

Whitehorse, Yukon
Wednesday, November 7, 2007 -- 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 remembrance of RCMP officers killed in the line of duty

Hon. Ms. Horne: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the government, I rise today to pay tribute to Constable Douglas Scott, the 20-year-old RCMP officer who was killed on Monday while answering the call of duty in Kimmirut, Nunavut, a small, isolated Inuit community of 425 people on Baffin Island.

I also rise to pay tribute to Constable Christopher Worden, who was similarly killed in the line of duty in Hay River, Northwest Territories, on October 6.

Mr. Speaker, it is incredibly important to pay tribute to all the RCMP officers who have been killed in the line of duty. It is also important to pay tribute to Constable Scott's family and the community of Kimmirut. The great respect this community has for the RCMP was evident when people of all ages and cultural backgrounds formed an impromptu human chain around the RCMP detachment shortly after the death of Constable Scott. This was a moving moment for me personally, as I could feel the emotion in these people expressing their great loss.

Mr. Speaker, I want to acknowledge the great efforts of the RCMP in policing the vast areas of the north. As the representative of Pelly-Nisutlin, which is home to small rural communities, just like the ones in the Northwest Territories and Nunavut, I understand the importance the RCMP has in ensuring the security and safety of small northern communities.

I understand that when a community member is lost or injured, the RCMP always respond, no matter what time of day or the conditions. I admire their bravery and courage. I admire their willingness to put themselves in harm's way for me, my family and my community. For this the RCMP deserves the respect and gratitude of the members of this House and all Yukoners.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to request that members of this House rise and take a moment in silence for Constables Doug Scott and Christopher Worden who gave their lives to ensure the safety, security and well-being of others.

Thank you. Gunilschish. Merci beaucoup.

Moment of silence observed

Mr. McRobb: On behalf of the Official Opposition, we, too, share the grief for the officer killed in the line of duty, with his family, friends and fellow colleagues.

Just for the record, Mr. Speaker, the tribute given by the Justice minister should have been on behalf of all parties, not just the government side.

Mr. Hardy: I second the words, both of the Minister of Justice as well as the House leader for the Official Opposition. Everybody in here, I believe, feels the pain and loss and the tragedy that has happened in a very short period of time in the north with regard to the RCMP officers, colleagues, friends, families, and how destructive and unbelievably disturbing it is for communities when they lose somebody that is serving them. The RCMP serve us daily, all through the communities and the centres throughout the north, and we must keep that foremost in our mind that they are here working on behalf of safety and justice for the people of the north.

Thank you.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Ms. Horne: I would like to acknowledge Staff Sergeant Tim Walton, who is with us today. Welcome.

Applause

Speaker: Are there any further introductions of visitors?

Are there any returns or documents for tabling?

Reports of committees.

Are there any petitions?

Are there any bills to be introduced?

Are there any notices of motion?

NOTICES OF MOTION

Mr. Mitchell: I give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to review its investment procedures to ensure it does not put tax payers' dollars at risk.

Mr. McRobb: I give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Public Accounts Committee to investigate the Government of Yukon's decision to risk \$36.5 million in asset-backed commercial paper, or ABCP.

Mr. Edzerza: I give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Yukon government to put an end to the practice of burning garbage in Yukon dumps and to adequately fund rural dumps to be able to employ full-time attendants because

(1) burning household garbage creates toxic pollutants;

(2) one of the toxins released in burning is TCDD, the most lethal human-made poison;

(3) toxins released by burning garbage cause cancer, birth defects, autism and respiratory problems; and

(4) burning garbage releases greenhouse gases that contribute to climate change.

Mr. Cardiff: I give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Yukon government to implement the recommendations in the final draft report of the education reform project which ask for a Yukon school nutrition program for every school to combat the growing obesity problem with Yukon children and specifically to:

- (1) eliminate junk food sales and promotions that require children to sell junk food;
- (2) involve community businesses in investing in nutritional and traditional foods in schools;
- (3) consult with and involve the Yukon food for learning project; and
- (4) establish nutritional curricula for all grades.

I will also file copies of a report from the Centre for Science in the Public Interest regarding this matter.

Mr. Hardy: I give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Yukon government to increase cigarette taxes by at least \$15.60 per carton and close the tobacco tax loophole that allows roll-your-own tobacco to be taxed at a lower rate, as recommended by the Canadian Cancer Society because

- (1) higher tobacco taxes are the most effective measure available to reducing smoking;
- (2) increasing tobacco taxes improves health and increases government revenue; and
- (3) the Yukon has one of the lowest tobacco taxes in Canada.

Speaker: Are there any further notices of motion? Is there a ministerial statement?

This then brings us to Question Period.

QUESTION PERIOD

Question re: Government investments

Mr. Mitchell: I'd like to follow up with the Finance minister on his \$36.5-million bond investment. In August of this year, the Government of Yukon made a \$36.5-million investment. Thirty days later, it was supposed to get its money back with interest. That did not happen. The investment is now in default.

The Premier has said repeatedly that the buck stops at his desk. In this case, perhaps we should say the \$36 million stops there.

Who decided to make this investment? Was it the Premier on his own or was the entire Cabinet involved in the decision?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: As we stated yesterday in this House -- and I'll repeat it for the member's benefit -- as long as the Yukon government has had a bank account it has been making investments. Frankly, our investments have produced a great deal of return to Yukoners.

The member is incorrect in suggesting there is a default in this matter. There's a situation that developed that extended the maturity date of said investment.

I want to point out to the member opposite, if he's interested in the facts, that the rating agency -- I know the member has made a lot of comments about taking risk -- reconfirmed on November 6, 2007 that this investment still has the highest rat-

ing available in Canada -- the same rating as Canada treasury bills have.

Mr. Mitchell: Well, Mr. Speaker, the minister didn't answer the question. The fact is that it is in default. There are many, many experts that will tell you that when a note is due, if you cannot pay it, that's default.

Mr. Speaker, Yukon taxpayers might be out as much as \$36 million because this Yukon Party government rolled the dice with money belonging to the Yukon taxpayers. People want to know who decided to make this risky investment. It's a simple question. I wonder why the Premier won't answer it, even though he has often said the buck stops at his desk. An economics professor from Simon Fraser University described it this way: "Your government took a bet, and the bet turned out poorly....They kind of got suckered in a little bit by the high yield without taking into account that, you know, this is a risky investment." He also said it could be years before the Yukon government finds out how much of its investment it will be able to recoup.

Again, who decided to make this investment? Was it the Premier on his own, or was the entire Cabinet involved in the decision?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: Well, Mr. Speaker, I am really pleased that the member has picked up from a report this morning from the Canadian broadcasting Liberal opposition, who have managed once again to dig up an expert -- an expert after the fact, I might add, Mr. Speaker.

Let's correct the record. The member has just stated that this was rolling the dice and was a risk. That is, in fact, incorrect. The CBC has been misinforming the public, by the way. It is not a high-yield investment. In fact, it's low risk with low rate of return. That's the point. The rating on this investment is the same as Canada treasury bills.

Mr. Mitchell: Well, that's interesting, Mr. Speaker. If the Premier has no good answer for his lack of fiduciary responsibility, he starts to blame the CBC and professors from Simon Fraser University.

Obviously, he's not worried about this high-risk investment, but the experts are saying the opposite. Edward Devlin, Canadian portfolio manager for the highly respected fund manager Pacific Investment Management Company, said, "The vast majority of about \$35 billion of this type of investment is backed by risky bets on credit default rates that are now so far underwater that investors could be looking at losses as high as 50 cents on the dollar." Just this week, Accountability Research Corporation said it would be appropriate to expect Canadian corporations with non-bank ABCP to write down 15 to 20 percent of the value of those investments.

Let's have some accountability. Who made the decision to make this investment -- the Premier or the whole Cabinet?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: Well, Mr. Speaker, the member brings up "blaming". I would suggest that the CBC and the so-called expert have misinformed the Yukon public.

Now, Mr. Speaker, first, the investments that the Yukon government has are not in any shape involved in the U.S. sub-prime markets. Second, the so-called expert, as reported this morning, said no other governments are involved. Let's get to

the facts of the matter. Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation -- \$257 million invested; Canada Post -- \$27 million; Greater Toronto Airports Authority -- \$249 million invested; NAV Canada, Government of Canada -- \$368 million invested; Ontario Financing Authority -- \$700 million invested. These are governments. Ontario Power Generation -- \$102.6 million invested. The Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan -- \$60 million invested; oh, Quebec -- \$137 million invested. Mr. Speaker, the member is incorrect, and the CBC is misinforming the public. That's not what the government is doing; the government is investing the taxpayers' money and getting a return.

Question re: Government investments

Mr. Mitchell: Well, Mr. Speaker, the government can't get any return; they can't get their investment back. There's an old expression, "Misery loves company." The Premier wants to surround himself with other unfortunate people who have made decisions, but Yukoners voted for this Premier and this is the Premier who is accountable in this House. This government has gambled the \$36.5 million of Yukoners' money -- that's not financially prudent. There were plenty of signs and warnings; they should have known better. This Yukon Party government should not have rolled the dice with the money entrusted to them. In May of this year, Edward Devlin, Canadian bond portfolio manager at Pacific Investment Management Company, or PIMCO, the world's largest bond manager, warned in the article I referred to of imprudent risk-taking in the ABCP -- asset-backed commercial paper -- market. We heard these warnings. Why did this government ignore them and take the risks? Will the Premier tell this House the details of this venture? Who has our money?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: Obviously the facts have little effect on the member opposite. The facts are: no risk, because the risk, as related to the rating, was the same as Canada treasury bills -- in other words, the highest rating available. That I do not call a risk. It is the best possible investment that can be made.

Secondly, we're not talking about a loss here at all. This member is actually standing on the floor of this House informing Yukoners that we've lost \$36.5 million. That is incorrect. We have merely extended a maturity date.

Furthermore, the member opposite is referring to Cabinet making a decision in this regard. How little regard does this member put in the hard-working officials in Finance who are charged with the responsibility of making these investments? To date, they have earned, in the last three years, \$16 million for Yukoners.

Mr. Mitchell: That's a sad demonstration of shucking -- shirking responsibility. We've "extended"? We've extended the maturity date? Did the Premier wake up one morning and say, "Let's extend the maturity date on these investments." No, the extension was by the noteholder who cannot repay it.

The people of the Yukon have the right to know where their \$36.5 million was invested. This minister obviously does not know where it is now, but where was it the last time he saw it?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: Speaking of shucking, maybe we should shuck some facts on the floor of the Legislature. The

facts are: the investment is in place. The facts are: the maturity date is extended. The facts are: reconfirm, November 6, 2007, still the highest rating available in the investment market. The facts are: on December 14 we will know the information on the maturity date going forward. The facts are: the Yukon government has not lost one nickel. The facts are: we've earned millions.

Mr. Mitchell: The facts are that you haven't earned anything if you lose your investment. The facts are that there is no liquidity in this market right now and that is why even the Auditor General, in the public accounts, indicates that we can't comment on the value of this investment at this point. We don't know if it's worth \$36 million, \$18 million, \$1 million, or one red cent, because there are no buyers. There is no liquidity.

The date the minister refers to is a date when financiers and bankers are going to get together in Montreal and try to report on next steps. It's not a date for a solution.

This investment is basically like a loan that is not being repaid. What Yukoners want to know and, more important, what they deserve to know is how these loans are collateralized and what iron-clad security was put up, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Mr. Fentie: First, the investment had the highest rating available. Second, it's backed by the banks -- if that helps the member opposite. Furthermore, Mr. Speaker, this member is suggesting that this government would actually invest Yukon taxpayers' money in a risk. The member is saying we would roll the dice. Hardly, Mr. Speaker.

Consider the facts. The money is invested and it is going to have a longer term maturity date. Secondly, the investments to date by those Finance officials have earned Yukoners some \$16 million. This is not a loss; this is a gain of revenue for the Yukon public of \$16 million. Case closed.

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Speaker: Order please. You have the floor, Leader of the Third Party, please.

Question re: Government investments

Mr. Hardy: This is a fun day today, isn't it?

The *Financial Administration Act* spells out the kind of securities that are acceptable for investing Yukon tax dollars. When that act was passed years ago, I am fairly sure the MLAs of the day didn't expect to see the Yukon government dabbling in investments that could be jeopardized by extreme volatility in the global credit markets. Those aren't my words, Mr. Speaker. They come from page 81 of the Finance minister's own public accounts document for 2006-07.

This summer, the Finance minister put \$36.5 million into two short-term investments that the banks have refused to pay back on time because of what is described as a sudden rapid exodus of investors in asset-backed commercial paper. With everything the minister knew in July -- and he knew it -- about the growing mortgage fiasco, not just in the U.S. but around the world in many areas, why would he invest in something so risky?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: That's the problem here; the risk was minimal -- zero by the way. The litmus test was met. This investment was backed by the banks, and this investment had the highest rating in the investment market. I don't know how else

to put this to the members opposite. These are the facts; that's why the investment was made; we support the officials who made that investment; we are earning money for Yukoners -- millions of dollars -- and we will continue to invest and earn money.

Mr. Hardy: This minister is so quick to quote from the Auditor General, yet when the Auditor General, in the public accounts, makes a comment like that, he dismisses it. Shame.

The minister has been doing his best to put a very happy face on this situation since CBC broke the story yesterday. Unfortunately, we've learned over the years not to take everything the minister says at face value. Several years ago, I referred to this minister's habit of rolling the dice. This is not a new term. Over five years ago, I said the same words about this minister's responsibility for taxpayers' money.

The NDP warned about gambling with others' money and the minister obviously hasn't listened. It was interesting to hear the economist on the radio this morning saying that Yukoners are capable of rolling their own dice. His message was pretty clear: high-yield investments also carry high risk. Everybody knows that.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, here's the question. Many other governments have stayed away from this form of high-risk investment. Why does the minister think it's okay for the Yukon government to be in this game?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: We're not in that game, Mr. Speaker. We're not in a high-risk investment. These are low-risk investments with a low rate of return; that's why the investment was made.

Speaking of rolling the dice, let's go back to previous governments in this territory and how they rolled the dice with Yukon's future. Where did it get us? Double-digit unemployment; paying overdraft charges to pay wages for government employees; an exodus of Yukoners. Where are we at today under this government's investment processes? \$16 million in earnings in three years; we have the lowest unemployment rate we've had historically in the Yukon; we have an increasing population; we have a growing economy; we have a better quality of life. We're not rolling the dice, we're building Yukon's future, brick by brick.

Mr. Hardy: Mr. Speaker, I guarantee that the money this government has wasted adds up to more than \$60 million, so they are going nowhere. Now the minister may be right about how everything will be fine and this will all work out in the end. On the other hand, he may be wrong and Yukon taxpayers could be out of pocket \$36.5 million.

It is one thing for individuals to gamble with their own money, it is something else altogether for the government to play Texas Hold'em with their taxpayers' dollars. Government investment decisions should not be made at a green felt table, Mr. Speaker. Regardless of how this current hand plays out, will the minister give his assurance that future government investments will be in proven and prudent securities that don't expose Yukon taxpayers to this type of risk?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: Well, Mr. Speaker, here we go -- the facts are obviously irrelevant to the member opposite. This is

not a high risk -- I repeat, it was a low risk. Mr. Speaker, it had the highest rating available in the market.

Second, the member says we're wasting money. Does the member say that \$112 million invested in education in the last fiscal year just closed is a waste of money? Does the member suggest that \$198 million in health and social services, providing those services to Yukoners in the last fiscal year, is a waste of money? Does the member suggest, as I go on, that the investments we've made in capital projects in this territory -- creating stimulus -- is a waste? Does the member suggest that an increase in government investment in this territory by \$400 million is a waste of money?

Mr. Speaker, not only are we investing money on the markets, we're investing money in Yukoners, we're building Yukon's future -- dollar by dollar, brick by brick. What has it done? A better quality of life for Yukoners. It is something the members opposite could not do; they don't know how to do it.

Question re: Government investments

Mr. Hardy: I'd like to follow up with the high-rolling Minister of Finance about how he invests Yukon's money. The minister was boasting this morning, just as he's boasting now, about how successful his investment strategy has been over the past few years. According to the minister, we're just raking it in, hand over fist. Well, let us be honest. A large percentage of that is coming from the federal government. Instead of hundreds of thousands of dollars, we're making millions in the money market, so he says.

The CEO of the Yukon Territory Inc. has a glowing bottom line for its shareholders. Will the minister tell us how much better the bottom line would be if he managed to eliminate the wasteful spending and unnecessary cost overruns that this government has incurred?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: Well, the last time I looked, the bottom line was in excess of \$135 million. That was the net financial position. I hope Yukoners recognize that, and I'm sure they do. And our accumulated surplus -- what this territory is worth under this government's watch -- is \$500 million plus.

I don't know what the member is talking about. Maybe the problem is arithmetic for the member.

Mr. Hardy: Well, perhaps the minister could use a reminder about some of the questionable spending on his watch: the Dawson City P3 bridge to nowhere for over \$3 million; and the multi-million-dollar rail study for his friends in Alaska -- where does it sit now? It's collecting dust on a shelf. The blank cheque for Watson Lake's phantom health facility; the 300-percent cost overrun on highway realignment near the Mount Sima cut-off; last year's overexpenditure in Community Services that contravened the *Financial Administration Act*; property management leases that the Auditor General says don't ensure Yukoners get value for their money. These are just a few examples.

