

Yukon Legislative Assembly
Whitehorse, Yukon
Wednesday, April 24, 2013 — 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 Administrative Professionals Week

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Mr. Speaker, as the minister responsible for the Public Service Commission, I rise today in recognition of Administrative Professionals Week and to pay tribute to the men and women who make offices work.

Administrative Professionals Week, which has been observed in Canada since 1952, is an opportunity to recognize the good work of administrative professionals in the Yukon public service and throughout the territory and to thank them for their contributions to the public service in our community at large. The work of administrative professionals demands a broad range of skills and resourcefulness. They fill many integral roles and responsibilities.

In the Yukon government, administrative professionals are often the public face of our programs and our services. Whether it's receiving funding applications for community projects or receiving inquiries about those programs and services, administrative professionals are the first point of contact. Their professional expertise, combined with a welcoming approach to clients, enables Yukoners to connect to the government we serve.

Administrative professionals also play a central role within the office environment. They are a hub of information and activity, the glue that holds the office together. By organizing and managing information, schedules, and budgets in a professional manner, they help bring a sense of order to our busy working world.

I am very proud of the contributions made by administrative professionals to the Yukon government and thank them for their professionalism and dedication to public service excellence. I encourage everyone in the territory to join all of us in celebrating this week by taking a moment to thank the administrative professionals in our own workplace. Thank you.

Ms. Hanson: I rise on behalf of the Official Opposition and the Third Party to pay tribute on this week and day for administrative professionals.

Although this day began as National Professional Secretaries Day a long time ago — almost 61 years ago — in recognition of the importance and value of the administrative support provided by secretaries, organizations have evolved and so too has the role of the person many of us refer to as “the person

who does everything in the office”. In 2000, the name was changed to Administrative Professionals Day to reflect this complexity. The administrative professional's work touches on technology, finance, customer services, vendors, the law, health care, human resources, and taxes — in some cases, all in one day. This year, the theme is “Honoring the office professionals who make offices work”. We tend to think of administrative professionals sometimes as support or secondary staff. In some offices, they are relegated to second-class status because they are just the administrative assistant or office manager. However, Mr. Speaker, anyone who has worked in any office environment for any length of time knows that these people are the ones who make our offices function.

Administrative professionals don't just work behind the scenes. Whose face do people see when they walk through the door? It's not the Premier, not the leader; not likely to be the MLA. The administrative professional represents our organization and sets the tone for each person who visits the office. They are an integral part of our workplaces and deserve recognition for their often unsung contributions.

As my colleague, the MLA for Riverdale South, said this morning, “If you want to know how important your administrative professional is, have them disappear for a month after falling off a snow berm at the start of the legislative sitting.”

Administrative professionals often believe their role is to help the office come together as a team. Denise Leschart, the administrative professional for the Yukon NDP, makes the comparison to a wagon or bicycle wheel. Everyone on the team must work together like the spokes on a wheel. “For the wheel to work,” she says, “every spoke has to be there, including the administrative professional; one can't be missing.”

Mr. Speaker, behind — and literally behind those walls — every member of this Legislative Assembly, there is a dedicated crew of administrative professionals, without whom the day-to-day business of legislators would be infinitely more difficult. I'm referring to the Legislative Assembly team led by all MLAs' guardian angel, Helen Fitzsimmons. Their experience working with MLAs of all stripes, over many years and many governments, has served all of us incredibly well.

So this week it is our turn to officially recognize the administrative professionals in our workplace. So what can we do to recognize the administrative personnel who work among and with us? A better question might be: Why haven't we done anything yet? I know that there are some in this room, perhaps, who would suggest that flowers would be the best bet. You know, I think that flowers are a good thing, but the administrative professionals need more than that — they need recognition from us more than once a year.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Official Opposition and the Third Party, I encourage people to recognize and celebrate the contributions of the administrative professionals in their workplaces, and I hope they have an administrator as skilled and as dedicated as the Official Opposition is privileged to have working with us. In closing, perhaps the simplest advice for us all is to recall the most effective words in our day-to-day relationships: “please” and “thank you”.

Mr. Silver: I'd like to thank the NDP for doing the tribute on behalf of the Liberals as well, but I just wanted to get to my feet for a second and personally thank our caucus' administrative assistant Jude Layzell. Last year, I pulled a fast one on her, and I didn't read the tribute that she prepared, and instead I dedicated my whole tribute to her, and I made her cry. So I'm not going to do that again, but I do want to thank Jude for all of her hard work. She's a loyal part of our team, she's a great friend, and it's worth mentioning her amazing sense of humour. And, as we can all attest to in this occupation, a good sense of humour around the office is absolutely essential. So we would like to thank Jude — or, as we call her in the office, "our boss". Thanks, Jude.

In recognition of National Immunization Awareness Week

Hon. Mr. Graham: April 20 to 27 is National Immunization Awareness Week, and I would like to, on behalf of all members of the Legislature, pay tribute to National Immunization Awareness Week. This is an ideal time to make sure our immunizations, and especially those of our children, are up to date.

A hundred years ago, according to Immunize Canada, infectious diseases were the leading cause of death worldwide. In Canada today, they cause fewer than five percent of all deaths, thanks to the success of immunization programs across the country. Dr. Brendan Hanley is Yukon's chief medical officer of health. He states that immunization is one of the most effective public health interventions in history and has saved millions of lives worldwide.

We rarely hear of diseases any more like diphtheria, rubella or tetanus. They don't often have a chance to take hold in a population thanks to public immunization programs, yet some diseases are breaking through again because some segments of the population don't think they need to be immunized. There is a good reason we immunize against rubella, pertussis, diphtheria and tetanus and meningococcal diseases. They are dangerous; they rob us of sight or hearing or the use of our limbs; they affect our brains; they kill us or, worse yet, they kill our children.

I'm not trying to be an alarmist; the fact is immunization does save lives. Unfortunately, thanks to the great success of the public health boom, many of us have grown complacent. We think of those old diseases that aren't around any more or that they belong to other continents, other peoples. Well, diseases don't care where we live. They can hop on a plane just as easily as we can, and they land in our home and spread if we don't protect ourselves. In 2002, there were more than 2,000 cases of whooping cough in B.C. One infant died of whooping cough in that year.

Just last year there was an outbreak of measles in Quebec with almost 800 confirmed cases. I will again quote Dr. Hanley: "Immunization is a great privilege but it's also our responsibility." In past generations we only have to look back as far as our grandparents' generation. A mother would give birth to a child, knowing full well that child may die of a disease before he or she could even go to school.

We can now protect our children against diseases that ravaged past generations, but we should also think about ourselves as well. How many of us have had a tetanus shot in the last 10 years? What about a pertussis booster? Should we consider protecting ourselves against hepatitis A or hepatitis B? Are we at risk of contracting shingles? If we don't know the answers to these questions, we should contact our community health centres and find out how up to date our immunizations really are.

Finally, I'm pleased to let my colleagues know that the Department of Health and Social Services is launching a new website this week. This site brings together information on immunizations, including links to scientifically vetted reports on communicable diseases and the immunizations that can protect us against them.

On the site we can find a word from the chief medical officer of health Dr. Brendan Hanley, links to other agencies with solid scientifically vetted information on immunization.

Parents are understandably cautious about what they expose their children to. It's important to look for sound information in reliable spaces. I encourage them to visit www.yukonimmunize.ca as a good starting place.

In recognition of the Yukon Writers Festival

Hon. Mr. Kent: It gives me great pleasure to rise today to recognize the 23rd annual Yukon Writers Festival, known as "Live Words". Each spring, Yukoners come together with local and visiting writers to celebrate Canadian writing. The Yukon's abundant literary talent is part of our culture and history. The festival exposes Yukoners to Canada's finest authors and encourages Yukon writers to pursue literary success at all levels.

I'd like to emphasize that the festival is Yukon-wide, with events happening in Yukon communities, as well as here in Whitehorse. The opening reception was last night at the Kwanlin Dun Cultural Centre. It showcased Yukon writers Dennis Allen and Jerome Stueart, as well as four visiting writers from across Canada.

Other events take place throughout Yukon between now and Saturday, including readings in community libraries and a program of readings and music in Haines Junction on Friday evening.

Mr. Speaker, alongside the festival is the 33rd annual Young Authors Conference, which takes place today and tomorrow at F.H. Collins. Students from throughout the Yukon take part in this event. There are students there from the three Whitehorse-area high schools as well as St. Elias Community School in Haines Junction and Robert Service School in Dawson City.

For our young writers, it is a unique opportunity to write and be coached by accomplished Canadian writers. Strong support from national organizations, local community groups and businesses makes the festival happen. I would like to thank the many partners and sponsors who have collaborated over the years to ensure its success. Financial support from this government as well as the Canada Council for the Arts and the Writers Union of Canada make it possible to bring the writers from across Canada to Yukon.

Special appreciation is due to our Yukon festival committee and volunteers. Their love of the written and spoken word and their hard work ensure a successful event. The festival is produced this year by Public Libraries branch, Public Schools branch, and Junction Arts and Music.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I would like to remind Yukoners that the festival is open to the public. Program information for events taking place throughout Yukon is available through the local media and at Yukon public libraries. Mr. Speaker, in conclusion, I would like to thank you and I invite members of this Legislature to join in celebrating the Yukon Writers Festival.

In recognition of Yukon Biodiversity Awareness Month

Hon. Mr. Dixon: I rise today to ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Yukon Biodiversity Awareness Month, which is in April this year. By now, every home has received a copy of *Yukon Celebrates Spring*, a guide to the many activities taking place around the territory that fosters an appreciation for wildlife and habitat. Biodiversity is the variety of all living things, from the tiniest soil organism to the biggest mammal. Every species has a part to play. All life on Earth is incredibly interdependent. Yukon's biodiversity has four amphibian species, 38 fish species, 66 mammal species, 227 bird species, more than 1,600 types of plants, and well over 6,000 insect species. Yukoners recognize the importance of maintaining biodiversity both here and around the world. They are working hard to ensure habitats remain healthy for the widest variety of species.

I would like to pay tribute to the many organizations that make the events of Yukon Biodiversity Awareness Month — or, as it's affectionately known in Environment Yukon, YBAM! — with an exclamation point, for *Hansard* — possible: l'Association franco-yukonnaise, Canada Games Centre, Carcross-Tagish First Nation, Ducks Unlimited Canada, Environment Canada, Girl Guides of Canada, Kluane First Nation, Marsh Lake Community Association, Society of Yukon Bird Observatories, Town of Faro, *Whitehorse Star*, Whitehorse United Church, Yukon College, Yukon Energy Corporation, Yukon Literacy Coalition, *Yukon News* and the Yukon Wildlife Preserve. These organizations host, promote or coordinate activities, big and small, from the Faro Annual Crane and Sheep Viewing Festival to the popular Girl Guide Snack Shack that feeds all the hungry visitors at the Swan Haven Interpretive Centre.

I would like to make special mention of the frog walk planned for May 11 by the Carcross Cut-off. This year, participants will be able to check out the sounds of spring in the new *Yukon Amphibians* brochure published by Environment Yukon. The *Yukon Amphibians* brochure is beautiful to look at and full of information about frogs, toads and even salamanders. This is an excellent example of how the department generates and shares knowledge, helping others to act responsibly and respectfully in their interactions with the environment.

As I mentioned before, four of the 6,000 or so species of amphibians found in the world call Yukon home. Given that frogs and toads are ectothermic, or cold-blooded, this is quite

an accomplishment, given our extremely cold winters, short and cool summers and scarce hibernation sites.

The most common and widespread frog in Yukon is the wood frog, which is found as far north as Frog Lake on the Old Crow Flats.

The Columbia spotted frog is pretty rare because it cannot survive freezing. It has only been sighted in the Hyland River and Irons Creek area, east of Watson Lake, and on Bennett Lake near Carcross.

The boreal chorus frog is found only in La Biche River in the southeast corner of Yukon.

Lastly, the western toad, which is found throughout northern British Columbia, is so far confined to the Liard River basin.

In closing, I would like to note that Yukon is home to tens of thousands of plant and animal species, many found nowhere else in Canada and several nowhere else in this world.

While my remarks today focus on Yukon Biodiversity Month, I would like to recognize the role played by the Yukon Conservation Data Centre in preserving biodiversity here. The CDC is operated by the Yukon government to gather, maintain and distribute information on animals, plants and ecological communities at risk or of conservation concern in Yukon.

This information is essential for the effective management and protection of our natural resources. With so much to choose from, I encourage all members of this House to enjoy a wildlife viewing event or two during Yukon Biodiversity Awareness Month. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Are there any introductions of visitors?

TABLING RETURNS AND DOCUMENTS

Speaker: Under tabling returns and documents, the Chair has for tabling *Report of the Chief Electoral Officer of Yukon on Political Contributions 2012*.

The Chair also has for tabling the *Report on Subsistence, Travel & Accommodations of Members of the Yukon Legislative Assembly, 2012-2013*.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: I have for tabling today the *Yukon State of the Environment Interim Report: An Update for Environmental Indicators 2013*, which is published by Government of Yukon, through the Environment Yukon department, as well as contributions from the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources, Community Services, and other levels of government, including the City of Whitehorse and the federal government.

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: I have for tabling today the Fleet Vehicle Agency 2013-14 business plan by the Yukon Highways and Public Works. I also have the Queen's Printer Agency 2011-12 annual report by the Queen's Printer Agency, Yukon Highways and Public Works, and the Queen's Printer Agency 2013-14 business plan by the Queen's Printer Agency, Yukon Highways and Public Works.

Speaker: Are there any reports of committees?

Are there any petitions for presentation?

PETITIONS

Petition No. 11 — additional signatures presented

Ms. Moorcroft: I have for tabling an additional 25 signatures to the petition whereby the undersigned ask the Yukon Legislative Assembly to urge the Government of Canada to hold a national public inquiry into missing and murdered aboriginal women and girls, and to consult with the provinces, territories and national aboriginal organizations on the terms of reference of the national public inquiry.

Speaker: Are there any responses to petitions?

Petition No. 11 — response

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: I rise today to respond to Petition No. 11, which was presented to this House on April 22. Petition No. 11 urges this government to join the call for the federal government to hold a national public inquiry into missing and murdered aboriginal women and girls and consult with provinces, territories and national aboriginal organizations on the terms of reference of that national public inquiry.

This call for a national public inquiry was supported by leaders from the national aboriginal organizations and premiers and aboriginal ministers who were in attendance at the federal-provincial-territorial meeting held in Winnipeg last week. I bring to members' attention that, on April 23, I introduced a motion urging the Government of Canada to hold a national public inquiry into missing and murdered aboriginal girls and consult with the provinces, territories and national aboriginal organizations on the terms of reference of the national public inquiry.

It is also important to note that the Government of Yukon was one of the first governments in Canada to begin addressing this tragic issue of missing and murdered aboriginal women and that much work has been done on this and related issues.

Through the Women's Directorate, the government has been providing support to the Yukon Sisters in Spirit project, which was designed to research the occurrences of missing and murdered aboriginal women in Yukon. This project is also designed to work with families and communities to develop relevant violence prevention and public education initiatives.

In related activities, the government has contributed over \$1.5 million since 2004 toward the prevention of violence against aboriginal women fund, which is intended for innovative projects that addresses aboriginal women's safety and wellness in Yukon communities.

Since 2007, the government has provided funding through the women's equality fund to the Whitehorse Aboriginal Women's Circle, Liard Aboriginal Women's Society and the Yukon Aboriginal Women's Council.

In 2008, the Women's Directorate created an aboriginal women's policy and program manager position that seeks advice from First Nation communities, aboriginal women's organizations and aboriginal women to ensure impacts on aboriginal women are addressed and effectively implemented in government initiatives.

Also, between 2013 and 2015, the government is providing support to six violence prevention projects: \$25,000 to the Kwanlin Dun First Nation to establish a violence prevention worker within the Kwanlin Dun community; \$25,000 to the Liard Aboriginal Women's Society for the Together for Justice project to create a community action plan and encourage systematic change with RCMP training and performance; \$50,000 to the Skookum Jim Friendship Centre for a two-year Women of Wisdom project offering skills that can be used by the participants to develop personal awareness and recognize their individual worth; \$25,000 to the Whitehorse Aboriginal Women's Circle for the Daughter Spirit project, which will address the incidence of self-harm occurrences among young aboriginal women; \$25,000 to the Yukon Aboriginal Women's Council for the Brothers in Spirit project, a one-year strength-based community inquiry project targeting aboriginal men, where interviews will be conducted to gather stories and experiences of aboriginal men who are behaving in a non-violent, respectful way toward others; and \$50,000 to the Yukon Women's Transition Home Society, or Kaushee's Place, for a two-year elder mentor project to increase the sense of community support and cultural connections for aboriginal residents of Kaushee's Place.

The government has also invested heavily in lone-parent family facilities, as well as in housing that protects women and children fleeing abuse. We have also invested heavily in substance abuse programs and are working on the construction of a new alcohol and drug treatment facility, as we know that substance abuse is often a driver when it comes to violence against women and children.

I think it's important to point out that, while the government is doing its part, the responsibility for dealing with this important and tragic issue is the community's. To address this issue successfully will require the efforts of First Nation governments, community groups and families — people need to talk about this issue. Cooperation and partnership need to continue to be formed so this issue, which affects our mothers, daughters, families and communities, does not continue.

We look forward to working with our territorial and provincial counterparts on the terms of reference for a national inquiry. We look forward to raising awareness on a national level of an issue that has impacted so many. Along with this inquiry, the Government of Yukon will continue with its own efforts to raise awareness of this issue and to continue to work with those who are most affected. This has been a priority for this government and it will remain so.

Speaker: Are there any bills to be introduced?
Are there any notices of motion?

