

**Yukon Legislative Assembly
Whitehorse, Yukon
Wednesday, April 18, 2012 — 1:00 p.m.**

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

Prayers

DAILY ROUTINE

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

Tributes.

TRIBUTES

In recognition of the Special Olympics

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Mr. Speaker, on Saturday evening a number of my government colleagues and I attended the annual Special Olympics gala dinner and fundraiser. What I would coin as an incredibly successful evening turned out to be even more special when it was announced that Yukon's own Special Olympics athlete, Michael Sumner, will be competing next year as a member of Canada's training squad at the 2013 Special Olympics World Winter Games to be held in PyeongChang, Korea from January 29 to February 6, 2013.

A talented figure skater, Michael Sumner earned his spot on Canada's team, thanks to his gold medal performance at the Special Olympics Canada Winter Games in St. Albert, Alberta earlier this year. Competing in the men's freestyle skating event, Michael gave a great performance, which won over the crowd and the judges, on his way to his well-deserved gold medal. As Yukon's sole athlete on the team, Michael will be in good company as Canada has traditionally fielded a very strong Special Olympics team at the World Games. A student at F.H. Collins Secondary School here in Whitehorse, Michael balances achieving his best in school with excelling in his sport. He trains in Whitehorse with figure skating coach Michelle Gorczyca, who has contributed so much as his development as an athlete.

Like all high-achieving athletes, Michael's natural talent, dedication to his sport and his hard work are keys to his success in figure skating. This May Michael will travel to Toronto where he will join his Team Canada teammates and begin to work with national team coaches to prepare for the World Games.

Over the months leading to January 2013, Michael will be training super hard to get ready for these major international games. I am sure that the adventure of travelling to Korea and skating with the best of the best in the world will be inspiration enough for this wonderful young man.

At this time I would like to acknowledge the great work of Special Olympics Yukon and all coaches, the organizers, the volunteers and the supporters who help, day in and day out, to provide superb opportunities for our Yukon athletes — in a very supportive environment, I might add.

Today Special Olympics Yukon boasts more than 90 athletes across the territory. The Government of Yukon is a

proud supporter of and contributor to Special Olympics Yukon, which, among other organizations, continues to promote active living through an excellent and inclusive sport and recreation system. Participation in sports and recreation activities through organizations like Special Olympics Yukon encourages personal achievement, teamwork, fair play and mutual respect — qualities that help us be better people and help us live, work and play together better.

Organized sport develops our social networks, connects our communities and promotes vibrant, healthy and sustainable communities.

Like all Yukoners, I take great pride in the accomplishments of our remarkable and successful athletes such as Michael Sumner. Their hard work, perseverance and willingness to challenge themselves is an inspiration for us all. It is young people like Michael who remind us of what is possible, and through their example, they inspire us to strive to be better.

Mr. Speaker, I speak for all of us — that is all Members of the Legislative Assembly — when we wish Michael Sumner every success in the future. He will represent Yukon well — and Canada at that — and we all will be behind him every step of the way as he laces up in PyeongChang next year.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Ms. Taylor: In the gallery here today are a number of guests in support of Michael Sumner and members of Special Olympics Yukon, and I would just like to point out some of them — and there are a few. First, Michael Sumner; Michael's mom Deb Sumner; his grandma Elaine Sumner; Serge Michaud, executive director for Special Olympics Yukon; Jim Tucker, president of Special Olympics Yukon; Amber Church, program director for Special Olympics and also — I should add — Chef de Mission for Team Yukon 2012; Michelle Gorczyca, who could not be here today. She was here earlier. We were just having a discussion with her before, but I did want to recognize her. She is Michael's training coach for the 2013 World Games and also Special Olympics Yukon's figure skating head coach.

Also with us in the gallery here today is Owen Munroe, Team Yukon 2012 and Christopher Lee, also Team Yukon — two superb athletes and Olympians in their own right. Thank you for being here. Also with us is Karen Geiger. Thanks for being here with us. Congratulations again, Michael.

Applause

In recognition of Volunteer Week and Education Week

Mr. Tredger: This is Volunteer Week and Education Week, so it's particularly fortuitous that I rise to pay tribute to school councils, boards and committees on behalf of the entire Legislative Assembly.

School councils, boards and committees are democracy in action and play a vital role in Yukon education. They are elected for two years and, in the case of boards, three years, by people living in the school's attendance area and many are parents of students in the area.

The *Education Act* provides for guaranteed representation on councils for First Nation members, where the population

warrants. These members are instrumental in adding a vital cultural element to discussions and decisions.

The dedicated volunteers influence each school's programming and activities. They review and approve school plans, take part in the hiring of the school's principal and make recommendations on how the school's budget is spent. They determine the length of the school year and take part in resolving questions about staffing needs, renovations and student transportation.

I can speak first-hand about the value of the school council. Their insight, support and direction are critical to a school's development. They put in long hours and work closely with teachers and parents. They are integral to the building of community schools.

The one school board in the Yukon is the francophone school board, which is the administrative head for the one French first language school, l'École Émilie Tremblay. The trustees are elected for three years. School boards have a direct responsibility for the whole operation of their schools. I would like to commend the francophone community for taking on these additional responsibilities.

School councils, boards and committees work not only with their own schools, but also with the Department of Education. School councils and boards provide reflection of their communities. They are the voice of parents and others in the community to provide a source of information and support. They are a critical communication link. This works both ways. The impact that school councils, boards and committees has on departmental policies and actions is recognized, and the government has provided a senior official, a school council liaison, who supports them.

Members of school councils, boards and committees are meeting in Whitehorse for their annual spring conference this weekend. I wish them well in their deliberations and endeavours.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those people serving on school councils, school boards and school committees, and recognize their commitment to education in the territory. Without them, our schools would not be as vibrant and productive for Yukon students. They are making a difference.

Speaker: Introduction of visitors.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Mr. Kent: It is my pleasure today to introduce Mr. Mark Rodgers, senior vice-president of Habitat for Humanity Canada, visiting us from Toronto. No stranger to this House, Arthur Mitchell is here in his capacity as volunteer president of Habitat for Humanity Yukon. Both gentlemen participated in an announcement that the Minister of Community Services and I made this morning about how we have provided land in the various phases of Whistle Bend to that organization.

Applause

Speaker: Are there any returns or documents for tabling?

TABLING RETURNS AND DOCUMENTS

Ms. Stick: I rise to table the following two documents: *Calgary's 10 Year Plan to End Homelessness*, as put out by the Calgary Homeless Foundation, and *Plan to End Youth Homelessness in Calgary*, June 2011, Calgary Homelessness Foundation.

Speaker: Are there any reports of committees?
Are there any petitions for presentation?
Are there any bills to be introduced?
Are there any notices of motion?

NOTICES OF MOTION

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

THAT the Standing Committee on Rules, Elections and Privileges, also known as SCREP, convene a meeting prior to the end of the 2012 spring legislative sitting for the purpose of bringing forward recommendations on the use of electronic devices and the permission of e-petitions, in order to modernize the practices of the Legislative Assembly.

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

THAT this House urges the government to act on its promise made during the 2011 election to pass legislation to manage ATVs in the Yukon wilderness by:

(1) forming a technical committee, comprised of government employees and interest groups, to draft legislation governing the use of off-road vehicles; and

(2) immediately undertaking an educational campaign which focuses on both environmental stewardship of sensitive alpine and wetland areas, and on the safe, responsible and respectful operation of off-road vehicles by all users in the Yukon.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to develop and implement a homeowner protection act that includes mandatory licensing for home builders and contractors and an effective warranty program for new home construction and home renovations.

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

THAT this House urges the Minister of Education to work with the Minister of Health and Social Services to facilitate sharing names of incoming kindergarten-age children, drawn from community health records, with Dawson City kindergarten teachers, in order that they may better engage with and prepare those families for entering the school system.

Speaker: Are there any statements by ministers?
This then brings us to Question Period.

QUESTION PERIOD**Question re: Peel watershed land use plan**

Ms. Hanson: Mr. Speaker, on April 16, I asked the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources to confirm that the Yukon Party government will guarantee that the public will be consulted on the final recommended *Peel Watershed Regional Land Use Plan*, as submitted to the Yukon government and First Nation governments by the commission. The minister's response rebuffed that notion.

Let us be clear about the facts as they pertain to the land use planning process set out in chapter 11 of the First Nation final agreements — 11.6.3.2 of the final agreements makes it clear that government modification, amendment or rejection of the final recommended plan occur after public consultation, not before. Will the minister finally stand in this House and tell Yukoners when consultation on the recommended plan, as required by the final agreements, will begin?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Part of the problem — I'm waiting for a microphone here. The light is not on.

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Hon. Mr. Cathers: You can hear me? I guess the bulb is burnt-out in the light.

Mr. Speaker, since I understand that indeed my microphone is on, what I would point out to the Leader of the NDP is that, in fact, I have answered that question before.

If the member would review the Blues, the member would see that we have an obligation to work with the senior liaison committee before determining the consultation timelines. Once that work has taken place, we will be in a position to announce timelines for final consultation.

Ms. Hanson: Yes, Mr. Speaker. That is why I am raising the question today. The First Nation final agreements are clear. The Peel Watershed Planning Commission was charged with submitting a final plan — it has. The parties, and that includes both First Nation and Yukon governments, are to do public consultation on that plan — not some modified, watered down, or amended version of it, but the final recommended plan, as submitted. The final recommended plan was submitted to the parties on July 24, 2011.

Mr. Speaker, my question to the minister: When will the minister stop telling Yukoners that it is the Yukon Party's unilaterally imposed plan that will be consulted upon when the reality is that, according to the final agreements, the only plan to be consulted on at this time is the final recommended Peel land use plan, as submitted by the commission?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: The problem in engaging in debate with the Leader of the NDP is, in fact, that the leader consistently brings forward assertions to the floor of this House that are not factual, and in some cases, even contradict what that member or some of her colleagues have said in the past. Again, I would remind the member that her own colleague, the Member for Copperbelt South, stood here last fall in the Assembly and acknowledged that at this stage in the process, government has the ability to accept the plan, reject the plan, or modify the plan.

As I have indicated repeatedly to the members of the NDP, the government has indicated we believe that the plan should

be modified. We will be engaging in consultation, including different scenarios and options of how we think the plan can be improved upon. We will also, at all times, continue to remain consistent with our obligations under the final agreements with the First Nations. But as I have stated a number of times before in this House, at this stage in the process, government has an obligation, if it believes improvements can be made, to indicate on what basis it thinks potential improvements could be made and to present those options to the public. That's exactly what we're going to do.

Ms. Hanson: We've heard this before. The minister said, on April 16, that the Yukon Party government had provided direction six years ago on how they wanted the plan to look. Well, Mr. Speaker, the minister was not accurately reflecting the facts.

Yukon government had many opportunities over the years to provide substantive input into the plan. The public record shows that any proposed modifications suggested by the Yukon Party government were so vague as to be unhelpful to the commission despite its request for more clarity and detail. The final agreements speak for themselves. The Yukon Party government has no right to try to persuade First Nation governments or Yukoners otherwise.

The question is simple. When will the Yukon Party government honour the First Nation final agreements, respect the law and bring the final recommended Peel land use plan, not his modified version, to public consultation?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Again, what I would point out to the member is that even her own colleague stood in this House last fall and acknowledged the fact that at this stage in the process, government has the ability to accept the plan, reject the plan or modify the plan — or the parties, I should say, have those rights — the Yukon government for Crown land, and First Nations for the land that is theirs within that area. Again, as we've indicated, we have provided some suggestions and will provide further options around possible modifications. But we will continue to follow the process outlined in the First Nation final agreements and continue to meet our obligations, including not making final decisions until that process is concluded.

One of the suggestions that we have outlined is that we think the proposed plan should perhaps be modified to make it more like the Yukon's only existing regional land use plan, the *North Yukon Regional Land Use Plan*, which manages environmental footprints from all users in a fair, equitable and evidence-based manner. That plan was jointly approved by the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation government and the Yukon government in 2009.

Again, in the final stages of the planning process and during consultations, we will continue to follow our election commitment to seek a final plan for the Peel that protects the environment and respects all sectors of the economy. We will also follow our obligation not to reach final decisions until the process is concluded and we have fulfilled our obligations under chapter 11.

Question re: Off-road vehicle use

Ms. White: As long ago as 1981, surveys done in Yukon found that a majority of Yukoners want proper management of ATVs in the Yukon wilderness. The year 2009 saw the establishment of the Select Committee on the Safe Operation and Use of Off-road Vehicles, which tabled its report in the spring of 2011. As we have been told here before, it is up to the government to accept or reject any or all of the select committee's recommendations. During the election last fall, all candidates supported passing legislation to manage all-terrain vehicles in Yukon's wilderness, if elected — and here we are elected. Concerned Yukoners are right to hold us to our promises. The government has said, yes, it wants to do this work and yet with the ATV season fast approaching we have heard nothing.

Can the government confirm it supports the report of the select committee in its entirety and tell Yukoners when it plans to act on the recommendations?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Indeed, this was an issue that was important in the election and is important in Yukon today. Many Yukoners have a stake and an interest in how the government proceeds with this issue.

Earlier this week, I wrote a letter to the Yukon Conservation Society, as well as a number of other NGO groups that had concerns. We have indicated to them that we will be forming an interdepartmental working group to assess government's existing legislation and regulations and determine how best to address the recommendations made by the all-party committee on off-road vehicle use that the member referenced.

Ms. White: I thank the minister for his answer. Will the government commit to a timeline for drafting this legislation governing off-road vehicle use?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Of course we are interested in moving forward to address the recommendations of the all-party committee on off-road vehicle use. The issues that have been raised by that committee relate to both the environment and the effects of ATVs on the environment, as well as safety and responsible riding of off-road vehicles.

In terms of assessing our options, as I said, we have formed an interdepartmental working group to assess our options and review our existing legislation and regulations to determine how best to proceed and how best to address the recommendations of the all-party committee.

Ms. White: I was looking actually, for a timeline. Legislation takes time and we know this. Meanwhile, the ATV season approaches us as the snow line creeps up the mountains. Private ATV use is one thing, but work-related use of off-road vehicles is another thing. With increased exploration, many employees new to the Yukon may not be aware of Yukoners' long-held concerns about the impact of ATV use or the sensitivity of our environment. There is already accumulated damage to fragile areas and disturbance to wildlife. New trails are being cut with no planning or oversight. The harm is very long lasting.

Will the government immediately start an educational campaign targeting both recreational and work-related ATV use that includes two focuses — the environmental stewardship

of alpine and wetland areas, and the safe, responsible and respectful operation of off-road vehicles by all users in the Yukon?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Thanks to the member opposite for the question. Of course, as I said, we are looking to review our own existing legislation and regulations before we determine whether or not to proceed with or how to proceed with either new legislation, or amending legislation, or changing regulations. We want to make sure of a fulsome understanding of what we have currently. We know that in certain areas we are interested in restricting the growth of trails and limiting ORV use, particularly in sensitive alpine areas that the member opposite referenced. As well, we are interested in looking at our regulations and legislation regarding the safe use and responsible riding of ORVs.

In terms of an educational campaign, I can say that we are certainly interested in moving forward with an educational campaign that addresses all those issues.

Question re: Education teleconferencing

Mr. Silver: Our small rural high schools have the opportunity to share resources through district teaching using teleconferencing. For example, any given school may not have the staff and/or expertise to offer all three streams of mathematics, but by combining classes through teleconferencing, each stream could be offered in every school. As a rural educator, I often advocated for district teaching in this way. For example, Watson Lake could be the community responsible for one pathway in mathematics; Dawson City could be responsible for another one, and we could communicate via this technology. Teleconferencing is an excellent resource that has the potential of being equivalent to one full-time position in every community. Unfortunately, the reality is that the resources actually often lie dormant. The minister spoke of the importance of this technology and some of its successes, and I commend his department for this progress. Could he expand on this? Is this expensive technology, in his opinion, being maximized?

Hon. Mr. Kent: I thank the member for the question. When I spoke yesterday during debate on the Department of Education, I outlined as part of our rural strategy that one of the five pillars is programming, along with locally developed curriculum in the communities, distributed learning, and use of technology. I think there are always more things that we can do. I spoke specifically to two students from Watson Lake who have joined a Physics 12 class via videoconference that is being offered out of F.H. Collins. So I think, although there are some examples of that technology working right now, there are more things we can do to use technologies such as the iPad pilot projects that are taking place at four Yukon schools and other uses of technology, particularly with respect to delivering different classes through videoconferencing.

Mr. Silver: I appreciate the answer from the minister. The Yukon high school curriculum includes three possible math pathways, but the rural high schools usually have only one math specialist. In my career as the high school math teacher at Robert Service School, we rarely offered all three pathways. Since we didn't have the staff numbers, we couldn't actually compete with the variety of courses that are offered in

the urban high schools. As a result, we lost students to Whitehorse schools. If teleconferencing could provide more courses, students would have the same opportunities as Whitehorse high schools and could stay in their home communities.