As chief trustee of the public purse, what is the minister doing to eliminate questionable spending decisions and exercise better control over project costs?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: Well, that's quite a dissertation. Let me put it this way: five years of Yukon Party financial man-

agement, five unqualified audits. Does that help the member opposite?

Before this government came into power, Yukon was getting qualified audits. Five years of financial management by the Yukon Party government, five years of surpluses. Does that help the member opposite in how we're investing Yukoners' dollars?

We were, when we came into office, in a situation of overdraft. We were in a situation of a mere \$400 million to \$500 million available. Today, we have a budget in excess of \$900 million. How does the member equate that into a waste? It is helping Yukoners build a better quality of life. Case closed.

Mr. Hardy: Yes, the case really is closed over there. The minds are closed over there.

I would like to take the minister back to where this discussion started, with the question of how government investment decisions are made. The information that is coming out now suggests there isn't a clear policy on what this government will or won't invest in. The minister wants us to believe that everything is fine and the banks and other lenders will sort out the asset-based commercial paper issue -- it's just a matter of time. But the fact remains that even the minister doesn't know for sure. We might have to settle for a lower profit or we could even end up having to settle for 50 cents on the dollar or less from this high-yield, high-risk investment.

If he is so sure, if he is so confident, if this questionable investment ends up turning sour and Yukon taxpayers lose money, will the minister do the proper thing and resign his portfolio?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: I will not resign the portfolio, because Yukoners elected me and this government to lead this territory. The investments here have been made based on the litmus test. They are backed by the banks, and they have the highest rating in the marketplace. We are not going to resign anything, Mr. Speaker. In fact, we are going to continue leading this territory.

The member is talking about loss. This is not a loss. We are making money in the millions. Before we came into office, our investments were making a paltry \$300,000-and-some annually. They are suggesting that they invested with a different policy. No, it was the same policy, but limited financial management ability.

Today in the Yukon, we are making millions from our investments. That is the kind of financial management this party, this government, brings to the Yukon. It is working, and it is building a better future for all Yukoners. If they want to be part of it, it's their choice. They can remain part of the problem or they can become part of the solution. It's their choice.

Question re: State of the environment report

Mr. Elias: I have some questions for the Minister of Environment. In May of this year, I asked the minister several times about the release of the state of the environment report. The Yukon *Environment Act* requires a state of the environment report to be completed once every three years. In the five years the Yukon Party government has been in office, this report has never been released.

In May, the Premier didn't seem to be too worried about breaking the *Environment Act*, central to his own ministry. He called it a benign legality.

Can the minister provide Yukoners with an update, or is the Premier unwilling or just incapable of making this report public?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: As I said to the member opposite back then, when the report is ready and in a position ready for tabling, it will be done. This government is definitely ensuring that the state of the environment is in good shape.

This territory right now is second only to British Columbia in land base under protection and conservation. This territory is moving ahead with a climate change strategy. This territory, unlike other governments, is now actually modernizing our biophysical database. This territory has increased investments in the Department of Environment. The environment is in good shape: that's the state of Yukon's environment.

Mr. Elias: I challenge the Premier to stand up and look into that camera, to Yukoners, and provide the reasons why he's leaving Yukoners in the dark with regard to their environment. The state of the environment report provides early warning and an analysis of potential problems for the environment, and it allows the public to monitor progress toward the achievement of the objectives of the *Environment Act*.

We're living in a rapidly changing environment. When will the Premier produce the report and let Yukoners decide if their environment is in good hands?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: I will look into the camera for the member opposite, if it helps him.

We are working with Yukoners. Under this government's watch, Yukoners are not monitoring; they're actually working with the government in ensuring that the environment is being protected and that we are doing the appropriate things in managing this territory's affairs.

Let's look at another example: oil and gas dispositions in north Yukon and what happened there. The environment is important; therefore, the majority of the Turner wetlands have been alienated from oil and gas development.

Let's look at another example: in the member's home community, the first-ever announcement of an actual draft land use plan was made in Old Crow a mere two days ago. This is done with Yukoners. They're not monitoring; they're building a solid environmental management regime with this government here in this territory.

Question re: Porcupine caribou herd, hunting restrictions

Mr. Elias: Mr. Speaker, I have some questions for the Premier. Earlier this fall, the Premier visited Old Crow during his community tour. He made no mention of the fact that he was about to lift two important hunting restrictions on the Porcupine caribou herd. Safely back in Whitehorse a couple of days later, he made the public announcement that the 500-metre no-hunting corridor and the letting-the-leaders-pass regulations would not be enforced this year. This decision could have a long-term impact on the future of the herd, a resource that is the lifeblood of many of my constituents. Why did the

Premier not have the political courage to stand up in Old Crow and inform my constituents about this very important decision?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: Well, Mr. Speaker, the member opposite -- and it's unfortunate -- is a day late and a dollar short. It's really unfortunate that First Nations reached a disagreement on implementing those recommendations from the Porcupine Caribou Management Board. But the government acted as it should. Instead of trying to implement recommendations that First Nations have disagreed with, we are moving ahead with First Nations on a harvest management plan for the herd -- real conservation measures. That is our objective. That is what we're doing.

Mr. Elias: Well, Mr. Speaker, the fact is, conservation of this herd has been going on for thousands of years, and it's nice that the Premier has finally joined us. The Premier didn't have the political courage to deliver an unpopular decision to my constituents or even engage in a respectful discussion with the very people who know the caribou issue the best. He waited until he was safely back in Whitehorse before announcing the political decision -- a decision that strikes at the very way of life of my community. The Premier should have told the residents of Old Crow what he was planning to do first-hand, because it affects them the most. Will the Premier apologize for not informing my constituents when he had the chance to do so?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: Mr. Speaker, I'll apologize to the people of Old Crow on behalf of the member opposite for not recognizing the importance of a harvest management plan. That is what his First Nation is working with the government on in partnership. That is what other First Nations are working on, and we are proceeding with that whole initiative in conjunction with the Porcupine Caribou Management Board. We don't sit here and criticize First Nations. They disagreed with these recommendations. We stepped in and acted in a positive, constructive way and put together an initiative along with the board and First Nation governments on how to deal with conservation for the herd. That's exactly what's happening, and it has the commitment by the Vuntut Gwitchin and this government and the Tr'ondek Hwech'in and other First Nations involved. Mr. Speaker, what else can I tell the member opposite? We're moving ahead. The member is going backwards.

Mr. Elias: How can the Premier be so inadequate at a crucial time like this?

Shortly after the Premier made his unilateral decision, he was forced to have an emergency meeting with the chiefs from Dawson, Mayo and Old Crow. In that meeting, he was apologetic to the Chief of the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation, yet he refuses to apologize here today. Why is he so unwilling to offer a public apology to the people of Old Crow?

I am challenging the Premier right here, right now, to get on his feet, look into the camera and apologize for how he has treated my constituents.

Hon. Mr. Fentie: There is nothing to apologize for, unless the member takes issue with the harvest management plan for the herd itself.

Mr. Speaker, this initiative was something the Porcupine Caribou Management Board was working on long before this

member became interested in a harvest management plan for the herd itself.

That's what the government is doing. It is working on real conservation measures. That is important to the Vuntut Gwitchin people. That's important to the members of Na Cho Nyak Dun. That's important to the members of the Tr'ondek Hwech'in and transboundary First Nations. It is important to this government. We are taking real measures, real steps to ensure conservation of the herd. The member can join us, or the member can sit there with his colleagues and criticize the good things that are happening in the Yukon.

Question re: Social housing

Mr. Edzerza: The Minister of Health and Social Services has repeatedly announced that social assistance rates are finally undergoing an extensive review. We sincerely hope this will lead to a better, more humane system that improves living conditions for Yukoners who are not getting the full benefit of the current economic upturn.

What concrete steps is the minister taking to address the housing needs of clients of his department who are on social assistance?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: To answer the member's question, I thought it had been made perfectly clear that reviewing the social assistance rates includes all areas of the social assistance rates. The officials of the Department of Health and Social Services have engaged, over the past number of months, in what is the most comprehensive review of the Yukon social assistance program and the manner in which it supports people in getting into the work force that has ever been undertaken. In fact, we're taking a very different approach than previous governments in focusing on helping people get into the workforce, ensuring adequacy of rates while they are forced to rely on social assistance, and providing incentives to assist them in entering the workforce. That work is coming very close to completion and I look forward to an announcement as soon as Cabinet has reviewed and approved the recommendations.

Mr. Edzerza: Let the record state that the minister did not answer the question. Rent in Whitehorse averages \$700 a month. The maximum housing allowances under social assistance is \$390 a month for a one-bedroom suite. A nice, clean, one-bedroom apartment at \$390 a month simply does not exist. Recently we've seen entire city blocks of low-cost housing bulldozed to make room for high-priced condominiums. We've also seen at least one downtown hotel that housed many social assistance recipients over the years torn down for the same purpose.

Can the minister tell us how many social assistance recipients living in hotels have been displaced in the past year, and what has been done to find them suitable alternatives?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Both through my Department of Health and Social Services and through the work of Yukon Housing Corporation, the Yukon government and the Yukon Housing Corporation are taking the steps necessary to support people who are forced to rely on social housing and social assistance. That work is being done.

Again, I emphasize to the member opposite that this government is doing what no other government had the vision to

do. Through the hard work of officials in the Department of Health and Social Services, who have reviewed the Yukon's system and looked at best practices nationwide, the work that is being done right now is on developing the best system in the country, in terms of ensuring adequacy of rates for those forced to rely on social assistance and ensuring that the system assists people in entering the workforce and remaining there for the good of themselves and their families.

Mr. Edzerza: Well, it may be a hot housing market if you're a condo developer. If you're poor, if you're on social assistance in Whitehorse, you're feeling the squeeze. Winter is here, and there has been no meaningful action by this government to help those dealing with poverty.

Last year, the federal government announced a \$50-million program for affordable housing in the Yukon. About \$32.5 million went to First Nation governments. That leaves \$17.5 million in this government's hands, and so far we've heard nothing about how that money will be spent.

What is this government's \$18-million plan to address the housing needs of Yukon's most needy people? Or will they continue to fall into the wider cracks between rich and poor in our society?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: I have to rise to this occasion to speak to the number of housing developments that this government has been working on over the last number of years and recent months.

Yesterday, as minister responsible for the Women's Directorate, I had the opportunity to announce a new housing initiative that will work to address affordable and secure housing for those most in need. And I refer to lone-parent families headed by women, as well as their children.

I also refer to victims of violence. Mr. Speaker, our government has been working on a number of fronts in response to housing needs. We have been working to address housing needs for our seniors and for our elders. We have been working to address emergency housing for youth as the Minister of Health and Social Services just mentioned. The Women's Directorate and the Council of Yukon First Nations were also very successful in having recently received funds to conduct a feasibility study to undertake the most effective ways to address the hidden situation among homeless women in the Yukon.

Mr. Speaker, our government is working on a number of fronts, and there are a number of other initiatives that we will also be announcing here in due time.

Speaker: At this time I'm sure that Question Period has elapsed. We will now proceed to Orders of the Day.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

MOTIONS OTHER THAN GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

Motion No. 183

Clerk: Motion No. 183, standing in the name of Mr. Nordick.

Speaker: It is moved by the Member for Klondike

THAT this House urges the Government of Canada to give consideration to building in the Yukon a world-class, cutting-edge, Arctic research station that was announced in the Speech from the Throne on October 16, 2007, in conjunction with the Government of Yukon's establishment of a cold climate research centre of excellence for the north at Yukon College and its community campuses.

Mr. Nordick: Mr. Speaker, I'd like all Members of the Legislative Assembly to pause for a second and think about a cold climate research centre of excellence for the north based in the Yukon. During the election campaign of October 2006 -- just over a year ago -- we committed to implement a Yukon climate change strategy. That included a high-level vision, guiding principles and four of the following goals: enhance awareness and understanding of climate change impacts on Yukon's environment, people and the economy; reduce greenhouse gas emissions through efficiency improvements within the Yukon government programs in the short-term and additional measures related in infrastructure development in the long term; building Yukon environmental, social, and economic systems that are able to adapt to climate change impacts and are positioned to take advantage of opportunities presented by climate change; and support efforts to establish Yukon as a northern leader for applied climate change research and innovation.

This climate change strategy included the establishment of Yukon College as a climate change research centre of excellence for the north. This centre would address sustainability and rapidly changing climate through innovation, adaptation and mitigation measures. It would also make Yukon College, with its community campuses, a leader in climate change research and development. It would also find ways to mitigate damage to boreal forests such as by the spruce bark beetle and pine beetle infestation. It would also build a cold climate innovation cluster situated at Yukon College campuses to specialize in three general areas of cold climate technology: building construction and maintenance, municipal infrastructure, and geo-technical works -- increasing inventory monitoring, data collection and research on the impacts of climate change on the Porcupine caribou herd and other wildlife species such as moose, caribou, bears, Yukon and wood bison. We also promote the Old Crow campus of the Yukon College as an integral part of research on the Porcupine caribou herd to ensure local and traditional knowledge is utilized in strategies to lessen the impacts of climate change. It would include the Yukon Wildlife Preserve as an affiliate of the Yukon College centre of excellence in order to study the impacts of climate change on Yukon wildlife.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask where we are on this commitment. I would suggest also that we have come a very long way in just one year. The continued location of the Energy Solutions Centre and establishment of the Northern Climate Exchange at the college were the seeds for the growth for the climate change research centre of excellence envisioned in our platform. The Energy Solutions Centre exists to inform and

deliver federal and Yukon government programs relating to energy efficiency and renewable energy. The Northern Climate Exchange shares information and promotes understanding of the challenges and issues around climate change. These centres have existed for quite a number of years and form educational portions of our overall climate change strategy. The climate change research centre of excellence is a major component of this government's climate change strategy.

It is advancing at a favourable pace. Yukon College has formed a partnership with the University of Alberta to provide high-level northern climate research. Recently, another agreement was made with the University of Northern British Columbia to study the potential of offering a degree in environmental science locally.

Yukon College has set aside a site for the eventual construction of a building to house the climate change research centre. We believe the Yukon, and specifically Yukon College, is ideally located to become such a climate change research centre of excellence. The Yukon has all the facilities, transportation, communication and infrastructure available to provide excellent services to such a centre. We are within a short flying time from any of the northern sites where research may or should be done.

As stated earlier, the climate change research centre of excellence is a major component of the climate change strategy. It isn't the only one. Our government believes that many components are needed to create a complete climate change strategy.

At a climate change meeting with the federal ministers in February, the Premier stated, "I want to deliver the messages that, although we are pleased to see the federal government take action on climate change, their approach must also include the adaptation initiatives. Research and development related to climate change impacts and adaptation are an important part of adapting to climate change."

Mr. Speaker, it is also recognized that human activities have a significant impact on global climate change. One of the adaptation steps this government has taken to reduce its impact on climate is the acquisition of some hybrid cars, some smart cars and compact cars for the government's fleet vehicles.

Another step is the Yukon Housing Corporation providing information on healthy, energy-efficient designs and products for houses. The corporation provides information, grants, and interest-free loans for home repair, home enhancement repairs, as well as upgrading of older houses and the construction of new houses to green home standards.

The approval and construction of a power line from Carmacks to Pelly Crossing and ultimately to Stewart Crossing will remove the Minto mine, Pelly Crossing and other developments in that area from the need to purchase electricity with diesel generators. This will remove millions of tonnes of greenhouse gases from our atmosphere. The power line will enable us to improve our impacts on climate while at the same time improving the economy of the territory.

Mr. Speaker, we are experiencing the impacts of permafrost melting created by global warming. This is evident in such things as: the disappearance of water from a lake near Old Crow as discussed by our colleague from Vuntut Gwitchin;

satellite images of the greatly reduced masses of Arctic sea ice; the erosion of Herschel Island shores from high water levels and the large amounts of open water permitting more severe wave erosion. The recent discovery of a polar bear on the shore, well away from its usual hunting area on the Arctic ice is another example of climate change. The Porcupine caribou herd is not expected to cross the Dempster Highway this year as is its normal practice. All these incidents may make it worthwhile to use the Yukon College community campuses as a base for climate change research.

The damage experienced in the water and sewage infrastructure and the recreation centre in my community may, in part, be a result of the permafrost changes. It may be worthwhile to establish the Dawson campus of Yukon College as a research base for the study and adaptation needed in building construction and maintenance of municipal infrastructure and geotechnical studies in a permafrost area.

Climate change is resulting in the Yukon and the Province of British Columbia experiencing devastation of millions of acres of forest by spruce bark and pine beetle infestation. Our government is calling on the federal government to declare these areas as natural disasters. If disaster funding is achieved, our government will be able to research and develop ways of preventing the spread of these insects and mitigating the damage, and develop ways to use the damaged wood. This would again improve the Yukon economy.

The discovery of ticks on the wild elk population and their potential spread to indigenous moose and caribou species is very likely another example of climate change. In combating this pest, the excellent staff, including the wildlife biologist and veterinarians within the Environment department, may benefit from the establishment of the Yukon Wildlife Preserve as a research and adaptation centre.

Mr. Speaker, these are just a few of the ways in which the Yukon and its communities can benefit from the innovation and adaptation and mitigation measures within a climate change research centre of excellence at Yukon College.

Mr. Speaker, the government supports the Yukon Cold Climate Innovation Centre and the motion to continue to urge the Government of Canada to support the innovation centre in the Yukon. The Yukon government has identified this initiative as a priority and, in partnership with the private sector, First Nations and Yukon College, has been working on the development of the Yukon Cold Climate Innovation Centre for the past three years.

