



# Yukon Legislative Assembly

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Number 207

1st Session

33rd Legislature

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## HANSARD

Tuesday, May 5, 2015 — 1:00 p.m.

Speaker: The Honourable David Laxton

# YUKON LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

**SPEAKER — Hon. David Laxton, MLA, Porter Creek Centre**

**DEPUTY SPEAKER — Patti McLeod, MLA, Watson Lake**

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<b>Hon. Elaine Taylor</b>	Whitehorse West	Deputy Premier Minister responsible for Tourism and Culture; Women's Directorate; French Language Services Directorate
<b>Hon. Brad Cathers</b>	Lake Laberge	Minister responsible for Justice; Yukon Development Corporation/ Yukon Energy Corporation
<b>Hon. Doug Graham</b>	Porter Creek North	Minister responsible for Education
<b>Hon. Scott Kent</b>	Riverdale North	Minister responsible for Energy, Mines and Resources; Highways and Public Works
<b>Hon. Currie Dixon</b>	Copperbelt North	Minister responsible for Community Services; Public Service Commission
<b>Hon. Wade Istchenko</b>	Kluane	Minister responsible for Environment
<b>Hon. Mike Nixon</b>	Porter Creek South	Minister responsible for Health and Social Services; Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board
<b>Hon. Stacey Hassard</b>	Pelly-Nisutlin	Minister responsible for Economic Development; Yukon Housing Corporation; Yukon Liquor Corporation

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<b>Darius Elias</b>	Government House Leader Vuntut Gwitchin
<b>Hon. David Laxton</b>	Porter Creek Centre
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### New Democratic Party

<b>Elizabeth Hanson</b>	Leader of the Official Opposition Whitehorse Centre
<b>Jan Stick</b>	Official Opposition House Leader Riverdale South
<b>Kevin Barr</b>	Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes
<b>Lois Moorcroft</b>	Copperbelt South
<b>Jim Tredger</b>	Mayo-Tatchun
<b>Kate White</b>	Takhini-Kopper King

### Liberal Party

<b>Sandy Silver</b>	Leader of the Third Party Klondike
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## LEGISLATIVE STAFF

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**Yukon Legislative Assembly**  
**Whitehorse, Yukon**  
**Tuesday, May 5, 2015 — 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 with the Order Paper. Tributes.

## TRIBUTES

### In remembrance of 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the liberation of the Netherlands

**Hon. Mr. Istchenko:** Seventy years ago today, the guns fell silent along the Canadian lines in Holland. Mr. Speaker, I rise today on behalf of this House to pay tribute to the soldiers of the First Canadian Army who, from September 1944 to April 1945, were given the important and deadly task of liberating the Netherlands from Nazi occupation.

In early September 1944, three months after the D-Day landings in Normandy, British and American troops launched “operation market garden”, a massive assault on the Dutch town of Arnhem, in an attempt to find a quick route into Germany via the crossing of the Rhine River at Arnhem. The Arnhem attack failed, leaving most of the Netherlands under German control. The Allies needed the large harbour to ship supplies to their advancing armies. The harbour was the Belgian city of Antwerp, one of Europe’s biggest ports. While Antwerp had been liberated, the 70-kilometre estuary of the Scheldt River, which connected Antwerp to the sea, was still held by the Germans. The task of clearing the estuary of enemy forces — known as the Battle of the Scheldt — was assigned to the First Canadian Army. The First Canadian Army was Canada’s principal fighting arm in northwest Europe during the war under the command of Canadian General, Harry Crerar. It included the Second Canadian Corps as well as a large contingent of British, Polish, American and Dutch infantry and armoured troops.

Since the Battle of Normandy in the summer of 1944, the First Canadian Army had formed the left flank of the Allied advance toward Germany, with the First Canadians liberating ports and cities along the Channel coast of France and Belgium. The wide, multi-channelled Scheldt River between the North Sea and the port of Antwerp was a treacherous landscape for attacking troops to operate in. It was flat, soggy and sometimes flooded land, situated below sea level and enclosed by dikes.