Will the minister commit funding to curriculum development and programming so that students can get the greatest benefit from this technology?

Hon. Mr. Kent: As I mentioned in my previous answer, that is part of the rural strategy and the work that's being done there and recommendations that came out of a conference that was held last year. One of the pillars, again, is programming. I will wait to hear from the working group and take their recommendations into account when we talk about the better ways to deliver programs such as the three streams of math that the member talks about.

Mr. Silver: I look forward to this working group's results.

Currently, it is difficult to share resources through teleconferencing, because school calendars vary so much between districts. Dawson starts three weeks before the Labour Day weekend. I believe Old Crow and Pelly are the third week in August and Whitehorse schools usually start after Labour Day. This means that a student in Dawson would have to wait three weeks before his or her classes start if the teleconference teacher were in Whitehorse. On top of that, all breaks other than national or territorial holidays, may be different from school district to school district. Scheduled differences are a main obstacle for teleconferencing. Is the minister aware of any departmental plans for coordination among rural schools in teleconferencing? If not, will he consider taking the lead on this coordination?

Hon. Mr. Kent: Again, I thank the member opposite for the question. When it comes to the school calendars, I have asked department officials, of course, to work with the schools.

I've asked the department officials to work with the school councils, as they are the ones that set the school calendar, to coordinate those calendars throughout the Yukon so that we can — even to the point where we are talking about coordinating the bell system throughout the Yukon — deliver those classes that are offered at F.H. Collins to Robert Service School. I know that there are going to be some challenges in coming up with a common calendar, as the member said. Each community, I think, is on a different calendar right now. Whitehorse is coordinated, but when it comes to delivering those types of classes and programs, I have taken the lead. I have instructed the department staff to begin the conversations with school councils so that hopefully, and perhaps as early as this upcoming school year, we will have a coordinated calendar among all Yukon schools.

Question re: Tax credit, children's arts and cultural activities

Ms. Moorcroft: Taxes are on Yukoners' minds these days, given the fast approaching April 30 tax filing deadline. This afternoon this House will be debating whether to establish a Yukon tax credit for parents or guardians of children involved in music, arts or tutoring. Assuming this change mirrors the federal tax credit, our research department has found that the

tax credit is worth about \$35. \$35 won't pay for many piano lessons or art camps, and it is applied equally, whether you earn \$110,000 a year or \$21,800 a year — the total income for someone working 40 hours a week at the new minimum wage of \$10.30 an hour.

Will the government support an amendment to the tax credit motion up for debate this afternoon that is more targeted at directly helping the working poor to access funds for cultural programming?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: The motion we're about to debate talks about mirroring an existing tax credit that occurs with the federal government. The lowest tax rate with the federal government is approximately 15 percent, so by combining the Yukon tax credit, as well, we'll increase that to just slightly over 22 percent. So, combined, on a \$500 credit, people will see a reinvestment of approximately \$110.

Ms. Moorcroft: The Official Opposition is not opposed to tax credits, per se. After all, the NDP brought in the small business tax credit and we supported the caregiver tax credit motion. We do think that government has a larger role to play in society, and as it collects taxes and distributes this common wealth, it has many tools in its fiscal toolkits, other than tax credits, to move toward certain policy goals. Take, for example, the kids' recreation fund that was established by an NDP government in 1999 to provide direct funding of up to \$400 per child for families earning less than \$45,000 a year for recreational and cultural activities.

The fund approach is far more accessible to low income Yukoners than a tax credit that shows up long after the bills are paid.

Mr. Speaker, I am looking for two commitments from this government: Will this government support expanding the kids recreation fund? And will they, through their communications budget, ensure that parents are aware of the fund and what activities are eligible?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: The Yukon government currently has expenditure programs that assist low-income Yukoners in accessing arts, sports and recreation, and certainly the kids recreational fund is one of those programs. That is a fund, Mr. Speaker, which this government has dramatically increased through its history, in terms of being able to support and to target those underprivileged kids, giving them more access.

Ms. Moorcroft: The kids recreation fund, according to the information on the website, is \$200,000 per year and has not increased in a while. According to a recent Environics poll, commissioned by the Broadbent Institute, the vast majority of Canadians are concerned about the growing gap between rich and poor. They are willing to pay higher taxes to fight it, and they want to see government taking the lead on addressing it. A strong majority believe that the growing gap between rich and poor undermines Canadian values.

Mr. Speaker, we know that children living beneath or close to the poverty line miss out when it comes to recreational and cultural activities. As it goes forward with its social inclusion strategy, will this government commit to reviewing the use of fiscal measures like tax credits, direct funding and application-

driven funding to address the growing gap between rich and poor in the Yukon?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Mr. Speaker, I would like to point out for the member opposite that over \$10 million is being invested in support of recreation infrastructure and programming available to all Yukon families. That is contained in this year's budget that we are currently debating on the floor of the Legislature.

Make no doubt about it, this government continues to support active living through infrastructure and programming, as I just mentioned. We continue to provide many activities for free or at a reasonable cost. We provide financial assistance through the kids recreation fund, which this government increased substantially a number of years ago. It is available for children and youth living in low-income situations.

We continue to provide assistance through a variety of funds, such as the health investment fund, the community development fund, Lotteries Yukon and so forth.

We provide annual funding to sports governing bodies. We just spoke about Special Olympics Yukon for example — special recreation groups, through high-performance athletes, coaches and officials. Again, this government does take very seriously the investment in families — and children especially — as well as after-school programming through the Department of Education. We will look anew to certainly enhance funding.

Question re: Affordable housing

Ms. Stick: The housing crisis in the territory has not gone away. A rental market is considered critical when there is below three percent available rental units. The Yukon Bureau of Statistics reports that we are at 1.3 percent. Of 1,010 apartments surveyed, 13 were vacant in March — 13. It's a safe bet they weren't vacant for long, even with an average rent of \$800 or \$900, which is the highest it has ever been. What is this government doing about this summer's immediate, critical vacancy rate?

Hon. Mr. Kent: We on this side of the House recognize that there are challenges with housing all along the housing continuum. That's why previous Yukon Party governments increased the social housing stock by some 40 percent, investing significant dollars — close to \$100 million over the previous eight years, or the first two mandates of the Yukon Party government. There is, of course, initiatives that are underway such as the one initiated by the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources for Lot 262.

We see the private sector stepping up. The Minister of Community Services and I were up in the Ingram subdivision. There is a big hub of activity of multi-family residential units up there. I think one only has to look through the local newspapers to recognize that the private sector is also going to play a big part in helping us solve our housing issues here in the Yukon.

Ms. Stick: We are experiencing the perfect storm in the housing crisis. We have an economy that has resulted in a lack of rental accommodations and high prices for land. Developers are building condominiums and homes that have a high rate of return and are expensive. We are seeing more conver-

sions of rental units to condominiums. The results: increasing prices for housing, high rental costs, low rental vacancies and demolition of rental units to make room for condominiums. Meanwhile, Yukon Housing's Alexander Street apartments stand empty since last summer. The Salvation Army can still only house 16 individuals on their emergency mats, beds or chairs. What plans does this government have for emergency and affordable housing for this summer?

Hon. Mr. Kent: Although the Minister of Health and Social Services is the lead on the Salvation Army file and the Alexander Street file, I have worked with him closely on the Alexander Street Residence. There was a change in the type of clients that are going to be using that facility, which precipitated a change in the overall staffing model and the cost of the renovations that we have to do. So we've very much committed to proceeding and following through on that promise to ensure that Alexander Street is available. Again, the Yukon Party government has worked on a number of initiatives. I did mention in my previous answer that there is a 40-percent increase in the social housing stock in the territory, and significant upgrades to existing housing stock. Again, as we look all along the housing continuum, from the emergency shelters to the social housing to the private rental market to home ownership, we're seeing real expenditures and real dollars identified in this budget — \$35 million for land development so that we can get land in the hands of Yukoners.

Of course, this morning the Minister of Community Services and I, in partnership with Habitat for Humanity, announced land commitments to that organization throughout the development of Whistle Bend. A number of initiatives are underway and a number of initiatives are planned.

Ms. Stick: We have heard about what the Yukon government has done in the past, but I am talking about this summer and the need now. There are people who are not able to afford a place to rent. There are homeless people who do now have places to live. We know about Lot 262; that is only a guarantee of 30 rental units. There is \$13 million of affordable federal money that is still unspent. This lack of a clear, Yukon-wide housing strategy that sets goals, builds partnerships and measures outcomes needs to address these housing needs. Those documents I tabled today speak to those kinds of programs.

What is the plan for housing, for affordable rentals, for the homeless and for workers coming to the Yukon this summer?

Hon. Mr. Kent: The member may not want to hear about the significant investments and accomplishments of the Yukon Party government over the first two mandates, but I think those investments are paying dividends right now. We have 19 units of affordable housing in Dawson City. We have a 48-unit seniors complex on College Drive located at Yukon College.

Those were significant investments made with Canada's economic action plan money and housing strategy money. We have identified funding in this budget for an expansion of Kaushee's Place that will occur in this fiscal year. We have identified money for lot development. We are looking at working and engaging with the private sector, and working with the

City of Whitehorse, First Nations and other municipalities throughout the Yukon to solve the housing problems for Yukon residents. That is why we continue to be thankful for the investments made by previous Yukon Party governments, so that we do have that 40-percent increase in housing. We will continue to make strategic investments and work with the private sector to solve the housing issues that affect Yukoners all along the continuum.

Question re: English as a learned language program

Mr. Tredger: Last fall, I asked the Minister of Education questions on the status of programs for learners who speak English as a learned language — ELL students. The number of ELL students continues to increase. These young students and their families are having a positive impact on our community, in our schools and in our classrooms, but are also presenting many challenges. Support for these children is essential if they are to succeed in their new country and if the student will be integrated into the school system. Extra staffing may be needed, but certainly support and training for classroom teachers and support staff is essential.

What specific measures has the minister taken to meet the needs of ELL students and their teachers in the many schools in our school systems that are housing them?

Hon. Mr. Kent: I don't have updated numbers different from those that I was able to give to the member in our last sitting before Christmas, but just to say again, as of November 17, 2011, there were 157 ELL students at schools throughout the Yukon, mostly here in Whitehorse. Since the previous sitting prior to Christmas, we have established a working group that will look at all aspects of planning for HR and programming support in our schools. I would expect that, through the staffing allocation process, that the English language learners — particularly from the Catholic schools where we're feeling the most pressure from our new immigrants — will be addressed for this upcoming school year.

Mr. Tredger: Since the fall sitting, the minister has had the opportunity to review many of his responsibilities, ELL among them. This is a time of year that planning is done for the new school year beginning next fall. Setting meaningful performance indicators and monitoring student performance are key ways for the department to assess the effectiveness of current initiatives, programs and services. Planning for the future begins with an evaluation of programs and a thorough look at what has transpired.

Has the minister or will the minister, through his committee, evaluate the ELL programs across the school system and make it available publicly?

Hon. Mr. Kent: As I mentioned in my previous answer, there has been a working group established in January of this year to look at all aspects of planning for human resources and programming support in the schools. One example of what we're doing in the department to assist new adult immigrants — Advanced Education has entered into a contract with the multicultural centre to provide free language classes. Advanced Education also works to inform the Public Schools branch when new English language-learning students may be arriving into the system and the Public Schools branch then works indi-

vidually with the school and student to ensure that each learner receives adequate supports.

I think that we have to continue to work and I don't disagree that we also have to set meaningful performance measures, and that's what I expect all of these committees to do. They're evaluated based on their terms of reference.

Mr. Tredger: I realize that the program is developing, but ongoing evaluation must be done in order that gaps in service may be identified and we can work toward continuous progress. We need to know what is working and what more needs to be done. Policy must be developed from this information that is inclusive and responsive to the community involved — in this case, the community of ELL students and their school communities, teachers and staff.

I would ask what criteria and data the ministry is using to base programming on? What policies and programs and goals has the minister set for ELL programs in Yukon schools for this fall?

Hon. Mr. Kent: As I mentioned in the previous answer, the working group was established in January 2012 to deal with the comprehensive human resources review. The staffing allocation committee has been working very well, and I applaud the previous minister for setting that up and adhering to the aspects that are contained within that allocation policy with respect to equity, transparency, predictability, timeliness, responsiveness, accountability, sustainability and viability.

These are very important aspects of the staffing allocation formula when we are considering where to place our human resources throughout the school system. Again, the New Horizons five-year strategic plan began in 2011. Contained in that are performance measures and performance goals, and we will report back on them through our annual reports. I know it's not contained in the annual report that was tabled this year, but I've talked to department officials and once we get some good data, we will be able to insert that into future annual reports.

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

MOTIONS OTHER THAN GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

Motion No. 162

Clerk: Motion No. 162, standing in the name of Mr. Hassard.

Speaker: It is moved by the Member for Pelly-Nisutlin THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to establish a tax credit for parents or guardians of children involved in music, arts or tutoring.

Mr. Hassard: It is with great pleasure that I rise in this Assembly today to speak on Motion No. 162.

This motion urges the Government of Yukon to establish a tax credit for parents or guardians of children involved in music, arts or tutoring. This credit would mirror the children's arts

tax credit in the 2011 federal budget introduced, allowing parents to claim a non-refundable tax credit based on an amount of up to \$500 in eligible expenses per child paid in the year. The credit is available for the enrolment of a child, who is under 16 years of age at the beginning of the year, in an eligible program of artistic, cultural, recreational or developmental activities.

An example of what this might do for Yukoners, in 2007 the Yukon government introduced the non-refundable children's fitness tax credit. The credit mirrored the federal non-refundable credit and was provided to Yukon taxpayers with children under 16 years of age, or under 18 years of age if eligible for the income tax disability amount at the beginning of the year in which an eligible fitness expense was paid. For each eligible child, the taxpayer can claim up to \$500 in allowable expenses. If the child qualifies for the disability amount and is under 18 years of age at the beginning of the year, an additional amount of \$500 can be claimed, as long as the minimum of \$100 is paid on registration or membership fees for prescribed program or physical activity.

In the 2009 tax year, 1,415 Yukoners filed for this credit, which is approximately 5.5 percent of all Yukon tax filers. The credits claimed just over \$750,000 in that year resulting in a benefit of around \$50,000 being provided via the Yukon children's fitness tax credit.

The federal children's tax credit benefit amounted to approximately \$106,000 with a total resulting in around \$156,000 in savings to Yukon taxpayers.

Mr. Speaker, as you can see, this would be very beneficial to the taxpayers of the Yukon. For parents from a community outside of Whitehorse, this would be especially beneficial; I know, because as a father who drove my daughter from Teslin to Whitehorse twice a week for five years so that she could attend dance classes, I would have been more than happy to have been able to take advantage of such a credit.

This is just one more example of this government understanding the needs of Yukoners, and I encourage all members of this Assembly to vote in favour of Motion No. 162, the children's arts amount, and I look forward to listening to all the other comments.

Ms. Hanson: I thank the Member for Pelly-Nisutlin for bringing forward this motion.

As indicated in Question Period, the Official Opposition is not opposed to tax credits and we will support this motion. However, as we indicated also during Question Period, we do have some issues with the motion and with this government's plan to use a tax credit to encourage greater access to music, arts or tutoring for Yukon's children.

We share the goals, but we have some questions as to whether the tax credit method is the most effective and appropriate, and whether or not there could be other measures that would be more effective and appropriate in terms of achieving the goal of encouraging children to be involved in music, arts and to provide tutoring to that end. We believe that the biggest area of concern and where the motion is weakest is that it just doesn't address the persistent and growing gap in incomes.

That growing gap between rich and poor is one of the most profound social policy issues that we must deal with.

As referenced earlier this afternoon, a recent Environics poll commissioned by the Broadbent Institute shows that the majority of Canadians recognize this growing gap and want to see governments acting to close it.

The whole issue of the inequality gap is one phenomenon that has been recognized around the world. This is not unique to the Yukon and governments around the world are being challenged to deal with a growing equality gap, which results in inequality. We know that children living beneath or close to the poverty line miss out when it comes to recreational and cultural opportunities. We believe that we should use the tools of government to address poor children's needs, whether it is for appropriate shelter and food or, in this case, for cultural and recreational opportunities.

The proposal here is for a tax credit, and I think we need to recognize that a tax credit is an amount that is subtracted from your taxes owing. We would question the government and I would be interested to hear from the member opposite: Has the government calculated what level of income would a person need to qualify for this tax credit? The granting of tax credits in some cases — we talk about social inclusion in this territory — to families who can afford to pay for music, art classes and tutoring is hardly a whole-child approach and hardly a wholly inclusive approach. What is the plan — when you start talking about this from a tax perspective — for families who can't afford to pay for these extra classes and activities for their kids?

