



Yukon Legislative Assembly

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2nd Session

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HANSARD

Wednesday, April 26, 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
Paolo Gallina	Porter Creek Centre
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Yukon Party

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

THIRD PARTY

New Democratic Party

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

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**Yukon Legislative Assembly
Whitehorse, Yukon
Wednesday, April 26, 2017 — 1:00 p.m.**

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

Prayers

DAILY ROUTINE

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

Tributes.

TRIBUTES

In recognition of Daffodil Month (Cancer Awareness Month)

Hon. Ms. Frost: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the Canadian Cancer Society as we mark the 60th anniversary of Daffodil Month.

Daffodil Month is one of Canada's largest running fundraising campaigns. Each April, thousands of dedicated volunteers all across this country smell freshly cut daffodils and wear lapel pins. Mr. Speaker, I don't know how many daffodils are sold in the Yukon but there are many. The Canadian Cancer Society reports that more than seven million flowers are sold in Quebec and Ontario during some years.

Over the past 60 years, generous Canadians have donated more than \$1.4 million to the Canadian Cancer Society during its April fundraising drive. That money has helped fund lifesaving research and support services that have saved or improved the lives of countless Canadians — not just here in Canada and in the Yukon, but around the globe.

More than 20 years ago, some of that money funded research by a Canadian doctor named Eduardo Franco. His research contributed to the discovery of the human papilloma virus. HPV causes cervical, cancer that, in turn, led to the development of the HPV vaccine.

I am proud that today, this government announced that we are expanding our HPV vaccination program here in the Yukon. Starting in the 2017-18 school year, Yukon will be offering free HPV immunization to boys in grade 6 as well as to all at-risk males. Protecting young Yukoners is a priority for this government and expanding our immunization programs to include boys will help protect our youth from HPV-related cancers and other serious health problems.

Today I also want to honour and thank all Yukoners who volunteer countless hours of their time and energy to help raise money to fight cancer. This is a fight that must go on because some 40 percent of all Canadians will receive a cancer diagnosis in their lifetime. Thanks to those local volunteers, the Canadian Cancer Society continues to support Yukoners through its toll-free Canadian cancer information service, its cancer connection peer support program, operating the Smokers' Helpline through funding provided by the Yukon government, and providing access to services and

programs for Yukon patients who are undergoing outpatient treatment in British Columbia.

I also would like to briefly mention a recent campaign that was led by the Department of Health and Social Services, working for and with the Council of Yukon First Nations. The ColonCheck Yukon campaign encourages all Yukoners aged 50 to 74 to take the FIT and to follow up with their primary health care providers in order to prevent colon cancer in Yukon or to catch it early.

Colon cancer is the second-leading cause of cancer death in men and the third most common in women, yet it can be prevented or detected at an early stage. I believe that our well-received "Wherever You Sit Do the FIT" campaign will make a difference here in the Yukon. It's a great example of our people-centred approach to wellness that will help Yukoners thrive.

Thank you again to the Canadian Cancer Society and its many volunteers for their ongoing efforts to save the lives and reduce suffering. I encourage all Yukoners to support their cause, not just in April, but throughout the year.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

In recognition of Denim Day

Hon. Ms. Dendys: Mr. Speaker, I rise to ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing today, Wednesday, April 26, as Denim Day. Denim Day is a new fundraiser for the Yukoners cancer care fund. This fund helps Yukoners battling cancer and their families cover some of the out-of-pocket costs that can be incurred during cancer treatment. On Denim Day, Yukoners are encouraged to purchase a \$5 Denim Day pin and wear their jeans to show their support for the cancer care fund. While we can't wear jeans in the Legislative Assembly, many of us here are wearing our Denim Day pins to show our support.

Cancer touches all of us. It has touched everyone in this Assembly in some way. I have lost family members and friends to cancer. In Canada, cancer is responsible for 30 percent of all deaths. In 2016, it was estimated that more than 202,000 Canadians were diagnosed with cancer and 140 of them were from the Yukon.

On a very personal level, 13 years ago, I myself faced a diagnosis of breast cancer. This isn't something that I have ever shared in a public forum, but thought that it was fitting today. This changed my life. All of a sudden, I was faced with a battle for life and for the chance to raise my children. I am one of the lucky ones. Having an early diagnosis and very good Yukon and BC medical care was the key to my survival.

Supporting the Yukon Hospital Foundation's cancer fund is one way that we can help Yukoners who are struggling through difficult times. We have good health care coverage for treatment and drugs. We have medical travel programs that benefit cancer patients who must travel to BC and Alberta. We have access to great oncologists, but we can't provide everything. This fund provides money directly to patients and their families that can be used for the many out-of-pocket expenses such as daycare, rent, or a mortgage that still must be paid, no matter if one is fighting cancer.

Again, from my personal circumstances, support is key when you are facing a battle for life. This fund is a small way that we as Yukoners can help others in need. The fund started in 2013 and, since that time, more than \$200,000 has been raised. To date, 107 families have accessed the fund, each receiving a grant of \$1,000. I encourage all members of this House, if they haven't done so already, to purchase a \$5 pin from one of the many participating businesses and to encourage friends and colleagues to do the same.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

In recognition of Daffodil Month (Cancer Awareness Month)

Ms. Van Bibber: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise on behalf of the Official Opposition to pay tribute to Cancer Awareness Month, or Daffodil Month, in honour of all Canadians who have been affected by cancer in some way. This extends beyond people who have dealt, and are dealing, with the disease personally — to families, friends, those who work in cancer research, those who care for people with cancer, and those who volunteer countless hours to raise money for research.

Cancer has impacted the lives of countless people and will continue to do so without prejudice, without cause or reason, and without remorse. April is Daffodil Month and, every April, millions of volunteers work tirelessly to raise funds to support cancer research and support service for individuals and families faced with cancer and for a number of other reasons aimed at the fight against cancer.

The daffodil has become a symbol of courage and hope. By buying and wearing a daffodil pin throughout April, it's a wonderful way to show solidarity in our support for Canadians living with cancer.

In 2013, the incredible community support we have in Yukon resulted in the establishment of the Yukoners cancer care fund with tremendous backing of the Yukon Hospital Foundation. The fund has been a key support for Yukoners and a path to flow dollars from fundraising directly into local communities. It is a gift from Yukoners to Yukoners who have cancer in their home. That same year, Speaker David Laxton, who has joined us today in the gallery, hosted a launch for our fund called the "Speaker's reception" and the bulk of our funds were raised at that event. I would like to send a personal thank you to him for his contribution to cancer awareness. Any money donated through the fund is used directly to support cancer patients and all donations over \$20 receive a tax receipt. I have personally heard many, many stories on the work done to help local families. Some families or people are willing to share their journey — thank you to the Minister for Mountainview — while others still want privacy.

Today, we start a new annual event, Denim Day. Denim Day has been used across the country to raise funds for breast cancer, children's hospital funds and many other causes. Thanks to Karen Forward, president of the Yukon Hospital Foundation, this wonderful idea is going to be an annual event for the Yukoners cancer care fund. The premise, as was mentioned, is for offices, groups or people who want to

support the cause and who also love pins. To buy a pin for \$5 and with the support of your supervisor, wear the pin and that gives you a pass to wear denim to work that day. Denim Day is today, April 26.

At this time, I would also like to send kudos out to the Yukon River Quest paddling group, "Stix Together", who have taken their cancer journey further by raising money for our fund. They are even taking a booth at the trade show this year to raise awareness. Well done, team.

All these actions build awareness of the fund and the help it directly gives to Yukon families who have cancer in their homes. Thank you to everyone who has participated this year. Watch for next year's pin. It will be different and it will be the start of your collection. We hope to get the whole territory involved. I know there are pins in Haines Junction and Mayo for sure.

I would like to take this time to thank everyone for supporting cancer funds and what we can give, big or small, does help. A special thank you to Cathy Archbould, who donated her time and photo studio for this campaign. Yukoners are just the best.

I would like to thank everyone and to get you to help me welcome a few guests in the gallery related to this who have come to share this day with me: Ms. Karen Forward, the president of the Yukon Hospital Foundation; the chair of the Yukon Hospital Foundation, Philip Fitzgerald; my beautiful sister-in-law, Judy Kelly, who is a volunteer extraordinaire; and my nephew, Michael Kelly. Thank you.

Applause

Ms. Hanson: I rise on behalf of the New Democratic Party caucus to pay tribute to the Canadian Cancer Society's Daffodil Month and the Yukon cancer care fund's Denim Day campaign.

As we've heard today, all of us here have been touched by cancer. Whether it's a family member, a friend, or a co-worker — including past members of this Assembly — we all know someone. More and more these days, we know about the progress being made due to research. The good news is that we do know more people who are able to call themselves cancer-free.

It is because of ongoing research and science that survivor rates go up. Through Daffodil Month and the fundraising efforts of that campaign, funding for many of those research projects that can take place across Canada continue. The purchase of daffodils at our local stores or the purchase of a pin that we wear on our lapel also go to help individuals and families trying to cope with a cancer diagnosis and all that it entails.

It is great to have the addition of Denim Day — as mentioned, a fundraiser for the Yukoners cancer care fund, a fund that those facing cancer treatments can apply to. This money can help take a small bit of stress off an individual or family.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to extend a big thank you to all those volunteers — those selling daffodils and selling pins,

which help our friends and neighbours trying to live a life with cancer.

Mr. Kent: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the Government House Leader for her indulgence in letting me intervene here in the regularly scheduled tribute program.

From 2006 to 2009, Mr. Speaker, I worked in Whitehorse as the Yukon regional manager for the Canadian Cancer Society. That society was built upon the hard work of volunteers. We're joined here today by four of those volunteers, and I just ask members in the House to help me welcome them.

Not only are they spearheading the daffodil campaign every year but, as members of the Order of the Eastern Star, each month they get together to clip stamps and fold cancer bandages and visit the Whitehorse General Hospital as well. I would just ask members to help me welcome Mary Mickey, Faye Jamieson, Barb Zaccarelli and Muriel Frizzell. Thank you so much for being here.

Applause

In recognition of Administrative Professionals Day

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I rise today to acknowledge Administrative Professionals Day. This day is an opportunity to acknowledge and celebrate the hard work, professionalism and skill of everyone working in the administrative field. Historically, the importance of administrative professionals was recognized during the Second World War. Skilled personnel were crucial to meet the vast administrative requirements of the war effort. An association was formed to support professional development and to help attract people to the administrative field. In 1952, National Secretaries Day was created in the US and it has since been renamed to Administrative Professionals Day and has become internationally recognized. The change in name reflects the expansion in the responsibilities of our administrative staff.

As someone who has worked in the public service for many years, and for many years in the private sector, I know how critical administrative professionals are to ensure the smooth running of our day-to-day lives. Administrative professionals are the people who have their fingers on the pulse of the organization. They operate at the centre of business, industry and government. They know the importance of the little things and that an attention to detail is crucial for the efficient running of any operation. A good administrative professional is worth their weight in gold, Mr. Speaker, and when you find someone good, you work very hard to keep them.

Over the past six months, my Cabinet colleagues and I have had the pleasure of working with many of the administrative professionals, both in the Cabinet office and across the Yukon government civil service. It is thanks to their hard work, professionalism and responsiveness that we have been able to familiarize ourselves with our respective portfolios and prepare for the hard work ahead.

Administrative professionals are on the front line of program and service delivery for the Yukon government.

They are the people on the other side of the counter or at the end of the phone or e-mail when you make an inquiry or need to access information. The Public Service Commission, working in collaboration with our human resources colleagues in all departments, has implemented a centralized process for anyone interested in working as an administrative professional for the Yukon government. This process is constantly being adapted to make it easier for candidates to apply for an administrative position. Anyone interested in working in the administrative field can submit their application through the Yukon government's online job board.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage everyone to take the opportunity on Administrative Professionals Day to recognize the administrative professionals in your office, at your school or at your place of business. Thank them for helping us to keep the wheels on and for keeping us on track in our jobs and in our daily lives.

Before I sit, I would actually like to recognize some of the hard-working individuals I have had the pleasure of working with recently: Kelsey Smeeton, Nona Whitehouse, Sabrina-Jean Fred and Amy LeBlanc.

In addition to that, we also have some executive assistants who are also important to the administrative efforts: Kluane Adamek, Jessie Stephen, Brandon Kassbaum, Susan Simpson, Shannon Clohosey, Kim Stavert, Emily Farrell, Kathleen Smith, Michele Shaw, and at the tail end, Monica Nordling. Of course there are also hard-working administrative in our opponents' offices in the New Democratic caucus and in the Yukon Party caucus, and they too are doing the work of the civil service and helping keep this operation running.

Applause

Mr. Istchenko: I rise today in recognition of Administrative Professionals Day. I pay tribute to the important role that administrative professionals play in the workplace.

I want to use this opportunity to thank all of the employees who have worked in our offices, whether in an administrative role or not. The jobs that they did were not easy but every single one of them stepped up every day to get the job done.

With that, I would like to read a letter that was sent to all our former employees in December, put together on behalf of the six of us: "We want to express our deepest appreciation for the help and support that you have offered over the past five years. We are very grateful to you and your families, as without your unconditional support working in our offices over the past five years we would not have accomplished so many things. For this you should be proud. Running a government is not simple. It can be very challenging but it can also be very rewarding. Having such a great team made it just that much easier. We know how many of you went the extra mile. They can put a lot of stress in your lives and for this effort we are very thankful. We were very fortunate for having a chance to work with staff of your calibre. Not only were you all professionals but you all brought a unique set of skills,

knowledge and insight to the table. Thank you very much for bringing this work day in and day out and sharing it with us. We credit you for our successes in government as well as your own professional growth, so we thank you for that.”

In recognition of Every Student, Every Day initiative

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to Every Student, Every Day, a student attendance initiative. This initiative is a partnership between the Victoria Gold Yukon Student Encouragement Society and the Yukon government.

Every Student, Every Day provides funding to local projects to encourage regular student attendance and active engagement in school. Up to \$25,000 is contributed each year by the Yukon government to match funds raised. This year, a total of \$50,000 will be awarded to support 15 projects across Yukon.

One project receiving money from Every Student, Every Day is the makerspace project at Johnson Elementary School in Watson Lake.

Another project is academic and land-based camps offered through the Individual Learning Centre. These camps help students earn credits, learn healthy habits and develop work skills.

The Teen Parent Centre, the Teslin School and the Elijah Smith Elementary School will also receive funding for projects that engage families in the school.

Communities help improve attendance, and this is critical for students to feel part of the school and to learn as a group. With exciting projects that engage different learning styles and interests, students can have more success at learning, as well as develop stronger connections with the school community. Regular attendance and engagement foster better grades and develop important work habits that benefit students throughout their lives. Every Student, Every Day funds programs that improve attendance.

Since 2012, Every Student, Every Day and the Government of Yukon have worked in partnership to provide almost \$235,000 which has supported 50 locally generated attendance initiatives. I am proud of our partnership with the society and the community partnerships with our schools that bring benefits for our youth. This initiative is an incredible example of a company giving back to our community. I would like to thank Victoria Gold for continuing to support this initiative. This company has shown great commitment to Yukon and is setting an excellent example for others investing in the territory.

I would also like to note that I am bringing this tribute today on behalf of each of the other parties here in the House. They join us in this tribute. Thank you. Merci beaucoup. Shaw nithän.

Speaker: Introduction of visitors.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce Diane McLeod-McKay of the ATIPP office and to welcome her to the Legislative Assembly.

Applause

Mr. Gallina: Mr. Speaker, I would like members to join me in welcoming David Laxton, former Speaker of this House and former MLA for Porter Creek Centre. Welcome.

Applause

Speaker: Are there any returns or documents for tabling?

TABLING RETURNS AND DOCUMENTS

Speaker: Under tabling of returns and documents, the Chair has for tabling the 2016 annual report of the Ombudsman, which is tabled pursuant to section 31 of the *Ombudsman Act*.

The Chair also has for tabling the 2016 annual report of the Information and Privacy Commissioner, which is tabled pursuant to section 47 of the *Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.

Finally, the Chair also has for tabling the 2016 annual report of the Public Interest Disclosure Commissioner, which is tabled pursuant to section 43 of the *Public Interest Disclosure of Wrongdoing Act*. I would note for the record that Diane McLeod-McKay is the Commissioner for all of those departments and, as indicated by the Minister of Highways and Public Works, she is present in the gallery today.

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

Are there any reports of committees?

Are there any petitions?

Are there any bills to be introduced?

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 4: *Act to Amend the Supreme Court Act (2017)* — Introduction and First Reading

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I move that Bill No. 4, entitled *Act to Amend the Supreme Court Act (2017)*, be now introduced and read a first time.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Hon. Minister of Justice that Bill No. 4, entitled *Act to Amend the Supreme Court Act (2017)*, be now introduced and read a first time.

Motion for introduction and first reading of Bill No. 4 agreed to

Speaker: Are there any further bills for introduction?

Are there any notices of motions?

NOTICES OF MOTIONS

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

THAT this House supports the efforts of the Vuntut Gwitchin people and the Gwich'in people of the Northwest Territories and Alaska in lobbying the United States Congress for the protection of the sacred calving grounds of the Porcupine caribou herd so vital to the health of this herd and well-being of northern communities.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to hold a Yukon Forum four times annually.

Ms. Hanson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to fulfill its election commitment and immediately appoint a non-partisan commission on electoral reform to engage and collaborate with Yukoners to:

- (1) propose the best system to replace the first-past-the-post voting system, including consideration of proportional representation;
- (2) consider fixed election dates;
- (3) consider legislative amendments so that voters have the final say when an MLA crosses the floor; and
- (4) consider banning corporate, union and Outside contributions to Yukon political parties.

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

THAT this House commends the generosity of RyanWood Exploration and the northern exploration and sport development fund for contributing \$70,000 to local athletes on their journey to the Olympics to compete in cross-country skiing.

I also give notice of the following motion:

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

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Gallina: While I am standing, I would like to take this moment to recognize Connor Whitehouse, a constituent of mine in Whistle Bend. I apologize for not recognizing you, Connor — welcome.