This initiative supports the creation of a research centre where cold climate technologies could be researched. The support of a cold climate research innovation centre has been identified as part of Economic Development's long-term plan, *Pathways to Prosperity*. Starting to develop such a research centre now will position Yukon as a leader in cold climate technology and research.

Living and working in the north requires specialized technologies designed with the realities of our climate and geographical location in mind. The Yukon cold climate innovation cluster has identified three early areas of opportunity: (1) build-

ing construction and maintenance; (2) municipal infrastructure; and (3) geotechnical works.

This could lead to the development in the construction, mining, and oil and gas industries. The Yukon Cold Climate Innovation Centre will be developed around the commercialization of cold climate research. The Yukon government recognizes that the commercialization of cold climate technologies will provide important economic opportunities for Yukoners as well as diversifying the Yukon economy.

The Yukon government has provided over \$244,000 to date to partner with industry and First Nations in developing the Yukon Cold Climate Innovation Centre. The Yukon government continues to work with our partners, including the Government of Canada and stakeholders, to support this project.

While the Yukon cold climate innovation cluster is still in its early stages, it has already begun to attract a number of early start projects that will raise the profile prior to the construction of a permanent facility.

The Yukon cold climate innovation cluster has been working to raise the profile of innovation centres through the use of targeted meetings with potential industry partners and anchor tenants. A memorandum of understanding has been signed by the Yukon cold climate innovation cluster, Yukon College, and the University of Alberta. This memorandum of understanding will allow the three partners to access researchers and share in opportunities that a research centre of this kind will bring.

The Government of Canada, through the targeted investment program, provided an additional \$200,000 in support. The funding for the project in fiscal year 2006-07 consisted of \$200,000 from INAC's targeted investment program and \$153,888 from Economic Development. Private sector funding partners have not yet been identified.

The Yukon cold climate innovation cluster has applied for \$202,000 from the strategic industries development fund for fiscal year 2007-08. INAC's targeted investment program has allocated \$400,000 in fiscal year 2007-08 and 2008-09 for the project development phase.

The northern strategy has approved funding of \$755,900. The Yukon cold climate innovation cluster will give the Yukon government the opportunity to invite the leaders in cold climate research to the Yukon by establishing a research centre here in the Yukon to give Yukoners access to new technologies and opportunities.

This is an important project toward developing the research in the Yukon and the positioning of Yukon as a research centre. The Yukon government will continue to support this project through the Department of Economic Development and in partnership with the Government of Canada.

I'd like to thank all members for supporting this motion. I'll repeat the motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Canada to give due consideration to building in Yukon the world-class, cutting-edge Arctic research station that was announced in the Speech from the Throne on October 16, 2007, in conjunction with the Government of Yukon's establishment of a cold cli-

mate research centre of excellence for the north at Yukon College and its community campuses.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Inverarity: I would like to thank the House for allowing me to get up to speak on this particular topic today, and to the motion.

In doing my research, I'm reminded that, when I was reading the Yukon Party's platform in the last year during the election, they had asked us to imagine tomorrow, where a Yukon would be renowned for taking initial steps to address climate change with its own climate change research centre of excellence for the north. It cited a number of bullets -- I'm only going to read two here today.

The first was to establish at Yukon College the climate change research centre of excellence for the north and building a cold climate innovation cluster situated at the Whitehorse campus that would specialize in the three areas that were mentioned here today by my colleague on the other side.

I think it's important to recognize that there is some confusion in the statements, and perhaps this is a good opportunity to try to clarify these two statements and exactly what they represent. The motion that was brought forward to the House today states that the government wants the world-class, cutting-edge Arctic research station that was announced in the federal Speech from the Throne on October 16 and that we're encouraged to support this. In his response to the Speech from the Throne, and just as a point of clarification, Prime Minister Harper's commitment to Arctic research includes initiating the first-ever comprehensive mapping of Canada's Arctic seabed as well as the establishment of a world-class research station to be located in the Arctic itself. There is no suggestion or indication that Whitehorse or the Yukon would actually be considered for the location of the research station. I think it's important for us to perhaps not have too wishful thinking in this particular case, particularly as it might relate to the Yukon College campus. One would think that if it was going to be in the Arctic and have relevance to the mapping, it would probably be closer to the Arctic Circle than to the 60th parallel, but I think it's encouraging that we should continue to try to get the Canadian government to look at the Yukon as a location for this research -- the land-based component of it.

I'd like to indicate that Michael Byers, an Arctic sovereignty expert, said that the Prime Minister's comments sounded like a land-based station is envisioned in spite of the fact that Canada's most useful research platform is the icebreaker *Amundsen*. He went on further to say to the Canadian Press that he would have been more excited if the Prime Minister had announced that we were going to build a purpose-built research icebreaker.

It sounds to me like the Prime Minister isn't really sure how this is going to be developed. That's an opportunity for us. We can go about encouraging these people, including the government and federal politicians, to look at the Yukon, to perhaps not only put the land-based research centre -- if in fact that's what's going to happen -- but perhaps also consider our Arctic Ocean as a location for the sea-based research centre

where perhaps we could encourage them to build an icebreaker that is specific to the type of research that we're looking for.

It seems like their emphasis in this particular regard is going to be focused initially on mapping the ocean seabed. This brings up a discussion that was raised earlier in the House about the actual boundaries of the Yukon in the north as it leaves the land base and goes toward the Arctic Circle. I know we have discussions with our friends in Alaska. I think we should also address our neighbours in the Northwest Territories as to identifying this boundary as it leaves the north and clarifying what are in fact our territorial waters -- much like Newfoundland in eastern Canada.

There is no mention of an Arctic research station in the Yukon's Speech from the Throne that was given on November 23, 2006. The Yukon Speech from the Throne does mention a cold climate innovation cluster. The cluster is supposedly going to focus on the commercialization of cold climate technologies. This is an economic development initiative that is focused on growing a very specific industry for the Yukon, and we're not opposed to this. I've commented in past times in the House that I think that this innovation cluster is unique and can be focused on specific areas.

There are a number of others around the world, and I know that the Airbus was tested in Iqaluit. They don't actually have a research centre, but there is one in Iceland. The point here that I'm trying to make, Mr. Speaker, is that we need to find our niche within this industry -- the cold climate technology clustering. If we can identify some uniqueness, then it should go forward. We do take offence, though, that the Yukon Party government is misleading the public by associating the cold climate innovation cluster initiative with the Environment portfolio. This is an economic development initiative, and it should be viewed that way. I feel that tying it together with the environment portfolio is perhaps incorrect.

Three-quarters of a million dollars of the taxpayers' money has been allocated to this innovation centre. I have to ask: where are the industry leaders who are going to support this initiative, this development? I see that we have the Yukon government on board; I see we have the University of Alberta on board, but I don't see industry stepping up to the plate at this point. Maybe that should tell us something. They should be lining up to get in on this great deal, but they are not. Which begs the question: why are the experts and the key industry players ignoring us? I think we need to have a better plan if we're going to attract this industry to the Yukon, and I think it can be a great thing.

For the record, the cold climate innovation cluster is not an environmental initiative focused on addressing the effects of global warming. The motion also states that the Arctic research station is to be built in conjunction with the Yukon government's establishment of the climate change research centre. One thing we're not exactly sure about yet is whether the centre of excellence is in fact going to be established or not. It has been promised in the most recent Yukon Party newsletters. The only progress on this issue is the purchase of a smart car and the memorandum of understanding signed with the University of Alberta. These are both steps in the right direction. I think

that if we're serious about this issue, we should be moving forward more; we should be taking more of an initiative and we should be certainly putting more money into these particular causes.

I think the member opposite from Klondike has made mention of a number of issues, of grizzly bears on Melville Island and other commercial fishing in the north. It's possible, for example, through climate change, if in fact the Arctic does warm up to the point where we could see an Arctic fishing industry where perhaps cod stocks or -- I wouldn't think whaling necessarily -- I'm not sure if I stand well on that -- I don't think whales should be harvested -- but certainly other types of fish that exist in the Arctic would be very important to a Yukon fishing industry and maybe we will have to adapt to that type of climate change initiative.

On that note, Mr. Speaker, I think I'll wind up my remarks by thanking the Member for Klondike for bringing this important issue to light. I think we should do everything we can to encourage the federal government to develop not only industries, but research on climate change. Perhaps there are individual companies that might relocate for the cold climate cluster that's also being developed. I caution the government to continue to keep these as separate entities and look at them as they are and not necessarily as environment based.

Hon. Mr. Rouble: It is my honour and pleasure to rise in the Assembly today to comment on and debate the motion brought forward by the Member for Klondike. I would like to thank him for bringing this important motion forward and for leading off in the debate and discussion today. I trust that as our discussion goes on we will have an opportunity to clear up some of the issues and misunderstandings of the Member for Porter Creek South.

There were some assumptions in his presentation that I think need a little bit of clarification. I trust we will be able to shed some light on that today and provide him with more information and background on it so that he and the other members of the Assembly can support this motion, which I think is a very good and strong motion, one calling on the territorial government to continue its strong relationship with the Government of Canada and to work with the Government of Canada on this very important issue. It's an issue that is not only of importance to Yukoners, but to Canadians and indeed the whole planet.

We have had many debates and many comments in this Assembly about the issue of climate change and the impacts we have seen here in our community and throughout the territory. Human beings everywhere on the planet are recognizing that the climate is changing, weather patterns are changing -- indeed, that is why it is called "climate change" rather than the previous term of "global warming". We are now seeing other impacts of different types of weather -- hurricanes or rain or different weather patterns affecting the entire planet.

We are in a situation now where we have to recognize how our planet is changing. If we are to continue to be a species that will live on this planet, we will have to make steps to mitigate some of these changes and to adapt to our new reality.

I think the discussions could go on and on and on about the causes behind this, but what we do have to address is the reality of the situation that's before us -- that being climate change.

We in the north appreciate this because we see it, and we are seeing it much faster than other areas on the planet. The north and the other extreme, the far south, are areas on our planet that are significantly impacted and are often bellwethers or bell-ringers for impending problems.

So I think setting up this cutting-edge research station will provide a tremendous amount of benefit, not only to Yukoners -- to learn how to adapt to and mitigate the new situation -- but it will also provide significant benefit to all Canadians and indeed everyone on the planet.

In the last election campaign, the Yukon Party committed to establishing a climate change research centre of excellence. This was to address sustainability in a rapidly changing climate through innovation, adaptation and mitigation measures. We committed to make Yukon College, with its community campuses, a leader in climate change research and development and we committed to find ways to mitigate damage to the boreal forest, such as the spruce bark beetle and pine beetle infestation issues. Indeed, Mr. Speaker, we are recognizing an issue that needs to be addressed and making a commitment to do that.

It was very welcoming to hear that the new federal government has recognized the importance and the value of the north. For far too long under previous governments, the north was barely even given a second thought. It was very refreshing to see that in the speech, "Strong Leadership. A Better Canada.", presented by our Prime Minister a couple of short weeks ago, they put such importance on the north, as they plan to continue building a better Canada.

The Prime Minister went on to say that the Arctic is an essential part of Canada's history. If I can quote from the document, the Prime Minister stated: "But the North needs new attention. New opportunities are emerging across the Arctic, and new challenges from other shores. Our Government will bring forward an integrated northern strategy focused on strengthening Canada's sovereignty, protecting our environmental heritage, promoting economic and social development, and improving and devolving governance, so that northerners have a greater control over their destinies."

Mr. Speaker, I am sure that you will agree, as will all northerners, that our hearts were warmed when we heard the Prime Minister of Canada make these statements and bring to the national forefront these issues of importance to the rest of Canada.

In the Prime Minister's speech, he went on to commit -- I will quote from the document here: "Our government will build a world-class Arctic research station that will be on the cutting edge of Arctic issues, including environmental science and resource development. This station will be built by Canadians, in Canada's Arctic, and it will be there to serve the world."

I am glad that we are having this debate here now in this Assembly when the federal government is at the development stage of implementing this vision. I would like this Assembly to unanimously support this motion and call for the federal

government to build this world-class Arctic research station here in the Yukon.

I think that is consistent with what has been proposed by this government and the plans with Yukon College and with the Council of Yukon First Nations and our other partners in the climate change research centre of excellence.

We have a wonderful opportunity here where everything is aligning. There is a recognition of the need. There is a recognition of the north by the federal government. There is a commitment by the federal government to work on a project like this, and there is a commitment by this government to work on a project like this.

We have a wonderful situation where all the stars and partners are aligning in this, and we need to seize that. All members should send a strong message to the federal government that this research station should be built here in the Yukon.

There are some tremendous reasons and significant strategic advantages for why this research centre should be built here in the Yukon. Number one, we are in an area where we are significantly impacted. We see the impacts on a day-to-day basis, season by season. We have a tremendous amount of infrastructure in our territory. Let's start with the transportation infrastructure.

Researchers and people from Outside can travel to the Yukon via road or our international airport, where we also have affordable flights to communities such as Edmonton, Calgary and Vancouver. The Yukon is a very accessible part of the north with our strong road networks, including the Dempster Highway, which is a transportation route that is maintained year-round and which crosses the Arctic Circle. The Dempster Highway is an all-season route that provides access all the way to the northern shores. That's an important attribute that should be considered.

We also have a tremendous telecommunications and Internet infrastructure here in the north. Yukoners are very proud of the fact that better than 97 percent of all Yukoners have access to high-speed Internet in their home. That's a tremendous rate of connectivity, one that is the envy of the rest of Canada, if not the rest of the world.

With the connectivity we have, we also have video conferencing facilities throughout the territory, plus our significant investment in the cellular telephone networks. Indeed, practically anywhere you are in the Yukon, you can be in touch. That's a tremendous attribute and asset to research coming up here.

Another significant advantage is the human resources here in the territory. I'm sure that we could all go on and on at length about the significant talent that we have here in the territory from our scientists, from our engineers, from our researchers, from our outfitters, from our guides, from our people with traditional knowledge. The Yukon has a host of people who are capable of working in these industries -- indeed that have been working in these industries -- and it will be a tremendous asset and advantage to visiting researchers who would make use of this station or centre.

Mr. Speaker, one of our significant assets that we have is the Yukon College and its network of community campuses. We have a very well-respected college that has relationships with universities across Canada. Recently we've heard of renewed agreements and partnerships with the University of Alberta, with the University of Northern British Columbia, and also with other partners in education, like the University of Regina and Royal Roads University. The list of partnerships that Yukon College has established is very extensive.

As well, Yukon College is home to the Northern Research Institute, which is a tremendous research facility now that looks into many areas of importance to all Yukoners, including physical science, social science and environmental science. We have these assets that we can build upon.

Also, Mr. Speaker, in the Northern Research Institute we already have the existence of the Northern Climate Exchange, which is already a very well-respected authority on climate change and information regarding the north. We also have significant industry involvement, and this is demonstrated by the companies that we have working here in the north and that are making a contribution to our society.

I should clarify for the Member for Porter Creek South some of the issues regarding the climate change research centre of excellence and the cold climate innovation cluster.

The territorial government is pursuing Yukon climate change initiatives on two fronts.

The member opposite appears to giggle at that.

We are going to continue our efforts to develop a Yukon climate change centre of excellence. As well, we are working very strongly and diligently with our partners in the cold climate innovation cluster. One area has a research focus, and the other side has a practical focus. In very simple terms, Mr. Speaker, one might be looking at the pure science with the other looking at the applied science. I hope that clarifies the issue for the member opposite.

Indeed, they're both looking at the weather and the climate and how things are changing not only in the north but throughout the planet and how we can adapt to it. The cold climate innovation cluster will work with commercial entities as to how best they can change their technology and develop new technologies to adapt and to mitigate and, as well, the research centre of excellence will look at working with researchers from across the planet who are looking into these issues and help to coordinate their efforts in a way in which we can make sure that we as Yukoners are aware of what research is going on in the territory, to provide a clearinghouse for information so that when researchers come here they leave their information, their conclusions and their findings behind so that Yukoners can benefit and also, Mr. Speaker, how we can assist them in doing their work so that they get the best possible results, the best possible information.

Mr. Speaker, this is an important point that we're at now. The federal government is at the development stage of implementing their vision of the north. The territorial government has made a commitment in this area, and we are indeed committed to working with all our partners in this area. We would certainly appreciate working with the federal government in

helping them to accomplish their vision and address the needs of climate change and the needs that are important in the north.

I would like to thank the Member for Klondike for bringing forward this very important motion, and I'd like all members to support it. If we send a message of how unified we are, how we all recognize the importance of this issue, that we all recognize that this is a very important tool we as Yukoners and as Canadians can use to address this issue, we should unanimously support this motion, send that message to Ottawa and then work with Ottawa to build a world-class research station here in our community.

Thank you very much for your attention to the debate today, Mr. Speaker. I would ask all members to rise and show their support for this motion.

Mr. Elias: I would also like to thank the Member for Klondike for bringing this motion forward, as the Yukon is one of the first jurisdictions around the globe to receive the impacts of global warming. There is much environmental collapse happening in so many places at once here in the Yukon, and it's obvious something has gone grievously wrong. A multi-generation commitment is required to fix the problem on a global scale.

Northern ecosystems have tolerance limits and we are seeing those limits exceeded too often and the state of our environment suffers. Around the world, flooding and drought account for more than half the world's deaths from natural disaster alone.

If we talk about climate change impacts, war and genocide are the ghastly offspring of drought, as shrinking supplies of water and fertile land breed violence around the world. In Australia, they've been experiencing a five-year drought; in China's Sichuan region, they're experiencing the worst drought in more than a century, and 17,000 people are out of drinking water.

