



Yukon Legislative Assembly

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HANSARD

Monday, April 24, 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

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Yukon Liberal Party

Ted Adel	Copperbelt North
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Yukon Party

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Brad Cathers	Lake Laberge	Patti McLeod	Watson Lake
Wade Istchenko	Kluane	Geraldine Van Bibber	Porter Creek North

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New Democratic Party

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

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**Yukon Legislative Assembly
Whitehorse, Yukon
Monday, April 24, 2017 — 1:00 p.m.**

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

Prayers

DAILY ROUTINE

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

Tributes.

TRIBUTES

In remembrance of Jim Smith

Hon. Mr. Silver: I rise this afternoon to pay tribute to the late Jim Smith, a man who shared his responsibilities with the whole of Yukon so generously.

Mr. Smith came to the north as a young man. He settled first in Atlin, BC, where he met and married Dorothy Matson, his wife of 74 years. In 1947, the Smiths moved to Yukon, made their home and raised their family in Whitehorse. Jim Smith was active in local affairs. He was president of the Whitehorse Chamber of Commerce and served a term on Whitehorse City Council. In 1958, Mr. Smith was elected to the Legislative Assembly or, as it was known at that time, the “Territorial Council”.

He saw the mandate of the 1958 council as laying the foundation for responsible government here in the Yukon. He genuinely believed the future of Yukon should be determined by the people who live there. As Commissioner from 1966 to 1976, he carried on with this mandate. In 1970, the Executive Committee, a forerunner to the present-day Cabinet, was created with two elected representatives involved in the running of government.

Mr. Smith believed in good government for Yukoners. As Commissioner, he worked hard over many years to reorganize the territorial administration into a modern governance structure. Mr. Smith made many other contributions to Yukon life, both in the territory and also beyond its borders. He co-founded the Arctic Winter Games with Stuart Hodgson, the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories, and also Governor Walter Hickel of Alaska. He worked with Premier Dave Barrett of British Columbia and Governor Bill Egan of Alaska to secure approval for construction to the South Klondike Highway from Carcross to Skagway.

He played a critical role in the establishment of Kluane National Park and the Chilkoot Trail National Historic Site.

After 10 years as Commissioner, Mr. Smith went on to head the northern Canadian power corporation, a pre-cursor to today’s Yukon Energy Corporation.

Throughout his public life, he never lost his common touch, and his interest in and affection for the Yukon people. Many knew him simply as Jimmy; many — like our current Commissioner Doug Phillips — insisted on calling the man “Mr. Smith” out of respect and adoration. Either way,

Mr. Speaker, all agreed he had a wry sense of humour. Also, he was a modest person — modest about his many and profound contributions to this territory.

Mr. Speaker, Yukon is a much better place for Jim Smith’s involvement in public life. His gifts to this territory are significant and they are enduring. On behalf of our caucus and the Government of Yukon, I extend to Mr. Smith’s family our deepest sympathies for the loss of your devoted husband, father and grandfather.

At this time, I would like to ask all of my colleagues to join me in welcoming to the gallery today Dorothy Smith, Jim Smith’s wife of 74 years.

Applause

Hon. Mr. Silver: Also with us here today: Marilyn Smith, daughter; Alex Murdoch — Mr. Smith’s grandson — and I have to say, I’m not supposed to pick favorites as an ex-teacher, but you’re one of my favorites for sure, Mr. Murdoch; also Eric Smith, Jim Smith’s son; Darrell Alexander who is Marilyn’s partner; Trevor Alexander, their son; and also Natasha Alexander, daughter. Thank you.

Applause

Ms. Van Bibber: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On behalf of the Official Opposition, I rise to pay tribute to Mr. Jim Smith. Jim Smith was born in New Westminster, BC on New Year’s Eve, 1919, but it has always been felt he was Yukon’s son. After graduating from high school and with the war on, Jim was on the search for a job. He started work at a butcher shop and quickly learned the trade. An opening for a butcher came up in Atlin and he agreed to give the place a try. The store advanced his fare and up the coast he came, arriving in 1940 to a bustling town. He met and married a local girl, Dorothy Matson, in 1942. Then they moved from Atlin to Whitehorse in 1947.

Tourist Services was a huge complex where the current Yukon Inn complex is now, and Jim Smith was hired as the manager. I still remember the wonders of that modern grocery store, where the doors opened automatically. During this period, Jim was encouraged to become involved in local organizations, which eventually led to politics. He was city alderman, then a member of the Territorial Council.

In 1958, there were five elected councillors: Ray McKamy from Mayo; John Livesey from Carmacks-Kluane; George Shaw, Dawson; Charlie Taylor, Whitehorse East; and James Smith, Whitehorse West. The Commissioner of Yukon was selected and given instructions by the Indian and Northern Affairs minister and, well, basically ran the territory. The council really had no power — but were local elected executives from the communities to help the Commissioner in his direction for Yukon. Jim quickly realized things needed to change — to have a Yukon with Yukon decisions.

After Commissioner Gordon Campbell finished his term, there was a hunt on for a new Commissioner. There were interviews given to a few candidates, and Jim was one of those candidates. DIAND minister, Arthur Laing, arrived in the territory carrying a briefcase with the name of our new

Commissioner. Remember, communications were not like they are today. In that briefcase was the name “James Smith”. Yukoners were pleased. He was well-liked and everyone knew he would be fair and speak up for Yukoners. He was now in charge.

He was the longest sitting Commissioner in Yukon’s history. He served two five-year terms from October 15, 1966 to June 30, 1976. He began a legacy that is amazing. He formed the first budget program committee in 1968 so that the territory had a better handle on the money allotted to it. He was starting responsible government for and by locals. In 1974, he changed the name from Council of Yukon Territory to the Yukon Legislative Assembly. He said — and I quote: “The Commissioner had to be a dyed-in-the-wool politician. If I had stopped and paid attention to the controversy, we never would have done anything.”

The beautiful land of Yukon was something to be recognized and enjoyed for generations. He assisted in the establishment of the Kluane National Park and Reserve, had the Chilkoot Trail designated as a national historic site and encouraged the construction of the south Klondike Highway link to Skagway, Alaska.

The news that the NWT was eyeing possession of Herschel Island came to his attention, so he — along with Hilda Watson and several others — travelled north and planted a Yukon flag in 1972. That ended that; he claimed the island. The Hon. Member for Kluane, Hilda’s grandson — Wade Istchenko, provided me with a picture of the flag-raising, and it gives our caucus great pleasure to have presented the family members with a photocopy today.

He was also the push behind this building, where the Legislative Assembly is — to have government all under one roof. Little did he know how big government would grow.

Mr. Smith was instrumental in helping to form and encourage our modern land claims. He always believed that local First Nations should be involved in the government process. How that was to happen was an unknown, so he encouraged his staff to find ways. He could not tolerate segregation and wanted First Nation people to be a part of the Legislative Assembly. He was a very good friend of Elijah Smith, and they had many long discussions. A document called *Meaningful Government for All Yukoners* was written during his time at the helm and passed in the Legislative Assembly. He thought of two options: electoral boundary changes — so for one, Old Crow and Kluane would have a single seat, and that would surely guarantee First Nation input.

Jim, along with a small delegation, made a trip to New Zealand to visit the Maori, who had a structure that set aside four guaranteed seats, but Ottawa would not have anything to do with that. So today, our electoral boundaries have worked in our small jurisdiction and we can thank Mr. Jim Smith for that and for his inclusiveness.

This story is about the humble beginnings of the Arctic Winter Games. In 1967, Cal Miller — another colourful local — was attending the Canada Winter Games in Quebec City and he quickly realized that the northern kids’ skills were not

at the level of the provinces. We had a smaller population and did not have access to facilities and the means to many structured sports. He had an idea for a northern games that was the best idea since the invention of 7UP.

He lobbied Commissioner Smith, who then contacted the Commissioner of Northwest Territories, Stuart Hodgson, and the DIAND Minister, Arthur Laing, and they thought it was a smashing idea. One call to the west from Jim, and Governor Walter Hickel was also on board. The first games were held in 1970 and had three teams: Northwest Territories, Alaska and Yukon.

He was also the father of Yukon grants to help students who had to travel Outside to further their education. That was a help to so many families.

During those years, the territory was booming. Clinton Creek mine, Anvil Range, Cassiar, United Keno Hill Mines all helped drive the economy.

He eventually resigned after his 10 years as Commissioner and, after a brief regrouping, he worked for NCPC, as the Premier mentioned, and then fully retired from public life.

I first met the Smiths when I was running for Miss Dawson City back in the late 1960s. The Queen’s Tea was at the Commissioner’s residence on Kluhini Crescent, and it was thrilling to be there. Mrs. Smith was ever the gracious hostess, and Mr. Smith would be greeting and making everyone feel so welcome. When I was appointed Commissioner of the Yukon in 2005, many notes and congratulations arrived, and among them there was a note from former Commissioner Smith and Dorothy. They never failed to reach out.

Also during my term, I had an idea to have a book written about the Commissioners who were still living, and to get their stories and feel of their time while in office — not history from someone else’s perspective, but from the occupants of the office. With the help of Speaker Ted Staffen and writer Linda Johnson, each Commissioner was able to express their stories. We all had one chapter and it gives the reader an insight into the sense of responsibility and duty assigned to that position. *At the Heart of Gold: The Yukon Commissioner’s Office 1898-2010* — it’s a good read if you haven’t done so.

Jim was friendly and he loved to touch base with everyone. His memory was like a steel safe: once in there, he never forgot. Now he might get a name wrong — as we all do from time to time — however, he knew exactly where you fit into the Yukon fabric. If there was a family connection such as the name “Van Bibber”, he had a story. He said — and I quote: “I feel I brought the Yukon into the 20th century. That was my biggest accomplishment and I am happy I did it. I have no regrets. It was a lot of work, but we survived — with a lot of satisfaction too. There were good days and bad days with mediocre ones in between. On good days, you knew you won; on the bad days, you knew you lost. The mediocre ones were bothersome because you never knew if you won or lost.”

His wife Dorothy and his children were his biggest supporters and he always said that without his family he could not have done it.

In the final paragraph in *At the Heart of Gold*, Jim said — and I quote: “The Yukon is still the finest piece of undeveloped real estate in North America. To those entrusted with its care, may the Lord’s arms continue to be wrapped tightly around you while you tackle the tasks ahead.”

He will be missed and he will be remembered fondly. Yukon is better for him having chosen this as his final home. To Dorothy and his family, thank you for sharing him with all Yukoners.

Applause

Ms. Hanson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, on behalf of the Yukon New Democratic Party caucus, I thank you for the opportunity to add a few words in tribute to the life and contributions of James Smith. As my colleagues in the Legislature here today have described so well, James Smith’s contributions to Yukon are many and long-lasting.

Mr. Speaker, as I, along with so many others, participated in the celebration of life and death of Mr. Smith on Saturday, I was struck by the recurring theme of service that underlay James Smith’s life. His commitment to the principles that sustain a healthy democracy — that build community and cooperation — are hallmarks for a rare breed of leader — a leader who understands the importance of service.

You know, Mr. Speaker, the ideal of servant as leader is one that many aspire to, but few attain. In his quiet, dignified and respectful way, Mr. Smith’s legacy as a servant of the institutions, the governments, the church and the family he loved are a powerful legacy.

Applause

Speaker: Introduction of visitors.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Mr. Silver: Mr. Speaker, I would ask everybody in the Legislative Assembly to join me in welcoming today a couple of former Liberal leaders and a former Premier, Pat Duncan, as well as former Liberal leader Arthur Mitchell. We also have in the gallery former Deputy Clerk Missy Follwell.

Mr. Hassard: I would like everyone to join me in welcoming a few people today who certainly aren’t strangers to the Legislature: Ken McKinnon, Gordon Steele and Mr. Jonas Smith as well.

Applause

Ms. Hanson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would ask the House to join me in welcoming Jan Koepke and Tim Koepke, former Ombudsman and also former chief federal negotiator for Yukon land claims.

Applause.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like the House to recognize a constituent of mine, Mr. Wilf Carter, who is sitting up in the gallery today.

Applause

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Mr. Speaker, I would also like to welcome Mr. Ken McKinnon, who is of course a friend to this House, but who is also a constituent of Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes. Sitting next to him, as already noted, is a colleague of mine, Mr. Tim Koepke, a former Ombudsman and Information and Privacy Commissioner. Welcome to them both.

Applause

Speaker: Are there any returns or documents for tabling?

Are there any reports of committees?

Are there any petitions?

Are there any bills to be introduced?

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 2: *National Aboriginal Day Act* — Introduction and First Reading

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I move that Bill No. 2, entitled *National Aboriginal Day Act*, be now introduced and read a first time.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Minister of Community Services that Bill No. 2, entitled *National Aboriginal Day Act*, be now introduced and read a first time.

Motion for introduction and first reading of Bill No. 2 agreed to

Speaker: Are there any further bills for introduction?

Are there any notices of motions?

NOTICES OF MOTIONS

Hon. Mr. Silver: I rise to give notice of the following motion:

THAT, pursuant to section 18 of the *Conflict of Interest (Members and Ministers) Act*, the Legislative Assembly reappoint David Phillip Jones, QC, as a member of the Conflict of Interest Commission for a three-year period.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to report on progress made since the 2013 *Report on the Audit of Staffing* by:

(1) outlining specific actions taken by the Public Service Commission and the government’s human resource units to implement the 15 recommendations; and

(2) reporting on steps taken to resume effective operations of joint committees between government and the Yukon Employees’ Union.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to live up to its election promise to tender seasonally dependent contracts by no later than March 31 of each year and to immediately get the contracts for this summer's schedule on the tender management system.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to review the foster parent program and work to identify areas that can be updated to incentivize potential foster families, including but not limited to:

- (1) increasing compensation or allowances;
- (2) identifying other incentives such as tax credits or rebates; and
- (3) implementing a cash referral system for finding successful foster families.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to work in partnership with the RCMP, First Nation governments, municipalities and stakeholders, including small-business owners, to implement measures to improve community safety, reduce property crime, and target the illegal drug trade.

Mr. Kent: Mr. Speaker, I rise to give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to go back to the table with the federal government to negotiate an exemption for Yukon to the carbon tax.

Mr. Istchenko: Mr. Speaker, I rise in this House to give notice of the following motion:

- THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to:
- (1) fully disclose and report on an annual basis the details of promotional spending and sponsorship by Yukon Energy Corporation; and
 - (2) after making this information publicly available, hold public consultations to seek the views of Yukoners on whether this promotional and sponsorship spending should continue, or if they would rather see savings reflected on their electrical bills.

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

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Recent deaths in Whitehorse

Hon. Ms. Dendys: Mr. Speaker, I want to acknowledge the Kwanlin Dün First Nation and the Ta'an Kwäch'än Council, whose territory we are convening on during this 34th Legislative Assembly. Our heartfelt condolences go out to the

First Nation governments and their people during this very difficult time in their communities.

Your government has reached out to the First Nation governments. The First Nation governments are leading the responses in their communities, with support being provided through cooperation with Yukon government agencies. We want to commend the work of the RCMP, Victim Services, Health and Social Services and the Women's Directorate for their work during this time.

Mr. Cathers: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Official Opposition, I would also like to join the minister in expressing our sincere condolences to the families of those who have passed away, as well as to the community and First Nation government, and commending and thanking the RCMP, Victim Services and the Women's Directorate for their work at this difficult time.

Ms. Hanson: Mr. Speaker, I thank the minister opposite for raising this. It is very rare that we have a ministerial statement in this Legislative Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, the death of any person in our community diminishes us all. The death of two women by violent means is unacceptable. I reached out last week to Chief Bill to express our sadness and our shock that this was happening still.

There are no easy words in this kind of situation. Every person in this room has been touched by violence. We must bring it to a stop.

Hon. Ms. Dendys: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the members opposite for their responses today. It's very much appreciated.

I want to acknowledge the Member for Whitehorse Centre for the note she sent to me this last week regarding this issue. I appreciate her very kind words.

We are taking our lead from both the Kwanlin Dün and Ta'an Kwäch'än regarding what services we are providing as a government. I would be happy also to make officials available to the members opposite to answer any specific questions about how we are assisting, and I will certainly remain in contact with the members opposite as more information becomes available with regard to the events that are happening in the community.

Again, our heartfelt condolences go out to the First Nation governments during their very difficult time and to their communities.

Speaker: This then brings us to Question Period.

QUESTION PERIOD

Question re: Carbon tax

Mr. Hassard: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Premier promised his government would hit the ground running. However, by taking six months to bring the Legislature back, the Premier has shown that he is in fact not ready to get to work. That said, I have a very simple question for the Premier.

During the six months that he delayed bringing back the Legislature, did the Premier conduct an analysis of what the financial impacts of his carbon tax would be on Yukon families?

Hon. Mr. Silver: Mr. Speaker, I do appreciate the question from the member opposite. The Yukon government is very proud to have signed on to the *Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change*. We agreed with the framework's assertion that carbon pricing will encourage innovation and build the foundation of a low-carbon and resilient economy. It is time that we as a territory make efforts to reduce our dependency on fossil fuels, and it's well past time to take action on a global level as well.

The first step in this action is the pan-Canadian framework, and we have agreed with our fellow provinces and territories to the aspects of that pan-Canadian framework.

We are also taking part in negotiations in full participation, because it's clear that Canada was not going to allow any of our provinces or territories to decline on a carbon pricing mechanism. We are now in the process of waiting to hear back from Ottawa for next steps, and we look forward to engaging with stakeholders here in the Yukon to showcase how we plan on giving all money from the federal carbon pricing mechanism back to Yukon businesses and families.

Mr. Hassard: So I'll take that as a "no".

Another question then, Mr. Speaker: During that same six months, did the Premier conduct an analysis of what the economic impacts of his carbon tax would be on Yukon businesses?

Hon. Mr. Silver: The answer is not "no". We're going through a process and we are working with stakeholders on this. During the election campaign, we campaigned on actually dealing with a federal pricing mechanism, as opposed to others who decided to take the route of looking for an exemption where there is no exemption.

So again, we are going to concentrate on what we can concentrate on here in the Yukon; part of that is waiting for the details to come from Canada through the next few months to find out the answers to specific questions that we've asked. Now, Yukon will need clarity from Canada prior to designing a rebate program on how Canada will adhere to the following two principles that are very important to this side of government: carbon pricing should minimize competitive impacts and carbon leakage — particularly for emission-intensive, trade-exposed sectors — and also carbon pricing policies should include revenue recycling to avoid disproportionate burdens on vulnerable people and indigenous peoples.

As opposed to hoping and praying that there is going to be an exemption, this government did the steps to make sure that we were getting ready for a federal carbon pricing mechanism and making sure that carbon pricing mechanism does what it's supposed to do: reduce our fossil fuels' reliance; but at the same time, not penalizing businesses where they cannot have any alternative.

Mr. Hassard: The question was: What kind of analysis has the Premier done? There was no answer, so the answer is "no".

Mr. Speaker, Yukoners know that before you sign your name along the dotted line of a contract, you should have an understanding of what it is you're actually agreeing to. We would have expected that an economic analysis of the impacts of the carbon tax on Yukon families and businesses would have been done before the Premier signed his name on to this carbon tax scheme. In the last six months, Mr. Speaker, has the Premier done any economic analysis of the impacts of this carbon tax on Yukoners?

Hon. Mr. Silver: You know, the member opposite should be very clear and understand that it was his government that was moving forward, looking at options for carbon pricing mechanisms back when the Yukon Party was in power. There were conversations being had — which there should have been when there's a pricing mechanism happening on a federal basis that is going to affect Yukoners, so kudos to having those original conversations.