Applause

NOTICES OF MOTIONS

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

THAT this House commends Rick Hansen for his efforts over three decades to remove barriers and improve the lives of people with disabilities.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House supports the efforts of the Government of Canada to restore the confidence in the Yukon's environmental and socio-economic assessment process through amendments contained in Bill C-17, now under consideration by the Parliament of Canada.

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

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Federal gas tax fund

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today, I am happy to share that Larry Bagnell, Member of Parliament for Yukon, on behalf of the federal Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, Hon. Amarjeet Sohi, City of Whitehorse Mayo Dan Curtis and me, the Minister of Community Services, announced funding of \$2.8 million under the federal gas tax fund for three waste-water projects in Whitehorse.

We are excited to share with you today the three projects that will benefit from this funding. The Marwell lift station project will receive \$2.4 million. The Marwell lift station processes the majority of the city's waste water and will be upgraded to improve its efficiency. The Burns Road storm sewer project will receive \$100,000. This will fund upgrades to the storm sewers on Burns Road. The Hidden Valley storm pond project will receive \$330,000. This will fund a new outfall pipe and trench for the Hidden Valley storm pond, helping to manage storm water in these neighbourhoods.

Once complete, these projects will provide reliable sewage-water management services for residents, contributing to maintaining healthy communities and protecting property. We are proud to support these projects that will help ensure waste-water systems across the city are prepared to meet the needs of the communities they serve. The funding from the gas tax fund provides local solutions to local problems. It is an important resource for First Nations and municipalities here in the Yukon as we work together to build sustainable local infrastructure.

Through the gas tax fund, the Government of Canada will provide more than \$180 million for the Yukon in infrastructure funding over 12 years. That's for public transit, green infrastructure, social infrastructure, transportation that supports trade and Canada's rural and northern communities. The Government of Yukon strongly supports this predictable funding that gives communities a meaningful role in building a better Yukon. The federal gas tax fund is a great example of a federal tax that is collected by Ottawa and returned to Yukoners. Yukon communities are then able to direct federal dollars to their particular infrastructure priorities, contributing to a wide and varied range of projects.

Mr. Speaker, our government believes that modern public infrastructure is key to: supporting the unique needs of northern communities; investing in green infrastructure projects for the environment; and supports local economic opportunities — all of which go hand in hand with improving

family income, job opportunities and quality of life for those living and working in the north. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Kent: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I thank the minister for the statement that he has delivered here today. Of course, the Yukon Party supports these types of infrastructure investments. Not only do they improve the infrastructure and the long-lasting life of those important projects, but they also provide much needed jobs. I'm hoping in the minister's response here today he can let us know if these three projects will be tendered by the Government of Yukon or if they'll be tendered by the City of Whitehorse. I look forward to hopefully getting that response today or in the near future.

Mr. Speaker, when it comes to tendering projects, again, as I mentioned, they are very important for local contractors. Our short construction season makes it extremely important to get these tenders from the pages of the press release to the tender management system and out into the contracting community.

I just want to reference a couple of joint announcements that were made prior to the election — last summer, in fact. On June 22, 22 projects were announced for funding under the Government of Canada's new clean water and waste-water fund by, again, Minister Sohi, and the previous Minister of Community Services, Mr. Currie Dixon. As of May 1 of this year, 13 of those projects are to get underway. I'm hoping that the minister can provide in his response an update on that close to \$29-million worth of work that was to get underway by May 1st or previous.

Mr. Speaker, also on July 26 of last year, there was another joint announcement by the Government of Canada and the Yukon government — again, under the previous government — that 17 infrastructure projects in the Yukon were to get joint government funding.

Taking a look through that list, there are four projects totalling close to \$37 million that have not started yet. They include projects in Carcross — the Nares River bridge replacement — the Burwash water treatment plant replacement, the Nisutlin Bay bridge rehabilitation, as well as the Teslin Airport connector road. I believe that these are four of the projects of those 17 that have not started yet or have not hit the tender management system. Again, we will be looking for updates from the minister either in his response here today, but a good news announcement. I know the contractors are anxious for those tenders to be let and look forward to that. Again, congratulations to the minister for making this joint announcement today with Mr. Bagnell on behalf of Minister Sohi, as well as Whitehorse Mayor Curtis.

Ms. Hanson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On behalf of the New Democratic Party caucus, of course we support the idea of federal gas tax monies being used for infrastructure projects in the Yukon. It has been part of the discussion and debate in this Legislative Assembly for a number of years.

I would note, Mr. Speaker, as I commented the other day, that the practice of ministerial statements is unusual and has

been unusual in the recent practice in this Legislative Assembly. I note from looking at the very helpful annotated Standing Orders at the federal level that they're usually made on matters of government policies or matters of national interest. I think what we see today is a classic example of what can happen when we use ministerial statements on matters that have already been announced and been in the press, and then it looks like we get into this little sparring match so it's no longer a ministerial statement — it's a debate.

I would suggest Mr. Speaker that if there are ministerial statements to be made, let's think about what they really are. Are we re-announcing? Is it just another press release or do we want to get into a to-and-fro about "my government/your government, my ministers/your ministers" and "we're good guys and you're not". I don't think that's what is intended, but I'll be observing to see how the practice is carried out in the future.

That being said, of course we want to see federal gas tax monies being used in our communities throughout the territory employing local people and ensuring that the money is flowed effectively and efficiently. Thank you.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Thanks, Mr. Speaker and I thank the members opposite for their response. I will try to provide several comments. First of all, to the Leader of the Third Party, thank you for your comments. I just note that this is not a re-announcement. This is being announced today for the first time and I'm sure that House leaders will be able to have a conversation about choices around ministerial statements, so thank you for your comments.

To the House Leader for the Official Opposition, again, thank you for your support. You listed off quite a few projects there. I will do my best to get the answers specifically for you. I know that just this morning we had a conversation regarding some of the clean water and waste-water projects so I am happy to get you an update. I don't have all 22 at my fingertips at this moment.

I will note that we have had conversations with some of the communities on several of the projects that you listed and we are in good conversation with them. Just last week, we were discussing, for example, the Nares bridge.

With respect to the gas tax funds, what the Department of Community Services typically does is we offer our community partners support, whether they wish for us to be the people who are tendering those projects or not. We try to support them in a capacity way. Typically, with the City of Whitehorse, they will let those projects themselves, but I will get a specific response for you. I will check with the department later today and get a response right away.

I'm happy to acknowledge the benefits the predictable funding from the federal government provides for our communities today. When Yukon communities and First Nation governments have the opportunity to direct where funding is to be spent, all Yukoners' lives are improved. Ensuring predictable funding for communities is a priority for our government and we will continue to work with municipalities, the Association of Yukon Communities and

the federal government to ensure great programs like the gas tax fund are supported.

It is also worth noting that the projects funded by federal gas tax funds create a diverse growing economy, providing good jobs in an environmentally responsible way. Thank you for the opportunity to speak, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: This then brings us to Question Period.

QUESTION PERIOD

Question re: Government contracting

Mr. Hassard: Mr. Speaker, today the first question I have is for the Minister of Highways and Public Works.

Mr. Speaker, the construction season is upon us and we are reminded of a promise that the Yukon Liberals made in the fall to Yukoners if they were elected. They promised to tender construction projects for the summer season no later than March every year. March has come and gone and with it, a broken Liberal promise. Local contractors were looking forward to this. Contractors were ready to get to work and the government took a little too much time to get here into the Legislature to move forward.

Can the minister tell Yukon contractors why it wasn't a priority to get these contracts out on time like the government promised it would?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the member opposite for his question. I can go further, Mr. Speaker. I can tell the member opposite that I actually have told contractors that it is our intention to get the planned and coordinated tendering of the Yukon government's seasonally appropriate contracts out in March 2018. Contractors in this territory were not expecting a 118-day miracle, Mr. Speaker. They knew exactly what they were getting when they voted for this government. They were going to get a respectful government that listened to them, a government that did the right thing when it came to contracts — that abandoned the fast and the loose and started to go to the measured and coordinated. So we're going to do that, Mr. Speaker. This government is going to do it properly. We're going to do it in March 2018.

The contractors that I have spoken to — and I have spoken to hundreds of them — are more than happy to hear our plans and our approach going forward. So that's where we stand, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Hassard: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Unfortunately, those contractors have bills to pay this year.

Mr. Speaker, this government took a record amount of time to get back to the Legislature, beating the previous record by 50 days. Earlier this week, we learned that they didn't spend this extended time off figuring out how the carbon tax will impact the economy, and now we find out they didn't spend the time meeting their own promise to tender the summer contracts by the end of March as they promised.

Mr. Speaker, can the Premier tell us how many other Liberal promises will come with an asterisk?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I have to take the member opposite's question as a compliment. They obviously have

enormous confidence in this team of people that I am surrounded by to work miracles. After years of neglect, after years of being unable to tender government projects in a methodical or planned fashion, they want this government to do it in 118 days. I'm tickled, Mr. Speaker.

The contractors in this community, the retailers and all the people who deal with procurement understand that this government is working very hard on this file. They weren't expecting changes within 118 days, and they are more than happy with our plans to do it better in March 2018. Until that time, there are many, many, many government contracts going out the door. All the members opposite have to do is look at the contract registry to see that.

Mr. Hassard: Every time there is a new government put in place, tenders still come out. Contractors of the Yukon continue to work. The minister needs to understand that he is the minister. He is the one responsible for these decisions and for living up to his promises, so instead of spending his time here coming up with excuses, maybe he should spend his time getting these tenders out so Yukoners can get to work.

Can the minister tell us by which day all of the seasonally dependent contracts will be tendered?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Mr. Speaker, this new Liberal government has inherited a number of issues from our predecessors. This is not an excuse; this is just reality.

We're dealing with those things in a methodical, thoughtful manner. We are not the team with the fast and the loose; we're measured and considered, and we're going to continue handling the procurement file in exactly that fashion.

I have a team of people in the department who are working very hard on this file. They have assured me that there will be no problem getting seasonally appropriate contracts let in March 2018, and I have every confidence that we're going to do that. I know the opposition does too. They are probably very happy about that.

For the member opposite, more than \$70 million has been let in government contracts since we took office. That's a lot of money, and it's keeping Yukoners at work and pushing our aims of making peoples' lives in this territory better.

Question re: Clean water and waste-water fund

Ms. McLeod: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We are 26 days into April and have not seen many significant tenders being released for contractors to even consider bidding on — the previous government had approved a number of major projects such as the new water reservoir in Watson Lake — and yet this new government hasn't tendered any contracts for them. In fact, according to the agreement that the previous government signed with Canada, work was to begin on the Watson Lake reservoir by April 1 — another deadline missed by this Liberal government.

Can the minister give us an update on when the Watson Lake projects will be tendered?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I did receive a letter from the member opposite late last week. I thought I did reply. I will check on that to make sure.

I mentioned earlier today during the ministerial statement that we had been discussing some of the clean water and waste-water funds, and I'm happy to announce that the project that she is asking about received approval today and will go forward.

I thank her for her question. We are working diligently. In looking at all the clean water and waste-water projects, we are looking to ensure that infrastructure in the territory is delivering on regulatory needs and is making sure that our communities are healthy and safe.

Ms. McLeod: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just a reminder to the Minister of Community Services that I wrote on more than one occasion and, yes, I did get a response to acknowledge that the project was being signed off on.

My question, however, was when this project was going to be tendered.

The projects that the previous government approved under the clean water and waste-water fund are critical to our communities. The project in Watson Lake isn't just an important piece of infrastructure — it means important jobs. In some cases, the start dates listed for these projects have come and gone. Can the minister explain what the delay has been in getting these projects to tender, since they were approved over a year ago?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member opposite for her question. I'm afraid I'm unable to answer at this moment at what point the project will be tendered, but I'm happy to look into it for her.

Mr. Speaker, these projects were not approved in a budget. They may have been given some work for design and planning. I think, as all of us know here, that when it comes to infrastructure projects, it takes time to do it properly. We don't want to be rushing infrastructure projects and ending up with problems. There are several of those, which we're now working on, because we have encountered problems.

There is a responsibility to act in a diligent and calculated fashion to make sure that the work we're doing is effective and well-spent. I appreciate that the past government had chosen several projects to go forward. They had done so by approving some design work. We will be approving those through a Management Board process and through a budget.

I appreciate her question; I'll try to get a response specifically for her.

Ms. McLeod: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With regard to the projects listed under the clean water and waste-water funding, they span the territory and each have start dates no later than 2017. Due to this government's decision to delay getting to work by six months, we know that many of these projects have already missed their deadlines. Can the minister confirm whether federal funding for these projects is now in jeopardy as a result of the government delays?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I rise, very happy to respond to the question from the member opposite. Actually none of those projects are in jeopardy — none.

We worked with our federal counterparts. I sat in a meeting with the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources and with First Nation chiefs to have a meeting with

Minister Sohi, the Minister of Infrastructure and Communities for Canada. We discussed the issues of tendering here in the north. He was very supportive. In fact, he gave us a one-year extension on delivering on the clean water and waste-water fund. None of the projects are in jeopardy. I thank the member opposite for her question and we are happy to be delivering to ensure that we have sustainable communities.

I will note that if there is a Management Board submission from the past that I have missed, please by all means bring it to my attention. I would be happy to note where the decision was made that these projects were funded. That would be terrific.

Question re: Early childhood strategy

Ms. Hanson: Mr. Speaker, we can all agree that children are our greatest asset. They are our future. It is also well known that the resources we put into our children from prenatal care onward has huge impacts over the life of the child and into adulthood. Safe, affordable, quality childcare is an important resource that many Yukon families seek both in Whitehorse and throughout Yukon. Although the Speech from the Throne makes mention of childcare, there is no indication what priority this government places on this important matter. This concerns me.

During the campaign, this government did commit to development of an early childhood strategy. Can the Premier tell this House what timeline he has set for his minister to develop an early childhood strategy?

Hon. Ms. Frost: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member opposite for the question. Quality, accessible, affordable childcare is an important feature in early childhood development here in Yukon. The work that we are doing with the childcare community is to ensure that we provide quality care for all children who are in our services and with families in the communities.

In 2016 and 2017, I can note that childcare programs received over \$4.3 million in direct operating grants to assist with their operational costs. In addition, over \$71,000 was set for start-up and emergency funds. Our vision for the Yukon includes improved coordination of early childhood programs to maximize the benefits to children. To this end, we are working in consultation with the federal Government of Canada to ensure funding of a national framework on early learning and childcare, which has committed \$500 million for the fiscal year 2017-18 for provinces and territories, will be acquired or accessed in the Yukon to assist for future early learning and childcare initiatives.

Ms. Hanson: Mr. Speaker, it is clear that we agree on the importance of early childhood education and childcare. The fact of the matter is that early childhood educators and daycare workers in Yukon communities work hard to provide the best for Yukon children. Research shows the many benefits of investing in quality, early childhood education. For the individual, we are talking about better health and well-being throughout the person's life. The economic impacts of these investments benefit not only the families, but all of our community. Yet in Yukon, we have a fragmented system of

early childhood learning and care services that negatively impacts children, families and staff.

Yes, we have direct operating grants; yes, we have emergency funds — but what we do need is cooperation and consultation with parents, caregivers, professional staff and funders to improve the current system.

Again, my question is: What concrete steps are being taken by this government now to work with parents, educators and First Nation governments to improve access to quality daycare and quality childhood education?

Hon. Ms. Frost: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I can assure the member opposite that we will do everything that we can to identify and address the needs of families and childcare facilities in the Yukon. This year our department, the Department of Health and Social Services, is taking the measures to address that, and I would be happy to share that information with the member opposite in terms of our strategic plan. At this moment in time, I don't have that in front of me, and I would like to just say that here — that I will get you the information that you're asking for and I will do that in a timely fashion.

Ms. Hanson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the member opposite for her commitment on providing information on that broad strategic aspect. Perhaps we can go to a more specific aspect of the responsibilities of the Department of Health and Social Services with respect to childcare.

That department is responsible for ensuring the health and safety of children in childcare centres. That's why those facilities are licensed by government. In 2008, nearly a decade ago, the government was informed that over one-third of childcare centres and family day homes had unacceptable levels of radon, yet shockingly, this year's Auditor General's report states — and I quote: "We found, however, that the Department had not taken any action to directly address this issue." How is this acceptable, Mr. Speaker? Why does the department not simply require radon testing as part of the licensing process and require remediation when needed? Mr. Speaker, what immediate steps is this government taking to ensure that Yukon children don't spend another day, let alone a decade, in buildings with unacceptable levels of radon?

Hon. Ms. Frost: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With respect to this new question on radon, I acknowledge that we have had some historical challenges, as was identified by the Auditor General's report. We are taking measures. Historically, I understand that there was a process set in motion by the previous government. This government is working with all of the childcare centres. We are mitigating and we are putting in place adaptation measures to address the radon levels in our facilities.

In terms of regulating the private sector — private homes, private owners — we can and we are notifying the private homeowners. Custody and control of Health and Social Services radon testing processes — this includes our facilities — our continuing care homes, our Young Offenders Facility and all of our group homes. We do have an internal working

group that works on addressing the challenges of radon and childcare programs and how it will be handled moving forward. Over this past winter we sent out many letters to licensed facilities and childcare centres and day homes to raise awareness about the importance of radon testing and mitigation measures —

Speaker: Thank you.

Question re: School calendar

Ms. Van Bibber: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This question is for the Minister of Education. The *Education Act* includes a section on school operation in order to guide administration each and every year through the process of planning the school calendar. The act states that the minister shall specify on or before March 31 for each school year the opening day, number and days of school operation, length of the day and number of minutes of classroom instruction in that day.

It appears the school calendar for Whitehorse schools was only released yesterday, 26 days past the deadline, and it looks like the school calendar for rural schools has not been released. Can the minister explain why there was a delay in releasing school calendars?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the honourable member for her question. It is certainly a matter that I was concerned about as well.

I asked the department to coincide with the rollout of the new curriculum to develop four years of school calendars — for the next four years, beginning in 2017 and beyond. As a result of that request and the requirements of the *Education Act* that school councils are given the opportunity to review and approve school calendars — and they work on their own schedule, unfortunately — there was a delay as a result of that.

My understanding is that the school calendar for Whitehorse was issued last Friday. I stand corrected if my friend knows something else, but I have indicated that this is unacceptable. The school calendar has now been issued. I understand that the rural one has also been issued this week — and it certainly won't be happening again.