To that end, our little Official Opposition research team who works so diligently on our behalf, worked through a mock tax filing and found that if the Yukon government basically mirrors — as the Premier said earlier this afternoon — the federal tax approach, the credit will mount to \$35.20 per year. That is \$35.20 paid out long after the bills for piano lessons, art camp, et cetera, are paid. It is a credit of \$35.20 whether someone earns \$110,000 a year or \$21,800 a year. As my colleague mentioned earlier, the \$21,800 is really based on a person working 40 hours a week at the new minimum wage of \$10.30 per hour.

The catch, when we are talking about a tax credit, is that one has to spend, as I understand it, \$500 in activities. So if the person is earning \$110,000, \$500 for an art camp is not a problem. It's an entirely different matter to someone who is just scraping by. In our mock tax filing, our hypothetical Yukoner is a single parent, paying for child care and works 40 hours a week, as I said, at the minimum wage of \$10.30.

So they receive the universal childcare benefit of \$1,200, and they pay a relatively cheap — and this is relatively cheap — \$400 a month for childcare in a day home — not likely to be had at one of the daycare centres. Their total income would be \$21,800.24. Their net income, after childcare deductions, would be \$18,008.24. This basically gives this working single parent a monthly budget of \$1,500. Where does this working parent spend the monthly \$1,500? They need to pay rent. We heard earlier today about the rising rent increases. We have people coming into our office every day telling us about rent increases of 22 percent. Mr. Speaker, that's unconscionable,

but it's happening. We're seeing daily increases to the rents in this territory.

If they have a child, two bedrooms would be nice. If they're lucky, they'll find that two-bedroom apartment for \$800 — so \$800 for rent. If they're careful, they can budget \$400 a month for food and \$400, as I said earlier, for childcare. We're already over \$1,500, so I guess we have to deduct some of the money from food, — or else delay on the rent cheque. There is nothing in the monthly budget for a bus pass.

There are no savings for post-secondary education, for a vacation, for dental work, and there is certainly nothing available for art, music or other cultural activities, let alone what would be determined to be an eligible — as yet undefined — activity.

So, for this working Yukoner, the tax credit applies but it won't be used. Now it may be lovely to have something, but if it's not available to you and if it's not going to address the needs of those who most desperately need access to these kinds of activities, it's not very useful.

We asked in Question Period whether the government would support an amendment to this tax credit motion that's up for debate this afternoon to one that is more targeted to directly assisting the working poor to access funds for cultural programming. The response, to say the least, was tepid. The Premier didn't agree to it. He indicated to us — this was, of course, to be expected — that it would be a mirroring of the federal tax credit program. So, in this case, then, if you can spend the \$500 — if you have that \$500 of disposable income — you'll get roughly \$115 — I think he said \$110 or \$120 or something — back, \$35 of which will be paid by the Yukon government — foregone revenue from us.

So as we said in Question Period, the NDP is not opposed to tax credits, per se.

We, when in government, did some innovative tax credit programming in the past. As mentioned earlier, it was the NDP that brought in the small business tax credit and supported the caregiver tax credit motion. However, Mr. Speaker, we do know that government has a larger role to play in society. As it collects taxes from all of us and distributes what is really the common wealth, it has many tools in its fiscal tool kits, other than tax credits, to move toward certain policy goals.

As my colleague mentioned earlier, it was an NDP government that brought forward and initiated the kids recreation fund in 1999 to provide direct funding of up to \$400 per year for families earning less than \$45,000 a year for recreation and cultural activities. The fund approach is far more accessible to low-income Yukoners than a tax credit that shows up long after the bills are paid, if you can afford to access it in the first place.

We encourage the government to expand the kids recreation fund. Let's look at the \$400 per child; let's look at what are eligible activities, supplies and equipment; and let's promote the fund. Let's make sure parents are aware of the fund and the activities that are eligible under that fund.

As I mentioned, this fund came into effect in 1999, and over the years, about \$1.6 million has been invested and has helped about 6,000 Yukon children. That is a pretty good stat, Mr. Speaker, and one that we should be proud of. But it aver-

aged out over those years, and that breaks it down to about \$120,000 a year and the question is, is that enough?

Contrast that with \$35 not collected by the Yukon government. Should it mirror the federal government's cultural tax credit? If 10,000 tax filers are able to fully utilize the credit, the cost to the Yukon coffers would be about \$350,000. Really, the question is which is more effective? Which is more effective in achieving the objective that I share with the member opposite in terms of trying to ensure and wanting to ensure that all children and their families can access artistic and cultural activities, and sort of grow the whole person? What approach better addresses the lack of opportunity for children living at or near the poverty line? As I referenced earlier, the Environics poll, commissioned by the Broadbent Institute, indicated the vast majority of Canadians are concerned about the growing gap between rich and poor, and are willing to pay higher taxes to fight it and they want government to take a lead on addressing the issues of inequality and of poverty.

A strong majority believe that the growing gap between rich and poor really does undermine what we hold as common Canadian values. So we believe it's time for the Yukon government to review its rules on fiscal measures like tax credits, direct funding and application-driven funding to address the growing gap between rich and poor in the Yukon. As I said earlier and as my colleague spoke earlier, we will support this tax credit, but we expect and we will encourage that down the road in not too few months, we will have a more comprehensive and informed debate on how we as government — as legislators — use our fiscal tool kit to better address important social policy goals.

Hon. Mr. Kent: I'd like to thank the Member for Pelly-Nisutlin for bringing forward this motion here today to the floor of this House. Perhaps I could put a little bit of context around where this motion came from. I attended a meeting of the Whitehorse Elementary School Council — I think it was last week, actually. One of the issues that was brought to my attention was that we had mirrored the federal tax credit when it came to sport and recreation, but we hadn't done so when it came to music or arts or tutoring services.

I'd really like to thank the school council for bringing that to my attention. I was able to speak to the Premier in his capacity as the Minister of Finance and the Member for Pelly-Nisutlin, along with all of my caucus colleagues. We quickly agreed that this is something that we were able to move on and able to move on very quickly. Again, thank you very much to the Whitehorse Elementary School Council for bringing this forward and bringing it to my attention at the meeting I attended last week.

We also have to put a little bit of context around the Leader of the Official Opposition's comments. I think that we as legislators here in the Assembly need to strive to do better. We need to paint that whole picture for our constituents who are listening and for Yukoners who are paying attention to the deliberations in this House.

I know that in budget debates we have had members of the New Democratic Party cherry-picking items out of the budget,

such as the amount of resource royalties that are paid — or collected by the Yukon government, but of course leaving out all of the other revenue that's directly contributed to the government through quartz mining licences and placer mining licences and, of course, the substantial royalties that are being paid by the Capstone Minto mine to the people of the Selkirk First Nation.

We've seen members opposite cherry-pick small amounts out of the Yukon Housing budget such as the —

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Point of order

Speaker: Member for Takhini-Kopper King, on a point of order.

Ms. White: The minister opposite is speaking to questions other than the questions under discussion — Standing Order 19(b).

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

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Mr. Speaker, I don't believe there's a point of order. I think the Minister of Education is providing context that he believes is relevant to the motion under debate.

Speaker's ruling

Speaker: I don't believe there's a point of order. It's hard for me to make a decision at this time until I actually hear all of the comments that the minister has to say — if he's able to wrap it up and bring it back. The minister has the floor.

Hon. Mr. Kent: I would just like the Leader of the Official Opposition, in her remarks, where she was wide-ranging to issues such as the Broadbent Institute and those types of things — I respect her right to speak to what she wants to speak about, so I would expect members to, hopefully, give me the time to bring some context to what I want to say.

Speaking to context around this — and again, I think we as legislators owe it to Yukoners to paint the whole picture.

This tax credit is important, as it will give families an additional amount that they can use when they are paying for music or arts, dance class, or tutoring, but it is only a part of the picture. The Department of Education funds the Learning Disability Association of Yukon or LDAY. It funds their home tutor program. Tutoring services are offered outside school instructional hours at lunch, after school, evenings and weekends.

The department also funds tutoring through the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation and Skookum Jim Friendship Centre. These tutoring programs help many First Nation students from around the Yukon improve their academic abilities. Funding is available to support students in all 14 rural communities as well as Kwanlin Dun, Ta'an Kwäch'än, and rural students attending high schools in Whitehorse. Home tutoring programs are designed to fit the needs of the individual communities. Proposals are developed and funds for hiring tutors are administered by partnerships of local community representatives.

When it comes to music and arts, over the years the Department of Education has supported a variety of music programs throughout the Yukon. The department supports and

utilizes the Yukon Arts Ed-Venture program, which incorporates a range of fine arts such as drama, dance, visual arts and music is in the teaching of core academic subjects. Yukon Arts Ed-Venture focuses on the learning needs of the students by assisting teachers and developing and delivering relevant curriculum, learning outcomes that are reflective and responsive to our Yukon learners, cultures and languages.

Artists work with teachers on an individual basis to develop rich cultural materials and experiences to ensure that learners are meeting curriculum learning outcomes. Together, they're helping students as they develop the knowledge and skills for successful 21st century citizenship. The Arts Ed-Venture program brings MAD into the elementary schools — the music, art and drama course that's currently offered at Wood Street Centre School here in Whitehorse. Those are used by artists to engage students in learning. The sessions develop and enhance critical and analytical skills for each learner. Using art to deliver curriculum provides teachers with tools to ensure the students' physical health and well-being, social competence, emotional maturity, cognitive development and communication skills are being addressed. The success of the learner is at the heart of the philosophy of the Arts Ed-Venture program. In addition, the department also provides funding for the Yukon Summer Music Camp Society and the Rotary Music Festival. MAD, as I spoke of earlier — the music, art, drama and dance program that's being offered at Wood Street Centre School is something that this government also funds and supports. It's a unique performing arts program that provides students with credit courses, including English, social studies, physical education, theatre performance and a choice between several fine arts and applied skills courses.

This program is based out of — as I mentioned — the Wood Street Centre School and is available for all Yukon students. MAD 11 to 12 students receive credits for English, social studies, fine arts and theatre performance, and during the course of the semester prepare three productions. This program is open to those in grades 11 and 12. We also fund the whole child project. In an effort to develop a true community school, including preschool children living in the downtown catchment area, the administration and staff at Whitehorse Elementary School developed a plan to implement a whole child program at the school for the 2001-02 school year. The project is realized through the effective coordination of services from local child serving agencies and institutions and the development of improved community capacity. The project is governed by a board composed of all major partners, including the Department of Education, Department of Health and Social Services, Learning Disabilities Association of Yukon, Council of Yukon First Nations, Yukon Family Services Association and others. The board of the program is seeking funding for a full-time project coordinator.

In September 2006, the whole child program was expanded to Elijah Smith Elementary School and I witnessed first-hand when I attended the school council meeting there along with the Premier — I believe that was in February or March of this year. Some of the key components of the whole child project are a community coordinator, whole child re-

source centre, parenting classes, library program for children and families, a toy-lending library, computer lab access programs, open gym nights, breakfast for learning, family recreation and arts. So, Mr. Speaker, I know the Minister of Community Services will speak to substantial investments —

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Point of order

Speaker: Member for Takhini-Kopper King, on a point of order.

Ms. White: I'm going to reference Standing Order 19(b) again. We're not discussing the topic under order right now. We're referencing from the budget and all the things the government is doing, but we're not talking about the amendment to a tax credit. All the programs mentioned are free or sponsored by the government.

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

Hon. Mr. Cathers: On the point of order, I believe that the Minister of Education is referencing other investments and providing context that he believes is relevant to the motion at hand, just as the Leader of the NDP did earlier in referencing the Broadbent Institute and other matters that she believed were relevant to the topic at hand.

Mr. Elias: On the point of order, Mr. Speaker, I don't believe that there is a point of order. I believe that in the past the Chair has consistently allowed a wide range of discussion during motion debate. I have been here for six years; it is the norm to try to make one's point during Wednesday's motions debate.

Speaker's ruling

Speaker: On the point of order, there is no point of order.

In the Speaker's meeting that we have in the mornings, we have been looking at this over an extended period of time. It has come up among ourselves and we were looking at it.

The member has a limited time to speak. He is to speak to the subject at hand, and how he wishes to tie it all together is entirely up to him. I would ask the member to work to tie it together.

Hon. Mr. Kent: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I believe that speaking to programs provided by the Department of Education, for which I am the minister responsible, with respect to tutoring and music and arts and the whole child program is certainly something that is relative to the motion we are discussing here today.

I am going to wrap it up, Mr. Speaker, and just remind members of the Assembly that we are here doing work on behalf of all Yukoners, and it's important that we provide the full context. I did refer, earlier during debate, to some of the cherry-picking that happens with the budget and how the New Democratic Party is doing that.

I guess, Mr. Speaker, we only have to look to last fall's election and ask the Liberal candidate for Lake Laberge about when some of his comments were taken out of context and placed in NDP election material. He has also experienced that,

so I would just encourage all members to ensure that they paint the entire picture when we are discussing issues of public interest on the floor of the Assembly.

Mr. Silver: I will keep it to the point. I rise on behalf of the Liberal caucus to offer a comment on Motion No. 162. This motion advances the tax credit to offset student expenses related to music, art or tutoring. Participation in arts and music can bring many opportunities to young people, but for some families, high program and associated costs limit these opportunities to grow, explore and to develop. Tutoring can be key for some students, helping them with their course load and learning skills that they'll use throughout their academic careers and beyond. Again, tutoring costs can be high and may inhibit some students from getting the extra help that they need that will position them to excel in the future.

I would be remiss if I didn't mention at this time, like the Minister of Education did, as well, the excellent work that the Learning Disabilities Association of Yukon does in the Yukon in terms of tutoring. I personally have seen hundreds of hours of LDAY-sponsored tutoring at Robert Service School in Dawson City, and my students owe that organization a debt of gratitude. This service hires local educators and provides tutoring free of charge to our students.

On the motion, tax credits such as those proposed in this motion can reduce the ultimate costs of music, art and tutoring activities, making them more accessible to more students. Knowing the value of taking part in these undertakings, we support reducing their costs; however, for this tax credit to be meaningful, we must also ensure that music, art and tutoring programs that are offered through our public school system are adequately resourced themselves. It is in our schools that many children have the greatest early exposure to arts and music. High quality public school art programs provide an inspiration to take part in other paid programs, which this tax credit proposes to make less expensive. As well, for families unable to afford extra expenses related to music, arts and tutoring, even with the tax credit, their children are reliant on our school system for that part of their education.

While we are supporting this motion here today, I also wish to take the opportunity to remind the Minister of Education and all members of the primary importance of these programs within our schools. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Ms. Taylor: I am very pleased to rise in support of this motion before us. I'd like to thank my colleague from Pelly-Nisutlin for bringing forward this motion.

I'm not too sure where to begin, other than, as was discussed during Question Period on the floor of this Assembly — there was some discussion about there being perhaps not enough focus on recreational programs for children and for families — those particularly in need.

I just wanted to say that on a high level — because I want to stay focused on the motion at hand as well — but since remarks have been brought forward by members of the opposition in this regard, I think it's very appropriate to take a little bit of time to share with members opposite all the investments

that the government does make in support of recreation, as well as art and culture. I'll go back a few years. I know there was some discussion about the kids recreation fund. I'm a huge supporter and fan of this particular funding initiative. It has worked very well. It has been very effective over the years. In terms of comments about whether or not we can do a better job of promoting the fund and making it available to families — I agree.

I agree with all those points. The more information and education to promote funding initiatives such as this, the better we are as a society and a community as a whole. I do support that approach, and I thank the Leader of the Official Opposition for her comments in that regard.

It was our government, as I referenced during Question Period, that did take the initiative to acknowledge the contribution of the kids recreation fund and, as such, we were able to place a substantive increase in the kids recreation fund. Of course, currently, it stands at about \$220,000. The fund, as it stands today, is reflected in this year's budget, which we are currently debating. We were able to increase it — I believe it was during the 2005-06 fiscal year, back in the day, when it was sitting at about \$140,000. So it was a substantive increase. We were able to increase it to \$200,000 from \$140,000 at that time and, of course, we have been able to contribute to it ever since then, to where it sits today at about \$220,000.

As I referenced earlier, there are a number of other mechanisms that the Government of Yukon also takes great pride in funding — and I think I alluded to some of those initiatives during Question Period. We work very closely with a number of recreation groups and associations. I should also add that we are also working on revitalizing our Yukon active living strategy, as we speak, which places great emphasis on childhood obesity and the problems and challenges we have today, not just with children within the territory, but children throughout the continent at that.

So one of the things that we are looking at through our revitalized strategy — it is about 10 years since the last strategy was implemented — is to place greater emphasis on after-school programs. So that is one of the very important tenets of this strategy going forward, and we are looking to enhancing what we have available in our respective schools today, which is very important.