NOTICES OF MOTION

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to continue to work collaboratively with the Government of Canada for funding to improve our highways, construct new schools, expand the current hospital and to enable investment in energy, transportation and communication infrastructure.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: I give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Yukon government to invite officials from the Yukon Hospital Corporation to appear as witnesses in Committee of the Whole during the spring 2013 sitting.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Yukon government to invite officials from the Yukon Development Corporation and the Yukon Energy Corporation to appear as witnesses in Committee of the Whole during the spring 2013 sitting.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT a select committee regarding the risks and benefits of hydraulic fracturing be established;

THAT Patty McLeod be chair of the committee;

THAT the chair of the committee have a deliberative vote on all matters before the committee;

THAT the honourable members Hon. Currie Dixon, Stacey Hassard, Jim Tredger, Sandy Silver and Darius Elias be appointed to the committee;

THAT the committee be mandated to:

(1) gain a science-based understanding of the technical, environmental, economic and regulatory aspects of hydraulic fracturing;

(2) gain an understanding of Yukon's current legislation and regulations relevant to the oil and gas industry;

(3) consider the potential risks and benefits of hydraulic fracturing if it were used in the Yukon;

(4) facilitate an informed public dialogue for the purpose of sharing information on the potential risks and benefits of hydraulic fracturing as well as gathering input from the Yukon public, First Nations, stakeholders and stakeholder groups, including non-governmental organizations;

(5) hold public hearings in the two communities most likely to be affected by oil and gas development, Watson Lake and Old Crow, and in other Yukon communities as deemed appropriate by the committee;

(6) consider whether hydraulic fracturing can be done safely if properly regulated;

THAT the committee have the power to call for persons, papers and records and to sit during intersessional periods;

THAT in exercising its power to call for persons, papers and records, the committee may invite:

(1) officials from the Government of Yukon to appear as witnesses on technical matters;

(2) officials from other North American jurisdictions with experience in the regulation of hydraulic fracturing to appear as witnesses on technical matters;

(3) experts in matters related to hydraulic fracturing to appear as witnesses;

(4) representatives of Yukon First Nation governments and Yukon municipalities to appear as witnesses; and

(5) stakeholders and interested parties, including non-governmental organizations and members of the public, to ap-

pear as witnesses or provide input through other methods to be determined by the committee;

THAT the committee report to the Legislative Assembly its recommendations regarding a policy approach to hydraulic fracturing in the Yukon that is in the public interest, including:

(1) its findings, if any, regarding the potential risks and benefits of hydraulic fracturing and whether allowing the use of this technique is in the public interest; and

(2) its recommendations, if any, regarding any steps that should be taken to responsibly regulate hydraulic fracturing should its use in Yukon be allowed;

THAT the committee report to the House its finding and recommendations no later than the 2014 spring sitting of the Legislative Assembly;

THAT if the House is not sitting at such time as the committee is prepared to present its report, the committee chair shall transmit the committee's report to the Speaker, who shall transmit the report to all Members of the Legislative Assembly and then, not more than one day later, release the report to the public; and

THAT the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly be responsible for providing the necessary support services to the committee.

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

THAT it is the opinion of this House that:

(1) the Government of Yukon chose not to release consultation data on the Peel land use plan because it knew the data would not support its desired outcome;

(2) a statistical analysis of the consultation data demonstrates that 80 percent of Yukon respondents support the final recommended plan;

(3) the Government of Yukon should stop criticizing anyone who disagrees with its position on the development in the Peel region;

(4) the Government of Yukon should accept the advice of the former chair of the Yukon Land Use Planning Council and take steps to make the policy and operational changes required to restore public confidence in the land use planning process; and

(5) the Government of Yukon should accept the will of an overwhelming majority of Yukoners and implement the recommended Peel land use plan.

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

THAT this House urges the Discovery Channel to remove the word "Yukon" from their television program named *Yukon Men*.

Speaker: Is there a statement by a minister?

This brings us to Question Period.

QUESTION PERIOD

Question re: Education employees making public statements

Ms. Hanson: Mr. Speaker, in its current form, the Department of Education's draft policy on making public statements appears to be entering into *Charter*-rights-to-freedom-of-speech territory.

Teachers are telling me that educators did not forfeit their *Charter* rights when they entered the teaching profession. On Monday the Minister of Education said there would be consultation with the Yukon Teachers Association and others on the draft policy, and that further changes are being contemplated based on those discussions.

My question to the minister is straightforward. What has the minister discovered after having consulted with teachers and what changes will be made to the policy?

Hon. Mr. Kent: Just a couple of clarifications I think are important with respect to this. These are guidelines in draft form, still being worked on, and they provide guidance on an existing government policy that has been around since 1994. It's one of the GAM policies dealing with public communications and conflict of interest. As mentioned, it was first created in 1994 here in the territory. It has gone through many different governments, including governments of all parties represented in this House. These policies are in place in every jurisdiction in Canada and apply to all government employees. This work is still at the operational level; officials are working; officials have been engaging with the Yukon Teachers Association and others. Once we get to a final draft — there have already been changes made, I understand. I haven't been involved in these discussions and nor should I be there at the operational stage right now. I look forward to seeing the final draft once it has been completed.

Ms. Hanson: It's true that guidelines do exist and have always existed, but there are new aspects to this. The draft policy in its current form is not about confidentiality. It is a very broad policy that requires Education employees to get clearance before they, and I quote, "provide information to the media on any education-related matter", end quote. It even requires all Education employees to get direction in advance to determine if they can speak and what they can say at a public education-related function.

The way the draft policy is written, teachers are rightfully worried they won't be able to participate in public meetings, like school council meetings, unless they are cleared. Does the minister have a new draft policy that he will release so that teachers and the public can determine if the rules are reasonable and do not infringe on *Charter* rights?

Hon. Mr. Kent: One of the disappointing things that comes from the Leader of the Official Opposition on this is the fearmongering that exists. The document that she's referring to is the first draft that was shared with the Yukon Teachers Association. There have been several drafts and changes made to that document since that original one was let. Once it's finalized, of course, I'll be happy to share it and I'm looking forward to reviewing it.

One of the important things to also mention is government employees, particularly those employees in the Department of Education, have access to a lot of sensitive personal, legal and business information that can impact people's lives, and that information has to be treated carefully. The Department of Education is very complex — obviously we deal with children, we are responsible for information on our immigrant population — so again, that's why we have those policies in place. The purpose of these guidelines once they're completed — not the first draft that the Leader of the Official Opposition is fearmongering about — we look to help ensure the employees in the Department of Education can understand their responsibilities with respect to this type of information. Again, it's information that involves children, immigrants, and others that is held within the department.

Ms. Hanson: The minister opposite is doing a disservice to himself and to his public service by suggesting that we are fearmongering. It is educators who have raised this issue — educators. I would repeat that teachers understand and respect confidentiality. This is not about confidentiality. I remind this House that it is the Yukon Party that has severely restricted public access to public information about decision-making and that has refused to act on promises to implement the whistleblower protection. This policy is another tightening of the noose on civic participation. This policy came out in January. Then, as now, there were a lot of controversial education issues being discussed in staff lounges, at school council meetings and in the public domain. I refer to the rushed consultation on changes to calendars, to the confusion about F.H. Collins Secondary School and the issue of homophobia at Vanier Secondary School.

Why was the draft policy released at this specific time and when will the minister present a revised policy that respects our teachers?

Hon. Mr. Kent: Again, I have to mention that the Leader of the Official Opposition is wrong and she's fearmongering on this. The document that she tabled in this House was the first draft. It has undergone several iterations and modifications since then based on feedback from the Yukon Teachers Association and others.

The Department of Education deals with very sensitive information — information about our children, information about our immigrant population and information about others. When it comes to this type of information, we want to make sure that the guidelines that are supporting a policy that has been in place since 1994 and has been through the rule of governments from all sides of this House — there has been an NDP government, Liberal government and several Yukon Party governments since that time — are going to help to ensure that all of our employees, not just the teachers — we have a number of employees in the department — understand the responsibilities with respect to this type of information.

Fearmongering and tabling a very first draft is disrespectful, and I think the Leader of the Official Opposition should be ashamed of herself.

Question re: Oil-fired appliance safety

Ms. White: Yukon's fire marshal said that after the deaths of five people in Porter Creek last winter, local retailers have done a brisk trade in carbon detectors. Tragedies motivate people to action and there is no doubt that the preventable deaths of the Rusk family and Mr. McNamee from carbon monoxide poisoning made people take action. Yukon homeowners have been motivated to have their chimneys, furnaces and wood stoves inspected. The necessary work to meet safety requirements can be very costly — in the thousands of dollars — and even if they know their homes require renovations or new installations for safety reasons, many people may not be able to afford the job.

My question is this: Will the Government of Yukon be introducing new financial supports for homeowners to perform renovations or new installations to their heating systems so their homes are safe?

Hon. Mr. Kent: With respect to this question raised by the member opposite, we do have a program in place called the "home repair program," and that does apply to furnace upgrades and modifications to heating units. That is something that they can access right now, and it's available to individuals. We are looking, through the Yukon Housing Corporation, into introducing a separate program that speaks specifically to heating systems and appliances just to help out, perhaps, with the marketing of the program. That hasn't been done yet, but in the meantime they can access the home repair program for those types of expenditures.

Ms. White: I'm familiar with the home repair program. My concern is that if someone is accessing the home repair program for installation or other safety issues, they will run out — they will max out at their \$35,000. We have a domestic well program, where rural residents receive low-interest loans to drill wells and pay back the government in five, 10 or 15 years. Those same people can also access the home repair program, so my question: Will the minister outline his plans for this new heating system program and when can we expect to see that available?

Hon. Mr. Kent: I'll be happy to outline those plans and the availability once the Yukon Housing Corporation has conducted their diligence on that. Again, the home repair program is presently being promoted for the purpose of homeowners and landlords having their heating systems inspected and/or repaired to confirm safe operations. With respect to the maximum amount, just on a personal note, I've had my furnace and oil tank replaced in the past couple of years, and it was in and around the \$10,000 mark. So I don't anticipate the maxing out at the \$35,000 mark, as the member opposite suggests, will be a problem for the majority of Yukoners who are looking to access this program.

Question re: Victoria Gold power generation

Mr. Silver: Mr. Speaker, in a recent article in the local newspaper, the Premier was asked about the potential of opening the Victoria Gold mine near Mayo.

The original plan for the mine was to tie into the existing power grid. However, the Premier told the paper that there is now a second option on the table: having the mine generate its

own power by burning diesel or possibly a diesel-natural gas mix, and I quote: "Those two options are still on the table and being discussed by the company and officials as well". The article goes on to say that, according to the Victoria Gold president, the company has no plans to generate its own power, "No, it's still our intention to tie into the grid. We're actually not permitted to have our own power system, so we're working very closely with Yukon Energy Corporation to tie into the grid and have them provide power."

The company and the Premier seem to be in contradiction with each other here, and I just want to know: Does the Premier stand by his comments, or does he want to correct the public record?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: I would encourage the member not to assume that every story in the newspaper is always correct. We know the media — we assume they make the best intentions but, in fact, in this case, yes, there have been discussions that have gone on between Yukon Energy Corporation and Victoria Gold. As far as them hooking up to the grid, that has not been determined to be the final option yet, and there has also been discussion between Yukon Energy Corporation and Victoria Gold, as well as the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources and Victoria Gold about the possibility of Victoria Gold choosing to generate its power on-site. No definitive conclusion has been reached at this time.

Mr. Silver: I guess there is still a contradiction here between the president of Victoria Gold and the Premier regarding the mine's intention to get power. Victoria Gold wants to hook into the grid. That is what they told the local media and that's what it says on their website, and I quote: "Grid power currently runs along the highway and Victoria has a letter of intent in place with the Yukon Energy Corp to support grid power via a spur line to be constructed along the existing access road." This is going to be a very large customer, Mr. Speaker. I'll move on.

We know our power grid is already stretched to its limit. Does the Energy Corporation have sufficient capacity to serve this mine and what will the source of that power be?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: The member is trying to create the sense of a contradiction between what the company and government are saying. I think the member is really fishing here. In fact, as we indicated, yes, the company had planned to hook up to the grid. That plan is still a possibility but we have also had discussions with them at a ministerial level, at a departmental level and at a corporation level about the possibility of Victoria Gold doing on-site energy production themselves. As I've stated on a number of occasions in the House, before we would give permission for a mine — including Victoria Gold — to tie into the grid, there would be a number of steps that would have to be met and we would have to believe it was in the best interests of Yukoners and ratepayers. Energy projects of that size also require approval by the Yukon Utilities Board before they can commence and before those assets can be added in to the rate base.

So there are a number of tests that have to be successfully met and approvals have to be given not only by the Yukon Energy Corporation and by government, but also by the Yukon

Utilities Board, for energy projects of that size if they are to be added on to the public grid.

Mr. Silver: For the record, I'd much rather be fishing than trying to get answers from this minister.

Maybe the Yukon Energy Corporation appearing in the Legislature this spring, as I've requested — and we heard today that they're going to show up; that's great — could actually give us some answers about these particular companies attaching themselves to the grid.

The Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources has said in the past that he's looking forward to development on the Eagle mine site in 2013. He also said that the government has been advised that the Eagle property will be in production by 2014-15. Now, this is a very large project and it involves a great deal of preparation from both the company and the government. At this point, Victoria Gold is focusing on securing its financing and we are very happy to see this project moving forward.

We know the Energy Corporation is working very hard on supplying power and answering the power questions for this particular project. Is the government still anticipating development this summer, and what preparations is it doing to make sure that it's ready when this comes on to the grid?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: A few points that have to be said in context — Victoria Gold has gone through the YESAA process. They have successfully received a recommendation from YESAB and a decision document recommending the project proceed. The company has not yet applied for their quartz mining licence, which is another step that must be taken.

It is a very challenging market right now, not just for Victoria Gold but for other companies with large undertakings. If the member follows the news, stock markets are in a period of undervaluing a significant number of opportunities.

I would direct the member's attention to the protocol that I tabled in the House, between Yukon Development Corporation and me, as well as the letter of expectation, which lays out a number of expectations, including our key expectations that the Development Corporation ensure its subsidiary operates in a manner consistent with the government's overall requirement that Yukon Energy Corporation provide Yukoners with safe, reliable and cost-effective electrical power — in particular, that Yukon Energy Corporation minimizes financial risk; assists government, as required, with technical information to help government make good decisions, including policy decisions about new energy projects; undertakes new energy projects as directed by government; and performs maintenance on existing assets. The member will also see a number of references to ensure that — I gather I'm out of time, Mr. Speaker, so I will have to provide that information later, but I encourage the member to read the letter.

Question re: Old Crow riverbank erosion

Mr. Elias: I have a question for the Minister of Highways and Public Works. Old Crow is very close to being cut in half. Access to the rock quarry —

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Mr. Elias: Do I have the floor, Mr. Speaker?

The Chief Zzeh Gittlit School and traditional hunting grounds — these important places will be severed from the rest

of the community when the road connecting them falls into the Porcupine River. This road runs past the eastern end of the Old Crow airport, over land owned and maintained by the Yukon government. The ice is breaking up and the river won't wait for this government to make a decision.

When will this government take responsibility for the land it owns in Old Crow and shore up the riverbank to prevent an important community transportation route from being destroyed?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: I would like to thank the member for Old Crow for raising this important question and certainly bringing light to it.

As the member opposite is very much aware, I had the opportunity to actually meet with members of the Vuntut Gwitchin government last month in the community of Old Crow, during which time this matter arose as a very important issue. The Department of Community Services and the Department of Highways and Public Works have committed to working with the government to address this very important issue. At this time, we are awaiting information from officials from the Vuntut Gwitchin government to advance this project.

Mr. Elias: That's good to hear. I'd like to hear from the Minister of Highways and Public Works though, because this area falls directly within his department as it is part of the airport right of way and it is a part of the roads that are being maintained in Old Crow.

It's important to note that the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation is doing the Yukon government's job. Despite the fact that the land belongs to the Yukon government, last September the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation went to the trouble of consulting with an engineering firm to assess the cost of having the riverbank shored up. It might surprise you to learn that it's not a lot of money, Mr. Speaker; it's approximately \$150,000 — that's it. We're talking about one-hundredth of one-percent of a commitment from the territorial budget here and it appears to not be in the budget this year. I don't see it in a line item.

Can the Premier assure my constituents the problem will be addressed and the threat to the community of Old Crow will be alleviated immediately?

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: I thank the member opposite for the question. To answer my esteemed colleague, the Minister of Community Services stated that we will be there with the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation.

I just want to put on record that the Transportation and Maintenance branch has a 950 Cat loader, a 120 Cat grader, a steel drum packer and a D6 Cat, and our Aviation branch has a loader and a five-tonne dump truck. Not too long ago I did speak with the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin about Porcupine Enterprises, which is a Pelly and Vuntut Gwitchin company, and they have some larger Cats, larger hoes, and a 35-tonne rock truck. Absolutely, Highways and Public Works along with Community Services will be there at the table to assist in any way that they can.

Mr. Elias: It's also important to note that I met with these ministers in the fall and again in January to let them know that this issue was of importance to the community. It's also important to note that \$150,000 is going to be multiplied by 10

if this isn't rectified immediately. With the Premier and the Finance minister's prudent fiscal management, I think the time is now for them to alleviate this problem. What my constituents want to hear on the floor of the House today is, "Don't worry, this river's going to be fixed. The riverbank is going to be stabilized and you don't have to worry about the access route to the traditional harvesting grounds, to the Chief Zzeh Gittlit School or to residential subdivisions."

It's a simple answer from the government. They were well aware of this six months ago.

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: I want to thank the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin for the question. I think the answer has already been provided by the Minister of Community Services in terms of how we are waiting for an assessment to be done before we can move forward. It was well articulated by the Minister of Highways and Public Work — the assets that are available to be able to deal with this problem. The member is also correct that this government is in a strong financial position as a result of 10 years of strong economic growth as a result of the good strong policies that this government has had to see that we have economic prosperity — that we are in fact in a position to be able to spend the money in places when these things come up. I have spoken about this in the House many times. We are in a position to be able to meet the needs that are sometimes unexpected — last year, for example, with the flooding in Upper Liard and perhaps with what is going on with the road in Old Crow.

I appreciate the question. I think the answer was well articulated. As a result of the Yukon Party government, we are in a position to be able to deal with this and other unforeseen incidents if they do arise.

Question re: Mayo B project

Mr. Tredger: Mr. Speaker, yesterday the minister responsible indicated he does not know production figures from Mayo B. Despite repeated requests for information from this minister, we are not getting answers. We have heard that Mayo B is not running at full capacity. Constituents are telling us that you can't run the water through the turbine at full capacity without causing winter flooding — flooding that threatens the Village of Mayo. The government is clearly aware of the flooding issues in Mayo, because it has budgeted money for, "finding a permanent engineering solution for winter flood abatement along the Mayo River." The winter flooding in Mayo is a new and ongoing problem, seemingly since the construction of Mayo B.

What is the cause of the winter flooding in Mayo and has this government found a permanent engineering solution?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: First of all, let me address the preamble of the member's question and point out that the members either do not understand how the structure works or are choosing to ask questions that create a different impression.

I would point out that not only are there two corporations with very capable boards of directors and staff who manage this — the Yukon Development Corporation and Yukon Energy Corporation — there is also a process where the regulator that has the primary responsibility for regulating the utility is the Yukon Utilities Board. In the last rate application from the

Energy Corporation, interveners asked 1,200 written questions that were answered. Yukon Energy Corporation staff spent three days on the stand answering questions, including the costs and benefits of all energy options.

For the members to try to create a sense of what the cost per kilowatt hour is, it really depends — the usage of various energy production assets on the system is dependent on things including water flow, the yearly cycles, demand on the system, et cetera. I would certainly be happy to have staff appear before this House, as they will later this sitting, to answer those detailed questions, but for the members to expect a pat answer to that simply does disservice to how the structure operates and is not —

Speaker: Order please. The member's time has elapsed.

