation people, to look around and see the hope in people's eyes that we were going to have a path going forward where people were going to work together and we were going to advance this Yukon Territory.

Motion No. 18 agreed to

Speaker: The time being 5:26 p.m., this House now stands adjourned until 1:00 p.m. tomorrow.

The House adjourned at 5:26 p.m.

The following documents were filed May 17, 2017:

34-2-5

Consultation period for proposed amendments to *Vital Statistics Act* and *Human Rights Act*, letter re (dated April 12, 2017) from Hon. Pauline Frost, Minister of Health and Social Services, and Hon. Tracy-Anne McPhee, Minister of Justice to Patti McLeod, Member for Watson Lake (McPhee)

34-2-6

Alaska Highway Shakwak project funding, letter re (dated March 28, 2017) from Wade Istchenko, Member for Kluane to Hon. Chrystia Freeland, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Government of Canada (Istchenko)