Of course, that would be made available to each and every student, regardless of their background or their socio-economic status. In addition to that, we have been able to implement — as I said, in this year's budget, we are implementing a number of initiatives investing in new recreation infrastructure throughout the territory through programming available through our sports governing bodies. We just spoke at great length about Special Olympics Yukon. That's just one example. For the first time, in speaking with the executive director for Special Olympics Yukon recently, they're actually going to be taking their development games outside of the City of Whitehorse to the community of Carcross later on this summer. That's a great thing — being able to reach out to all communities helps revitalize or regain interest in recreation and in participating in initiatives such as Special Olympics.

We, of course, provide a number of different activities for free, whether it's sponsored through organizations, whether it's on the recreation file or even on the arts and culture file. I'll certainly speak to that at greater length.

We help fund a number of mechanisms. I spoke about the kids recreation fund, but also, the health investment fund, the youth investment fund, the community development fund and Lotteries Yukon. I think there was just recently a report was tabled in the Legislature, which points out all the Lottery Commission funding programs for the last fiscal year. It outlines, community by community, support of initiatives sponsored by the community clubs, recreation committees and so forth.

The motion that we speak to really builds upon all of these investments and more. I think it's very important that when we talk about investments in families that — not only investment in recreation and sport — that is also inclusive of art and culture. I know that when I was minister responsible for Tourism and Culture, we worked very diligently alongside the Department of Education in promoting arts in the school. In fact, one of the things that we were able to do was boost the funding allocated to the Artist in the School program.

At that time, it was approximately \$25,000. We were able to boost that to about \$100,000 per year. That has really enabled a substantive degree of new investments in arts programming in all our schools. It has helped enhance wages paid for preparation time for each of our contracted artists performing in each of our schools. It has helped increase the hours of instruction time when it comes to the arts in each of our schools. We've been able to deliver a multitude of different and extended programs as well that weren't necessarily made available. We increased outreach to assist schools in planning projects, and we've been able to expand arts programming in many of our communities outside of the capital city. We've been able to, as a result of that ongoing investment, invest in comprehensive resources for schools to use and to reference other art and education programs made available.

I think it is very important to pay tribute to funding mechanisms such as this, because it is important that we reach out to students within schools and outside of the schools during school hours and beyond that, as well.

Likewise, I know that, in addition to Artist in the School program, there is also Artist in the School touring program, the Art Ed-Venture program. Those two are also as offered by the Department of Education. They combine to offer Yukon children a rounded approach to learning and the arts. As has already been stated on the floor of the Legislature, I think it is very important that when we look at providing education — and this is Education Week — we look at all forms of experiences to the degree of learning and teaching so that we can help reach out in a responsive manner to all children in our schools to encourage creativity and exploration, and in doing so, improve the overall student performance of our children.

So, I do want to just make reference to that and how those particular investments are helping make a difference in the lives of many children.

There has been a lot of talk about tax credits. This government has invested in tax credits over the last nine years and will continue to invest — business case or by case by case. I'll just again make mention that our government continues to not increase taxes. In fact, we've held the line on taxes for nine years and will continue to do so. We've been able to invest monies when it comes to tax credits for child tax credits. We talked about other credits that have been made available over the years. Of course, when it comes down to other support mechanisms, whether it's our seniors' income supplement, whether it's our own homeowners grant — again, these are all initiatives that we continue to make available for families, which we're very pleased to support.

So I don't want to go on at great length other than to say that we very much support this initiative — the tax credit going forward in support of the arts and in support of tutoring and in support of cultural activities.

Its intended purpose is to mirror the federal non-refundable tax credit provided to children under 16 years of age. The one thing I do want to say is that this does supplement the investments already made and are continuing to be made by the Government of Yukon on a number of different fronts. I certainly look forward to receiving comments made available from members opposite and certainly look forward to receiving the support of all members in moving this initiative forward and looking forward to discussing other timely initiatives.

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: I rise today on Motion No. 162 to give my support to that motion. I'm losing count of how many times this side of the House has felt disappointed in the conduct we hear from the NDP on the other side of the House — the continued interruptions and catcalling that goes on really, Mr. Speaker, at those times when we are discussing and talking about things that maybe they don't like to hear.

In the context of the self-appointed official timers on responses to questions and their remarks that go on that are out of order to try to remind people who have the floor to —

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Point of order

Speaker: The Leader of the Official Opposition, on a point of order.

Ms. Hanson: Mr. Speaker, this is clearly Standing Order 19(b) — this has nothing to do with the matter at hand.

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

Hon. Mr. Cathers: The member herself has stood up and made similar criticisms of members opposite on matters. The same degree of latitude is typically applied to both sides. I don't believe there is a point of order.

Speaker's statement

Speaker: On the point of order, once again, it is very difficult for the Chair to make a decision on whether or not the person is speaking to the motion or not until the member has finished speaking. I would hope that all members would take this into consideration. When you're starting to make your opening remarks, try and tie them into the subject at hand.

We'll be looking at this in the Blues, and I will be, if necessary, issuing a full ruling on it.

Hon. Premier, you have the floor.

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: As I was saying, it is really about the ability of the NDP to selectively cherry-pick what they want to talk about, and I think the Minister of Education gave a very strong example of trying to paint a picture with only a small portion of the actual story. As we have heard, through practice, this side of the House has respected the members opposite to be able to express their opinions and their views during debate. However, unfortunately, they seem unable to reciprocate with the same courtesy to this side.

For example, the Leader of the Official Opposition talked about the Broadbent Institute, which to me, quite clearly, is contrary to most economists in the western world, in terms of where their opinions are. You know, I think that what we are really talking about is tax reduction and really creating investments and jobs through tax reduction. We only have to look as far as our federal government, in terms of the strategy that they implemented since coming into power five or six years ago, in the reduction of personal taxes and the reduction of corporate taxes and where this country sits on an economic scale when compared to other nations in the world.

It has given us the opportunity to be part of the solution to be able to create jobs and create wealth, which allows us, then, to deliver on programs that are important to people, such as health, such as education, and such as helping those people who are, unfortunately, unable to help themselves. This is created through the opportunity of creating a strong economy and strong investments within this territory and country, which allows us to do exactly that.

This motion and this tax credit really is assisting working families and reducing their tax burden. As the Minister of Community Services just mentioned, we've had a record, since coming to power, of not increasing taxes. We are committed to not increasing taxes. Here, again, is an example of where we continue to reduce the tax burden to put more money in working people's pockets and allow them to make the decisions on what they choose to do with that money — whether to invest it in a savings account or reinvest it within our local economies. An example is the motion that we're talking about today — the motion that we had previously — unanimous support for the caregivers tax credit or the one we spoke of where we removed the cap on limits for health and disabilities that was to come into effect in the tax year 2011.

The Yukon has a history of establishing non-refundable tax credits when they are warranted and after special consideration that mirrors the federal legislation. For example, in 2007, the Yukon mirrored the federal non-refundable children's fitness credit. The credit mirrored federal non-refundable credit and was provided to Yukon taxpayers with children under 16 years of age or under 18 years of age if eligible for the income tax disability amount at the beginning of the year in which an eligible fitness expense was paid. For each eligible child, the eligible taxpayer can claim up to \$500 in allowable expenses. If the child qualifies for the disability amount and is under 18

years of age at the beginning of the year, an additional amount of \$500 can be claimed as long as a minimum of \$100 is paid on registration or membership fees for a prescribed program of physical activity.

In the 2009 tax year, 1,415 Yukoners filed for this credit. This makes up about 5.5 percent of all Yukon tax filers.

The credits claimed totalled \$753,000 in that year, resulting in a benefit of about \$50,000 being provided via the Yukon children's fitness tax credit. The federal children's fitness tax credit benefit amounted to approximately \$106,000. This resulted in a total tax savings of approximately \$156,000 to Yukoners as a result of the combined Yukon and federal children's tax credits.

As I just mentioned briefly, effective in the 2011 tax year, there no longer is a subject to \$10,000 limit on eligible expenses related to financial dependent relatives when claiming the Yukon medical expense tax credit. As a result of this, caregivers who incur extraordinary medical- and disability-related expenses will receive full tax recognition for these expenses.

Prior to 2011, caregivers who incurred medical- and disability-related expenses for an aging parent, sibling or other financially dependent relative, were not able to claim expenses above \$10,000. Just here in this session and through unanimous support of the House, Yukon is now providing, effective January 1, 2012, a \$2,000 tax credit for caregivers caring for relatives with a disability, including seniors and adults with severe disabilities.

This tax credit will provide tax relief for caregivers of all types of infirm dependent relatives, including, for the first time, spouses, common-law partners and minor children. Yukoners will be able to claim the enhanced amount for an infirm dependant under one of the following credits: the spouse or common-law partner credit, the child tax credit, the eligible dependant credit, the caregiver credit, or the infirm dependant credit.

Speaking to tax credits, I just thought I'd take an opportunity to list some of the tax credits that the Yukon government does provide to Yukoners. There is a basic tax credit for everybody who files their income tax. There is a basic federal tax credit; there is a basic Yukon tax credit. There are spousal tax credits for those spouses who earn less than \$10,527 every year; eligible dependants are children under 18 years of age; caregiver, infirm dependants; Canada employment; adoption expense; children's fitness amount that we've talked about; pension and disabilities.

There is a long, long list — public transit and many different tax credits that this government does provide and, of course, charitable donations and gifts that we, as a government, continue to provide to Yukoners. It is giving back to families and allowing them flexibility to be able to make more decisions on how to spend their money.

Recently, in the 2011 federal budget, Canada introduced a non-refundable children's art tax credit, known as the children's art amount. This tax credit allows parents to claim a non-refundable tax credit based on an amount of up to \$500 in eligible expenses per child paid in a year. This credit is available for the enrolment of a child who is under 16 years of age

at the beginning of the year in an eligible program of artistic, cultural, recreational or developmental activities. For a child who is under 18 years of age at the beginning of the year and is eligible for a disability tax credit, the 15-percent non-refundable tax credit may be claimed on an additional \$500 disability supplement amount when a minimum \$100 is paid in eligible expenses. Eligible activities include literary arts, visual arts, performing arts, music, media, languages, customs and heritage, and activities that provide enrichment or tutoring in academic subjects. This measure applies to the 2011 and subsequent taxation years.

As the Minister of Community Services mentioned, we, in fact, currently have a number of programs to assist lower-income families to access arts, sports and recreation. Now, I ask my colleagues to join me today in urging this government to establish a non-refundable tax credit that would mirror this effective and appreciated federal legislation to assist Yukoners who care for their children in the pursuits of arts, music, tutoring and other valued cultural activities. So I'm proud to support Motion No. 162 today, and I urge all members to do so.

I'd also like to thank our Member for Pelly-Nisutlin for bringing this motion forward. I'd also like to thank and acknowledge the Department of Finance for the professional people who work hard every day on behalf of all Yukoners and do the work to put this together. With that, I commend this motion to the House.

Hon. Mr. Nixon: I'd like to thank the Member for Pelly-Nisutlin for bringing this motion forward. I believe that establishing a tax credit for parents or guardians of children involved in music, arts or tutoring is a good move for Yukon.

I'd like to also begin my comments today by talking about the federal tax credit that Yukon's credit will mirror. To help with the costs associated with children's arts activities, Canada proposed to introduce a children's arts tax credit. The credit will be available for a wide range of activities that contribute to a child's development and are not eligible for the children's fitness tax credit. Like other Canadians, Yukoners enroll their children in artistic, cultural, recreational and developmental activities. These activities contribute to a child's development.

Unlike fitness-related items, Canadians and Yukoners were not able to claim some of these expenses associated with children's arts activities. Canada's children's arts tax credit builds on Canada's actions to help parents and their children. Under the federal model, parents will be able to claim the 15-percent non-refundable children's arts tax credit, up to \$500 of qualifying expenses per child incurred in 2011 and future years for a child who is under the age of 16 at the beginning of that tax year to qualify.

I am pleased by this motion. As the minister responsible for arts and culture, I have been learning more about Yukon's rich and rewarding legacy in the area of arts and culture. I would like to come back and talk about using this credit to promote activities like art, languages, music, painting, photography, sculpture and sewing. These are all areas that are promoted by the culture branch of the Department of Tourism and

Culture. This tax credit will help us encourage young people to explore our culture.

I would like to talk for a few minutes about our Cultural Services branch. Cultural Services is dedicated to the preservation, development and interpretation of Yukon's heritage resources and to fostering the growth and impact of the territory's visual, literary and performing arts. On our website are links to learn more about our programs and to explore the rich and diverse arts, heritage, history, and culture of Yukon.

I would like to mention some of the areas that are very interesting on the cultural side. We have Yukon Archives, which I think is one of the great hidden gems of our department. The Yukon Archives acquires, preserves and provides access to the Yukon's documentary heritage. Photocopy, map, and photograph reproduction services are available.

When I toured the facility, I was very impressed by the holdings and by the staff who manage them. These are impressive. I'd like to mention that Archives can also order reference material for patrons from other institutions through inter-library loans. I just want to mention one area that caught my attention. One of the areas noted above that is eligible for the credit would be photography. As members know, I am the Minister of both Justice and Tourism and Culture.

I was introduced to the photographs of Claude Tidd, an RCMP member stationed in the Yukon. Photography was much more than a hobby for Claude — it was a calling. He brought impressive professionalism to his avocation as a photographer and his photographs are impressive. This is a great example of someone finding a hobby they really enjoy. Because of his recreation, we have a tremendous treasure of photographic record for Yukon. It really is a neat story, and I won't spoil it by giving away the ending, but I encourage all Yukoners to check out the story and the associated exhibit at www.yukonromance.ca.

I also want to mention the historic sites and museums sections within the department. I'm looking forward to exploring more of these sites and facilities over the course of the summer, and I hope other Yukoners get to experience these themselves. I also toured the heritage resources section, which is comprised of archaeology, paleontology, and geographical place names. I'm really enjoying learning more about this unit, and it's my hope that we can find ways to engage our children.

The arts section's mandate is to support and encourage the development of the visual, literary and performing arts in Yukon. The children's tax credit, as laid out, is a helpful aid in encouraging young people to explore the arts. It fits with some of the other programs we have to encourage the arts in Yukon. We accomplish this through programs that enhance public appreciation of the arts and assist artists, arts organizations and arts collectives in the pursuit of their goals.

We have the arts fund, which is for groups, societies and collectives. We have the advanced artist award. This is for individual artists. We just had the spring intake on April 1.

The fall intake is October 1. The touring artist fund is for individual artists and ensembles. We have four intakes a year: on the 15th of March, June, September and December.

The arts operating fund is for registered, non-profit arts organizations. The annual intake was February 15 and I just signed off on some letters earlier this week, Mr. Speaker.

We have Culture Quest which is for individual groups and we have the permanent art collection. The annual intake is in the fall. I see this tax credit as one more way we can encourage and support Yukoners in exploring the arts. In previous years, we had the Yukon student visual art program. This program was for all students under 18 years of age attending a public school in the Yukon. Approximately 50 works of art were selected and exhibited in the Department of Education building in Whitehorse — a second round of jury-selected work for the permanent collection of student art. The permanent collection of student art is a body of art work that belongs to the Department of Education. The collection is as diverse and creative as the children who produced the work.

The visual arts assistant from the arts section facilitates the conservation and administration of the collection. The student art collection hangs in the hallways and some offices in the Department of Education in Whitehorse and Dawson City. It is professionally framed with accompanying identification plaques. We had some of these pieces of work in our offices here. I enjoy admiring the talent of these young Yukoners. A tax credit would help encourage more young Yukoners to explore the arts, and I think that it's a very good thing.

We often talk about ways to promote and pass on our cultural traditions, and I want to mention one particular area where I think this tax credit would have a tremendous impact. One of the documents that crossed my desk was related to the exhibit during the Arctic Winter Games of "Sewing Our Traditions". For this special Arctic Winter Games exhibition, the curators also included dolls from the circumpolar north. Each doll has its own character and individuality that reflects the dollmaker's personality and community landscape. Together, the dolls tell a story and provide a testimony of our unique culture of the north from a brightly coloured cloth doll from Yamal, Russia, to painted Greenlandic dolls, to tiny intricate details like bead moccasins and locally trapped fur and home-tanned hide. These were truly exceptional examples of fine crafts from across the north. The dolls represented historical and contemporary perspectives on northern traditions, fashion and culture. They were brought together by the Yukon Arts Centre for the Vancouver 2010 Cultural Olympiad through the generous support of these three territories.

I might add that I would like to extend a very heartfelt thanks to the great staff at the Yukon Arts Centre. They do an exceptional job up there. This exhibition was the first of its kind to highlight this Inuit and First Nation art forum and northern garment design. I think it would be great if we could get more northern kids, more Yukon kids, to get involved in this art form. It's something that is truly special to the north. This is a good motion. I recommend that all members of this Assembly support it and again I thank the member for bringing this motion forward on the floor today. Thank you.

Speaker: Is there any further debate?

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

Mr. Hassard: Thanks to everyone in the Assembly for their time and input on this very important subject of Motion No. 162. I look forward to taking this motion to vote, and I look forward to unanimous support. Thank you.

Speaker: Are you prepared for question?