Mr. Tredger: I guess that's why they call it Question Period. This member does expect an answer. There is such a thing as ministerial responsibility, and it's the minister's responsibility to be fiscally responsible and to set direction for the corporations.

The people from Mayo have told me that, for most of the winter, there has been heavy equipment working the Mayo River clearing ice and managing flow. Of course this raises many questions — the ability of Mayo B to run at full capacity; environmental impacts; what is the long-term plan and who bears the cost?

Can the minister responsible tell this House what the environmental impacts of the heavy equipment working in the Mayo River are? How long will the work continue and who is paying for it?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: First of all to the member's assertions, the member is again trying to paint a picture that either demonstrates that the member simply doesn't understand how the structure works or prefers to engage in mudslinging rather than constructive debate.

I'd ask the member, when he asks about the cost per kilowatt hour from the Mayo B dam project, what's the cost per kilowatt hour from the Whitehorse dam? What's the cost per kilowatt hour from Haeckel Hill? Is the member factoring in capital costs? Or is the member factoring in operations cost? The windmills, as we've pointed out, have not been very effective. This is why we have a process that involves Yukon Energy Corporation going to the Yukon Utilities Board for detailed questions and accountability and why we have witnesses from the corporations appear in front of the Legislative Assembly to answer questions of that detail.

The member is oversimplifying the situation and either doesn't understand how the system works and the energy grid works or is choosing to engage in mudslinging just for fun. As far as the river goes, I look forward to providing more information about that in the next response.

Mr. Tredger: Let me assure the minister opposite that I am not engaging in mudslinging, and trying to get an answer from him is not fun.

The people of Mayo deserve answers, and so do the ultimate ratepayers, the Yukon public. The minister responsible

has been avoiding answering our straightforward questions about energy production choices.

The flooding is causing damages to property. A very productive and decades-old farm has been flooded at least twice. Valuable dirt that took years to build up was washed away forever. Homes in the Village of Mayo, within the dikes, have flooded this winter. People have had to use pumps to get rid of the water.

Mr. Speaker, what recourse will there be for people in Mayo whose property has been damaged by the flooding?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: I want to just clarify for the member opposite that it was at the request of the Village of Mayo and at the request of the Na Cho Nyäk Dun First Nation that we provide assistance to the community of Mayo, and we have been doing that over the years.

The winter flooding of the Mayo River is certainly an unanticipated event that has been occurring, and it is very complex, and there are many contributing factors.

What the government has done, though, is that we have gone to work with the Mayo community. We have gone to work with Yukon Energy Corporation, with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, on opening up the diversion channels, which have been a very effective means and are certainly within the assessment provided through Department of Fisheries and Oceans on an emergency basis.

In the meantime, we have committed to developing long-term strategies to prevent or to mitigate this winter flooding problem as we see it, and we are doing so in collaboration with our community partners.

Mr. Speaker, we do have dollars allotted for flood mitigation in this year's budget, as we have allotted funding in the past to address this issue. We understand the priority that the Village of Mayo and the Na Cho Nyäk Dun First Nation has allotted to this, and we are committed to finding that long-term solution.

Question re: Communication infrastructure

Ms. Stick: Mr. Speaker, telecommunications and Internet service are important for our economy, for the health and security of our communities and have increasingly become an essential way of life. Yukon consumers' experiences are not always positive. We pay more for Internet, and service interruptions are common and costly. Northwestel's announced planned modernizations to rural Yukon have been shelved due to a recent CRTC decision on wholesale pricing. The Yukon government's announcement of a new ICT secretariat is welcome news, if it means that Yukon's investments in infrastructure upgrades result in better service and the ability to grow the IT sector economy.

What has been the Yukon government's total contribution to Northwestel for Internet service upgrades and how does the government measure whether the public receive value for money?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Thanks to the member opposite for her kind words about the policy direction this government has taken with regard to prioritizing the ICT industry of our economy and the actions we've taken to date to stimulate activity in that industry. With regard to her specific question about monies

the government has given to Northwestel, I'm not really sure exactly what she means, but I do know that, over the course of the past several decades, various governments have worked with Northwestel, as the lone provider, to enhance infrastructure.

The proposal we have discussed — the idea of working with the private sector to develop a second fibre optic route to the south — hasn't been allocated any funding yet. We have identified some money in the budget to do some feasibility work, but we haven't yet expended any money, so I don't know exactly what she's asking about on that issue.

I would agree with her assessment that the ICT industry is an important component of our economy and that the services provided to Yukoners sometimes don't match with the ones provided to those in the south. That's something that we take issue with and certainly want to push Northwestel toward, as well as engaging with the CRTC to ensure that their regulatory means for pushing service providers in that direction are also encouraged.

Ms. Stick: The Yukon government needs to be prepared to invest in improving IT services, but this enthusiasm must be tempered. Investments need to be strategic and get results for customers, for small businesses, and help grow Yukon's IT sector, which can be a source of new knowledge economy jobs. An independent IT strategy report on the Economic Development website suggests that the Yukon government, as the largest consumer, needs to be strategic if its IT investments are to result in services that can create an IT private industry and better service for consumers.

How is the minister ensuring that, prior to committing additional taxpayer dollars to Northwestel for infrastructure improvements, a strategy will be in place to ensure public goals are met?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Indeed, there is a strategy in place. She just referenced it. We, in collaboration with YITIS, the Yukon information technology industry sector, developed a sector strategy for that industry that is now published on a website. She has seen the strategy; she has referenced it and now she is asking me where it is. So I would direct her back to the website where she found it. That's where the strategy is.

That strategy comes up with a number of recommendations for government and for industry for how to move forward with the ICT industry in the territory. We have endorsed that report. We paid for it. Indeed, we're working with industry to implement the recommendations.

As a part of that, we've already developed a directorate within the Department of Economic Development to facilitate that sort of implementation. I've identified core funding for the YITIS group to provide for some intra-industry collaboration and to assist with the industry in coordinating its efforts. I've also indicated that we're willing to explore the possibility of a second fibre optic link to the south.

So there are a number of activities that we have undertaken already. There are a number of things we've committed to, and there is strategic work that has been done already which provides us with guidance for going forward.

Ms. Stick: The ICT strategy report on the Economic Development website suggests public governments choose whether they want to be owners and have a stake in the IT infrastructure or use other approaches to be catalysts and leverage public investment in this sector.

Throughout the world, there are different approaches public governments are taking to IT infrastructure and an IT economy. What conditions is the Yukon government prepared to place on any future infrastructure funding to private IT providers, and has it ruled out a partial ownership stake in a major infrastructure project it helps to finance?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: At this point we haven't ruled out any option. Of course, we are considering a number of options for how we might move forward with that particular project. I would suggest, though, that I think it's a good idea for us to take into consideration a number of different factors, including the role that First Nations may want to play in that and the role that their development corporations may want to play in that project. Private companies themselves, I'm sure, will be interested and, of course, there is always going to be a role for government as an important component there.

I have indicated previously in answers in this House that I believe the private sector really needs to be the lead in this sort of thing, but I've obviously made commitments that the government is willing to support them and work with industry to see a project move forward. Ultimately, the structure of whatever ownership model that could evolve for that particular project isn't yet determined. As I've said, we have indicated that we are willing to do a pre-feasibility study on this. At this stage, we simply don't have the details that the member opposite is asking for.

Those are details that will come out in the planning procedures and, as we move forward with a feasibility study, I'm sure the answers to her questions will begin to emerge, and I will be in a position to respond more accurately as we approach work actually being done on this project.

With that I'd say that the ICT industry's a priority for us; we're excited about it and I'm very encouraged by the work done to date.

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

OPPOSITION PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

MOTIONS OTHER THAN GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

Motion No. 372

Clerk: Motion No. 372, standing in the name of Mr. Silver.

Speaker: It is moved by the Member for Klondike THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to invite officials from the Yukon Development Corporation to appear as witnesses in Committee of the Whole during the 2013 spring sitting to answer questions related to the pending energy shortfall facing Yukon.

Mr. Silver: I got the good news this morning: my months of asking, and we finally get the privilege of seeing the Yukon Energy Corporation and the Yukon Development Corporation in this House. I wish the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources in his capacity as House Leader would be a little bit more forthcoming with information. I asked a very simple question this morning: are you going to put forth a motion today calling for the corporations to come forth? Whereas he didn't say no, he did give the indication that they would only do something like that during Committee of the Whole.

Either way, I'm extremely happy that the corporations are coming forth. I do think it's worth noting though that the minister went to great lengths this morning in Question Period to take offence to the Member for Mayo-Tatchun. I believe he said he was creating a different impression with regard to Yukon Energy Corporation and Yukon Development Corporation, so I think sometimes maybe he should listen to himself and maybe take his own advice.

Once again, I wish we had that information this morning, but at the same time I do want to apologize in advance that my speech might be a little bit laboured today because my final notes were done and edited today after the House Leaders meeting and at that time I was led to believe that the minister would not do exactly what he did. Anyway, there are an awful lot of important issues that I'm definitely going to get around to speaking of today.

The motion is pretty straightforward. It calls for the officials from the Yukon Development Corporation to appear as witnesses this spring to answer questions about energy. It is a simple request that would allow for debate on a wide range of topics. I'll go through some of these topics today. I hope the motion can be supported by all members of this Assembly and that later this month, or sometime next month — we still don't know — that we will have a good debate with our energy experts in this Chamber.

I will begin with a statement from the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. He reminded us a few days ago — or yesterday, I believe, in Question Period — about the role the Yukon Energy Corporation and Yukon Development Corporation play and I quote: "...we do have two boards and corporations that manage this area. They are ultimately responsible to this government and to the Legislative Assembly through myself as minister..." That was the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, April 23 this year in Question Period.

I could not agree more with that statement as it pinpoints the reason why I have brought forward this motion today. The corporations are ultimately responsible to the Legislative Assembly. One of the obligations the minister has is to bring these corporations to the Assembly. In February of this year I put out a news release calling on the Premier to confirm that officials from both the Yukon Hospital Corporation and Yukon Energy Corporation would appear as witnesses in the Yukon Legislative Assembly during the spring session. Today's motion should therefore come as no surprise. We are more than halfway through this session and it's only today that we have notification that the Yukon Development Corporation and the Yukon Energy Corporation will be here in the spring.

I wanted to avoid the process that we went through last session I asked, on a regular basis during motions for the corporation to appear — and the government refused.

I wanted the government to have ample notice that Yukoners have plenty of questions in this field, and also in the fields of health and energy for these officials — questions that deserve answers. I did not receive a response to my call at that time.

Once the session began, so did the stalling on this request. Finally, after tabling a motion this week, the government confirmed that yes, officials from the Hospital Corporation will be appearing. It took two months, but I'm pleased the government has finally, if not reluctantly, agreed to this request. It would have been two full years since representatives from the Yukon Hospital Corporation have sat in the Legislative Assembly. The government has been very reluctant to have the corporations appear to answer questions, and the public deserves better.

The Yukon Hospital Corporation last appeared February 15, 2011, and since that time there have been several significant developments. A number of years ago, the Yukon Party government moved the construction of the two new hospitals out of the Department of Health and Social Services to avoid the scrutiny of the Legislature and have resisted calls to have the corporation appear as well.

As questions mount about the new facilities, it's an ideal time for some accountability to the public. The report from the Auditor General on the construction of the two new hospitals in rural Yukon is one area of questioning, and the \$27-million bailout of the corporation is another.

I'm sure that we could spend another day talking about these two items alone. I understand officials will be appearing in mid-May, and we welcome the government's change of mind in agreeing to have them come forward. The only corporation that appears on an annual basis in this Chamber is the Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board. There was an act review some years ago and one of the recommendations from that review was to formalize the appearance of the corporation in this Chamber on an annual basis. It is now written right into the act. Prior to that, the corporation appeared on an ad hoc basis at the whim of the government, much like the situation we now have with the Hospital Corporation. I would urge the government to make amendments to the appropriate legislation to formalize an annual appearance by the Yukon Development Corporation, the Yukon Energy Corporation and the Hospital Corporation.

Accountability and transparency are important to me as a legislator and I am demonstrating that with the motion that I have called here today. There is a principle at stake here: elected officials are doing a disservice to their constituents if they forego an opportunity for public insight on Crown corporation spending. That principle is an important one. It is probably as important as the content of the discussion itself. It's about being open and accountable. I also appreciate the arm's-length relationship of the corporation.

The ministers responsible for the Hospital Corporation or for the Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board or for Yukon Energy Corporation often stand in this House and say,

"I'm not responsible for that. That was a board decision." In many cases they are absolutely correct. There are a number of questions we have that can only be answered by the corporation. To deny us the ability to ask these questions by refusing to bring officials into this House is — I don't think I can use the words here in this House, but I believe that my point can be made on where I think this government stands.

The circular argument of "I'm not responsible but you can't ask that question to those people who are" is not a strong argument and it is more of a deflection. I believe that Yukoners deserve better. In moving forward, I would love to see some kind of changes to the legislation to allow these other corporations to also appear on a regular basis.

With all due respect to the ministers responsible, we often learn more about power and electrical rates and our energy future in two hours with the corporation than over an entire sitting with the minister. As the Member for Mayo-Tatchun referenced earlier, there is a reason we call it Question Period and not answer period.

As an aside, in our experience with the Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board in here, it seems to me that the officials are relishing the opportunity to set the record straight and to have those conversations.

It has been two years since officials last appeared and hopefully we can get a chance to ask some questions. Yukon Development Corporation did not appear in 2009 or in 2012 and last appeared in 2011, more than two years ago. With regard to Yukon Development Corporation, which last appeared on February 17, 2011, to be precise, the list of concerns is very long. I think even the government would agree that there are important issues here. I believe that every member on that side of the House has been asked questions by their constituents on many of the questions and concerns and issues that I am going to lay out. I believe the public would benefit from having some of these questions answered. Let's look through some of them.

We're looking for a progress report on Mayo B. How much power is the expansion producing, for example? We have questions about the future of current rate subsidies. The government recently announced a one-year extension to the interim electrical rebate. We have questions about the all-too-frequent power outages that we experience here in the Yukon. We have questions about new industrial customers. Who are they? What are the timelines for them coming on to the grid, for example? I'll talk more about this situation later on.

The recently signed January 2013 letter of intent to create a power purchase agreement with Copper North Mining Corporation, other PPAs that are already in place, and still others that have been negotiated — have the existing PPAs been financially successful? What impact might Victoria Gold being developed have on our power system? There seems to be a conflict of information on how the mine will get powered, and I didn't really receive an answer today either. Let me read from the recent story — and this is a quote from the *Yukon News*: "It's estimated that Eagle will use up almost 100 gigawatt-hours of electricity, but there appears to be some confusion over where that power will come from. The original plan was to tie Eagle into the territorial power grid. But Pasloski said

there is now a second option on the table: having the mine generate its own power by burning diesel, or possibly a diesel-natural gas mix,” — and the Premier’s quote was — “Those two options are still on the table and being discussed by the company and officials as well. I can’t speculate on what exactly will be the requirements and how it will be looked at. I know that energy requirements is something that both the Victoria Gold and officials are working on to see what is the best solution for the mine and for the ratepayers, the taxpayers and citizens of Yukon.” This is what the Premier said, but according to McConnell, the company has no plans to generate its own power.

His quote: “No, it’s still our intention to tie into the grid. We’re actually not permitted to have our own power system, so we’re working very closely with Yukon Energy Corporation to tie into the grid and have them provide power...” That’s from the *Yukon News*, April 12, 2013.

The whole point of bringing this up once again here is that perhaps the corporation could clear up some of this confusion — the corporation’s financial plan is another example. This year’s budget has \$2.625 million for Mayo B ratepayers’ support. I have a few questions I would like to ask the corporation about that. How many years will the taxpayers be paying for this, for example?

I’ve already raised questions in Question Period about the corporation’s obligation to serve new industrial customers. The minister says it is not an absolute obligation. Well, where is the line? I’d like to ask the corporation for its view on this question. What happens if a company wants to hook up and the corporation refuses?

The long-delayed IPP policy — Yukon Development Corporation is involved in that as well. Yukoners would like to hear their thoughts on it. Perhaps they can explain why four years after the minister promised it was coming, we still have nothing delivered.

Also, some of the long-delayed net metering policies and Yukon Development Corporation’s involvement and opinion on that issue.

There are questions that arise from the recent general rate application in 2012 and the Utilities Board ruling on that application. The recently tabled shareholders letter of expectations and the recently tabled protocol between the government and the corporation have also raised a number of questions. The topic of governance and the idea of a separate board for Yukon Development Corporation and Yukon Energy Corporation — another interesting topic that I would love to have a chance to discuss with the corporations and the boards. The biggest one: How will future power needs be met? It has been described to me as an “energy cliff” or an “energy shortfall”. That’s what Yukoners are facing. There are many ways to describe it, and they all mean the same thing.

We are at a capacity for hydro and yet the demand continues to grow. If some of the industrial customers come on-board in the next few years, we are going to be scrambling to keep up. How are we going to meet these energy demands? According to a document filed by the Energy Corporation in the 2012 GRA, the answer is mostly diesel. Diesel use as a percentage of

the increased load will rise year after year from approximately 30 percent to over 70 percent.

Recent developments around liquefied natural gas, or LNG, could certainly impact those numbers — again, something to discuss with the corporation.

In the long term, there is a possibility of connecting to the North American grid. A commitment to advance this goal was a campaign commitment of both the Yukon Party and the Liberal Party in the last election campaign. In the short term, this is obviously not a solution.

Let’s talk a little bit about the future of LNG in the Yukon. It’s a very hot topic right now, and I know the corporation has been proactive in moving on this initiative. The government, on the other hand, has been slow to respond to the work being done by both YEC and YECL. We’re at a point now where both the private and the public energy companies are waiting for the government to produce regulations to govern the use of LNG in the Yukon. The government isn’t part of the solution in this case. It’s part of the problem.

I introduced a motion recently — Motion No. 411. I’ll read it into the record again:

“THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to proceed with regulations governing LNG so that Yukon Electrical can switch over generators from diesel to LNG.”

Now, the purpose of this motion is very straightforward. I am urging the government to get these rules in place. The minister has talked about LNG for some time, but has failed to “set the table”, so to speak, for Yukon Energy Corporation and others to proceed.

Now I know that the NDP they say that they don’t like the idea of LNG. Unfortunately, because of the lack of planning, the Yukon is currently left with very few options. We are not ready to move on other projects after a decade of Yukon Party government. It’s better than diesel, and it will have to do until other options become available.

We have no ideological objections to liquefied natural gas. This does not mean that a more viable, renewable option should not be immediately invested into, and it does not mean fracking in the Yukon. I would love to have this conversation with the Yukon Energy Corporation and the Yukon Development Corporation. I would relish the opportunity to discuss the viability of beginning with the frack-free, made-in-Yukon liquefied natural gas industry. Tell me there wouldn’t be market for such a product.