The member opposite also knows that the pan-Canadian framework has set out certain requirements. Of course we're working with every department right now and working with federal counterparts and we will be moving forward when we hear more details from Ottawa on aspects of our annex — which I hope and pray that the member opposite has read, and understands that a lot of work has gone into this so far. We are at a good place right now — moving forward to a tax that's going to be coming forth from Ottawa in 2018. I look forward to continuing that dialogue and that debate here in the Legislative Assembly.

Again, we believe carbon pricing is an effective measure to fight man-made climate change and I urge the opposition to take the same stance.

Question re: Carbon tax

Ms. Van Bibber: The government has not told Yukoners anything about how its carbon tax will impact the economy.

Documents from the Department of Economic Development state — and I quote: "For Yukon, the price of oil can influence economic activity, particularly in how it can impact mining sector activity as well impact tourism activities." We saw these impacts firsthand in 2008 when fuel prices skyrocketed and at least one local RV park saw a 30-percent decline in business as a result.

Can the Premier tell us today how much his carbon tax scheme will hurt the Yukon tourism sector?

Hon. Mr. Silver: I do appreciate the question. I know that this is a concern of Yukoners because there are a lot of unknowns.

What we do know is that the federal carbon mechanism pricing is coming and to prepare for that, we intend to reach out to stakeholders and to make sure that the carbon pricing mechanism hits where it is supposed to hit, which means that if you can reduce your carbon emissions, you will. Everybody knows that this is a federal carbon pricing mechanism, so the

same concerns that are going to happen in the tourism industry here will affect other jurisdictions as well.

We recognize that the pan-Canadian framework — the Vancouver protocol — has identified the north is going to feel these effects more so than other jurisdictions, so we will be working with other governments. We will be working with other stakeholders to make sure that this carbon pricing mechanism does what it's supposed to do. One of those things that it will do is help us pivot toward a non-fossil-fuel-based economy. These are opportunities that I would hope to see the opposition embrace.

Now, it's going to be feeling the pinch on the pump for sure and we understand that. It's going to affect our tourism industry; it's going to affect our mining industry. We're going to be working with stakeholders on both to make sure that the carbon pricing mechanism reduces emissions where it is supposed to, but in those areas where we have a unique case — where it is more expensive because of our northern consideration — we'll make sure that the money comes back to Yukoners' families and Yukon businesses to address those situations.

Ms. Van Bibber: In December, the Premier told the Yukon News that Yukoners will get more money back in a carbon tax than they actually paid because tourists will pay the carbon tax, but will be ineligible for a rebate. It seems the Premier is essentially proposing a tax on tourism. The tourism sector is highly competitive and increased costs would have a negative impact on visitor numbers and economic activity across the territory. It seems the Premier has not considered the impact on the tourism sector.

Why has the government not taken the time to study these impacts on a carbon tax within the tourism sector?

Hon. Mr. Silver: It's worth noting at this point that carbon pricing mechanisms are being implemented right across the world. Every region has the responsibility to do their part. We're committed to doing that, and I would hope — and I will allow for the opportunity — for the opposition to work with us on how these mechanisms work on a regional basis, whether it be for the mining sector or for the tourism sector.

We have time. We have time to work out the details. To say that we haven't been doing work already behind the scenes with all of our departments — working with the Department of Economic Development, working with the Department of Environment, also Community Services and Finance — there is lots of work being done.

We are waiting for Ottawa to look at the next steps based upon our annex, and at that time, we will share with the opposition where we are and how we can effectively make sure that the carbon pricing mechanism does what it's supposed to do — reduce our reliance on fossil fuels.

At the same time, there is a benefit. If you're getting more than just Yukoners paying into this tax, then you're going to have the benefits going back to Yukoners. That's a benefit to us — to be able to make sure that when we set our targets — when we set the rebate mechanisms — that we have a certain

threshold based on a larger pot than what Yukoners specifically are paying into.

Question re: Hydraulic fracturing

Ms. Hanson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. From the first community meetings where Yukoners learned about fracking to Yukon's largest ever petition and select committee hearings across the territory, fracking is an issue that Yukoners care deeply about.

The threat to our water, the high infrastructure cost and the impact on the land made many Yukoners conclude that it is just not worth the risk. There is little doubt that fracking has no social licence in Yukon.

On behalf of the thousands of Yukon citizens who signed petitions, who attended community events, and who wrote to their MLAs, I'm offering the Premier an opportunity to send a clear message.

Does the Premier stand by his election commitment that there will be no fracking in Yukon and will he tell this House what form this moratorium will take?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: The Government of Yukon does not support the use of hydraulic fracturing in oil and gas development, and we are seeking the best means to implement a moratorium on hydraulic fracturing. I see in our audience here today some members who have definitely taken this seriously. I have had an opportunity to meet with Yukoners concerned and I think they are quite comfortable with the approach we are taking.

There are currently no active oil and gas operations and no hydraulic fracturing activity underway in Yukon. We support responsible oil and gas development in collaboration with affected First Nations and in keeping with established regulatory environmental assessment in land use planning processes.

On April 15, 2015, the former Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources introduced a motion in the Legislative Assembly that, among other things, called for economic studies as outlined in the recommendations for the Select Committee Regarding the Risks and Benefits of Hydraulic Fracturing. I am happy to say that I have reviewed that study of potential economic impacts of developing shale and oil gas in the Liard Basin and I will release it — but there is a very important point. The risk portion of that report was never added, so I'm happy to say that we will be coming out with that report. We're going to make sure it's done right — as per the motion that was tabled, I believe, on the second-to-last day of the Sitting formerly, and we will be making sure that there is no fracking during this mandate.

Ms. Hanson: I appreciate the minister's words, but like many Yukoners, I'm concerned that words are the only form that this moratorium will take — no regulation, no legislation. The problem, as Northern Cross has recently demonstrated, is that, in the world of oil and gas industry, words are sometimes misused.

You see, Northern Cross spent years telling Yukoners that it was not planning to frack in Eagle Plains. Yet two weeks

ago they launched a \$2.2-billion lawsuit against the government for preventing them from fracking.

Mr. Speaker, it is the government's job to protect Yukon waters, air, land and pristine wilderness. The notion that protection of our environment would trigger any requirement for government to pay compensation holds future generations hostage.

Is the Premier considering any form of compensation to oil and gas companies following its decision not to allow fracking in Yukon?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Once again, I want to just — it's paramount that Yukoners understand that, as we were at their doorstep and as ran in this election, we have committed that there would not be hydraulic fracturing. We stick to that.

The member opposite has touched upon some particular issues. I think for those who follow the media, there are some processes that are going through — they are in the legal process. So at this point, I would reserve the right to comment on those items. But certainly, we're looking for the best possible tools to continue to stick to this moratorium. There is a series of tools that we can use but, at this point in time, we're looking at sticking to our word. Certainly, I think it's important to understand that there is no activity that's happening at this point in time where people have sought a permit to undertake hydraulic fracturing.

Thank you for the question.

Ms. Hanson: We know the issue is before the court, and no one is expecting the government to discuss the specifics of a court case, but in his role as the minister responsible for Energy, Mines and Resources, the minister has said that he wants to settle out of court — as he did recently in the media.

He sends the message that this government is willing to compromise on Yukon's right to protect our environment by preventing fracking. He is saying that Yukon's right to protect our land and water is negotiable.

It seems like Northern Cross has decided that, having failed to frack Yukon's natural resources, it will just frack the public purse instead.

One has to question why the minister has put himself and Yukoners in such a weak position by opening the door to compensation. Will the Premier tell Yukoners that this government will not give in to corporate interest and that he will not pay out oil and gas companies for Yukon's rightful decision to protect Yukon's water by prohibiting fracking?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: We must have read two different articles, but anyway — with that being said, you know, I appreciate the digging in to try to bring us to another position, but certainly — the Leader of the Third Party — the comments that I have made about consultation — you know, Yukoners have watched over and over again these legal processes. I think that what I've learned in private business and what I've learned at the negotiation table is that sometimes you do have an opportunity to work through things.

I have no interest in putting us in a weak position in government — absolutely not. Certainly, what we want to do

is take into consideration the effects on the taxpayer at all times. That's paramount for me.

Once again, we're committing to not going through the process of hydraulic fracturing. As for the Northern Cross situation — we'll let that play out in the courts and hopefully we'll maybe even get to a point where we don't have to go there — but not by putting this government or Yukoners in a weak position.

Thanks for your question.

Question re: Children in care

Ms. Hanson: This is a new question. In 2014, the Auditor General of Canada made the following observation in his report on Yukon Family and Children's Services — and I quote: While the department meets many requirements, "...it does not adequately fulfill several of its key responsibilities for the protection and well-being of at-risk children, youth, and their families."

In a subsequent hearing, the department assured the public that changes were being implemented. Recently, we have learned that children as young as three in the care of this government are staying in group homes, often with much older children. This is not an appropriate family, nor structured setting, required by children this young. Will the minister tell this House what concrete steps the department is taking to fulfill its responsibility as parent in caring for these very young children?

Hon. Ms. Frost: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member opposite for that great question. We are taking seriously the challenge before us with children in care — any children in care. We are currently looking more specifically at indigenous children in care, looking at rural Yukon and looking at what we can do to provide the necessary supports to ensure that children who do come into our care through the foster care system are well taken of. There are, in recent media reports, significant challenges that are before us. Foster care and finding foster care programming in homes in the communities oftentimes is difficult. We are working with our partners, working with the communities, working with the parents and looking at the whole important role of collaboration and cooperation with the indigenous governments of the Yukon Territory. The health and well-being of all Yukon children is paramount, and foster parenting is a full-time job. With that full-time job, we most certainly want to ensure that there are appropriate accommodations made. In terms of excellent work by the foster parent program and the collaboration that we have conducted over the course of the months in office, we will continue to work to ensure that we address this.

Ms. Hanson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the minister for her comments. This government has the ultimate responsibility for the care and well-being of children legally in its care. The government and this minister are in fact the legal parents of children in care, and have the role of making decisions and providing appropriate structure and care that ensures the well-being and growth of the child, whether they are three or 13 or 18. A child of three has very different

requirements, learning abilities and needs from those of a teenager. Any parent will tell you that a three-year-old requires constant attention, stimulation, play and love. This is a critical time in the brain development and growth of any child.

What training and support is the minister's department providing to group home staff to ensure that they are able to meet the needs of young children in the government's care?

Hon. Ms. Frost: Mr. Speaker, the work currently that is established with the Association of Yukon Foster Parents and working with the Department of Health and Social Services staff — we are looking at capacity development within the department to ensure that we have adequate programs, adequate staffing and a place to provide the essential services to children who we have in care.

Ms. Hanson: Mr. Speaker, I think everybody would acknowledge the yeoman efforts of foster parents in the foster care system, but it is the challenge that we are facing with very young children in group homes. Along that line, it is no secret that some youth and teens in care and in group homes are often out late at night. Some as young as 13 are not returning to their group home. Staff are regularly required to go out and search for these youth, often alone. Even when they are able to track down these youth who are in the care of this government, we have been told that group home staff do not have the authority to return them to the group home. These are your children. Youth and teens out at all hours of the night are at risk in a myriad of ways.

Mr. Speaker, what concrete steps are being taken to provide support to group home staff to address these concerns and to provide them with the ability to act and to ensure the safety and well-being of youth in the care of this government?

Hon. Ms. Frost: What are we doing? What can we do? I guess I would pose the question: What can we do differently? What are we doing differently? We intend to provide the best possible services and support that are available to us. Ideally, we would like to look at the prevention mechanisms available to us. So how do we keep our children at home in our communities with their parents so that we're not confronted with these challenges? That's what we want to do. That's what this government wants to do. That's what I want to do as the minister responsible for Health and Social Services.

The challenge is with regard to what happens when a child comes into our care. We have policies and procedures in place that guide and govern us and that protect the young children in our care.

Question re: Liberal Party ethical standards

Mr. Cathers: Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Premier. Does the Premier believe that the leader of a political party has an obligation to set an ethical standard for the party and a responsibility to show leadership in setting the tone for the party and setting standards for that team's ethical conduct?

Hon. Mr. Silver: Yes.

Mr. Cathers: I thank the Premier for the answer. Does the Premier believe that an ethical standard for his team includes following the law?

Hon. Mr. Silver: Mr. Speaker, I guess we'll play this game until we get the last part of the question. I'll let the member opposite just go ahead and ask his question.

Mr. Cathers: It's interesting that the Premier refused to answer whether an ethical standard for that team includes following the law.

The Premier has acknowledged that as Leader of the Liberal Party, he has an obligation to set an ethical standard for his team. When he learned one of his candidates might not be complying with the law during the 2016 election, he had the option of defending the candidate's action or publicly stating that all Liberal candidates had to comply with the law or they would be kicked off the team. He made the wrong choice.

Will the Premier now apologize to Yukoners for failing in his duty as Leader of the Liberal Party to ensure that all of his candidates followed the law and complied with the *Elections Act*? Will he acknowledge his mistake and apologize for defending the candidate instead of telling her, as he should have, that she had to obey the law or she would be kicked off the Liberal Party team?

Hon. Mr. Silver: Mr. Speaker, I apologize for being so guarded to the member — but I guess once bitten, twice shy with this particular member.

Mr. Speaker, we are aware that the RCMP is conducting an investigation into this matter and that this will proceed through the Yukon territorial court. It is a very serious matter and it is important that the Yukon election acts are upheld and the rights of voters are protected. To answer that question, yes, I absolutely believe that the law should be adhered to.

With regard to this particular candidate — again, we have a court case that's moving forward. I will answer the follow-up question which would be whether or not we believe that the appointment to the Assessment Review Board is something that we should be reconsidering. Well, the answer is: Innocent until proven guilty. If anything changes in the courts, then we'll make a decision at that time — just because I know that's where this question is going to lead the next time the member opposite decides to get to his feet.

Question re: Procurement policy

Mr. Hassard: Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the minister responsible for Highways and Public Works.

Mr. Speaker, this government campaigned on how it was going to improve procurement services, yet this morning we see again a continuing trend where the government's solution to contracting problems is to either fire the contractor or head for the courts.

Can the minister explain how he arrived at this decision, and should contractors expect this to be the new norm in dealing with contract issues?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I thank the member opposite for his question.

This government is committed to improving the procurement system for all Yukoners, and we have a number of methods we are going to use to fix that system. We want to make sure that contractors have a list of contracts that they can refer to when they are going forward so that they can better plan and build capacity within their companies to actually carry these contracts forward in a measured and methodical manner. That list will be coming out in March 2018, and I'm sure that process will help contractors and the government, and help all sorts of projects roll out in a measured and responsible way. It will help the procurement process immensely, so stay tuned for that.

Question re: Carbon tax

Mr. Kent: I have a question today for the Premier.

Yukon businesses will be forced to pass on increased costs from the Liberals' carbon tax on to Yukon residents. The president of Air North, Yukon's airline, noted that the carbon tax will increase the cost of airline fuel, which currently totals over \$20 million a year for that company. Trips to the Yukon would become more expensive; it would also make it more expensive for Yukoners to fly south. People are less likely to fly if ticket prices skyrocket. We heard earlier today that, in his rush to please the Prime Minister and sign on to the carbon tax agreement, details were lacking. In the six months the Premier delayed bringing back the Legislative Assembly, did he do any analysis on what the impacts of his carbon tax scheme will be on our local airline industry?

Hon. Mr. Silver: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and I really do appreciate the question. Yukon's airline is another example of a Yukon business that we will be working with and have already reached out to. Joe Sparling has already been to the office and we have had a comprehensive conversation with our chief of staff as well, and we look forward to meeting with more local stakeholders as we iron out the details of a local effect — a local version of the carbon pricing mechanism that Ottawa is going to be implementing.

Mr. Kent: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. So no numbers on what the impact of the carbon tax scheme will be on our local airlines.

A local CEO stated that his restaurants would have to pay more for food, and his hotels would pay more for heat. This would either hit their bottom line or be passed on to Yukon consumers.

Another local business owner said that the prices will go up and, while she would pass on some of those costs to customers, she will have to swallow some of it to stay competitive with larger grocery stores in town. Again for the Premier — in the six months since being elected and delaying the recall of this Legislative Assembly, why was there no analysis done on the impacts of his carbon tax scheme on the local hospitality industry, restaurants or our grocery stores?

Hon. Mr. Silver: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It is interesting that we keep hearing from the Yukon Party on how long it took us to get down to business — as if we were not working on things in the six months that we were not in the Legislative Assembly. It is worth noting that it took us 138

days to sit. The Yukon Party governed for 134 days without calling the Legislature back in 2016 while it figured out what it wanted to do about calling an election — but that is for another day.

All of these concerns are very important, and I would urge the member opposite to work with the government and maybe share the contacts of the local businesses that have concerns. I would also tell local businesses that we are starting on the process of getting the input of all of the local companies and local individuals on how we are going to be fair in making sure that all of the money collected from a federal carbon pricing mechanism will come back to Yukon businesses and Yukon families. They can then make sure that they are utilizing the right business approaches — to make sure that they are being as conscientious as possible — and at the same time make sure that if there are areas where they cannot reduce their emissions, then that has to be taken into consideration while we all work together. Maybe not all of us — we will extend that option to the opposition to help us with this next round after we get back from Ottawa their answers to our specific questions on the Yukon annex.

Mr. Kent: Well, Mr. Speaker, I find it very interesting that the member opposite, the Premier, wants to consult with Yukoners after he has already signed onto the deal in a rush to please the Prime Minister. Documents from the Department of Economic Development state — and I quote: "The price of fuel also influences the cost of Yukon construction activities and the cost of goods in Yukon as the majority of goods purchased locally are transported from outside the territory." This means that many of the goods and foods sold by our hospitality industry will increase in cost. Going out for dinner will be more expensive. Purchasing groceries at the grocery store will be more expensive.

Again, after six months, why doesn't the Premier know how much more expensive these activities will become because of his carbon tax scheme?

Hon. Mr. Silver: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It is interesting that the Yukon Party still believes that somewhere on the dashboard there would be some kind of exemption if we just held on and did nothing. It is not true. There is a federal backstop that Ottawa will put forward. That federal backstop will be there for any jurisdiction in Canada that decides that they are not going to put their own carbon pricing mechanism forward. That is going to happen in Manitoba. That is going to happen in Saskatchewan. The three territories united together and said that we will implement the carbon pricing mechanism through the federal backstop, and in that process there has been an awful lot of work being done through the three territories with Ottawa — internally with all of the departments — to make sure that the pan-Canadian framework is adhered to and the Yukon annex with Yukon-specific considerations is adhered to.

The next stage is to hear back from Ottawa, from all of the internal conversations, and we will reach out before anything happens as far as setting of a pricing mechanism. These questions will be asked. I appreciate that the opposition is ready to go with helping how we can figure out how to

implement this federal carbon pricing mechanism, and I look forward to working with the opposition to make sure that Yukon businesses and Yukon individuals' concerns are heard.

Speaker: The time for Question Period has now elapsed.

We will now proceed to Orders of the Day.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

CONSIDERATION OF SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Mr. Speaker, I wish to inform the House, pursuant to the provisions of Standing Order 26(2), that consideration of a motion for an Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne, if not concluded today, will take place on Tuesday, April 25, 2017.

ADDRESS IN REPLY TO THE SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

Mr. Gallina: Mr. Speaker, I move:

THAT the following address be presented to the Commissioner of Yukon:

MAY IT PLEASE THE COMMISSIONER: We, the Members of the Yukon Legislative Assembly, beg leave to offer our humble thanks for the gracious Speech which you have addressed to the House.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Member for Porter Creek Centre that the following address be presented to the Commissioner of Yukon:

MAY IT PLEASE THE COMMISSIONER: We, the Members of the Yukon Legislative Assembly, beg leave to offer our humble thanks for the gracious Speech which you have addressed to the House.