Some Hon. Members: Division.

Division

Speaker: Division has been called.

Bells

Speaker: Mr. Clerk, please poll the House.

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Agree.

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Kent: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Nixon: Agree.

Ms. McLeod: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Agree.

Mr. Hassard: Agree.

Ms. Hanson: Agree.

Mr. Tredger: Agree.

Ms. Moorcroft: Agree.

Ms. White: Agree.

Mr. Barr: Agree.

Mr. Elias: Agree.

Mr. Silver: Agree.

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

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

Motion No. 162 agreed to

Motion No. 163

Clerk: Motion No. 163, standing in the name of Ms. McLeod.

Speaker: It is moved by the Member for Watson Lake

THAT this House urges the Government of Canada to ensure that Yukoners continue to have access to CBC AM Radio and CBC TV by requiring the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation to:

(1) provide AM Radio service by relocating its Whitehorse tower and continuing to broadcast CBC Radio One on the AM 570 band; and

2) continue to transmit CBC TV in both English and French in Yukon.

Ms. McLeod: It gives me great pleasure to speak to this motion. It calls on the Government of Canada to ensure that Yukon citizens continue to have CBC AM Radio and TV.

The CBC is a national treasure. It must continue to survive; it must continue to serve the north; and it must continue to broadcast on the AM band.

Mr. Speaker, I do not pretend to be an expert on AM/FM technology, but I do know this: FM signals are unreliable, sometimes unavailable for days, and are not always received clearly. This is true in southeast Yukon; it is true outside of Whitehorse; and it is true in many other parts of the north. I have been driving late at night, far from a broadcasting source, and have still been able to pick up CBC Radio, and that is a comforting thing.

As we are all aware the federal budget released earlier this month, cut the funding of this essential service to the tune of \$115 million over three years. Part of CBC's response to this is to plan for job cuts and an early cessation of the AM-band broadcasting by July 31 of this year. The north relies on CBC radio and television for news, weather, current events and Canadian discussions on Canadian topics. As taxpayers, we have invested many, many billions into the CBC. This is our national network, there to distribute quality Canadian programming for Canadians. Many northerners — many taxpayers — want this service to continue. We don't believe that the 1.7 percent of Canadians receiving CBC using analog technology are insignificant. To that 1.7 percent, having the ability to receive CBC broadcasting is a lifeline to the world. CBC reports that shutting down analog service will save them \$10 million. I understand that cutting this service may be fiscally prudent for CBC in a minor way, considering their entire budget, but it doesn't qualify as doing the right thing. It wasn't the right thing in 2009 and it's not the right thing now.

It has become necessary to perhaps relocate the CBC's Whitehorse tower and this government is willing to work with CBC to find a suitable location.

In 2009, there was unanimous support in this Assembly for a similar motion for continued service to the north and, again, I urge all members of this Assembly to support this motion. Thank you.

Mr. Barr: I do have a few comments regarding this issue and the motion. I'll just speak to this by saying that this House urges the Government of Canada to ensure that Yukoners continue to have access to CBC AM Radio and CBC TV by requiring the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation to: (1) provide AM Radio service by relocating its Whitehorse tower and continuing to broadcast CBC Radio One on the AM 570 band; and (2) continue to transmit CBC TV in both English and French in Yukon. We support parts of this motion and will be bringing forward an amendment to improve it.

The Official Opposition fully supports the CBC. We support our public broadcaster. The NDP certainly agrees with the importance of the CBC and on its vital role in connecting us and telling our Canadian stories. It's extremely important to the little guy — the Yukoner on the trapline who has no other way to connect with the outside world — and many neighbours of mine in rural Yukon who can't afford the \$1,000 a year for satellite TV and who may not receive the FM transmission, which as my colleague across the room is aware, is up and down. We don't get it consistently.

As I said in my tribute to the CBC's 75th anniversary, the CBC is an institution that brings us together as a country. The

CBC has been the venue to tell our stories as Canadians and is more vital than ever today as we receive more corporate media with its commercial programming.

I just want to take a moment to reflect. There is the recent budget cut of \$115 million. I recall, over the years here in the Yukon, continual cuts that have affected the ability of CBC to relate to Yukoners. I realize that it is not only here in the Yukon, but across the north as these cuts are no longer able — I do remember a time when local musicians would go into CBC and be able to present some of their music on the radio.

In agreement with the musicians union and the requirement for CBC to have a high standard as a public broadcaster that would be in compliance with the standard throughout Canada, you would receive a nominal amount of money for singing a song or a couple of songs. That was great for us in the north here that we'd be able to do that and we'd be aired on national radio as expressing our music from the north. That is no longer available to us. As these cuts continue over the years, it's part of the reasoning for us to add an amendment to this motion. There are other cuts. I know that it has set CBC, in my opinion, kind of behind the eight ball over the years in being able to provide what we know is an integral part of our service here in Canada for a Canadian story.

CBC's contribution to our cultural life is invaluable. It plays a vital part in binding this vast country together. As our MP, Ryan Leef, has said in his letter to constituents in response to the strong objections to the cuts to the CBC, there has never been a more pressing time than now to have a national voice. He added that CBC certainly plays a great role in northern Canadian lives. More than that, in the north we all rely on the CBC for the local news, weather, live programming and the interviews that inform us of new developments.

Yesterday I asked questions of the government about CBC on the very subject of relocating the Whitehorse tower so that broadcasting could reach all Yukoners as it has for so many years. I wanted to know if the government was willing to extend the lease for the Whitehorse tower, which runs out in July of this year. In his reply yesterday, the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources talked about the history of the Yukon government's involvement around the AM tower. He said that CBC did not pursue a plan to develop an alternative site, but that he would work on a time extension for the current relocation.

The time extension is a nice gesture. I suppose it is, but the reality is that in order to absorb the federal cuts of \$115 million, CBC management wants to phase out analog services. They want to phase them out in direct response to the federal cuts. In a ruling issued Monday, the CRTC said the north, with its isolated communities and small population, presents an exception, so they can continue broadcasting with analog. We hope this happens in the Yukon and throughout the north, but we cannot ignore the cuts from the Harper government.

This motion ignores the cuts. This motion asks the Government of Canada to work to force the relocation of the tower to maintain a service without addressing the funding issue. It would be simple for this government to extend the lease and to

give support to such an important service to Yukoners as the CBC.

Apart from the situation of relocating the Whitehorse tower, the CBC has suffered major cuts, as I have said before, of \$115 million over three years. This will mean programming cuts that will definitely affect the north negatively. Our caucus introduced a motion on April 2 that urged the Government of Yukon to lobby the federal government to maintain the current level of staffing for the CBC in the Yukon, the current level of radio programming, and to retain Whitehorse as a CBC regional hub.

We are waiting for the government's response to that motion.

CBC North has already suffered cutbacks in staffing in the past few years. It has done its part. Friends of Canadian Broadcasting openly questions the motives of the federal government and the continual cuts to CBC. This organization that advocates for the public broadcaster clearly states that the federal Harper government's intent is to eliminate our CBC. Several Conservative MPs have tabled petitions in the House of Commons to that effect, and Stephen Harper has stated that the national service should be privatized. We must not let that happen. It was interesting to listen to the minister yesterday essentially quote the Harper playbook on the CBC cuts. The playbook is to deflect the real impacts on the cuts felt in communities by cherry-picking what they think is an example of waste that their core supporters can't abide.

The Harper playbook says cut Radio Canada International's Portuguese language services to the people of Brazil — and the minister happily obliges. He quotes from the Harper playbook by saying the CBC gets more than enough money, and its job is basically to provide regional service, which is not economically attractive for the private sector to provide.

So I guess he'd support KSAN broadcasting Hockey Night in Canada. I think Yukoners who can't afford cable or satellite wouldn't like that. I will watch Hockey Night in Canada when the playoffs are on, and I can't imagine anywhere in Canada, especially in the north, if you couldn't watch your hockey game — especially during the playoffs — if you couldn't afford your satellite. It would be atrocious to think of that, as hockey is Canada. You know, when people think of Canada, they think of hockey.

So he seems to agree with the federal government, which doesn't appear to like the CBC. But he knows a lot of Yukoners do like the CBC, and this puts the minister in a tough place. Asking the federal government to force the CBC to relocate the tower on their dime, when the federal government is cutting \$115 million over three years, just isn't the kind of support we should provide from this House.

If you want the services to carry on — which we all do — we need to recognize what is behind the services changing, and that is the federal cuts. If we don't recognize the cutbacks and the impacts on the Yukon, the Legislative Assembly is ignoring reality. To correct this, I propose the following amendment.

Amendment proposed

Mr. Barr: I move

THAT Motion No. 163 be amended by adding the phrase, “restoring adequate funding and” between the words “by” and “requiring”.

The amended motion would read:

THAT this House urges the Government of Canada to ensure that Yukoners continue to have access to CBC AM Radio and CBC TV by restoring adequate funding and requiring the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation to:

(1) provide AM Radio service by relocating its Whitehorse tower and continuing to broadcast CBC Radio One on the AM 570 band; and

(2) continue to transmit CBC TV in both English and French in Yukon.

Speaker: The amendment is in order.

It has been moved by the Member for Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes

THAT Motion No. 163 be amended by adding the phrase, “restoring adequate funding and” between the words “by” and “requiring.”

Mr. Barr: I would just like to say that the amendment basically recognizes the federal cutbacks and urges the Government of Canada to restore adequate funding.

I agree with the mover of the motion that CBC is a national treasure, and as such, it deserves adequate funding to do its job. The federal budget cut is \$115 million over three years. To absorb the cuts, the CBC is cutting 650 jobs, including some in the north, and is looking at cutting analog services to deal with the cuts. There will be significant cuts to the news departments in English and French. Already, shows are being cut, like *Dispatches*, which provides excellent journalistic coverage of stories from around the world. Canadians and Yukoners are learning daily of the impacts of the federal budget cuts. We know about the impacts of the cuts to the CBC. In the paper today, one story is about the impacts to the Office of the Surveyor General, to the National Aboriginal Health Organization and to the gutting of environmental assessment rules. We know the impacts of the cuts to Katimavik, to the National Roundtable on the Environment and the Economy, and also on the National Council on Welfare. We know that there are impacts of these cuts to be felt in the Yukon in terms of Yukoners losing jobs. There are job losses at the Surveyor General offices, and I believe at Environment Canada and at the local Revenue Canada office.

What’s guiding the federal government’s cuts? Many think it is ideology. They want to make governments smaller and reduce government’s role in shaping a just society. Is it driven to pay for their corporate tax cuts? These cuts don’t make sense with the backdrop of the global economic recession, but they have to pay for their corporate tax cuts somehow. We have issues with federal cutbacks and our amendment addresses this issue as it affects the CBC, in particular. I urge all members to support this amendment.

Ms. Hanson: I am pleased to rise to speak to this amendment, because I think it’s important. As the Member for Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes pointed out — the original mo-

tion — we understand the intent of it because we all support the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation and the rich contribution it makes to us from sea to sea to sea.

As somebody who has worked across the country in small fishing villages in Prince Edward Island, on the west coast of Vancouver Island and in the north, I know the importance of the CBC. The challenge that is addressed in this amendment is the real core and the crux of this issue, which is that, in fact, as much as we intended to show our support for it and the Crown corporation — the CBC — in fact, it is flawed because it says that the Crown corporation should be urged by this House to do something when, in fact, it is the federal government that has created the very dire situation that the Crown corporation, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, finds itself in today.

It is not just the \$115 million that the CBC will be suffering as a loss by 2015 in terms of the complete cut to its budget, but this represents a cumulative damaging impact on this treasured national icon. I remind — and I have said this before in this Legislature — the federal government in the mid-1990s, the federal Liberal government of the day, made devastating cuts across the board. The CBC was cut \$350 million.

Those cuts continued over the years and similarly — and I understand and I would expect the Minister of Finance to be somewhat empathetic to this because I have heard previous ministers of finance speak to the cumulative impact of federal cuts that emanated in the mid-1990s. It was the catch up, but we could never keep up. So we have some attempt to that through our territorial formula financing agreements and the augmented amounts, but the substantive structural change that occurred in the cuts that were made to the territorial formula financing in the mid-90s by the federal Liberal government have endured and they have certainly endured with the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation.

I find it kind of ironic and, as my colleague from Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes stated, there is a message box out there. We heard it reiterated yesterday by the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources with respect to certain members, a certain sector within the federal Conservative Party who are, quite frankly, echoing and mimicking the language of the commentator, Ezra Levant, from Quebecor, Sun News. We heard it yesterday in this very Legislature. It’s unfortunate. The CBC was intended to be, and has served us all well, as both a respected national broadcaster that gives us both a national lens and eye and ear on the world. The national and international component cannot be understated.

We go back and we spoke earlier last week in terms of — and I’ve heard over the years the commemorative discussions in here in terms of Canada’s war effort. Think about the role the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation played in terms of unifying this country around our national war effort. It’s invaluable. To see it destroyed cut by cut by cut by a federal government that has an ideology against a national structure of any kind is really quite shameful.

Going back to May of last year, on May 3, the current Minister of Heritage, James Moore, made a comment that says, “We believe in the national public broadcaster. We have said that we will maintain or increase support for the CBC. That is

our platform and we have said that before and we will commit to that.”

Mr. Speaker, they said it; they didn't deliver. In fact, what they have done is deliver a devastating blow to the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. The amendment that the Member for Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes has put forward today is doing the right thing. It's urging the Canadian federal government to restore adequate funding to the Crown corporation so that it can deliver on its mandate to provide quality services to Canadians from sea to sea to sea. I urge all members to support this friendly amendment.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: On the amendment, I have to begin by first of all noting that, again, we see both the NDP Member for Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes and the Leader of the NDP taking comments out of context and creating a spin around them that is not reflective of what the member, in fact, said — in this case, my comments from yesterday in the House. I would remind the member that, in fact, the position that I laid out on behalf of the government yesterday in the House is that as far as the issue of the federal budget goes, we will leave it to the federal government to determine appropriate resources. Whether or not relocating the CBC tower requires additional resources and whether or not continuing CBC AM and CBC TV services in the Yukon — and again, CBC TV services in both English and French — we will leave that determination to the federal government.

I will emphasize my statement from yesterday. Providing services to Yukon citizens is a lot more important than providing Portuguese language services to the people of Brazil.

In responding specifically to comments made by the Leader of the NDP — I will not waste a lot of time on that — I do have to point out that, in fact, the member's assertions in reference to Ezra Levant, and the suggestion that somehow we were quoting from him, is incorrect. If the member would note, in fact, the only reference that I made in quoting a national reporter was from a column that Peter Worthington put in, which was featured in the *Whitehorse Star* as well, and identified a few examples of some of the areas that the CBC has been involved in funding, such as Portuguese language services to Brazil, and a stake in Sirius Satellite Radio of some \$12 million.

Again, what I want to emphasize is that the crux of the motion tabled as presented by my colleague, the Member for Watson Lake and supported by the government, is to encourage the federal government not to reduce CBC services in the north and not to allow the CBC to reduce its current services to Yukon citizens. Whether or not that can be done within the CBC's existing budget or requires additional resources really is a matter for the federal government in scrutinizing and reviewing the budget to determine, in the view of the government.

So, again, contrary to the member's assertions, we do not support the federal government's decisions around CBC's budget, but neither do we oppose them.

They are tasked with reviewing the budgetary needs of CBC and certainly in light of some of the services like Portuguese language services to Brazil through Radio Canada Inter-

national it is understandable that perhaps the federal government could feel that there are areas that do not meet with the core CBC priorities. Again, that is really a matter for the Parliament of Canada to determine. We are focused on the needs of the Yukon.

This motion is focused on urging the federal government to make sure that the CBC does not reduce its AM radio services and that it does not cease providing CBC AM radio services. It encourages the federal government to ensure that the CBC relocates the Whitehorse tower. Again, as I stated yesterday, the government will assist them in finding an alternative site, as we did in the past when we provided a three-year extension to the lease. CBC, contrary to what the mover of the amendment noted, has for quite some time intended to end providing the AM radio service.

That is a position that was opposed by the House before and it is one that again we continue here to express. The government's opinion is that we believe that the core mandate of the CBC includes providing regional services in areas where it is not attractive for the private sector to provide those services and without which we would see no services to those citizens. If the CBC ceases its AM service to Yukon citizens on the AM 570 band provided through the Whitehorse tower, it would be very surprising to see a private sector company step in and provide that service. That service will cease to exist; that is exactly an example of the type of service that we believe the national broadcaster has a core role and duty to provide to Yukon citizens.

Again, what I would note — I have just been passed a copy of the article from before and I would correct it. It wasn't Peter Worthington who had written the article, but neither was it Ezra Levant, as the Leader of the NDP said. I would note again that CBC had been providing services in both Portuguese and Russian through Radio Canada International. So, again, whether or not those services should be provided is a matter for CBC and the federal government to determine.