But I’m not the expert, Mr. Speaker. What I do know is that there is promising work being done in Eagle Plains, and if this government ever learned to get along with the Kaska, there would be potential in the southeast Yukon as well.

LNG could power our territory for years to come until our renewable resources, our renewable sources, are more developed. I know that Yukon Energy is interested in working with any proponent who could supply this resource locally. Every year, millions of dollars are drained out of our territory to buy fuel that is produced in other parts of Canada. If estimates are correct, we are sitting on another option, one that we can produce here at home, one that can produce steady jobs and a steady economy. This is worth pursuing.

When the session ends, there will be a committee in place to examine the issue of fracking. A properly planned oil and gas industry would have seen this discussion take place several years ago. The government's intent, however, to finally do the right thing and to engage the public in this debate is now very encouraging. The Yukon Party does not want to use the word, but just as there currently is a moratorium on staking claims in the Peel, there is, and there must be, a moratorium on fracking in the Yukon from now until the committee's work is done and Yukoners receive all the facts.

I think that there has been an assumption made by some — and it's an incorrect assumption — that an LNG industry in the Yukon would necessarily mean fracking in the Yukon. Our conventional gas resources are huge, probably enough to supply our domestic market for years to come.

As legislators, we will receive some direction from the public on the issue of fracking and we'll let the committee do its work. However, to rule out the entire industry for fear of fracking is wrong because there is a conventional resource that can be extracted without fracking, and our party believes in that industry. It will be an industry that we will try to encourage in the years to come. It will take private and public sector investment, it will take an improved relationship with First Nation governments, and it will take political leadership.

As far as energy planning goes, I would like to conclude with some points about energy planning and about the relationship between the government and the Yukon Development Corporation. It is unfortunate that the former Yukon Party government spent two years and hundreds of thousands of dollars trying to sell Yukon Energy Corporation to ATCO. Instead of the corporation being able to focus on the business at hand — planning our energy future — two years were lost in resignations and worse. These episodes sapped the corporation of time and energy. It really set planning back an extended period of time, and the Yukon Party government bears full responsibility for the entire episode. Unfortunately, that was not the end of the political interference and it does continue today.

I recently asked the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources about the potential for the Government of Yukon to move into the energy planning business. Is there an appetite to discuss moving energy planning in-house, away from the Yukon Energy Corporation? Again, I am not the expert in this field, but experts have questioned the Yukon Energy Corporation's spending of more than \$20 million in recent years on a variety of energy options.

I want to give the corporations a chance to speak in this Assembly on this topic. Most of this money is recovered through higher energy bills. Money spent on energy planning in the Energy Corporation is not debated in this Legislature unless the corporations appear. Let's hear from the corporations their side of this debate. There is less scrutiny by the public of the spending because it is not debated in the Legislature as a line-by-line budget item. The last thing I want to see — I need to make this point very clear — the last thing that I want to see is political interference, messing with a sound and responsible energy corporation or industry.

In recent years the Yukon government has even refused to allow officials from the corporation to appear in the Legislative Assembly to answer questions. I'm glad to hear that today they have changed their minds. With the amount of money being spent, I believe we need to discuss these options.

There are, of course, advantages to leaving these discussions inside the corporation if the corporation is allowed to do its work free of political influence and interference. In recent years this has been an impossible task. Once again, us having this conversation is one thing; having the corporation in here to be part of this conversation — I relish the opportunity and I would love to hear from the corporations on this proposal.

In conclusion, I have demonstrated today that there is no shortage of topics to discuss and I believe Yukoners would be well-served by having the Yukon Development Corporation appear here in the spring, and I'm thrilled to hear that they will be here.

I've already said that their appearance should be legislated, similar to the arrangement in place with Yukon Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board. The appearance is guaranteed and not subject to political wrangling. I've spent much effort asking for the minister to allow the corporations to appear and I believe that normally that shouldn't be such an onerous task; it should be mandatory.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I would just like to thank you for your time here today and I look forward to hopefully getting the unanimous support of this House for my motion. Thank you.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: I'm not going to talk about and rebut everything within the member's statements. There are a few things, to begin with, on which, in fact the government and I do agree with him on: there needs to be appropriate and careful scrutiny of the decisions that are made, including financial spending, and careful consideration given to what investments are made in the future. I would also like to note, with regard to the Member for Klondike's suggestion that more planning work and policy work should be done — as he referred to it — in-house within Energy, Mines and Resources, that that is being given consideration. We are currently working with the Yukon Development Corporation and Yukon Energy Corporation boards to clarify and to find roles and responsibilities for what each corporation does and what is done by government, so in fact, that suggestion by the member opposite is something that we have already been working on determining, considering and discussing — where those support services are best housed, who is best to undertake certain work, and where the funding for that would best come from.

This whether it comes through corporations, through government directly in-house or through an arrangement by government to fund certain policy work, such as consideration of connecting the grid to the west to Alaska, and to the south to the grid in northern B.C., as well as investment in hydro projects and planning for them because, as you know, we do have a commitment to continue to pursue the development of hydro projects and plan for the future in that manner.

I'm not going to spend a lot of time answering the member's assertions or accusations about past activities under the Yukon Party and the reference the member made to past issues with regard to the Yukon government that took place up to 2009. I think it's rather rich for the member to attempt to hang that on members of this caucus, considering that most of the members of the current Yukon government were in fact elected in 2011. If the member is going after me specifically, I would encourage him to review the media records from 2009, but really, that is in the past.

We need to talk about the future. As the member knows with regard to even the possibility of sale of assets, if he were to refer to the letter of expectation tabled by me and between the chair of Yukon Development Corporation and me, the minister will see — member, pardon me — will see that this minister has put in a specific reference to, and specific requirement for, the board in the shareholder letter of expectations 2013 between the minister responsible for Yukon Development Corporation, which is me, and the Yukon Development Corporation. If the member will look on page 4 of the letter of expectation, it states, and this is the first time that this has even been stated in a letter of expectation from government, "Neither Development or its subsidiary, will sell, lease or dispose of any publicly owned energy assets (or an interest in such assets) including, but not limited to, hydro assets and other generation, transmission and distribution assets. This restriction does not apply to outdated parts of components that have been replaced and are being disposed of as a result of normal equipment maintenance or system upgrades."

I think that statement is quite clear; it's a matter of public record and the member would do all Yukoners a service if he were to focus on a constructive discussion of where as a territory we should go in meeting Yukon's energy needs.

As far as cost scrutiny, there are a few points I need to point out to the member. While the overall scrutiny of the budget for Yukon Development Corporation, which does form a part of the government's budget, goes to this Legislative Assembly, in fact the detailed scrutiny of the costs of both the Yukon Energy Corporation and the privately owned utility, Yukon Electrical Company, are scrutinized by the Yukon Utilities Board, which is a quasi-judicial regulator that I believe is established under the *Public Utilities Act*. So that board has the primary responsibility for reviewing expenditures. It allows people, including members of the public, to file as intervenors. While that does not eliminate responsibility of this Legislative Assembly and members for the overall responsibility for what is a government-owned corporation, it should be noted that the detailed scrutiny of those expenses and whether their costs are reasonable is dealt with by this board and is really the bulk of the work of what the Yukon Utilities Board does, including reviewing rate applications and cost of service.

The technicality of that work is so significant that the cost for a company like Yukon Energy Corporation to even go into a rate hearing is a very expensive endeavour. While corporation staff can better address the exact cost, my understanding is that for some things such as a phase 2 hearing, the filing requirements can be significant enough to cost around \$1 million to go

through that process. But I will allow the staff of the corporation to provide exact numbers on that. That is my recollection of what they have told me in the past is the cost of filing for those types of hearings.

The people who serve on the Yukon Utilities Board have an obligation to get into a level of detail and consider the costs and make a decision for which they are ultimately accountable to the Yukon Legislative Assembly and the Yukon public.

With regard to the Member for Klondike's claim that the utilities — both Yukon Energy and Yukon Electrical — are "waiting for rules to govern LNG", as he phrased it, before they can proceed with projects, the member is quite simply incorrect. The Kotaneelee gas plant in southeast Yukon is permitted and our existing regulatory structure does allow companies to use liquefied natural gas and store it for electrical production.

However, if the member will return to what I said in speaking to the amendments to the *Oil and Gas Act* that government brought forward and which were passed in the fall sitting of the Assembly, at that time I made a commitment that we would be bringing forward regulations to help us better manage gas processing plants and storage of liquefied natural gas for energy production. So the regulations that are currently out for consultation are aimed at giving our staff more tools and a more detailed and more modern regulation structure that allows them to appropriately manage the activities of companies that have a permit to do things, including storing liquefied natural gas for the production of electricity. To that end, both utilities could in fact proceed with developing and using liquefied natural gas for electrical production if government had not proceeded with the regulation. But based on the advice of staff, we determined that it was necessary to help us improve the regulatory authority that our staff have to effectively manage plants that can be complex and have specific requirements, such as cooling and significant pressure requirements, because if done properly, it is something that can be a very cost-effective, efficient energy source.

But it is something that also needs to have the equipment carefully monitored and needs to meet appropriate modern standards to ensure safety.

I'm not meaning to be insulting to the Member for Klondike, but I do have to point out on that, if he would review *Hansard*, I believe I explained some of that last fall. The member may not have been paying attention at that time, but I do wish to point out to him now what the facts are so that hopefully for future Question Periods he understands that yes, companies actually can right now go forward with gas facilities, but updating those regulations is something that was identified to us by staff as something that would improve our ability to regulate it.

There are a couple of other things I'd like to just touch on. In fact, the Member for Klondike, in his preamble, was wondering what the rationale is for separate boards of the Yukon Development Corporation and Yukon Energy Corporation and moving toward separation of those boards so that people do not sit on both boards.

The rationale for that really comes from the Auditor General. That's something that I believe I explained to the Standing Committee on Appointments to Major Government Boards and Committees. But in fairness to the Member for Klondike, I don't think he was a member of that board at that time, so I don't think he was present at the meeting when I provided the context. In fact, this is based on what we have heard and what the Auditor General has, in fact, in past reports, encouraged the

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Hon. Mr. Cathers: The Member for Klondike appears to have some questions. I was under the impression this was motion debate, but I would refer the member to the Auditor General's report on the Energy Solutions Centre where he'll see references that allude to government reviewing the structure to ensure that there is not an overlap of officer or board positions between a Crown government corporation and its subsidiary. So based on that and what we have heard through discussions with the Auditor General, that is the entire rationale behind separating board memberships, to ensure clear separation of roles and responsibilities.

The member made some reference in his preamble about motions to call witnesses. In fact, I would point out to the member, both the motion that he brought forward and the motion that I tabled today are motions that urge the government to invite witnesses, but they aren't actually the motions that call witnesses before this House.

If the member will review the past sittings, he will see that the motion to call witnesses — as I will bring forward during this sitting of the Assembly — actually specifies the name of the witnesses to be called and the hours during which they will appear. Those motions can be done either in the House or in Committee of the Whole, but typically have been motions in Committee of the Whole.

First of all, I would encourage members to review the protocol between the Chair of the Yukon Development Corporation and me, and the shareholder letter of expectation from me to the Yukon Development Corporation. If the members will review the current structure, they will see that there has been a significant investment of time by staff of Energy, Mines and Resources, Justice and Finance in revising the protocol and the shareholder letter of expectation.

There has been discussion with the chairs of the boards of both corporations and really this is aimed at doing a few things, including improving the clarity, updating the language, and ensuring that we have a protocol that clearly spells out roles and responsibilities and also emphasizes this government's expectations for the two corporations.

There are a few things I need to point out since the member raised it, and in specific reference to Question Period earlier. I'd point out with regard to those who have asked for a simple cost — well, what does the power from this particular asset cost to produce? There are a number of costs within the entire system, depending on who is doing the calculation and their viewpoint of what should be factored in. A switching station or an upgrade to a transformer — are those considered part of the costs of a specific energy project or not? There can be

differences of opinion on that so the answer is not necessarily a simple, "Well, it costs this much per kilowatt hour from this asset."

While those explanations can be given, they really require some detailed explanation rather than a 90-second explanation in Question Period, and they are best addressed by staff of a corporation who can explain which costs are part of transmission, which costs are part of generation, and which are part of distribution. There are also issues around the consequential costs of upgrades to certain systems, to adding new assets onto the system, that are not solely due to those assets but were, in part, required because of the addition of new generation capacity.

So I'm not going to take a lot more time in the House this afternoon explaining that calculation. I would encourage members, if they have questions about that and the costs of generation from various assets, as well as how frequently certain assets are producing power and how many kilowatt or gigawatt hours per year they are producing, to ask those questions of the corporations when we bring them in later this sitting.

As far as the notice given for bringing in the corporations — if the Member for Klondike recalls, he asked at one of the first House Leaders meetings this sitting whether we'd be bringing in the Hospital Corporation and Yukon Development Corporation or Yukon Energy Corporation.

I indicated to expect that we would be but — as the member knows — just as they don't give us advance notice of the questions they will be asking and very little advance notice of what motions they'll be calling, government doesn't typically — and neither have the NDP or the Liberals when in government — provide a full anticipated list of the lineup of departments and the business for each and every day of the sitting. In fact, were we to do so, we would find that that would very quickly change based on the pace of debate and the questions that the members ask or choose not to ask during Committee of the Whole debate on departments and on legislation.

I'd like to address a couple of other points. The duty to serve question — the simple answer to the Member for Klondike's question about the duty to service is that it's not an absolute duty. There is room for discretion, both by Cabinet and the Yukon Utilities Board, as it relates to large industrial customers, in particular, which is the main effect. That is something that we will be, in the near future, based on legal advice, trying to explain in simple layman's language that is understandable, both to members of this House and to the public, to define what that means. I have received correspondence from some members of the public about that.

Work is going on right now, and once we have work done by the departments on that to explain that clearly and succinctly, we will be making that available to all members. But the simple answer is that it's not an absolute duty. Both Cabinet and the Yukon Utilities Board have the ability to say no to a large industrial customer if they believe that those additional consequential costs are not in the best interests of Yukoners.

In the case of any line project, it's referenced in the letter of expectations and is actually a reference to what has been in regulation since 1993, I believe. It was the Order-in-Council

passed that said “Yukon Energy shall not develop or acquire new generation assets or new transmission or distribution lines having a voltage in excess of 20 kV, except for such assets or lines required to replace or maintaining existing assets without the approval of Development’s Board of Directors and the Minister;”

So some of these references that are contained within both the protocol and letter of expectations are in fact simply references to what is in legislation or regulations.

A few of the things I draw members’ attention to in the shareholder letter of expectation include: detailing government’s performance expectations of the Yukon Development Corporation and its subsidiary, the Yukon Energy Corporation; each of these expectations serves and supports government’s overall requirement of the development group; that it provide Yukoners with safe, reliable, cost-effective electrical power both now and for the future.

That requirement in turn reflects the government’s view that the development group is a key instrument of its energy policy. The Yukon Development Corporation is responsible for supporting government in its achievement of its energy policy objectives and for assisting as needed with development of those objectives. As the sole shareholder of the Yukon Energy Corporation, Yukon Development Corporation is ultimately responsible for ensuring its subsidiary fulfills its responsibilities accountably, efficiently and cost effectively. That quote I was referencing is a quote from the purpose under the shareholder letter of expectation.

The members will also see, and I will quote excerpts from them, but in the interest of time this afternoon will not read in the full list or the full protocol or letter of expectation — I would strongly encourage members from the Opposition who have an interest in this to read both the current protocol and letter of expectation and past protocol and letter of expectation to understand the context and some of the changes that really have been the result of a significant amount of work by staff of my department, by the Department of Justice and the Department of Finance, as well as working with the chairs of the boards of the Yukon Development Corporation and the Yukon Energy Corporation.

We think that while there’s reference in the protocol that government, the Yukon Development Corporation and the Yukon Energy Corporation will continue to clarify operational responsibilities over the next year, we really see this as an evolution and improvement in the structural operational understanding, clarifying who needs to do what and ensuring that all resources of each body are best directed to achieving effective outcomes in a cost-effective manner.

The members will also see on page 2 of the letter of expectation the clear direction by government to the Yukon Development Corporation to ensure its subsidiary operates in a manner consistent with government’s overall requirement that the Yukon Energy Corporation provide Yukoners with safe, reliable, cost-effective electrical power — in particular, that the Yukon Energy Corporation minimizes financial risk, assists government, as required, with technical information to help government make good decisions, including policy decisions

about new energy projects, undertakes new energy projects as directed by government and performs appropriate maintenance on existing assets.

Again, returning to the topic of what power from individual generation assets costs, what needs to be pointed out to the member is there has been an issue in the past and there was a period going back a little bit in time of roughly a 10-year period where, under previous governments, there was not significant investment made in capital maintenance of the assets — that is, replacement of parts on time, ensuring that there are investments made in those areas, replacing parts that are nearing the end of their expiration and so on and so forth.

Those maintenance costs are a factor that are necessary to maintain the health of assets, but it also adds complexity to the answer of how much does it cost for this asset to produce power if upgrades have been made to a line because of equipment that is nearing the end of its lifespan or, in the case of the line going to Keno, there were some investments made that corporation staff can best explain to try to improve the efficiency of that line and reduce the chance that it would suffer the type of power outage that occurred roughly in early 2012.

So there have been some investments there, including, I believe, improvements to their sensing equipment. So those costs — again, depending on who’s doing the calculation — can be determined to be related to any specific generation asset or related to the customers. That is why, really, to get into taking numbers out of context is not really the best way to answer. It’s not a simple answer that 90 seconds in Question Period can do. It’s really best addressed by staff. In some cases, it may require a detailed and written explanation to clarify which costs are related to which parts of the system.

Another thing I’d just point out in reference to some of the questions we’ve heard this week during Question Period and also to comments from the Member for Klondike is that it should be noted that it was this government that expanded the *Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act* to cover the Yukon Energy Corporation. Prior to that, an ATIPP request couldn’t have been made for the document that the Member for Takhini-Kopper King has referred to, which was received through ATIPP.

We encourage staff of departments and corporations to share information with the public, including anything that would be subject to an ATIPP request if an ATIPP request were made. It has been a practice across all government departments to encourage the disclosure of that information without a formal ATIPP request having to be made if it is something that would be considered publicly available information and not protected under the protection of privacy provisions within the *Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.

I think I have addressed most of the points that needed rebutting. As I indicated to the member at the House Leaders’ meeting this morning, we would be bringing forward an amendment to this motion. As I reminded him, it has been a practice for staff of the Yukon Energy Corporation to appear before the House along with the Yukon Development Corporation procedurally. I would encourage the member, if he has any

questions about it, to ask the Clerk or Deputy Clerk for clarification on the procedural rules regarding this.