Mr. Gallina: Mr. Speaker, honourable members, Yukoners, friends and family, I rise today before you humbled to address this House as the MLA for Porter Creek Centre. I am truly honoured to be representing over 1,000 riding constituents and to be an advocate on behalf of all Yukoners throughout the territory. My full name is Paolo Nando Ernesto Gallina. Both of my parents immigrated to Canada from Europe at a young age and blessed me with an Italian last name that simply translates into "hen".

My father Peter and my mother Francesca raised my brother Dino and I in Richmond, BC in a house full of arts, love, sports, food and friends. I first came to the Yukon in the early nineties and the classic tale of a summer's visit. I worked for the Westmark Whitehorse, and the following winter, I dove headfirst into Yukon tradition and, funnily enough, ran as a Sourdough Sam under the pseudonym "The Westmark Whip".

I instantly took to the strong sense of community here and began to gain experience through volunteer work and employment with the Yukon Sourdough Rendezvous, the Whitehorse Chamber of Commerce, the Yukon Convention Bureau and the City of Whitehorse. I was fortunate to travel

the territory for my work, and I was captivated by the people, the places, the cultures, the stories and their traditions.

Mr. Speaker, in 1999, my family suffered a tragic setback. My brother Dino had been visiting family in London, England, scouting prospective art schools and by accident was struck by a train in the underground. He survived, though was in a comatose state for the remainder of his life. It took six months after the accident for him to be stable enough to travel back to Richmond, BC, where he remained in a continuing care facility for two and a half more years. During this time, I had moved back to Richmond to support my family. Our lives changed forever. We were with Dino seven days a week, providing physiotherapy with a network of over 50 volunteers. We were dedicated to rehabilitating Dino and nurturing him back to consciousness. Even though Dino was in a vegetative state, he would wake up — he would open his eyes and move his arms slowly — but there was no connection. He wasn't able to communicate with us. We would often say we needed to get him through the fog, that we could do this — we could bring him back.

To paraphrase Martin Luther King Jr., the ultimate measure of a person is not where we stand in the moments of comfort and convenience, but where we stand at times of challenge. The challenge we faced with Dino was of monumental proportions for us as a family, and thankfully we all gravitated naturally to our roles. I was called upon, as the oldest son, to represent what was important to us — finding ways to bring positive people into our lives and to motivate and to serve.

My father became more solid than ever in his role as the rock foundation that never wavered — sticking to his guns and always being there when we needed him. Now my mother — she transformed. My mother operated from pure passion and energy. She was convinced and unconditionally driven to bring my brother back and she wasn't going to rest until that happened. Sadly, a few years after the accident, Dino passed away peacefully from heart failure due to complications from a flu virus. We were devastated. We always believed we were so close to bringing him back — and maybe we were, but now the hard work began for us to try to re-establish a normal life.

Mr. Speaker, I share this personal story because when I tell it, it brings perspective back to the world around me. It helps me appreciate the life that my family and I have, and it inspires me to help others to reach for what's meaningful to them.

In 2003, I again answered the call of the north and made my way back to Whitehorse with my bride, Sarah, in tow. We began to raise our family and shared our northern lives with my parents as much as possible. I began where I left off and started to further my career in the business community, working with the Tourism Industry Association of Yukon, the 2007 Canada Winter Games, Outside the Cube Management Consulting, Mount Sima and, most recently, with Northwestel as their community investment manager.

Now as a politician who serves the people of the Yukon, I've entered a world that I seem strongly connected to. This connection, with the support from my caucus members and

the leadership of Premier Silver, leads me to believe that there is tremendous opportunity to make the lives of Yukoners better.

Mr. Speaker, my decision to run for political office and as an MLA was threefold. First, I saw a team of candidates and volunteers being assembled that I knew I wanted to be a part of. Whether I won or lost the election, I knew my experience, skills and personality would lend a positive change in the lives of Yukoners. I'm truly honoured to have beside me today a group of people who are smart and caring. They know how to listen and they value my role on this team and the contributions that I make. Their encouragement propels me to be the best citizen, father, husband, friend and elected official that I can be.

Secondly, as the father of a young family, I benchmark my daily actions knowing our children and future generations will one day take the reins of this territory and become stewards of the earth. In my role as MLA, I'm able to involve and teach my children through my own experiences and provide them with a complete understanding of the democratic society that we live in, how they can engage when their time is right, and to help them further appreciate the life that we have here in this territory and that it is not common around the globe.

Finally, I am here today because I have the desire to serve. As a young man trying to define my purpose, I was looking for the rational explanation: What profession would I be in? Would I be a father, a husband, a coach or a mentor? Today as I stand here, I can say with confidence that my purpose is to serve and the act of serving itself is who I am.

Mr. Speaker, the riding of Porter Creek Centre is one of the fastest growing ridings in the territory. It flanks the Yukon River to the east and is filled with trails, parks, facilities and a mix of residential homes where it's evident that residents take pride in their place. Constituents can count on me to be approachable, efficient and thoughtful. I will listen to their concerns and work to understand what matters most to them and their families. I will work hard to solve the problems they bring to me and I will be an advocate for community priorities.

Mr. Speaker, in the throne speech, we heard how the government is committed to managing the territory's financial resources prudently and will measure and report on the progress that it makes. In my capacity as a private member, I will work with the government and strive toward fiscal accountability. I have been appointed by order of the Legislative Assembly to sit on four standing committees. In these all-party committees, I will review Public Accounts, government regulations and reports from the Auditor General's office to ensure government meets the needs of Yukoners. I will be assessing parliamentary procedure to find ways to modernize orders of this House and I will be recommending appointments to major government boards and committees. I'm proud to report that, since being elected, all of these committees have met and are moving the mechanics of government forward in positive ways.

The throne speech highlighted how the government was committed to a stronger economy and that it recognizes that Yukoners want good jobs and business opportunities. I'm poised to leverage my career experience in this territory through partnerships with numerous businesses, community organizations and industry associations. I will be focused on finding ways to create jobs, strengthen and diversify the economy and protect the environment, and as our team moves forward, I will ensure that responsible investments and programs and services lead to healthy, productive and happy lives for all Yukoners.

Mr. Speaker, the throne speech outlined the importance of strong government-to-government relations with the First Nations and that all communities matter. I will work collaboratively with all governments and with my colleagues and members here in this House to ensure that all communities in the Yukon continue to grow and thrive. I will remain humble, respectful, and open-minded to our northern cultures and play a part in fostering reconciliation.

In my role as the caucus chair and party whip, I will bring forward relevant matters to Yukoners for our caucus to debate, discuss and align on. I will keep our team focused on the priorities we have set for government and keep top of mind our commitment to make the lives of Yukoners better.

There are Yukoners past and present who played a vital role in helping me to get where I am today: Marj Eschak helped me appreciate the value of contributing to the community; Dee Enright taught me the art of getting stuff done; Derek Charlton encouraged me to believe in my abilities; Larry Watling for his mentorship over me; Dave Gould told me that it was okay to dream; Sam Oettli showed me how to be an amazing role model to my children; Patti Balsillie was the sister I never had; and Susan Simpson drove me to success with a winning campaign.

My father now lives here with my family and he gives us unconditional love every day. My mother succumbed to cancer after a brief and courageous battle in 2010. She left me with a deep understanding of what it means to serve and live with passion. My wife Sarah, who truly is a shooting star, has not wavered in supporting me for 15 years this coming June. She and I have brought four healthy and beautiful daughters into this world: Oriana, Adria, Isabella and Vittoria. While they inspire us every day as they move into their teenage years, I'm preparing myself for a little trouble in the henhouse.

Speaker's statement

Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Gallina. A gentle reminder to all MLAs — probably some of us novice MLAs — that Members of the Legislative Assembly are not to be mentioned by name in the Assembly, so if you could govern yourselves accordingly, I know you will. Thank you.

Mr. Hassard: I am pleased to rise today as the Leader of the Official Opposition to respond to the Premier's Speech from the Throne. I will just begin by saying that the speech really contained very little detail, and when the Premier was

asked why this was, he said the real detail would be coming in the budget. This raises the question as to what was the point of a second throne speech other than to limit the amount of time opposition parties have to debate the budget. In the interest of using our time wisely and getting to work quickly, the Official Opposition will be limiting our responses to just this speech. Instead we will focus our efforts on the budget.

As I noted earlier this year, in my initial response to the Speech from the Throne, leading an effective opposition and holding the government to account is an honour and a privilege that I take very seriously. It is a duty that I and my colleagues will discharge to the best of our abilities.

In the course of our duties, we will ask questions of the government about matters that are important to our constituents and to all Yukoners. We will offer constructive criticisms of the government's decisions to ensure that they withstand the test of debate and to assure that Yukoners understand the context within which those decisions are being made. From time to time, we will offer alternatives so that Yukoners understand that the path being taken by the current government is not the only option to offer. It is indeed rare that decisions of government are without other options or without nuance, and we will do our best to explore those options and nuances to ensure that the right decision is being made and the right direction is being taken.

This is an important task in a democratic society, and my colleagues and I will endeavour to uphold our duty. To this end, our first task of this Sitting is to respond to the Speech from the Throne put forward last Thursday. Traditionally, the Speech from the Throne offers a new government the opportunity to chart out a course for their new mandate. It allows them to set priorities and provide the public with a glimpse into their agenda and their vision for governing in the coming years. Having heard and read the throne speech and having thoughtfully considered it, I can say that it most certainly came up short. For a speech that has taken almost six months to prepare, it was disappointingly lacking in detail.

As far as we can tell, the speech was strung together with headlines of old news releases, campaign platitudes and tired clichés. Its silence on key issues is deafening. In fact, on certain topics, such as key platform commitments, you have to wonder why the government chose to leave them out. Maybe they were hoping Yukoners would forget about their promises so they are easier to break, or maybe they just simply needed another six months to write it.

We may find out soon enough. At the current pace that this government produces speeches from the throne, we are due to get 20 of them over the course of their mandate. So far as we can tell, in fact they have delivered more throne speeches than they have seasonally dependent construction contracts.

Before I turn to my criticisms of the speech content, let me say that there are a few aspects of the speech that I was pleased to hear. I was pleased to hear the government's commitment to work at improving First Nation relations. We can all agree that improving relationships with any government is a benefit to Yukoners. I was pleased to hear the

government acknowledge the importance of the mining sector and commit to its support for responsible resource development. While it was a rehash of an announcement made several months ago, I was pleased to hear of the government's support of the resource roads in the Klondike region. We hope that this commitment and support will extend to other regions of the territory as well.

Mr. Speaker, I was also pleased to hear that the Liberal government has committed to completing the Whistle Bend continuing care facility, expanding the programs and addiction services at the new Sarah Steele Building, and moving to incorporate midwifery into the health care system. These are some of the Yukon Party initiatives that are being carried on by the Liberal government and have the support of the Official Opposition.

Having said that, let me now highlight where there are some significant gaps in the speech and the vision outlined in it. Mr. Speaker, we are concerned that some of the Premier's most significant commitments have been left out or ignored. One of the Premier's first commitments to Yukoners after learning of the 2016 election results was: "We are ready to hit the ground running." Well, Mr. Speaker, I think we can safely say that the Premier most certainly has not lived up to his promise. The delays this government has caused in getting down to the business of governing the territory have been historic.

First, they took a historic amount of time to recover from their election celebrations and swear in a Cabinet. Weeks ticked by without any direction being given to the patient officials of the Yukon government. Next, they took a historic amount of time preparing themselves to appear in the Legislature. They shattered the record for number of days passed before allowing the opposition to ask questions and hold them to account, and the delays don't end there. Numerous people — whether government officials, external stakeholders — have taken notice of how long it has been for this Liberal government to staff up and organize their own office. Mr. Speaker, when the Premier and his Cabinet can't even run their own political office effectively, it sends a terrible signal about their ability to run the entire government.

Mr. Speaker, we aren't the only ones noticing this. Just last week, the Yukon Employees' Union withdrew from all joint management committees and joint policy review boards because of the Liberal government's inability to get senior managers in place in a timely fashion. The Liberal's prolonged search for new senior government officials like deputy ministers is causing problems and disruption throughout the public service, and this came to a head last week.

The private sector is also taking note of this. In the 2016 election, the Liberals promised to get seasonally dependent work tendered by the end of March. Here we are at the end of April, while building contractors — hoping to get to work early as the ground thaws — are left waiting in the face of a broken promise from the Liberal government. What is worse is that we know that the waiting won't be over for some time yet. The Liberal government's historically late legislative

Sitting will mean that the budget won't be passed until well into the construction season. When the Premier tables the budget later this week, it will be the latest tabling of a budget in memory. Debate will not even begin until the first week of May.

Mr. Speaker, it has become quite clear that the Premier's first promise to Yukoners to hit the ground running has been broken. The Liberals may very well have hit the ground, but unfortunately we're still waiting for them to get up.

To be fair, Mr. Speaker, I don't think that their failure to launch as a government has been deliberate. I don't think that they wanted or planned to break these promises to Yukoners so early in their mandate. Rather, I think that many of the promises they've made are simply beyond their abilities to deliver. To be sure, officials within the public service, public sector unions and businesses in the private sector are all taking note of this.

Another notable omission from the throne speech was the Liberals' commitment to cut corporate tax rates and eliminate the small business tax. Mr. Speaker, the Yukon Party supports measures to make Yukon a more competitive place to do business. We have a strong record of cutting taxes and taking action to improve our business climate.

The commitment to make these significant tax reductions was a prominent feature of their economic platform and any mention of it was conspicuously absent from the throne speech. Businesses that we have heard from worry that the possible tax cuts will be a contingent on the imposition of a carbon tax. If this is the case, the Liberal government certainly is not being upfront or open about it, and this is something that we in the Official Opposition will be watching for. Again, we think that these are issues that the government has had more than enough time to begin planning for.

Another important issue that has arisen over the past six months is the government's tendency to side with interests of Ottawa over the interest of Yukon. We have seen Ottawa unilaterally ban offshore development without consulting Yukoners while the Premier remains silent. We have seen the Premier abandon negotiations for exemption of the carbon tax, even though at least one of the other territories continues to pursue this. We have seen the Premier brag about leaving almost \$1 million on the table in a new health transfer deal. Not only did the deal not include any new money to cover medical travel, a report by a leading university suggests it will be unsustainable for the territory in the long run. These are issues of concern and we hold out hope that the government will understand that it was elected by the voice of Yukoners in Ottawa, not the other way around. Unfortunately, we saw nothing in the throne speech suggesting they intend to reverse this trend. In fact, Mr. Speaker, when it comes to priorities, the Speech from the Throne mentions Ottawa three times and medical travel none.

On the topic of this government's carbon tax, the throne speech left much to be desired as well. Several months ago, we tabled a series of important questions about the details of the Liberals' carbon tax plan and we have yet to receive any

real response. We hope that we are able to get more information and insight throughout this Sitting.

With that, Mr. Speaker, we eagerly await the budget to see what details are provided.

Thank you.

Mr. Adel: Mr. Speaker, I acknowledge that we are on the traditional territory of the Kwanlin Dün First Nation and the Ta'an Kwäch'än Council, and I am very honoured to be here speaking to this House today. It has been quite a journey to get here.

The purpose of a throne speech is to set the tone for the 34th Legislative Assembly. Let me repeat that: The purpose of the throne speech is to set the tone of the 34th Legislative Assembly, not the details. It is the task of this government to work with all Yukoners to improve government-to-government relations, have reconciliation, move forward, and forge new and meaningful working relationships with all levels of government.

Our common goal should be to improve the opportunities of Yukoners to create a healthy environment and positive working relationships that encourage the opportunities for all of us to have a good education, a sustainable environment and happy, healthy Yukoners.

An important part of this government's mandate will be to build new relationships with our First Nation partners for the benefit of everyone, be it in education, health, mining, environment opportunities that can be shared among Yukoners. This is an important point to note because my colleagues around me — in the last six months when the opposition has said we have been doing nothing — have been working hard to put these types of priorities to the forefront in their mandate letters, in the way they're dealing with the Government of Yukon and its employees.

The throne speech has set the tone of ongoing cooperation and new partnerships by the Liberal government to the betterment of us all.

For those of you who don't know, my name is Ted Adel and I am the MLA for Copperbelt North.

I would like to take a few minutes right now to thank the people who worked so hard on my campaign to get me into the House today. Where do I begin? With the love and support of my wife Barbara, this journey began in 2011 when I ran my first campaign under the Liberal banner in beautiful Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes, as my colleague likes to call it — and he is not wrong. We were complete rookies. We had no idea what the commitment is like to run a campaign. Many miles, many handshakes and many cups of coffee later — the odd washroom break — we learned what it's like to come in a distinct and distant third, but we learned.

Fast-forward to May 2016. I sought the support of my family to campaign once again because I truly believed that the right group of people could move the Yukon forward, and that was our Liberal team. We took what we learned in 2011 and put together a campaign team led by my wife Barbara and my campaign manager, Rose Sellars. It was a big ask. Our families put their lives on hold from May 1 until November 7.

We knocked on 553 doors, sometimes two or three times, so we could listen to the constituents tell us what they felt needed to change in government today.

In August, Rose and Tim Sellars came on board and really helped kick our campaign into high gear. We navigated our way through a three-way contested nomination. With that, we brought 260 new members to the Yukon Liberal Party and we were successful on our first ballot at the nomination meeting. It's the first time we've ever had a three-way contest, and it's good for government and it's good for democracy to see that many people who were interested. That was step one. The next step was the door-to-door campaign where my two sons and volunteers took our Liberal message to numerous constituents criss-crossing the streets.

My worthy opponents — Pat McInroy, running for the Yukon Party, and Andre Bourcier, running for the NDP — both ran strong and respectful campaigns, for which I would like to thank them now. It was encouraging to see that many people working that hard for Yukon constituents. I would like to say that on November 7, we prevailed by 37 votes. No one said it was going to be easy, but it was certainly worth it.

The pillars of our throne speech were four. Healthy, happy people — we are committed to programs to support Yukoners from infants to elders.

Our government believes that Yukon students deserve a high-quality education and better mental health strategies. New money has been negotiated for home care and mental health initiatives in our first month in office. Whistle Bend is online to be completed in 2018.

The National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls begins its national hearings here in Whitehorse next month. What could be more important right now, given the state of what has been happening in the Yukon and the good work that our ministers have been doing to move this forward?

Healthy, vibrant, sustainable communities — we will make strategic investments in health. Whether it's in Carmacks, Mayo, Teslin or other communities — they all matter to this government. So does clean water. I come from a little town called Walkerton, Ontario. Water is always foremost in my mind.

Climate change — our carbon tax, our policies, our working with the federal government to develop something that is relevant and helps all Yukoners.

Better energy sustainability and reliability, better connectivity to the Internet and the rest of the world — so that we have redundancy so we can continue moving forward, as we have, through business education with that connectivity. We live in an environment that promotes lifestyles and choices just outside of our doorstep. We should never lose sight of that and never stop working to keep that.

Strong government-to-government relationships — reconciliation with First Nations is built with mutual understanding and respect. Good governance and constructive partnerships benefit all Yukoners. There is a strength in a united voice. We can be an example for all of Canada. It will involve hard work and sometimes difficult conversations but,

as for Jim Smith forging the way before us, it will certainly be worth it. We are here to build a bright future for your children and grandchildren, my children and grandchildren, and all Yukoners.