Our focus as the Yukon government is in standing up and expressing our position that whatever else the national broadcaster does, whatever the federal government does as far as budgetary needs, we want to express the strong position to the federal government that the Yukon should see no reduction in CBC services. AM radio should continue; CBC TV should continue in both French and in English.

Again, Mr. Speaker, I will not spend long in speaking to the amendment. I would also note that, contrary to the assertion made by the mover of the amendment — the Member for Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes was making a number of assertions about what he claimed I would support — I would say that, virtually without exception, all of his assertions are incorrect, and I think, come dangerously close to imputing motive, contrary to our Standing Orders. I would point out that if the member actually read the motion that is presented by my colleague, the Member for Watson Lake, in talking about the importance of continuing CBC TV transmission services — the member made the assertion that if Hockey Night in Canada wasn't broadcast by CBC, then it wouldn't be available to Yukoners who can't afford cable and can't afford satellite.

Did the member not notice that what the motion speaks to — transmitting CBC services — if that CBC transmission of the signal ceases, again, whether or not CBC continues to broadcast Hockey Night Canada, Yukoners who don't have cable and don't have satellite will not see Hockey Night in Canada, whether or not it's on CBC.

Again, in speaking briefly to this, I would note, as I noted three years ago in this Assembly — and as a number of my colleagues did the last time we discussed CBC transmission services on a Wednesday — the two core elements to why the CBC should exist and should be funded by the Government of Canada is to provide regional services in areas that people would not otherwise see that service, like rural areas of the Yukon. Another reason is to provide culturally relevant programming that the federal broadcaster feels may not otherwise be provided to Canadian citizens. Regional services to the north are, in my belief, a core part of the very reason for the CBC's existence. The CBC, I would point out, even with the reduction of money, receives roughly \$1 billion a year. I believe if the member will look at the budgetary numbers, he would see that the public broadcaster's budget is bigger than the budget of the entire Yukon Territory. We appreciate that they have a significant area of the country to cover and that they do provide broadcasting services around the world.

But, again, the point of this motion, without the amendment, is to simply urge the federal government to do whatever is necessary to ensure that CBC within the Yukon continues to provide both AM service and TV in French and English. We will not be supporting the amendment presented by the Member for Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes because the determination of whether or not the CBC has adequate funding or should have additional funding provided really is one best left to the federal government.

Mr. Tredger: I speak to the amendment as a rural Yukoner, one who strung a line along the riverbank so that I could pick up AM radio. I think it's no question, from what I have heard in the House, about the importance of CBC. I've seen it bring together communities. It made a real effort to be involved in the communities. It gives you a community report and reports on things that are happening in and around Whitehorse and the Yukon.

CBC also brings us a national perspective and an international perspective. Sometimes they work in different languages because they work around the world. I'm not questioning that; I don't know enough about it to question it. But I do know that CBC — when I travel around the world, people recognize it. When I was in Europe, people talked about the programming from CBC. Perhaps some of it was in their language, but it raised the image of Canada. It made it easier for our business people and made it easier for our tourists.

To attack an entire corporation for one or two programs sounds a bit like cherry-picking to me. However, I'm not one to call names. CBC is a Crown corporation. They depend on the federal government for their money. To say that we want them to do one thing, and to deny them funding, is to change reality.

It reminds me of the services in Whitehorse sometimes, when people in rural Yukon are told, "That service is available," but they need to spend \$500 or \$600 to get in to take advantage of the free service. Asking the CBC to perform a function without asking the government or urging the government — the federal government — to support that funding is akin to doing nothing. We are giving them a little moral support, but we're asking them to do the impossible. I hope not, because it seems evident that, despite protestations to the contrary — and what I've heard many times is about the great relationship that our territorial government has with their Conservative counterparts in Ottawa. Now might be a time to use some of that goodwill, some of that influence, and urge the federal government to reconsider some of that funding cut.

Again, we are saying one thing and changing what we say to fit our reality — not the real one. This amendment is not about the importance of CBC. We all recognize that, and I have heard members on both sides of the House speak eloquently to the importance of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, both television and radio.

This is about ensuring that they have the adequate funds to perform that duty. It is not inexpensive to service areas like Yukon and Nunavut and the Northwest Territories, Newfoundland, or other areas, and we need to ensure that they have the funding to do that — not at the sake of local programming, not at the sake of being able to phone up someone in Pelly Crossing or Haines Junction or Watson Lake and getting the community news. It takes time and it takes effort and it takes money.

I congratulate the CBC on what they've done. I would continue to encourage this government to work with them to find solutions. I also would urge the federal government to restore adequate funding so that they can fulfill their mandate. So I'm speaking in favour of this amendment, because I'm speaking in favour of CBC.

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

Some Hon. Members: Agree.

Some Hon. Member: Disagree.

Speaker: The Speaker is going to call division on that. It sounded pretty equal.

Division

Bells

Speaker: Mr. Clerk, please poll the House.

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: Disagree.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Disagree.

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Disagree.

Hon. Mr. Kent: Disagree.

Hon. Mr. Nixon: Disagree.

Ms. McLeod: Disagree.

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: Disagree.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Disagree.

Mr. Hassard: Disagree.

Ms. Hanson: Agree.

Mr. Tredger: Agree.

Ms. Moorcroft: Agree.

Ms. White: Agree.

Mr. Barr: Agree.

Mr. Elias: Agree.

Mr. Silver: Agree.

Clerk: Mr. Speaker, the results are seven yea, nine nay.

Speaker: The nays have it. I declare the amendment defeated.

Amendment to Motion No. 163 negatived

Speaker: Is there any further debate on the motion?

Mr. Elias: Mr. Speaker, I would like to first of all thank the Member for Watson Lake for bringing the motion forward to the floor of the House today.

On May 6, 2009, I believe that we discussed the CBC in great length. I pulled from *Hansard* — I think it was over 22 pages of discussion on the CBC, so we have been here before. I do support the motion, and I think it is very important for us to send a united message to the Government of Canada and CBC about how much Yukoners value the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation in the north. I think the essence of the motion is to urge the CBC and the federal government to sufficiently fund the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation's northern service. Across the north, CBC radio and television provide essential communications to our communities and to our sister territories and, very well, our nation. I think that everyone has their own favourite CBC story, and I'd like to speak about a couple of mine.

As I have mentioned in this House several times, I had the privilege of growing up out on the land for a substantial portion of my youth — from March until June. The CBC was an incredibly important communications tool for us, especially from the outside world, whether weather or sports or news or listening to the Gwitchin program or especially listening to their request show. I believe that request show was — what was it called? Blue Ice Afternoon, I think it was called. It was during the afternoon. No matter what we were doing in the Old Crow Flats, at my grandmother's direction all work would stop and we'd turn on the radio and we'd listen to the request show, because we found out if someone was born. We found out if someone passed away. We found out if family was okay. We found out what other muskratting camps were doing. So it was incredibly important. That was our lifeline to the outside world. Just to give some perspective of how — I understand the Member for Mayo-Tatchun said he strung a line along the river to receive reception. What we did was we used snare wire. We hooked snare wire together and we put it between two poles and hooked it up to our radio.

So that is how we got reception out on the Old Crow Flats and it was a vital service, basically, and it was very important to many of the traditional camps out in the Old Crow Flats.

Another thing that is important to mention is — this is a personal one as well — I used to be a senior park warden for Vuntut National Park and for some reason I was stuck in the

park for about, I do not know, an extra week, because the helicopter could not come in, I had this little radio, so I climbed up to the top of the mountain and I did the same thing. I strung up some snare wire and the only shortwave signal that I could get was CBC. It was pretty unique, because it was pretty bad weather and that was a unique personal experience as well. I would be remiss if — I remember all of my friends in Old Crow, when we used to hear the anthem from Hockey Night in Canada on CBC on the TV, we used to run and slide in front of the black and white television in Old Crow and watch the play-offs and listen to Bob Cole when he sends shivers up your spine calling the play-by-play on Hockey Night in Canada, especially when his first opening words every evening were, "Good evening, everybody." So it was pretty exciting.

The Member for Kluane asked me to do the 1987 Stanley Cup final play-by-play today on the floor of the House between the Edmonton Oilers and the Philadelphia Flyers in overtime, but I don't know if I can do justice to it, because it was actually Bob Cole who did that. So I'll save that for another day.

One of the other things that I will never forget is on September 11, 2001. My grandmother was still alive at the time. I think it was 5:00 a.m. and she was hard of hearing. I remember the radio blaring. I was sleeping, and then I got this nice little slap on the bottom of my feet and she said, "Get up. Something bad is happening in the world." Those were her words, so I sat up. We had about 12 citizens from Old Crow in Washington, D.C., in Hawaii and various states doing the campaign for the protection of the calving grounds in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge in Alaska.

I jumped up and we set up CBC in the actual administration building in Old Crow. We had to find our citizens and, obviously, things were in a panic in the Lower 48. We did get a hold of them and got them safely back to the embassy in Ottawa via bus from Washington. It was CBC that notified or let the world know in Old Crow the events that were happening on 9/11.

When I think of CBC I think of some of the past people who have worked in the territory on the CBC programs: Janet Patterson, Ron McFadyen, Pam Buckway and the list goes on and on, and the present team that exists now. Basically we would like to see that CBC radio and TV service be continued unencumbered and unaffected in our territory. I think that those of us who live in remote communities expect this type of unique investment and that should be continued. I believe that is all that matters. I think it is important for the CBC and the federal government to recognize that it's almost inconceivable for a lot of remote, isolated northern communities to not be able to access television and the AM 570 band.

It would be almost a life-changing experience. That is how important the CBC is. I think I stand here today to help the effort in not allowing the CBC to reduce or omit altogether radio and television stations in the Yukon. It's so important. I think that there has been a high degree of trust in the CBC over the years when it broadcasts the weather, the news, the sports, their cultural programs and their shortwave services as well.

I stand here today in support of the motion. I think it's important for us as elected officials and parliamentarians to send

the message that this is a requirement here in our territory. We appreciate the services of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. So I would encourage all members to submit their testimony to the Legislative Assembly today. Thank you.

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: I thank the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin for his comments. It's so true — I meet with my counterpart tonight. I have a meeting with the member from N.W.T. we introduced in the House yesterday. I'll be discussing this motion with him. I think this is very important across the north. It has to be a united message to our counterparts in the south at the federal level. We should strongly urge them, and as legislators and as elected officials, I concur that we need to do this.

CBC North is the name for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation's radio and TV in the Canadian Arctic. I'm going to talk a little history and reasons why we need to urge the federal government. Originally known as the CBC Northern Service, its first operations began in 1958 with radio broadcasts, including the takeover of CFYK. Originally, that was a Royal Canadian Signal Corps-owned community-run station in Yellowknife, Northwest Territories. This began broadcasting shortly after the war in 1948. Around the same time, the CBC took over CHFC in Fort Churchill, then an army camp in northern Manitoba.

The station had previously run a variety of programs including American AFRS shows. Peter Mansbridge is its most distinguished alumnus. The station in Churchill was closed in the late 70s and moved to Rankin Inlet later. The CFFB began operations in Frobisher Bay — known as Iqaluit, Nunavut, today — on February 6, 1961, the service initially consisted of local programming in Inuktitut, English and French, along with news and other programs from the CBC network received via shortwave.

With the advent of the Anik series of satellites, Inuktitut and English radio programs from CFFB became accessible to most eastern Arctic communities. CBC North Radio carries daily aboriginal language programs in Dene Suline, Tlicho, North and South Slavey, Gwich'in, Inuvialuktun and Inuktitut. The shows include news, weather, entertainment and provide a very vital service to the many people in northern Canada for whom English is not their first language.

Whether in the Yukon or in the Northwest Territories, on CHAK in Inuvik, which serves the northern Beaufort Delta area, in Nunavut, which covers three time zones — eastern, central and mountain — or in Inuktitut regions of Northern Quebec, the program service, the regular CBC Radio One programming at many times during the day and different times is pre-empted to air local programming.

During the 60s, CBC North featured a mailbag program on Saturday evenings entitled *The Northern Messenger*. I remember my grandmother telling me about this. Since mail delivery was rare in the north, letters were sent to CBC studios in Montreal, and they were read on the air to listeners in some of the settlements. I speak to the need today — this service is a vital link to locals in these regions. You can receive this service in

very, very remote areas. The transmission is so much better than FM, as we all know, and antennas can be built.

My story, as the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin and the Member for Mayo-Tatchun discussed, we were at the east end of Frances Lake on a 10-day hunt, so we built an antenna with every piece of wire we could find and we could not find reception anywhere and then my friend hooked the radio antenna to the chimney pipe and we picked up CBC. There are many different ways.

The idea and the reason this is so vital and important to us is that it's for those people who are out on the land — the trappers, the hunters, people out in the mining camps and the fishing camps. Information being passed on through some of this programming they have — we won't be able to cross the ice bridge as of next week. The ship comes in and brings in the four-wheeler that you ordered eight months ago in an Arctic community; road closures; weather reports; and, of course, whether you are at Squirrel Creek, Klukshu, Aishihik village, or many other rural areas here — even in the Yukon campgrounds — you catch the AM radio and they talk about a fire ban because it's extreme. This is how important this is.

Near and dear to my heart and most Yukoners' hearts is the Stanley Cup playoffs. Another good reason for this is having updates on the hockey scores from *Hockey Night in Canada*. Everyone can find out how their teams are doing on their quest for the Holy Grail of all sports, Lord Stanley's cup.

I would really like to commend the member for bringing this motion forward, and I do believe we should support this motion. We should remember those people in the north and across the north and we should be a united voice and put pressure on the feds. So with that, I commend this motion. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: In rising to speak to the motion, I'd like to again thank the Member for Watson Lake for tabling this motion. This is a matter — the CBC AM service, in particular, but also, to an extent, the transmitted television service, is something I heard about from a number of constituents over the years, particularly when CBC was planning to cease its AM service back in 2009. It's important to my constituents. I've brought this issue before the House in the past and voted previously in favour of the motion in 2009, supporting the CBC AM service.

I thank the Member for Watson Lake for bringing forward this motion and also thank her for the opportunity to assist in the drafting of the motion to ensure that it reflects the key issues that we are both hearing from our constituents, as well as about the importance of the CBC, as most of us do in regions around the territory.

Again, what I would say in speaking to the main motion is that CBC service is very important to rural areas of the Yukon. The CBC's AM service, in particular, goes well beyond the range of any of the FM transmissions or of CBC's planned FM transmission. It goes well beyond the range of CKRW's AM transmission and for many areas within the 483,000 square kilometres of the Yukon's land mass. There are many parts of

that, where the only possibility of receiving radio service with a radio is through the AM service provided by CBC.

People have come up with innovative, low-cost solutions to allow them to listen to CBC's AM service. I've heard from constituents who are north of Mayo, who are receiving CBC's AM service from the Whitehorse tower through wrapping coils of copper wire around an AM radio to boost the signal. There are other innovative methods I've heard about from people and have listened to, including hooking up a wire to a stovepipe in areas, perhaps not quite as far into the Yukon wilderness as the example I just gave.

But all of these are steps, where somebody can take a very simple, very cheap, light AM radio, hook it up with relatively little infrastructure and be able to have access to the news and have access to information about any pending or possible emergencies or issues that may exist. I would point out that if you asked Yukoners how they learned about a number of the emergencies the Yukon has seen in the past, whether it be fire, floods or the September 11 situation — both the New York element of it and the Yukon's own experience with 747s landing in Whitehorse — a great many of the people you would ask would tell you, I think, that they heard about it from CBC, either through the AM service or through CBC TV.

Using the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks as an example, I know that I first heard about it from CBC's AM service on the shores of Lake Laberge, in an area that was significantly beyond where CBC's FM service reached. We then put on the generator and watched it on CBC TV, transmitted over the airwaves.

This is just one personal example, but something that is very similar to the stories that many Yukoners would tell about their experiences about hearing about situations like September 11 or like forest fires that in some cases may even have posed a risk to them or their property, floods and other events — all of these things are very important things for people to learn about. Unfortunately, it seems that the CBC, in making decisions based out of their Toronto office, does not always focus on the Yukon's needs as much as they should. What this motion intends to do is raise the issue to the attention of the federal government that this is a matter that goes beyond corporate cost-cutting decisions by a publicly owned broadcaster. It is something that affects the information that is provided to Yukoners within the territory.

It is important and has a connection to Arctic sovereignty, which the federal government has identified as a top priority. An important part of exercising sovereignty over an area is the ability to communicate and for the public to be informed of events that go on, especially those events which may present a risk to their property or personal safety. The news is another part that should not be forgotten. As the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin noted, it has also been important for the community connection. People have passed messages and engaged in sharing information and wishes across CBC, providing their personal viewpoint and engaging through CBC North and its AM service.