Ms. Van Bibber: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Parents and teachers alike have to plan life around school work, extracurricular activities, appointments and vacations. They also must plan personal time. It would be beneficial to have the next school year planned by the legislated time allotted.

Although the minister missed this year's legislated timeline, can the minister commit to getting the school calendar for the schools in our communities out immediately? Further, can she commit to getting the calendars out before the deadline each year going forward?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you again to the honourable member. I indicated in my first answer — but I'm happy to reiterate so it's clear. The school calendars for the next four years — let's put aside 2017-18 for a second, and so for the next three years after that — 2018-19 and beyond — will be issued by the middle of May of this year.

So I agree with you 100 percent that families need school calendars to plan, schools need them, administrators need them and students need them. They will be issued far prior to September 2017 so that families can provide planning options for their own schedules into a number of schools.

The other reason it's so important for us to make sure that school calendars are out is that, in addition to March breaks and alternatives like that, the community schools have slightly different calendars and have an opportunity to choose different days for activities for their schools, including hunting activities and those kinds of things, so it's absolutely critical they have them.

As I said, Whitehorse and the rural schools will have them — or do have them already — and they will have them for the next three years. We'll then do one each year by the deadline of March so there will always be four years out for each and every school to plan.

Ms. Van Bibber: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On the topic of the Whitehorse school calendar for next year, the last day for this school year ending is June 20. Next year it's scheduled for June 8. Can the minister tell us how this drastic change has happened and assure Yukoners school hours are still being met?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Again, I'm happy to clarify this point. The hours are absolutely being met. They're mandated by the legislation. The minutes, in fact, and hours of the school requirements are set out in the *Education Act* and the regulations.

Part of the consultation when we went to school councils was that almost — well, all but one school, if I recall correctly; I don't have the numbers in front of me — were far more interested in an earlier date in June, so beginning earlier in August and ending earlier in June. The information that I've been provided and that we've looked at very closely indicates that school attendance in the month of June in the City of Whitehorse is very low, unfortunately. I feel that's a concern and we'll be trying to address it. But with the advent of summer, I would say, in June here in the territory, it seems like that affects the attendance. School councils were consulted. They're the ones who chose the earlier date. Administration concedes as well that they can do all of their hours and the act is being met with respect to required minutes and hours in that schedule.

Question re: School calendar

Mr. Cathers: Mr. Speaker, we've heard reports that the Minister of Education is planning to increase the number of professional development days in the school year by two because of the new curriculum.

With the release of the school calendar, can the minister confirm whether there has been a change in the number of classroom days?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Thank you to the honourable member for his question.

Let me just say it this way: The required days required in the act are being met this year. They are being met in addition

to the two extra instructional days for teachers as a result of the curriculum change and that's what they're for.

Consultation has been done with each of the school councils in the City of Whitehorse and they've agreed to provide two of their days — because school councils have four days each — for instructional/non-instructional days for teacher training and teacher consultation. As a result, they have provided those two days as the extra two days, so there is no effect whatsoever by providing more training for teachers to adjust to the new curriculum on the overall school days.

Mr. Cathers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The old school calendar has classes ending June 20 and the new calendar shows classes ending June 8. Now, we heard that the plan was to reduce the number of classroom days, I believe. I would ask the minister to just confirm what I think she said, which is that because of a reduction in days allotted for school councils, there will be no overall reduction in classroom days?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Mr. Speaker, that's right. There is no overall reduction in the hours that are required. The school calendar adjusts from year to year — sometimes 173 days, sometimes 174 days.

Sometimes, it depends on the school and how many minutes are allotted per school to adjust per minutes for the school day. So no, there is no reduction in the minutes that are required for teachers to be in a classroom and for students to receive that instruction.

Mr. Cathers: What I just heard the minister say about the number of minutes in the classroom — I would point out that in fact longer school days do make it harder to keep the attention of children. I believe there are a number of studies that would demonstrate that. If the minister has studies that contradict that, I would be interested in seeing that information.

My next question is: Because the act currently specifies students must be provided with 950 hours of instruction in a school year and 15 hours of professional development and another 15 hours for non-instructional purposes specified by the school council, can the minister tell the House whether she's planning changes to the *Education Act* in order to accommodate their new plan regarding the number of professional development time for teachers?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Thank you for the question. No, contemplating changes to the act are not required, because the current school calendars and the ones going forward will comply with the legislation. As the member opposite is well aware, there is intense detail in the *Education Act* about how those minutes are required to be spent. These calendars and the ones going forward are all in compliance with those requirements.

I also appreciate his comment that longer school days are difficult for students — so is going late into June, as we have been told by the administrators and school councils across the territory. But I guess I should be clear that if we're talking about extended minutes in days, we're talking about less than three in most cases — two three-minute changes and one one-minute change. As a result, the effect is minimal. I appreciate the question and I can confirm that all the school calendars

going forward will be in compliance with the current *Education Act*.

Speaker: The time for Question Period has now elapsed. We will now proceed to Orders of the Day.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

OPPOSITION PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

MOTIONS OTHER THAN GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

Motion No. 6

Clerk: Motion No. 6, standing in the name of Mr. Hassard.

Speaker: It is moved by the Leader of the Official Opposition:

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 place the contracts for the summer of 2017 on the tender management system.

Mr. Hassard: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is truly a pleasure to rise and speak to Motion No. 6. Mr. Speaker, as you just read the motion in the Legislature, I won't do it again.

I just want to start by saying that I do understand that, as a new government, the government needs time to transition as any new government would. That's very reasonable and we've never said that the government shouldn't take some time to get ready.

However, we're almost six months away from the November 7 election and the fact is that I believe that is more than a reasonable amount of time to take to get ready to govern. Just for context, in the federal election of 2015, it took the new government 49 days from their election to get back into the House to face Question Period. Here in Yukon, we see that this new government in fact took 168 days from election day until we had our first Question Period here on Monday. That brings me to the motion.

During the election campaign, this government made a very bold and, in my opinion, a very good promise and that was to tender all seasonably dependent contracts before the end of March. I think it was a good promise and certainly one that our caucus supports; kudos to the government for putting this in their platform. As well, I believe the contracting community thought this was a good promise. Anyone who has ever worked in the industry knows that certainty is key. By certainty, I mean certainty in costs, certainty in timing and certainty in knowing when you can start planning for work and when you can start getting to work.

Since the election, this is one of the promises that I personally have heard a lot about. The contracting community has had a lot of questions for me as a legislator regarding this promise. They were wondering if I had any insight into the timing. This is why we as the Official Opposition have raised this issue. It is not because we are here to try to make life difficult for the government, but because we are here to ask

questions on behalf of Yukoners. These are very real issues, and we hear about them every day.

I hope that in the government's responses to this motion today that we don't see a lot of time wasted pointing fingers and blaming the previous government as we have seen in the past couple of days. I don't think this does anything to further the debate, and I don't think it is what the contracting community is looking for. The responsible thing to do is take ownership of promises and deadlines that were made by the government. These promises were made during the election period, and if the government thought they wouldn't be able to meet them at the time, then they probably shouldn't have put them in their platform.

However, there was no asterisk on this promise. It was very clear that the government would tender contracts no later than March every year — not every year except this year. Instead of coming up with excuses, I believe the government should be focusing their time on getting these contracts out to meet this deadline. I think that is the responsible thing to do — identify a problem and then fix it.

Over the last six months, we have heard a lot about this issue — and rightfully so. We are six months into the mandate and we have seen very little in terms of contracts being tendered. Getting these contracts out to tender is vitally important to the Yukon's economy. For example, according to the Bureau of Statistics, the construction industry made up 8.5 percent of Yukon's GDP. This compares to: accommodation and food services at three percent; administrative waste management and remediation services at 1.4 percent; transportation and warehousing at 3.3 percent; professional, scientific and technical services at 3.5 percent — just to give you an idea of how important this is.

Mr. Speaker, certainly these industries aren't entirely dependent upon government contracts, but they, along with other industries, do receive a lot of work thanks to government contracts. Combined, these industries accounted for \$473.6 million of the Yukon's GDP, so it's a very significant number, Mr. Speaker. These contributions to the economy are undeniable and these sectors of the economy would like certainty, which is why it is so important for the government to get moving on these contracts.

We heard the Minister of Highways and Public Works in Question Period speak about how many tenders there were on the tender management system, and we should look at it. Well, Mr. Speaker, I look at that tender management system on quite a regular basis and, as of April 20, which was the day that this 34th legislative Sitting began, there were 23 listings on the tender management system and, of those 23, five were added on April 19. So there weren't that many jobs on the tender management system.

For construction projects up here in the north, it's very important for companies to know what the projects for the summer are in advance so that they can move on them quickly. Most often, companies want to be in a position where they're either beginning construction now or starting to get equipment in place. Mr. Speaker, companies that need to move heavy equipment to job sites need to do so before road

bans are put in place, or else we just have more delays in the projects getting underway. This is just a simple fact of doing business up here in the north. That is just one more reason why living up to this promise is so important.

A big question I'm hoping to have answered today is: When does the government plan on moving forward with seasonally dependent contracts? Not only are these contracts important to contractors, but they're equally important to construction workers here in the Yukon. Many Yukoners and their families depend upon this important industry, and these are hard-working Yukoners. When government can help them in the industry they work in, I believe it's a good thing.

These employees survive on the wages they earn over the course of the short season. This is how they support their families, make their mortgage payments or pay their rent. This is how they afford to buy their vehicles and send their children to university. This is how they buy their groceries and heat their homes — the list goes on and on.

The benefits of these industries are huge and felt across the entire territory. Shortening the season by any length of time can be detrimental to Yukon families and, unfortunately, because there has been such a long delay in getting these tenders out, it seems that this year's construction season will be shortened by a lot.

Mr. Speaker, jobs in the south are not as bountiful as they have been in the past, so thinking that employees can take part of the summer off and do a little extra fishing and then head off to the oil patch for the winter is not quite as easy as it used to be. This is a life that I have lived — as has my son — so I have a fairly good idea of what I'm talking about here.

For the contractors, this is not only about them making money; it's about looking after their employees. We heard wonderful tributes today about our employees and the importance of having good employees and keeping those employees. If the businesses are not able to keep those good employees working, the contractors can't afford to have people sitting around drinking coffee in the shop, waiting for the government to get the jobs out.

It's not just to get these important projects built but to get Yukoners working. Mr. Speaker, tendering projects takes time. Contractors need time to figure out their prices. The departments need time to go through those tenders and award them. It's now the end of April and so, in my opinion, in a best-case scenario, if we see projects coming out now, we're not going to see them awarded until mid-June and that's a long way into our short construction season. This is very concerning to me and to members of the party with me as well. I encourage the government — it is vitally important to get these tenders out immediately.

Mr. Speaker, I know that the government has in their possession many projects that the previous government has done their homework on. The monies were in place and ready to go. So we have trouble understanding what the holdup could be. As we heard in Question Period, we talked about the clean water and waste-water fund through the Government of Canada and many of those projects were approved and ready for tendering already. We heard from the Minister of

Community Services that none of these projects were in jeopardy. They had extensions on the timeline for them for another year, but that doesn't help the fact that none of these projects have yet started, Mr. Speaker.

Another interesting thing that the Minister of Community Services mentioned today in Question Period was that some of the projects haven't been started because of problems that were found with the projects. It would be very interesting if the Minister of Community Services could provide details to this House on what projects seem to be delayed because of problems and what those problems may have been.

Mr. Speaker, some of the projects — just to give you an idea: we had \$3 million for the City of Dawson for the Dawson twin raw water line; outfall upgrade and screening plant; \$3.75 million for other waste-water upgrades for Dawson City; over \$6 million for downtown water and waste-water upgrades for the City of Whitehorse; almost \$7 million for water and waste-water upgrades in Faro; in the neighbourhood of \$7.5 million for Watson Lake; \$5 million for Carmacks; \$3 million for Haines Junction; \$8 million in Mayo; sewage lagoons in Ross River and Old Crow worth nearly \$5.5 million; and water treatment in Marsh Lake and Tagish in excess of \$1 million.

Mr. Speaker, the previous government was very happy to work with Minister Sohi from the federal government to secure this funding. Both the minister and his staff were very helpful and excited to help roll out infrastructure money into the territory very quickly. In fact, we are proud to have been the first jurisdiction in the country to fully sign on to the federal government's phase 1 infrastructure projects. For a small jurisdiction, this is a huge accomplishment, but we also knew it was important to do because the construction industry is so critical to the Yukon.

Mr. Speaker, as I stated earlier, it creates and supports many jobs across the entire territory. As the government would know, these federal funds are time-limited. As we heard from the Minister of Community Services today, we have commitment that they will extend that for a year, but we still need to move quickly on these projects. We recognized the short building season in the territory, moved quickly to secure the funding and identify projects, and the goal was to get the tenders out early so we wouldn't miss any of this important funding.

Mr. Speaker, these projects that I've mentioned add up to over \$34 million, which is a lot of money here in the Yukon. It is also very important money for this sector of the economy. This money is meant to support important infrastructure in our communities — infrastructure that the Yukon needs and jobs that Yukoners need. I should be clear that this is only one pot of funding. There are, of course, other projects from other pots of funding that the government will hopefully be tendering soon. These projects that I have mentioned stretch from one end of the Yukon to the other, offering jobs for citizens from virtually every community in the territory.

Mr. Speaker, I will just leave you with this. I am curious as to why the government is dragging its heels on getting these jobs tendered. Obviously they have broken their promise

for this year, but we are willing to look past this. This shouldn't be about political fighting between parties and, as I said at the beginning of my remarks, I thought this was a very good promise made by the government and I commend them for that. As such, I would be first in line to applaud the government if they can get these tenders out so Yukoners can get to work.

I hope that this motion helps the government move on this quickly, and I would like to thank all members for taking the time to listen to me today.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I appreciate the kind words of the Official Opposition leader this afternoon and the collaborative tone he adopted at the tail-end of his remarks this afternoon. It's good to see and I thank him for that.

I am very happy to address the motion brought forward by the opposition leader this afternoon. Through his motion, the member opposite is trying to say something to make a point. The member opposite is suggesting we aren't living up to the promises we made during their oft-delayed election cycle of 2016. Since then, we've been in power for 143 days. The days are changing — it's 168 days if you go by the day the election was called; it's 143 days if you go by where we are today from the swearing-in — but we won't quibble with that. I think we're going to stick with 143 days to today. That's the day from the swearing-in and here we are. While the swearing-in seems a lifetime ago, 143 days is not very long, Mr. Speaker. It's a relatively short time in our lives and the life of this government.

The opposition leader has asked us to fix something that the Yukon Party was unable to fix in — depending on your measuring stick and we're talking all these days — five years or 15 years.

He's also asking us to race off — to simply issue the contracts willy-nilly, to get them out and to simply toss contracts on the procurement management system without thought or consideration. Well, I would like to be totally clear on this point, Mr. Speaker, crystal clear: those days are gone — gone, Mr. Speaker.

This is probably not well understood by the Official Opposition or not fully accepted by them. They're still railing, still grappling with their new role in this House. I understand this. We're all adapting. Change has happened. Making decisions off the cuff — well, we've seen how that works out. It does not work out well. It hasn't worked out well in this territory for many years. We're in a new world, a new day, and this is it.

We've seen in the past what happens when you announce school projects before the proper permitting is in place — sort of meet yourself, get out in front of the electorate, hard hats on, shovels, in front of signs, "Look at us, we're doing great stuff" — except they had no permits. Then they rush the school, and the school goes ahead and then we wind up cancelling that same school because it's too expensive suddenly. The contracts have been delayed so long that the cost has gone up and now it's \$47 million, or whatever it was, and it's too expensive so they cancel that, throwing \$6 million

of Yukon money that could be used to build sewage treatment plants or help constituents in real ways — health care, mental health and childcare, which we've been talking about all day today. That money's gone — bang — and no longer there — \$6 million, so we're going to do that. We're going to redesign and make it cheaper. It's a good thing. Out they go, racing away — all things off the table. It comes back and they redo it smaller, and it comes in more expensive — more expensive. So to save money they spend more — lots and lots more. This is what happens when you make off-the-cuff decisions. The public has grown tired of such an approach. Haste makes waste — it's an old axiom, one we should heed.

Shall we move to the dismantling of F.H. Collins School, Mr. Speaker? It was supposed to be finished last summer. It was supposed to cost \$2.5 million to tear the old school down and it was supposed to be finished, as I said, last summer. It's not finished yet. I have inherited one of these projects. Here it is.

It's now going to cost an estimated \$6.9 million at least, Mr. Speaker. This is what happens when we rush things, when we don't plan, when we're not considered in planning and executing our contracts. We end up with an enormous waste of money that could be used for childcare, health care, the community of Mayo, or the community of Teslin.

Shall we talk about the other projects, Mr. Speaker? Sarah Steele, the main admin building that we're surrounding right here, the college or any of the other projects that have experienced substantial cost overruns in recent memory?

Of course things can go wrong. We all know that. It keeps us up at night. I'm telling you, it keeps me up at night. I take this very seriously. I want to make sure these contracts get done properly and that things don't go off the rails. Have I thought about everything? Have we considered everything? Is there something I'm missing? Have we done the proper due diligence to make these things go off? My family can tell you that there have been a lot of sleepless nights as I get accustomed to my new role, but that's the job and I'm enjoying it — make no mistake — but we want to make sure we're doing it right.

Sometimes it doesn't go right, and these things happen. I can understand that. The citizens of Whitehorse and of the territory, of Mayo and of Old Crow, can understand that — that sometimes things are unexpected. What we're talking about is a pattern, a bigger problem than the occasional overrun or delay. We're talking about a litany — many, many, many — that my colleague in Community Services, that myself and that my colleague in Education have inherited.

Mr. Speaker, we will deal with these problems. This is the job. I actually enjoy dealing with them. I wish I didn't have to, but I will, and I'll do it with a smile on my face — fix these puzzles that we're confronted with — and get it done.

The last government approached tendering of major construction projects fast and loose, Mr. Speaker. Apparently things on their side haven't changed. It's the way they did business for a long time, and I understand that. You get accustomed to some things, but this group is going to do things differently. We're the government now and we've

inherited a host of issues, as I alluded to, and we're going to deal with them in good time.