Florida's Lake Okeechobee is the second largest water body in America. It fell to a record low level in 2007.

Climate change isn't science fiction; it's science fact, and it's already damaging the planet at a pace that's alarming. Suddenly and unexpectedly, the crisis is upon us when a planet fights a fever caused by humans.

The United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change issued a report on the state of planetary warming on February 2007. Warming of the climate system is unequivocal, the report said. It also said that it is with a very high confidence that human activities since 1750 have played a significant role by overloading the atmosphere with carbon dioxide. Bill Chameides, a scientist with Environmental Defence in the United States says, "Things are happening a lot faster than anyone has predicted." Ruth Curry, of the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution says the last 12 months have been alarming.

Is it too late to reverse the changes global warming has brought? That's not clear. Reducing our emissions output, year to year, is hard enough. Getting it low enough so that the atmosphere can heal itself is going to be a multi-generational commitment like I said. Terry Chapin, an ecology professor at the University of Fairbanks says, "Ecosystems are usually able

to maintain themselves, but eventually they get pushed to the limit of tolerance."

With regard to polar ice, polar ice is so reflective that 90 percent of the sunlight that strikes it simply bounces back into space, taking much of the energy with it. Ocean water does the opposite; it absorbs 90 percent of the energy it receives. The more energy the ocean gets with the result, each cubic mile of ice that melts, vanishes faster than the mile that preceded it.

Melting permafrost, which is partially decayed frozen organic matter, rich in carbon, located in the circumpolar Arctic, in Alaska, Canada and Siberia -- the soil is warming and decomposing, releasing gases that turn into methane and carbon dioxide. How much carbon is socked away in Arctic soils? The National Center for Atmospheric Research in Boulder, Colorado suggests that 200 gigatons to 800 gigatons are locked up in these Arctic soils. The total human carbon output is only seven gigatons a year. In December 2005, researchers with Britain's National Oceanography Centre reported that the Gulf Stream has slowed 30 percent since 1957, and it appears Arctic and Greenland melt water is overwhelming the natural cycle of the Gulf Stream.

The big worry is that the whole climate of Europe is going to change because of this. The United Kingdom and Alaska are on the same latitude and the only reason why people can live in the United Kingdom versus Alaska is because of a properly functioning Gulf Stream.

Just some more information with regard to climate change and the state of the temperatures on our planet: 1.44 degrees Fahrenheit will be the total temperature rise in the 20th century -- it is a warming trend -- and 1.98 degrees Fahrenheit to 11.52 degrees Fahrenheit is the total temperature rise anticipated in the 21st century if present trends continue.

Eleven of the past 12 years rank as the warmest in modern history. With regard to sea levels, four inches to eight inches will be the global sea-level rise in the 20th century. The global sea levels are anticipated to rise 19 inches to 37 inches in the 21st century if present trends continue. If the entire Greenland ice sheet were to melt, sea levels are anticipated to rise 23 feet.

Carbon dioxide levels -- less than one percent. This is the percentage by which greenhouse gases rose in the 10,000 years before the Industrial Revolution; 33 percent is the percentage by which greenhouse gases have risen since the Industrial Revolution began; 650,000 years ago was the last time atmospheric carbon dioxide was at today's levels; three million tonnes of annual carbon dioxide emissions are released by a typical 500-megawatt coal-fired power plant; 19 pounds is the amount of carbon dioxide produced by burning one gallon of gas in a typical car; the annual worldwide human emissions of carbon dioxide are 32 billion tonnes.

Well, this is a big problem and big problems demand big answers. What are some of the possible solutions? Reduce pollution, generate cleaner energy and adapt to an ever warming climate. Wind is a form of alternative energy. Giant wind farms that harness the power of moving air are producing more and more of the world's power supply.

Geothermal -- the fiery core of the planet is a major source of energy, and this depends on how deep we have to drill to

find it -- to get that geothermal energy. As oil and gas prices steadily rise, geothermal increasingly becomes a bargain investment. If they can do this in Iceland, we can do this here at home.

Light energy -- solar power -- draws energy from the warming sunlight through solar panels placed on the land and roofs of our communities.

I'd like to talk about adaptation and mitigation for a moment. When climate scientists use the word "adaptation", they are referring to actions intended to safeguard a person, community, business or country against the effects of climate change. Its complement is "mitigation". They must go hand in hand. Mitigation is any measure that will reduce greenhouse gas emissions, such as drawing power from a wind turbine, geothermal technology or the sun, rather than a diesel- or coal-fired power plant. Mitigation simply cuts emissions, and adaptation is living with the changes in the environment, society and the economy, which global warming will continue to generate.

In closing, I'd like to talk a bit about the social ramifications as they pertain to this phenomenon of global warming and climate change. When we speak of climate change, the next generation must be a large component of our scope of thought. We must be cognizant of their needs in order to avoid social despair and the feeling that there is no hope to avoid a catastrophe in the next generation.

In our work in monitoring the effects that climate change and global warming are having on our infrastructure, our natural ecosystems and our health, we must also consider what effect these changes are having on us in a social context. What I mean by this is that we must ask ourselves this: how is the relationship between the social effects of climate change and our ability to make decisions affecting our society?

Hon. Mr. Hart: Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of this motion. It's my great pleasure to do so, and I would like to thank the Member for Klondike for presenting this motion to the House.

As Minister of Community Services, I am highly aware of the effects of major natural events such as flooding and wildfires have on our environment as well as the change in climate that has occurred over the last 10 years. In fact, Mr. Speaker, worldwide weather patterns have been substantially altered during the last 10 years. There have been several cases where hurricanes and tsunamis -- which were once rare or maybe only happened once in 20 or 30 years -- are now happening on a regular basis. There is flooding in Africa, and we have droughts in other areas, in Asia, that normally don't experience that phenomenon. We have flooding in Mexico, for example -- another issue that, again, we have not seen the likes of in the last 20 or 30 years. Mr. Speaker, there is big weather change throughout the world.

We're getting winds in places -- in Canada, for example, it would be tornados. Until the last four or five years, they've never been a real threat in Canada. But in western Canada, over the last four or five years, we've had at least a dozen or so tornados in our western provinces, creating great damage to small

communities and posing great risk to members of the community.

So there is great change in the weather throughout the world. As I stated earlier, I can easily recall here, with regard to the recent flooding we had this past summer in the Southern Lakes area, water levels being higher than anyone had ever seen before -- a record high for as long as we've ever maintained records. The water level at Marsh Lake broke all previous high water levels. Because of the high water level, mitigation efforts were put into place and Protective Services established a mobile command centre at the Marsh Lake day use area for operations, information and coordinating purposes. From this location, local planning directed how mitigation and bagging efforts were coordinated to assist all those who were victims of the flooding in that particular area.

Mr. Speaker, this government led the way in assessing the situation, gathering resources and equipment needed to tackle the situation, and a coordinated approach to the emergency was taken, with a high priority being placed on personal safety, main infrastructure, outbuildings, and transportation routes.

Also, during this event no major physical harm occurred to any individual resulting from the flood. But, again, there was a vast array of flood damage throughout the region, depending on where one was located and depending upon which lake in the Southern Lakes area an individual had their private residence and/or recreation facility.

Mr. Speaker, this may be a sign of things to come for the Southern Lakes region. It may be something that will be the norm for the region. We are unsure. Again, based on what we have seen in the rest of the world with regard to weather patterns, this may become the norm in the Southern Lakes. It might not be. It may be the once-in-200-years that has been identified.

It could possibly be that way. But, again, it demonstrates that things are changing, and things are changing quickly, and we are witnessing the effects of climate change right here at home on a great basis.

A lot of scientific research indicates that things will continue to change. Scientists have indicated that the northern region of the planet is currently most affected by the current trend in climate change. Thus, there has recently been global research conducted in the north by many scientists throughout the world reviewing many of the situations happening, especially on the eastern Arctic side of Canada in the Nunavut and Northwest Territories areas, dealing with the ice floes, ice pack, the effect on fishing, as well as the effect on polar bears and other wildlife associated with northern living, and the impact it is having on the subsistence of the local Inuit, depending on the wildlife in the area.

Again, a great amount of impact has been seen on that global warming aspect from the northern regions, and it may be a sign of things to come. As my colleague from Old Crow had indicated, he and his constituents have seen a substantial amount of change in their region, especially over the last three or four years.

He also indicated that we are experiencing the thawing of the permafrost. One only has to take a drive from here to Bea-

ver Creek, especially in the area from Burwash Landing to Beaver Creek, and one will see a substantial amount of impact with respect to the warming process that has taken its toll on the Alaska Highway.

I might add, Mr. Speaker, that only a few short years ago that particular route was refinished and, when it was completed, it was very straight and very flat. As of today, in some cases near White River, there are craters that are being developed just outside of the actual Alaska Highway. It is because the ice has just melted and there is nothing to hold the soil up, and thus we have created little pot lakes along the side of the Alaska Highway. Again, this is a sign of things that are happening with regard to global warming.

Another impact, of course, is the increase in glacial melting. I think that we've all heard stories with regard to receding glaciers in Juneau and many of the glaciers throughout Canada. One only has to go into the Banff National Park, to the Glacier National Park, to see how far the glaciers have receded. Basically the glaciers have been galloping, Mr. Speaker, at a rate that is unheard of -- compared to their rate previous to 1959.

I can recall, Mr. Speaker, going to the Glacier National Park when I was about 12 or 13 years old and being able to visualize these glaciers fairly close to the road. Right now, it is a long ways away from the road. You have to go a long way to see the impact.

Rising sea levels in the Arctic is another impact. This especially can be seen on Herschel Island with that particular increase in water level. Prominent scientists also have predicted that the Northwest Passage will probably be passable by 2050, given today's rate of global warming.

As the Member for Porter Creek South indicated, the ice-breaker may be a very important aspect if we didn't have a clear water passageway. Then determining what are our borders with regard to the ocean will become very important. Thus it's incumbent upon Canada's federal government to ensure that the appropriate measures are taken now to assert our sovereignty over that particular region.

The evidence is in: the climate is changing. We need to know more. We need to know how things will change; we need to determine how we can mitigate the effects of the change and what is the best way to collect our research, how we can learn from others' research and combine it so we can mitigate the results of the current climate warming phase.

This motion calls for this House to urge the Government of Canada to build a cutting-edge Arctic research station here in the Yukon in conjunction with a cold climate centre of excellence for Yukon College. I believe the Yukon is the place to base an Arctic research station, whether it's close to Herschel Island or land based here in Whitehorse. We have the perfect opportunity to provide for this type of facility in the north.

As was stated by previous colleagues, we have an international airport here in Whitehorse; we can welcome scientists and researchers from practically any country east or west of the Yukon. If the international scientists land here in the Yukon, we have a road system that can take us right up to Inuvik and right to the Arctic Ocean, so we can work and collect data from that area.

Also, because the Dempster Highway is an appropriate access to the north -- even though we have to shut it down every once in awhile because of the high winds -- it's a very adequate system for developing and collecting research.

We have the capacity to host major events such as conferences and workshops where scientists can get together and share their knowledge. That's all available right here in Whitehorse -- much more so, Mr. Speaker, than it is in other jurisdictions in the north.

Yukon College is an excellent choice for a research centre of excellence. The centre would certainly attract more research to the Yukon, which would build on our current knowledge. The centre of excellence based in the Yukon would also ensure Yukoners get some benefit from northern research. Basically, if it's here, we will be looking at all the research done in the north and have access to that information to assist us.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all members of this House to support this motion that a research centre be based in the Yukon for the good of all Yukoners.

Thank you.

Hon. Mr. Fentie: Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the motion tabled by the Member for Klondike today. I think it's very timely and fitting that this motion be debated in this Assembly. Of course, the very concept that we're dealing with through the content of this motion is compatible with what is already proceeding and evolving, and that is the cold climate innovation cluster.

But let me, in my comments, attempt to put some shape to this overall initiative or concept. It is a commitment, obviously, by the government side to Yukoners in establishing what we could call the climate change research centre of excellence.

The first question that must be answered is: why do this? I think it's fair to say that there is growing evidence that Yukoners are witnessing the impacts of climate change, or the global phenomenon of climate change that is happening in the world today.

Indeed, the north may be warming faster than any other region on earth. I think some of the evidence of that is certainly before us, and many members have alluded to those examples.

There is also the issue of adaptation and the need to adapt to our changing environment due to this global phenomenon. Of course, these measures can diminish the ecological and socio-economic risks. I want to stress that: risks associated with climate change. Of course, adaptation efforts are indeed knowledge based and knowledge intensive.

In addition to climate change realities, economies are more dependent on the production, distribution and use of knowledge and innovations than ever before. The people in research activities within academic institutions are one of the most critical resources to a growing economy. In today's Yukon, that is exactly what we have.

Let's look at some general goals of a climate change research centre of excellence. This is to be an umbrella and/or service organization in order to focus research and talent on strategic challenges -- which is climate change; provide an interdisciplinary body to further develop research programs; at-

tract more research investment and activity to the Yukon; enhance the overall capacity of Yukon College; support the further development of Yukon-based research and expertise; provide for long-term support for innovation and commercialization; ensure Yukoners have access to and benefit from research; and increase the institutional, public and private benefits of research in the Yukon.

Of course this also will create the partnership that is necessary in a phased approach to develop First Nation government and college partnerships; vision and strategy; to acquire resources to develop programs and services; to expand and establish further accreditations and capacities within our college.

So, Mr. Speaker, I think this motion is clear in its objective and that it is to garner full support from this Assembly to send off to our federal or national government, who recently -- and I'm very encouraged by this -- stated clearly in the throne speech of October 16 of this year that their intention to focus on research in the north is indeed genuine. That is something that we have worked on over the past many months, and we're pleased that our federal government is listening and recognizes the importance of research in the north that will address this very critical and important issue to us all.

I would encourage all members to wholeheartedly support this motion as tabled by the Member for Klondike. It is timely as I said; it's an as important initiative for Yukon as there ever was, and we have a federal government who obviously appears to be receptive to this approach in the north.

Mr. Speaker, of course the government side will be forging ahead with this initiative, but it would certainly be beneficial to be addressing it with our federal government with this Assembly in unanimity. I think what I've heard to date leads me to believe that that is what we will be doing. I can assure members of the House that once we conclude these proceedings in this debate, the government will be actively pursuing our federal government in their process of investment and developing research initiatives in the north.

With that, I will turn it over to other members. Hopefully, we can move to a vote shortly, pass this motion and then conduct further business regarding this important initiative for the territory and the north. I think the Yukon is well-poised to be able to establish such a centre. We have the ability, the desire and the commitment to make it work.

Thank you.

Mr. Cardiff: It gives me great pleasure to be here today and to rise to speak to this motion. We believe this is a good initiative. I believe there are some questions that need to be answered. When you read what the Governor General said in the Speech from the Throne, I think some of the information from the federal government needs to be fleshed out a little bit. I'm still not totally clear on exactly what direction the federal government is going in, but the direct words from the throne speech were to build a world-class Arctic research station, and basically it was to address issues in the Arctic, including environmental science and resource development. I believe that's important.

There are also other issues of research -- about social development and the effects of climate change on people's health. I suppose that might fall under environmental science, but I would like to get more information on exactly what the federal government's vision for their Arctic research station is.

Here in the territory, we know there are a number of initiatives underway -- initiatives by the government, private sector and non-government sector. We heard the members on the other side talk about the Yukon cold climate innovation cluster at the college. I was actually in Watson Lake and had the opportunity at the Yukon Chamber of Commerce meeting to hear a presentation from Mr. Cameron regarding the work they are doing and how that is progressing. It is encouraging.

It is encouraging. As someone who worked in the construction industry, there are a lot of things that they are looking into that I can relate to, I guess, from working on buildings. There is a lot of technology and new ideas out there. There is a lot of research that needs to be done to improve the lives through new technology, whether it be through home construction or the way we deliver services -- you know, what works and what doesn't work in the north.

So, I think there is a tie-in or could be a tie-in. I think it's a matter of trying to see what it is that we are doing here in the north, here in the Yukon, around cold climate innovation or climate change research and how it would fit with what the federal government is proposing. That's why I'm saying we need to flesh out with them a little bit more what their intentions are. I hope that the government will do that, and I hope they will communicate that back to us here in the Legislature and to the public at large.

One of the other things mentioned today was the climate change research centre. I think it's important -- the Premier talks about adaptation. The world is changing and we all have to adapt to a changing world, whether it be the social structures or the environment. But we also need to ensure that we're learning from that research. When you do -- I think the Minister of Education called it -- the "pure science," getting out there and gathering knowledge, I think you have to turn that into the "applied science" at some point and learn from what you're discovering and make changes, not just adapt to what those changes are, but if you see something where you can make change, where you can improve the situation that's happening -- it's about reducing greenhouse gases.

It's about changing the way that we interact with our environment on a regular basis, on a daily basis. I think it's important that we take that science and turn it into something that we can use to benefit society -- whether it's to benefit the health of northerners, so that we live healthier, more fulfilled lives, or whether it provides benefits to the wildlife being affected by these changes. I think it's important that we try to make those changes and we don't just get lost in the idea that we have to change what it is that we do because the environment is changing. I think we need to change what we do so that the environment -- whether it is society, the wildlife, the land or the water -- isn't negatively affected. It is to our benefit and it's to the benefit of future generations.

While the Premier likes to talk about the whole idea of adaptation, I think we need to take that knowledge that we're gaining through this research -- whether it be the cold climate innovation cluster or the climate change research centre -- and use that to the benefit of the people who live here in the Yukon and across the north, and not just here in Canada but around the circumpolar north as well. I think it's important that we share that knowledge.