Under the leadership of Canadian General Guy Simonds, who had temporarily replaced the previous general, Canadian and British soldiers fought a series of fierce battles through October and early November 1944 against German defences along the estuary. The First Canadian Army lost more than

13,000 men — men killed, wounded or missing during the Scheldt fighting and, of the total troops, 6,300 were Canadian.

By November 6, 1944, however, the estuary and its large islands had been secured. On November 25, the first convoy of Allied cargo ships entered the port of Antwerp. The First Canadian Army spent the winter of 1944 patrolling its portion of the front line in the Netherlands and France, while American forces fought back against the Germans’ surprise attack in the Ardennes Forest. In February, 1945, the First Canadian Army was part of a huge Allied offensive to drive the enemy across the Rhine River. It was ordered to clear the area between the Maas and the Rhine rivers. In March 1945, the First Canadian Army was reinforced by various Allied units, including the First Canadian Corps, which had been transferred north from the battlegrounds of Italy. For the first time in history, two Canadian corps were fighting together and, with the international strength of more than 450,000 men, the First Canadians became the largest army ever commanded by a Canadian officer.

In late March 1945, the First Canadian Army began rooting out German forces in the remainder of the Netherlands. General Charles Foulkes, commander of the First Canadian Armoured Corps, accepted the surrender of the German forces in the Netherlands on May 5, 1945 — 70 years ago today, Mr. Speaker.

The Canadians were greeted as heroes. They liberated small towns and major cities, including Amsterdam, Rotterdam and The Hague. Millions of Dutch had suffered terribly during the harsh winter of 1945 and the Canadian troops facilitated the arrival of food, fuel and other supplies to the starving population.

More than 7,600 Canadians — soldiers, sailors and airmen — died fighting in the Netherlands. These veterans are buried in official war cemeteries across the Netherlands, the largest being the Groesbeek Canadian War Cemetery near Nijmegen and it holds the graves of more than 2,300 Canadians.

Canadians are fondly remembered by the Dutch as both liberators and saviours who rescued millions from sickness and starvation in 1945. Every year since the war, the Netherlands has sent thousands of tulips to Ottawa in appreciation of Canada’s sacrifice.

My grandfather, Crawford Watson, and one of the former members of this House, the MLA for Kluane, the Hon. Bill Brewster, were two of these Canadian liberators. I was also very proud last June when my son, Travis Allen Istchenko travelled with other Yukon youth to Normandy for the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the D-Day celebrations to honour and to learn.

As a young Canadian soldier posted in Germany, I had the opportunity to visit Holland on many occasions. The veterans’ sacrifices have not been forgotten by the people of Holland. Canadian flags and signs thanking Canada can be seen lining the streets today. The cemeteries are immaculately maintained by the schoolchildren who laid a bundle of yellow roses at each headstone.

I know first-hand the appreciation the Dutch have for Canadians. Today our Prime Minister said these words so

eloquently: “The heroes who liberated the Netherlands, like the men and women who serve our country today, understood that when there arises a great evil, a threat to all the things that define our existence as a free and just people, such enemies must be confronted. Even if it means not just the risk of great sacrifice but the expectation of such... This is what we’ve always done, this is sadly, what we are still called upon to do today and this is what we must always do.”

At the going down of the sun and in the morning, we will remember them.

### In recognition of International Day of the Midwife

**Hon. Ms. Taylor:** I would like to ask my colleagues in the House today to join me in acknowledging today as International Day of the Midwife, a day to celebrate midwives and the important role they play in Yukon family health care.

A midwife is a professional in obstetrics. They provide valuable services at all stages of pregnancy, birth and postpartum. In addition to providing birth-related care to women, some midwives may also provide primary care related to reproductive health, including family planning and menopausal care.

The practice of midwifery is regulated in most Canadian jurisdictions, but it is not recognized in Yukon under the *Health Professions Act* at this time. The Yukon government has been addressing the regulation of health professionals by providing resources to develop the regulatory framework, as with the introduction of nurse practitioners into Yukon’s health care system in 2012 and the recently passed pharmacy and pharmacist legislation.