The good people on the opposition benches are suggesting that there are no contracts out. This is wrong, Mr. Speaker — simply wrong. So far, since taking office, this government has issued \$72.9-million worth of contracts. There are currently 30 contracts out for the Yukon government departments. The good member opposite looked on April 20 and there were 23. Now there are 30; tomorrow there may be 30-whatever — there will be more.

Next year it will be different. Next year, at the end of March, major construction projects will be tendered. All of these contracts are worth millions — although of the 30 that are on the contract registry right now, the total value won't be known until they close — then we will know what the value of those contracts are. It is not an insignificant amount of work. Much of the work this year is on bridges. Bridge work is expensive. There is a construction contract on a bridge on the Robert Campbell Highway. There are culvert and BST treatments that are standard on the Alaska Highway. There is a call for bridge work on Clear Creek. There is work out on the Yukon River bridge rehabilitation.

It is not all bridge work. Along with the aforementioned work on the Alaska Highway, this year's work on the north Alaska Highway — Shakwak — has closed and been awarded. There is more coming.

The Official Opposition is wrong, and the contractors in the territory — the many, many people who I have spoken to — were not expecting to have all contracts let in 118 days. They were not expecting a 118-day miracle. They were not expecting a 143-day miracle. They were expecting something solid next year and we are committed to that. The Yukon government is committed to supporting communities for businesses and First Nation development corporations. We understand that government procurement is an important driver of the Yukon's economy, and we want to realize economic benefits for Yukoners through the government's purchasing power.

We have heard concerns from the vendor community that we need to improve our procurement practices. I have heard those personally. I have been to the procurement workshop. I have been to the reverse trade show. I have met with retailers, contractors and consultants. On this file, I have met with people virtually every week that I have been office, and I have heard all sorts of stories and complaints. We have heard about inconsistent documents with unclear instructions. We have heard about requests for references for past project experience that, by definition, may exclude local businesses. We have heard about tenders coming out at times that do not suit the work being requested. We know this — I know this because I have been listening. I have been listening for months — 143 days. I have been listening as we all have on these benches.

As I said, I attended the reverse trade show before I was minister. I was a newly minted MLA, and I walked around the Westmark talking to civil servants in Community Services, in Health and Social Services and Highways and Public Works. I was getting the lay of the land, doing the research, finding out

how this works — what is going on, what are your hopes, what do you want to accomplish? I heard how these civil servants wanted to fix the system.

As I mentioned, I also spoke to contractors several times. I have been to their annual meeting with hundreds of them. I have spoken to them and had coffee with them. They have come to my office. They have discussed what they expect and what they know. I had a couple of them in the office of the Economic Development minister just two weeks ago.

I asked them point-blank: Did you expect that these seasonal contracts would be out this year? They said, "No. We did not think that was going to happen." Of course, the member of the Official Opposition — if any of the members of the Official Opposition have names of people who are disappointed with this, I would be more than happy to talk to them. I'm sure that offer is always available. I've met with a lot of people. I'm more than happy to meet with more. If they want to provide names, just send them my way.

But I've heard the contractors' concerns and the retailers and most people — photographers, videographers — all these people we've spoken to. The tech community, the new IT sector — all these people — I've heard their concerns. I've heard what they want. I've heard their take on the problems and their suggested fixes. Do you know what they want? I can tell you. They want more thought put into the procurement process. They want more time to plan. They want a little more consideration about how they do business — about their seasons. They want their RFPs written tighter and better. They want more consistency in the application of policies across this government. They want us to stand by the terms of the contracts that they're getting. They don't want a contract to stipulate one thing and then for the government to say, "Yeah, okay, you can use something else", when everybody else has bid on the one thing, which is often much more expensive or a different process than the one that they were asked to address in the RFP. That type of inconsistency — that type of fast and loose behaviour is something that we want to avoid, if at all possible, and they appreciate that.

So we're listening, Mr. Speaker. This government was elected on a promise to the Yukon people. They wanted to be heard and we're listening. We're going to follow through on these things. We're going to improve them. As I said earlier this week, I have to take the opposition's motion as a compliment. I repeated it again today in Question Period. They expect this crew — this talented group of individuals who I'm so lucky to be working with — to work a 118-day miracle to get the tenders out by March 31 of this year — getting all those contracts out the door by last March 31. Of course, that's an aggressive timetable. It's ridiculously aggressive — almost recklessly aggressive, Mr. Speaker — fast and loose.

In some cases, they didn't know there was a problem with procurement. On April 7, 2016, the Member for Copperbelt North, the then-Minister of Highways and Public Works, stated regarding procurement, "We're doing a good job. Yukon contractors are doing a great job of competing when it comes to bidding on contracts". He's correct there.

“We will continue to work to advance the procurement process so that it does offer opportunities for local companies”. It was working great. My predecessor made that statement, despite being told repeatedly by the Contractors Association, chambers of commerce and many other NGOs and businesses that there were serious problems regarding government procurement.

Under this new Liberal government, these businesses and organizations will be heard. Fast and loose was yesterday’s approach. So as I have said, over the last few months, I have been familiarizing myself with the lay of the land and, as mentioned, we’ve had these conversations with chambers of commerce, consultants, retailers, landlords, medical supply companies, photographers, videographers — the list is very long. I will speak to whoever wants to come by, because information drives understanding and good decisions. It leads to better decisions. We’re listening to all Yukoners, Mr. Speaker, not just a select few people who come in the door. We’re listening to as many people as we possibly can.

I have also been talking to my department. I have spoken to representatives of other departments. This is a vexing issue — there’s no doubt — but rushing things is not the answer. Staff across Yukon government are working right now on process changes that need to be addressed so that government can tender work earlier. As you know, procurement is a responsibility of many staff across government. You guys have all been there; you’ve seen it in action. Highways and Public Works is collaborating with its partners in one government, this government, to ensure work is appropriately forecast and placed on the tender management system. We don’t want to miss anything; we want to get those tenders up there across government and make sure those tenders are actually up there.

One of the problems is that sometimes departments aren’t as diligent with that system as they could be, and so we’re going to ask them to be a little bit more diligent. That’s what leadership is all about, Mr. Speaker. It is about identifying problems and directing people to take action to fix them. That’s what this government is going to do.

We’re committed to responding to the vendor community’s concerns in improving Yukon government’s procurement processes. The Yukon government is committed to reducing barriers to local businesses and First Nations in their effort to secure government contracts. We are committed publicly to tendering major summer construction projects — seasonally appropriate construction projects — by the end of March next year — clear?

I would like to fix the Leader of the Official Opposition’s motion to more accurately reflect the new direction of the Yukon government from fast and loose to measured and considered.

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Point of order

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

Mr. Kent: This is with respect to 19(i). The term the member opposite has used — “fast and loose” — a number of times during his speech — I was looking through the Standing Orders and I believe that he is using insulting language in a context likely to create disorder. I believe this type of language has been ruled out of order in the past and I would ask that you would rule on it now, or in future.

Speaker: Member for Copperbelt South, what language are you referring to?

Mr. Kent: Pardon me, Mr. Speaker — the term “fast and loose”. The Minister of Highways and Public Works has used it on a number of occasions here this afternoon.

Speaker: Member for Riverdale South, on the point of order.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Mr. Speaker, on the point of order, I suggest that it’s a difference between honourable members and that it’s not in fact a breach.

Speaker: Are there any further representations on the point of order raised by the Member for Copperbelt South?

Speaker’s statement

Speaker: I will take this under advisement and return to the House at a later date, if required.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I would like to fix the opposition leader’s motion to more accurately reflect the new direction of the Yukon government. I would like to propose the following amendment, Mr. Speaker.

Amendment proposed

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I move:

THAT Motion No. 6 be amended by:

- (1) inserting the word “major” before the word “seasonally”;
- (2) deleting the word “by”; and
- (3) deleting all the words after the phrase “no later than” and replacing them with the phrase “March 31, 2018”.

Speaker: There is a motion to amend Motion No. 6.

We’ll take a brief recess for the motion to be reviewed for form and content.

I have had an opportunity to review the proposed amendment and have determined that the amendment is in order.

It has been moved by the Minister of Highways and Public Works:

THAT Motion No. 6 be amended by:

- (1) inserting the word “major” before the word “seasonally”;
- (2) deleting the word “by”; and
- (3) deleting all the words after the phrase “no later than” and replacing them with the phrase “March 31, 2018”.

To confirm — my understanding is that the new motion would read as follows:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to live up to its election promise to tender major seasonally dependent contracts by no later than March 31, 2018.

Minister of Highways and Public Works, you have up to 20 minutes to speak to the amendment.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Now we're on the right track. We're now dealing with facts instead of conjecture, reality instead of fantasy, planning instead of off-the-cuff decisions. The public has asked for this.

I would like to once again thank the Leader of the Official Opposition for having such confidence in the ability of the new government to fix the issues around procurement in less than six months — in 118 days, 143 days, 168 days or whatever yardstick you would like to use. I really do appreciate his confidence in us and I think it's well placed, but it's too much. We can't fix the system that is the product of 14 years of neglect in such a short period of time.

Not only has this system been severely flawed for many years, but it has been neglected by the previous government that was intent on telling everybody that things were fine, to ignore the problems instead of admitting to any mistakes and trying to fix them.

I'm surprised why the opposition would like us to change anything about Yukon government procurement policies when they told us everything was hunky-dory just less than a year ago.

There are problems. We know there are problems. I have heard there are problems from many, many people — many of the people who members opposite have spoken to — and we have a good read on what those problems are. I am very happy to say that this government will indeed fix the problems we inherited from the previous government, and I appreciate the opposition's support in doing so. I actually embrace the suggestions from the opposition on how we should fix the problems they left for us. After all, they should have intimate knowledge of why and how this system that they administered and led for so long is not working for Yukoners. I am more than willing to work collaboratively with the opposition; in fact, I'm really happy the opposition has started to acknowledge the problems in the system.

In his opening remarks this afternoon, the opposition leader called our pledge to fix the procurement system by 2018 “bold” — a good promise. We agree with that. His kudos are appreciated. I thank the member opposite for those remarks.

As I've said, I have spoken to hundreds of contractors over the last several months and they have said they're happy with the approach this government is taking to fix procurement, with the direction we're headed, with the measured and considered approach and the planning that we're promising to bring to this system — tightening it up a little bit, meaning what we say, doing what we said.

Planning is an important thing, Mr. Speaker. When you start scoping things out and looking down the road a little bit — not just to the next year, not just the immediate seven months — looking two years down the road, three years down the road, four years down the road — letting the contractors see what we've got on the horizon. They can start to say, “Holy smokes, they're going to be building a major project in

2020. It would be nice if we could bid on that contract. How do we bid on that contract? What things do we put in place? What people do we need? What resources do we need — trucks or equipment? What training? Our four-person operation can't build the extended care facility; how do we get there?” It would have been nice for this community to have a shot at that. They didn't. They didn't because everything was, “Holy smokes, there's a crisis. Let's fix it.” They did and here we are.

We're going to work with the departments together, as one government — we speak all the time — and we're going to take that approach to make sure that we come at these things with the appropriate thought. When things happen in a community, we have to know whether there's housing in place, Mr. Speaker. What sort of sewage infrastructure is in place so that we actually don't hook up something that doesn't have sewage facilities — because when you do that, you end up having underground car parks that are half what they thought they were going to be because we couldn't build them the way we thought. That's heartbreaking when that happens. It's a waste of effort and energy and a diminishment of something that could be absolutely spectacular.

We own our promises, Mr. Speaker. We live up to them. Yukoners are seeing that. They've seen it already just three days into this legislative session — which, by the way, is not where all the work happens. There's lots of work happening outside this House all the time. Colleagues are working until 9:00 p.m. on days we're sitting. They're working that late even when we're not sitting. There is lots of work going on over here and the members opposite know that because they've been in this role. They've been here, where we sit, working, I'm sure, on behalf of their constituents and the greater Yukon, as we are.

In a very short period of time, we have introduced legislation giving rights to the LGBTQ community. We have created a National Aboriginal Day — introduced legislation in this House. My colleague from Community Services introduced that legislation just recently. We have held a Yukon Forum and we are having another one next month — two in a very short period of time. It is remarkable — following through on our promises — respecting Yukoners, respecting all Yukoners, listening to them and allowing them to be heard. We will tender all major seasonal contracts by March 2018.

The member opposite talked about employee wages and how important this work is. There is nobody who knows this better than I. This work is important for Yukoners. It is important for real Yukoners — for all Yukoners to make a living. Let's look at that for a minute. Let's go back for a minute to F.H. Collins and the cancellation of the school contract I referenced earlier. Let's talk about concrete and what real effect that had on Yukoners, Yukon jobs and Yukon companies. When the previous government cancelled that contract — off the cuff made that decision — a company that had prepared and had brought a team of people together to do that work was suddenly out of work.

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Point of order

Deputy Speaker (Mr. Hutton): Member for Watson Lake, on a point of order.

Ms. McLeod: I believe the member is not speaking to the amendment that he is to be speaking to now.

Deputy Speaker: I thank the Member for Watson Lake for that.

Deputy Speaker's ruling

Deputy Speaker: I would consider this at this time as a dispute between members.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Concrete — we are talking concrete — hard stuff. Yes, here we are. We had a company that was up here trying to do work — it had recruited a group of people. It is important that we understand that this is what we are trying to do. This is why we want to make sure these contracts are tabled by March of 2018. It is important to Yukoners that we do this. This is one of the perils — the pitfalls — you can fall into if you don't plan, if you don't consider these things and if you don't move it forward. The concrete company suddenly had no work. They had planned on it. They had it. The contract was there and suddenly it wasn't — poof. They had a team of people. This is in the days not too long ago when Alberta was booming and they had a bunch of people who could have gone —

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Point of order

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

Mr. Cathers: Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Pursuant to Standing Order 19(b), the Minister of Highways and Public Works is not speaking to the amendment. The previous Speaker's ruling ruled that language of this type that is so far away from the motion is out of order.

Deputy Speaker's ruling

Deputy Speaker: Thank you, Member for Lake Laberge. I fully expect the member's remarks will shortly return to relevance. It has certainly been the practice in this House in the past to allow as much flexibility as possible, so I don't want to limit freedom of speech in this House.

On that note, there is no point of order.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The contract is gone, and so what that did was it left the company scrambling to retain its workers. It started doing smaller contracts, which worked like a domino effect. It started to put pressure on smaller contractors, and to steal the work from them. It had a devastating effect on this economy. I know that because I speak to contractors. I know what they want and what they expect from a government. What they expect from a government — the relevant part — is that they want contracts tendered — seasonally relevant contracts tendered — in good time for them to plan and make sure they

have their workers. They want those contracts honoured once they are let.

This government is going to do that, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We're going to make sure that contracts are let by March 18, that they're well-planned, that they give contractors a lot of time to look ahead to get the people they need to work these important public works, that they can put people to work in the territory, driving our economy and making lives better for Yukoners — for all of us. We're going to try to make sure that those contracts are tendered in such a way that locals have an ability to bid on them, that the money stays in the local economy, and that this territory benefits from the economic spending of this government.

That's an important part too, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We all know — again back to F.H. — about some of the unease of the community with the way that contract was handled, and it's one of the reasons why we're here today.

That is what I have to say on this matter — that this government respects contractors, respects the good suggestions of the Leader of the Official Opposition on this very important matter. He has said that he supports this promise, that it's a good promise, and I agree with him — and we're going to stand by it, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Thank you.

Mr. Hassard: Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. In speaking to the amendment that was put forward by the Minister of Highways and Public Works — it's definitely an interesting tactic but, unfortunately, it totally guts the intent of the motion.

The motion, as amended, that the minister has put forward is also a good motion. I have no qualms with all of those things — making sure that next year all tenders are out early — that's great. That's part of what we're asking for, but Mr. Deputy Speaker, the original motion was about tender contracts for this year, not about 2018.

The platform commitment did not specify that they would promise to have those jobs out by next year. So that was where this motion came from. It appears to me that this isn't an amendment to a motion. This is more like an amendment to the platform of the Liberal government. It's very interesting that they felt that it was fine to promise to contractors and promise to those employees throughout the Yukon that they would have jobs out this year and now they've changed their mind — “Oh, but next year. Don't worry, next year.”

Well, I ask, Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is the Minister of Highways and Public Works committed to feeding those families — helping pay those contractors' bills this year because the jobs will come out so late? I didn't ask for miracles. I didn't expect this government to be miracle workers. I asked a very legitimate question: Will we see seasonally dependent contracts coming out soon — these contracts that should have already been tendered? People should already be working on these projects. For the Minister of Highways and Public Works to stand here and lay blame on the previous government — I believe I was about 30 seconds into my original motion when I asked: Could we please not go

there? That does not help the contracting community. This was a motion about getting jobs out now — not next year.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, obviously we will not be supporting this amendment. Thank you.

Mr. Cathers: Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. With this motion — or the amendment to the motion, pardon me — moved by the Minister of Highways and Public Works, what is really notable here is in fact the minister is trying to effectively amend the Liberal Party's election commitment. The Liberal Party, in an election news release on October 11, 2016, made very specific commitments to Yukon businesses and people who are employed in the contracting community. In the section that they had entitled “Reduce Barriers to Procurement and Contracting for Yukoners”, the commitment that was made — pardon me, the headline for that section was “Commit to Transparent Capital Planning”. The Liberal Party committed to Yukoners — and I quote: “Tender projects for seasonally dependent Yukon Government-funded construction projects no later than March each year.”

Contrary to what the minister said, they didn't place any caveats on it for major projects. They didn't say that they would do it by 2018. There was in fact in that list one recommendation that they did say they would not immediately implement: that was to accept the recommendations and “...implement the recommendations of the Procurement Advisory Panel Report in an accelerated manner, completing its implementation by 2018”.

I did, in fact, remind the member who proposed the amendment that the Procurement Advisory Panel was commissioned by the Yukon Party when in government, recognizing that there was a need for improvements to the contracting and procurement process. So they've committed to accept work that was done, in fact, under the Yukon Party watch.

Again, on the Procurement Advisory Panel recommendation report, they committed to implementing it by 2018. They promised Yukon contractors that they would tender projects for seasonally dependent Yukon government-funded construction projects no later than March each year — and they didn't say after 2018.