Another institution that would probably play a role in the gathering and dissemination of some of that research would be the University of the Arctic, I believe.

I'd like to recognize, as well, the work being done at the Northern Climate ExChange that has, I believe, been situated at Yukon College in the Northern Research Institute for about the last seven years -- the work they do around climate change and looking at the effects of climate change, looking at how it affects us here in the territory, providing public education and an exchange of information, working in partnerships with governments and First Nation governments and others in the community.

The Arctic is a very large area. I think of the Arctic as being north of the Arctic Circle, and we live in the north. Some people would say we live in the north because we're north of 60. There are people who live in areas that aren't north of the 60th parallel in Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, British Columbia, Quebec and Labrador and believe they live in the north. So as to where exactly you draw the line. When it comes to Arctic research, I guess, the line for me would be the Arctic Circle. It's still a large area. I believe it is 20 percent of Canada's land mass that is north of the tree line, and it's a very large area and it is going to be impacted by climate change.

So as to the actual location, it almost sounds to me -- and that's why we have to go back to the federal government to see what their vision is -- that there needs to be a number of different approaches to this. There is also a lot of water involved in the equation when it comes to Arctic research and I believe that was mentioned earlier: the melting sea ice, the research that is being done on icebreakers, the mapping of the seabed in the Arctic and the effect that it has on the wildlife, fish and whales in the Arctic Ocean.

So, as to where it is located, I believe that, given the work that is being done here in the Yukon, it would be beneficial if it was located here in the Yukon -- whether it is located in Whitehorse or some other geographic location. I don't know which would be best, but I would like to see, at the very least, a portion of that Arctic research station located here in the Yukon.

It takes me back to listening to something I heard the other day: we actually have a rich history of doing research here. Think back to the agriculture research station that was located in Haines Junction. There is a rich history of research that has been done here in the Yukon.

So the motion, once again, to urge the Government of Canada to give consideration to building this cutting-edge Arctic research station here in the Yukon, is something that we would whole heartedly support here in the third party.

I think there is still some work to be done to find out about exactly what the federal government's vision is for this and to encourage them to look at what it is we've been doing here in the Yukon -- the history of research and the progress we're making. Hopefully, they will take that to heart.

The other thing is that we also have a pretty good history. I know, through my former involvement with Yukon College, that there was a pan-northern relationship among the colleges across the north that, from that partnership and the partnership around the circumpolar north, developed into the University of the Arctic. I think we need to be aware of that relationship.

We all need to work in cooperation across the north to see that this research is gathered across all three territories around the circumpolar north and shared around the circumpolar north.

Thank you.

Hon. Ms. Taylor: I, too, rise and join with members of this Assembly in providing my support to this motion that was put forward by the Member for Klondike. I, too, would like to extend my thanks and appreciation to the MLA for Klondike for the opportunity for members to engage in some discussions regarding the advancement of this particular area -- and that is calling on this House to urge the Government of Canada to build a cutting-edge Arctic research station here in the Yukon in conjunction with the Yukon cold climate research centre of excellence for the north at Yukon College.

There has been a fair amount said today. However, without having to repeat what a number of members have said, I did want to put a few things on the record.

In the election of 2006, the Yukon Party's platform was entitled, "Imagine Tomorrow". Within that platform prominently stood a number of commitments that had to do with this particular area. First and foremost was establishing Yukon College as the climate change research centre of excellence along with a number of mandates as outlined in our platform, including addressing sustainability in a rapidly changing climate, to say the least, through innovation, adaptation and mitigation measures. This would make Yukon College, with its community campuses, a leader in climate change research and development in order to find ways to mitigate damage to our environment as a result of these particular effects, as well as build a cold climate innovation cluster situated at Yukon College, focusing on three general areas of cold climate technology involving building construction and maintenance, municipal infrastructure and geotechnical works. This is a fairly ambitious agenda but one that I believe is very achievable. In fact a fair amount of work has taken place over recent years. I'll speak to that a little bit later on as well.

Just building on what some of the members have said today about climate change, I think that it's very safe to say that the territory -- the north in particular -- will continue to face many climate change impacts in the coming years, including changes in our habitat, wildlife and bird populations, our freshwater systems and land stability.

Again, these impacts will have long-lasting and far-reaching effects on the way we do business in terms of how we produce power in the territory, how we conduct tourism in the

territory, how we forest, provide opportunities for agriculture, look at transportation infrastructure and human health. This particular initiative is but one of a number of initiatives that we are working on in collaboration with a number of different partners in the territory and on the national front to address climate change in our everyday lives.

It's interesting. One of our officials in the Department of Tourism and Culture -- I think it was about a year ago -- actually made a presentation at an international conference, and in particular it was on the threats of climate change to Yukon cultural resources -- to UNESCO headquarters. Actually, it was just over a year ago. But some of the topics of our official's presentation included effects on Herschel Island. One only has to take a look at the rapid and dramatically rising sea levels, shore erosion, melting permafrost, surface water runoff, not to mention increased visitation.

Part of the presentation surrounded the Klondike, actually, and melting permafrost taking place there, as well as increased wildlife activity -- as we certainly have seen the threshold of wildfires in that area over the last number of years as well as alpine ice patches and the unprecedented melting taking place in that area and the resulting impacts of exposure to artifacts, which has had positive but also negative effects, whichever way you look at it.

In fact, earlier this year, the historic settlement area of Herschel Island was placed on the list of the 10 most threatened heritage sites in Canada by the Heritage Canada Foundation.

The reason why I bring this to light is that when we think of climate change, we think of changes to wildlife habitat, fish and so forth. But it's also interesting to note that there are far-reaching impacts on even our cultural and historic resources here in the Yukon. For that very reason, there is an emphasized need for the development of a cutting-edge centre of excellence here in the Yukon.

As the Minister of Education outlined for members earlier, I think there is rationale provided for making the Yukon that particular starting point. You know, one only has to take a look at our very good infrastructure, relatively speaking. We have a number of community campuses; Yukon College is well-established in the territory, and we have enhanced capacity within the college community. In fact, as we speak, we're going through a strategic planning exercise to define how we can better deliver programs and services, where we can better focus and so forth.

One only has to take a look at the network of road infrastructure in the territory. I think, as the Minister of Highways and Public Works has said -- I can't recall how many miles we have to maintain, but --

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Five thousand kilometres. That's right. It's actually quite a vast amount of space in kilometres to cover in the Yukon. Thanks to the good work of the Department of Highways and Public Works, our road network is really in superb shape.

In terms of connectivity, whether it be air access -- of course, I have always said that in order to have a successful tourism industry you need really good air access and air access

is very critical in terms of having connectivity to the Yukon on whatever basis.

Internet -- again, when one looks at the number of individuals on a per capita basis in the country, Yukon rates probably among the highest, if not the highest, in user ability, I suppose -- individuals accessing the Internet. Again, for all those reasons and certainly many more, we have a great deal to offer in terms of making this a cutting-edge institute -- call it what you will -- and to set up a centre of excellence here in the territory.

I think that one has to take a look as well at the great amount of work that has taken place over the years. In fact, in looking back at recent news releases from years past, it was actually in May 2004 when over 60 representatives from the Yukon, the Northwest Territories, Nunavut, Nunavik and Labrador met in Whitehorse at a forum to discuss the merits of a cold climate innovations cluster north of the 60th parallel. As a result of that, a lot of work has transpired.

The Government of Yukon was able to finance a feasibility study to explore the viability of this particular concept a year later, in 2005, in which a study garnered results that indicated that, yes, it is feasible to situate and develop a cold climate innovation cluster in the Yukon.

It also garnered results that development of this innovation centre would in fact be a prerequisite to developing an innovation cluster. I think that it was the Member for Mount Lorne who made reference to this before. Mr. Kirk Cameron from Gartner Lee was actually contracted as the managing director to oversee the development of this initiative. As the lead consultant, he has done an exemplary job on this as well.

I too took part in the recent Yukon Chamber of Commerce annual general meeting and had the opportunity to learn a great deal more about the activities of this particular group. This group comprises a number of different entities: the Government of Yukon, First Nations, Yukon College, the National Research Council and many others have come together to advance this particular initiative. I congratulate them for all their work and their continued efforts to move it further.

This motion is really instrumental in leveraging the Government of Canada's support in furthering this important initiative. I think that there are some challenges, but we in the Yukon -- I've learned over the years that if we do put our minds to it and we work together collaboratively, we are certainly able to meet the impossible.

The rationale for a Yukon cold climate innovation research centre has been mentioned here today. It would be a research development facility that would support the establishment of a world recognized concentration of very creative, innovative companies that would be focused on the development of cold-climate technologies. It would be a collaboration of partners on the government levels to provide research strategies on how we could further this particular initiative.

As I mentioned, we were able to complete the feasibility study earlier -- I believe it was about a year and a half ago -- and it did garner some great results. As a result, I think that the board representing this particular initiative does include the Government of Yukon, Canada, the Yukon Indian Develop-

ment Corporation, the chamber of commerce, Yukon College and a number of representatives from the private sector to help establish the parameters to oversee the development of this centre.

So it's focusing on three particular areas, again as outlined in our platform -- infrastructure, construction and geotechnical work. We certainly have a lot to offer and we're very pleased to be able to support this particular initiative. I think it was mentioned earlier that monies have been flowing. In fact, I think in the northern strategy funding, there was about \$755,000 that was allocated to further demonstrate the abilities of and marketing the cold climate centre concept in the Yukon.

So again, these dollars will be put to very good use. As well, I was also interested and supportive of dollars being made available for community adaptation projects, made available as a result of northern strategy funding. In fact, I think it was \$1.2 million, if I'm not mistaken.

So, there are a number of different fronts that we are working to address, but I'm very pleased to hear that members opposite and members on this side of the House are all in agreement that this is a great opportunity for the Yukon. It speaks to the Yukon coming of age. I've mentioned it on a number of occasions, as have others, but with all the attention on the north, whether it be as a result of security, sovereignty-related issues or the north becoming a very clear destination of choice for visitors and a great, attractive place to live, this just adds to the arguments that the Yukon does stand to benefit a great deal from this particular initiative.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Mr. Lang: Mr. Speaker, again, I would like to compliment the Member for Klondike for bringing this very important motion forward. I'm very pleased to stand here in support of the motion, and I also would like to compliment the House on the positive way all of us have focused ourselves on this motion.

I think the Arctic research centre is an important part of not only Yukon but also north of 60. I think it's very important that the partnership between the Government of Yukon, the First Nations and of course the federal government and Yukon College, goes forward with this conceptual plan. Putting it to work is very important for not only ourselves but for Canada. As all members here have been discussing, the issue about mitigation and the impact of global warming on northern Canada is quite noticeable compared to southern Canada when we look at the permafrost and when we look at the many things that we have talked about this afternoon that have been directly affected. In turn, it gives us as northerners an opportunity to work with the federal government and our other partners to address these many, many issues. Now, we talked here this afternoon about those issues and mitigation, causes and things like that. But these kinds of questions will be answered as we move forward with our partners on this conceptual plan.

Now, understanding that north of 60 includes Nunavut and Northwest Territories and that those two other jurisdictions will be interested in and impacted by anything that happens north of 60, I visualize not only the Yukon having the Arctic research

centre here but also working with our partners, the Northwest Territories and Nunavut, to supply the input that is needed from those jurisdictions to help us, if we are successful in acquiring this research centre.

Again, it will take a commitment by the federal government and, as we said here today, we're complimentary to Ottawa on their positive northern vision as it pertains to the Speech from the Throne. As we move forward with this plan and work toward the research centre in partnership with the federal government and First Nations -- of course, encompassing this would be Yukon College, which has campuses throughout the Yukon. The campus in Old Crow would become very important because of its location, so it would benefit Old Crow to have this kind of program move forward.

It will also add to it to have the First Nation add their overview to see the issues they've had over the last period of time, whether five years, 10 years or two years. There has been great impact in that area and they've seen it on the land. They spend their life on the land, so having them involved at that level at an Old Crow campus would definitely benefit this program.

The Minister of Tourism and Culture was talking about tourism, and another example of global warming and the issues we have is the north highway permafrost. The situation we have on that highway -- trying to bring it to a national highway standard, as well as fighting the fact we're going over big areas of permafrost that are thawing and disrupting the quality of our highways. Those are the kinds of things that would be a great experimental project for all of Canada -- how we address transporting goods, vehicles and people over the permafrost situation.

What I'm saying here this afternoon is that I certainly support the Arctic research centre motion that was brought forward by the Member for Klondike.

I really recommend that we as a House work aggressively with our partners -- to get a commitment from the federal government to move forward with this.

I'm very optimistic, given the attitude we've had in the House today and the remarks we've heard.

I'll keep it short, Mr. Speaker, because I know there will maybe be a couple more comments.

I certainly do support this, and I look forward to this unfolding in the territory. It would be interesting to see -- if in fact we are successful and look back five years from now and see the project as it matures as we move forward into this research centre -- how it would expand our college, add to the flexibility of the college and provide another reason for the college to be there, which is always a very positive move. And, of course, all Yukoners will benefit from this.

I'm looking forward to the vote this afternoon, and I certainly do support it. I look forward to moving forward with the research centre concept in our jurisdiction.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Ms. Horne: In opening, I'd like to acknowledge Melanie Douville, a councillor with Teslin Tlingit Council, who is sitting in our gallery. Welcome, Melanie.

Applause

Hon. Ms. Horne: Mr. Speaker, climate change is a reality. The appropriate response to climate change is, it seems to me, a topic of great interest to most people. It seems as if everyone has a different opinion on what we need to do. In my reading of this issue, I am aware that the scientific community attributes climate change to many different causes. In looking at the Yukon context, I think we need to focus our energies on adaptation.

During the last campaign, we expressed our vision for managing and protecting Yukon's environment and wildlife in our platform. Given time constraints, I will only mention a few of the commitments we made in this area. We committed to protecting the environment by doing the following: maintaining and enhancing the quality of the Yukon's natural environment for present and future generations. Through ecosystem-based management, conservation of resources and protection and maintenance of biodiversity, we committed to implementing the climate change strategy.

The Yukon's climate change strategy includes a high-level vision and guiding principles in the four following goals: to enhance awareness and understanding of climate change impacts on Yukon's environment, people and economy; to reduce greenhouse gas emissions through efficiency improvements within Yukon government programs in the short term and additional measures related to infrastructure development in the long term; to build Yukon environment, social and economic systems that are able to adapt to climate change impacts and are positioned to take advantage of opportunities presented by climate change; to support efforts to establish Yukon as a northern leader for applied climate change research and innovation.

We also committed to establishing Yukon College as the climate change research centre of excellence. This research centre of excellence will: address sustainability in a rapidly changing climate through innovation and adaptation of mitigation measures; make Yukon College, with its community campuses, a leader in climate change research and development; and find ways to mitigate damage to the boreal forest such as the spruce bark beetle and pine beetle infestations.

Build a cold climate innovation cluster situated at the campus at Yukon College to specialize in three general areas of cold climate technology: building construction and maintenance, municipal infrastructure and geotechnical work.

Mr. Speaker, we are committed to increasing our inventory monitoring, data collection and research on the impact of climate change on the Porcupine caribou herd and other wildlife species, such as the moose, caribou, bears and the Yukon wood bison.

We will promote the Old Crow campus of Yukon College as an integral part of the research on the Porcupine caribou herd to ensure local and traditional knowledge is utilized in developing strategies to lessen the impacts of climate change.

Mr. Speaker, we will include the Yukon Wildlife Preserve as an affiliate of the Yukon climate change research centre of

excellence in order to study the impacts of climate change on the Yukon wildlife.

We support energy conservation initiatives and ensure Yukon's energy resources are developed in an economically and environmentally responsible manner.

In looking at this issue -- as I said earlier -- it seems to me that most people I talk to about climate change have at least one opinion about what we need to do -- and they feel strongly about it. I think the way to move forward is to focus our energies on a measured, rational, reasoned response. We only have so many resources that we can commit to any issue and when we are dealing with a global issue, no one jurisdiction has the resources or ability to remedy the problem on their own. That said, there is much the Yukon can do -- and it is doing -- to address this issue. Just because we are a small jurisdiction doesn't mean that we cannot make a global contribution. We can lead the way in adapting the new, emerging conditions that we face.

I think that we need to focus our energy and resources on ways to adapt to our changing climate. As I said a few moments ago, we need to respond in a measured and rational way. So what is it that we as a government are doing? First, we are enhancing awareness and understanding of climate change impacts on Yukon's environment, people and economy. That means we are participating in numerous monitoring programs throughout the territory in places like Herschel Island, the North Slope, Wolf Creek, Kluane and the southwestern Yukon and Kusawa. We are building our knowledge base.

We are continuing research in educational programs, based on need assessment, performed in Yukon for Yukoners. To cite an example from my own riding, Minister Lang's Department of Energy, Mines and Resources, through the forest management branch, is supporting ongoing efforts to establish adaptive management frameworks, to support implementation of the strategic forest management plan in the Teslin Tlingit traditional territory. Adaptive management is the management approach that rigorously combines management, research, monitoring and means of changing practices so that credible information is gained and management activities are modified by experience. Adaptive management is widely viewed as a critical response to climate change. For this approach to work, we recognize that the more information we have, the better. That is why we continue to develop and refine climate change related databases, ensuring ease of access and availability of information relevant to Yukon and the north. We are continuing with NatureServe Yukon which collates information on rare or threatened species and ecosystems. I hope that includes a section on chihuahuas, whose lineage dates back to early Egypt as the cherished pets of Pharaohs. We support major climate change impact projects like the Arctic Council's Arctic climate impact assessment project.