If this motion is to pass or if this motion as amended were to pass, it actually doesn't call the witnesses, but whether or not this motion passes this afternoon, I will be bringing forward a motion in a future Committee of the Whole naming the time when witnesses from the Yukon Development Corporation and the Yukon Energy Corporation will appear in this House. It'll name the time, the date, and the officials by name, and the same process will be followed for the Yukon Hospital Corporation.

Amendment proposed

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Accordingly, I move:

THAT Motion No. 372 be amended by:

(1) inserting the phrase "and the Yukon Energy Corporation" after the words "Yukon Development Corporation"; and

(2) deleting all words after the word "questions" and replacing them with the phrase "and discuss matters relating to the Yukon Development Corporation and the Yukon Energy Corporation."

Speaker: Order please. The amendment is in order. It has been moved by the minister responsible for the Yukon Development Corporation

THAT Motion No. 372 be amended by:

(1) inserting the phrase "and the Yukon Energy Corporation" after the words "Yukon Development Corporation; and

(2) deleting all words after the word "questions" and replacing them with the phrase "and discuss matters relating to the Yukon Development Corporation and the Yukon Energy Corporation."

Hon. Mr. Cathers: The amendment is fairly simple, as I mentioned in introducing it. It is standard and the most productive use of the House's time to have officials from both Yukon Development Corporation and Yukon Energy Corporation appear. Some questions that are detailed in nature are probably best addressed by Yukon Energy Corporation staff, whereas the overall responsibility to this House — the direct accountability is from the Yukon Development Corporation, which is the parent of YEC, so of course they need to be here as well.

As far as the end, the member's characterization really is not accurate. I'm not sure whether the member is simply playing politics in his phrasing of the motion or whether the member is actually not understanding what's occurring within the electrical demand, but it's not accurate to describe it as an "energy shortfall" facing the Yukon, as the member said in his phrasing.

What is in fact occurring is that if projected growth in residential demand — and I note that is projected growth in residential demand — continues as the corporation expects, we will be running out of our renewable energy capacity or renewable electricity capacity. This is because electrical demand is growing beyond the capacity of Yukon's renewable hydro and wind electricity supply. Although the members, especially

members of the New Democratic Party, have been trying to paint a different picture in past days — we have actually made significant investments in green energy, including investment in a third turbine at the Aishihik dam, with support from the federal government. That has improved our ability to use the water in Aishihik Lake and to increase both the peak capacity of that through the Aishihik dam through that project — peak electricity production from the Aishihik facility and, because the third turbine is smaller in size than the other two, it enables a more efficient use of water if the demand is not yet at the capacity that would fully utilize the capacity of the first two turbines, which are of a larger megawatt size each.

The investment in Mayo B line project — as I noted to members, there were several reasons that project was chosen by government. That includes the fact that the federal government had a time-limited fund that required what they referred to as "shovel-ready" projects that met their criteria for shovel-readiness within two years. It enabled us to get at \$71-million investment from the federal government under that project.

It was the project recommended by the Yukon Energy Corporation and the Yukon Development Corporation at that time. It also enabled us to do what the Yukon Party committed to in our 2006 election platform, which was to work toward the connection of the Mayo-Dawson transmission line and the Whitehorse-Aishihik-Faro grid. The platform commitment was fulfilled — significant federal investment in increasing our green energy supply; a significant reduction in carbon emissions that otherwise would have been produced through the need to burn diesel because we would already be burning diesel to make up for what Mayo B is currently producing had that investment not been made — so a significant reduction of what would otherwise occur in carbon emissions because of that investment.

The reason for the amendment is because the member's characterization in the latter part is not accurate. What is occurring is that if projected growth of residential load is at the level that the corporation expects and/or if there are new large customers added on to the system, there is a need to add new energy capacity or else the diesel generators would be in operation more frequently and those have a very expensive cost per kilowatt hour, which has to be paid by someone.

It is reaching the end of our cheap hydro surplus capacity, but to characterize it as an energy shortfall either reflects a lack of understanding of the facts or simply an attempt to characterize it as something other than what it is.

I think that would largely address the amendment. The only other point I should just touch on briefly is in fact that there have been significant investments made by Yukon Energy Corporation in reviewing various energy supply options, and we commend the corporation for doing its due diligence and doing work in the past. We've also asked them, as I have indicated in the House upon my taking over the portfolio of Yukon Development Corporation for the first time in the fall of 2011 — in November 2011 — we've asked them to be focused in the work that they are doing, including a focus on the priorities as I articulated in the letter of expectations.

These were as follows: to minimize financial risk; to operate in a manner that Yukon Energy Corporation provides Yukoners with safe, reliable, cost-effective electrical power, which of course means being targeted and focusing where new studies are done; and ensuring large amounts of money are spent on projects that are likely to be viable projects and projects that are likely to be successful in getting permitted through the appropriate permitting regimes, as well as projects that are likely to be deemed acceptable by the Yukon Utilities Board.

With that, I think I've brought enough context on the amendment and — oh, I should add one further point on that, which is that the proposed amendment at the end of it replaces the end of the wording with the standard type of wording that is usually in motions to bring witnesses before the House, which is to discuss matters relating to — in this case the Yukon Development Corporation and the Yukon Energy Corporation. If the member would look at previous motions related to calling witnesses or corporations, that's the standard wording that is used, regardless of whether it is Yukon Development Corporation, Yukon Hospital Corporation, or Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board.

With that, I commend the amendment to the House.

Mr. Silver: Mr. Speaker, you don't even need to set your clock. I am fine with the amendment. We obviously have a disagreement as to the concerns with energy moving forward in the Yukon. When you take a look at how this government connects GDP to major mining projects that are moving forward, there is a pending energy shortfall. The wording of this amendment and the wording of this motion today is pretty much a moot point. The corporations are coming in and I will accept the amendment, but I definitely will, as well, ask questions related to the pending energy shortfall facing the Yukon. Thank you.

Speaker: Does any other member wish to be heard on the amendment?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: I would like to briefly say a few words about the amendment, because I do want to comment on how I feel that this amendment improves the motion.

One of the things that I was not entirely content with in the original motion was the level of specificity in terms of what was going to be looked at in the motion and what it was prescribing that members would be able to ask about.

The idea that members would only be able to ask about what the Member for Klondike characterized as the "pending energy shortfall" and what he just mentioned, as well, I think doesn't do justice to the members of the House who want to ask the questions about other important aspects of the operations of the Development Corporation and the Energy Corporation alike.

A few of those, for example, might be things that relate to other aspects of the Energy Corporation, like some of the activities they have taken with regard to demand-side management. I know they have opened up an office, I believe, in the last year specifically for programming around demand-side

management. I know that the government, primarily through the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources and the Energy Solutions Centre, has engaged with the Energy Corporation to advance programming on that front.

So there are things —

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Ms. Moorcroft: Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask all Members of the Legislative Assembly to join me in welcoming some visitors to the gallery. We have present with us here this afternoon elder Agnes Mills, who serves on the Whitehorse Correctional Centre elders advisory committee and who has also been involved with the Yukon Aboriginal Women's Council, the Whitehorse Aboriginal Women's Circle and in support of Liard Aboriginal Women's Society, and is the auntie of the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin, who has a motion on the Order Paper coming up for debate later this afternoon. We hope that will in fact be soon.

Also in the gallery, Chantal Genier is here. She is the president of the Yukon Aboriginal Women's Council. I would like to ask all members to join me in giving them a warm welcome.

Applause

Hon. Mr. Dixon: The short point I was just making was that there are other matters related to the Energy Corporation and the Development Corporation, which I think bear some discussion in the Legislature. I feel that the amendment put forward by the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources improves the motion to allow for that sort of discussion.

As well, a few other matters that I think are important that need to be touched on are questions, I believe, for the Energy Corporation and the Development Corporation around the work they've done with both the Energy Solutions Centre and the Department of Environment's Climate Change Secretariat around some of the commitments that have been made in the *Climate Change Action Plan* that I think members should be interested in and probably have questions about.

Of course, one of the commitments in the government's *Climate Change Action Plan* progress report of last year which was to replace existing on-grid diesel generation with a lower carbon technology. Of course that's something that was committed to in the *Climate Change Action Plan* progress report of 2012, and I'm sure it's something that will come up in those discussions with the Energy Corporation.

Again, these are just a few examples of some of the things that I feel need to be discussed and need to have the attention of members. I did feel that the motion in its original wording was unnecessarily prescriptive to the detriment of the motion as a whole. I'm happy to see the Member for Lake Laberge, the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, move this amendment, and I will be supporting the amendment.

Speaker: Does any other member wish to be heard on the amendment?

Amendment to Motion No. 372 agreed to

Speaker: Does any other member wish to be heard on the main motion as amended?

Mr. Tredger: I rise to speak in favour of Motion No. 372, as amended, standing in the name of the Member for Klondike, and I thank him for bringing this forward.

It's unfortunate that he had to go to these lengths. It's unfortunate that the minister has chosen to play games around this. I think it's critical that we live up to our promise that we made to our constituents about open and honest government and transparent.

When I see the silliness around this as something that should have come and been straightforward as a matter of course — energy is critical to our future. Yukoners want a say in it. When we have the minister refusing and not answering questions and blaming the Yukon Development Corporation or the Yukon Energy Corporation for his lack of knowledge, we see all the more reason why we need to have this discussion in the House.

Such visits should be standard. They should be set ahead of time with notice for all members of the House so that it can be most productive and make best use of the House's time.

I was somewhat dismayed to hear the minister in his remarks still not agree to come up with a date ahead of time so that all members of the House can be sufficiently prepared and ready for the discussion and the debate. It's an indicator of the games that are being played, the lack of openness, the lack of transparency and the lack of a desire to have a discussion that involves and is at the centre of our future.

We and the Yukon people have many questions for when the Yukon Energy Corporation attends. We will not be limiting our line of inquiry to just energy shortfalls, although I must commend the Member for Klondike for pointing out that that is an impending crisis and one that we have seen and should have seen coming for the past 10 years.

The Yukon Energy Corporation has not attended the Legislature since March of 2011. This is a corporation in which all Yukoners are shareholders. We need to ensure accountability and transparency. That is achieved partially through having legislative oversight. This means having the chair of the Yukon Energy Corporation board of directors and the president and chief executive officer of the Yukon Energy Corporation attend as witnesses. I will provide a bit of overview of the areas that I think we need to discuss.

As the Member for Klondike referred to, there is a pending energy shortfall. We are most fortunate that our leadership in years past saw the need for a constant renewable energy supply and, through the transfer of NCPC — Northern Canada Power Commission — assets, during the time of a previous NDP government, the Yukon has had a legacy of cheap, affordable and continuous electricity through hydroelectric projects like the Whitehorse and Aishihik dams. At that time Yukon was in good shape and was a major power producer for the territory. Investments went into a pilot project on wind energy at Haeckel Hill. This was cutting edge at the time. Sadly there was no vision to expand beyond the pilot project, so how did we get there?

These legacy hydro projects gave us a good basis to build on by providing abundant renewable energy. We have squandered our grace period and now we find we are in a crunch — a crunch that we have seen coming for a decade now.

We hear the minister say how they want to focus on hydro-electricity, or electricity produced through dams and water, but it's going to take a long time; it's a long-term process. We're only now beginning to plan; where have we been, as we've seen the lines going closer and closer between our consumption and our production capacity?

As the Member for Klondike mentioned, we are reaching our bottom line. This isn't just about increasing supply; it's demand-side management. In 2009, the Yukon Utilities Board directed the Yukon Energy Corporation to develop a demand-side management plan.

Where is the progress on this? Retrofitting and energy savings programs for consumers, and renovations — we should be going into these wholeheartedly. These are proven, low-hanging fruit. We are dabbling in them, certainly, but we should be committing wholeheartedly to these renovation programs.

I must commend Yukon Energy Corporation and Alexco for their work on an industrial energy audit on their mine site in Keno. It has proven very successful and achieved considerable cost savings. Why is this not a requisite for any new major developments? Why is this not incorporated into our building permits?

Management got us to this pending shortfall. The warning signs have been out there for years. The energy planning should have started on this 10 years ago. Consumption from individuals, from existing business and from mines has pushed our capacity to the brink. Money repeatedly wasted on dead-end projects like the Gladstone diversion, which intends to divert an entire lake from one watershed into another.

DFO is and always has been adamantly opposed, but still YEC spent hundreds of thousands, perhaps millions of dollars on more studies and efforts to bypass DFO.

Money is spent on wind studies that are then buried as the public tries to gain access to documents that our shareholders have a right to and they are denied or the documents are heavily redacted.

I was glad to hear the minister state that he was encouraging corporations and his officials to make full and transparent disclosure to the public of reports and studies that have been done. The study done on wind showed that wind energy was viable. There's a lack of ongoing maintenance and efficiencies of the existing infrastructure. We've known of this pending shortfall but where is the plan to begin figuring out where and if we are going to have a major hydroelectric project? Where are the discussions with our First Nations whose traditional territories such a project undoubtedly will affect?

Instead, we have spent lots of dollars on feasibility projects, like increasing the water level in flood-prone Southern Lakes and putting forward a plan that would dramatically alter Atlin Lake's water level. Lots of money went into Mayo B, and the minister has been unable to supply information that would demonstrate value for money.

Again, we're reaching a bottleneck. The government is proposing LNG — a political direction to move to LNG instead of renewables. The Champagne-Aishihik project is showing that renewables are viable.

The 2012 protocol between the minister responsible for and the chair of Yukon Development Corporation spells out very clearly that it is the minister who "is responsible for developing and implementing energy policy and providing direction relating to energy policy and its implementation to Development." We have asked many specific, concrete questions about energy policies, and the minister responsible has failed to answer them.

For example, on several occasions, we have asked about two main goals of the 2009 energy strategy, those being: (1) to increase renewable energy supply by 20 percent by 2020; and (2) to support and demonstrate renewable energy projects in communities off the electrical grid to reduce diesel use.

The minister did not provide any information about how he will direct the implementation of these goals. It is his responsibility to both direct implementation of those important renewable energy goals and to report progress to this House. There was a 2010 progress report on the energy strategy. On page 6, it says that renewable energy is emphasized — and I quote: "Energy production from renewable energy sources is a priority to reduce fossil fuel use and greenhouse gas emissions." Another report on the energy strategy was due at the end of 2012, but we have not seen it yet.

In the Department of Community Services, back in 2009, some great work was done to identify potential renewable energy projects around the territory. Also in 2009, the Yukon Party signed on to a pan-territorial initiative called "A Northern Vision". It included a renewable energy inventory and called for cooperation and commitment to shift from fossil fuels to renewable energy. Here is a quote: "Dependence on imported fossil fuels puts us at an economic disadvantage; the three territories are vulnerable to high costs, price volatility and supply disruptions. The burning of these fuels also emits greenhouse gases that contribute to the changing climate that is affecting the North.

"At the 2009 Northern Premiers Forum, the three territorial Premiers committed to developing an inventory of current and future renewable energy resources. This inventory describes the current state of renewable energy use in territories, outlines actions being taken, and describes policies under development to increase renewable energy use in the North."

Taken altogether, the energy strategy, the climate exchange strategy, and the pan-territorial initiative, these initiatives provided hope that the critical shift away from fossil fuels could actually begin. Further open energy charettes gave Yukoners the impression the government actually intended to include and be informed by local expertise in renewable energy. Unfortunately, we are now learning differently. We are learning that the minister responsible for the Yukon Energy Corporation will not answer our questions about renewable energy goals in his own energy strategy. In fact, the minister spends more time ridiculing those who would question him. It would benefit him to focus more on telling the truth.

We are learning that the minister responsible for Energy, Mines and Resources will not answer our questions about the actual energy results of Mayo B, a very significant public investment. We are learning that the energy charettes in the end were more about public relations and less about actual information seeking. How do we come to this conclusion? How did we come to this state? In addition to inaction on renewables, we have learned that, for the minister, liquefied natural gas has always been a done deal — no cost-benefit analysis necessary. When the Yukon Energy Corporation released a report called *LNG Transition Option*, this minister clarified the direction he wants this territory to go with power. Minister Cathers spoke, "Transition fuel is Yukon Energy Corporation phrasing. I think a better choice of words would be to refer to it as a replacement for the role that diesel has played in the system." This minister aims to increase Yukon's dependence on greenhouse-gas-emitting fossil fuels, but he has no cost-benefit analysis to demonstrate this is fiscally responsible.

We certainly recognize that liquefied natural gas, a carbon-based fuel, is not environmentally responsible, but the minister obscures the truth about LNG. He says it —

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Point of order

Speaker: Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, on a point of order.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: For a member to accuse another member of obscuring the truth certainly would appear to be contrary to Standing Order 19(h). I'd ask you to have the member retract that.

Speaker: I'd remind the minister not to give the Chair direction but to just stick to the point of order.

I will ask the member to retract it though. Please retract the statement.

Withdrawal of remark

Mr. Tredger: Certainly, I will retract that statement.

But the minister is economical with the truth about LNG. He says it burns cleaner than diesel and that —

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Point of order

Speaker: Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, on a point of order.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: The member, after being directed by the Chair to retract an accusation contrary to Standing Order 19(h), I believe just made another one.

Speaker's ruling

Speaker: There is no point of order. The words used have been used before and have been allowed, but the member is really pushing the line here and I caution him to be careful what words he chooses because they will come back to him.

Member for Mayo-Tatchun, you have the floor.

Mr. Tredger: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. LNG should be measured by its full life cycle costs — extraction, water,

transportation, processing, various emissions at every step of the way, including methane.

Many Yukoners are disappointed and frustrated that this minister is not making progress on the development of renewable energy. His rhetoric reveals that he needs to update his information about the real and fiscally responsible potential for a diverse and renewable energy future in the north.

The minister is rushing regulations through to enable the development of LNG infrastructure without demonstrating that he has done his due diligence on renewable alternatives. According to a presentation put together by the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources, Yukon's LNG timeline is to have one truckload a week coming to Watson Lake this summer and by 2015-16, the goal is to have two to three truckloads a day to Whitehorse, all with no true cost/benefit analysis. This represents a real failure on renewable energy.

There has been quite a bit of confusion about the obligation to power new mines. We have not received clear information from the minister opposite. The Premier has weighed in and YEC officials have said publicly that the corporation's position is that it's obliged to provide electricity but not if it would cause an additional burden for ratepayers. The president and CEO of Yukon Energy Corporation has said other things, and the Yukon public would benefit from a more in-depth discussion about this obligation and how Yukoners can make a decision to power a mine and get value for money.

We have brought in a motion about increasing legislative oversight of capital spending. Unfortunately, the government put down this suggestion. Energy infrastructure spending needs more oversight and accountability provided by the Legislative Assembly.

With that, I will be voting in favour of this motion and I encourage the minister opposite to set a date well in advance so that all members of this House can be prepared for the debate.