Now we're left to wonder — now the minister is trying to amend their platform and hope people won't notice the change. He says now it will be March 31, 2018. Maybe next year he will say it has moved to 2019, and apparently that's okay, but I would remind the member that, during his time as editor of the *Yukon News*, he would literally be the first to criticize a party for promising Yukoners that they tender projects every year by March 31 and not telling them that wasn't going to happen until well into their mandate.

They did not say in their platform, “Oh, we didn't mean the first year.” They said every year. The minister and any member voting in favour of this are in fact voting to change retroactively what they promised Yukoners.

I would in conclusion just note — as my colleague, the Leader of the Official Opposition did — that there are contractors who are depending on this. This is something that

the member, in his rhetoric, in his criticism of the previous government, is missing —

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Point of order

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

Hon. Ms. McPhee: My understanding is that the use of the word “rhetoric” is inappropriate and I'm asking for you to rule on a point of order that the member opposite retract that word and strike it from the record and that he refrain from using it.

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

Mr. Cathers: Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The word “rhetoric” has been used many times in this House without being ruled out of order, including by the Premier himself.

Deputy Speaker's ruling

Deputy Speaker: This word “rhetoric” has been used in the House in the past in context and I will allow it in this case.

Mr. Cathers: Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. What I think that the minister is missing in making this very political response on his part — and more than a little condescending, I should say, in his tone — is that this is not ultimately about the members in this Assembly.

As my colleague, the Leader of the Official Opposition was referring to, there are contractors who depend on income from seasonally dependent contracts to feed their families, to put food on their table, and there are people who are out there right now who took the Liberal government at its word when it promised to have seasonally dependent tenders out by March 31 each and every year during their mandate. They took it at its word and they are worrying now about how to feed their families and how to pay their mortgages.

As my colleague was very sincerely noting in his remarks, this is not something that is just a political issue or football. The member should not lose sight of the fact that, by choosing not to keep their word to Yukoners, there are people right now who are wondering how they are going to pay their mortgages and put food on the table — so I will be voting against this amendment.

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

Some Hon. Members: Division.

Division

Speaker: Division has been called.

Bells

Speaker: Mr. Clerk, please poll the House.

Hon. Mr. Silver: Agree.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Agree.

Hon. Ms. Dendys: Agree.

Hon. Ms. Frost: Agree.

Mr. Gallina: Agree.

Mr. Adel: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Agree.

Mr. Hutton: Agree.

Mr. Hassard: Disagree.

Mr. Kent: Disagree.

Ms. Van Bibber: Disagree.

Mr. Cathers: Disagree.

Ms. McLeod: Disagree.

Mr. Istchenko: Disagree.

Ms. Hanson: Agree.

Ms. White: Agree.

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

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

Amendment to Motion No. 6 agreed to

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

Ms. McLeod: I would like to just take a moment to thank the Member for Pelly-Nisutlin for bringing this motion forward for us to discuss today. The issue of contracting is very important to me and to my constituents in the Watson Lake area, and I am quite dismayed to find now that it's obviously not very important to your new government.

The area surrounding Watson Lake is a beautiful place. Highway tourists are greeted with a friendly sign, reading "Welcome to Watson Lake, Gateway to the Yukon". With Watson Lake being their first stop on their trip to the territory, and Watson Lake is our gateway, it's our first impression and its citizens are our welcoming committee.

It's home to the Watson Lake Sign Post Forest, designated as an official Yukon historic site, which visitors flock to with a sign of their homeland in tow to add to the tower of handmade signs, licence plates, city limits signs, directional and establishment markers. The fact is, sadly, Watson Lake infrastructure does not meet the standards of what you would think the gateway to the Yukon would have.

The infrastructure is aging and our town needs the help of our territorial and federal governments to improve. When the Yukon government and the Government of Canada signed the infrastructure agreement in June of last year — that agreement that identified Yukon-wide projects for funding under the clean water and waste-water fund — Watson Lake was approved for three much-needed improvements.

The announcement of the improvements to Watson Lake's aging infrastructure resonated well with citizens. They looked forward to these upgrades taking place, but they have yet to see when this will happen — and now it sounds like March 2018 to improve drinking water.

I'll touch on each of these projects and highlight the original start dates and funding allocations. The Watson Lake reservoir has been in need of upgrades for some time. The acceptance of this project by the federal government under this agreement described the project as being water reservoir upgrades and the construction of a new reservoir. The project was set to begin on April 1 of this year and was allocated funds of \$3.6 million.

The second project placed under this agreement for Watson Lake was upgrades to the waste-water force main and gravity trunk. Total funds allocated to these upgrades were \$900,000 and work was set to begin on May 1 of this year.

Also originally slated to begin May 1 were upgrades to the Watson Lake wet well and lift station — this large project with \$3 million allocated in funding for its completion.

Mr. Speaker, I have not seen any indication that these projects are set to begin any time soon. As we have discussed earlier, I inquired with the Minister of Community Services to find out the status of the Watson Lake projects because they did not appear on the tender management system. I received a reply stating that the service agreements for the reservoir upgrades and wet well and lift station were on the minister's desk for signing.

These projects should have been out for tender by now. They should already have been awarded and the contractor should be ready to get to work. The citizens of Watson Lake would like to see the work being tendered in the area. We depend on those jobs. Not only does early tendering allow a contractor to prepare, budget and get started to make the most efficient use possible in this short construction season, but most local residents can see upcoming projects and apply for reasonable employment with companies setting up to do the work. Our young workers who have a chance to be part of local projects will be forced to look for other jobs in the summer when they could have been planning to get an early start with contractors on these large projects and have work to cover the season.

I agree wholeheartedly that contractors working on government contracts should be supported by government. This starts with allowing them the best chance to be successful right from the beginning. Early tendering allows contractors to know whether they are successful in securing a tender and to know this very early on in the season. In turn, they can prepare for the project at hand and plan for others that they acquire throughout the season simultaneously.

It is not a secret that persons given more time to prepare can do better on a task than one with a task sprung on them with no notice. I think I have been hearing this resonating from the other side of the House. The same goes for the contracting community. Yukon businesses rely on government tenders. Bidding on these tenders is a lengthy and competitive process, and preparing to begin a project involves much preparation. It is costly for businesses to undertake this kind of tendering. To tender early is to allow these companies the time they deserve to do the best job they can. Taxpayers deserve to know that contractors will do their due diligence if they were allowed an adequate amount of time from

government to prepare and organize, mobilize equipment and assemble their crews.

This is not an issue isolated to my riding of Watson Lake. Communities across Yukon are in similar situations. Much of the infrastructure across the Yukon is aging and in need of upgrades or replacement. There are other communities of tradespeople or casual workers who would benefit from knowing when a project is slated to begin in their area. Having these projects tendered and off the plates of department employees would likely be a benefit to them as well. Then they can shift their focus to ensuring that jobs run smoothly and perhaps identifying new projects or securing new funding. The construction season should be designed by weather and natural processes. It should not be based on when government is able to get their stuff together and get the projects out the door. Contractors should not be worrying about the tender process when they can be mid-project and spend their time assuring quality work and addressing any problems that may arise during construction.

When jobs are rushed, so are employees. This increases the chance of human error and the likelihood of deficiencies. Government frowns upon deficiencies. Any government frowns upon deficiencies. There is a good chance that many can be avoided by giving the contractor an adequate amount of time to do the job. I hope this government makes changes to their process for future years and ensures contractors are given time, support and the respect that they deserve.

I look forward to hearing when work is scheduled to begin in Watson Lake and urge the government to get the tenders posted as soon as possible to give the contractors and residents a chance to plan. The construction season is upon us — and I mean 2017, not 2018.

Ms. Van Bibber: It's a pleasure to rise in the House to address the motion before us. My constituents elected me to be their voice and I will strive to represent them to the best of my ability. With that, I represent a number of contractors in my riding, all of whom have been waiting patiently to see the new government move forward in posting tenders for construction. At the very least, they were looking for an indication that there would be work for them this summer. To post seasonally dependent contracts no later than March each year is one of the few promises the Liberal government made to the contracting industry, and I must agree with my colleagues that it is a good one, as has been mentioned.

When asked why they haven't lived up to this promise, the government continues to tell us, "Next year; next year". Next year doesn't help my constituents now. Next year doesn't offer certainty for contractors trying to prepare and plan. Next year doesn't give the indication there will be jobs for hard-working Yukoners who rely only on summer construction to pay their bills and put food on the table.

As we all know, the construction season is short. Contractors need time to bid and enough notice to ensure they have the equipment, the resources and the crews to put in place before the season begins. There are a number of projects across the territory that were approved for funding last year

and were scheduled to begin this construction season — again, as was mentioned by the opposition leader, the projects under the clean water and waste-water fund. These infrastructure projects may not be glamorous, but they are the infrastructure that our communities need. Where are these projects now and why haven't they been tendered? Mr. Speaker, these projects were ready to go to tender and Yukon contractors are ready to get to work.

As my colleague from Pelly-Nisutlin has mentioned, this is not just about contracting companies. This is equally about jobs for construction workers and hard-working Yukoners and their families. Equipment operators, truck drivers, and excavating and paving crews and labourers — these are the people who rely just as heavily on knowing whether and when tenders will be posted. This is simply to plan their summers accordingly so they can stick close to home or stay in the territory to work. This is about job certainty. If there are no tenders, there are no jobs and no job certainty. No job certainty means they will have to look outside the territory to ensure they can keep working.

Members on this side of the House have heard the concerns from industry and from our constituents. We will continue to bring it up because it matters to Yukoners and we are to be their voice and to represent them to the best of our ability. As such, it is paramount that we provide those in the construction industry with the certainty they need to plan ahead and to get to work.

As their self-imposed deadline has already passed, there is still an opportunity to show the industry that all members of this House are on their side. It would certainly be appreciated if the government took their concerns into consideration and offered Yukoners some insight as to when they will be able to get to work. I thank you for taking the time to listen, Mr. Speaker, and I hope this motion's debate may help the government move forward, live up to their promise and resolve this issue.

Mr. Istchenko: It is a pleasure for me to rise today to speak to this motion.

There are concerns with contractors in the contracting industry for sure. In my comments today I would like to take the time to acknowledge our local contractors and give them thanks for the hard work and the long hours they put into meet deadlines, standards and to produce quality of work we have all seen across the Yukon here.

It's not an easy feat to adhere to a schedule laid out by a government and any number of disruptions can occur throughout the contracting period. Our local contractors do good work. Through the construction season, workers are seen on the job in town, throughout the Yukon communities and on our highways. They complete necessary upgrades and enhancements, take down old buildings past their prime and erect new ones. They work long, hard hours.

Although they are paid to do their jobs, they deserve recognition for this investment that they have in their lines of work. They work in all weather conditions to build our territory and for this I would like to thank them.

The Yukon Party government released its response to the Procurement Advisory Panel in August 2016. Our previous government was committed to working with the private sector as a partner for advancing the Yukon economy and made great achievements in modernizing the procurement process.

Our government was in the process of exploring options to approve a fall capital budget or multi-year capital planning to improve project forecasting and scheduling for Yukon businesses and to allow tenders to be issued well ahead of a short summer construction season. Our government knew the importance of this work and was well on the way to completing the task at hand. It is important that I mention this tidbit of information, as glancing through the Liberal Party platform, one might have taken note of their promise on procurement and given credit where credit wasn't due.

Other party actions our government had committed to include: developing policy to support local vendors in collaboration with the vendor community; creating a program for comprehensive project and performance evaluations to improve future procurements; reviewing the bid challenge process to identify opportunities for interim improvements; as well as developing policy to replace it with a more modern, trade-compliant mechanism. This response was created to fix problems that have been identified over years of procurement.

Our government worked with businesses and stakeholders to find solutions to identified problems. We were well on our way. Taking those same ideas and rebranding them as a Liberal promise do not make that a platform commitment. It is simply building on the good work of the previous government. This government has been working for six months on ways to adopt the good work of the previous government and call it their own.

I for one am not going to call them on this. We want them to carry on in these actions or all of the hard work between government and the private sector and the Procurement Advisory Panel will have been for nothing. The business community is happy with the response. I encourage the government to dive into the recommendations by the panel and work to fill the gaps in procurement. To start with early tendering is a wonderful promise to the Yukon contractors; however, it seems that a promise made is a promise broken. I would encourage the government to slow down on their promises and ensure they are doable before making them, because people are watching and waiting to see if they can live up to their big words.

I will now turn to the promise the Liberal Party made to Yukon contractors if they were to be elected in the fall. They promised to tender construction projects for the summer season no later than March of every year. This promise would give contractors time — time to plan their construction season before the summer got busy for them, and time to conduct a thorough investigation into the tasks at hand from the start of the bidding process through to the end.

Now we know we have unpredictable spring weather in our territory. It may take time for contractors to be able to start a job after spring breakup. This promise gave contractors more time to focus on planning and bidding in the summer

rather than doing that work in the summer construction months. In turn, more time could be dedicated to the actual job. When speaking to contractors, they were happy to be given a little certainty and foresight into their season. Unfortunately, this promise was not followed through this year. It is the end of April. The sun is shining and we are seeing temperatures in the mid-teens. We are getting into the prime construction season and contractors have yet to see the major projects tendered by this government. We have yet to see whether the projects committed to by the current government's predecessors will be followed through. The uncertainty is building.

The Liberals made a platform commitment to — and I quote: "... developing an inventory of 'shovel-ready' projects that will be tendered well ahead of each construction season." We have not seen this inventory. We cannot be sure that this inventory has been developed or is even in the works because there is nothing to see in the tender forecast. If they are looking for a place to start, perhaps they could look at the projects lined up by the previous government. We have yet to see any commitment from this government on the go-ahead of these projects. We are waiting for the budget. I trust that the government is working to get tenders out of the door for 2017. I cannot imagine that the Minister of Highways and Public Works is not aware of the importance to Yukon contractors that this work gets out. I do, however, hope that the government will attempt to hold to their promise in future years — I am encouraged by what I am hearing — and allow contractors the certainty of knowing that they will see tenders by the end of March. This will not only make projects shovel-ready by construction season; they will be shovel-worthy.

We ask the government to start working on the contracts for this construction season as soon as possible to offer contractors certainty and the best start possible to their ensuring a successful season. Contractors are bound by a set of obligations to the government. The Liberal promise to tender projects by March was a way to offer a reciprocal obligation. Quite simply, it is in the government's best interests to get these projects rolling as fast as possible in a new construction year. Yukon has a fairly short and unpredictable season. As I already stated, it is best to avoid a situation where a contractor is faced with adversity because they are trying to make a deadline. When they spend the beginning of the prime weather for the construction in the Yukon waiting for a tender to be released — when they must now hurry to assemble a crew, take on a new venture mid-summer — they could be partially through the construction of the project.

With road construction and maintenance starting as early as possible in the season, companies are able to take full advantage of our territory's short construction season. I've done this. Like the Leader of the Official Opposition, we've been in this construction before and we know how important it is. Anyone who has worked in the private sector and in the construction trade would know that. The more time they are given to budget and prepare for work, the more successful they will be.

Projects that are tendered early will have gone through a rigorous assessment process and are less likely to have deficiencies later in the project. You combine that with projects being completed on schedule and it seems to be a win for all. We have seen the reactionary nature of this government. Taking contractors to court should not happen. Contractors should be supported and given the time and proper resources needed to complete the projects.

The infrastructure agreement reached between the Government of Yukon and the federal government in June of last year identified 22 projects to be funded under the clean water and waste-water fund, with a combined figure of over \$68 million between the two governments going into community infrastructure. Of these projects, I believe four have been started. This seems like a great place for this government to start in their tendering.

The majority of work has been done for them. Being from Kluane, I'm pretty interested in knowing the status of the projects out in Kluane. The Haines Junction waste-water lagoon upgrades identified under the infrastructure agreement had originally been given a start date of April 1, 2017.

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Point of order

Speaker: Minister of Justice, on a point of order.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker — I'm not sure that the honourable member is now speaking, or has been for the last number of minutes, to the amendment and the motion, as amended, that is on the floor at the moment. I'm asking for your ruling on that.

Speaker: My understanding is that — and I can be corrected, if I'm not correct — an amended motion has been passed, which is arguably not a lot different from the first motion — but in any event, that's for the House to determine — but that the Member for Kluane is speaking to the main amended motion. He's not speaking to the amendment.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: That's correct. I think talking about the other contracts that he has mentioned, and a number of things he has talked about, are not to the motion that's on the floor. That was my point of order.

Speaker's ruling

Speaker: I have no issue with the Member for Kluane continuing.

Mr. Istchenko: Thank you, Mr. Speaker; I'm just about done.

Again, I have yet to see any sign of movement on these upgrades but would be happy to receive a status report from the minister. There are more projects ready to go. Our communities are ready for this work to start. Our residents have been asking — and I've heard it in my riding, Mr. Speaker — when the work is going to be started. They'll be happy to hear that everything will be by March 2018, when I update them. They are much-needed upgrades from the Highways and Public Works minister.

Silence, Mr. Speaker — it's time to break the silence and start working on the promises made to Yukoners. In the name and respect of the contracting community and for all Yukoners, it's time to get some tenders out the door and get our contractors back to work.

Mr. Kent: I am pleased to speak to this motion as amended today, and I thank the Leader of the Official Opposition, the Member for Pelly-Nisutlin, for bringing it forward, and I thank all members in the House who have spoken to it thus far.

Mr. Speaker, what I would also like to do to start out is to thank the public service employees who work in the Department of Highways and Public Works. As most people know in here, I was the previous Minister of Highways and Public Works, and I certainly appreciated the professionalism that they provided to me. I'm sure that the Member for Kluane, especially those in the Property Management branch — all of the work that they put in to the tenders over the years when we were in government and I'm sure that ministers before of all stripes would do the same.

Also, as the critic for Community Services, I would like to thank the staff in the Community Services' infrastructure branch as well. I know they're responsible for delivering on and off a lot of these projects throughout the territory and, in many cases, in partnership with our communities and they do a very good job. I hear from mayors on a continual basis about the great job that the staff in Community Services are doing in working with their various communities, so I think it's important to recognize and thank the professional public service who are involved in procurement.