We also participate in the collection of information for the Canadian climate impacts and adaptation assessment. We are working on reducing greenhouse gas emissions in Yukon. This means we are working on a variety of pilot projects, including solar and geothermal applications. We are tracking our energy expenses in Yukon government buildings. The transportation

division of Highways and Public Works is pursuing alternative vehicles such as the hybrids. I see they are also looking at smaller, more fuel-efficient vehicles, too.

Mr. Speaker, I earnestly support Motion No. 183 to establish Yukon College as a climate change research centre of excellence. We will have a world-class cold climate resource centre that will be on the cutting edge of Arctic issues.

Gunilshish. Thank you.

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

Mr. Nordick: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to thank all members for supporting this motion that urges the Government of Canada to give due consideration to building in Yukon the world-class, cutting-edge Arctic research station that was announced in the Speech from the Throne on October 16, 2007, in conjunction with the Government of Yukon's establishment of a cold climate research centre of excellence for the north at Yukon College and its community campuses.

Thank you.

Speaker: Are you prepared for the question?

Some Hon. Member: Division.

Division

Speaker: Division has been called.

Bells

Speaker: Mr. Clerk, please poll the House.

Hon. Mr. Fentie: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Agree.

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Kenyon: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Rouble: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Lang: Agree.

Hon. Ms. Horne: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Hart: Agree.

Mr. Nordick: Agree.

Mr. Mitchell: Agree.

Mr. McRobb: Agree.

Mr. Elias: Agree.

Mr. Inverarity: Agree.

Mr. Hardy: Agree.

Mr. Cardiff: Agree.

Mr. Edzerza: Agree.

Clerk: Mr. Speaker, the results are 16 yeas, nil nays.

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

Motion No. 183 agreed to

Motion No. 208

Clerk: Motion No. 208, standing in the name of Mr. Nordick.

Speaker: It is moved by the Member for Klondike THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to:

(1) develop a public awareness campaign in conjunction with the RCMP to inform Yukoners, especially children, parents and educators, of best practices for safe use of the Internet, and of counselling and support available for victims of cyber-crime;

(2) strike an advisory committee of concerned stakeholders; and

(3) work with the federal and other provincial and territorial governments to explore legislative and regulatory options to further protect children.

Mr. Nordick: I rise today to bring to the attention of this Assembly a matter that is very important to me and to my colleagues and indeed this whole Legislature -- the protection of our children while they are exploring the on-line world.

As we all know, developments in information and technology have changed the way we live. This is especially true in the area of communications. The ability to send and receive large volumes of information over long distances can be a tremendous asset. The ability to be able to connect with anyone anywhere in the world is amazing. In just a few short years, we have witnessed a fundamental change worldwide in how people communicate.

Friends travelling in far off lands such as Australia, Egypt or Charlottetown are able to share their holiday pictures with us almost instantaneously. We can telephone loved ones over the Internet and see their expressions on our computers. We can listen to radio stations from around the world. We can order car parts, books, music and pretty much anything else one can think of from any of the number of shopping sites. We can even take some fairly advanced education courses over the Internet. Through the Internet, we have access to more information than at any previous time in history. People from around the world are contributing information and collaborating to produce some of the very sophisticated and useful tools like on-line encyclopaedias and high-quality multimedia presentations. A very useful thing I can do on the Internet is go to the Department of Environment's Web site and find many, many maps of the Yukon. I can download the guide to fishing in the Yukon. This is stuff I want you to know about. I think most of us in this Chamber use the Internet as a library. It is a place from where we can download information that we want. Mr. Speaker, the Internet, for those reasons alone, has become an important part of our lives.

Due to changes in technology, we are now able to do so much more than we were able to do even a few short years ago. The Internet has become a much more interactive place. Instead of a library, it is becoming more of a coffee shop. People are now able to carry on conversations in real time. In preparing for this debate, I did some reading about these developments, and it appears as if the trend to making the Internet more interactive will continue. Certainly the deal announced last week between Google and MySpace looks like we are heading in that direction. While most of this is good news, there are some concerns we have to address along the way. It was not long ago that cellphones were only useful for making telephone calls. Now, not only can we call someone, we can read books, play

video games, surf the Internet, send emails and listen to music, all on our phones. I'll come back to cellphones in a few minutes, as they illustrate how something very good can be used for something not good.

Clearly, technology is changing rapidly. The rapid changes in technology may mean that parents are now unaware of the kind and scope of information that can be made public.

Some children, in their eagerness to explore their world, are providing information that is not healthy to people they know only as a name on a screen in the home.

Children are not the only ones sharing more information than they ought to. For most people going about their daily lives, raising our families, running our businesses and being involved in our communities uses up our time. When I do have spare time, I spend it doing things other than reading up on the latest Internet technology developments. However, this is stuff I need to know about as, in this case, ignorance is definitely not bliss. There are things I need to do to keep my personal information safe. Things like credit card and bank account numbers and my contact information can be used for fraudulent purposes.

Of course, as children become more computer-literate, they too are able to access more places on the Internet, and some of the places they go to visit are so-called "social network sites" where they chat with interesting people they meet.

There are three ways that chats occur. The first are Web-based chat rooms that can be located throughout the Internet on pages, such as fan club Web sites, on-line gaming sites and personal Web sites, among others. Individuals can discuss a variety of topics, including computers, games, movies, music, et cetera. Many popular search engines have their own chat platform and can be run by most operating systems, providing that the software that allows you to communicate with others in the chat room has been installed.

The second kind of chat room is called a "real-time chat". This is done by using messaging software that lets you communicate with your friends and colleagues in real time. Features include a Quick Launch Bar, music file support and a new answering service. Some versions can allow communication behind firewalls.

The third kind is called an "Internet relay chat," or IRC for short. An Internet relay chat requires a specific program that allows a user to download the software, select a nickname, choose and connect to an IRC server using that software. Once the application is downloaded and a user is connected to the server, they can choose from a large selection of chat channels covering many topics.

Private communication can also occur on IRC; however, the message is not completely secure from others. You can choose one of the thousands of channels of virtual rooms available. The content of many IRC chat areas are uncensored and, because they are publicly accessible, they attract a diverse range of people.

As I said earlier, the Internet has changed the way we communicate. Protecting the children from harm is of paramount importance for all of us in this Assembly. I know my colleagues on both sides of the floor will agree with me that we

have to do everything possible to keep our kids safe on the Internet. I'll leave it to my colleague from Southern Lakes to discuss the different programs his department offers to kids to become cyber literate and to protect themselves while on-line.

I do know that the Department of Education has programs in place to address cyber literacy. I would like to take a few moments to discuss what is happening on the national front because it is something very important for us here. The National Child Exploitation Coordination Centre, the NCECC, an integral part of Canada's national police service, was created to help protect children from on-line sexual exploitation.

When it comes to the Internet and children, the National Child Exploitation Coordination Centre is a national clearing-house and coordination centre for all international requests to conduct investigations in Canada related to child sexual exploitation on the Internet. It provides support to peace officers and in particular investigators involved in files dealing with child sexual exploitation on the Internet. It builds relationships and collaborates with domestic and internal partners to raise awareness and combat criminal activity that targets, exploits and abuses children. It will develop standards and guidelines within Canada to provide many levels of support to law enforcement investigators involved in files dealing with the sexual exploitation of children on the Internet.

The issue of on-line sexual exploitation of children is one that has gained a greater profile over the past several years. The Internet has changed the way child sexual exploitation offences are committed, investigated and prosecuted.

At the national level, clearly Canada is committed to moving forward with protecting our children. In the *Backgrounder*, on the issue, the Government of Canada has declared the well-being of children and youth to be a top priority. They have criminal code provisions and policies are in place to directly combat exploitation. They also have a variety of tools and strategies to address this, and they are working with communities and non-governmental organizations to protect children and youth from exploitation.

At a local level, I am pleased that we have a very committed police force that is active in our school outreach programs and who work very, very hard to protect our children. Mr. Speaker, clearly we need a coordinated approach to keep our children safe on-line. The rapid progress of technology means that we have to pool our resources to keep up. It is amazing how technology has changed. In looking over the list of do's and don'ts for staying safe on-line, I was amazed to realize that GPS technology and a cellphone could be a potential issue or that the camera on a cellphone could lead to problems. I'd like to share with you some of the advice that they provide to keep safe on-line.

Report any suspicious on-line activity to <http://Cybertip.ca>. If someone you don't know approaches you or makes you feel uncomfortable on-line, tell your parents and do not write to them. Never meet anyone in person you have met on-line without parents' permission. Do not buy or accept gifts from anyone you meet on-line. Never call anyone you met on-line. If you are unsure about something, ask your parent or guardian. Remember that people you meet on-line may not be who they say they

are. Make sure that an adult is nearby when chatting on the Internet. Always check with your parents before entering a chat room and tell your parents about your on-line friends. If someone on-line is making you feel uncomfortable, there may be a good reason for you to leave that Internet location and tell someone about it. Share e-mail addresses of people you write to with your parents. Remember that nothing you write on the Web or e-mail is completely private. Immediately delete unknown e-mail attachments without opening them as they can contain harmful viruses.

Don't give out or post any personal information, such as your name, home address, school name and telephone number. Use a nickname and never tell people your real name. Don't post personal information on your profile. Pick a password that is hard for others to guess and never share it with anyone except your parents. Do not post pictures of yourself or anyone else on the Internet. Remember that any photos you post on-line or send to people can be used without your acknowledgement or permission.

Think carefully about where you put your webcam. Don't put it in a location that will give away any personal information about you or your family. Always unplug or cover your webcam when it's not in use. Be aware that laptops often have built-in webcams that are the size of pinholes.

Many cellphones come with built-in cameras -- still and video cameras. Their wiring may come with global positioning systems, GPS, and can be manipulated by an outside user.

Mr. Speaker, I'm sure I have not covered all the things that make for best practices. Indeed, near the beginning of my comments, I mentioned that Google and MySpace recently teamed up to make the Internet more interactive. How the partnership will affect the development of the Web remains to be seen.

My motion today calls upon the Government of Yukon to develop a public awareness campaign in conjunction with the RCMP that will keep Yukoners, especially our children, safe from cybercrime by informing the children, parents and educators of best practices for safe computing. Since children learn from watching their parents and grandparents, that means we have to make a habit of practising safe computing too.

As I have already outlined in my comments, and as my colleague from the beautiful Southern Lakes, the Minister of Education, will discuss later in the debate, there's a great deal we are doing in the Yukon and on the national front.

Sadly, Mr. Speaker, sometimes children and others are preyed upon. I would urge my colleagues to include in their public awareness program information on counselling, support and other resources available to victims of cybercrime.

I see on the news Web sites that some sick minds are using the Internet to exploit people's generosity toward those who have been victims of natural disasters, so it is not just the children who need to learn -- we all do.

Mr. Speaker, as I outlined in my motion, I feel strongly that we need to strike an advisory committee to identify potential options and solutions for best practices.

As the Internet evolves, so too do our best practices. For example, who would have thought five years ago of having a

GPS chip or camera in a cellphone? Who would have imagined that those advancements could be used against the phone's user? We need concerned stakeholders who are aware of the technology situation and are able to provide advice to the government on potential issues and how to find remedies or best practices for those issues.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I urge the government to work with Canada and other provincial and territorial governments to explore the legislation and regulatory options to further protect children from on-line predators. Are laws, regulations and policies appropriate tools to deal with this issue? Is there room for improvement? Mr. Speaker, I look at something like the challenges we face with substance abuse. There is a role for the RCMP to play. However, we have also seen there is a role for safer communities and neighbourhoods teams to play. By working together, we are able to do better.

I'd like to thank all members for supporting this motion.

Mr. Inverarity: Well, Mr. Speaker, as usual this government is five years late and \$36 million short.

From 1999 to the year 2002, Industry Canada, the RCMP, the Canadian Information Processing Society Klondike branch and a number of other organizations, including the Government of Yukon, put together a project called "Cybersafety". In it, we promoted the concept of cybersafety and had an education platform through which to educate youth with regard to cybersafety.

I think it was actually held in conjunction with IT Week. IT Week is usually held in the first week or first two weeks of May of each year. It was an Industry Canada project that they initiated. It might have been appropriate for us to discuss this particular motion then. However, better late than never is probably a good adage to have in regard to cybersafety because, as the minister has said, it's an important issue. Our children are at risk, and I think it deserves a time in this House. I'm just surprised that, considering that the Internet first became available in Yukon in 1994, this is the first time that this House has actually had an opportunity to address cybersafety.

There are many things, as have been mentioned earlier, with regard to cybersafety. Junk mail is probably one of the biggest issues on the Internet today. On average every week, I get close to 500 junk mails in my personal e-mail. I've had that particular e-mail account for a number of years, so I expect a certain amount of junk e-mail to come in, because it has been around awhile.

However, this morning, I was really quite surprised when my government e-mail account received a piece of junk e-mail. It's one you've seen around, where you get an e-mail from a bank, for example, that says your account may be insecure, log on to here and we'll fix it up and make sure your personal information is highly secure.

I have for tabling a copy of the e-mail I got this morning. I would like to submit it to the House as an example. It is very accurate. It's even from, in this particular case, the Toronto Dominion Bank. I'm not sure I can mention that, but I will. It's signed; it looks professional and the link it has -- the easyweb

site -- is one that is a real site but behind this is a massive conspiracy to steal personal information.

I think it's important for us to all recognize that this issue of cybersafety, while very important for children, affects us all and we all have to pay attention. I know this; I think I received my first piece of junk e-mail from a bank -- it was Citibank -- probably around 1997. I knew it was false, although it was very real, because, one, I didn't deal with Citibank at the time. I don't even believe they were in Canada at the time.

But then I got one from eBay, and it said to sign on, log in and update your account. At the time, I was very concerned, because this type of malicious e-mail was still new in the market. So I copied it and pasted it in a new e-mail and sent it off to eBay and, sure enough, it was malicious e-mail. They thanked me very much for the information and said they would get right on to it, and I know they have been a leader in trying to prevent this type of e-mail from going around.

Another type of e-mail or another type of cybersafety that people should be aware of is the product or term that is called "malware". This is short for "malicious software". You might go to a site and you might be looking for a utility that you want to download onto your computer. In fact, what it does is come in and invade your computer and then starts to hijack the operations that are going on. It might put up popups that are pornography-related, for example. It might also go into your hard drive and search your hard drive and retrieve information. It's not as bad as viruses, as we know. These are highly destructive tools that we get -- they can come in through malware. They can come in through different processes that you do, but the intent behind malware is that it's commercial-based. If you don't go to the site and actually buy their product, it will continue to bug you and hound you until such time as your malware is purchased and then it goes through there.

Most of these reflect or refer to what we call identity theft on the Internet. There has been a lot of media coverage of identity theft over the last number of years. The bank one is an example where people are trying to hijack your bank accounts. I think we all have to be very cognizant that the onus is on us to pay attention to these things. The best piece of advice I could give with regard to identity theft is that, if it doesn't feel right, if it doesn't look right, then the odds are it isn't right. You should pay attention and you're better off deleting it. If the bank really wants to get hold of you, they'll phone you and you can deal with that.

So those are important things that we should keep in mind. I think earlier today the Member for Klondike mentioned the IRC -- Internet relay chat. This has been around actually since the early Internet days. Most people don't know that the Internet was first established in the early 1970s as an educational communications tool between universities.

Nowadays we have IRCs and Web sites like Facebook -- for example -- also MSN Chat lines and a number of other chat facilities. If you are not careful it is really easy for people to find out who you are and try to solicit you or, in particular, children to get them to meet and visit places.

I could actually talk on this subject for days. As you know, my background has been in the IT field and I believe that, in

the case of cybersafety, it is something that we are not currently doing enough to deal with.

I've also brought along another item that I'd like to table. I'll hold it up. It is actually a mouse pad. This was developed in 1999 on cybersafety. You can see the logos on the bottom are the Government of Yukon. This is a sample of it. A number of government departments were involved in its production. I have to say that, as the president of the Canadian Information Processing Society at the time, and the sponsor for IT Week, it proved to be a very successful early tool in promoting cybersafety in the Yukon.

You've got my vote on this one, gentleman. This is a good topic and we need to promote this thing and make sure that we continue to do it.

Mr. Speaker, I think I'd like to go through a number of the items on my handy-dandy notes that I have here. The first one is, don't give out your password to anyone.

Mr. Speaker, I've tabled it already and these are my talking notes, Mr. Speaker. So, anyway, thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I think we all know by today that passwords are very unique to each of us and they are things that we should keep safe and they are things that we should not have as simple devices to get into our computer.

They should be at least eight digits long. They should be alphanumeric in nature, and they are things that we should never give to anybody else. Never give out personal information on-line. How many people have gone to these IRC chat rooms, Mr. Speaker, and sat down and chatted up friends on-line? I know three individuals who got married over IRC chat lines. But I know just as many -- in fact, double that, who have had nothing but bad experiences from them. So it's important to never give out your personal information on-line. Never send your picture over the Internet. This is very important too. It's okay for us to have our own personal Web sites, I guess, with our own pictures on them. But it's if you don't know, particularly young people, and that's what we're talking about with regard to this mouse pad, it will be there every day. Never send your picture. Don't open or accept files, links or URLs from people you don't know or trust. Today, one of the most common ways of infecting your computer with viruses is via MSN Chat. You're on there, and people will pop up automatically, and they will try to send you what might be a picture or what might be a file. The worst thing you can do is attempt to download these.