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: I will be brief but certainly I thought it would warrant a couple of comments following the debate from the Member for Mayo-Tatchun. What has changed in 10 years — 10 years ago was when the Yukon Party took over government after six years of NDP and Liberal governments. You are right, at that time there was no issue with energy, Mr. Speaker, because we had a mass exodus. Thousands of people were leaving the territory because there were no jobs here after the policies of the NDP government were put in place. So we had a mass exodus. Certainly that has been demonstrated as the NDP solution to the energy crisis and, in fact, the housing crisis, as well. Just kill the economy so people leave by the thousands and then we have an abundance of housing and an abundance of energy, as well.

Mr. Speaker, again I think there is still a bit of work that the Member for Mayo-Tatchun needs to do in terms of the understanding of the structure of the Yukon Energy Corporation and the Yukon Development Corporation.

In fact, there is only one shareholder of the Yukon Energy Corporation and that is the Yukon Development Corporation, which is the sole shareholder of the Yukon Energy Corporation. Yukon Development Corporation is owned and controlled

by the Yukon government — just information for the Member for Mayo-Tatchun, as well.

This government has continued to look forward as a result of the strong growth that we have. We are looking at how we're going forward and we do say that we believe that hydro is a long-term solution for this territory and work is being done now. Options are being discussed and conversations will go out as time goes forward to talk to all of those people who will be affected — Yukoners in general — but specifically as well with Yukon First Nations, and even discussions on ownership opportunities for the production of clean, renewable energy in the long term, which could guarantee perhaps investment by some of the First Nations a stream of revenues for generations to come.

We know that exists because of the fact of the devolving of NCPC to the Yukon government. Really, the hydro continues to be a gift that keeps on giving for years to come. So we are looking at that.

With the implementation of green energy fund from the federal government, we were the first jurisdiction that had a shovel-ready project ready to go when that opportunity arose. We were able to partner with the federal government to ensure that we could utilize and access that money, because not only has it given us more renewable hydro electricity and not only has it reduced the need for diesel supplementation because of the green energy — so we've reduced our greenhouse emissions and we've provided a number of jobs.

I also want to take this opportunity to acknowledge and to thank Yukon's former Member of Parliament, Erik Nielsen, for the work that he did for the transfer of NCPC from the federal government to the territory.

We look at all of the options that are out there. As the minister has explained many times, we have to ensure the projects moving forward are palatable to the taxpayer and the ratepayer here in the Yukon. We have to look at partnering on the larger-vision projects and I do believe that a long-term hydro project with an inter-tie to connect us to the North American grid is a visionary project that will ensure stability and economic growth in the long term for this territory.

We are looking at that. We're also looking at the feasibility of an inter-tie with southeast Alaska. We're looking at the West Creek project as well. I've had discussions directly with the Governor of Alaska. What we're talking about is how we are moving forward. With the current Yukon Party government that we have here today, most of the members of the Yukon Party government are in their first term of office as are many members of this Legislative Assembly. I want to acknowledge the work of the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources and his department in the work that has been done.

I want to acknowledge the work and the cooperation of the chairs and boards at Yukon Development Corporation and Yukon Energy Corporation in working toward the documents that have been tabled in this Legislative Assembly — the new protocol and a protocol that really does articulate the purpose for this protocol. It articulates what the mandate is for the Yukon Development Corporation because this is a protocol between the government and the Yukon Development Corpora-

tion. It is the Yukon Energy Corporation that reports to the Yukon Development Corporation, which reports to the government.

What we have in the protocol is as follows: what is the mandate for the Yukon Development Corporation; what are the roles and responsibilities; from the government's perspective, what is the role of the minister; what is the role of the deputy minister; what is the role of the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources. The protocol also talks about what the role for the Yukon Development Corporation is, as well as the role for the board chair and for the board itself; what is the Yukon Development Corporation's responsibility for energy. It goes on to talk about the president and chief executive officer, and it talks about communication and reporting.

This is a new protocol and with it subsequent to that was the shareholders letter of expectations that was also put forward this year, which gives the government's direction to the Yukon Development Corporation, providing them with a direction and also articulating the accountabilities with respect to the Yukon Development Corporation.

I think what we're talking about here is how we're moving forward and, as a result of the success that has occurred over this last decade of Yukon Party government, we do have a demand. We are working with the Yukon Development Corporation to clearly articulate what that demand is and what it will be going forward. We're also working toward what we need to do in terms of the long-term success and we do believe — and there is work to be done — that the long-term success would be allowing us to gain that stability with a tie with the rest of the North American grid and producing clean and renewable hydroelectricity, which I think will benefit Yukoners for generations to come.

You know, I just have to listen to the member opposite talking about the atrocities of fossil fuels and how bad LNG is, and of course we are saying that we are looking at LNG as well. LNG might be something that we need to do in terms of replacement if we have to replace diesel engines, for example, for a generation.

I think, for example, the member opposite fails to acknowledge the significant reduction, for example, in United States in their greenhouse gas emissions since they have been switching from coal to natural gas. It has been tremendous. Some of that is conventional drilling for gas and some of that is through hydraulic fracturing, which occurs in many jurisdictions around the world.

We're very proud of the select committee moving forward — meeting the obligations that started with the motion the government put forward, in terms of dialogue with Yukoners and ensuring that what we do is science-based. We're very proud and excited about this work moving forward. I think for the Member for Mayo-Tatchun and for the member opposite to really have their heads in the sand and not acknowledge that some of these options are occurring, and occurring successfully, in other jurisdictions are very worthy of looking at.

We have to also understand and take into account where we live and what challenges we have to ensure that we can have a sustainable energy production, recognizing how small

our population is and how great our geography is — almost 500,000 square kilometres. I think that if you look at where we are — and we just have to look to the east to the other two territories to see what a great position we are in, in many respects, and certainly, in terms of energy production — where I think essentially every community in the other two territories is driven by diesel-generated electricity. I think we have a lot to be loud and proud of and, as has been articulated by this motion, we will look forward to having officials from Yukon Energy Corporation and Yukon Development Corporation come to the House during the spring session to be able to answer the questions articulated by Members of the Legislative Assembly. Thank you.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: I wasn't originally intending to speak to this, but some of the outrageous statements made by the Member for Mayo-Tatchun compelled me to respond. I have to respond to some of the rather silly comments he made — some of them silly, some of them inaccurate.

First of all, the one I wanted to mention was his quote about the Yukon Energy Corporation's charettes. He said, and I quote: "The charettes were more about public relations than public input." If that's how the member feels, and if that's how the NDP feels, I encourage them to bring that forward to the Energy Corporation when they're inside this House because I'm quite certain that the staff at the Energy Corporation, who put a lot of time and effort into those charettes, don't feel that way. I know they felt that, in many cases, they received a lot of good input from the public and appreciated the input. I've spoken to staff before and heard that they really enjoyed some of those charettes and a lot of the people who attended them enjoyed providing their input.

For him to make that sort of assertion in the House is fine, but I hope he's willing to make it to the Energy Corporation when they're here. If he's not, I'd be happy to clip his quote and send it to the corporation, so they're aware of how the NDP feels about their charettes.

The second was that his discussion on this wave of trucks coming to Watson Lake for the LNG — to provide energy for their generators there. He said that no cost-benefit analysis had been done. I was perplexed by that because I have to assume that the Yukon Electrical Company Limited most certainly would have done a cost-benefit analysis on that sort of thing before they made such an important business decision as to switch from diesel to LNG.

For him to suggest that that particular private company didn't conduct a cost-benefit analysis — first of all, I would think it's inaccurate, and second of all, I think it's probably inappropriate for him to speak so negatively about a private company in the territory. For the NDP to suggest that — and I know that the Member for Tahkini-Kopper King has previously in Question Period confused the difference between the private company, which is Yukon Electrical Company and the Yukon Energy Corporation — I appreciate it's a very similar acronym, but they are very different entities and one, of course, is a publicly owned Crown corporation-style institution and one, of course, is a private company. For the member to suggest that

no cost-benefit analysis has been done by the Yukon Electrical Company with regard to the switch from diesel to LNG in Watson Lake, I think is, well, rather silly. I think that it's very likely that the company undertook a legitimate cost-benefit analysis before they made that business decision and for him to suggest that they just made this decision without doing a cost-benefit analysis is, I think, insulting to the company.

The list goes on of the rather inaccurate and silly comments he made, so I won't go on at length because I'm very conscious of the time and I understand that there are others who want to speak to this and there are some other important motions coming up, so I will sit down very soon.

But I did want to say that this bizarre approach taken by the NDP where they insult private companies, insult the Yukon Energy Corporation for their charettes and insult government for a decision around considering LNG is very peculiar and unbecoming. So I wanted to get that into the record, because I do feel that it is important to mention that. I will sit down now because I do want to carry on with the debate, but I would encourage them to get their facts straight, to remember who they are insulting when they are in this House and encourage them to behave a little bit more responsibly.

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

Mr. Silver: I would like to thank everyone who was on the record today, making their comments. Looking at the whole day, a lot of the conversations are moot. We are getting the corporations coming forward and that's great.

We kind of broke out into a he-said, she-said, and I just want to say a couple of comments based on what I have heard today with regard to the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources getting up and giving us his thoughts about costs and issues surrounding IPPs or whether or not there is an energy shortfall pending. I just have to say, we've heard these statements. We've heard them many times over. I would like to say that the answers — or the lack of answers — are part and parcel of why we need the corporations to come forward in the first place.

I have met with the officials of these corporations, and his views just don't hold water. Instead of answers, we get the minister's opinions, attacking the Opposition and cracking wise about the NDP and wind. The minister also spoke about how we don't give our ministers questions beforehand and therefore they don't have to give us a specific date for corporations to appear in this House. I have given questions to the ministers directly. If I think that I'm going to get a better answer by providing the question in advance, I'll do that, because it's much better to actually have an answer that's thoughtful as opposed to hearing another round of the briefing notes. So I just had to put that on the record.

Also, I just finished putting on record almost every single question that I'm going to ask the corporations. So again, the minister's statement — it does a disservice to Yukoners and it just doesn't hold water. It's just simply not true. Instead of taking issue with some of the other questionable statements that

were put forward by the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, I'm going to keep this brief as well. We have other very important issues to discuss here today.

The corporations are coming; that's great and finally we'll have a public audience with our energy professionals. I'd like to thank everybody for their comments today.

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

Motion No. 372, as amended, agreed to

Motion No. 423

Clerk: Motion No. 423, standing in the name of Mr. Elias.

Speaker: It is moved by the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin

THAT this House urges:

(1) the Government of Canada to hold a national public inquiry into missing and murdered aboriginal women and girls, as called for in an April 17, 2013, statement issued by nine provinces and 2 territories;

(2) Yukon's Premier to publicly endorse and express support for the statement of April 17, 2013, and its recommendation for the Government of Canada to hold a national public inquiry; and

(3) the Government of Yukon to join and actively participate in the inquiry process and contribute resources as needed.

Mr. Elias: It's an honour today to speak to this motion. On this call for a federal inquiry into missing and murdered aboriginal women and girls, mine is just one in a chorus of voices. Sometimes in this Chamber we find that we are in the right place at the right time, and I'm honoured to have this opportunity to speak to our motion today. I say "our" because that's exactly what it is. It has my name on it, but I stand here today proud to say that this was a team effort. I want to thank the Premier for carefully considering all the facts before making a decision to call for a national public inquiry on behalf of the government yesterday and for his response to the petition today. Should the Prime Minister agree and launch the national public inquiry into missing and murdered aboriginal women and girls, this could have far-reaching ramifications for our territory. So, thank you, Premier, for taking the time to speak to your senior staff, Cabinet colleagues, your fellow leaders across the Council of the Federation, women's groups and our elected members in this House before urging the Government of Canada to do the right thing.

I also want to thank the Leader of the Liberal Party for his support when I asked for it. When I spoke with the Member for Klondike and explained what I was going to do on motion day today, he immediately said, "Absolutely." So thank you.

I thank my chief of staff for his new fresh approach, his articulation and knowledge of this issue. I thank the Member for Copperbelt South, especially, who came into my office on Monday morning and said to me, "Darius, you have a wonderful opportunity here to do something good," because I was in the right place at the right time in the motion rotation. She recognized that I do have dozens of motions on the Order Paper

that I could have called today, but her foresight and guidance and passion and caring in her voice made this a no-brainer decision for me. I also thank her for her petition that she tabled.

To the Whitehorse Aboriginal Women's Circle, the Yukon Aboriginal Women's Council, Yukon Sisters in Spirit, the Liard Aboriginal Women's Society, Yukon Women's Transition Home Society, Kaushee's Place, Victoria Faulkner Women's Centre, Les EssentiElles, Yukon Status of Women Council, Native Women's Association of Canada, Assembly of First Nations, Métis National Council and the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, mahsi' cho for all your hard work and dedication.

It is important to note that I spoke with the president of the Native Women's Association of Canada, Ms. Michèle Audette, this morning and she wanted me to convey something to the minister responsible for the Women's Directorate and to all the members of this Assembly as a whole. She said, "You should be proud of yourselves for the financial resources that have been invested into the women's organizations in this territory and for having the foresight and courage to bring the motion forward to your Assembly today."

I also want to recognize that the Premier did extensively go over those investments in his response to the petition this morning.

I think it's important to recognize that when we as elected officials in this territory take the opportunity to speak with one voice and send a message to Ottawa that we see tremendous value in the national public inquiry to missing and murdered aboriginal women and girls, this, to me, exhibits a moral rectitude and solidarity that Yukoners rightly expect us to display in this House.

That's the difference here today. We can be the first Assembly in the country on behalf of the people we represent to unanimously vote to urge Canada to call for a national public inquiry. I may stand corrected, Mr. Speaker, but I could not find any other Assembly in this country that unanimously urged the Government of Canada to do so.

It is an honour to call this motion before the House to be debated and represent the collective call to address a continued injustice. It is my sincere hope that at the end of House business today we will be able to celebrate Yukon's voice joining the chorus calling for action from the Government of Canada.

Let us pause for a moment to remember the name of a victim, Angel Carlick — just 19 years old. She went missing a few days before her high school graduation in 2007. Her body was found in a wooded area near the Pilot Mountain subdivision six months later. It has been almost six years since then, and we still don't know what happened to her.

Close your eyes for a minute and think of a young woman you know who is currently in her mid-20s. I have two daughters in their mid-20s, Mr. Speaker.

Think of how important she is, how loved she is, how much she contributes to the world, how valuable she is to her friends and her family. Now, imagine for a moment if that potential had been snuffed out like a flame of a candle six years ago. We've all seen the picture of a smiling Angel, proudly dressed in a cap and gown, clutching a bright bouquet of red roses. In the picture she is full of life, ready to leap into adult-

hood. But someone took that all away from her, and we still do not know who, or why they did it.

The Yukon RCMP still has a file open for Angel Carlick. They also have files open for three other aboriginal women who have disappeared. We do not know what happened to them. In fact, since the 1960s, there have been over 35 unsolved cases of missing aboriginal women in the Yukon. That is 35 families who do not know what happened to someone they love — 35 smart, strong, beautiful aboriginal women, who might have been our mothers, our daughters, our sisters, aunts or grandmothers.

I am opening with stories about people because humanity can get lost when we just talk about cultural groups or statistics.

In his 2012 report on the B.C. missing women inquiry, the Hon. Wally T. Oppal wrote, and I quote: "Given the horrific number of women who disappeared, many of whom were murdered, there is a tendency to refer to them as an anonymous group, their individual existence blurred into a collective identity."

That's the risk of examining the issue in terms of it being about aboriginal women and girls. We're talking about people here, Mr. Speaker, individual people with hopes and dreams, wallets and bank cards, just like the rest of us; people who had every right to live safely, free of fear of violence and fully respected by every other person in society around them. It's written right into our Constitution. In fact, in November of 2010, the Government of Canada endorsed the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, which reads: "States shall take measures, in conjunction with indigenous peoples, to ensure that indigenous women and children enjoy the full protection and guarantees against all forms of violence and discrimination."

But I know there is a question on many people's minds; it too often goes unspoken, so let's just get it out into the open right now: why aboriginal women and girls? What's so important about them that they deserve a special inquiry and special attention from the Government of Canada? Again I'll quote Mr. Oppal: "Aboriginal women experience higher levels of violence in terms of both incidence and severity and are disproportionately represented in the number of missing and murdered women across Canada."

If you are an aboriginal woman in Canada, the likelihood that you will experience violence is far greater than it is for any other citizen and it's five times more likely that an aboriginal woman who faces violence will die as a result of it. That's a Canadian average, and consider that the risks are four times higher here in our territory.

Looking specifically at the issue that the federal government needs to address, the numbers become even more distressing. In Canada there are approximately 580-plus cases of missing or murdered aboriginal women and girls.

Four of them are in the Yukon, and one of those is Angel Carlick. These are truths; these are undeniable. We have known them for a long time. Violence and death are ever-present shadows that our aboriginal sisters and mothers and neighbours

and colleagues must live with constantly, more so than any other Canadian.

Knowing the problem exists is never enough. We need to know why the problem exists. We need to examine its roots; we need to understand the conditions that feed its growth. Then we need to tear it out of the earth and cast it aside to clear a safe path for aboriginal women to walk down. That's our job; that's why we were elected — to improve the conditions for all people — to improve their lives and to make them safer.

To be honest, Mr. Speaker, I don't even know why we're talking about this — endorsing an effort to improve our understanding of how we can make Canada safer for its most disenfranchised and at-risk population seems like a no-brainer to me, especially when you consider the investments Yukon has already made into building and promoting a culture of non-violence.

I will leave it to the minister responsible for the Women's Directorate to list the specifics of government's many programs that have addressed the rights and interests of Yukon women. I'll simply say that it is millions of dollars that we have wisely invested into a wide variety of programs.

Ms. Audette, president of the Native Women's Association of Canada, tells me that these investments give Yukon a reason to celebrate and that we set the bar for other Canadian jurisdictions. So it makes sense for us to protect and build on those investments. It's only natural that Yukon be the first to formally call on the federal government to launch an inquiry into how and why hundreds of aboriginal girls and women across the country have unaccountably gone missing or have been murdered. Of course, conducting a national inquiry requires the expenditure of funds. We should view that as further investment, because not conducting one does not necessarily result in savings or a cost-neutral situation.

In the face of the current inadequate response to ongoing violence, all levels of government will continue to face calls for action, requiring them to devote resources to responding to these. Estimates of the cost of spousal violence against women in Canada range from \$4 billion to \$6.9 billion to \$7.4 billion. These figures do not capture the costs of non-spousal violence that disproportionately affect aboriginal women and girls.

In the long term, conducting one comprehensive national inquiry will be more cost-effective than conducting multiple investigations, which include only some regions in Canada or partial investigations of causes and factors. Conducting a national inquiry to address and acquire a full knowledge of violence will also be more cost-effective for all levels of government than proceeding on the basis of partial understandings or limited approaches.