Earlier today, we heard a ministerial statement about new infrastructure money that was announced in partnership with Canada and the City of Whitehorse. In my response to the minister, I highlighted some of the projects that were announced last year and there are some gaps in delivering on them. I know he committed, of course, to getting back to the House at that time. Having only four minutes to respond, I wasn't able to get into specifics of the projects. I note that he mentioned — I believe during Question Period — that there were problems with some of them. Hopefully we can explore that a little bit further this afternoon as well — which projects were experiencing problems. Obviously there have been a number that have missed the deadline that was set out in the original news release and backgrounder, and perhaps we'll get a chance to explore that a little bit further this afternoon as well — on the specific projects that have missed the deadline. I know my colleague, the Member for Watson Lake, has spoken to a few of them.

Mr. Speaker, hopefully — if I have a little bit of time, I want to touch on the recommendations of the Procurement Advisory Panel that was published in August 2016. As members know, I was the minister in November 2015 when we struck this panel and at that time, I thanked the individuals who participated. There were some from outside of the Yukon — I believe two from Ontario, one from British Columbia — as well as representatives from the Yukon. The consulting

engineers were represented and a member from a local legal firm was on there, as well as the Contractors Association.

I have to say that during the rigours of an election campaign, sometimes you miss all the announcements that the other parties are making, but I didn't miss the announcement that was made by the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources — at the time, the Liberal candidate for Porter Creek South — saying that the Liberal government was prepared to accept all of the recommendations of the Procurement Advisory Panel and, I think, fast-track — I'm not sure of the exact language and I apologize for that — the implementation. To me that really signalled that this was a good piece of work — the work that we had initiated and completed, and the report that was put out. When I spoke about the report in the last Sitting of this Legislature, the spring of 2016, I said that obviously this was an unedited report. It was free of any political interference. There was no red pen taken to it by me or any staff upstairs. I think that's why it stood the test of time and stood the test of parties on both sides of this House.

I appreciate that announcement made by the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources when he was the candidate at the time. I'm looking forward to hearing the plan for implementation. I believe 2018 was the commitment that they made at the time to implement all of the recommendations of the Procurement Advisory Panel so perhaps, when we get into departmental debate, the Minister of Highways and Public Works will be able to provide some responses to that or the Minister of Economic Development.

I'm also interested from a procurement perspective in the recent signing of the Canada free trade act. I appreciate the work done by my colleagues previously when we were in government, as well as the Minister of Economic Development and the Premier for taking that important document across the finish line.

The one piece that interests me in that is the — again, I apologize if the terminology is wrong — wildcard projects where there will be exemptions. It will be interesting to hear from the minister what those projects are and how they will be chosen as far as which ones will receive exemptions, but again, that will be for a day forward when we're in Economic Development debate and get a chance to chat with the minister further about the final free trade agreement and what that is going to look like for Yukon contractors.

As I mentioned, we did have a number of projects under the clean water and waste-water fund announced last year, June 22. The Government of Canada was providing \$51.4 million — that's an approximate amount — for combined project costs of \$68.5 million if you include the Yukon territorial contribution. As I noted today, there are a number that are past deadline, and hopefully the Minister of Community Services, if he will be participating in this debate or when we're up in Community Services sometime during this Sitting, can provide a little bit more detail. I know he committed to do so today during his ministerial statement of response.

I just want to get on the record some of these projects because these communities will be looking forward to hearing more about them, I'm sure. Projects in the City of Dawson — there are the Dawson twin raw water line, outfall upgrade and screening plant decommission. The federal funding amount was \$3 million for that. Water and waste-water upgrades in Dawson City for \$3.75 million federal funding, and City of Whitehorse — Whitehorse downtown upgrades, just over \$6 million. Pardon me, Mr. Speaker, on the two Dawson City ones, the first one was scheduled to start on April 1 of this year, the second on June 1 of this year, and the City of Whitehorse ones on July 1.

Little Salmon Carmacks First Nation — Little Salmon Carmacks water plant and truck bay upgrades — \$825,000 federal commitment. It was supposed to start on January 1 of this year.

Two projects for the Town of Faro — Faro water and waste-water line upgrades of \$3.75 million, and the Faro pumphouse rehabilitation and reservoir upgrades — were supposed to start next week on May 1 — and April 1 of this year for the second one.

The Member for Watson Lake mentioned the three projects for her community — the Watson Lake force main and gravity trunk, the reservoir and the Watson Lake wet well and lift station — over \$7 million in federal funding. Those projects were supposed to start to start May 1, April 1 and again on May 1 — for the three in that order.

Two projects for the Village of Carmacks — phase 3 waste-water system — \$2.6 million — and the Carmacks lagoon and sludge beds at close to \$2.6 million — both projects were slated to start on June 1 of this year.

For the Village of Haines Junction, a \$3-million project for lagoon upgrades — April 1 start in the press release that was put out. All of these dates are in the press release that was put out last year.

Village of Mayo — three projects — Mayo lift station, waste-water force main and Mayo valve replacements — almost \$3 million combined for all three. Again, there was a May 1 start date for all three of those projects. There was a fourth one for the Village of Mayo as well — Mayo water and waste-water line upgrades — \$5.25 million in federal funding with a May 1 start date as identified last June.

For Marsh Lake, the water treatment plant replacement — \$1.125 million and an April 1 start date. Ross River sewage lagoon is just north of \$2 million — start date of July 1 of this year.

Out at the beautiful community of Tagish, the Tagish pipe fire hall to water treatment plant is a waterline construction job — \$187,500 and a start date of July 1 of this year.

In Old Crow, there is lagoon rehabilitation for \$3.375 million in federal funding and a July 1 start date.

There are a couple of other territory-wide projects — waste-water system upgrades of approximately half a million dollars. I am assuming they are at various locations. They were to start last year on September 1 — an update on that as well.

The City of Whitehorse public transit improvements of \$890,000 — I believe that was to purchase buses. I could stand corrected on that as well, but there is a start date of June 1 of this year.

Those are the clean water and waste-water fund projects. I was pleased to hear during Question Period today that ministers opposite were able to secure an extension of a year, I believe he mentioned at the time, from the federal government when they were in Ottawa recently. That is good news for the contractors, but again we need to get to a point where we can get the contractors to work. These projects were working their way through the design phase when the election was called. It would be great to get an update from the minister, whether it is today or when we get into Community Services debate on the status. Perhaps he could provide the information by way of letter or legislative return.

If he gets it sooner, it would help to inform debate on the floor of this House, but again the Leader of the Official Opposition, the Member for Pelly-Nisutlin and the Member for Kluane both have extensive contracting experience in their previous life. As minister, I relied on them an awful lot for advice when it came to procurement and contracting. In the spirit of cooperation and collaboration — I know it doesn't always happen in this House — perhaps this is one of those things where we can get together. We want to help. I mean all of us have contractors who live in our riding.

In Copperbelt South there is an incredible number of small- and medium-sized contractors and people who work for contractors who live in the riding, especially the newer part of the riding — Whitehorse Copper and Meadow Lakes golf course area, who I got to meet and talk with on the doorstep. Many of them are friends and some are family. An important part of what we do as a government is to get these tenders out. I think if we can work together to do that, that's all the better and I believe the intent of the original motion that was put forward by the Member for Pelly-Nisutlin was that people were excited about the Liberal commitment to accept the recommendations of the Procurement Advisory Panel to get those tenders out prior to March of each year.

The second part of the motion spoke to projects that are this year's. Obviously we've seen the government come forward with a different solution as far as that promise goes — where they'll go to March 2018 — but what are we going to do for those contracts that are supposed to go out this year? We have a very short construction window in this territory. Getting tenders out and getting them back through the system can often be cumbersome. I'm interested in hearing from members opposite on what some of their solutions will be. We were working on some. We of course, had we been successful in last fall's election — whoever was fortunate enough to be the Highways and Public Works minister had we been successful — the job for them on day one would be picking up where we left off. I'm pleased to hear that the government is working on it, but it would be great to hear a few more details with respect to the particular recommendations that are in the Procurement Advisory Panel that we put forward.

It's funny — I was talking to one of the presidents of a contracting NGO here in town and he said he had met with some of the folks across the way and there may be a re-branding of this document, but he was quite adamant that you make sure that you don't throw the baby out with the bathwater and that there are some good recommendations in here. This was obviously recognized during the campaign by the members of the Liberal Party when they put their platform together. I don't really care whose signature is inside the front cover, if it's a picture of fireweed on the front or a picture of the Minister of Highways and Public Works — whatever it takes to get these advisory panel recommendations moving. We look forward to hearing some further details about that when we get into departmental debate on the budget.

While I'm certainly disappointed that the amendment was made — because I do feel that it took out the intent of the original motion, even the motion, as amended, as mentioned by the Leader of the Official Opposition, is something. It's something for the contractors — and for us as well — to hold the government to account. It will certainly be interesting the first time the Highways and Public Works minister has to stand on his feet and defend a project that has come in overbudget or is delayed. We'll be looking back to his remarks on this day in the Legislature to hold him to account.

I can assure him that it's going to happen. It will happen. There will be a project that is budgeted at a certain amount that will come in. He may have to retender. There may be some language problems in a tender document that cause the project to need to be retendered. He has set some expectations for himself and we'll be interested to hold him to account over the next four or five years or however long this mandate is.

I wish him well. As former Highways and Public Works minister, I know it's a difficult job balancing the needs of the department with what the Yukon communities are expecting from the minister and from the department, as well as your colleagues. You're going to be lobbied by each and every one of the people across the way and, if you haven't already been, you're going to be lobbied by each and every one of us on this side of the House as well. It's a tough job; it's a tough gig. While I wish him well, I'll certainly be holding him accountable for the statements that he has made here today and the criticisms — sometimes unfair criticisms — I found him levelling here today at the previous government and previous ministers. We certainly worked hard; we did our best; we tried to make sure contracts were tendered on time and that budgets were adhered to. It's just not always going to happen. We'll see. I wish him well, but we'll see what happens.

Thank goodness for Hansard, Mr. Speaker, because we'll be able to go back and re-read the minister's words here from this afternoon and hold him to account on the first project that doesn't go exactly the way he had hoped it would.

With that, I thank members for listening to me this afternoon and I wish members across the way, and the Minister of Highways and Public Works across the way, luck in delivering on an improved procurement process. It's an

extremely important thing and there are a lot of Yukoners watching.

Ms. White: Mr. Speaker, it's a fascinating time in this Legislative Assembly right now. It's something else to hear mistakes of the past brought up and then defended. It's a circular conversation where some of us had a front-row seat for a little while.

We know there's going to be a learning curve with any new government, and we appreciate that. We respect that.

It's important to know that, unfortunately, you weren't left the best situation, and it would be disingenuous to pretend it was anything other than that. From our perspective, from the Yukon NDP, we understand that and we wish you luck in how you're going to decipher that.

The March 31 deadline for this year is probably, really honestly, not feasible and we appreciate that, because you've had to go through and pick through the creative accounting that was put forward before to understand what actual money exists, and that has probably been an eye-opener of a very large scale. It's important to say here that our expectations for 2018 will be very different, because it's not about the mistakes of the past that you have to unravel; it's about how we decide to move forward in the future. Right now we're dealing with the past but, by 2018, it's going to rest firmly at the feet of this government on how we proceed in the construction season.

There are important things that are happening right now that are your responsibility and they do need to be addressed when contractors are coming to the Third Party, to the Yukon NDP, to say, "Look, we need mediation or we need arbitration. We need to be able to go to the procurement office and say, 'Look, before this contract gets pulled that is 99 percent complete and the only thing that is not in place is the timeline, wouldn't it make more fiscal sense for us to finish it even if it were late?'" That's something that we have to think about. Right now, in the procurement process, there is no mediation so there is no ability to say, "Well, how come you were late?" — and these are the reasons. "Why didn't this happen?" — and these were the reasons.

Arbitration is scary for some people because it's binding, and it's a binding recommendation from an outside party that says this is how we will proceed forward. But there needs to be solutions and it can't just be, "This is what we're saying today, and that's the case." If we've already paid for most of the contract and most of the work is done, conversation needs to happen and there needs to be a place for that, and that is in the procurement process and that needs to be either through mediation or we can talk about why it didn't work. If that doesn't work, then it needs to be arbitration, because if we continue on the way that we're going, then the only conversations that are going to happen will be in front of the court. That is not acceptable because, when we all said that we would do things differently, that is the challenge — not to repeat the mistakes of the past, but to have conversations and to hear, because a lot of times I think that there are valid

reasons — maybe not always, but at least if you can hear them, then the conversation can happen.

I have been fascinated with the fair wage schedule because, for me, it's a big deal. As a ticketed journey person, the fair wage schedule for me is a big thing. It means that I was guaranteed a certain wage while working on jobs. Part of the problem is that the only way the Yukon government oversees whether or not people are being paid the fair wage schedule on government jobs is if they go through the business incentive program, and that is not good enough. If you have a contractor who can come from Outside and can underbid the locals — because they are going to put out advertisements. They will put out advertisements for plumbers and they will be paying \$10 less an hour, and do you know what a plumber in the Yukon can't do? They cannot work for \$10 less an hour because that's just not feasible here.

If we say the only way we will have oversight over projects is if they go through the business incentive program, then that is not good enough. A government job is a government job. Local contractors who pay the fair wage schedule — to be perfectly honest, local contractors pay substantially more than what the fair wage schedule is — should not be penalized for being smaller. Right now, the current situation is that contractors in the Yukon are being penalized because they're smaller.

There's a plethora of things we can talk about when it comes to contracting. There are so many different things that I think you guys are going to have the opportunity to start picking apart. The most important one that I want you to know is that I know we can figure it out — right? I know we can. I know that with different leadership and different styles, this will not always be the same system.

Focusing on the mistakes of the past isn't going to fix the future. Some of those problems are happening right now, and it's not the previous government; it's your government. It's under your watch.

My hope is that we can have those conversations. When I say "we", I don't necessarily mean me, because I'm not the contractor and this isn't my issue right now, but those conversations need to happen because, if a conversation can save the government and save the taxpayer — and that's us and everybody who lives in the territory — the tens of thousands or hundreds of thousands of dollars, they can save us from going to court. Conversations don't happen in court; they don't. We all know that's not how it works. I hope we can look at mediation, putting something in place sooner than later, because 2018 is going to be too long.

The important part, on the other side of that coin, is that mediation is when we work together, and arbitration is when someone else has to make that decision, but that is also important. As elected people, we all have different experiences.

In your case, you're going to rely on your officials, which is important, but sometimes it needs to be taken one step further away. It needs to be someone who fundamentally understands what the issue is and, to be perfectly honest, that's definitely not me — but I would challenge that it's

probably not you, either. Arbitration is important for that reason.

Fair wage schedule — for every project in 2018, we need to make sure that people applying on those jobs are getting paid what they deserve. I've had conversations in this House before where I've pointed out to the Yukon government — and I hope it changes — that there were four apprentices in the entire Yukon government. Think about that. That's phenomenal.

That is something I would like to see changed. One of the conversations that you're going to have to have internally — but you're also going to need to have with people like the Contractors Association — is about scaling projects in a way that local contractors have the capacity to not only bid for them, but to successfully bid for them.

With those agreements we've just signed that have opened up our borders, it's great to say that local contractors can bid on projects in BC, but that is not the reality. The problem is that big companies from Outside will bid on local projects and they will do it at a loss because then they're in. This is critical. You need to have the conversation on how we can break it into pieces.

I have also had meetings with the Contractors Association, and one of the biggest things they talked about — hopefully that document comes soon, because they are going to talk about value added. What's the value of having a local contractor? What's the value of having local journey people on that job?

You can't even measure it because that's who pays into income tax in the territory. That is whose kids go to daycare and school and that's who buys groceries at the grocery store, because right now, whether we mean to or not, we've created — very similar to the mining industry — a fly-in/fly-out contracting business, where people will come up and work for multiple weeks. They'll stay in staff housing and they'll leave. Then we have to figure out — does a licence plate make a contractor local? Does an office space make a contractor local? I don't have the answer to that, but that is something that we have to consider because right now income tax is not being paid in the territory for a lot of people who are working on jobs, and that is a concern for me.

I'm sure you realize that I think contracting needs a major shakeup. I don't think it's going to be easy, but I also know that if I have been approached by the people I have been approached by, people want to talk about it. They have solutions, they have ideas or they have steps forward where they think we can make a difference, but we need to make sure it's local contractors, to the best of our ability, without contravening trade agreements. How can we do that? Do we make them into smaller pieces? Do we allow them to partner together so they meet those requirements? How do we write out those contracts in a way that, when going out for the construction season, they don't eliminate them from that ability — that they are not so finely designed that the company has already been decided and they are never going to be from here?

Right now, talking about the mistakes of the past isn't — it's something, it's true, and there is a certain amount of joy in being able to say, "Look how this turned out." It's a bit interesting, but the problem is that I don't want to be here in three years to say, "We talked about it in 2017, but it still hasn't worked." I hope that we have those conversations — and when I say "we", I really mean you over there — minister, Premier, and other ministers — because those conversations are critical.

The point I would like to leave is that we need to be able to have dispute resolution with existing contractors who are working on existing jobs, so that the only place the conversations happen is in court. Whether it's through mediation, whether it's through arbitration — those are critical. The other part is that the oversight of government jobs should not only be about whether or not the contractor has applied to the business incentive program. We, as elected people, have more responsibility to the territory than to say, "They didn't need the help, so we're not going to pay attention." Every journey person and every apprentice on that job deserves to be paid like the person next to them or on the next construction site. That is your responsibility.

I'm going to leave you with that. I hope we don't revisit this conversation because I can also mine what I have said from Hansard, so don't worry — it can come back on all sides.

I know that the intention is there. In 2018, I hope that when I stand up I'm not going to say, "Well, you committed to having this out early on." Good luck with this year and I hope we get to see some of those projects go, and I know that's the intention so I'm hopeful. I really don't want to read about court cases. I don't want to read about how that is where it's going. That is my hope.

I thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank my colleagues for a change and I look forward to future conversations.

Mr. Cathers: In rising to speak to the motion as amended, we will be supporting it. I think that overall it is still better to have this motion passed than not, but, as I noted in the amendment, it is a change from the commitment made in the Liberal platform.