Good jobs for diverse and growing economy — above all, Yukoners want and need to work at good, sustainable jobs. We will seek to work with education to align training programs that make sense for our market demands. We will encourage business partnerships with local companies. We believe the economy and the environment go hand in hand. They cannot be mutually exclusive. Diversity in our economy is paramount to our success and we will endeavour to support all sectors of our economy.

I ran because I felt the Yukon is in need of strong, experienced leadership that all of my colleagues bring to this Liberal team. During my tenure, it's important to me to help make the Yukon an even better place to live.

In 1992, I embarked on a journey. I was a jaded Ontarian who had finished careers in Ontario, sold my businesses and was looking for a new opportunity. The gentleman who owned the small Canadian Tire store in our town was coming to the Yukon and I asked him if he needed some help. Four weeks later, here I was, with family in tow — three teenagers grumbling all the way from the centre of the universe to the backwoods of Canada — or so they thought.

Over the years, as they grew and started their own families and moved away, all I hear from my three older children is, "Gee, dad, I wish we could come back." There is nothing like this place. Let's celebrate that.

Subsequent to that, in 1996, I met my wife-to-be Barbara. We had two more sons who are just working through their graduating years — who were born and raised here, who would love nothing better than if I gave them a jackknife, a tarp and some matches and kicked them out the door. They would spend all their time in the mountains if they could. They are going to be the new stewards of the Yukon. These are the people for whom we are preserving this. These are the people for whom we are making this better. This is something we cannot lose sight of because there is nothing in all my world travels I have seen that compares to this.

When I came here, I stayed with Canadian Tire for awhile. Then I moved on to become a postman, through which I got to see the entire City of Whitehorse — some good, some bad. It was a lot of fun. From there, I've gone on to do work with the Canadian Union of Postal Workers. I have done a lot of volunteer work. Like my colleague to my left, I was also a Sourdough Sam — though a few years before him — and that was back in the days when Mr. Gallina will know we did 10 days of straight-on performances. So is that an experience that has helped me with the Legislature — this type of performing? Perhaps. It's fun.

From there, I've come to understand that service is something I've done all my life. I am a life member of the Kinsmen Club of Canada, which is the highest honour for service work that they can bestow on a member. I am committed to moving forward with my constituents and it is

paramount to me and people who know me that if you ask me to do something, I am happy to help.

In my riding from Canyon Crescent to Lazulite, to North Star, to Falcon, the riding of Copperbelt North encompasses rural and municipal constituents. My constituents live, breathe, work and play within the City of Whitehorse's boundaries. It's important to me that I represent Copperbelt North constituents on challenges that bridge municipal and territorial governments' responsibilities and priorities. In light of these priorities, I've participated in the recent town hall meetings held by the City of Whitehorse, and the École Émilie Tremblay and Golden Horn schools. I listened as my constituents spoke passionately about the concerns they have in and around their neighbourhoods, such as safe trails, quiet enjoyment, safety, speeding, highways, local improvement costs, snow runoff, and how resolutions can be arrived at in a mutually beneficial and amicable way, based on evidence-based decisions.

A lot of what a private member does within the government happens behind the scenes. As co-chair of the CDF committee since we formed the government, we have earmarked over \$1 million toward important territory-wide community initiatives, which include: the church in Mayo, Wolf Creek ice rink, a Drift Drive park, and a whole bunch of other community improvements. I'm enjoying the aspect of being a private member because our work impacts all Yukon communities and we have identified that all communities matter.

As a member of the Public Accounts Committee, I will be helping to hold the government accountable to the recommendations of the Auditor General of Canada's reports and findings as part of our transparency and commitment to good governance on behalf of all Yukoners.

Private members will also be a large part of special commissions struck by this government to anticipate and look at specific and general issues. We may not be in the media often, but we are consistently working on Yukoners' behalf.

First and foremost, I am here for my constituents and I would like to hear from them, not just when something becomes a problem, but when you need to have a chat over a coffee about what we can do to make the Yukon better: good jobs, a sustainable environment, a modern Yukon — all communities matter — and healthier and happier lives. These four priorities define who we are as a government and will guide our decision-making moving forward. I am honoured to be representing you, and I would like to thank you for the opportunity to do so.

Ms. Hanson: I should have clarified at House Leaders this morning exactly what the Official Opposition's approach was going to be this afternoon. I was thinking that we were going to be hearing from all of the Official Opposition this afternoon, so I have been busy scribbling away here. You are going to hear some scribbled notes, which is probably not — well, the Premier is familiar with that approach of mine, so here we go.

It really is an honour to stand in this House at the beginning of the Second Session of the 34th Yukon Legislative Assembly as the elected representative for the people of Whitehorse Centre. Some days it seems like an awfully long time since I first stood here after the December 2010 by-election. At the outset, I offer my sincere gratitude to the citizens of Whitehorse Centre for again putting their trust in me to bring their voices into this Legislative Assembly. Whitehorse Centre is a diverse and thriving community — a community with many challenges. There are many unique aspects to Whitehorse Centre. For one, Whitehorse Centre is probably the one riding in the whole territory that nearly every Yukoner has been to. There are probably not very many Yukoners who have not been in downtown Whitehorse or in some part of it. Whether you are coming in from the communities for a medical appointment or to participate in events like Adäka, Rendezvous or events at the Old Fire Hall or the now-burgeoning focal point on the waterfront, the Kwanlin Dün Cultural Centre, Whitehorse Centre is a hub. Indeed, many people from all over Whitehorse and surrounding communities work downtown or will soon visit Arts in the Park or the farmers market as the warm weather returns.

Whitehorse Centre is also a starting point for many tourists' Yukon journey. Above all, Whitehorse Centre is a unique amalgam of all that is Yukon. I am honoured to represent First Nation people and recent immigrants from all corners of the world, elders and seniors, young families and students, lifelong Yukoners and people who are just putting down roots in our territory. The cultural and linguistic diversity of Whitehorse Centre includes AFY, celebrating their 35th anniversary this year, and the multi-cultural centre offering settlement services to new immigrants.

Of course Whitehorse Centre is also home to many Yukon businesses from the Itsy-Bitsy Yarn Shop to big box stores. Change is a fact of life for Whitehorse Centre. From being the historic home of Yukon's first peoples along the waterfront to the settlers enticed north by gold, Whitehorse has evolved over the years, and with that change come many challenges.

Whitehorse Centre is home to both cosmopolitan new condo developments and squalid slum apartments. There are hipster hangouts and homeless hideouts. There are people struggling with loneliness, mental illness and/or substance abuse. There is joy and despair, and this is who we are, Mr. Speaker. So you can understand why I'm both proud and humbled to have been re-elected to serve this eclectic riding that represents today's Yukon in so many ways. I will do my very best to bring these diverse perspectives in what unites us to the forefront in this Legislature.

Speaking of what unites us, I do want to start by acknowledging and encouraging a change of tone in the throne speech delivered last week. It was good to hear the Liberal government incorporate it into their statement of commitment because the throne speech, along with their campaign promises set out in their election platform, does form a commitment made to all Yukoners, a commitment to

which we, on the opposition benches will hold this government to account. The language of collaboration, collaborative people-focused care, recognition of the important of both the environment and the economy, and the language of reconciliation was good to hear. As the Speech from the Throne said — and I quote: “... it’s not just what it does that’s important. It’s equally important how it does it.”

So after 14 years of a government that lived by a father-knows-best principle, Yukoners are hopeful for government that will do more than talk a good story. I’ll come back to this in a moment.

The legislative agenda for this Sitting of this Legislature, while a bit on the thin end, contains important measures that the Yukon NDP caucus advocated for a long time and supports. Making National Aboriginal Day a statutory holiday is a symbolic positive step to take toward reconciliation. It will be an opportunity for all Yukoners to celebrate and learn about the rich contributions, past and present, of First Nation cultures to our territory. It’s a holiday that all Yukoners deserve to participate in. It’s not a holiday for First Nations; it’s a holiday for all Yukoners.

I have to salute the work of a former colleague of mine to bring this issue forward in the Legislature. The former NDP MLA for Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes worked tirelessly on this, from collecting petition signatures to reaching out to First Nation leaders, business owners and others in support of this initiative.

As I mentioned earlier, though, we must keep in mind that, while important, a measure like this is symbolic in nature and it is no substitute for concrete action on fulfilling the other 93 calls to action contained in the truth and reconciliation report. There are many vitally important initiatives left on the “too hard” pile by the previous government that we must, as legislators, take on if we are serious about reconciliation — examples that stem directly from the TRC, including living up to commitments made in treaties.

For too long, government has talked around the issues of addressing modern land use and resource development, despite the fact that in both the Yukon final agreements and the devolution transfer agreement there is an obligation to develop modern successor mining legislation. The promise of unbounded economic development in the Yukon is an illusion until and unless the Yukon government makes it a priority to work in a principled manner with Yukon First Nation governments, the Government of Canada, industry and citizens to get regional land use planning going with a respectful, effective process and timelines to provide the certainty needed for sustainable economic development in the Yukon.

Mr. Speaker, another welcome legislative change signalled by this government in its throne speech is the amendment to the *Human Rights Act* and *Vital Statistics Act* to eliminate discrimination against trans-identified people. This is again a change that was championed in this Legislature by a former colleague of ours, this time the former NDP MLA for Copperbelt South. I want to thank her for her work on this.

But as she would no doubt do, I think we all must give credit for this change to the advocates, to the citizens who have made this issue a priority for our community. I’m thinking of Chase Blodgett and everyone at All Genders Yukon. I’m thinking of trans-identified people who have for years had to patiently wait, sometimes for the bureaucracy, sometimes for the political will, to see their rights enshrined in our laws. Yukon will be a better place for their work and we owe them our gratitude. It’s time Yukon finally catches up with the rest of the country in taking this positive step. Hopefully someday soon Yukon will again be at the front of the pack when it comes to human rights instead of playing catch-up.

Now, Mr. Speaker, there are, in my view, several caveats in terms of my endorsement or the positive response to the throne speech we heard last week. An example is the question of whether those words, those stated intentions, will materialize. As I mentioned earlier, we do welcome the change in tone. We appreciate the symbolic gestures made by this government on issues from collaborative care to building a more resilient economy. But if we have learned anything from the experience of the federal Liberal government, it is that a change in language does not necessarily mean a change in action.

We hope — and I think all Yukoners hope — that this government will take a different approach than that being followed by its federal counterpart when it comes to actually delivering change — change that Yukoners need and want — because we can talk about patient-centred collaborative care all we want, but if patients are still being bumped from wait-list to wait-list and the silos in our system are not dismantled, we will have failed. We can talk all we want about a resilient economy that protects our environment but, if we keep creating more Faros or more Mount Nansen mines, we will have failed.

I encourage this government to be bold, not just in words but in actions, so that Yukoners over the next months and years see a real difference in their day-to-day life, because ultimately that is what every government should be about — making life better for the people we represent.

Another reservation that I have about this throne speech is what was not said in it. The first thing that comes to mind is the issue of inequality. Anyone who has ever volunteered at the food bank or at the soup kitchen knows that there are many people in this territory struggling to make ends meet. Despite the abundant resources we have and the generous transfers Yukon gets from Ottawa, we have yet to find a way to ensure that no one is left behind in Yukon, that no kid goes to school on an empty stomach.

Yukoners are still struggling with the real and serious issue of the shortage of affordable housing. I would encourage all members of this House to take a moment and get today’s paper. We are too early in the Sitting to have the members opposite sitting there reading the newspapers, but we have seen it in the past; hopefully, that may not happen. Take a moment, grab today’s paper and go through the apartment or house rental classifieds. It’s a fairly short list, Mr. Speaker.

Now imagine having to find a place on Yukon's minimum wage — \$11.32 an hour. Even someone making \$15 per hour would struggle to find a place to live that won't take up 50 percent or more of their income. That is unacceptable, Mr. Speaker.

People will tell me that there are very few adults trying to live on minimum wage. Tell that to my constituents in downtown Whitehorse — there are — who are working full-time. This is how we end up with people who have a full-time job, who still need to go to the food bank every week. This is how we end up having kids go to school hungry — because their parents have to make the impossible choice of heating their home, getting nutritious food or paying for school supplies. We can do better and we must do better.

Although the throne speech, in terms of tone, was good and it was light, it was also sometimes light in content. Yukoners are looking for a clear vision of how the new light and positive language will be reflected in that positive change for ordinary Yukoners.

I mentioned a little bit about the notion of using the language of collaboration. Actually, there were seven uses of the word “collaboration” or “collaborative” throughout that brief speech. It was used to describe the health care model that the government aspires to. I remind the government that over 900 Yukoners took part in a comprehensive review of Yukon's health care system in 2008-09. That report and its companion, *Taking the Pulse*, set out a vision for health care endorsed by Yukoners that focused on collaborative primary care, midwifery and community-based care. While it is good and important to hear that the government is willing to spend the new federal monies on home care and mental health, what is missing is a commitment to how that money will be spent. Yukoners have clearly said before what kind of health care we need in this territory and how it should be delivered — community-based health care. Think of the money we could have saved if over the last 10 years we had implemented any of the recommendations of that territory-wide consultation — hundreds and hundreds of millions of dollars.

It's good to hear that they are willing to spend the new federal monies on home care and mental health, but I'm looking for the commitments on how it is going to be spent. Again, it's what the government itself said in its speech. It's how we do it. Will the government commit to a timeline that would see expansion of home care to include evenings and weekends, and strengthen the provision of home care in rural communities within the next year?

I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, that these are needs that are not only necessary, but vital to reducing demands on our acute care system. We look forward to the details of when and how community care clinics will be established in Yukon, how they will be comprised, and who will be part of those clinics.

An aspect that is missing from the Speech from the Throne in terms of building a healthy and happy people — a really important piece of our public health care system — is any mention of dental care. We have had serious changes and challenges within the school system for dental care and its delivery. Dental care was originally part of the vision of

medicare in Canada because it's seen as a vital piece of the preventive health care model. Of course, when medical doctors went on strike in Saskatchewan, they basically scared the whatever out of various governments from going beyond the single-insurer system. So the doctors were happy they got the insurance scheme, but governments were scared off from moving to the next component, which included dental care. But Mr. Speaker, dental care is an absolutely vital piece of prevention and preventive health element in terms of diabetes and heart disease. We look for the kind of creative ideas and responses from the government on this.

Nowhere in this Speech from the Throne in terms of healthy and happy Yukoners do we see any indication of how this new Yukon government will give effect to addressing the real issue of poverty reduction. Again, Yukoners — over 70 different NGOs, non-government organizations and many, many citizens — in the course of 2009-10 participated in discussions around a poverty reduction strategy for Yukon. There is no legislative framework for that in the Yukon. There is no way of measuring whether or not we're succeeding in any of the efforts that we take to reduce poverty in this territory, unlike other provinces. If we're going to say we're going to do something to make life better for people, we should have some measuring stick to say we've done it or we've moved along that stick. Mr. Speaker, without effective planning, we can't tell whether or not we're doing anything more than saying the good words.

Mr. Speaker, we're pleased to see in the Speech from the Throne that this government is willing to invest more in quality childcare. The question will be how much and by when. Perhaps the minister will give positive consideration to the creation of a ministerial taskforce, including all relevant stakeholders in the first year of her mandate. It's not in the mandate letter to review childcare needs — to address what I have become increasingly concerned about, which is the real and serious deficiencies in our legislation that was, at the time — in 1990 — leading the way but now has fallen back — our childcare legislation. It concerns me on a personal level, representing Whitehorse Centre, when I see — almost daily it feels like, but that's an exaggeration — the increase in the number of childcare facilities that are repurposed facilities. When I look across the street, when I look down beside the 202, when I look at the old Sears building and I see children whose parents need to place them in childcare because all of us — not all of us, but many of us in this room — have had the experience that when you're working, you need childcare for your child. You hope that childcare will be quality childcare. You hope your child will have exposure every day to a safe play area and to fresh air. Mr. Speaker, we are denying that to many, many children in this territory.

If you look at the regulations that date back to 1990, you can walk four blocks and that is called adequate access to play areas for kids. Try that at 40 below with a two-year-old or an 18-month-old. There is a need to look at the importance of making childcare affordable and accessible in our territory, to look at what are the modern, 21st century requirements for accreditation of childcare workers, to look at what kind of

commitments we as a community are willing to make to build safe, quality childcare services and facilities. Why aren't we investing in childcare facilities as we do in educational facilities? We talk about EDI — the early development index — and how Yukon is failing and falling back and it's not just in rural communities. We have serious issues in this town. That will take rethinking some of our approaches about how we have done it in the past, but I am hopeful that in this government's commitment to healthy families, it will be taken into consideration.

It is good to see that this is a government that is open to the idea of Housing First. I would have hoped that by 2017 we would be beyond exploring the idea of Housing First. It is time to commit to ending homelessness through the evidence-based and proven Housing First approach to homelessness and housing insecurity.

On housing more generally, the language in the Speech from the Throne is fairly general and there is no mention in the Speech from the Throne or in the mandate letters of any sort of common-sense approaches to protect Yukoners, for example, who make the most important and probably the most significant financial investment of their lives, which is to buy a new home, and we continue not to see any protection for them by being, again, one of the few jurisdictions in Canada without a home warranty program so that new home purchasers and people who have done renovations have protection to address building deficiencies after making that significant investment.

I know my colleague from Takhini-Kopper King will raise this, but I have to say it also because it affects people who I am dealing with right now in casework issues: the absence of any recognition of the need to recognize — and this is an absence in both the Speech from the Throne and in mandate letters — the differences between mobile-homeowners and renters and the need to protect mobile-homeowners by putting a cap on pad rental. Here is an opportunity to correct, to indicate or to signal that this government hears the essential justice of correcting the *Residential Landlord and Tenant Act* — an oversight by the previous government that fails to provide security of tenure so that we can move away from being one of the few jurisdictions to allow evictions without cause.

As much that, as I said, we appreciate the improvement in tone, it can't be at the expense of expectations that tone replaces substance. We were shocked not to see any specific reference to how the efforts of the supported independent living facility — Vimy — would be addressed specifically. This is a community group of seniors, and my goodness, some of them are even older than I am, and they are getting there, and they're wondering if they are going to be able to live in this facility that they have worked so hard for so many years on.

Building a healthy, happy community means an inclusive approach. It's not just using the word "inclusive". In my view, it is disappointing to see the lack of inclusion of any specific language about how this government will work with Yukoners living with disabilities.

Again, as I was scribbling away this afternoon, I looked at the healthy and happy people part, and I couldn't see that. I stand to be corrected, I'm sure, by members opposite if that's an oversight, but I didn't see that. I would expect, at minimum, a review of relevant government programs and services with the objective of accommodating Yukoners who are living with disabilities, and accommodating their diverse needs and abilities.

Mr. Speaker, it can go from the complex to the simple. It has been suggested — and we have suggested it and will continue to suggest it — that the Yukon look at how we live up to the UN *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* to ensure that we are living up to that convention. Being a subnational government of the federal government that signed on to this convention, we have obligations there. To the simple one: finding a new location to provide community-based living for the current tenants of the Takhini Haven group home.

My colleague, the former MLA for Riverdale South, pointed out time and time again how offensive it was to have Yukoners living with disabilities who have committed no crime but are housed in a former women's jail, on the jail grounds. It took her five years to get the previous government to acknowledge that it was wrong to keep the barbed-wire fence around it. The barbed-wire fence is gone but it is still a jail. I can tell you that there are people who you see every day, who you interact with, who resent deeply that they are in that facility.