It's important that we recognize an inquiry is not an attempt to blame any one faction of our society. Maybe there's a fear that someone's going to get in trouble or that we're looking for a scapegoat or someone to blame, but that's not the case at all. We just want to know why.

Ms. Audette told me, and I agree with her: "We need to focus on the future safety of aboriginal women rather than seek a place to blame for past actions." It's not just about what has gone wrong historically; it's about the underlying causes. The

B.C. commission examined many factors that contributed to the environment of violence that Canadian aboriginal women and girls are forced to live in. They include issues like the following: discrimination; institutional bias, referencing some jurisdictions' justice systems; a lack of leadership; outdated approaches to policing; inadequate resources; poverty and social inclusion.

For our communities to grow and to thrive, women and children must be healthy, feel safe and secure and enjoy the full protection and guarantees against all forms of violence and discrimination. I'll leave that as my opening comments, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: I'd like to begin by thanking the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin for putting forward this motion today, and I want to thank him and acknowledge him for the words that he has just given us and the passion with which he said those words. I think they certainly struck home with all Members of the Legislative Assembly.

I would like to make my comments today summarize a bit of some of the work that Yukon government has done to date and perhaps put into context a bit of the work of the Aboriginal Affairs Working Group as well. I'd also like to acknowledge that the government will be supporting this motion put forward today. While the motion itself urges our support, in fact, the record will show that the motion I tabled in the Legislative Assembly this week will already show we have done so and that we are urging the Government of Canada to hold a national public inquiry into missing and murdered aboriginal women and girls and consult with the provinces, territories and national aboriginal organizations on the terms of reference of the national public inquiry.

I hope that we are correct with the member opposite's assumptions that we could perhaps be the first in Canada to do that.

I would like to recognize that the Yukon has recognized the violence against aboriginal women. We must look at this collaboratively. We have been working with many groups — aboriginal women's groups and Yukon First Nations — and individual aboriginal people on a number of key initiatives. Yukon was one of the first jurisdictions to respond to and address the issues of missing and murdered aboriginal women in our communities.

Currently, the Women's Directorate is providing support for the Yukon Sisters in Spirit project, which was designed to research the occurrences of missing and murdered aboriginal women from here in the Yukon and to work with those families and their communities to develop relevant violence prevention and public education initiatives.

As part of implementing the recommendations from the Yukon aboriginal women's summits, the Yukon Sisters in Spirit project has received \$114,720 of funding from the northern strategy trust and an additional \$75,000 from the prevention of violence against aboriginal women fund from 2010 to 2013.

Aboriginal women's equality is one of the main priorities of the Yukon Women's Directorate. I know that the minister responsible is looking forward to making her comments on

some of the good work that the directorate has done. Through this, we are directly supporting a number of successful ongoing programs to help address violence against aboriginal women. This includes the prevention of violence against aboriginal women's fund, which is intended for innovative projects that address aboriginal women's safety and wellness in Yukon communities.

In 2009, the Women's Directorate doubled the prevention of violence against aboriginal women fund to \$200,000 annually, and the Yukon government has contributed approximately \$1.5 million to the fund since its inception in 2004.

In 2012-13, the Women's Directorate provided funding to eight organizations and in 2013-15, the Women's Directorate is able to support six violence prevention projects through this funding. This includes \$25,000 to Kwanlin Dun First Nation to establish a violence prevention worker within the Kwanlin Dun community.

There is \$25,000 for the Liard Aboriginal Women's Society for the Together for Justice project to create a community action plan and encourage systemic change within RCMP training and performance; \$50,000 to the Skookum Jim Friendship Centre for a two-year Women of Wisdom project, offering skills that can be used by the participants to develop their personal awareness and recognize their individual worth; \$25,000 to the Whitehorse Aboriginal Women's Circle for the Daughter Spirit project, which will address the largely overlooked incidence of self-harm occurrences among young aboriginal women through community awareness, encouraging dialogue and providing resources within the community; and \$25,000 to the Yukon Aboriginal Women's Council for the Brothers in Spirit one-year strength-based community inquiry project targeting aboriginal men. In this project, interviews will be conducted to gather stories and experiences of aboriginal men who are behaving in a non-violent, respectful way toward others. These interviews will look to explore reasons why men choose not to abuse their families and intimidate partners and choose non-violent and respectful actions.

There is \$50,000 for the Yukon Women's Transition Home Society for a two-year elder mentor project to increase a sense of community support and cultural connection for aboriginal residents of Kaushee's Place.

This program is designed to transmit traditional cultural knowledge and teachings regarding healthy lifestyle skills, self-care and responsible stewardship from elders in the community to aboriginal women fleeing violence.

Yukon has committed \$450,000 over three years to support aboriginal women's organizations in developing projects that respond to the recommendations made at the Yukon aboriginal summit that was held — the second one that was just held in October of 2012.

Since 2007, and now committed through 2016, the Women's Directorate provides funding through the women's equality fund to the Whitehorse Aboriginal Women's Circle, the Liard Aboriginal Women's Society and the Yukon Aboriginal Women's Council. The Women's Directorate is working together with the Whitehorse Aboriginal Women's Circle to develop proposals and a business plan for an aboriginal

women's centre in Whitehorse. In 2012, the Women's Directorate supported this group in developing and submitting an application to CDF for an aboriginal women's centre feasibility study. This application was successful, and the Whitehorse Aboriginal Women's Circle has just issued the feasibility study report that details the results of their research.

As I have mentioned, the government has also invested in such things as the lone-parent family facility, as well as investments in housing projects that protect women and children fleeing abuse.

We have also invested heavily into substance abuse programs and are working on the construction of a new alcohol and drug treatment facility, as we know that substance abuse is often a driver when it comes to violence against women and children. Those are just some of the hard numbers — the actual financial support we have — but I think what we really need to do is to acknowledge the work of these aboriginal women's groups and the individuals out there who are working tirelessly on this issue. As the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin spoke about — really trying to get to the core of this issue and, really, the question is why, as he articulated. We want to know why.

The Aboriginal Affairs Working Group has been doing good work for a number of years and it has evolved over time. It is currently working in conjunction with the Council of the Federation and the leadership of the premiers across the territories.

It has been working in three important areas: closing the graduation gap, closing the income gap, and ending the violence against aboriginal women and girls. The latest meetings last week that we had our senior officials go to — I think all of these issues are important issues that we need to continue to work on.

On the graduation gap, the committee is endorsing a joint workplan of the Aboriginal Affairs Working Group and the Council of Ministers of Education Canada on shared priorities, endorsing the inventory of aboriginal education-related provincial and territorial initiatives and agreements that are promising approaches to increasing aboriginal graduation rates and identifying opportunities to build and foster relationships among partners to address the education challenges and opportunities of First Nations, regardless of status or residency, and Inuit or Métis peoples.

On the income gap side, the working group discussed supporting practices in aboriginal communities that have increased opportunities and participation in economic development; endorse further additions to the Aboriginal Affairs Working Group's economic development success stories website, which is www.aawgecdev.ca.

Shared activities and best practices related to developing increased aboriginal entrepreneurship, employment training and business development programs and strategies for First Nations, regardless of status or residency, Inuit or Métis people and, most importantly, was ending violence against aboriginal women and girls. They received the recommendations of the third National Aboriginal Women's Summit, hosted by Manitoba, that occurred in November of 2012. They discussed *For-saken: the Report of Missing Women Commission of Inquiry* in

2012, among other reports and best practices, and then acknowledged that Parliament has agreed to appoint a special committee on the matter of missing and murdered indigenous women and girls in Canada and that the premiers and ministers who were in attendance supported the national aboriginal organizations' leaders' call upon the federal government to hold a national public inquiry into missing and murdered aboriginal women and girls and that the federal government consult with the provinces, territories and national aboriginal organizations on the terms of reference of the national public inquiry and, further on, to explore further actions for prevention in support of aboriginal women and girls at risk and exchange information and promote collaboration between the federal-provincial-territorial justice tables and the Aboriginal Affairs Working Group.

The ministers and leaders did acknowledge the importance of continued cooperation on aboriginal affairs.

This includes the following: focusing on increased efforts to support safe communities and prevent violence against aboriginal women and girls; enhancing skills and educational opportunities; building strong working relationships with aboriginal communities to support economic development; working to address housing challenges; and working with the federal government to enhance disaster support services.

The Aboriginal Affairs Working Group will continue to provide national leadership on these and other issues to further support and ensure a strong future for aboriginal communities across the country. The results of these meetings will be coming forward to the next Council of the Federation meeting, which will occur later this summer in Ontario, and I will be looking forward to actively participating in that.

I have had the honour of being in attendance at the last two summer COF meetings. The day prior to the meeting is devoted to meetings with the national aboriginal organizations, and we've had very good discussions and also opportunities to have one-on-one discussions as well. Last year in Nova Scotia, I had a chance to have a good talk with Shawn Atleo at that time, as well, and to build those relationships. I know that Shawn Atleo has been here and looks forward to coming back to the Yukon to continue some of that good work.

My quote that was a part of the conclusion of the meetings last week and that was included was that I'm pleased that Yukon can offer its experiences and expertise to the important work of improving quality of life for aboriginal Canadians. National leadership is essential in moving forward on issues important to Yukon and the rest of Canada, such as addressing the education gap and ending violence against aboriginal women and girls.

Just to continue to highlight the good work that this committee has done — and I believe the growing impetus it has going forward — we should look at what it is that it does and therefore be able to help determine how they were able to come to the conclusions that they had working in conjunction with the national aboriginal organizations at this meeting, and through some of the powerful discussions that occurred. While I wasn't there, I was able to hear of these stories that were

brought forward through the officials who were present at the meeting.

Now the objectives of the working group: to carry out the direction and priorities established by the provincial and territorial premiers and national aboriginal leaders following their annual meeting and report back on progress; to strengthen collaboration, strategic thinking and planning on jointly agreed-to priorities of provinces and territories and national aboriginal organizations; to share information and successes that will help improve the well-being of aboriginal peoples in all parts of Canada; and to invite federal engagement on specific and relevant aboriginal initiatives or issues as appropriate.

The membership of the Aboriginal Affairs Working Group is comprised of ministers of aboriginal affairs from the provinces and territories and leaders of five national aboriginal organizations: the Assembly of First Nations; Métis National Council; Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami; Congress of Aboriginal Peoples; and Native Women's Association of Canada.

This committee does report back to COF on an annual basis and will be doing so this summer. Some of the work that has happened — currently the minister from Manitoba is the chair of the working group. The group has focused on tangible, concrete and results-orientated action in the priority areas. In particular, the issue of violence against aboriginal women and girls, including the over 600 missing and murdered aboriginal women, remains an urgent priority.

The second meeting of the working group was held on April 20, 2010, in Toronto. A framework for action was presented and ministers and leaders agreed to work on three key goals that I articulated earlier: the closing of the graduation gap, the closing of the income gap and ending violence against aboriginal women and girls.

The premiers and NAO leaders met in August 2010 to further discuss these three areas. The meeting resulted in a letter from Manitoba Premier Selinger to Prime Minister Harper, recommending the Prime Minister convene a meeting of first ministers and the leaders of the national aboriginal organizations, recommending the establishment of a task force on missing and murdered aboriginal women and girls, and inviting the federal government to commit to a third national aboriginal women's summit.

The third meeting of the working group was held on April 19, 2011, in Ottawa. At that meeting the working group approved a series of recommendations for premiers to further the work in the three priority areas of increasing graduation rates for aboriginal students, supporting economic development in aboriginal communities and ending violence against aboriginal women and girls.

These recommendations were contained in the July 20 report to premiers. At our meeting on July 20, 2011, in Vancouver, premiers and NAO leaders endorsed the ongoing work of the Aboriginal Affairs Working Group and, in particular, directed the Aboriginal Affairs Working Group to develop a meeting framework including outcomes for a first ministers meeting on aboriginal education.

March 13, 2012, the FFM framework was submitted by Ontario Aboriginal Affairs Minister Wynne, the Aboriginal

Affairs Working Group chair, to the current Council of the Federation chair, who at that time was British Columbia Premier Christy Clark. Subsequent to the 2012 meeting, a progress report from the Aboriginal Affairs Working Group was transmitted to the Premiers in advance of their NAO meeting in July 2012 in Nova Scotia. At that meeting, the premiers and NAO leaders accepted and endorsed the April 2012 report and directed the Aboriginal Affairs Working Group to continue work based on the action plans contained in the report.

As I have stated, the most recent meeting of the Aboriginal Affairs Working Group was in Winnipeg just last week. Actions were agreed to in each of those areas, supporting the call by national aboriginal organizations for the federal government to hold a national public inquiry into missing and murdered aboriginal women and girls, and for them to engage the provinces and territories and the national aboriginal organizations for the terms of reference.

Mr. Speaker, the next meeting of this working group will be held in November of 2013.

There have been some other accomplishments that are worth noting from the working group, such as an updated inventory of innovative bilateral and trilateral First Nation education initiatives and agreements. A virtual resource centre is under development that will serve as a clearing house centre of excellence and will post and access research, articles and descriptions of initiatives that address violence against aboriginal women. Also development of an Aboriginal Affairs Working Group economic development website — this site includes information on how Yukon final agreements have brought economic benefits to Yukon First Nations. A compilation inventory is being developed of provincial and territorial agreements, policies, programs and strategies that have improved opportunities for aboriginal economic development and economy building. Data being collected may foster future discussions and/or partnerships among neighbouring jurisdictions where agreements, policies, programs and strategies have been successful.

Joining national aboriginal organizations in calling upon the federal government to hold a national public inquiry into missing and murdered women — this is, I think, the boldest and loudest work that has come out of this group.

I think that's what we've done and I acknowledge that work, but I would like to sort of bring my comments to a close by getting back to reality. I remember very clearly that time in 2007 — it's hard to believe how time goes by — when Angel Carlick went missing and the subsequent discovery of her body months later. I very, very clearly remember attending that ceremony and the releasing of the balloons by the river. More than anything it is also looking at and thinking about and acknowledging the families of these people and what they have to go through. I certainly haven't had to deal with that myself and for that, I am thankful, but I know that just being a parent of four children, and three of them being daughters, I think even just the thought of such violence or the thought of having a loved one disappear and not knowing what happened certainly is a tragedy that's beyond description.

So I think that we need to recognize those families; we need to thank the groups and individuals who have been work-

ing on their behalf, but also on going forward as to how we can address and really get to finding out why this happens, because that's how we can help to really move forward and get past that and ensure that we can curb this and eliminate this from happening.

I want to also take the opportunity to thank the minister responsible for the Women's Directorate for the great work she and the officials in the Women's Directorate have been doing in supporting these groups for a number of years. I would also like to thank the Minister of Justice and the former Minister of Justice, Marian Horne, who herself was indeed very passionate and committed to this.

I think that I would also like to acknowledge the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin for bringing this motion forward today. It's very timely and I have to say that I'm thankful that as the numbers rolled out this week it was in fact his turn and he had the opportunity to bring forward this motion. I think it is very symbolic and I'm very thankful that that in fact happened today.

Ms. Moorcroft: I would like to thank the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin for bringing this motion forward for debate today. I'm pleased to speak for the Official Opposition in support of this motion.

The high rates of violence faced by indigenous women in Canada are a national human right tragedy that has gone on for too long and continues today. It is a tragedy that affects many families here in the Yukon. While I have deliberately chosen not to mention any names today of the women who have gone missing, my heart goes out to all the families.

A public inquiry can be given a mandate to inquire into both specific facts and also the broader concerns — the social science, the history and other evidence about missing and murdered aboriginal women in Canada. A public inquiry can be given a mandate to examine the many underlying root causes at the core of the high rates of violence against aboriginal women and girls. The mandate of the public inquiry should not only reveal the root causes — racism, sexism, poverty, poor health, inadequate housing, low school completion rates, low employment rates, inadequate or inappropriate government policies, inadequate police and social responses to violence against women — but it must also then make suggestions and develop and present to the Government of Canada a specific and integrated plan for addressing the particular conditions affecting aboriginal women and girls.

Violence against women will only stop when more men engage in making personal, political and social change to end all forms of violence. I thank all of the men who speak and who work for that.

Like the MLA for Vuntut Gwitchin, I would like to acknowledge the value of the financial contributions that the Government of Yukon, and particularly the Women's Directorate, is making to many equality-seeking women's organizations. I support those efforts and the work that is done.

I also want to thank the many women I've heard from and worked with over the years to end violence against women, and I need to recognize the value of the Internet and the informa-

tion available on websites from organizations, such as the Native Women's Association of Canada, the Feminist Alliance for International Action, Amnesty International, Yukon Aboriginal Women's Council, the Whitehorse Aboriginal Women's Circle, the United Nations, the Assembly of First Nations and many others, although those are some of the ones I drew from in preparing my remarks today.

Indigenous women have the right to be safe and free from violence. When a woman is targeted for violence because of her gender or because of her indigenous identity, her fundamental rights have been abused. When she is not offered an adequate level of protection by state authorities because of her gender or because of her indigenous identity, those rights have been violated.

Mr. Speaker, as Amnesty International put it, "Violence against women is rarely understood as a human rights issue. To the extent that governments, media and the general public do consider concerns about violence against women, it is more frequent for it to be described as a criminal concern or a social issue. It is both of those things, of course, but it is also very much a human rights issue."

As a human rights defender, I take very seriously the need for members of the Assembly to respect the full and equal rights of aboriginal women as found in the United Nations *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, the *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women*, and the most recent United Nations *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*.

Canada has ratified these conventions, which means that Canada has accepted its obligation as a state party to respect, protect and fulfill equality rights for indigenous women living in Canada.

Canadian government statistics reveal that indigenous women are five times to seven times more likely than other women to die as the result of violence. The pattern of violence against aboriginal women looks like this — racist and sexist stereotypes deny the dignity and worth of indigenous women, encouraging some men to feel they can get away with violent acts of hatred against them. Decades of government policy have impoverished and broken apart indigenous families and communities, leaving many indigenous women and girls extremely vulnerable to exploitation and attack. Many police forces have failed to institute necessary measures, such as training, appropriate investigative protocols and accountability mechanisms to eliminate bias in how they respond to the needs of indigenous women and their families.

The Native Women's Association of Canada, NWAC, is founded on the collective goal to enhance, promote and foster the social, economic, cultural and political well-being of First Nations and Métis women within First Nations, Métis and Canadian societies.

As a national organization representing aboriginal women since 1974, NWAC's mandate is to achieve equality for all aboriginal women in Canada. NWAC has documented more than 600 cases of missing and murdered indigenous women in Canada, most within the last three decades. Because of gaps in police and government reporting, the actual numbers may be

much higher. NWAC also notes that Canadian police and public officials have also long been aware of a pattern of racist, sexist violence against First Nations, Inuit and Métis women in their homes and on the streets, but government response has been shockingly out of step with the scale and severity of this tragedy.