I just want to end briefly in speaking to the motion and also note that I would like to thank the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources for his kind words yesterday during his remarks on the throne speech. I note that I have enjoyed working with him as well as the Minister of Community Services and the Minister of Tourism and Culture in their roles prior to being in this Assembly. I hope to continue some of that collegiality even though the House is naturally at times an adversarial area. The Premier, of course — we have always been on opposite sides of the floor, but I have enjoyed working with you and do truly wish you well in your government. We will, of course, give you a hard time from time to time, but part of that is aimed, in fact, identifying areas where we think that the bar should be raised and pressing you in this Assembly to do what we think should occur.

There are a couple of points I want to note in speaking to this area. I'm not going to spend too much time revisiting the commitment that was made by the Liberal Party and is being effectively amended at this point, but really what I want to note to members is that I think it's important that every member of Cabinet especially understand deeply how important their jobs are. I'm not saying "important" in the manner of the glory or the fact that it's nice to have department people show up for a briefing and call you "Minister" or to have people invite you to events and give you an opportunity to speak. What I'm really speaking to is the fact that you need to understand that, in government, if you don't make a decision — if you delay a decision because you want additional information — well, sometimes that is exactly what you need to do. You also need to recognize that because of the important areas covered by the Yukon government, because the Yukon economy is more dependent than it should be on government, a delay on your part, even if well-intentioned, can have negative impacts on the public and hurt people who you genuinely didn't intend to hurt. That includes if you delay contracts going out the door.

It is notable — and I understand that they're a new government — but the fact that fewer contracts are out the door by the start of the fiscal year than the previous year is something in fact that the Minister of Highways and Public Works, rather than pointing fingers at the previous government, should recognize, and that clearly there were choices made under his watch that affected the timing of those projects. They may have been well-intentioned, but ultimately the fact that there were fewer contracts out the door than in previous years is having a negative effect right now on Yukon families. Without being overly partisan on this, what I do really want to emphasize in speaking to this motion is the importance of government meeting the new commitment and recognizing that when you're in government, one of the worst things that you have to deal with as a minister is who you don't always have the luxury of taking as long as you would like to make a decision, because failure to make a decision is in itself a decision. A delay on your part — again, sometimes that is absolutely required, but there are other times where you need to simply recognize that the consequences to someone else of you taking longer in making the decision has an impact.

So based on the best available information at the time, you do need to recognize the need to move forward even if your picture of the situation isn't perfect and understand that the consequences of you delaying that decision are actually worse.

Again, I hope that the government does follow through on meeting this new commitment on contracting. I would also note — I believe it was the Member for Takhini-Kopper King made reference to delays occurring under this government's watch. I also want to note to the Premier and to all of his colleagues that the delay in hiring and filling deputy positions is having a bigger impact than I think they likely realize. I don't think that delay was made with bad intentions, but the longer there are people acting temporarily in roles, it does —

as the president of the Yukon Employees' Union rightly noted — delay some of the strategic decision. It delays some of the personnel decisions, and I would just note that I am not at this point going to be overly critical of that.

I do think a mistake was made in extending some of the acting appointments until the end of June. In the roles that I am aware of — deputy ministers — all of the people who are there are capable people. Whether the Premier chooses to appoint them or appoint someone new, I would just encourage him to recognize that while there is a delay in giving someone the Cabinet stamp of approval as deputy minister, it does have an impact on everything from ADM hiring to manager hiring. Six months is a long time in the world of government. Again, some sincere advice on that would be to simply move as quickly as you can and to recognize in the future — that the longer there is somebody in an acting role — having somebody there for a month or two doesn't make a big impact, but when it starts getting into a quarter of a year or half a year, it does slow down the operations of that department and it does lead to delays in what reaches ministers' desks as well. Ultimately, it has the effect of slowing down government from a policy perspective, from a legislative perspective and from a programming perspective, and it just creates consequential problems.

With that, I think that was all I wanted to mention. I will wrap up my remarks. Again, I just note very sincerely to every member of government — especially those in Cabinet — that your jobs are maybe not as much fun as you hoped they would be, but you need to recognize that people are depending on you. If you make mistakes, it is easy for others to criticize them, as we will criticize your mistakes and as you have criticized ours — some in the former capacity as the editor of the *Yukon News*.

When you are looking at it as minister, you need to sometimes step back from the moment and think about the fact that even if you are not ready to make a decision on a file, sometimes the consequences of that are worse. In cases like contracts, for example, if you don't leave enough flexibility within the overall target number of the budget in what you have set in your Management Board minutes, you can end up delaying a project by literally a month and a half because of a requirement to go back through the Management Board process on a project you have already tendered.

Your officials in Finance can give you some advice on that, but a piece of free advice would be to recognize that rather than setting your limit at the target cost, you're often better to give the minister — presumably in conversation with the Minister of Finance — the ability to come in within the estimate range rather than fixing it at the target cost. I've had that experience myself and the example of six weeks is not one pulled out of the air, but it does impact people who are depending on the job, who then wait a month and a half while they don't have that opportunity.

That's all of the free advice I'm going to hand out today and all of the criticism. I will wrap up my remarks, noting that I do think the motion has been weakened, but urging the government to recognize that when we step out of this

Chamber, you have to keep in mind that there are people who are depending on all of us.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Mr. Speaker, for the member opposite from Watson Lake — she opened her remarks talking about the sorts of projects around water and waste water as not being glamorous. While I know what she is saying, I stood in this House and described myself as a dishwasher with the Department of Community Services and so I'm not looking for glamour. I'm happy that we're here to try to work on these issues.

I would also like to acknowledge and thank the Official Opposition House Leader. He made some very complimentary remarks to the Department of Community Services and civil servants in general and I appreciate that. I share his comments and I thank him for making them here.

I'm going to talk about a couple things that we care about here. Maybe before I get there, I appreciate that we have this motion before us. I support that it's amended. I don't quite understand how we could put in place a motion that tells us we have to meet a deadline that has passed. I don't know what that looks like and it is confusing to me, but I think all of us in this House are seeking to try to ensure that we get in place a system that is going to give our construction industry a lot of lead time. That is exactly what we all want and I appreciate that we're all there on the same page. We care about our construction industry. They do deserve our recognition and our support. I think we also care about the projects that we're discussing. Most of them that have been raised today are from under this group called the clean water and waste-water fund, so I will rise to speak briefly about that.

We care about having safe drinking water in our communities and we care that we are managing our waste water in an environmentally responsible way. We need to do this and it's very important. I think that when we talk about timing — and I appreciate the member opposite's latter remarks talking about timing — we have to be cognizant not only of decisions that might be delayed but also about rushing them. It is a fine balance.

I did not hear my colleague from the Minister of Highways and Public Works state that there would never be any contracts that come in overpriced. That's not what I heard at all. I heard that we were going to work to try to design the system so as to minimize the risks of that happening.

It's the ability to identify errors and to address them that we're trying to work on, and the ability to have a system in place that would lead to fewer of those mistakes ahead of time. Again, it feels to me that all of us here in this House agree that there are things that can and should be done around procurement that will improve that situation.

I appreciate that on June 22 last year there was an announcement about clean water and waste-water funds. I committed earlier — I think it was in Question Period — and I commit again to coming back to all members of this House to give them an update on the status of those projects. I don't believe that deadlines that were set then were the deadlines

that we had set. I believe it's our responsibility, as we enter into this, to work diligently on our infrastructure projects.

I'm not able, for the members opposite, to give you an exact update on each and every one of those projects, but I commit to doing that, and I re-commit to doing that. What I will say is that, when we look at the year over time, we will have more infrastructure spending than we have had in past years. I think that's coming — or more capital spending, in any case. That's largely due to infrastructure investments.

I do think we are building on the work that the previous government started. I recognize that when we talk about projects of this nature, you don't want to stop them after you've invested quite a bit, because it's wasteful. We recognize the design work that had gone in place, and the announcements that came on June 22, and we are working with the departments to move forward on those projects.

I will also say that, while there are always changes that arise, there has been no partisan move to try to change the direction of the clean water and waste-water fund, as it was identified. We appreciate the work that came in place. The thing I want to try to address, though, is that, although the amended motion now puts a deadline of March 2018, it in no way means that we are not working diligently to get contracts out as soon as possible. What I'm trying to say to the members opposite is that there have been some delays that were necessary because the election was later than most people anticipated, so there were several things around the budget that we had to deal with as we entered. That in itself will not have delayed anything around the clean water and waste-water fund. I know of only one project and I stand to be corrected — I will get that information and share it, but I know of only one project under the clean water and waste-water fund that saw a delay of the type that was referred to by the Member for Lake Laberge, where we had to push it back. I would note that the project was already dealing with regulatory requirements that weren't yet forthcoming. I don't see that the delay within Management Board would have delayed anything around that project.

I will work with members opposite to try to provide information in a timely manner. I appreciate that we are working together in this House to try to find a procurement system that will work for all of our contractors.

We care about our contractors and we are working for and with them. Thank you for the opportunity to speak on this amended motion.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Certainly today we've had an opportunity today to cover a tremendous amount of items and points on this topic and I appreciate the fact that it's the Member for Pelly-Nisutlin who has brought this forward. He has always been a champion on this particular item. He's someone I've gone to in this role and even before taking on this role. I believe he and his brother, who was an MLA in this House, have always been champions for their communities and for local contracting. Certainly I believe that even in the past, the community of Teslin has had some challenges with

the way tenders were being rolled out by the previous government. I don't want to belabour the items of the past.

I would like to say it's certainly a breath of fresh air having the MLA for Takhini-Kopper King back here today and I appreciate her points, but to build some context I think it's important that we talk about some items and what we're really trying to do here. I understand that there has been a delay in a few items and certainly, as the Opposition House Leader had mentioned, there has been some good work done in the past under his guidance.

First, I think I'll just talk about the communities and Teslin and the interim Leader of the Official Opposition. We've had an opportunity to work together already. I have reached out to him and he has reached out to me to try to make sure that money stays in Yukon communities. I will always have that door open for advice from him because I respect his time in the contracting industry and his success.

If you look at what transpired in Teslin and you look at how the First Nation, in conjunction with the municipality, using the model of a federal non-profit, I believe — I could be wrong on some points, but I think that was essentially what was structured — they did that because they were frustrated. They were frustrated with company after company coming in to their community and not having sticky dollars. Sticky dollars essentially are — and we've talked about it a bit in our platform — dollars of real impact. Essentially those are government funds or private sector funds, and when they stay in these very important communities in the Yukon, you get a multiplier effect — so you may have a dollar turn into a multiple of three. That's kind of what we look at in the Yukon. So whether it's Teslin or Champagne or Faro, that's what happens.

So there's nobody really better to put this forward as being a champion for that community, to be fair, and I want to have a straight conversation here to finish off this debate today. We have to talk about how there are some real challenges — real challenges — and not every community has the capacity to form these community corporations or the great relationships that exist in Teslin. As the House Leader said, take an opportunity, sit down with individuals who also know and work through these items. I've done that before.

I certainly in my previous role as executive director of Champagne and Aishihik First Nations — and I share this in a positive manner — we sat down, the interim leader and also the MLA for Kluane and I, about the projects that the member had talked about that were rolling into Haines Junction. We felt that we — the First Nation and also people in that community — wanted to know what are our opportunities? There are millions of dollars coming into this community. How are we going to have an opportunity? So "I have a backhoe" or "I have a dump truck" or "I have a fuel distribution" — how are we going to figure out how to do this? They met and we had good conversations, but the real challenge was that I don't think we ever really got under the system that was in place. I don't think we really got to a place where we saw those sticky dollars.

The Member for Kluane could correct me, but when we go out and see these projects from last year, how many people in Haines Junction have opportunities? Essentially what we're trying to do here is a big move. As the former Minister of Highways and Public Works understands, it's a big ship — trying to move it.

There are certainly some items that are already out to tender. Many items are out to tender, but there are some things that we have to correct and still roll out, but certainly let's talk. There have been some pretty profound statements made today, such as about people not being able to pay their mortgage and people not being able to put food on the table. Once again, I hear you, and I am not going to argue that point, but certainly the way the tenders are going out this year does not differ from what we have seen for 14 years.

Now, you can challenge us on the fact that not every seasonal tender has been delivered, and we do have to get that right — you are right. I agree with that and I will work with my colleague to make sure that we do that. Certainly, most contractors, unless they are new to the community, have been living this for 14 years — over and over. I agree with the House Leader, I do. He is right. There is great work that has been done. Some of my constituents were part of that process. They said the exact same thing to me, which was, "Please make sure you respect the work that has been completed. Use that work and make sure you implement it in an effective and appropriate manner." We are really trying to get to the same point here — we are — every one of us. It is really about making sure that we keep this money in the Yukon and we keep these opportunities here in the Yukon.

As the member Leader of the Official Opposition stated in his opening dialogue — he said he knows what it's like to have to leave. I might have misunderstood, but I think it was more about leaving the territory to go to work and having to come back because of these contracting situations. I would never refer to a family — refer to your son.

Our goal is to make sure he doesn't — I don't want anybody to leave Teslin. I want people working in Teslin. I don't want people leaving to go to Fort McMurray, and I am serious about that. Every one of us is serious about that. I want the people — your kids, your grandchildren, my kids, my grandchildren — I want them all working here. That is why we are trying to get this thing right, and we are trying to do it now. We have drawn a line in the sand and are saying, look, we are going to make some tough decisions. Everybody in this room knows that — whether from their time here or outside of here — this is difficult to do.

The Member for Watson Lake touched upon a few items and she talked about Watson Lake. I have to say, I wish she was here to share this with her — but I love Watson Lake. I had my summer vacation in Watson Lake last year. I do love the Sign Post Forest and I like the waterslide at Lucky Lake with my kids after a bite at A Little Taste of Home — actually breakfast and dinner.

What saddens me is that she talked about the infrastructure deficit in Watson. What I have seen over the last number of years is, that shouldn't be. It's not because you

have a representative or an existing MLA from your riding that your riding should be treated differently. This is 15 years of representation in Watson Lake from a previous, previous premier, and also her representation. We're going to make a commitment here that we're not going to leave Watson Lake by the wayside. We're going to make sure that we deliver on it. I'm excited — she's going to keep my feet to the fire when it comes to economic development, and I'm really looking forward to talking to her. She's going to challenge me on those items.

There has been great work done and, when it comes to the work that my colleague has done, when it has to do with working with stakeholders — that's part of it. You have to get it right with the stakeholders. The stakeholders aren't coming in to meet with us and saying, "I can't believe that all tenders are not out by this point in time." What they're saying is that we have to get it right. We have to get it right, once and for all.

They're excited about what's coming. They're excited about the continued announcements. They're excited about the direction the economy is going in, and they see that this real move toward reconciliation, in turn, provides investor confidence and, in turn, that will lead to opportunities for them.

Like I said, I'm not going to try to stand here and take on the glory for other people's hard work, but I'll give you facts. It's announcement after announcement. I look at companies, like today, that are great local employers — certainly companies that continue to hire Yukoners as much as they can — one of them being Capstone. Today, I think probably everybody in the Legislature has seen that, and I congratulate them. Any time you hear good news like that, it makes us all smile, and that just leads to continued time for Yukoners to work. I think the announcement of today was something like 2020 — another continuation. We had an opportunity to an extension in the first couple of weeks that we were here, but Mr. Light announced that today and that's good news.

I'm encouraged. Part of my mandate letter states that I have an obligation to work with large industrial projects to provide opportunities to Yukoners. I have been encouraged by our conversations with Goldcorp. They still have a regulatory regime to go through, but even as of last week when we met with them, their focus is to make sure that they provide opportunities for Yukoners.

It's not just focusing on the procurement process in government. The Member for Lake Laberge is absolutely correct. We need to change the — he actually said that, but I think he was referring to the fact that there's a big government spend that a lot of us rely on out there, and that the private sector relies on, and we need to have more private sector money here. We have to. We just can't continue to rely on things the way they are.

So Goldcorp is committed to that. There's also JDS. Not to use an abbreviation, but I'm just saying that because I think it's named after the owner, Jeff Stibbard. They are committed on all their projects to making sure.

That's the kind of dialogue — I'm happy we're having that dialogue with Goldcorp and JDS, and BMC is no different. It was also going through the regulatory regime and that's another potential \$350 million or \$400 million spend. Of course, the cap ex — meaning the capital build. The initial build before you go to production in these resource sectors is truly a time when you can see some real sticky dollars in communities. Then their commitments, whether it be with their Kaska partners or their Northern Tutchone partners — we're excited about it. I think Victoria Gold — and the House Leader has watched that process. How far they have moved ahead didn't happen since we've been here. That was done under the guidance of the previous minister.

When I look at this, we have to think about 15 years of this process and that's really what contractors are talking about. It was said over there — I want to finish the day off on a nice tone, but we're talking about legal and court cases. I'm looking outside, and when I got to work today, there certainly weren't a bunch of yellow Caterpillar machines on the front lawn. Yes, we are going to have some sticky times, and if anybody is going to be the target, I am the target to start this off as the House Leader. The one thing I can say that I will take credit for is that probably some of these legal disputes that are going on — some big numbers. I don't know if you had any in the billions, but I have read the paper and I have one looking to be in the billions. The dispute resolution piece that was touched on — and I'm looking for it and that's your area of expertise, and I certainly am not going to speak to that, but I would rather not be in court and I would certainly rather be working things out at a table.

As the House Leader said — you're right. When you mentioned it, you said we did talk about the fast track and, if you noticed, I got up and I said to my colleague, "Please get that done", because you're right, you got me on the record there and I know you will remind me if we don't get that done — and probably over and over again.

This is about going back to this and I thank you for the leeway you have given me, because it's really about — as we said, we have all had some flexibility today — focusing on the motion and it's focusing on the motion as amended. It goes back to — we can't do things. The original motion was to roll them out — not to be aggressive on my comments or to try to be conflictual, but it was roll them out now. We're not rolling them out now. Things have been done in a way and it didn't work. It did not work, so we're going to make a decision to try to fix them. I'm not saying that my friends across the way wouldn't have fixed them. I'm not saying that. If they had the opportunity, they may have fixed them. They did some good work at the eleventh hour and now our responsibility is to fix it.

The motion — if we're looking from a purely legislative standpoint — to focus on the language that's in front of me and then, with the addition of the amendment, what we're really talking about is, first and foremost: Do we rush it? No, we amend it to say "next year".