Remember, anyone can lie on-line. Don't arrange to meet an on-line friend alone. Particularly children should not be trying to set up arrangements with people they've met over the Internet. We see examples of this even now, with the child porn that's going on over in Asia and places like that. So it's critical that we instill these beliefs and this knowledge into our young people with regard to cybersafety.

I think I'd like to turn my comments at this point to a couple of the other items that were mentioned in the motion. The second item on the motion refers to striking an advisory committee of concerned stakeholders. I'd have to say that my judgement on this is still out, but it wasn't referred to exten-

sively, if at all, in the Member for Klondike's opening statements.

But my concerns about having a particular committee for this include who would make up this committee. Would it be an all-party committee of Members of the Legislative Assembly that would form this committee and that we would do it? Would it be members of the public? Would we be striking a whole new committee of individuals with respect to this?

As part of that question as to who would sit on the committee, I think the issue would be: what will they do on the committee? Will they have a mandate from this House to go out and strike down cybercrime, strike down pornography, strike down all the things that our children should be safe from on the Internet? This is important to know, and I'd like the answer to that. Perhaps the members of the House could actually fill us in on that as we get through the debate today.

When will this committee be struck? That's another important issue. Are we going to be doing it year-round? Is it going to be in a limited time frame? I think what we can do is try to promote this awareness. I mean, the whole motion strikes me as a campaign -- a marketing or advertising campaign to educate our youth and adults, as I may have mentioned.

But I think what we need to do is set some finite goals to this campaign. I encourage the RCMP -- they participated in it the last time, and I thought that this was very, very constructive. In fact they helped to fund a lot of the mouse pads I tabled earlier.

I think it's important that we have measurable goals with respect to this committee, as to the time frame, what the end results would be, and that they should report back to this House and tell us exactly how the campaign went, how much money they spent and where the money came from.

I mentioned Industry Canada earlier -- they still have a Web site today that deals with cybercrime and it's very useful information. I would encourage members on the other side to actually go and look at this particular information -- this Web site -- and see the important new issues that are coming up on this particular item.

I think it's important that we move on in this debate. As you can see, I have a passion for it. I understand the issues that revolve around cybersafety. I'm anxious, with bated breath, to hear the members from the other side speak to this. I'm encouraged to see that, after 15 years of the Internet being in Yukon, we're now dealing with the issue of cybersafety.

Hon. Ms. Horne: I think the member opposite has a misunderstanding of this issue. What we are doing is enhancing safeguards against child sexual exploitation that is in place. Mr. Speaker, as a mother and a grandmother, our children are very precious. Keeping them safe is a high priority of this government. As all on this side of the House have noted, this issue is of great importance to all Yukoners.

I was at a recent conference where the subject of cybercrime was addressed in detail. The conference was extremely informative, and I greatly appreciated the speakers, the participants and the opportunity to discuss with other ministers and experts the issues we face in addressing crime.

Most of the sessions I attended dealt with this issue of cybercrime and on-line exploitation of our children. While I knew about the issue in a general way, I did not know how easy it is for pedophiles to commit crime using the Internet. Fortunately we have a very capable partner in the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. I'm very pleased with the good work our RCMP already do in protecting our children and in protecting us.

In conjunction with my colleagues, we are going to do something further. I absolutely endorse this motion the Member for Klondike has brought forward because it speaks to the heart of what it is that I believe we need to do.

Mr. Speaker, I think there are three areas that we have to address. I would like to outline these points and then speak to each point in more detail.

The first is that we have to educate the public on safety while on-line. That means that we have to develop and deliver an information and awareness campaign on cyberspace best practices. As a grandmother, I know that children learn from watching mom and dad. If we are going to teach our children to be safe, we have to model that behaviour ourselves. As the Internet changes, we have to keep updating our best practices.

The second area we have to address is that we need community partners who understand the changes in the way that people are using the Internet and who can advise us as a government of things we need to be doing to keep our children safe. One example I can think of is that the technology driving the Internet has changed dramatically over the last few years. We need to keep updating our best practices to reflect the rapid change in technology.

I think that this committee would be able to also identify potential areas of concern and advise us of ways to address those areas.

The third area is that we need to look at what kinds of changes are needed to our laws or legislation and regulations at both the territorial and federal level. This question of our legislative framework is one that we have to review and discuss very carefully.

I think the question we have to ask as lawmakers is this: have we given the RCMP the tools they need to do their job?

Having outlined the areas I wish to address, I would now like to turn my attention to the details of this motion. We are in the process of developing a coordinated public awareness campaign. The Internet has done much to increase our ability to communicate. Most users of the Internet have gone from being observers to being active contributors to the Internet.

As my colleague from the Klondike noted, the Internet is much more than a library. It has changed to being much more interactive.

People can exchange information very quickly -- some of it very personal. At the touch of a fingertip we can publish information to the Internet that can persist for a very long time. People on social networking sites can upload pictures, videos, music and all kinds of documents -- some of it very intimate. While that interactive aspect can be very useful, it can also be exploited.

Mr. Speaker, the best practices for safe computing have changed in the last few years as the technology has changed. It

wasn't that long ago when programming a computer meant sitting down and punching holes in cards or tape; then came cassette drives and floppy disks. One could have a cup of tea or dinner while waiting for a program to load. It took a lot of time to send documents, never mind videos or music presentations. The technology simply wasn't there to permit large volumes of information -- say, a video of our grandchildren.

Because of the limitations of the technology, only the most sophisticated users were trying to post information to the Internet. However, as technology has developed, computers got faster, smaller, more powerful and they also got cheaper.

Here in the Yukon we invested heavily in extending high-speed Internet to all our communities. I believe Yukon is the most wired jurisdiction in Canada. Now, most people have access to a computer either at home, at work, or often in both places. In other words, Yukoners are active participants in the Internet. We need to keep Yukoners safe while on-line.

There was much that I learned while at that conference and quite a bit of it had to do with making a habit of being careful while on-line. Some of it is very simple, but so effective at keeping us safe.

I appreciate the Member for Klondike reading into the record all the things that we should do to stay safe. I think that many people in the Yukon are just like me. We surf the Internet every day and yet we don't know what the best practices are. We need to let Yukoners know what the best Web-surfing practices are.

The second point I want to talk about is the formation of an advisory committee. Protecting our children and ourselves while on the Internet is a major undertaking. The Internet is evolving and changing so rapidly. Just think of how it has changed in the last 10 years -- or even in the last five years or the last year. As a minister, I need the collective wisdom and advice of people who understand the Internet and care about protecting our children and us.

While I have not established the membership for this advisory body and the working group, I would look for it to include parents, the police, educators, people in the Internet business, representatives of Yukon and other governments, especially First Nations, and, of course, concerned citizens. The fact of the matter is that so much energy and time is being invested in expanding the horizons and applications of the Internet that it is impossible for one person to keep track of everything that's happening. We need to identify potential risks and take appropriate steps to mitigate those risks. I look to this committee to give the government advice on ways to continue to protect our community, especially our children.

The third point I would like to discuss concerns our national and territorial laws. In preparing for this debate, I have done quite a bit of reading on the file. We have been monitoring national news Web sites for stories about protecting children from on-line exploitation. There has been a great deal of discussion on this topic in the last few months. To put this in perspective, in the United States their national tip line has fielded about 503,000 tips since 1998.

Mr. Speaker, that is about 50,000 per year or about one every 10 minutes. Statistics for Canada are harder to come by,

but the <http://Cybertip.ca> Web site saw their reports of child sexual exploitation jump from 1,011 in 2004 to 5,771 in 2005. From my discussions, I understand that those numbers are not likely to go down. As a parent and a grandparent, as an MLA and the Minister of Justice, I ask myself: have we got the right tools, the right legislation to address this issue? In the paper, *Child Pornography: Model Legislation & Global Review*, which was published in 2006 by the International Centre for Missing & Exploited Children in conjunction with Interpol, the researchers looked into the question of developing and championing model legislation with regard to child pornography. It has been reported that there are about 200 new pornographic pictures posted every day. Each one of these pictures involves a victim, a child.

Experts believe that model legislation is crucial to successfully combating child pornography crimes around the world. Consequently, they examined the child pornography legislation currently in place in the 184 Interpol member countries. They tested the legislation in five areas. The authors of the paper wrote the following: "In particular, we are looking to see if national legislation: (1) exists with specific regard to child pornography; (2) provides a definition of child pornography; (3) criminalizes computer-facilitated offences; (4) criminalizes possession of child pornography, regardless of the intent to distribute; and (5) requires Internet service providers (ISPs) to report suspected child pornography to law enforcement or to some other mandated agency."

Mr. Speaker, here is what they wrote about their findings: "Our end results are, to say the least, shocking: only 5 countries meet all of the criteria set forth above; only 22 countries meet all but the last criteria, pertaining to ISP reporting; 95 countries have no legislation at all that specifically addresses child pornography."

Clearly, there is a great deal of work that has to be done to determine what tools are needed to combat the exploitation of children over the Internet. It is my intention to raise this issue with my colleagues so that we can identify and develop remedies for any gaps in our national, provincial or territorial legislation. I understand that a working group of senior officials has already begun this work.

The Yukon Party committed to protecting Yukon families. This motion is keeping with that commitment. It is a commitment that is very dear to my heart: to protect our families in the Yukon. I thank the Member for Klondike for bringing it forward. I wholly support it.

Thank you. Gunilschish. Merci.

Mr. Cardiff: It's nice to see that we are making some progress today on these motions. I hope that the cooperation being shown here today by members on this side of the House is recognized. Hopefully, it is recognized and returned in kind, unlike on previous Wednesdays.

I think this is a pretty important motion, Mr. Speaker. I do have some questions. I think we are all aware -- it has been mentioned many times -- how rapidly technology is changing. I recall in the early 1990s having a conversation with the president of Yukon College at the time, talking about how rapidly

knowledge was changing back then. I think it was doubling every seven years. I don't know what it is now, but the amount of knowledge and information that is available largely because of technology is just incredible.

With that increase in knowledge, the increase in technology and the availability and access to knowledge, there are also some challenges.

I think the intent of the motion is good. I do have a few things I would like to say about it. The motion appears to be focused largely on protecting young children from cybercrime, and I think that's very important. I think all of society -- for the most part anyway -- wants to protect our children from being victims of cybercrime or any other type of crime. We want to do what's right for them.

Cybercrime is not only used for child abuse or exploitation. I think some of that was touched on. I'll just touch on some of these points briefly. They include stalking, identity theft, terrorism, intellectual property theft, marketing information theft, sabotage of operating systems, spam, viruses and actual sabotage -- I think a lot of us have probably experienced spam or viruses at one time or another -- and the creating of false documents or the changing of false documents.

I know nobody on the other side likes to believe what they read in the media, but there was actually an interesting story about that, not that long ago, in one of the local newspapers -- about how people are able to go in and change documents and put their version of history up on the Internet and change it. I think the site is called Wikipedia.

So, I think it's not just children who are victims of cybercrime, but the intent of this motion is largely to protect children. I recognize that and I thank the Member for Klondike for bringing this forward, because it is important.

When we look at some of the statistics on cybercrime against children, it is actually pretty scary. There was a study done by the Crimes Against Children Research Centre in the United States. They found that with youth between the ages of 10 and 17, one in five had received a sexual solicitation or approach over the Internet in the last year. One in 33 had received aggressive sexual solicitations, asking them to meet or telephone. It often involved money or gifts being exchanged. One in four children had had unwanted exposure to pictures of people involved in sexual acts. One in 17 were threatened or harassed.

I think that, in 1999, Canada became the first country in the world to have pretty much 100 percent of its schools and libraries connected to the Internet. In some respects, it's a blessing for them to be able to access information, do their school work and explore and learn about the world out there. At the same time, when we hear statistics like this, it's not much of a blessing. It's something that needs to be addressed.

Ipsos-Reid published a report about Internet usage and found that, of Canadian children who regularly use the Internet, 23 percent have actually had face-to-face meetings with people they met on-line. It is a concern. We need to be vigilant about watching and putting measures in place to protect our children while they are on the Internet and participating in chat rooms and various forums.

The motion talks about developing a public awareness campaign. I think that it is good to work with the RCMP. There are also a number of other agencies and groups that have that information. As part of that public awareness campaign -- I think the Member for Porter Creek South pointed out -- there are some places where you can find out about best practices or when our children are on the Internet, and some places where you can actually block some of these sites -- things that we can do for our children.

A lot of that information is already available and a public awareness campaign could possibly be as simple as making the public aware of the programs that are already available. There is a lot of material available through schools and publishing websites. I'll mention a few. There is the media awareness network for teachers and parents at <http://bewebaware.ca>; it is a national coalition of Canadian media companies and non-profit organizations. It raises the awareness and involves parents.

It provides practical information and tools to help parents manage their children's use of computers and the Internet. It's a nationwide program; it's bilingual.

<http://Cybertip.ca> is a national tip line for reporting on-line sexual exploitation of children. They have links to provincial and federal law enforcement agencies and they receive tips through on-line reporting or from a toll-free phone number or fax. They provide information to those who contact them, the complainant, on subjects such as Internet filters, e-mail spam blockers, victim referrals, and they will alert parents to common lures or practices that are used by child predators who are using the Internet. They also will refer parents or those who are contacting them to the appropriate law enforcement agencies if they feel that's necessary.

There are a few others: SchoolNet National Advisory Board and a Public Safety Portal from the Canadian Association of Internet Providers. There's probably all kinds of information out there and I'm sure, with a little bit of research, we could create a very good public awareness campaign to assist educators, parents and the children themselves about what the appropriate use of the Internet is.

There have been some changes to existing federal legislation. There were amendments to the Criminal Code. In 2001, it actually created a new offence that targets criminals who use the Internet to lure and exploit children for sexual purposes. It made it a crime to transmit and access child pornography on the Internet, and we've seen in the news how important this is recently. What has been on the news lately is actually pretty disturbing.

These changes also allowed judges to order the deletion of child pornography posted on computer systems in Canada. It allowed the judges to make a forfeiture of the material and the equipment used in child pornography offences. It allowed the judges to make prohibition orders or peace bonds, and it amended the child sex tourism law, which is what I was referring to in the media recently.

This is something that affects us here in the Yukon and the intent of the motion, I think, is to deal with a public awareness campaign here in the Yukon about something that's very global because of the nature of the Internet. So it can come at our

children from anywhere and it involves working together with agencies. The RCMP works with other agencies such as Interpol. I think we need to also keep in mind that there are international treaties such as the UN *Convention on the Rights of the Child*, which sets out obligations to protect children from all forms of abuse, all kinds of economic exploitation, all forms of sexual abuse and exploitation, and abduction.

It has the obligation for signatories to establish social programs and provide support to promote the recovery and social reintegration of child victims of abuse. The victimization of children on-line can take many forms. I think a lot of those were already mentioned, and I won't delve into them.

The motion talks about striking an advisory committee of concerned stakeholders. I'm not sure what the purpose of the stakeholders committee is. I'd be interested in learning more about the advisory committee. I think lots of information is out there, and I think if we listen to parents and educators, and we follow what is happening out there as far as what the best practices are, and keep our ear to the ground, we can learn a lot that way.

The one part of the motion that gives me a little cause for concern is where it says "counselling and support available for victims of cybercrime". It's not that I don't think we need counselling and support for victims of cybercrime. I wholeheartedly will endorse that part of the motion. What I have a problem with is -- and we hear this on a regular basis here in the Legislature -- the lack of services for people with psychiatric and mental health disorders, and there is also a dearth of services for victims of crime.

I'd like to commend the people who work in the victim services unit and who do that counselling on a regular basis here in Whitehorse, but we need more services throughout the Yukon -- in other Yukon communities besides Whitehorse -- and we need more counselling services made available to victims of crime in order to fulfill the intent of this motion.

I believe there's a need for more resources in this area. I hope that both the Minister of Justice and the Minister of Health and Social Services will take that under advisement, look into the area and hopefully provide some increased resources in the upcoming budget cycle to provide more counselling and more support services for all victims of crime so that we can fulfill the intent of this motion.

We in the third party will be supporting this motion and I thank the Member for Klondike for bringing it forward.

Hon. Mr. Kenyon: It gives me great pleasure to talk about this motion. I have a few things to say, but we on this side do want to get it to a vote today.

I was very pleased to see the Member for Porter Creek South talk about his experience and table a mouse pad with great support from the RCMP and other groups. I would like to point out one thing that he didn't mention is the big logo on the bottom, which is my Yukon Department of Economic Development and which actually paid for them. We are very pleased to be part of that project.

It was also very heartening to hear of his experiences, I suspect, with Al Gore and the invention of the Internet. The

Internet doesn't go back quite as far as the member would like to believe, but it has changed radically. I remember being on a group called Usenet. It was all text oriented. One had to have an academic account with a university or a senior position with a research foundation or facility in order to access it. In fact, when I left the University of Toronto Faculty of Medicine in 1988, one of my conditions of changing over to Toronto General Hospital was to retain an academic appointment so I would still qualify for it. When I finally made the full-time move to the Yukon, of course, the information highway became a goat path. Short of calling a number at full phone rates in Vancouver, we had no access. I was really happy to be a founding contributor to the YukonNet Operating Society and get that started up here.