That's more than tone; that's action — but it gives effect to that kind of respect that is spoken to in the Speech from the Throne. The Speech from the Throne speaks of a balanced approach to justice. The good thing is that this government is coming in when there are lots of really concrete starting points and concrete recommendations that will help it make real improvements for the lives of Yukoners. They can start by reviewing the Auditor General's report on correctional services, keeping in mind that all of the recommendations made by the Auditor General were agreed to by the senior officials of the departments responsible, so there should be no excuse, several years in, for those changes having not been implemented. They are accountable to us as legislators to follow through on what they did in response to the recommendations that were made.

One concrete step would be to ensure that never again will the so-called "Mandela provisions" be violated — that this government will live up to respecting individuals by banning isolation in the jail so that we don't create situations where individuals spend 15 days, 180 days or 300 days in isolation. The UN says 15 days is torture. We need accountability in terms of how many people have been in isolation.

The Speech from the Throne has one delightful, really loaded line that, if truly given effect, will have a significant impact on the future in this territory and we look forward to working with the government on it — "a larger review of Yukon laws, policies and practices" — because I think, Mr. Speaker, there are real opportunities. I had mentioned

earlier the changes are — there are some changes — let me step back for a second.

The government announced the long-awaited changes to the laws and regulations as they affect the pharmaceutical profession, and I have a list of about two or three pages of other professions whose legislative base — or lack thereof — needs to be updated. That's just one area in terms of that kind of professional regulatory side. Mr. Speaker, there is so much positive and constructive work that can be done when Yukon does this larger review of its laws, policies and practices with respect to ensuring that what we do as government is both in line with *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* and how that's consistent with what we've negotiated in our Yukon land claims agreements, that what laws that we have in place are consistent with what we have in our Yukon final land claims agreements. There are so many of them.

We're pleased to see the emphasis — or the reference anyway — on renewable resources and joining this global transition from fossil fuels. Again, there are so many aspects that we would hope to see fleshed out, both as what we see in the coming budget speech and over the course of the next few weeks, months and couple years.

One of the things that we put forward as an idea and we will be bringing forward again, as the Leader of the Official Opposition said, is offering positive ideas. We have spent a lot of time and energy in this territory on geological survey. We think it's time to do a renewable energy resource survey. If we're going to really get serious about our renewable energy, then let's map where those resources are. With our federal counterparts, let's spend the money to find out where they are so we can take advantage of them.

Mr. Speaker, there are many other aspects that, over the course of the next few months, we will be spending time together on. In this Legislative Assembly we'll have an opportunity to come back to a number of elements that I have not focused on with respect to where we think we could put some meat on some of the broad language that's contained in this Speech from the Throne, and we hope that the suggestions that we make from this opposition bench will be received in the same positive vein with which they are offered.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Applause

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I would like to begin, Mr. Speaker, by referencing the tribute to Jim Smith and acknowledging the Member for Porter Creek North when she was giving her lovely tribute to past Commissioner Smith. She quoted him as referring to the beautiful land of Yukon. That's where I would like to start.

I think that the Yukon is beautiful. Mountains, forests, the vastness of the river-carved landscape, the spring sky — all parts of the Yukon from the beautiful Southern Lakes up to the beautiful North Slope are exceptional and special to us, the people who plant our roots here in this land. As Members of the Legislative Assembly, each of us, I am sure, is extremely proud to represent a part of the Yukon. Each of us has a

beautiful riding, and I have the privilege to represent beautiful Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes. I say that here today not to try to make it any sort of competition with any other riding — just because I am very proud to be elected to represent a place that I call home and believe so much in.

It is very humbling to be elected to this Legislature to represent Yukoners and it is a responsibility that I consider to be a privilege. I intend to work very hard to represent all of the citizens of Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes to make lives better for all Yukoners. As a young person, my family moved around a lot. I lived in seven of the provinces, and when I came north — came to the Yukon — I met my lovely wife Susan and now we make our home here. Well, she had already made her home here. I was in trouble with several of the erstwhile suitors. She and I feel lucky to be able to live in beautiful Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes. Our living room window overlooks Marsh Lake and the mountains beyond. I was there just this morning working on this very speech. I'm reminded every day of the inspiration that this spectacular place provides to all of us. I'm happy to be here with all of you.

I would like to begin, Mr. Speaker, by thanking two people from my riding in particular — Mr. Rob Schneider and Mr. Kevin Barr. Like me, they also put their names forward to represent Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes. Both ran respectful and sincere campaigns. Both are dedicated community volunteers. I would like to thank Mr. Barr as well for his five dedicated years of service here in this House.

I would also like to thank all of the citizens of the four communities that make up beautiful Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes. During our election campaign, there are always times when, as candidates, we feel under stress, but as we worked in the riding, what I found especially memorable was to get to hear from Yukoners and to hear their points of view and to have them engage in our democracy.

I think that whenever that happens — whenever our citizens are engaged — then we strengthen our democracy, regardless of whatever political stripe we are talking about. I really appreciated the citizens of Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes. They came out to several town hall meetings or all-candidate forums. It was great to go door-to-door and to hear them as they spoke to us in those forums.

I would also like to thank my colleagues here in caucus. We have had quite a year. We ran a strong campaign, working hard to represent Yukoners. We spent a lot of time together since last fall — first during the campaign and, since December, in government. While I respect that the Leader of the Official Opposition has expressed his concern that we haven't been doing work, I would actually like to acknowledge, from my colleagues, the incredible amount of work that everybody has been putting in and also the level of respect that I have found from working with everybody. You don't always know where you're going to land, and it is sincerely an honour to get to work alongside all of you.

Finally, I would also like to thank all the members of this House. Congratulations to everyone who was elected to serve their beautiful ridings. It is a privilege and distinction to stand

among this group. I know we are all here in our sincere desire to serve the Yukon — this place that we all love to live.

As Members of the Legislative Assembly, we all have a duty to work to make the Yukon better as a whole — to echo what the Leader of the Third Party just said — and to represent our constituents. Our role is to serve the people of the Yukon, to work together respectfully, in and for the best interests of all Yukoners.

I would like to relate a small story, Mr. Speaker. A couple of weeks ago, I visited a grade 4 class. We were on one of the trips that we had been taking to the communities and we did a tour with the Minister of Education and the Minister of Health and Social Services to the Robert Service School. A grade 4 class asked me to come in and speak with them because they were studying civics. They asked if I could come and give them a few words about government. I did — and by the way, I also was given some of those lovely Yukon pins. At that time, my colleagues in my offices hadn't mentioned how precious those pins are and how few of them we get because that class is now all sporting those pins.

We had a conversation in that class; I was talking about the various orders of government and what we all do in those various orders. Toward the end, I asked them a question. I was talking about my role as a Member of the Legislative Assembly and as a minister. I asked them the question: Who do you think is my boss? Several of them shouted out "Premier Silver", which is very nice because he is also their MLA. That wasn't the answer that I was sort of trying to track down. I said to them, "Sure, he's my boss, but who's our boss? Who's the boss of the Premier and me?" There were several suggestions put forward. In the end, I said to them — they were a little surprised when I said to them that they were my boss.

No matter what our political stripe or what riding we live in, our job is to represent all people of the Yukon. Simply put, we work in a representative democracy, and this is a responsibility that I think we all take very seriously. I would like to acknowledge that I am speaking to you today — and we are all speaking today — on the traditional territory of the Kwanlin Dün First Nation and the Ta'an Kwäch'än Council. I was schooled on that pronunciation just last week. The member opposite and I were encouraged to pronounce it with the emphasis on the second syllable for the Ta'an Kwäch'än Council.

My riding of beautiful Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes includes the traditional territory of the Carcross/Tagish First Nation. One of the first priorities of our new government has been to improve government-to-government relationships to create a modern Yukon that is diverse and inclusive. I will speak a little bit more about that in a moment, but I would like to acknowledge that it has been a pleasure to get to speak with counterparts in other orders of government. Just this last week, I had yet another part — a good visit with Chief Carvill of the Carcross/Tagish First Nation. We are working together as respectful orders of government. That does not mean we will always agree, but it does mean that we will take the time to work together to try to reach a shared understanding.

Yukon First Nations are the foundation of this territory. Their story is the first story. Celebrating First Nation knowledge, language and culture is central to modern Yukon. It is part of our collective and shared history. For this reason, I am excited that I had the honour today to introduce our first bill to this House. I brought forward, as we all know, legislation to establish National Aboriginal Day as a statutory holiday here in the Yukon. I would like to acknowledge that it was my predecessor, Mr. Kevin Barr, MLA for beautiful Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes, who first presented the petition to establish National Aboriginal Day as a statutory holiday in the territory. I would also like to acknowledge that it was the Minister of Community Services who brought forward a motion here in this House that began the work to investigate National Aboriginal Day. I will let everybody know that today, as this legislation was tabled, I am given to understand that we have put the information up on the website about the work that was conducted to carry out a survey of Yukoners to check in with them on their opinions around National Aboriginal Day, which I will present later when we are debating the bill. I will let you know now that there is very strong support for National Aboriginal Day across Yukon and 88 percent of Yukoners expressed their support for it. I am very excited about that.

This holiday will be an important way that we can all come together as a community to commemorate First Nation history and celebrate First Nation culture. Marking National Aboriginal Day will enhance Yukon society as a whole. Again, I acknowledge the speech of the Leader of the Third Party who pointed out that this is for all Yukoners to celebrate.

As members of the Legislative Assembly, we already have big roles to serve and represent the citizens of our beautiful ridings. From the government side of the House, if we are also invited to join the Cabinet, the opportunity to help shape the future of the Yukon and make lives better for Yukoners expands further. When the Premier chooses Cabinet, lots of public servants wonder who they are going to get as a minister. It has an impact on the work that they do, day to day. Interestingly, for me, if you are asked to join Cabinet, you have the very same feeling as public servants. Who am I going to get to work with? How will this choice impact my day-to-day contribution? How will it influence the types of challenges that I face?

When the Premier invited me to join Cabinet, I was honoured to be offered a portfolio and especially excited to be asked to be Minister of Community Services. This means I get to work with communities across the territory on a wide range of issues, opportunities and projects and, as it turns out, I get to work with an extremely capable and motivated group of public servants in the department and I would like to acknowledge them. This territory is built on our communities from Watson Lake to Beaver Creek, from Tagish to Old Crow, from Whitehorse to West Dawson.

I would like to say that one of the first tasks that we carried out after we were sworn in was to make a trip with my colleagues, the Minister of Health and Social Services and the

Minister of the Yukon Housing Corporation to Ross River. We went there and met with chief and council. We sat down with the community; we had a conversation. On our way, we discussed how we would try to work as one government — this notion that we would take a “whole community” approach to dealing with issues. This was where I started to build my sense of respect for my colleagues. We had that meeting. We sat down and had a very productive meeting with chief and council and it was the first of several trips that I have been able to make to communities.

From there, we went to the community of Faro and we sat down with mayor and council. We didn't have a lot of time, but they were very kind to meet with us. I alerted the Leader of the Official Opposition, who is also the MLA for Pelly-Nisutlin, because in travelling to his community I wanted to give him a heads-up.

He joined us for a conversation with the mayor and council. It was very enjoyable and informative to be asked questions about the status of the Yukon's budget while sitting next to the Leader of the Official Opposition. It's great. I hope that we have that type of constructive working relationship throughout our tenure here.

Since then, I have been travelling all over the territory. I will note that on one of the days when one of the members opposite was talking about our work ethic and discussing it — asking about whether we were actually doing our jobs — I was in Beaver Creek in the riding of beautiful Kluane meeting with chief and council there and having great conversations with them. So it has been terrific. As I noted, my most recent — is it my most recent trip? My second-most recent trip has been up to Old Crow and to the City of Dawson — well, down to the City of Dawson, excuse me.

Twenty years ago, I moved to the Yukon and met my wife. One of our personal goals that she and I share has been to help make our communities vibrant. Like so many Yukoners, I have volunteered to help build our communities. I don't think this is just me; I think this is a common theme for all of us. For me though, from the Southern Lakes GranFondo to volunteering at music festivals, to one of my favourite events each year — and I encourage all MLAs to come out — the bridge-building competition — and thank you to the Minister of Education, who came and co-hosted that with me; I know the Official Opposition House Leader has been there several times and has had an enjoyable time — from running our community ski loppet; Rendezvous; volunteering with the Yukon Anti-Poverty Coalition; spring litter cleanup — which comes next week, and I hope we can all get out there and do some work around the community — to volunteering to build my own local free store. It was not once, not twice, but three times that we built that free store after it burned down twice. All of it has been to make our Yukon communities active, vibrant and sustainable. Therefore, it is a deep reward to be offered the role of Minister of Community Services and I look forward to working with all Yukon communities. All of our communities matter.

The Department of Community Services is an incredibly diverse department. I affectionately refer to it as the “kitchen-sink department”, where I am happy to be a dishwasher.

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Thank you from across the way there.

Community Services promotes active living through sport and recreation initiatives like the Special Olympics. I will note — and many of us were there recently at the Special Olympics dinner — that it was a very touching evening. The most important thing in my mind, were the speeches from the athletes themselves — incredibly moving. I have a personal relationship with the Special Olympics. I have two autistic nephews and my sister, the mother of one of those nephews — the elder of the two — has volunteered for many, many years in the Special Olympics in British Columbia. Each time I go down to visit my family there, I get “volun-told” and happily participate in the Special Olympics. It was great to meet with Special Olympics here as the minister.

We also have Team Yukon heading this year to both the North American Indigenous Games — and I'll talk a little bit more about that in a moment, with Team 88 — and the Canada Summer Games. I'm excited to get to both of those.

As a department, we will promote wellness by regulating midwifery — enabling more childbirth options in our communities. Again, I acknowledge that the Leader of the Third Party was talking about midwifery, so I'm looking forward to bringing that forward again with my colleague the Minister of Health and Social Services.

Community Services builds sustainability and jobs by investing in essential infrastructure across the territory. We promote safety by training EMS and firefighters to deal with structural fires and to respond to our wildfires.

Just late last week the Premier, the Minister of Economic Development and I attended a First Nation wildfire training session to their graduation and it was really quite an exciting time to be in there with those young folks. I applaud them for seeking work that helps to keep us safe. It is such a big deal and I appreciate it.

We're working with the First Nation development corporations to look for ways in which to increase that involvement of our government-to-government partners. As a dishwasher in the kitchen sink department, we are working to make lives better for all Yukoners.

The core of the Department of Community Services is about providing public services to the Yukon from water and recycling to libraries, mobile homes and electrical inspections.

For a moment, I would just like to add a few comments on mobile homes because, again, it was mentioned in the speech opposite. I appreciate that there are other notions about how we should dig down into the legislation and have a look at how it is working. At this moment, what I did as I came in as Minister of Community Services — I had a look to see where mobile homes were located across the territory and I would like to acknowledge and thank several members from the House — the Member for Copperbelt North, the Member for Porter Creek North and the Member for Takhini-Kopper

King. They all have mobile home parks in their ridings and they have been sitting down and working together on shared issues that their constituents have, and I appreciate that endeavour. I look forward to working with them on that issue.

From all of these topics in the core of the Department of Community Services, we work also in partnership with municipalities, First Nations and unincorporated communities to ensure that everyone has access to the services that enable them to thrive.

I would also like to note that partnership is a key element to success. Services are not always provided by government. In order for the whole territory to flourish, we need to work in partnership with other orders of government and also with the private sector, with societies and with our volunteers. Our social, political and economic fabric is richer when we all work together to enhance the place that we live, making lives better for Yukoners.

My portfolio in this Cabinet is rounded out by French Language Services Directorate, the Yukon Liquor Corporation and the Lottery Commission. I note that there are six members opposite who are critics of all of these various departments and I look forward to working with you all.

For the members in the House, I will endeavour from time to time to speak in French, which I'm about to do — and full-heads-up — but I'm also going to repeat all of those words in English, but not to worry. I will do my best.

C'est avec plaisir et humilité que j'ai recommencé à étudier et à améliorer mon français. J'aime beaucoup mon cours de langue hebdomadaire, et j'ai eu l'occasion de mettre mes leçons en pratique lors de plusieurs activités publiques.

It has been fun and humbling to begin to improve my French again. I'm enjoying my weekly French classes and have had several opportunities to practise my French at public events.

Je crois fermement à l'importance des langues — lorsque nous améliorons notre maîtrise de l'une d'entre elles, nous renforçons toutes les langues parlées au Yukon. Appuyer la prestation de services en français, et souligner l'importance de la langue et de la culture françaises au Yukon, veut aussi dire appuyer la diversité des langues de notre territoire. Cette diversité est une véritable force.

I strongly believe in the value of language. I know that when we strengthen one, we strengthen all Yukon languages. Supporting service delivery in French and celebrating the French language and culture in Yukon translates to supporting diversity of all languages in our territory. There is strength in our diversity.

À titre de ministre responsable de la Direction des services en français, l'une de mes tâches, en collaboration avec la communauté francophone, est de mettre au point des façons pratiques d'accroître l'offre de services en français, tout particulièrement en ce qui a trait aux soins de santé primaires, aux soins d'urgence et à la santé mentale. Je tiens à saluer la communauté franco-yukonnaise, et tout particulièrement l'AFY, pour la générosité dont ils font preuve en m'appuyant dans ce rôle.

As Minister responsible for French Language Services, I am tasked with working with the francophone community to develop practical solutions to providing more services in French, with a particular focus on primary, emergency, and mental health. I would like to acknowledge the franco-yukonnaise community, and especially AFY, which is celebrating its 35th anniversary right now, for being generous with their support for this role.

Pour notre gouvernement, il est important que les francophones aient accès à des soins de santé dans leur langue maternelle. Je travaille en étroite collaboration avec le gouvernement du Canada et avec nos partenaires locaux pour mettre au point des solutions qui amélioreront l'offre de services en français. Nous ferons certainement de grands progrès au cours des prochaines années.

It is important to this government that francophones have the opportunity to access health care in their primary language. I have been working closely with the Government of Canada and with our local partners to develop solutions to enhancing French language service delivery. We are poised to make great strides in the years to come.

Je suis également enthousiaste à l'idée de présider, cet été, des rencontres nationales avec les ministres responsables des services en français, et ce, au moment même où se dérouleront les célébrations du 150^e anniversaire de la Confédération. Monsieur le Président, certains Yukonnais seront peut-être surpris d'apprendre que le Yukon se classe au 3^e rang au pays en matière de bilinguisme, après le Québec et le Nouveau-Brunswick.

I am excited because this summer I will be chairing national meetings with the ministers of French Language just as we celebrate Canada's 150th. Mr. Speaker, I think it might surprise some Yukoners to learn that after Quebec and New Brunswick, the Yukon has the third-highest rate of French spoken in Canada.

Thank you everyone for your patience with my French.

As Minister responsible for the Liquor Corporation, I will work with partners and stakeholders to modernize the *Liquor Act*, to increase efficiencies and to provide for an appropriate balance between economic opportunities and social responsibility, and I get to support our amazing local producers.

I would like to acknowledge the Leader of the Official Opposition and his response to the Speech from the Throne — which, by the way, I think was given by the Commissioner and not by the Premier, but that's just a small point.

The previous government was working to help improve the service that the Liquor Corporation provides and I would like to thank them. I will continue to build on the work that they began. I have met with several licensees and local manufacturers, and we have some good ideas on how to continue to modernize and improve the Liquor Corporation and the work it does with businesses that make, sell or distribute liquor across the territory.

By the way, those national meetings that I'm going to be chairing this summer, Mr. Speaker, which I spoke about

earlier — I fully intend to showcase with pride our local Yukon wares.

For a moment, Mr. Speaker, I would like to turn to the enduring priorities that the Commissioner spoke about in his speech. I was excited to hear the Commissioner present this government's four main commitments in the Speech from the Throne. Each commitment will influence the work we do within government.