Please, with all due respect, the reason we amended this motion is because we can't roll things out the way they are. I

have had the chance to know everybody across the way over the years and I know they want what's best, so I don't know how decisions were made previously. I don't know. Maybe it wasn't them but there were decisions that were made. Those decisions, as they were rushed, certainly led to some very, very difficult times. We can dialogue about this, but this is serious. When you're spending big amounts of dollars — I won't get into exact details. When you build the largest capital project in Yukon history with government funds and you roll it out — and you certainly don't identify it when you begin the election process — and then you get elected as the government and then you roll this thing out — massive, massive. Like I said to the contractors — and we've had opportunity after opportunity. I sat with the contractors during the election campaign and also they came and sat with us at the Cabinet offices — chambers, development corporations. We've had good opportunities to meet with multiple people, but certainly when we talk about it —

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Okay. We do know that there are different ways to do it. We're taking that time now to get it right. If we don't have it right, and we're sitting here this time next year, then we're open to that discussion, but certainly at this time, give us the leeway to deal with this history of 15 years of contracts that really could have impacted Yukoners in a much, much better way.

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

Mr. Hassard: It has been a very interesting afternoon. Honestly, I didn't anticipate this motion taking up this much of the day, but in a sense I'm very happy that it has. I believe there was some very valuable debate today. There was a lot said on both sides — some of which I agree with and some of which I don't agree with, but that's obviously one of the great things about the democratic process in the democratic country that we live in. I'm happy to have seen that.

There are a few things I would like to clarify or make note of, maybe. The first is that the amended motion — yes, it is still a very important motion. I think that it's vitally important to contractors of the Yukon to have contracts out by — March 18, I believe, was the date that the minister used for next year. That's great. I'm happy to see that. You know, I'm sure that Yukon contractors will be happy to hear that too.

One thing that I have to disagree on with the Minister of Highways and Public Works was that the number of days — 143 or 168 — is really irrelevant. The fact of the matter is that, personally, I believe it was time enough to see more of these contracts coming out on the tender management system. I don't believe that the term "fast and loose" is appropriate at all. I believe that the department officials — both in Highways and Public Works, as well as Community Services — are more than competent enough to have done the homework they needed to do to ensure that these projects were properly vetted so that they could be put out on the timelines that they were initially slated for.

I'm not saying that every project had to be, because obviously a new government has their own priorities. They're going to take a bit of time and decide — oh well, maybe we don't feel that — you know, Teslin had a lot of money in the last couple of years, so we're going to hold that one and make sure we have enough so that we can put more money into Marsh Lake or Tagish. That's entirely the government's prerogative, and I don't begrudge anyone that.

I think the statement that the Minister of Highways and Public Works made that contractors weren't expecting to see seasonally dependent contracts get out on time this season — I thought that was a very odd remark. I have spoken to a lot of contractors, as I continually do, and I certainly haven't found one yet who said, "Gee, we're not surprised at all; we weren't expecting any work this spring." That concerns me to a certain degree.

Another remark the Minister of Highways and Public Works made was that no one knows better than he the importance of those seasonal jobs' wages. I think that's quite a statement for a fellow who is getting a paycheck every two weeks, 12 months of the year, currently. I think that would be a better statement for someone who is actually living that life currently, than someone who is here getting a very good wage, I believe, and gets to stay warm 12 months of the year. We don't have to go and work outside under a D9 that doesn't have an electric motor on it.

Another comment I think that the Minister of Highways and Public Works made was that he was very proud of the fact that this government, over the past six months, has put out \$72.9 million worth of contracts. I certainly hope that doesn't mean that we'll have a total of \$146 million worth of contracts this year, because that's over \$100 million less than last year and while — I'm getting my finger wagging here — I'm just simply stating that I hope that isn't the case because, whether we — the previous government — can be criticized for not doing our due diligence before tendering those contracts, the fact remains that Yukon contractors and the Yukon in general survives on that approximately \$250-million-per-year worth of contracts. I would be very disturbed, I guess, if this government came along and only did \$150-million worth of contracts. Most of you can probably appreciate that. I just want to be on record recognizing that fact.

The Minister of Community Services made mention of the fact that the original motion had stated that they tendered contracts no later than March 31 of each year, saying that you can't do something that's impossible because that date has come and gone. I can appreciate that, but the rest of the motion talked about immediately getting jobs out on the tender management system, so it's potato/potahto, I guess. It's important that we look at the entire motion and not just a small portion of the motion.

As I said before, I believe the motion still has validity. I am willing to vote in favour of this motion as it is. I obviously wish that it hadn't been amended the way it was, but that's the joy of being on this side of the House and not on that side of the House. We're quickly learning that.

I understand the purpose of the amendment and appreciate that. At the same time, I would just again like to thank everyone for their words today. I think there was a lot of wisdom in a lot of those words. We're not going to ever all agree on everything in here. As I said, that's the great thing about democracy.

Thank you very much for your time and I look forward to voting on this motion.

Speaker: Are you prepared for the question on the motion, as amended?

Some Hon. Member: Division.

Division

Speaker: Division has been called.

Bells

Speaker: Mr. Clerk, please poll the House.

Hon. Mr. Silver: Agree.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Agree.

Hon. Ms. Frost: Agree.

Mr. Gallina: Agree.

Mr. Adel: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Agree.

Mr. Hutton: Agree.

Mr. Hassard: Agree.

Mr. Kent: Agree.

Mr. Cathers: Agree.

Mr. Istchenko: Agree.

Ms. Hanson: Agree.

Clerk: Mr. Speaker, the results are 14 yea, nil nay.

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

Motion No. 6, as amended, agreed to

Motion No. 9

Clerk: Motion No. 9, standing in the name of Mr. Kent.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to resume negotiations with the Government of Canada in order to negotiate an exemption for Yukon from the carbon tax.

Mr. Kent: It is my pleasure to rise today to speak to this motion that I tabled, I believe, on Monday of this week. Obviously the carbon tax is something that has been on the minds of many Yukoners, going back to last fall's election. For me, it was the issue that came up at most doorsteps, for sure — whether they were on the side of the Yukon Party and us looking for an exemption — and, of course, I heard from those supporting the Liberals and the New Democrats, as well as the Green Party, about them being in favour of a carbon tax.

Some good discussions started well before the election, but came to a head during the election for me in Copperbelt South — and I'm sure for many of my colleagues on this side of the floor and perhaps the other side of the floor as well. I'm not sure of the discussions. I know I spoke about it with the Member for Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes when he perhaps mistakenly stopped by my house. It was great to see him anyway. It was a nice opportunity to catch up with him at our house in New Constabulary out in his beautiful riding of Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes. We're very close neighbours and I appreciate the opportunity to work with him in this House as neighbouring ridings, as neighbouring MLAs, and work with him on other things that are important to people who live in his riding as well as my riding.

That said, Mr. Speaker, I'm going to take my time here today — and perhaps if we end up debating this motion again at a future time — to talk about a few things. Obviously, this tax has dominated Question Period, not only today but for the first two days. Over those first few days, we heard some assertions from the Premier during Question Period about our stance on the carbon tax and what position we took as government, as well as during the last election. Given the fact that I have a little bit more time during private members' debate, I'll take the opportunity to correct the record and correct some of the assertions that the Premier made with respect to our position, and especially when it comes to what happened in Vancouver with the Vancouver declaration and following through to the early fall meetings of the environment ministers in Montreal.

Obviously the northern premiers had a stance against carbon pricing. As well, the previous Minister of Community Services, who was attending those environment ministers meetings on behalf of the Minister of Environment at the time — the Member for Kluane — had some success in getting some language agreed to there that gave us an optimistic approach that there would be an exemption.

The carbon tax is a tax that many Yukoners are nervous about in spite of the pledges from the Yukon Liberal government that it is going to be revenue neutral. I will certainly get into detail on what my feelings are with that and what the definition of that would be. We heard one of the Liberal candidates during last fall's campaign talk about the carbon tax, I believe, being a redistribution of wealth, which is very concerning to me, especially since it will hit people in rural Yukon and in the Whitehorse periphery an awful lot harder than it will people within the core of Whitehorse or at least with access to transit that many people in my riding and other ridings around the territory don't have.

I believe that the carbon tax will be very hard on our mining sector. I believe that the carbon tax will be very hard on our tourism sector — as well as potentially the government coffers — when it comes to projects that are being delivered. Highway construction projects, for instance, are very fuel-reliant for those heavy construction machines. I believe they have fuel protection within the tender documents that they have, so when this carbon tax is implemented in 2018, what is that going to do to the cost of doing business for the

government? What is that going to do to the amount of bang for the buck that the Yukon government will be able to do? Perhaps they won't be able to deliver as many projects as they had hoped to over the course of a year, given the fact that they will be paying an additional levy on the fuel that supports the construction of those projects.

I and others on this side of the House asked questions during Question Period about how this will affect the tourism industry. Our visitor industry is very dependent on either people flying or driving to the territory. One of our main competitors — I am not sure which member across the way — I am assuming it was the Premier who spoke during Question Period — that this tax will be levied in neighbouring jurisdictions, but it won't be levied in one of our closest neighbours — the State of Alaska — which we compete with on a regular basis for tourist dollars, for visitors. That is something that I hope to explore during this debate on the carbon tax and us seeking an exemption with members opposite when they have an opportunity to respond.

The industry that I am most familiar with, given my background as the previous minister as well as some of the careers I had in private life before coming back into politics — and I guess being Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources about 16 years ago or so under the previous Liberal government at the time — kind of gives me some unique insights into that industry and what it takes to be successful.

We were very fortunate to have weathered this last storm in the mining industry, and we weathered it well. Not everybody, obviously, had success during the downturn in the markets, but we worked hard and we worked hard with the industry partners to make sure that the Yukon remained relevant, that the Yukon remained in conversations in places like: Toronto; Denver; Beaver Creek, Colorado; Vancouver; New York; and the other major capital markets. That was a lot of hard work that we put in, and I applaud the minister for some of the recent announcements that have been made for the mining industry.

Bringing the majors in is great. At the last PDAC that I attended as minister, which would have been in 2016, we met with representatives — had lunch I think it was — with representatives of one of the major companies that is now active here on the exploration side. We were just having a casual conversation and they asked me what some of the fears I had about the industry in the Yukon, or what were some of the gaps. It was either bookend at the time for me. It was that the prospectors were in trouble. They were having trouble optioning their projects. They're the guys who go out there and do the initial work and bang on the rocks. Obviously some of the class 1 notification stuff was top of mind for them at the time and remains that way. I'm sure the minister has heard that from representatives of the prospecting industry.

I ran into one of them this morning. I think perhaps he was coming out of a meeting with the minister, and he stopped down to say hello. He's a good friend, so we had a good conversation about the class 1 and how that was playing out for them, but that's for another day. I'm sure we'll get into those discussions at a future time.

The other thing that I mentioned at that luncheon to the representative of Agnico Eagle — that's who we were meeting with at the time and who have now taken a further stake in some of Shawn Ryan's property south of Dawson City — was the lack of majors that we had here at the time. We were fortunate that within a couple months of that PDAC to have Goldcorp come to town, so to speak, and purchase Kaminak and their flagship property, the Coffee Creek property. I think that, hopefully, started a trend, and we've seen that build over the past while. There are great headlines in tonight's paper. I think the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources referenced that with Capstone and Minto mine extending the mine life. I didn't get a chance to read the article, but I understand it could be perhaps as long as 2022, maybe longer.

But again, how will the carbon tax affect this industry, which is very fuel-dependent, and very intensive when it comes to the machinery that it operates on mine sites for those that are off-grid? What is this going to mean for diesel generation or liquefied natural gas, if that's what they choose to use to generate? What will the carbon tax mean for them? I'll be interested to hear from members opposite how it will be revenue neutral for them or what their plans are to have it revenue neutral for them.

I will say it is our most important mining industry because it's always constant, they're always there. They're always on the creeks. When I was minister with the Liberals 15 years ago and gold was about \$250 or \$260 an ounce, the placer miners were still on the creeks and ever-optimistic, and nobody could have been happier for them to see the price of gold rebound as it did throughout the decade to some of the historic highs in 2011-12 and where it is right now. It's great — but again, a very fuel-intensive industry. Most of those projects and most of those mines are off the grid, so they're using fuel to generate their power. They're using fuel to power their equipment.

I wouldn't want to speak for them, but I would say it's obviously one of the top two — perhaps the top expense that they have on an annual basis, depending on where they are and who they are. So again, this tax that the Liberals have signed onto is certainly going to affect them and their ability.

I heard from individual placer miners during the campaign, as well as the Klondike Placer Miners' Association and others, that they are very concerned about a carbon tax and what it might mean for this industry.

Hopefully as other members get a chance to speak and, as I mentioned, we get a chance to hear what initial plans the government has to ensure that it is revenue neutral for them, it's not just the direct cost — the costs at the pump is I guess what we were referring to yesterday — but what are some of the hidden costs? What is the freight company going to do on their food and the parts? What costs are going to go up for them there? What can they expect to see there?

What can they expect to see from the expediting companies? This is hard rock and placer. What type of freight rates and increases will they see there? Again, it's not only those direct costs but's the hidden costs. Of course we heard

that the federal government — and I have the numbers in my more formal remarks that I will get into — but the federal government will be charging GST on top of carbon tax, so I'm hopeful that perhaps the Minister of Finance can reach out to his colleagues in Ottawa and, if it's going to be revenue neutral and if they are not going to keep any of the revenue, then charging GST on top of the carbon tax certainly doesn't fit the bill when it comes to that commitment by the federal government.

It will be interesting to see how that money — or if we are able to ensure that those dollars are also returned to the Yukon and returned to the people who pay them. I think that's the most important part. I don't envy members opposite in coming up with this rebate plan that they have.

It is going to be tough, because the people who live in downtown Whitehorse are certainly going to be affected differently from the people who live in Copperbelt South or Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes or Pelly-Nisutlin — obviously — in Kluane, Laberge — members opposite. Each and every one of our constituents are going to be affected in a different manner. It is going to be tough for them to make sure that it is revenue neutral. This is also a tax on families.

For me, that is what I heard on the doorsteps and that was one of the biggest fears for the people who supported us in trying to seek an exemption to the tax, just given where we are. Obviously home heating fuel and gasoline for many of us, it is not discretionary. It is not something that we can afford to live without.

It is funny because, when I left Riverdale — I lived in Riverdale for over 40 years pretty much, and was able to walk or bike to work that way. After I dropped my son off at daycare, I would see the Speaker walking from his Riverdale home to our office, which is great. Those are opportunities that are afforded to you when you have those options — whether you want to walk, bike or drive to work. But for me, living at Marsh Lake, and for many of my constituents in Copperbelt South, that option does not exist on most days. It is a concern.

I had the means to invest in a smaller car and am doing my bit for the environment and the pocketbook, and it has helped. But there are many people who live in these rural areas who don't have the means to do something like that, to purchase a new vehicle. They're stuck with what they have and they can't afford that, so this tax on families is quite concerning. I don't want members to take that lightly — and I know they don't. I know members opposite probably heard the same things from people at the doorsteps.

When there is the non-discretionary aspect of this carbon tax — and like I said, it's going to be tough for the government to make sure that individual families get each dollar back, but that's a commitment that they made to revenue neutrality and we'll certainly hold them to account on that and get a sense for where they are. The kitchen table is as important as the board table for the bigger mining companies. These are decisions that people will have to make, especially people with families. What are the choices they are going to have to make if this adds significantly to their household

costs? Will it mean that their daughter can't take violin lessons, that their son can't take dance, or that family members can't get involved in sports? Yukoners' families have budgets to adhere to and it's something that certainly is concerning to them when they make their decisions.

For instance, I was on the Superior Propane website — of course, it's an Alberta company as well. We all know that the Alberta NDP government has implemented a carbon tax in that province. On the Superior Propane website, they mention that they will show full visibility on your bill — and I quote: "As always, Superior will give you full visibility of the government fees associated with the delivery of your propane. We will display the carbon price as a separate line item so that you can see how this initiative impacts you."

I apologize — I am not sure what the rate per tonne is in Alberta that they instituted in their first year, but the price of carbon has been set at 3.08 cents per litre for the year 2017 and will increase to 4.62 cents per litre in 2018. My understanding of the escalator that the federal government is talking about is starting out at \$10 per tonne, escalating \$10 per year to \$50 per tonne by the end of that five-year term. It will cost the average household — this is what Superior Propane says — I know the Leader of the Third Party wants to speak, and she will get her opportunity to speak. I just ask again for her indulgence in letting me speak to my motion, rather than talk off-mic, as she has done for the past five years and continues to do here today.

Mr. Speaker, it will cost the average household about \$60 to \$80 of their annual propane bill in 2017. I am not sure of the math. I will look forward to hearing from the Premier on some of the intricacies of this. Does that mean that \$50 per tonne is going to be a \$400-increase in their annual propane bill by the time this is fully implemented? It will be interesting to hear what members opposite have to say about that.

In this evening's *Whitehorse Star* article about the carbon tax and some of the back and forth that we've had in here, the Premier I think mentioned, in response in Question Period yesterday — or perhaps the day before — the Member for Pelly-Nisutlin talked about the \$10 per tonne, but I think Yukoners will want to know what that means at the pump. I guess overall the Yukon Department of Finance, it says in this article, estimates that the carbon tax will create roughly \$5 million in revenue in the Yukon during its first year. Again, making sure that we can get that revenue back into the hands of Yukoners and how they do it will certainly be the challenge for the Premier and his colleagues over there, and that will be one of the things to define his time in government, I believe, when voters go to the polls the next time around.

Speaker: Order, please. Thank you, Member for Copperbelt South.

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

Debate on Motion No. 9 accordingly adjourned

The House adjourned at 5:30 p.m.

The following sessional papers were tabled April 26, 2017:

34-2-9

Yukon Ombudsman 2016 Annual Report — Speaking up for fairness (Speaker Clarke)

34-2-10

Yukon Information and Privacy Commissioner 2016 Annual Report — Privacy is a public interest (Speaker Clarke)

34-2-11

Yukon Public Interest Disclosure Commissioner 2016 Annual Report — Education Protects Whistleblowers (Speaker Clarke)