I too -- and some of the other members have mentioned, in terms of computers -- my first computer was a Tandy Colour Computer -- CoCo-- and I bought the 32K model so I'd never have to upgrade, and I of course found myself in great trouble in three months when I found that it did precious little and then I made the transition over. We could see the beginnings of some of the problems in Toronto -- which I've learned very quickly over the past 20 years is not the cultural centre of the universe, although I'm not quite to the point of spinning when I say the word.

I had a modem and it was a 300-baud modem, and I wanted to set up what we call the Toronto medical network so that physicians, nurses and professionals could communicate on that. We didn't see the need at the time to go any faster -- like a 1200-baud modem -- because who can read that fast. Of course, things have changed dramatically and we found very quickly on this great network that I thought I had set up that over 600 people were on it very quickly: two physicians and 598 kids. It was the kids who were really going into that.

One of the other members made the point regarding changing knowledge and changing information. I am afraid I didn't write the statistics down, but I believe it was the Member for Mount Lorne who mentioned it and he's quite correct. I know that in one study that, unless you're in a very general degree program, a pretty good chunk -- you know, like 60 percent to 70 percent of what you learn in your first year of university -- will be obsolete or proven wrong by the time you graduate in the same program. Information years ago was said to basically change every seven years. Now in some cases it can be every seven months and, by the time a study comes out to prove something, the information is already into the journals to disprove it.

Things are changing so rapidly; when everything became oriented into a graphic interface -- and I won't turn this into an advertisement for Macintosh computers, but I think people started to see the way that things were going. Certainly IBM saw it when they basically copied it -- in a legal sense, I'll qualify that -- but they went to a graphic user interface with Windows and things completely changed. It changed in a lot of ways. First of all, the amount of information, the graphics, the pictures, and the communications were faster as the speeds went faster.

The Member for Porter Creek South mentioned -- and tabled -- that he got his first junk mail on his government account. I would suggest that maybe he's not using the government account very much. In my experience we can get sometimes six, eight or 10 a day -- every day -- and involving everything. I've won so many lotteries and I've been chosen to receive millions of dollars from central African countries, et cetera, et cetera. And this goes on every single day.

So, perhaps the member could be using his computer a little bit more. Maybe that explains why some of the members opposite don't seem to be aware of some of the programs and such that we have.

There are other ways of using the information. We talk about spam, we talk about malware -- all very good points, all perfectly correct. Some of the information that goes through is rather interesting. One member mentioned Wikipedia and some articles that were in our local advertising supplement that claimed that e-mails were sent out from certain locations and, of course, that is not at all true. You can send them out from anywhere and make it look that way. It's called spoof mail. That's exactly what it is.

There is even a company -- I won't give the name, for want of somebody trying to play another little stunt -- and I can go on there and, for \$5 a month, I can change the call display of my telephone. In other words, Mr. Speaker, for \$5 a month I call you and it will come up on your display as whatever number I want it to be -- the home number of the Pope, George Bush's private line. If you've got a number, you put it in there -- for \$5 a month, that's what your call display will read. You can just imagine some of the fun you can have.

The problems with that, of course -- I have to go back and quote the former Prime Minister, Lester Pearson, who once said the Cabinet could walk on water and the media would probably report that that was because they can't swim. What can be done today with computers is absolutely frightening.

Open networks -- I know that when we were setting up a wireless network, or changing it in our home, the first network that came up wasn't mine, it was my next door neighbour's, and bingo, I was into their computer. We actually had to go over and suggest that they take a look at this.

That was brought home even more when it involved Pacific NorthWest Economic Region. We drove out of our offices in Seattle and one of our staff members realized that she had forgotten the files we were supposed to take to the state capital in Olympia. Rather than drive back, we simply pulled into the back of an apartment building and chose from the maybe 12 different networks that came up, and found one without a password. She simply went in and downloaded all the files from the office in the World Trade Centre in Seattle. Of course, no one would be the wiser.

Even visiting relatives in Portland -- going in and realizing that, all of a sudden, there were two or three other people in this guy's computer. His attitude was, "Well, I don't care. I've got nothing to hide." But that's not the point because, going back to child pornography, there was a case not that long ago in one of our major cities where the individual had a laptop and would plug into the power supply in the car and simply drive

around until there was a good connection and then was downloading all the pictures through somebody else's computer. So, if the local Internet provider saw any of this activity on your computer, Mr. Speaker, as an example, that doesn't necessarily mean that it was you or had anything to do with you.

So, if and when this committee is struck, I strongly, strongly, strongly urge that it include Internet professionals who know what they're doing because you can bounce that signal anywhere, and you can come up looking like any Internet provider in the world. How do you trace that? I'm sure there are ways, but it's so far beyond all of us.

Some of the other things, in terms of misinformation, with the Internet -- I have a friend who was absolutely horrified one day that I'd put some aspartame -- it sold under the trade name of Equal and a lot of other ones -- into some coffee, and didn't I know that this caused cancer and it was absolutely terrible and horrible that I would use this.

Well, I'm a scientist by training, and I like dealing with fact rather than fiction or fantasy. We used to have a service called Medline, and it used to be very expensive to get into. But now, of course, with the Internet, if you find the right site, you're in there for free and it's very easy to do. So I did a Medline search and tracked it back to 1977, which was the main database I was in, and the only deleterious effect of aspartame that I could find was that if you made it into a paste and put it on your skin, it could cause a rash. So I would highly recommend to anyone listening not to take coffee sweetener and use it as a skin cream. But there was nothing else that related to any of these wild claims.

So, I went back to my friend and pointed this out, and her response was, "Well, you know, I read this article on the Internet, and there it was." I said, "Great. I want to see it." So she came in with an article from a doctor at the University of North Carolina medical school claiming that this was cancer-causing. Again, liking to deal with fact, I called the individual and, yes, Dr. so-and-so was in fact on the faculty at the University of North Carolina.

So, I called her. I got put through to her and I started telling the story. She stopped me about halfway and asked me what in the world I was talking about. I started explaining the background and everything else, and she said, "I am not a medical doctor. I have a PhD in library science. I run the library here. I have never done medical research and I use aspartame." We had a good laugh over it and I went back to my friend, who I suspect is still telling people that she read it on the Internet.

I had the same thing with another friend about using -- I call it Saran Wrap -- the film you use for cooking and how it causes cancer. Well, the reality is that it all goes back to a grade 8 student who used a friend who worked at the National Institute of Health for a grade 10 science project. It had nothing to do with it being cancer-causing. In fact, the only time you get chemicals leaching out of this is when you utilize olive oil as the standard because it develops the highest temperatures. After an hour and a half on high in the best microwave on the commercial market, you would get very limited chemicals re-

leased from that. The testing was done in great detail, because how many moms use that over a bottle or whatever for baby formula and so on.

Again, we should be very cautious of what we see on the Internet, take it with a great grain of salt, utilize all of the safe computing procedures we have mentioned about passwords and personal information. Don't send pictures. Of course, all of us have our pictures on the government Web site, but in general and especially for children, this really isn't a bright thing to do. Be very cautious about where you are going and what you do.

The merging -- I don't know if it's a corporate merging -- of things like Facebook, Google or MySpace, if people here are familiar with them -- in fact these aren't the most popular groups in the world. There are other Web sites, the names of which I don't have in front of me, in Europe, Asia and the U.K. If you are on one of these servers, you can't really communicate with the others. It was announced on Tuesday that these are starting to merge, so if you are into one, you can communicate with friends in other jurisdictions.

The interesting twist to this is that they will be tracking the things you put in, your personal information. A good example that was given in one radio comment on this was that you may have a great interest in spelunking and don't necessarily want that generally known, except within your group. Well, guess what? It's going to get picked up now and you're going to start getting all the advertising that keeps appearing on these websites, all aimed toward your interest. If you have an interest in convertible cars, guess what? You'll start getting ads for the Toyota Solaris and this sort of thing.

Be very cautious of these things. There are huge privacy issues, which are magnified when you put them in terms of children who aren't as Web savvy. I would again point out that so many adults -- children of all ages -- aren't any better.

That's all I really wanted to say. It's a good move to put this together. We support it on this side and I'd like to get it to a vote today.

Mr. Edzerza: I'm not going to bring out any more issues that have already been mentioned. Everything was pretty well covered but, just for the record, I would like to state: how time changes. I can remember quite well when I was young. We never had computers; we never even had a television. But we found things to do, other than sit and watch television or play around on a computer.

I know it's what we know as progress, but sometimes progress brings a lot of issues up front that create a lot more problems than ever intended when bringing this new technology into play.

I want to say that a very large part of the population doesn't understand. They have no idea or understanding of what computers are used for. They don't understand what the Internet does, let alone try to understand what cybercrime is or what it means.

I'm glad to see, in this motion, that there will be some public awareness campaign, because that's what has to happen. There are so many examples of real scary experiences connected to the Internet. It makes one wonder why one even

would have a computer in their home. It's very scary; it's the unknown that seems to really hurt people. I know that most First Nation parents -- who are in my age bracket, mind you -- have no idea on why their children can stay on the computer for hours. For example, I've never been on a chat line even to this day. I don't even know how to get on it. I'm not interested in it.

Some parents probably thought their children were just getting education because that's what we know a computer is for -- to educate you. However, some later found out that their children were talking to total strangers on chat lines. I had one lady say to me, "What the heck is a chat line? What does that do? What is it?" They just don't have any idea.

I know my wife and I try our best to discourage, especially our grandchildren -- our children are grown up -- but we try to discourage them from even going on the chat line, let alone all the other things that a young person can get connected to. We also know that you can't police children 24 hours a day; you can't supervise them 24 hours a day. This appears to be very addictive. I know some people who spend hours and hours, every spare minute they have, they're on the chat line. Personally, I don't understand what's interesting in it, but some people are very addicted to it.

I also want to bring to the attention of the Assembly that this mouse pad that was introduced to the Legislature today -- I have never seen this before. So, I kind of wonder how many more people out in the general public have not seen this mouse pad.

Maybe one should have been put in every mailbox. I know all kinds of junk mail make it to every household, so something as informational as this mouse pad should have also been considered. Maybe the Minister of Economic Development wasn't generous enough with his multi-million-dollar budget. That's one possibility.

However, I think it's very informational and I would have liked to have had one in my house. I would like to know where I would get one from -- from the Women's Directorate? I will have to check it out.

Anyhow, that's all I wanted to put on record. I know I support anything that can prevent children from being exploited in all these horrendous areas that affect them forever, once they are involved with them.

Hon. Mr. Rouble: It's my honour to rise today to stand in support of the motion put forward by the Member for Klondike. I would like to thank him for raising this issue. Hopefully, we can raise the profile of this topic so that more people become aware of it, more people look into it, and more people take action to protect their children and themselves.

I am happy to support this motion today to support a public awareness campaign on best practices for safe use of the Internet, to strike an advisory committee of concerned stakeholders and work with the federal and other provincial and territorial governments to explore legislation and regulatory options to further protect children.

When we look at this, really what we are looking at is the amount of information that is getting out there and the access to information and the content that is available to our children. I

found a very interesting statistic the other day: 94 percent of Canadian children are connected to the Internet from their homes.

Thirty percent of Canadian children have their own personal computer. That is in addition to the computers that they have access to at school. Here in the territory, we are very fortunate to have a 2:1 computer per student ratio in our schools. There is one computer for every two students, which is a great asset in our school system. It is wonderful that we're teaching our children how to use these technologies, because they are there. They exist and they are a wonderful tool that, when used properly, will serve to enhance their learning and enhance their communication skills. It is unfortunate that, like any other tool, it can also be used for less than positive purposes.

On the subject of media, 78 percent of children watch TV daily. Almost half of them have their own TV. That's another important change. The speaker before me mentioned that when he grew up, he didn't have TV and wasn't familiar with computers. Not only are televisions and computers pervasive in our homes, but they are now usually in our children's bedrooms, where they have access to them often without parental supervision.

Now kids spend their time text messaging, instant messaging, blogging, using Facebook, swapping MP3s, shopping on eBay, visiting chat rooms and managing their own personal Web Sites. They have mastered these new technologies effortlessly and now spend their time multi-tasking through a complex mix of sound, graphics, text and images. They have become masters at managing, creating and distributing digital information.

We must recognize that it's our job to ensure that these kids, as well as the general public, develop an awareness and understanding of how this media can be used and educate our children so they become media-literate.

I'm happy to be able to report that there have been very few cyberbullying incidents to date in Yukon schools. I can tell you that each and every one of these cases is taken very seriously and is addressed in a very timely manner, right at the school level. We know that cyberbullying is an aspect of cyber-literacy. Students and parents need to be educated about how a student's choices in behaviour in cyberspace can have a potential impact on their safety. Their behaviour in cyberspace can also have an impact on their future education and employment options, and they need to be aware of this too.

Comprehensive resources to deal with this important and ongoing issue have been available in Yukon schools for over 10 years. Beginning in 1996, the Department of Education began offering Internet awareness programming to parents and school councils. This program was specifically focused on keeping kids safe and secure when on-line.

As well, the Yukon Department of Education has developed and delivered two professional development sessions -- known as "in-services" -- on this topic. The information and communications technology and the integrated resource programs for kindergarten to grade 7 and grades 8 to 10 were both delivered to public schools in September 2007.

Both of these professional development in-services -- the information and communications technology and the integrated resource programs -- addressed responsible and ethical on-line behaviour. Both of these curricula identified specific skills students must possess to critically analyze on-line content, and skills to assess the risk of entering into social networking environments, and the need to understand and practice ethical, responsible on-line behaviour.

Mr. Speaker, Yukon students need to develop these critical thinking skills and the good judgement to be able to understand and apply ethical and responsible on-line behaviour as part of the skill set that Yukon students require to be successful in this increasingly media-based world.

This year new Yukon-developed curricula that has been developed and introduced from kindergarten to grade 10 addressing ethical and responsible on-line behaviour. In addition to the new curriculum, each teacher has access to a wide range of media-awareness resources, including comprehensive presentations, background information, speaking notes, and follow-up exercises for the students.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to share with you some of the workshop topics that teachers have at their fingertips to help kids develop this cyberliteracy. The topics include: Growing-up on the Net, Critical Thinking Skills for Web Literacy, Kids for Sale: On-line Privacy and Marketing to Kids, Cyberbullying, Safe Passage: Teaching Kids to be Safe and Responsible On-line, Fact or Folly: Authenticating On-line Information -- which is a subject that the Minister for Economic Development just brought to the table here. Also, there is information available on Exploring Media & Race: Deconstructing On-line Hate.

The technology-assisted learning program has published a resource that links 44 links for students, parents and teachers on the topic of Internet safety. This is available at the YESNet Web site. Mr. Speaker, through this Web site there are sites that provide information for students, teachers, parents and educators. It is a great resource and I would encourage all members, if they have the opportunity, to visit it and find out more about the information. Our challenge isn't always to create the information, but to help to disseminate and to provide it to parents, students and teachers.

Mr. Speaker, the Yukon also participates in National Media Education Week, which is hosted this year from November 6 to 9. This year, the event is focusing on e-parenting. E-parenting is a key responsibility of today's net-generation parents. It's about understanding young people's cyberculture and being actively involved in their Internet usage.

Media awareness is launching a new program called MNet. During National Media Education Week, MNet will feature a national school-based program called Parenting the Net Generation to educate parents about kids' Internet use. Parenting the Net Generation workshops will be available throughout Canada until July 31.

Media educators help to shape our young people from being passive consumers of media messaging to active consumers who can apply critical thinking skills to analyze and access messages. Media education will help our kids recognize bias,

stereotyping and racism in the media. It will help them differentiate between media violence and real-world violence. They will learn to read between the lines of junk-food advertising and real-food advertising. They will learn how to question the connection between having a positive self image and interpreting the glamour and entertainment industry. They will learn to see the difference between stereotypical families on TV and families in the real world.

This is a very extensive topic and one that we could discuss for days on end, as the Member for Porter Creek South stated earlier. This is such a challenging issue and one that is constantly changing and one that we always need to be on top of.

I think we can pass a very positive message by unanimously supporting this motion, creating additional awareness about this topic and really working with Yukoners, the affected stakeholders, and especially with parents, on how we can better protect our children.

I would like to say a lot more, Mr. Speaker, but I would also very much like to bring this to a vote today, because I trust that we can all stand up and support this. I think we can all send a message that, yes, the Legislative Assembly can work together and that we can, again, pass a unanimous motion that sends a strong message.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Nordick: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to thank all members of this Assembly for their support of this motion, for the government to:

(1) develop a public awareness campaign in conjunction with the RCMP to inform Yukoners, especially children, parents and educators, of best practices for safe use of the Internet, and of counselling and support available for victims of cyber-crime; and

(2) strike an advisory committee of concerned stakeholders; and

(3) work with the federal and other provincial and territorial governments to explore legislative and regulatory options to further protect children.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Are you prepared for the question?

Some Hon. Members: Division.

Division

Speaker: Division has been called.

Bells

Speaker: Mr. Clerk, would you please poll the House.

Hon. Mr. Fentie: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Agree.

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Kenyon: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Rouble: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Lang: Agree.

Hon. Ms. Horne: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Hart: Agree.

Mr. Nordick: Agree.

Mr. Mitchell: Agree.

Mr. McRobb: Agree.

Mr. Elias: Agree.

Mr. Fairclough: Agree.

Mr. Inverarity: Agree.

Mr. Cardiff: Agree.

Mr. Edzerza: Agree.

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

Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

Motion No. 208 agreed to

Hon. Mr. Cathers: I move that the House do now adjourn.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Government House Leader that the House do now adjourn.

Motion agreed to

Speaker: This House stands adjourned until 1:00 p.m. tomorrow.

The House adjourned at 5:28 p.m.