First, around people-centred wellness that will help Yukoners thrive — this is closely tied to communities. When people are actively engaged, when they have recreation opportunities in their communities and access to infrastructure that encourages them to walk or bike, then people and communities thrive. Government-to-government relations are a very important priority for all communities.

I have personally met with most First Nation chiefs and municipal councils to discuss our working relationships and how together we can achieve our shared objectives. As I mentioned earlier, the other day I was at the celebration for 88 days to the launch of the North American Indigenous Games, as an example. For those of you who don't know, the North American Indigenous Games will be held in Toronto this summer. I believe the opening date is the 16th of July. Eighty-eight days out, we had a celebration at the Kwanlin Dün Cultural Centre to acknowledge that sport and recreation are an important pathway to reconciliation. In fact, the 88th action within the Truth and Reconciliation's call to actions are to support the North American Indigenous Games and so across this country, we celebrated 88 days out. This helps remind me of the importance of sport in reconciliation.

The third priority is that our government is also committed to creating good jobs and supporting a diverse economy in an environmentally responsible way. Building a vibrant economy and a healthy environment is smart for the long term. This will foster resilient communities for years to come. The Premier has mandated me to look at infrastructure investment, at waste diversion and predictable funding models for and with all communities.

Finally, as Minister of Community Services, our focus on healthy, vibrant and sustainable communities — well, this priority was practically written for the Minister of Community Services. As that minister, it is at the core of everything that we as a department do. I will personally work to ensure that the investments we make in our communities, including the significant support from the Government of Canada, will strategically enhance the health and sustainability of our communities, bringing local solutions to local problems. All of our communities matter.

Mr. Speaker, as an engineer and a scientist — with considerable experience in researching climate change across the north — the importance of sustainability is particularly urgent to me. I consider myself to be a sustainability advocate and will bring this perspective to my role in this government.

Sustainability comes in many forms. For example, as a northern resource economy, the Yukon has experienced a recurring boom-bust cycle since the days of the gold rush. As we continue to invest in mining, we need to be thinking for

the long term. We also need to diversify our economy. We need to protect our environment and consider how our communities will thrive and remain resilient for generations to come. When we invest in infrastructure, we need to be sure that our investments will last.

As an example, the Department of Community Services is working with all communities to deal with asset management. In this way, we hope to protect those infrastructure investments so that they last for the full life cycle — their intended life cycle. It has been concerning to all Yukoners when we see infrastructure that should have a much longer life reaching its end too soon because we haven't been thinking about how that infrastructure will deal with a changing climate — also how we ensure that we invest in it in a way so that it will last.

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Thanks, Mr. Speaker. While our global contribution to climate change and other environmental problems may be small, our potential impact for positive change can be big. As northern communities, we are on the front lines of our planet's changing climate. It is important that we are leaders in ensuring that we have a healthy environment, a strong society and resilient communities.

My science background also means that I am committed to objective, evidence-based decision-making. This science-based perspective is something that I think will contribute to the Legislative Assembly. By the way, evidence comes not just from science, but also from traditional knowledge. It is important that we collaborate with and hear from all communities across the Yukon and seek out their traditional and local knowledge. Science and traditional knowledge together will help us to make decisions that are better informed and longer lasting.

As we all work together in this Chamber to create a better Yukon, it is my sincere hope that we can work respectfully together. I commit myself to upholding clear and respectful dialogue and being open to hearing good ideas, no matter what side of the House they come from.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to read from a text message I received this past weekend — and I quote: "Hi, John. Good luck in the House. Even after 14 years, there wasn't a day that I didn't experience the butterfly sensation in my stomach. Be prepared for anything and everything and then some. Above all, enjoy the experience. It is a privilege to serve the territory and one that bears tremendous responsibility. It is also an incredible opportunity to learn, help others and make our territory an even better place to live." That text was from past Deputy Premier, Elaine Taylor, and I thank her for her very kind words.

Our job is to serve the Yukon and to represent our beautiful ridings. My belief is that when we work respectfully and constructively together, we can build a stronger Yukon. We each have something to contribute and it is our duty and privilege to work in a way that seeks the best for all Yukoners.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Hutton: Mr. Speaker, it's a tremendous honour and a privilege to rise in the House today to speak as the Member for Mayo-Tatchun. I want to start by offering a big thank you and mahsi'cho to all those people who supported me during my campaign. A special mention is required for the following individuals, without whose help I would not be here today: my campaign manager, Nancy Hager; my official agent, Cathy Samson; fundraising coordinator, Crystal Trudeau; my communications and IT assistant, my beautiful and helpful daughter, Nicole Hutton; and my get-out-to-vote driver, Michelle Buyck. These were my people in Mayo.

In Pelly Crossing, I owe many thanks to Mark Staub, Betty Baptiste, and Dean Gill for their help.

To my wonderful volunteers in Carmacks, Cathy Kowalchuk and Norma Gull, as well as my youth contacts, Zach Cochrane and Christian Gull. Mahsi' cho to you all. I must also thank former chiefs Eric Fairclough and Eddie Skookum, and the current Chief, Russell Blackjack, who all helped me with my campaign in Carmacks.

As you may be aware, the Mayo-Tatchun riding is the largest and one of the most beautiful in the territory. There is no competition. There are five separate, distinct and unique communities that make up Mayo-Tatchun. I would like to take this opportunity to share with all of you some of the history of each of these wonderful places.

Keno City is a real hidden gem located approximately 60 kilometres northeast of Mayo. The current population of about 24 persons is really a shadow of the 1,500 people who were in the area at the peak of mining operations in the 1950s and 1960s. Since 1913, over 213 million ounces of silver were produced by United Keno Hill Mines in the 75 years the mine operated in the Mayo district. This is equivalent to \$4 billion in today's currency. Keno Hill was the most significant contributor to Yukon's economy for almost seven decades and resulted in opening up the Mayo mining district. Mayo benefited greatly from all the jobs, the service sector support, the mine staff and the major infrastructure initiatives completed because of the mine at Keno. These improvements included the original Mayo dam, constructed in the early 1950s by Northern Canada Power Commission, which operated the facility until it was taken over by the Yukon Energy Corporation in 1987.

Keno, Elsa and Mayo had the benefit of enjoying electricity at the fine price of seven cents per kilowatt hour during those NCPC years. I think everybody is paying a bit more for it now.

Keno employed thousands of people during its many years of operation and hundreds of people from Mayo worked there over the years. Although there is an environmental legacy to be cleaned up that we are dealing with, the impact is mitigatable and when compared to the seven decades of economic and social benefits that accrued to the citizens, the negatives are really outweighed by the positive benefits over all that time. We have never seen a mine like that in the territory before, and I doubt we will ever see one again. This

was one that was a real game-changer, not just for Mayo, Elsa and Keno, but for the entire territory.

During its heyday, Keno was Canada's second-largest silver producer and the fourth-largest silver producer in the world. All Yukon owes a debt to this community and this mine for its massive and long-term positive impact on not just the economy, but the political development of the territory as well. With the good news recently from Alexco, we could see another 10 or 15 years of production from this mine, and I look forward to the benefits to our economy continuing for another two or three generations.

Now I would like to speak a bit about the place where I live and love — the beautiful Village of Mayo. I am very pleased to state here today that I was born in Mayo Landing in the summer of 1956, and I have lived there continuously ever since. It wasn't until 1958 that Mayo Landing lost the "Landing" part of its name. They decided that once the bridge was in at Stewart Crossing, the Landing didn't really count any more. It was a steamboat landing for many years and hauled billions of dollars' worth of ore from Keno out to the service centres to be further processed.

Mayo is the second-oldest survey townsite in the Yukon Territory after Dawson City. The first commercial flight in the Yukon that carried mail departed from Whitehorse and landed in Mayo on a fine spring day in about 1947. Mayo has had two royal visits: Prince Philip in 1959, and his son, Prince Charles, recently in 1994, who commemorated the Prince of Wales walking trail in Mayo.

Mayo is situated in the heart of the Yukon on the traditional territory of the Na Cho Nyäk Dun First Nation in the middle of some of the finest hunting and fishing territory in the world.

With a population between 450 and 500 people, which has remained stable for almost seven decades now, Mayo continues as a service centre for placer and quartz mining, which is evident in every corner of Na Cho Nyäk Dun traditional territory. The first prospectors and miners in the area showed up in the late 1800s, and their descendants continue to mine in the area today.

Mayo's population consists of 50 percent non-native and 50 percent First Nation people, which has enabled the community to grow, thrive and develop a diverse economy in a community that is really appreciative of diversity.

I began school in Mayo in 1962 — it was only a couple years after when they allowed First Nation people to go to school in this territory — and it was a real privilege to get to know a young man named Albert Peters, who, at the age of six years old in our first grade 1 classroom, shared something that the Northern Tutchone people call [*Member spoke in Northern Tutchone. Text unavailable*] with me. It is "dry meat" in English, and that was my introduction to the First Nation culture in Mayo. I fell in love with big parts of it, and I had no idea that this other culture existed in our own little community.

Part of my goal over the next four or five years here is to make sure that every Yukoner is aware of this community that was here long before us and that looked after this territory for

us for thousands of years and handed it over to us in absolutely wonderful, pristine shape — that we recognize and work together with them to make their home and our home a better place for all of us to live in.

I'm really encouraged by the work that our government has done in trying to rebuild the relationships with First Nations that have suffered so badly under the previous government. It's actually one of the reasons that I decided to campaign. My wife, my son and my daughter are First Nation and it's their territory. I want to work with them to make sure that we look after it for not only them but every other future generation that comes along, and it's something that has to be done together. For too long, non-native people have determined the course and the path of the First Nation people in this territory. It's time for that to change. It's time for First Nation people to take their rightful place as co-governors in this territory, involved in every decision that is made.

I'm going to end it at that and just leave it there, and let you ponder those words. But if we accomplish nothing else over the next five years other than improving our relations with our First Nation neighbours, then I think that we've done something that the last government failed to do in 15 years.

Hon. Ms. Frost: Drin gwiinzii. Shàw ìlį. I'm happy to stand here today to represent the Vuntut Gwitchin riding as Minister of Health and Social Services, Yukon Housing Corporation and Environment. I want to acknowledge at this time the Kwanlin Dün and the Ta'an Kwäch'än Council, whose traditional territories we are convening this 34th Legislature on.

My heartfelt condolences go out to the Kwanlin Dün people during this difficult time. I'm going to say in my language something that my grandparents taught us. [*Member spoke in Gwich'in. Text unavailable.*] It means, "The Creator will protect the community and keep them safe."

My name is Pauline Frost. I'm a mother, a sister and an auntie. These roles are the most important roles to me. I'm a daughter of the late Alice Frost and Donald Frost. I was born and raised in Old Crow. I have a husband and two beautiful children. My home, my family, my parents and my ancestors come from the Vuntut Gwitchin traditional territory. I could not be more proud of where I come from and the very special place that my people call home.

It brings me kind of to a place — I think an emotional place — because my uncle Grafton Njootli was the first First Nation health minister in this Legislative Assembly, with his very good friend, Alice McGuire. My mother, Alice Frost, was the first First Nation — first indigenous — woman chief in my community. My uncle was Harry Allen. He led and blazed the trail for the self-governing Yukon First Nations. These were my mentors. These were the people who brought me to where I am today. So in a way, I come with the teachings from the former leaders who brought me to a place of humbleness.

My home, my family — the community of Old Crow is a very special place. Under the watchful eye of my grandmother, Joanne Njootli, and my late grandmother, Clara

Frost — together they guided to build a strong indigenous identity in me as an indigenous woman — as a Vuntut Gwitchin woman. Shitsuu, Grandmother Joanne taught me the intricacies of being Vuntut Gwitchin women and how our people, the Gwich'in people, persevered during very difficult times.

My grandmother, Clara Frost, was uprooted at six years old and taken to residential school. She didn't go home until she was 18. She lost her identity. She lost her culture. She had her very dear friend with her, Robert Bruce Sr. Together they survived. She lost a number of her brothers during this time, and I look back at that time in history and I look at where we are as indigenous people in this territory and the lessons that were far, far fought and won on the backs of these people who sacrificed and were put through really, really difficult times. That's me; that's where I come from as a Vuntut Gwitchin member, a Vuntut Gwitchin citizen. The Gwich'in people persevered during these times. Our grandparents persevered. The lessons that both grandparents brought to me as a Vuntut Gwitchin — one was rooted in culture because that's what she knew. She taught us that the other was rooted in something else — in religion and teachings that were not familiar to her or familiar to our people. She came home and influenced us to excel, go away, get your education and bring voice to your people and make a difference for our society. I'm happy to say that I have two brothers and three sisters, and each one of my siblings is contributing well to our community and to our societies as public servants of this government and other governments.

For those teachings I am forever grateful. "Shàw ìlį" means "I am happy today" for all of that. I'm very fortunate to have grown up in my community and to be raised by the elders of my community and the leaders. As I indicated earlier, my mom, Alice Frost Njootli, blazed the trail for our community as a First Nation woman, first First Nation lady chief in our community. She was the one who pushed forward the first legislative amendments that went through this Legislature. She went ahead in our community to move prohibition of alcohol and the influences of alcohol in our community, with us as small children picketing down the streets of our community, to say we needed to make a difference.

We needed to protect the children. The respectful colleague asked earlier about what we intend to do about indigenous children in care. I come from that place. I know what it means and I will do my very best to ensure that we address that. We picketed up and down the community and we went ahead and voted and we won by a couple of votes. She went ahead, with us children in tow and the grandmothers in tow, and moved it ahead with Norma Kassi, who was then a Member of this Legislative Assembly, to enact it into Yukon legislation.

So to this day, that legislation is in effect and it means a lot for our community and that was what we did at the very beginning of our self-government process. We've grown from that place to where we are today with a number of

representatives in this Legislature, representing and speaking on behalf of our communities.

So I'm deeply honoured and humbled to be here today as the elected member. I say mahsi'cho to my colleagues. Thank you all for being such great support for bringing me in and educating me and just teaching me the ways. This way, I want to be able to provide and support you all, as well as ensure that I respectfully dialogue with my colleagues across the way. It's my role and the role for the indigenous people of this Yukon that, in order to forge forward, we must work together; we must work in collaboration and we must speak respectfully and be respectful at all times as we speak. That's what I intend to do in this House — in this Legislature.

I want to take this time to acknowledge my family, my husband and my children, and my brother-in-law Joe Tetlich, for getting me to where I am, to this place. They supported me during the campaign in my community. It was very difficult. It's a small riding and the community oftentimes makes their decision based on family votes, but I have the support of a significant number of my community elders and that I hold with the highest regard and I hold the elders with the utmost respect.

What an amazing territory we all come from — as we heard from our other members here. I'm proud of the progress that we've made in the Yukon over the course of the last 20 years. I spoke about the early beginnings and the teachings that I bring with me, especially around the advancement of First Nation governments in the Yukon. As one of the self-governing agreement signatories, Vuntut Gwitchin, and as a citizen of Vuntut Gwitchin, I saw that process; I saw that process evolve.

In 1993, while I'm studying here at the local college, my uncle, Harry Allen, invited me to come to the special ceremony. He said, "You need to know this. You need to understand it because some day, you are going to be our voice and you need to listen." Well, I listened and I travelled with him. I think it needs to be a part of our education system for all young people in the Yukon. It needs to be a part of what we teach our bureaucrats and our government. We need to teach our young people. I was a spokesperson for Mapping the Way. Mapping the Way is an opportunity for the federal government, the Yukon government and the First Nation governments to educate our bureaucrats on what it means to be a self-governing First Nation. What does it mean to implement all 28 chapters of the self-government agreement in true faith and collaboration — to educate about the significant places — the pristine places — that we own and occupy in this beautiful territory of ours? How do we design and protect special areas? It's important.

If you look at the north Yukon and you look at the *North Yukon Regional Land Use Plan*, it's the first and the only one in the Yukon Territory. The Vuntut Gwitchin people led that discussion. We went ahead and built special management areas to protect our traditional areas. We have legislation in our government that defines that there will never, ever be fracking on our traditional territory — not just Vuntut Gwitchin. We worked in collaboration with the Na Cho Nyäk

Dun and Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in to ensure that all of the north is protected by way of the territorial government and our own governments. That's my message from my people who I represent from Vuntut Gwitchin riding.

The modern treaties that we're all familiar with as signatories to those agreements — we have a process in this government that we're partners to the post-service transfer obligations of our self-government agreements. Post-service transfer obligation means that this government has yet to sign one self-government post-service transfer agreement with the First Nation modern treaty holders in this Yukon. It has not happened because we have not met in good faith to try to deliver effective health and social programs, alcohol and drug services, local services and heritage resource management.

Those are things that we want to do as government. We want to be able to build a relationship and work in good faith with the 11 self-governing First Nations. We have a number of First Nations that are not self-governing and, as my colleague Minister Streicker indicated, we have been in attendance at those communities to help to bridge the gap, to help them forge some new trails and ensure that they do not get left behind through this process.

The same sentiment was expressed by Commissioner Doug Phillips during the recent throne speech — and that is to continue to advance rural Yukon communities through respectful relationships, government-to-government approaches and mutually shared interests in reconciliation.

When first approached to run as an MLA for the Vuntut Gwitchin riding, I needed to respectfully consider what this responsibility would entail. Through my experience as the intergovernmental coordinator and negotiator for Vuntut Gwitchin and living and working with self-governing First Nations in the Yukon in our urban and rural communities, trying and attempting to negotiate in good faith programs and services that would meet the unique needs of Yukoners — the unique needs of our communities were major and were challenging, with many hurdles. I felt that a part of me was torn. Do I continue my work in advancing the First Nation's interests or do I come here and attempt to make a difference through this process?

With the guidance and the leadership of my community and the elders, I was driven to come here. My role is to serve our Yukon people and our communities, and to bring a strong northern and rural perspective to decisions that directly impact our communities. That's my role. That's why I see myself here. The decision to put my name forward came from my desire to want to change how government works with communities and with First Nations.

We have a responsibility to work alongside all levels of government. We must work in good faith and work toward implementation of our final agreements. It is now my responsibility to walk in the path that I walked in six months ago — to bring that voice to this table, to this Legislature and to this government.

My time spent in Yukon communities was not all work. I spent a lot of hours volunteering in our community. I volunteered in the City of Whitehorse as a volunteer

firefighter. I worked in Dawson City and in Teslin as a volunteer ambulance attendant. My husband and I started Run Dawson in Dawson City. We spent many, many hours — I'm a coach, I'm a mentor to many youth in my community. Over the course of my life, I worked as an indigenous role model, selected by my peer group to speak on their behalf at the national level about what it means to be healthy, to be strong, to be vibrant and to bring a voice to youth — to do it in a humble way and a respectful way. That's where I come from. I commit my life to work for my people, but my humble beginnings start in my community as a young person, caring for my children and the children of the community. As the First Nation saying goes, it takes a community to raise a child — and it truly does in all of our small communities.

I know first-hand, as many of our rural Yukoners do, how decisions made by those who haven't experienced the realities of rural communities and rural living can directly impact lives. The decision to step forward as an elected leader of my community was certainly not easy and required much reflection, ceremonies and many discussions. I am happy to say that I took that step forward, recognizing the leadership of this team and the team that Premier Silver brought around him. I felt that my time was right and it is my contribution to be here. I'm humbled to be here with such a strong and vibrant team.

Old Crow is a pretty special place. It's active; it's a rich community rich in culture and tradition. There is a generation of new leaders coming out of our community — forward-stepping leaders, leaders who are ready to make changes — yet rooted in our culture because the elders are there, the values and principles are there, and they will never change. That is important to note, because our community not only is unique; it is the only isolated village in Yukon. The cost of living and the economy of our community are difficult matters. It's a difficult place to live when it's 60 below and you have to get firewood to keep your house warm, and you have to pay that expensive diesel electric bill that you get every month. There is a lot that happens in these communities that we don't consider.