In 2004, Amnesty International published *Stolen Sisters: Discrimination and Violence Against Indigenous Women in Canada*. This report highlights the stories of missing and murdered women over the past three decades. Amnesty International is also concerned that Canadian officials are not living up to their obligations toward indigenous women. Many of the preventive measures identified by past government commissions and inquiries have not been implemented. Meanwhile, long-standing patterns of social and economic inequity continue to drive indigenous women and girls into situations like the sex trade, where the risk to their lives is much greater.

The Native Women's Association of Canada has been calling for a national public inquiry into missing and murdered aboriginal women for years. This call has been endorsed by the five national aboriginal organizations: the Assembly of First Nations, Métis National Council, Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami and Congress of Aboriginal Peoples, along with NWAC.

Here in Yukon, the Yukon Aboriginal Women's Council has administered the Yukon Sisters in Spirit program from 2011 to 2013. I note that the *Stolen Sisters* report only investigated missing and murdered aboriginal women and girls in the provinces south of 60. At the recent Grandmother Moon ceremony held at Kwanlin Dun Cultural Centre, the Yukon Aboriginal Women's Council reported that they have determined that there are 35 different incidents of missing or murdered Yukon aboriginal women. Although Yukon Sisters in Spirit project funding has ended, it has brought attention to the issue of missing and murdered aboriginal women and violence against women.

The project was successful in helping to rebuild relationships between the RCMP and aboriginal women's groups. In 2013, as part of the project, a survey randomly administered to citizens of the Yukon showed that 61 percent agreed that missing and murdered aboriginal women is a significant issue in Canada.

In a media release today, Chantal Genier, the president of YAWC, is pleased to see that the Yukon government has joined the call for a national public inquiry. YAWC, as well as Ann Maje Raider from Liard Aboriginal Women's Society and representatives of the Whitehorse Aboriginal Women's Circle have all spoken to me about how important it is to include these most affected groups — aboriginal women and their representative organizations — in determining the mandate of a public inquiry. It will be wonderful if the Government of Canada heeds this call and we can have the first national inquiry that does examine the violence against aboriginal women in the three northern territories, where we know the rates of violence are much higher.

A 2011 joint statement of indigenous and non-indigenous organizations called for action to stop violence. It said there can be no piecemeal solution to a tragedy of this scale. As we

in this Assembly join with other jurisdictions calling on the government to hold a national public inquiry on missing and murdered aboriginal women, we should contemplate other measures we can take to create safety for indigenous women. An example of progress being made into building relationships of trust between aboriginal women, the RCMP, and the broader community is the recent protocol signed between the Liard Aboriginal Women's Society and the RCMP detachment in Watson Lake, which establishes principles, objectives and core commitments that capture a new relationship.

The RCMP saw the need to change the way it responded to women who experienced violence, asked for advice from women and made changes. The protocol centres around improving how police and community respond to women who experience violence.

Together for Justice workshops provided training to place the RCMP on a common ground regarding First Nation culture and how people are responding to residential schools and challenges with the Justice system. As Chief Superintendent Peter Clark of the Yukon RCMP acknowledged, there is a need to "recognize women's courage, support their decisions and ensure our responses do not attach blame."

The *Together for Justice* project began in 2011 to promote a dialogue between women and the RCMP about how to create safety for women. A goal of the project was to do this work in Watson Lake and in Whitehorse as a model that then could be expanded to other communities. I truly hope that Yukon government will put its political will and public funds into supporting the completion of this work so that there is a similar protocol developed to be put in place for Whitehorse, a protocol that can become a best practice and can be expanded to include all Yukon communities.

As one woman who works in the field of preventing and responding to violence against women said to me, "Over the years, the silence has been deafening." We're speaking today. I've spoken to so many aboriginal women and their families and to Yukon citizens from all walks of life in the past about the devastating pain when a loved one disappears. Imagine losing a sister, a daughter, a mother, an aunt or a grandmother and imagine the heartbreak when a family isn't satisfied with the way that public agencies and services respond to a report of a missing or murdered aboriginal woman. We can do better.

If, as a Yukon society, we truly wish to remove homelessness, poverty, injustice, racism and violence from our community and move toward a community built on social inclusion, we must address the root of the problem and we must end the silence surrounding the issue of violence and degradation of women. A national public inquiry has the potential to break that silence.

The United Nations Special Rapporteur on violence against women has also taken note of the hundreds of murders and disappearances of aboriginal women and girls in Canada and the multi-level oppression that culminates in violence. Rapporteur Manjoo names among the causes the disadvantaged social and economic conditions in which aboriginal women and girls live, which make them vulnerable to such violence.

On March 12, 2013, for the second consecutive year, the Native Women's Association of Canada and the Canadian Feminist Alliance for International Action provided a briefing on murders and disappearances of aboriginal women and girls to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, a body of the Organization of American States. It focused on the lack of adequate government and police response to address this ongoing crisis.

Sharon McIvor of the Feminist Alliance for International Action called for the Government of Canada to establish a national public inquiry immediately. She said there is a need for a fully independent national public inquiry where the families, the groups, the governments and the experts can come together to examine the causes of this problem and find solutions. In addition, NWAC and FAFIA urge the Government of Canada to fully cooperate with international and regional human rights bodies so that aboriginal women and girls in Canada can have the benefit of their expertise and assistance in conducting a public inquiry.

The Feminist Alliance for International Action also made a submission to the United Nations Human Rights Council on the occasion of the second universal periodic review of Canada in October of 2012. It stated that a national inquiry in Canada is needed to address the many issues affecting the families of murdered aboriginal women and girls; to review police policies and procedures on searches and investigation; to examine communications between officials, police and the families of missing and murdered women; to review police oversight and disciplinary procedures; address the culture of racial and sexual harassment inside police forces; and to examine the social and economic disadvantages that contribute to the vulnerability of aboriginal women and girls to violence.

A significant aspect of the recommendation for a national inquiry in Canada that national aboriginal organizations, women's and human rights organizations and now, the Yukon Legislative Assembly, along with provincial and territorial governments are calling for, is that Canada consult with NWAC and other organizations representing and supporting the interest of aboriginal women on the terms of reference, so that the causes and consequences of the violence and the steps necessary to end the murders and disappearances can be fully examined.

I would also like to point out that in April 2013, the Assembly of First Nations and NWAC closed the National Forum on Community Safety and Ending Violence, held in Edmonton, with the renewed and strengthened commitment to actions to increase community safety and further pressed for a national public commission of inquiry into violence against aboriginal women and girls.

Canada has been urged repeatedly by United Nations treaty bodies to take effective action to address the failed justice system and governmental responses to the hundreds of murders and disappearances of aboriginal women and girls.

In 2008, after its periodic review, the CEDAW committee urged Canada to examine the reasons for the failure to investigate the cases of missing or murdered aboriginal women and to take the necessary steps to remedy the deficiencies in the sys-

tem, to urgently carry out thorough investigations of the cases of aboriginal women who have gone missing or have been murdered in recent decades and to carry out an analysis to determine whether there is a racialized pattern and to take measures to address the problem if that is the case. The CEDAW committee, at the same time, recommended that Canada develop a specific and integrated plan for addressing the particular conditions affecting aboriginal women, both on and off reserves, including poverty, poor health and the high rates of violence.

Canada has an obligation to report back on this issue to the CEDAW committee, and I believe that Canada has an obligation to conduct a national public inquiry.

Mr. Speaker, yesterday in this House, you acknowledged the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Mass Atrocities. It is relevant to debate on the motion before us to recognize that the forced confinement of aboriginal children in what is called the residential school system was a mass atrocity that still affects our communities today and that contributed to the tragedy of violence against aboriginal women. We need to focus on education, on investigation, and on action to end this violence.

The federal government has responded by announcing plans to spend money on addressing violence against women, although most of that money went toward police initiatives that track missing persons. The Government of Canada unfortunately delayed funding to the Native Women's Association of Canada's Sisters in Spirit initiative, which was important research and advocacy work that the government itself has said has been vital in drawing attention to violence against aboriginal women. While they have refused to develop a comprehensive national action plan on stopping violence against women and girls, even though Canada has played a key role in UN resolutions promoting such national action plans as a standard for all nations to adopt, this makes it that much more imperative that the Government of Canada will listen and will hold a national public inquiry.

I would like to conclude my remarks by quoting Michèle Audette, president of the Native Women's Association of Canada: "We need to ensure that indigenous women and girls enjoy the equal protection and equal benefit of the law in Canada." A national public inquiry would be another step down that road.

Hon. Ms. Taylor: I want to, first off, thank my colleague from the other side, the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin, for bringing forth this very important motion and to offer my support and, of course, to reiterate our government's support of this motion for the call for a national public inquiry on murdered and missing women in Canada. I'd like to thank the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin for his comments and for his eloquent words in support, and for providing some context as to why, in fact, we are here today and debating this very important subject.

I would also like to thank the previous speakers to the motion for their words and their perspectives. I have to say — without trying to sound repetitive — there have been a lot of good comments, and I'm going to try to keep my comments

succinct, because I know the Liberal Party member would like to say a few words.

I do want to say that this motion really speaks to the issue of violence. Often I am asked — and others in this Assembly — why do we focus on violence against women? It's a valid question and there are some very valid reasons why we do.

When it comes to violence in our communities, men's experiences of violence are largely different from women's in a whole host of ways. While men are more likely to be injured by strangers in a public or a social venue, women are in greater danger of experiencing violence from intimate partners in their own homes. Women are also at greater risk of sexual violence.

As has been said by others here today, Yukon has three times the national rate of violence against women. Rates of violence in the other two territories are even higher in comparison to our southern counterparts. The facts continue to shock. The rate of sexual offences against women in the Yukon Territory was over three and a half times the provincial average and when it comes to aboriginal women, again, they are more than three to five times as likely to report being victimized by a spouse in the last five years.

Yukon has the third highest rate of police-reported violence against women in the country. Police-reported data on sexual assault, criminal harassment and spousal violence provides a very big context for the continued pervasiveness of this very issue. The immediate and the long-term impacts of violence continue to affect women's employment, our economy, physical and mental health status, financial security and safety.

The prevention of violence against women is a priority of the Yukon government and a key mandate of the Women's Directorate for the past decade in my capacity as minister responsible for the Women's Directorate, and there is also credit to be paid to the former Premier, Dennis Fentie, who held the portfolio, as well as my former predecessor Marian Horne.

The Women's Directorate has been working very hard in collaboration with many aboriginal women's organizations, individual aboriginal women, First Nation governments, and others to address violence against women and to advance aboriginal women's equality when it comes to social, economic, legal and political — I believe that we have been doing just that.

I would like to make note of a number of initiatives. There has been so much work being done by many, many different organizations in the territory and governments, and we don't have the time here to actually spell all of that out today. But I do want to go back to 2005 and the Premier at that time, Premier Fentie — who also held the portfolio of the Women's Directorate — there was a discussion about violence against aboriginal women. It was really a talk of the Council of the Federation to bring the parties together, to bring all the provinces and the territories together to really highlight this issue and to do what we can as members of the confederation to highlight this work, and also to advance aboriginal women's equality.

It was a couple of years later that the government in Newfoundland, together with the Native Women's Association of Canada, co-hosted the very first National Aboriginal Women's

Summit in Cornerbrook, Newfoundland. I can say I was part of that delegation, along with a number of other aboriginal women in the territory, and it brought together 155 aboriginal women from across the country as well as premiers, the federal, provincial and territorial ministers and staff. Our delegation included just over 10 delegates who contributed directly to the recommendations that would then be forthcoming soon thereafter — and the identification of those priorities.

At the end of the summit, there were some 137 recommendations made by women, and of course about half of those were identified as the key priorities in moving forward.

I wanted to make note of that, because NAWS, which is the acronym of that summit, was a really key indicator of increased capacity of aboriginal women's organizations at the national level coming together, as well as the willingness of governments and non-government organizations and communities to really engage on those critical areas of importance to aboriginal women's equality in Canada.

Of course, by bringing forward those principles and those recommendations that are so highly important, it has helped to increase capacity. It has helped to broaden the issue of women's equality in the country, but also how we can work together collectively to advance aboriginal women's issues in the territory and beyond.

From there, at that time we brought that very thick document home to the Yukon and we had to try to drill it down and make it relevant to Yukon.

It was at that time that we were able to come home and we had what we called the YAWS, which was the Yukon aboriginal women's summits. We had a couple of them. We had one in Watson Lake and one in Whitehorse. I can tell you that they were very well-attended. There were women from all walks of life; many trailblazers over the years. It was a very powerful opportunity for coming together to talk to this very issue. From there, of course, the two Yukon summits' theme was "Strong Women, Strong Communities: Furthering Aboriginal Women's Equality". Again, the summits were really to communicate the outcomes of the national summit to Yukon aboriginal women and to determine Yukon women's priorities for furthering equality for Yukon aboriginal women.

It was from there that a number of recommendations were born. A number of implementation projects also came about. It included a violence prevention project, an aboriginal women's role model mentorship training program, an elder/youth land-based program, a culturally relevant gender balance analysis, as well as an aboriginal women's group expansion project.

The one I do want to highlight, however, is the Yukon Sisters in Spirit initiative. It indeed took form. It was really what I would coin as a 36-month project. It ran from 2010 and ended the end of March of this year. It was delivered by the Yukon Aboriginal Women's Council and they received dollars through the northern strategy trust, and I can say that what a tremendous project it was. It was designed to include the voices of missing and murdered aboriginal women's families and communities and to come together and commit to working to develop and support ongoing relationships based on trust and reciprocity. I can tell you that, of course, we do know that, as

was articulated just recently by the member opposite, there are some 35 cases.

The project began on April 1, 2010. It was a project, of course, as I said, hosted by the Yukon Aboriginal Women's Council as the only regional aboriginal organization in the Yukon and the sister agency to NWAC, as well.

Initially, it was to be a one-year research and awareness project, and it was quickly identified that that wouldn't be sufficient and it evolved into a three-year project focusing on policy, education, prevention and research. It began the day after the national Sisters in Spirit project ended, and that's key, because I have had the opportunity to meet Michèle Audette from NWAC on many occasions now. She has really congratulated the Yukon Aboriginal Women's Council and the government's support, but it is the women's organizations coming together and working hand-in-hand with aboriginal women from around the territory and working with their family members and the friends and the relationships that has really led to this project. It highlighted a number of things, and, as I understand, the project travelled to Women's Worlds congress in Ottawa and the National Aboriginal Women's Forum in Vancouver.

It was also showcased in the National Justice Forum, coordinated by the Assembly of First Nations, with the focus put on that specific project.

I had the opportunity of also attending the Sisters in Spirit "Honouring Grandmother Moon" event, which was held not long ago — earlier in February. For me to see so many of Yukon's women being permanently commemorated — when I say those women, they're the missing and murdered aboriginal women — with those exquisite moons, it came with mixed emotions for all of us in the room. To see so many moons there for the first time, it's tragic; it's saddening; but at the same time, as I looked around that room, it was so encouraging, by the commitment and the dedication of so many individuals and those trailblazers who remain in the territory, and their commitment to put an end to violence against women is inspiring.

Today's motion is about continuing on those efforts at the national level and at the territorial level. I want to quote Premier Greg Selinger. Back in November last fall, he said — and this is following the third National Aboriginal Women's Summit. As you can see, there has been a transition of national movement on this particular area of importance, as there has been in the Yukon with us hosting the second Yukon Aboriginal Women's Summit. The disproportionate number of missing and murdered aboriginal women and girls is a Canadian tragedy that we must all work together to end. At the end of the day, it is not just governments and not just organizations; it's all of our collective efforts and what we must do as individual citizens to put an end to violence against aboriginal women.

Mr. Silver: Seeing the time, Mr. Speaker, I will be very brief. I don't believe that I could possibly add more to the debate that hasn't already been said by the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin. The sincerity of his words and the unbelievable stats that he brought to this House are very compelling and horrifying. I said to him in our preliminary conversations I will absolutely support his motion. I would like to extend a thank you to

the Member for Copperbelt South for her years of dedication on this and other women's issues. It's obvious the level of commitment the member has given to this cause and she should also be applauded.

What an absolute shame — the discrepancies between these numbers. My heart goes out to the affected families. There's not much else to be said other than I'll be 100 percent supporting this motion.

Speaker: Does any other member wish to be heard?

Mr. Elias: I thank all members of the House. I do believe that a federal inquiry into missing and murdered aboriginal women and girls is going to happen. I think that conducting a comprehensive national inquiry with the participation of all levels of government and national aboriginal organizations will provide the knowledge we need to act with some wisdom to create meaningful change and to design a national framework and action plan that will prevent aboriginal families from experiencing the pain and horror of the loss of a loved one to violence in the future.

We require nothing less than a transformation of the relationship between aboriginal women and girls and those who are supposed to help and protect them; between aboriginal peoples and the government, police and the justice system; and of the way we think about and respond to violence in Canada.

The federal government must act. The country has spoken loud and clear. Mr. Speaker, you pray for us every day to conduct ourselves with temperance, understanding and reason, and that we, the elected members of this House, serve the people we represent with dignity and honour — and I believe that happened today.

I want to thank all members of this House that we send a united message — unanimous — and we give our Premier support that, when he speaks to the Prime Minister, this territory speaks with one collective voice.

Mr. Speaker, you also say that history will be the final judge of our deeds. Twenty years from now, when we look back on today and the discussions that happened and the results of a national inquiry, I think this is something that we can all be proud of.

Speaker: Are you prepared for the question?

Some Hon. Members: Division.

Division

Speaker: Division has been called.

Bells

Speaker: Mr. Clerk, please poll the House.

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Agree.

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Graham: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Kent: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Agree.

Mr. Hassard: Agree.

Ms. Hanson: Agree.

Ms. Stick: Agree.

Ms. Moorcroft: Agree.

Ms. White: Agree.

Mr. Tredger: Agree.

Mr. Silver: Agree.

Mr. Elias: Agree.

Clerk: Mr. Speaker, the results are 15 yeas, nil nays.

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

Motion No. 423 agreed to

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

Speaker: It has been moved by the Government House Leader that the House do adjourn. Are you agreed?

Motion agreed to

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

The House adjourned at 5:21 p.m.

The following Sessional Papers were tabled April 24, 2013:

33-1-81

Political Contributions 2012, Report of the Chief Electoral Officer of Yukon (Speaker Laxton)

33-1-82

Subsistence, Travel & Accommodations of Members of the Yukon Legislative Assembly, 2012-2013, Report on (dated April, 2013) (Speaker Laxton)

33-1-83

Yukon State of the Environment Interim Report: An Update for Environmental Indicators 2013 (Dixon)

The following documents were filed April 24, 2013:

33-1-49

Fleet Vehicle Agency 2013-2014 Business Plan (Istchenko)

33-1-50

Queen's Printer Agency 2011/2012 Annual Report (Istchenko)

33-1-51

Queen's Printer Agency 2013/2014 Business Plan (Istchenko)