Again, another element I would stress in talking particularly about CBC's AM service is the fact that it has been

roughly 60 years since the service was provided. We all understand that steps are being taken and new technologies are being developed, which, in some cases, may provide new opportunities and, in some cases, better service to citizens, but this should not lead to decisions to abandon technologies that currently are the best possible way for people, especially people who do not have a satellite dish, to find out information in certain parts of the Yukon; that people living in the bush and out on lakes and in wilderness areas or people out at hunting or fishing camps or engaging in — well, whether resident hunters or First Nations out hunting, trapping or simply enjoying the Yukon wilderness, there are very few that can or ever will take a satellite dish with them.

For those who might suggest that services like satellite radio are a solution to most of the Yukon, I would encourage people to take a drive north on the highway if they don't have a boost antennae set up on the satellite radio. I can't speak for others, but I note that even when driving to Dawson, I lose satellite radio service on my Sirius satellite radio. It is not available there; perhaps with a boost antennae or something I might be able to pick it up, but again, this comes at a significant cost to subscribe to that service. Not all Yukoners can do so. The electrical capacity required to provide that service is beyond what someone can have with a simple AM radio that has been a tried and true way that Yukon citizens for decades have been able to get information if they were out on the land in rural areas of the Yukon.

Again, I won't be too much longer in speaking to this motion. A number of my colleagues have made the point about the importance of this service. I want to particularly again acknowledge the importance of CBC's AM service, especially, but also the TV transmission, is something I've heard about from a number of constituents and have consistently supported the Yukon government encouraging the federal government and the CBC to determine what the necessary resources are to continue to provide those CBC services to Yukon citizens.

Whether or not the federal budget for the CBC of roughly \$1 billion is sufficient to enable them to move the CBC AM tower that is currently in the area that will be taken up by the Whistle Bend subdivision — whether the CBC needs more resources or not is something that, again, I emphasize we leave to the federal government to determine. Sending them the message that if they need to provide CBC additional resources to ensure that CBC continues to provide the services to Yukon citizens that it does today then we support them providing CBC with those additional resources. If CBC can deal with it internally through moving away from priorities such as the international language programming — examples I gave are CBC broadcasts in Portuguese, Russian, Arabic, Mandarin, and Spanish, and also owning a specialty channel or more as I know they own at least one and have a \$12-million stake in Sirius Satellite Radio.

These are examples of some of the areas that CBC currently engages in — things that do not relate to that core service of providing services in regional areas and providing cultural programming. We will leave those determinations to the federal government. I do not know, and I don't know or profess

to know, how many listeners receive those services I gave as examples, and I will not presume to judge whether those services should be continued or not. I will simply state my position that I believe firmly that all of those services are less important than continuing to provide the same level of CBC service in Yukon enjoyed by Yukoners today.

So I will be very strong on record, both as an MLA and as a minister of the government, in saying that we are asking the federal government, through this motion, to take whatever steps are necessary to ensure that CBC services to Yukon citizens are not reduced; and particularly and specifically to ensure that CBC AM service is continued; and to ensure that CBC TV continues to be transmitted over the airwaves in both English and French in the Yukon.

Before wrapping up, I want to specifically thank certain constituents — a number of constituents, as I mentioned, have provided information related to this over the years. I want to particularly acknowledge Pete Beattie, who did a substantial amount of work related to this and, in fact, brought forward some information which, in my opinion, raises real questions about whether the CRTC fully understood the impact that the reduction of CBC service would have within the Yukon, including whether the corporate office of the CBC understated the impact on the Yukon population. Again, I just acknowledge his contribution in that area and thank all the constituents over the years who identified to me the importance of CBC service, including constituents that just yesterday, when I popped into Tim Hortons, asked me about this issue and were pleased to hear that this motion was being brought forward today.

Again, specifically referencing a statement made by the NDP that suggested CBC's planned reduction of AM service and the TV service were in response to federal budget cuts contained in this year's budget — that is absolutely incorrect. Those plans were in place before. What I would note with that is the fact that CBC has known about the Whistle Bend subdivision development for well over a decade. They were aware that the site was going to require relocating the tower, if they wished to continue the service.

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Point of order

Speaker: The Leader of the Official Opposition, on a point of order.

Ms. Hanson: Mr. Speaker, the minister opposite is misstating the facts. In my comments to the members opposite, I referenced specifically the impact of the budget cuts in the mid-1990s — the \$350-million structural cuts to the CBC, which would have led to the same situation he is describing now — the cumulative impact of that — and then today we are talking about the \$115-million cuts. But I specifically referenced that I was not making any sort of suggestion that the decision to do that was related in 2009 because they weren't talking about the \$115 million in 2009, but the implications going forward ...

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Speaker's ruling

Speaker: Order please. It is not for the Speaker to decide whose interpretation of the facts are correct or not. There is no point of order.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: I would point out to the Leader of the NDP that points of order are not supposed to be about engaging in debate.

Speaker's statement

Speaker: Please remember to refrain from speaking on my rulings. I have made my ruling. Please carry on with your statement.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: I apologize for commenting on your ruling, Mr. Speaker.

I would note regarding the concerns raised by the Leader of the NDP that I was referring to comments made by her colleague — and she may wish to check the Blues on that situation. I certainly will not dispute the member's assertion that significant cuts made by the Liberals in office may have had some impact on the CBC, but frankly, in this case, I don't sit and review the federal budget for the CBC and I'm not going to speak to the decisions of either the current federal government or previous federal governments on whether those budgetary decisions were appropriate in meeting CBC's needs.

Our focus as a government in supporting this motion is speaking to the issues that we know about, that being Yukon services, encouraging the federal government — emphasizing to the federal government that a reduction of CBC's service area within the Yukon would have an impact on Yukon citizens and emphasizing and encouraging them to determine whether there may be additional resources necessary to ensure CBC is able to provide AM services and CBC in both English and French.

As the members will note, the motion presented by my colleague, the Member for Watson Lake, specifically does not make any reference to whether the CBC has an adequate budget to continue to provide AM service and continue to transmit in both English and French in the Yukon. Again, I will state, as I have a few times in debate, because the NDP seems to be taking a very different view of things — I will emphasize that we don't judge the adequacy of the budget. That is up to the federal government and the Parliament of Canada. We will leave the Parliament of Canada to engage in parliamentary debate. Unlike the NDP, we will not simply clip the rhetoric from the federal level, as the NDP seems to be doing, and bring it into this Assembly.

In the interest of time, I will conclude my comments. I commend the motion to the House. I encourage all members, including the NDP, to put aside their preference for a specific reference or determination to the adequacy of federal budgets and recognize that there is value in the Yukon Legislative Assembly standing up and unanimously saying to the federal government that we want them to ensure that Yukoners continue to have access to CBC AM Radio and CBC TV and that they should take whatever steps are necessary to ensure that the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation continues to provide AM

service, including relocating its Whitehorse tower and continuing to broadcast CBC Radio One on the AM 570 band, and secondly, to continue to transmit CBC TV in both English and French in the Yukon.

Again, that is the motion presented by my colleague. I very much support it. I commend it to the House and hope that the motion will pass unanimously today, and send a strong signal to the federal government about the importance of continuing to provide the AM signal and the French and English TV signal, provided by the CBC to Yukon citizens. Thank you.

Mr. Tredger: As I mentioned when I was speaking to the amendment, I don't think that there is any question the people in the House recognize the importance of it. We can all reference times that we or our constituents were very thankful that we did have CBC. However, the member opposite has made a number of incorrect statements, or statements I take to be incorrect, that might be misleading the Legislature —

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Point of order

Speaker: Government House Leader on a point of order.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: The member just got up and accused me of misleading the Legislature, which is clearly contrary to Standing Order 19(h), I believe it is.

Speaker's ruling

Speaker: There is a point of order. The member did say "misleading". Use of the word "misleading" is unparliamentary. The fact that the member disagrees with the minister's statements is fine, but the member must not accuse him of misleading the Legislature. I would ask the member to retract the phrase.

Withdrawal of remark

Mr. Tredger: I will retract the phrase.

The member opposite's facts may be distorted and thereby leave a false impression for other members of the Legislature.

He referred to — a number of times made rather disparaging remarks about the leadership at CBC and said that he wasn't going to comment on the budget and particulars of the budget and then proceeded to tell us about particular programming and particular aspects of it. Unfortunately for the member opposite, some of the facts that he used there were not true and when he referred to Sirius Satellite Radio, that is an investment by —

Speaker: Order.

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Mr. Tredger: When the member opposite —

Unparliamentary language

Speaker: Order please. When the member says that the minister's facts were "not true", the member is impugning the minister's credibility and I cannot allow it. A member may dispute an interpretation of the facts, but members cannot say or imply that the minister was lying. Again, I'll ask the member to retract and rephrase.

Withdrawal of remark

Mr. Tredger: I'll retract the statement.

The member opposite referred to Sirius Satellite Radio as costing CBC. In actuality, CBC invested in Sirius Satellite Radio when it was initially brought to the country and kept it alive, worked with it and entered into partnership so that areas that didn't have access — sometimes it was in the city and sometimes it was in communities — would have access through this.

That investment has repaid itself many times over. I don't have the facts before me because I was just reading about it the other night but the initial investment has been paid back at least 10 times.

So CBC has made an investment that has helped it to be able to be fiscally responsible. It has invested in the marketplace and is making wise decisions. Having said that, I believe in the CBC. I appreciate what the CBC has done for us and I do not appreciate the two-handedness with which it is being dealt. Thank you.

Hon. Mr. Nixon: It is actually with great pleasure that I am able to speak to this motion in the Assembly today. I have a number of constituents who, in fact, work at CBC, and I will mention a couple of them here in my notes. I thank the Member for Watson Lake for bringing this motion forward. I also want to thank the men and women from CBC for the good work that they do.

We already know that CBC has broadcasted nationwide for decades. I would also point out that over the years each and every one of us has utilized CBC in one capacity or another — I will get back to that point in a few minutes. Yukoners, especially those living in remote areas, feel a connection to the rest of Canada through the CBC. In fact, it was in 1960 that CBC shortwave service opened in the high Arctic.

Arguably, someone living in a place like Toronto also feels a sense of connection to the rest of Canada through CBC. In 1972, when I was only three years old, the Canada-Russia hockey series was available because of the launch of the Anik satellite. Today in Whitehorse, we have CBC Whitehorse providing radio services. CBC also has radio stations in Nunavut and radio and television in N.W.T.

Our local CBC personalities are like local celebrities for many. Roch Shannon Fraser, who one might argue is not only a personality, but indeed a celebrity, is charged with waking us up in the morning. His humorous approach to morning broadcasting is something that many, many Yukoners look forward to each and every morning. I also follow Roch on Twitter and have watched some of his reviews and some of his hilarious tweets since he signed on just a few short weeks ago. For me, Roch Shannon Fraser is not only a welcome addition to my morning, but he is also a constituent of mine.

Let's take a walk down memory lane. I can mention the names of a few shows that will mean something a little different to each of us: the *Royal Canadian Air Farce*; *The Beachcombers*; and taking us back to 1954, *Howdy Doody*.

Remember *Howie Meeker's Hockey School*? Howie was a former Toronto Maple Leaf player and coach. His passion for

the game and his rather direct commentary in his high-pitched voice will be forever remembered by many. I certainly will never forget growing up to *Mr. Dressup*, played by Ernie Coombs, and his sidekicks Casey and Finnegan. *Mr. Dressup* was on the air from the mid-1960s to the mid-1980s.

Indeed, each of us can pinpoint one specific time in our lives and are able to identify how the CBC played an integral role in it. I recall as a small child my father coming in from milking cows in the barn on a Sunday morning. He would immediately turn on CBC classical and big band music. I was marching around the house with a bucket on my head, banging pots and pans together. I indeed was the conductor of that big band. As I grew older — about 13 — my musical taste changed somewhat. Growing up on a family dairy in midwestern Ontario, I also recall the CBC radio playing endlessly in the barn from an old AM/FM cassette radio hanging from a nail on one of the barn beams. I recall the old radio hung sideways and was always covered in cobwebs. I remember going to the barn for morning and evening chores, taking my cassette tapes of Pink Floyd, Deep Purple and Black Sabbath in the hope that I could rock out a bit during chores to something other than traditional CBC programming; however, my father disapproved of my music in the barn. He claimed that CBC talk shows and music playing throughout the day helped improve milk production for our Holstein cattle. Indeed, to date, there have been studies on how classical music just may be a factor in improved milk production for cattle.

Another CBC personality breaking news to northerners is Leonard Linklater. Leonard is friendly and his right-to-the-point approaches, I am sure, are appreciated by many viewers and listeners. I know from the perspective of the person sometimes being interviewed, I sincerely appreciate Leonard's approach and style.

Our CBC correspondents and staff are neighbours, acquaintances and people we see in the grocery store, at the ball diamond, or in the chairs beside us as we watch our children perform. And perhaps they are friends.

I have had a unique friendship with a morning correspondent, Ellen Jones, as she too has a son with autism. Not only is Ellen a friendly voice in the morning bringing us breaking news, but she and her husband have also given their time and worked with me to form Autism Yukon. Ellen has given much of her time to ensure the best for her son, my son, and many other people dealing with autism within our community. I would like to thank her for her time and energy.

What four words are synonymous with CBC? Hockey Night in Canada. Unlike me — I am only in my mid-forties — CBC has indeed seen my Toronto Maple Leafs win a Stanley Cup. From Eddie Shack to Howie Meeker to Wendel Clark, and some of the most memorable games ever held in the world and covered, CBC has been there.

In closing, I personally commend CBC specifically for its ability to prioritize and move forward, as they have done before and as others have done before when budgets are prioritized. It's fairly clear to me that not only does CBC bring Yukoners together; it indeed links Yukon to the rest of Canada. I am

happy to support this motion today in this Assembly and again thank the Member for Watson Lake for bringing this forward.

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

Ms. McLeod: I want to, first of all, thank the Member for Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes for bringing forward the amendment, and I understand where he's coming from. But I must ask for support of this motion as a stand-alone motion, not to be tied to the restoration of previous federal funding levels for the CBC. It's just that important that we retain our AM service. With that, I look forward to your support. Thank you.

Speaker: Are you prepared for the question?

Some Hon. Members: Division.

Division

Speaker: Division has been called.

Bells

Speaker: Order, please. Mr. Clerk, please poll the House.

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Agree.

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Kent: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Nixon: Agree.

Ms. McLeod: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Agree.

Mr. Hassard: Agree.

Ms. Hanson: Agree.

Mr. Tredger: Agree.

Ms. Moorcroft: Agree.

Ms. White: Agree.

Mr. Barr: Agree.

Mr. Elias: Agree.

Mr. Silver: Agree.

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

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

Motion No. 163 agreed to

GOVERNMENT BILLS

Bill No. 37: *Act to Amend the Territorial Court Act* — Third Reading

Clerk: Third reading, Bill No. 37, standing in the name of the Hon. Mr. Nixon.

Hon. Mr. Nixon: I move that Bill No. 37, entitled *Act to Amend the Territorial Court Act*, be now read a third time and do pass.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Minister of Justice that Bill No. 37, entitled *Act to Amend the Territorial Court Act*, be now read a third time and do pass.

Hon. Mr. Nixon: I've already discussed this bill in second reading and in Committee of the Whole. I do not intend to repeat that discussion. I would, however, like to reply to a few items that came up during the discussion today. The objective of these amendments to the *Territorial Court Act* is to ensure that there are sufficient sitting judges to meet the demands of the justice system and ensuring the integrity and timeliness of the administration of justice in Yukon.

There are three permanent judges in the Yukon Territorial Court. There are 16 deputy judges who are qualified to sit in the Territorial Court on an on-call basis. Eight of those deputy judges sat in 2011-12. There were 86 sitting days and 28 travel days.

These amendments to the *Territorial Court Act* support a shortened and simplified process for the appointment of deputy judges. The deputy judges are called upon as needed when a permanent judge is unavailable or unable to hear a matter.

They are called upon to sit when permanent judges are not available due to caseload or when no permanent judge can sit due to conflicts. Because Yukon is a small jurisdiction, it does happen regularly that all permanent judges, as former practising lawyers here, have represented one or another party in a current case before the court. When that happens, that judge is not able to hear that case. Deputy judges have been selected from sitting or former provincial or territorial court judges who have gone through a thorough review of their credentials when first appointed as judges. It reflects the current requirement for the appointment of deputy judges of the Supreme Court of Yukon.

Mr. Speaker, I am confident that these amendments that are before you will have the effect of ensuring the highest standards for the administration of justice in Yukon by requiring that deputy judges be retired judges of the territorial court itself, or sitting or retired judges of another Canadian provincial or territorial court.

The amendments will also ensure that there is an expedited process for the identification of qualified persons to be deputy judges. I am very pleased to be bringing these amendments forward today. Thank you.

Speaker: Is there any other debate?

Motion for third reading of Bill No. 37 agreed to

Speaker: I declare the motion carried and that Bill No. 37 has passed this House.

We are now prepared to receive the Commissioner of Yukon, in his capacity as Lieutenant Governor, to give assent to bills which have passed this House.