Nutrition North Canada, for example — food prices. You have a young mother wanting to raise and give healthy food to her child. That's not possible unless you make a lot of money. So there has to be opportunities to grow the economy of our communities. Rural community economies are important, and I will work with my colleagues and Minister Pillai to ensure that the communities' local economies are important. It thrives and it sustains us where we are, and that is happy Yukoners and people if you have food on your table and if you have shelter.

A few weeks ago, Minister Streicker highlighted that he and our colleague, Minister McPhee, and I visited Old Crow. We had the opportunity to visit the school, and we went on a tour of the community. We met some pretty amazing young people. They are leading the way for our community, rooted in our culture and the teachings of our people. I am going to maybe tell you about one particular ceremony that happened while we were there at the community centre. The leadership

and elders hosted a gathering for us as ministers. That was a different experience for me as a minister coming in, not as a negotiator supporting my community. They brought in a young lady — 13 years old. Her name is Tyra Benjamin. Sixty years ago, her grandfather travelled from Old Crow across the Richardson Mountains with the RCMP by dog team and on to Herschel Island. This young lady decided she wanted to follow in her grandfather's footsteps. She wanted to see the land. She was 13. She took one year to prepare herself and her five little dogs, and with the support of the community and the people, she did. She persevered in the cold climate and the harshness and went over the mountains — 350 miles — with the dog team. She is 13 years old. That is resilience. That is rooted in her culture and pride, and the people were behind her all the way. She went there and back.

They honoured her and we had the distinct privilege of being there as they presented her with some gifts that will help her in her journey in life.

At the same time, two elders — a two-time cancer survivor and his wife — decided they had to come over the mountains because they have no caribou meat in their community. This is about the Gwich'in culture. This is about linking the culture — no matter the difficulties, no matter the hurdles we are confronted with. They brought their snowmobile over the mountain. The elder lady stood behind on the handlebar across the mountains and the husband drove the snowmobile, with their six-year-old grandson in the sleigh, over the mountains to our community. They feasted them and gave them food and escorted them back across the mountain. That is resilience. That is pride — pride in where you come from — collaboration, cooperation and working in good faith to see that everyone succeeds and is healthy and happy.

This was no easy task. She did train very hard. As a young person of our community, she forged new paths for other young people. They all huddled around her and supported her as she received her award. I just wanted to pay tribute to her and recognize the significant message there.

Through my previous role working for my community, I negotiated and lobbied for fair program and service delivery for Vuntut Gwitchin, but also for other Yukon First Nations — often with many challenges. In my current role, I plan to continue to collaboratively work in partnership with my colleagues from that negotiating table to ensure that we provide adequate services and programs that are available to all constituents of Yukon. Our self-government agreement has very distinct and specific language that says that this government — the Government of Yukon — must provide programs and services that are fair and equitable like other governments as you define the self-government agreement process — meaning that we need to ensure that our communities have the same services as other Yukoners experience.

Some of the areas that are of significant importance to my community — and I'll highlight it here, as we've noted on our tour in the community, that our health centre is situated on a contaminated waste site. They built it on the waste site and it's still sitting there some 30 years later. It's not accessible for

elders; it's not accessible for emergency care. We cannot get an emergency patient up that stairwell. That stairway has 50 stairs to get up to the top. Not only is it situated on a contaminated site, we built a brand-new, state-of-the-art facility next door to that. "Experimental innovation", it's called — innovation in housing. How do you address climate change and build a foundation system that will adapt and change? We built super-green insulated on a contaminated site two years ago that we were not notified of, and now we have to deal with that. I have to deal with that as a minister, but I negotiated that agreement to build that new, state-of-the-art innovation house on that property adjacent to the health centre, and now I'm realizing that — hey, why weren't we notified previously? That's what we need to do. We need to inform and be transparent.

Our high school students are most in need. Working in collaboration — this is demonstrating that we as partners and colleagues in this government will work with one another. I will work with Minister McPhee to address some of the challenges in our communities. We are still taking our children out of our community. I stated earlier that my grandmother was taken away from home when she was six years old. I was taken away from home when I was 13.

My siblings were taken away when they were 13. Children are still leaving home at that young age. That has to be addressed.

With regard to business and economic development, Yukon First Nations have generated remarkable wealth and successes in their business ventures.

Vuntut Gwitchin, as a co-owner of Air North and multiple real estate properties and businesses in Yukon, will continue to support economic development in the Yukon and recognize First Nations as large contributors to the success and the diversity of Yukon's economy.

I do want to stop and apologize. As the Speaker previously stated, we are learning, so if I am misrepresenting in how I present, I apologize and I will learn in time. I take anything back that I've said, using first names, and I will attempt — but don't hold me to it because I may go back to that old habit. I'll be cautious.

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Hon. Ms. Frost: Yes. I will have it right here so I don't mess it up.

Child facilities, childcare facilities in rural Yukon, affordable and accessible — key priority. Vuntut Gwitchin — key priority. We have this 75-year-old grandmother running our daycare centre because of the requirements for certification to get childcare in our community. It's impossible and it's ridiculous, and that's what we have to rely on. She came out of retirement to ensure that we have — that's what we do as a people, but it's not a solution and we need to certainly address it.

Our land, our water and the Porcupine caribou herd are pillars of who we are as Vuntut Gwitchin. The herd is part of our livelihood, our food security and, with changes to climate and the uncertainty in the US government with the Arctic refuge and the potential for development, that's a priority. It's

a priority for Vuntut Gwitchin. What can we do to assist, provide and lend our support? That deals with the wintering grounds as well — ensuring that we have effective and proper international caribou management agreements and plans in place, and protecting the wintering grounds of the Porcupine caribou herd. That's what the community is requesting.

One thing I have learned is that change can take time and that we must always be patient by nature. I am an action-oriented person and I am able to make decisions in a respectful and inclusive manner. There are many changes our team has committed to and initiatives that we will undertake during our time serving Yukoners as MLAs of the Legislative Assembly and as ministers. This new role is one that I take very seriously. It was an obvious next step in my contribution to my community of Old Crow, our Vuntut Gwitchin people and Yukoners alike.

The commitments to our election platform, the direction provided in the mandate letters and our new government's enduring priorities represent new approaches to leadership and to governance in our territory. Our team has been elected to bring forward a change, including commitment to work with all Yukoners to make their lives better, focus on creating jobs, and strengthening and diversifying the economy and protecting the environment, work collaboratively government-to-government to ensure that all communities in Yukon continue to grow and thrive. As we move forward we will make responsible investments in programs and services that lead to healthy, productive and happy lives for all Yukoners, especially for the most vulnerable people of our territory.

As my contribution to that, I have to acknowledge at this point that my family, twice a year — we host the dinner at the Salvation Army. We go, we cook and we serve food to the citizens of our community. Why? It is because many of those citizens come from my community. We do that twice a year and we're preparing to do that again shortly. I encourage everyone in this Legislative Assembly to get to know the vulnerable people of our community and hear their stories. That will guide us in making good decisions.

Our new government has been elected by our communities and we have been elected to represent their interests and to give voice to those who do not have a voice in our otherwise complex systems of government. The quiet strength of the Vuntut Gwitchin people, the elders who supported me in my quest for leadership — I am forever humbled and full of gratitude.

I would like to, at this time, acknowledge all the Members of the Legislative Assembly from the Vuntut Gwitchin riding — and this is important: Grafton Njootli, Kathy Nukon, Norma Kassi, Johnny Abel, Esau Schafer, Robert Bruce, Lorraine Netro and Darius Elias. I am reminded every day of their teachings, but also that they all came from different political stripes, yet they represent the interest of Vuntut Gwitchin, no matter in what party they came to this Legislature.

Our communities know what's best for them. They know what they need and they have the solutions. Today I want to touch on what we can achieve in the next five years and how

we can jointly work together — communities, governments and First Nations. The solutions are right here and we are committed to continue to grow and build a strong and healthy Yukon for all. In my role as the Minister of Health and Social Services, Environment, Yukon Housing and Yukon hospitals, I — and our departments and our teams — have been working very hard over the last few months and I'm pleased to share a number of updates with respect to those portfolios.

Making sure that the environment we live and work within is healthy and sustainable is at the core of everything we do. Yukoners cannot thrive and live healthy lives if the environment they live in is not healthy and thriving. Our communities will not be sustainable if our ecosystems are not. Our economy cannot grow if we do not make sure our fish, our wildlife and our plants cannot grow, and through our shared stewardship of this land, that reconciliation with First Nations is fostered. This is why these final agreements especially identify the collaborative establishment of protected areas and natural resources and management.

As first peoples of this territory, the Yukon First Nations knew what they needed to do to protect the environment because that was what sustained them. That was what provided for them. The economic viability of the nations relied on the environment and relied on what was there to sustain them. The people-centred approach to the environment focuses on people through our programs and services to help Yukoners thrive in our shared ecosystems. Yukoners understand the health benefit of being outdoors and active on the land. Visitors to our territory come to enjoy the vast landscape and unique wildlife. The number of hunting and fishing licences as well as camping permits purchased each year continues to increase. This is an indication of why it's important to get our people out on the land so that they can use it — live and breathe and get active.

Strategic investments in our communities are some of Environment's investment for vibrant and sustainable communities. We are working directly with our self-governing First Nations to make sure local concerns are addressed through our collaborative approaches to regulations and management measures. Cleaning up the environment and the liabilities that are associated are all things that we are doing in collaboration with municipalities and with the governments. Strong First Nation relationships are pivotal to our path forward as a government. We work in collaboration with various boards and committees in our communities — management boards, renewable resource councils and fish and wildlife boards. Together with the various levels of government, we will thrive as a nation and as Yukon. The department provides a key role in supporting a diverse economy. That means good jobs can grow when we have a sustainable environment.

With regard to Health and Social Services, a key pillar is the aging in place strategy. What is aging in place? It means age well in place; be happy in place, wherever that is. Oftentimes we look at a Whitehorse-centric model. What does that mean? It means we need to push it out. We need to push the programs out to the communities and ensure that all of

Yukon that normally would not have access to effective collaborative care programs and health care programs are afforded that access and that privilege.

We have a robust home care program. We have no wait-lists. It's provided free of charge for all residents. There are some challenges and we aim to work out the challenges. We extend an offer to all members to participate in that process and give us feedback.

I'm going to move on to kind of conclude here because I know I'm near the end of my time. So going out — regular community visits, supporting and collaboration with our governments, working with the federal government and the ministers — I do want to assure my colleagues that this is an important part of the work that we do.

I look forward to future collaborations. I look forward to the government's setting the priorities and the framework for the next five years through our business models, through our enduring priorities and our mandate letters, which clearly define the path and the direction that we are going. So our goal is to look at aging well in place and having healthy communities. We'll construct the necessary units in the communities in collaboration with our partners.

I'm reminded to stay humble and kind, to always stay grounded in my homeland, which is Vuntut Gwitchin.

As this new government, we will bring voice and carry the message for those who are not able to represent themselves. We have much work to do, and we must embrace the changes before us and work in the best interests of all Yukoners.

Deputy Speaker (Mr. Hutton): Thank you, Minister Frost.

Minister Mostyn.

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Point of order

Deputy Speaker: Member for Copperbelt South, on a point of order.

Mr. Kent: Just on a point of order — I know the Speaker mentioned earlier, reminding members — especially those who are new — not to use individuals' names in the House. I believe that actually — and you may want to confer with the Clerk, but that also is for the Deputy Speaker when recognizing members just to recognize them by their constituency. Just a reminder — I know there are lots of new people in the Legislature here today.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. That was uncomfortable, wasn't it? Silence doesn't go over well in this Chamber. In St. Ambrose's immortal words: "In some causes silence is dangerous." In this Chamber, Mr. Speaker, silence is dangerous. This is where we come to discuss the important issues facing the territory. The last time I checked, this territory is facing many issues.

I got into this work to represent the views of my constituents in this House, in this Chamber, and to give them a voice. So this afternoon, I am shocked and saddened that the good people populating the Official Opposition benches have

seen fit to rob their constituents of their voice in this Chamber. It is not easy to pen a speech. It is difficult work. It is very difficult work, but it is vitally important work. It is important that we fill this Chamber with the voices of our constituents, because through these speeches, my colleagues, the Leader of the Third Party, are representing the hopes and dreams and the aspirations of the good citizens of the territory. The people of this territory want to be heard. We promised to give them a voice. That is what we are here for.

It's important to the people who elected us, to those people who participated in our electoral system, who listened, who read, who spoke to us, those people who shared their concerns, their problems, their hopes and their dreams. They wanted a voice. Those people sent me to this Chamber. They sent us to this Chamber. So yes, I am shocked that the Members of the Official Opposition decided to relinquish their responsibilities as MLAs, to deprive their constituents of a voice. They have silenced their constituents. That they have rendered mute the people who elected them to speak on their behalf in this Chamber — I don't know, Mr. Speaker. That silence sits long on this Chamber. The voice of a huge chunk of the territory's people has been silenced and has not had a chance to respond to the Speech from the Throne and, as we see, we are all poorer for it.

This speech is delivered by me, but it reflects the views and opinions of hundreds of people who put me here, the good people of Whitehorse West. A society thrives on vigorous debate and discussion. It thrives on ideas and visions, visions about our future and what it looks like. The politicians on this side of the House and the Third Party understand this. It seems the Official Opposition doesn't understand — still doesn't understand, Mr. Speaker — but they will. They will.

In here, we represent our community — our whole community. We speak for: Filipinos, a diversity of First Nations, Mexicans, and Syrians, Europeans, Japanese and many, many more cultures; Muslims, Christians, Buddhists, Jews and many other faiths besides; bikers and hikers, snowmobilers and skiers, hunters and fishers, filmmakers, writers, artists and cooks; the downtrodden and the wealthy; the infirm, the sick and the elderly; the hungry and the homeless; a few who are both, a few who are neither, more than a few who are a mix of many of these things and more besides; there are youth, seniors; an active LGBTQT community; parents, married and single people and a few middle-aged folks sprinkled into the mix as well.

The point is that our community is wonderfully diverse. It's talented, resourceful, accepting and compassionate.

Because of all this, it has a delightful flavour — unique, rugged and independent, educated and self-taught, cultured but sometimes delightfully bawdy. We are collectively richer for all this diversity — this wide range of views and opinions and approaches. The Yukon is real in a way many places no longer are.

The territory's citizens have challenged me, supported me and inspired me for more than half my life. I arrived here in 1989. I drove up the highway in an old Honda Civic beater — so beat up that I had to fix the tailpipe with a V8 juice can. We

weren't very wealthy back then but we were happy. I had a good life.

I worked for the paper for decades. I covered this Chamber. I remember standing up there in December right after the Legislature finished sitting. I watched Johnny Abel come around and place gifts on everybody's desks after the event had closed. I watched as the House emptied and everybody walked out. I stood up there by that bannister and I watched the Chambers — 1990. I looked and there was nobody here; it was quiet. It wasn't the natural state of this House. This House should be filled with voices. I remember that. I remember how poignant the silence was — how out of place in this hall.

When I ran for office — started in January 2016 — it was a community affair. My sons, my brothers, my entire family and my friends gave up huge blocks of their time to come door-knocking with me. My colleague from Riverdale came with me and it was amazing. We walked that riding for months through the snow and the sun and the rain. It took nine months. These people gave up enormous amounts of their time away from their family and their other friends to get me here. I'm forever in debt for that generosity of spirit.

This territory — the people of this territory have given me more than I have a right to ask for. Fellow members, as you might have guessed, I am honoured to be here representing the people of Whitehorse West. I'm honoured to be here among you in a Chamber that I've followed so closely and admired for so very long.

In January 2016, as I said, I started walking the snow-covered streets to introduce myself to the community. Over the next nine months, I spoke to bankers and police officers, nurses and teachers, plumbers, retirees, cleaners and electricians. I met educational assistants, social workers and doctors, nutritionists, daycare workers and speech language pathologists, truck drivers, miners, contractors and pilots, mothers and fathers, tattoo artists and a librarian.

Whitehorse speaks English and French, Tagalog, Southern Tutchone, Gwich'in, Chinese, Arabic, and a dizzying array of other languages. Some didn't speak at all. Some were deaf, some were sick, some were in wheelchairs and some had polio. They have lived in Old Crow, Watson Lake, Faro, Haines Junction, Beaver Creek, Quebec, Finland, the Netherlands and other places besides. The point is that, geographically compact, this little riding packs a wallop. Arkell, Ingram, Logan, Copper Ridge — it's a neat little package that is in many ways a concentration of the wider territory — its values, its views. It's an urban riding, but it's representative of all of us.

Throughout the winter, as I walked with the friends and family, and through spring and fall, its residents — Whitehorse West residents — were gracious with me and shared their precious time. They told stories; they talked about their concerns about hospital care, mental health, trails, daycare, children in care, addictions, the need for better services in addictions, the state of our roads, our education system and 100 more issues besides. They also spoke passionately about the things they loved. They talked about

their families. They spoke with me about the environment, about politics and libraries. We talked about disadvantaged youth, dogs and animal shelters — mostly about dogs — hundreds of thousands of dogs. It's unbelievable; everybody has one, or so it seemed.

One or two, perhaps more, talked about fracking. I assured them that I'm against it, and I am. As you've heard from my colleague, the Minister of Economic Development, so are we all on this side.

You know, the people I talked to also noted their frustrations, their hopes and their dreams for the territory. Connecting with so many people was exhilarating, Mr. Speaker. I know you felt it yourself. It gave me a profound sense of community and I'm sure — as a matter of fact, I'm positive — it was shared by everybody in this Chamber, in this House. If we were to compare notes, I would bet we all had similar experiences talking with our constituents during the last election campaign. That, Mr. Speaker, was the opposite of silence.

It was a chorus of voices, ideas, opinions, information that fed our minds and drove us to the next door — informed our opinions, informed our future decision-making. That connection to our constituents is something we share, that we have in common. In Ottawa, we call it the House of Commons, and we do well to remember this commonality when we engage each other in this House.

I have known the Member for Lake Laberge for decades, since his sister was running the Yukon Quest and his parents were schooling me in cheechako and dog mushing at their remote home on the lake. The Member for Whitehorse Centre and I have known each other for years, and I admire her passion for and desire to advance social justice in the territory. The Member for Takhini-Kopper King and I share a passion for workplace safety and biking. The Member for Copperbelt South and I have known each other for years, and I believe I profiled him when he entered politics. We were both much younger back then and closer on the political spectrum, or perhaps not — time will tell. The Member for Porter Creek North has a storied history in the territory and I look forward to getting to know her better in this House. The Member for Watson Lake and I have corresponded quite a bit lately. She is doing her best to represent her constituents, and I look forward to working with her to solve those problems that she is raising. The Member for Pelly-Nisutlin I know less well, but I have enjoyed our occasional chats. He is an affable fellow and a hard worker, from what I have been told. The Member for Klune I know only in passing, but his uncle and I have worked together for decades. I look forward to hearing his perspectives over the coming years.

My riding of Whitehorse West is another good example of this commonality. My riding has played an important role in the territory's political history. It is a bellwether riding, electing members to government in 11 of Yukon's 14 territorial elections. It is the home of an incredible roster of distinguished legislators: former Commissioner Ken McKinnon, who we saw today in the gallery; former editor, minister and Whitehorse mayor, Flo Whyard; former

Premier, Tony Penikett; former health minister, Dave Sloan; former Speaker, Dennis Schneider; and former Deputy Premier, Elaine Taylor. They encompass this territory's diversity of political viewpoints. They all contributed greatly to Yukon's society in their own ways, and I have a deep and abiding respect for them all. In fact, over the years since I arrived, I have had the pleasure to meet and publicly debate each and every one of them.

Flo Whyard and I often discussed journalism. She was instrumental in building Macaulay Lodge, a facility that is being replaced by the Whistle Bend care facility, which I have inherited and will finish in the next year or so.

Tony Penikett signed the *Umbrella Final Agreement* and struck the first four land claim agreements — amazing work. He started a process this new Liberal government has vowed to respect, reinvigorate and strengthen after 15 years of neglect. It was the right approach in 1989 when I arrived in the territory, and it is the right approach today. I am proud to be part of a government that is intent on reconciling and building on that early vision.

Dave Sloan, a former health minister, is a friend — a mentor who taught me much about public life.

I interviewed Dennis Schneider a few times and found him to be a caring and thoughtful fellow who served the House well as Speaker.

Elaine Taylor was a dedicated constituency MLA who represented a riding for a record 14 years. She was respected by my constituents in Whitehorse West and we all owe her thanks for her long run in public service. Given this list, I readily admit that I'm standing on the shoulder of giants.

On November 7, Whitehorse West placed their faith in me to represent their views, to listen to their concerns and issues and to advance their cause where possible. They want to be heard and I will listen and give voice to them.

Throughout the months walking in my riding, I was clear with those I met. Representing people, championing them and giving them a voice in public has been my life's work. As I've said, I take this responsibility very seriously.

At the beginning of this talk, you felt how uncomfortable silence can be — so uncomfortable, the honourable member stood up to interrupt it. I can understand that.

As community representatives, we must end the silence. We must foster conversations with everyone. This government is not ours; it belongs to the Yukon people; they put us here. We are their voice, their servants. If we don't listen, the silence descends. Silence of even one voice deprives us all of a perspective, a warning, a thought, an idea that could change our world.

The Premier's throne speech signals our intention to follow through on our government's promise to give the people of this territory — all people — a voice. Members opposite think this is thin. I don't think this is thin at all. This is important work.

As a caucus, we are working together as one government — a group of colleagues who I respect and have learned from already an amazing amount. We are going to forge one government that serves all Yukoners — everyone. This

government has in less than 140 days reframed the Yukon's approach to its 14 First Nations. It has begun reconciliation based on mutual understanding and respect. That is good work. It takes a lot of effort and a lot of time. This government has signed an intergovernmental declaration that provides the foundation for a renewed relationship and future collaboration with our First Nations. It followed through with the Yukon Forum with First Nations. A second will be held next month. This new cooperative approach is providing wide-ranging benefits. It is creating certainty and building the resource sector's confidence in the territory. Tony Penikett knew that back in 1989.

The Yukon Chamber of Mines is now working alongside the government and First Nations, and this united effort is clearly comforting investors and helping to draw them back to the territory. This government's work extends beyond the mining sector, however. My constituents expressed a need for a broader economic focus and this government is listening. Tourism and culture are essential economic sectors in the Yukon.

This government is working collaboratively with municipal governments, First Nations and industry to find innovative ways to make Yukon a destination for Canadians, Americans and the world.

I have met with the Tourism Industry Association and the Wilderness Tourism Association to hear how Highways and Public Works might improve support to that sector. They were more than willing to speak with me. It was apparently something that didn't happen in the past and, of course, highways are an important conduit for tourists as are our airports.

I should discuss my department, Highways and Public Works, for a minute. It is the backbone of the territory. We build and operate roads, bridges and airports that link our communities and bring people food, medicine and other supplies north. People don't think about these things until they go wrong. We assume roads, bridges and airports will be open until they are not. We assume schools and offices will be healthy, safe and warm until they're not. Keeping all this running does not just happen. It takes effort, and when this vital infrastructure is not properly cared for and funded, it fails. Roads wash out and become impassable, bridges and culverts must be closed or collapse, air services impeded or shut down, contracts are not tendered or go wildly off the rails with enormous cost. Members opposite will know a lot of about that. Roofs leak, mould grows and the very business and the essential services we provide our citizens fail, which is to say that the stuff of Highways and Public Works is important. It is the foundation upon which we build communities, our government and our economy.

How government buys goods and services will also shape the future economy, Mr. Speaker. During the election campaign and since being elected, I have met with retailers, contractors, chambers of commerce, engineers, consultants, photographers, air carriers and civil servants on this important topic. Fixing procurement is an important goal of this

government and is a personal goal of mine. These people have been happy that I have spoken to them, Mr. Speaker.

I have heard the complaints about inconsistent application of the rules that has happened in the past, about poor drafting of tenders and requests for proposals has happened in the past, about inadequate reviews, and about local companies losing contracts by a few thousand or a few hundred dollars, about how this hurts the local economy, communities and business. It is a big issue, an important issue, and, of course, the opposition has made hay about our pledge to have a schedule project published by March. I'm in no way concerned by the jibes, Mr. Speaker. In fact, I'm flattered they thought this talented crew could fix years of neglect in just a few short months.

The contractors, retailers, engineers, chambers of commerce — all those I have spoken to; and there are many, more than 100, in fact — have much more realistic expectations and I have assured them we will have a schedule of upcoming projects available for contractors available by March 2018, as promised. This will give people bidding on and executing these contracts more time to build local capacity, plan for and build these public works. This will make for better price estimates, scheduling and execution. It will improve Yukon government spending and build the economy.

The department is also working on other improvements as we speak. The knowledge economy is also a growing player in the territory's economy. In January, there were more people employed in technology than in the mining sector here.

The knowledge economy is also a growing player in the territory's economy. In January, there were more people employed in technology than in the mining sector here. My colleague, the Minister of Economic Development, and I have toured their facilities. We've seen them assembling computers, coming up with innovative methods of hooking remote resource camps into the Internet, writing code, laying fibre and cables and erecting microwave towers to weave our community offices together — our communities together. This is an exciting time. The Member for Porter Creek South and I have been working on securing a new fibre link for the territory. Our goal is to secure a second line that will guarantee Internet access to the territory in the event one line is severed. Such redundancy is important to our tech sector and our modern society. Its existence will save our public and private sector employees millions in lost productivity and sales when a link is severed. Such a cable will provide the certainty the industry needs to grow. As Minister of Highways and Public Works, information is a focus of mine. I'm committed to making public information accessible and available to the people who own it — Yukon citizens — the constituents we all serve.

Highways and Public Works has started modernizing the *Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act*. The goal is legislation that reflects today's modern information-driven society while safeguarding citizen privacy. We want to make it easier for people to access more of their government's

documents. We want to make it easier for citizens to interact with their government — this government.

Citizens of Whitehorse West and those throughout the territory expect a modern government with modern services. Past governments have not recognized the strategic importance of an information-driven civil service. Ready access to data and evidence makes the civil service more nimble, simplifies decision-making, eases frustration, and reduces red tape. With our modern computer system, it's astounding our government still sequesters its valuable non-confidential data and research in filing cabinets away from easy access by the public and fellow civil servants. Changing this culture is not easy. It will require leadership and planning and resources — something that this government is willing to provide in spades. But over the next few years, we will modernize the civil service in this vital service to citizens.

I've directed staff at Highways and Public Works to start developing an open data repository to give society access to a wealth of government research and the ability to use it in innovative ways. We've also started developing tools to make it easier for citizens to access government services online. Those new avenues of service will begin to arrive this year and will continue to be expanded, refined and rolled out throughout the mandate.

Airports and aerodromes are similarly important drivers in the territory. The Yukon has four airports and 25 aerodromes. In the last three months, I have met with pilots, air carriers, aircraft owners, skydivers and others associated with this industry. I've heard their concerns and needs: from asphalt to fences to leases and better maintenance. I've also learned this is a complicated field, enmeshed in international, federal and local laws.

The reports — there are scads of them; hundreds and hundreds of pages. I've read them all. It's complicated — this field. We are, for example, dealing with the Dawson City Airport. We're exploring all options to improve that important piece of public infrastructure. We want it to meet the needs of pilots and air carriers. We want it to meet the needs of tourism operators and tourists themselves. We want to make sure it meets the needs of Dawson and the north Yukon, that it meets the needs of First Nations, the territory and the federal government. It is important work. It is dependent on many voices and many conversations.

We welcome that conversation, Mr. Speaker. We embrace it. We know airports are vital to the territory's future and tourism, business, arts and culture and innovation. Many take it for granted, but a three-hour-or-so commute to downtown Vancouver provides a competitive advantage over other cities in BC and Alberta. It makes the Yukon a viable centre for film, technology, law, health or any other economic sector that wishes to balance life and work in this beautiful territory of ours. This government recognizes this, so we'll be making strategic, evidence-based investments to improve air infrastructure in Whitehorse and throughout the territory.

Of course, highways and bridges are also an important pillar of the Highways and Public Works department. I spoke about that earlier. Over the coming years, we're going to

replace the Nares River bridge and repair others to ease transport of goods and people across the territory. We have 133 bridges and 248 structural culverts in the territory. Yukon tourists and travellers all rely on this transportation network to safely get where they're going. They rely on it, Mr. Speaker.

Strategic investments in road and bridge infrastructure ensure year-round access for residents and visitors and encourage economic development in communities across the territory. Over the coming years, we're also going to fix dangerous intersections on the Alaska Highway that cut through Whitehorse. We'll collaborate with the city on other intersections that need to integrate better with the Alaska Highway. We'll continue to maintain and expand our incredible highway system throughout the territory. This work will not be done alone. I'm working in concert with my colleagues in Economic Development, Tourism and Culture, Health and Social Services, Education, Community Services, the Housing Corporation and Finance as one government and alongside our municipality and First Nation partners to launch projects that will improve the lives of Yukoners, build on our economy and ensure sustainable communities.

I would also like to talk about the public service. I work with about 1,000 dedicated professionals in my department. So far, I have spoken to about 550 of them at desks, in offices, in industrial shops and garages from Whitehorse to Haines Junction. I even went through a speed dating exercise with 80 engineers one morning. You ought to try it sometime. It was a lot of fun.

I have many more people to meet and to speak to, and this is important to me because these professionals are thoughtful and dedicated. They know things — policies, legislation and funding programs and how things work that must inform my decisions. They work with me, not for me. They serve our citizens, not the politicians. This is a distinction that is easy to say, but I suspect needs a little care and attention to push through the culture. It hasn't been that way forever. I will work on that, Mr. Speaker. I'll provide the direction, the tools, and the resources to get the job done. I will ask civil servants not just for their best advice, but I will consider when making decisions for all Yukoners, not just a privileged few. Then I will do my best to explain that decision — why I'm listening or not, as the case may be.

My other department is, of course, the Public Service Commission. Here again, we have inherited a host of problems. That's the job — it is to deal with the problems. That's what we're going to do. As we saw late last week, a failure to plan to provide leadership has had a profound impact on the union. It's frustrated. Last week the president issued a call for help and I answered that call. The union president and I spoke. We had a great talk, in fact — a fruitful talk. He outlined the years-long frustration he has had with the previous government. He has asked me to change things, to improve things, to make things better — things the previous government had ignored, that they did not find important. He asked me to listen and I will do that, Mr. Speaker. I assured him we would.

The Public Service Commission is reviewing the hiring and promotion processes to ensure they are open, transparent and efficient. It is important to constantly evaluate this because the demographic shift in the Yukon is going to be challenging as we attempt to transfer corporate knowledge between the baby-boomers and the young staffers who will be coming in behind them.

The commission is also working with Yukon Housing, Community Services, Health and Social Services, Education and Highways and Public Works to modernize the provision of staff housing. So here we are in a new legislative session — 19 people united by our communities and our desire to serve our citizens. It is, as I've said several times this afternoon, important work. It is important to represent our constituents, to listen, to give them a voice — a presence in this Chamber — to work together to make this territory a better place — a better place for all.

Speaker: The member has five minutes.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: That's great. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thought I was out of time.

We have to give people a voice, a presence in this Chamber that we share, to work together to make this territory a better place — a better place for everyone, for all.

There are a few who charge that we have done little in less than 140 days. Those people have refused to stand in this House to represent their constituents through a response to the Speech from the Throne. It is impossible, therefore, to know what their constituents' hopes and dreams are or what their response to the throne speech is. We don't know. We've been denied that, and that's a shame, Mr. Speaker. That's a real loss.

When they have the time, I urge all members of this House to talk to the lesbian, gay, bi, trans, queer and two-spirit community. In our first few months, Mr. Speaker, we drafted changes to the *Human Rights Act* to eliminate discrimination on the basis of gender identity or gender expression. That's real change, Mr. Speaker. It's a big change and it's an important change to one segment of our community. We heard it was very important to them. It is very important not only to them but to our whole community to hear these voices.

This new Liberal government has also retooled the *Vital Statistics Act* to make it one of the most progressive laws in the country, Mr. Speaker. In the Yukon, lesbian, gay, transgender, bisexual, queer and two-spirit people will now have their rights respected. Here, they can lead safe, healthy lives and add their own unique voice to our society. That's new. That's something we've done. That's work we've done, Mr. Speaker. It's vitally important because in the past, there has been silence — shameful silence. As we've discovered, that becomes uncomfortable very quickly. It certainly becomes uncomfortable to me, Mr. Speaker.

I take my responsibility to represent my constituents very seriously. I am here to give them a voice, everybody a voice, Mr. Speaker. This new Liberal government respects diversity in its programming and services. It seeks it out. It knows the importance of community and of listening to that community

— our community, Mr. Speaker — all Yukoners — and that's a real change — a substantial change — and one of many.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Thank you for recognizing me, Mr. Speaker. It is an honour and a privilege to address this Legislative Assembly. I am looking forward to working with all of the honourable members of this Chamber to make the lives of Yukoners better. I have been sent here by the people of Riverdale South to represent them. That was not alone and not without the enormous help of what became, around the Liberal office, known as the "Sister Team": Kelly McGill and Michele Shaw. Without their energy and tenacity, I would not be here.

The people of Riverdale South had a difficult decision last November. Our former MLA, Jan Stick, was a caring and dedicated representative. Danny Macdonald brought his own skills and experience to the race. Nevertheless, I am grateful and honoured that the people of Riverdale South placed their trust and faith in me to be in this historic Chamber.

I originally come from a place on the other side of this country where government began close to 300 years ago. The relatively new coming of the Legislative Assembly to this territory in 1978 does not in any way detract from its historic nature. As we mourn the passing and celebrate the life of former Commissioner James Smith, we've been thinking a lot about his vision, his leadership and his achievements. I recognize the honourable member and her dedication and tribute to him today, which was very heartfelt, meaningful and educational as well. Mr. Smith believed in the people of this territory and in them making decisions for themselves to make progress happen. We are wise to learn from those who have gone before us.

The Yukon called me in 1992 and, like many stories, I came sight unseen for a two-year job that I got over the phone, and that was close to 25 years ago. Like lots of peoples' stories, I can remember that when I arrived here, I had to get a cab because I was going to stay at an acquaintance's — a friend of a friend's — place for a day or two, and the cab driver told me before we were even down Two Mile Hill that he came for a fishing trip nine years before that and stayed — went home for his stuff and came back. Then I realized how many times I would hear a story like that again, but that's like my story.

In 1993, I met a Yukoner who has now been my husband for over 21 years. We have an amazing son, and we have benefited — when he was born — not unlike Mr. Hassard — I read your speech from 2011 and understood that we had — I'm sorry, I said his name — the Leader of the Official Opposition. I realized that we had a connection because we dealt with newborns and difficulties with their health — but they are fantastic. I understand his child is as is mine. We benefited from being here in the territory, from amazing medical professionals and then, more importantly perhaps, at the time more amazing professionals at BC Children's Hospital. I am definitely thankful for that.

My path brought me to the Yukon, to Whitehorse and eventually to Riverdale South. Riverdale South is an amazing,

unique place to call home. Mr. Speaker, I know you know of what I speak because you are a very close neighbour. Riverdale South is an established and yet diverse neighbourhood. It has single and multi-family dwellings. It has community clubs, young families, seniors housing, five schools, businesses large and small, wilderness, lakes and world-class hiking, biking and walking trails. Recreation, summer and winter, is on our doorsteps, but then, so is downtown Whitehorse — a unique community.

Last summer and fall I spent evening after evening, like all of you did, talking to my neighbours. I was asking questions and listening. My goal was to learn about what concerned them, what ideas they have for innovative progress in government and how government needs to work for them.

In making the decision to run for office, I thought a lot about why I wanted to seek election — why now? My colleague, the Minister of Health and Social Services, said something that I made a note of because it stuck with me — because I think she said it was an obvious next step. In a way, that is how I felt as well. I know it is the same for a number of my colleagues on this side of the House. It seemed like an obvious next step. But I had to think long and hard about that and what it would mean for my own work, for my family's life, and what it would mean to be a member of this team.

There are really three experiences that describe what led me to making that decision. One was the broader experience, because during my time as the Yukon Ombudsman, we opened hundreds of files and conducted many, many investigations, as you know, into government actions and decisions. We opened hundreds of files during my terms there. Virtually all investigations at the Ombudsman's office began with my staff and me asking the government workers or officials or complainants — whoever was there, but primarily with respect to the government workers and officials — why they did something in a certain way or what was their authority for making a certain decision or taking a certain action.

On many, many occasions, the answer was: "Because that's the way we've always done it," or "I don't know." That caused me real concern. It didn't show innovation; it didn't show leadership, in my view, and I don't think this is the story that others who have worked with government have not experienced.

The second experience was listening to the radio one morning — as we all do here in Whitehorse — when a story about the Yukon Legislative Assembly came on. I listened that morning to the then-Premier respond to a serious and thoughtful question asked by a member of the opposition by completely ignoring the question, saying something not at all related to the question and then in an attempt to insult the other member, attacked the Liberals for something that allegedly had happened 14 years ago. My first thought was that his approach was disrespectful of this place — the process — and that it was wasting everyone's time and money.

More importantly, the speaker at that time — the former Premier — was forgetting who he was there to serve. Government must understand their responsibility to serve the

public. They must understand their authority to act. They must abide by the rules and foster innovation, progressive problem-solving among a talented public service. You've heard my colleague, the Minister of Highways and Public Works and the Public Service Commission, speak eloquently on the talented public service. Government must be fair, efficient and accountable. If you don't know the answer, say so. Explain that you'll find out and then find out. There is no place for personal attacks. I know that may sound naïve, given the current political climate around the world and the lack of respect for the truth, but we must — and by that I mean all of us — strive for professionalism and excellence.

In preparing to make this presentation, I read many previous replies to the throne speeches, and curiously, almost without exception, every speaker — no matter the party — spoke of wanting to do things differently, encouraging a more professional decorum in this House, and committed to behaving in an appropriately respectful way. Many of those speakers are in this room today and I urge them to remember and honour those commitments. I'm hoping manners will be the new trend. Should the decorum of this House begin to deteriorate, we must remember what Yukoners expect of us and why we have been sent here — to represent, to govern and to work for the people of the Yukon — all of them.

I was once told by a wise person — a mentor of mine and a very successful politician — "Return your calls. Listen and answer the questions for people. Even if you can't help them, they will appreciate being heard and your respect for them."

Much of my career has been focused on the public interest.

I spent four terms as the first female president of the Law Society of Yukon, until the time that I was asked by my colleagues to represent the Federation of Law Societies of Canada, which is the umbrella organization of 14 law societies, governing bodies of lawyers across Canada — some 90,000 lawyers and notaries. It's an international and national organization. Law societies, to be clear, do not represent lawyers; they operate in the public interest. They provide licensing and standards.

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

Debate on motion re Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne accordingly adjourned

The House adjourned at 5:30 p.m.