Commissioner Phillips enters the Chamber, announced by the Sergeant-at-Arms

ASSENT TO BILLS

Commissioner: Good afternoon. Please be seated.

Speaker: Mr. Commissioner, the Assembly has, at its present session, passed certain bills to which, in the name and on behalf of the Assembly, I respectfully request your assent.

Clerk: *Act to Amend the Liquor Act; Act to Amend the Territorial Court Act; Act to Amend the Financial Administration Act.*

Commissioner: I hereby assent to the bills as enumerated by the Clerk.

Commissioner leaves the Chamber

Speaker resumes the Chair

Speaker: I will now call the House to order. Please be seated.

GOVERNMENT BILLS

Bill No. 5: *Third Appropriation Act, 2011-12* — Second Reading — *adjourned debate*

Clerk: Second reading, Bill No. 5, standing in the name of the Hon. Mr. Pasloski; adjourned debate, the Hon. Ms. Taylor.

Hon. Ms. Taylor: As I was saying — I think it was back on March 21, if I'm not mistaken — this supplementary calls for sums in the amount of just over \$7.5 million, to be offset by sums not required of just over \$10 million, for a net expenditure reduction of approximately \$2.5 million. As the Minister of Finance was speaking to this bill earlier that day, this again reflects net financial resources within the budget of the Government of Yukon.

It reflects the dollars in the bank or, so to speak, the net surplus, which continues to enable the Government of Yukon to continue to invest in infrastructure that is absolutely integral to the continued growth of the territorial economy and, of course, adds to the quality of life that we as Yukoners have come to know. There are two primary expenditures within Energy, Mines and Resources as well as Environment. When it comes to Energy, Mines and Resources those expenditures reflect the remediation related to type 2 mine sites. Of course, when one looks at this current budget, the 2012-13 resources that we are debating, it also reflects about \$50 million housed within the current fiscal year. It is a significant expenditure indeed and it is, of course, multi-faceted as well.

When we look at the other expenditure, environmental liabilities, this is really following the advice offered by the Office of the Auditor General. Of course, this is something that our government has taken very seriously and has acted upon by creating the site assessment and remediation unit housed within the Department of Environment, which will undertake a number of assessments pertaining to each of our environmental liabilities, to be followed then with a revised estimate of those liabilities and booked as such. This expenditure reflects those very expenditures.

I won't go on at great length, because I do know that other members perhaps want to talk about this bill. Again, I just thank the members of the Assembly for their comments thus

far. I know that there have been some reflected by the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin and others. So we certainly look forward to hearing more when it comes to this particular bill.

Ms. Hanson: I just want to make a couple of very brief comments on the *Third Appropriation Act, 2011-12*. I think we all agree that legislative scrutiny of these and all estimates is important but, as the minister opposite mentioned, we're talking in this supplementary about an essentially very small amount given the overall estimates. The key is that these are for 2011-12. It's passed. We will be reviewing these in detail through public accounts come this fall. My focus is really that, as all of us have said in this Legislative Assembly, we don't want to spend a lot of time on what was passed. The fact of the matter that we're coming back to it speaks to the lack of overall scrutiny. We've seen that as a worrying trend in the last few years. We had hoped to try to cooperate with members opposite when there were motions brought forward which we clearly supported. When the indication is that the Official Opposition does support it, to see us use our valuable time not moving that to closure of that debate and just getting on with the fact and celebrating the fact that we do agree on numbers of matters is unfortunate. We saw in the main estimates in 2009-10 that 27 percent of the \$1-billion budget — \$273 million — never received a legislative scrutiny.

The main estimates for the very supplementary budget that we are talking about here today — \$460 million; 46 percent of the \$1.075-billion budget — those departments were not debated. In 2010-11, I correct myself, Mr. Speaker, and the main estimates for 2011-12, which we are speaking to the supplementary for that year — although we have supplementary in the other ones too — 27 percent or \$293 million of a \$1.09-billion budget were not debated.

I raise this because I am concerned. We have only debated Economic Development, Tourism and Culture, and we have had some partial and good discussion on Justice and Highways and Public Works. We have had some brief — well, I would not say quite so brief — on Education; it was good and thorough, but we still have a fair amount to go there in terms of the actual progress through the budget. Community Services started and Women's Directorate started. We have not touched on the Executive Council Office nor on Energy, Mines and Resources, and I would note that Energy, Mines and Resources has not been touched in terms of legislative debate in 2010-11 or in 2011-12. Mr. Speaker, Highways and Public Works — it was good that we got partially through that, but we have Energy, Mines and Resources. Environment is a key area that is a concern to many Yukoners. We also have Finance, Public Service Commission, Yukon Development Corporation, Yukon Housing Corporation, Yukon Liquor Corporation, Elections Office, Ombudsman and Child and Youth Advocate.

We have a job to do here moving forward and making sure that as if we were in the equivalent of in a business, the board of directors — and I've said this before — if we were the board of directors of a business we would not be approving a billion-dollar budget without detailed debate and scrutiny. Yukoners want to see us do that and so to that end, we will simply en-

courage all members to move forward on this and deal with the facts of 2012-13.

Motion for second reading of Bill No. 5 agreed to

Hon. Mr. Cathers: I move that the Speaker do now leave the Chair and that the House resolve into Committee of the Whole.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Government House Leader that the Speaker do now leave the Chair and that the House resolve into the Committee of the Whole.

Motion agreed to

Speaker leaves the Chair

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Chair (Ms. McLeod): Committee of the Whole will now come to order.

Before us today is Bill No. 5, *Third Appropriation Act, 2011-12*. Do the members wish to take a brief recess?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

Chair: Committee of the Whole will recess for 10 minutes.

Recess

Chair: Order. Committee of the Whole will now come to order.

Bill No. 5: *Third Appropriation Act, 2011-12*

Chair: We are opening debate on Bill No. 5, *Third Appropriation Act, 2011-12*.

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: I'm pleased to introduce Bill No. 5, *Third Appropriation Act, 2011-12*, also referred to as *Supplementary Estimate No. 2*, to Committee of the Whole.

Based on conversations we've heard, I think there's a willingness to proceed promptly through Committee debate. I would just like to add to comments that have been made.

Wednesdays have traditionally not included any government business. In fact, they have been an opportunity for members of this Assembly to express their opinions on the motions of the day. Certainly we have had a record during this Legislative Assembly of expediting and in fact moving things forward in a manner where we have shortened motion days, enabling the business of the House to resume, in terms of the government business.

I would only say that the member from the Official Opposition talks about some good discussion and I think we'll let the Blues be the record of what has happened to date in terms of moving forward. As you are aware, Madam Chair, I have said that there is a responsibility of the opposition to budget their time wisely in the attempt to be able to have discussion on all matters that are important and worthy of discussion by the members opposite. I would only need to perhaps point out some of the NDP debate that occurred on the amendments to the *Liquor Act*, and many examples of multiple, repeat questions as well.

So I think we all can see the usefulness of continuing to debate as much of this budget as can be debated, and we are

certainly willing to move forward with that. The *Third Appropriation Act, 2011-12*, provides for sums required of \$7.573 million, consistent with the amount previously identified in the special warrant. While the Legislature conducts its business, a special warrant ensures that government officials have the requisite legal authority to make the expenditures delegated and entrusted to them. The members will have the opportunity to raise questions in general debate if desired. Therefore, I do not plan to go into any great detail at this time.

The *Third Appropriation Act, 2011-12*, provides for \$7.573 million for increased expenditures as identified under the sums-required column, offset by sums not required of \$10.062 million. I will limit my comments to the sums required.

For the Department of Environment, \$3.15 million is provided to recognize a reasonable estimate of the Government of Yukon's known environmental liabilities identified through the assessment work undertaken in 2011-12. For the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources, an additional amount of just under \$2.6 million is provided with respect to remediation efforts related to type 2 mine sites.

This multi-year initiative continues to be of significant importance to Yukoners. The additional amounts required for these two departments represent the major items included in the special warrant and are identified under the sums-required column.

Sums required are, as mentioned earlier, offset by items not required and also by revenue adjustments. The individual ministers can speak to all changes reflected in the *Supplementary Estimates No. 2* during line-by-line debate. In summary, *Supplementary Estimates No. 2* reflects increased O&M requirements of \$6.797 million, decreased capital requirements of \$9.286 million and increased revenues of \$4.527 million.

Our net financial resource position remains positive. This is a most enviable position. While most provincial and territorial governments have net debt, this is not the case in Yukon. As a measure of our future revenue requirements, our positive net financial resource position means that we have not mortgaged the future. If I may: we are building the bank, not breaking the bank. Future revenues will be used for future programs and services. Future revenues will not be required to offset current programs and service expenditures.

Our government continues to pay as we go. Yukoners can be very proud of how our Yukon Party government has managed the fiscal framework. We have maintained a savings account while continuing to provide significant and strategic investments on behalf of Yukoners. Our future is bright. As I have stated, our positive net financial resource position represents a measure of our resources available for the provision of future programs and services. We are, indeed, financially well-positioned for the future.

As the Minister for Finance, I am pleased to present the supplementary estimates for consideration by the Legislative Assembly in Committee of the Whole.

Mr. Silver: Pursuant to the Standing Order 14.3, I request the unanimous consent of Committee of the Whole to

deem all clauses, schedules and the title of Bill No. 5, entitled *Third Appropriation Act, 2011-12*, read and agreed to.

Unanimous consent re deeming all clauses, schedules and title of Bill No. 5 read and agreed to

Chair: Mr. Silver has, pursuant to Standing Order 14.3, requested the unanimous consent of Committee of the Whole to deem to all clauses, schedules and the title of Bill No. 5, entitled *Third Appropriation Act, 2011-12*, read and agreed to. Are you agreed?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

Chair: Unanimous consent has been granted.

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: I move that Bill No. 5, entitled *Third Appropriation Act, 2011-12*, be reported without amendment.

Chair: It has been moved by Mr. Pasloski that Bill No. 5, entitled *Third Appropriation Act, 2011-12*, be reported without amendment.

Motion agreed to

Chair: We're going to continue with general debate on Bill No. 6, Vote 3, Department of Education. Committee of the Whole will recess for five minutes.

Recess

Chair: Order. Committee of the Whole will now come to order.

Bill No. 6: First Appropriation Act, 2012-13 — continued

Chair: We will be continuing debate on *First Appropriation Act, 2012-13*, Vote 3, Department of Education. Is there any general debate?

Department of Education — continued

Hon. Mr. Kent: I believe that the Member for Mayo-Tatchun was up and perhaps if he did have a question at the end of the day yesterday, if he could ask that of me again, that would be great.

Mr. Tredger: I might have. I believe I was talking about First Nation language and culture before we did leave. I know this is a critical element of Yukon education. It is a critical element for the First Nations of our territory. Again, I understand that the minister has received an invitation from the chiefs to come to a meeting. I am wondering what kind of measures we have, what kind of data we have collected, so that we can verify what is working and what is not working.

In terms of the First Nation languages, they have been in our schools for quite some time, and I believe I was asking a question around the amount of instruction per week or per day — however the minister wants to report that. Also, have there been any measures of how much our students are learning? When we go through French immersion, we come out speaking the language. Are there any indicators as to how many of our students who are going through the native language program —

and in many cases taking 13 years of it — can speak their language when they graduate?

Hon. Mr. Kent: Just quickly, before I respond to the member's questions, earlier today in Question Period, I may have misspoke. I will review the Blues. But in answering the Member for Klondike's question with respect to who sets the school calendars, I may have mistakenly said that it was the responsibility of the school councils. It is actually my responsibility, as minister, and the school councils have important input into that process. That is just to correct the record for members. Again, I will review the Blues when we get to that.

I would like to thank the department officials for quickly getting back with responses to some of the member's questions from yesterday and with respect to the questions he just asked regarding First Nations. Maybe I'll just go through them one by one.

The first question asked: How do First Nations determine if native language instruction is working?

So, with respect to that, the First Nations can work through the school growth process — a process designed to work collaboratively with staff and community to improve the success of each Yukon student. The process is founded on the principles of inquiry, collaboration and respect for the social and cultural diversity in Yukon. Staff, school councils, school boards, parents, the First Nation community, elders and students are expected to work together to make plans, determine appropriate actions and monitor progress to improve results.

In some cases, there are specific partnership arrangements. For instance, the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations' Southern Tutchone bicultural program is a bilingual and bicultural program intended to increase the level of Southern Tutchone content and perspectives in the St. Elias Community School. As a pilot project, it will be reviewed and evaluated. If the project proves successful, the foundation and framework may be expanded to incorporate more grade levels and used as a model for other Yukon communities. A partnership project plan was signed by the Department of Education and Champagne and Aishihik First Nations in February 2009. This agreement outlines the principles and performance goals of the project, as well as detailing the project evaluation timeline.

Yukon First Nation Education Advisory Committee advises on all First Nation programming issues in the Department of Education.

The second question that came up: Who does the evaluating?

Native language teachers are part of the Yukon Teachers Association and are being evaluated in three-year increments, similar to any other member of the YTA. The Council of Yukon First Nations did a review on language programming in 2010. At this point, the department is still waiting to enter into consultations on the report. The evaluation of programs falls within the school growth process. As such, a collaborative evaluation process is used with school boards and council trustees and members, First Nation representatives, parents, students, teachers and school administrators to plan and set goals for improved student performance.

The department ensures that the actions outlined in the school growth plan and the recommendations from school reviews are implemented and lead to improvement. Since 2010, all schools are on a continuous school review cycle every three years and schools are expected to respond to the recommendations in their annual school plans.

The third question asked by the Member for Mayo-Tatchun: How is that information shared with the relevant First Nation?

The Department of Education's First Nations Programs and Partnerships unit is responsible for facilitating the development of appropriate Yukon First Nation curriculum and supporting resource materials. The unit works in partnership with the Yukon First Nations curriculum working group of the Yukon First Nation Education Advisory Committee to ensure validity, accuracy and authentic voices in all materials developed. The working group is representative of each language group in the Yukon. The First Nation Education Advisory Committee advises on all First Nation programming issues in the department. The Yukon Native Language Centre shares its training information on their website. They also send their reports to the Council of Yukon First Nations as a report to the First Nations groups who are part of CYFN.

As required by the *Education Act*, language teachers are required to provide comments and marks for students who participate in the language program. The language teachers are also available to meet with parents to discuss the progress of their students with language learning. Again, just for members, please note that an assessment framework and evaluation tools have not been developed to date by the YNLC or the Public Schools branch. I will provide a copy of this to not only the Member for Mayo-Tatchun but also the Education critic from the Yukon Liberal Party. I'll send copies down tomorrow morning. Thank you.

Mr. Tredger: I appreciate that answer and thank you for that from the minister.

One of my concerns, of course, in terms of wanting a way to measure progress is that, lacking that, we end up relying on anecdotal information. That can be quite unreliable and put quite a lot of pressure on our classroom teachers because they have no means to refute any concerns.

The school growth process — it would be important, I think, to ensure that First Nations and the people involved in the communities understand that, at the same time that the school growth plans are being made, it also includes First Nation programming and that chief and council, the local school council and parents can get involved and have a say in that. To that end, I would ask if the minister would take that information when he goes to the next meeting with the chiefs and share exactly what he shared with us. I think it would go a long way.

A couple more things on the native language culture: one of the things I found is that the native language teachers are often trained in teaching in a classroom and language instruction within the classroom, and just learning or becoming comfortable in a school setting.

It is important to give them training in experiential teaching, as well as just classroom instruction, so that they can feel

the confidence and move from the confidence so that they can go from there to be able to incorporate experiential learning into the classroom.

Much of the instruction, as I said, that they are receiving is geared to the classroom instruction rather than to the whole cultural situation. I know that there are some efforts to move away from that but I would encourage the government to provide support for the First Nation instructors, and in a sense, giving them permission to take their students out and experience a wider culture.

What I have heard from many of the First Nations is that language is culture and culture is language and sometimes in a classroom, we separate that. Your example of the situation in Old Crow and the situation in Haines Junction are very good examples of integrating the experiential and the classroom. That type of model could be used throughout the system.

Seeing the time, Madam Chair, I move that we report progress.

Chair: It has been moved by Mr. Tredger that the Chair report progress.

Motion agreed to

Hon. Mr. Cathers: I move that the Speaker do now resume the Chair.

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

Motion agreed to

Speaker resumes the Chair

Speaker: I will now call the House to order.

May the House have a report from the Chair of Committee of the Whole?

Chair's report

Ms. McLeod: Mr. Speaker, Committee of the Whole has considered Bill No. 5, *Third Appropriation Act, 2011-12*, and directed me to report the bill without amendment. Committee of the Whole has also considered Bill No. 6, *First Appropriation Act, 2012-13*, and directed me to report progress.

Speaker: You have heard the report from the Chair of the Committee of the Whole. Are you agreed?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Speaker: I declare the report carried.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Mr. Speaker, 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 5:26 p.m.