The Yukon government is pleased with the engagement with the Community Midwives Association of Yukon and is committed to working together on next steps, including: the creation of a working group to review the work that has been done to date; conducting a cross-jurisdictional scan of existing legislation and regulations; and developing a plan detailing options for regulating the profession in our territory.

We recognize that the regulation of midwifery is of significant interest to many Yukon families and to women. We believe in continually improving Yukoners’ access to health care and are supportive of the work that midwives do. We believe Yukon women should have access to the best pregnancy and birth care available, including the services that midwives offer.

This evening, the Community Midwives Association of Yukon will host a celebration at LePage Park to commemorate this important date and to promote awareness of midwifery in the Yukon. It’s an excellent opportunity for Yukoners to hear about how regulated midwifery works in other jurisdictions and to develop a better understanding of the merits and challenges associated with midwifery.

I encourage all Yukoners to join us in celebrating International Day of the Midwife and to learn about the future of midwifery care in the Yukon.

**Ms. Stick:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on behalf of the NDP Official Opposition to also pay tribute to International Day of the Midwife.

In Canada, there are over 1,300 registered midwives. Across Canada and around the world, professionally trained and regulated midwives provide women and their families a supportive, healthy and safe choice for childbirth. Study after study has shown that prenatal and postnatal care provided by midwives results in outcomes that include healthier mothers, healthier babies, higher birth weights, fewer Caesarian sections and fewer return admissions of babies to hospitals.

In the Yukon, we have a renewed and active organization called the Community Midwives Association of Yukon and their purpose is to promote and raise support for regulated and funded midwifery in the Yukon. The Official Opposition has been calling for this for some time now.

I would like to speak to a few facts about midwifery. One, it is regulated in 11 Canadian provinces and territories, but unfortunately, not in the Yukon. We have midwives here and they all have achieved an accredited midwifery education, but are awaiting the regulations and funding that would support this choice for women and their families in Yukon.

Across other jurisdictions in Canada, a midwife may attend a birth in a home, in a birth centre, or in a hospital. In most jurisdictions, midwives are granted what are called “privileges” at the hospitals in the area that they’re practising in. This means they have an agreement with the hospital that they can use the facility and admit and discharge mothers and their babies as their primary care provider. Midwives collaborate with other health professionals in and out of the hospital to ensure the safety of mother and baby throughout the pregnancy, during the birth and after. Midwives provide follow-up in the home following the birth of a child and can provide help and support with breastfeeding, post-partum depression, and anything to do with the care of the mother and the newborn.

Mr. Speaker, these are but a few of the facts or realities, but I think I make the point: Midwives are health professionals who should be recognized and supported as an option for all women and their families looking for a birthing choice in the Yukon.

I would just end by pointing out that Prince William and Kate chose the support of midwives for the birth of their first child, Prince George, and for the most recent birth of Princess Charlotte Elizabeth Diana.

So a big thank you to the midwives across this country and in the Yukon, working to offer choices to women and their families to bring healthy babies into the world.

**Mr. Silver:** I rise on behalf of the Liberal caucus to also pay tribute to International Day of the Midwife. Each year on May 5, we mark International Day of the Midwife, and this year’s midwife theme is “Midwives: for a better tomorrow.” The theme highlights the role that midwives can play in making the future better for mothers and for children.

Midwives have become an increasingly popular option for birth in Canada in the last 15 years and have also had a strong presence overseas. There’s much work to be done here

in the Yukon to support midwives. We remain one of only two jurisdictions in Canada to not have midwife registration.

Furthermore, midwife-supported home births are not recognized in the same way that hospital births are. For example, those who are from the communities who choose to travel to Whitehorse for midwife births are not offered the same support that they would receive if the parent had chosen to have their child in the hospital. Parents in communities still choose to come to Whitehorse because they want to be close to a hospital with maternity professionals, but they would prefer the privacy and the dignity that comes with having their baby in a home.

For over a decade now, there have been calls for regulations on midwifery. A supported and regulated midwife program in the Yukon would open up new and natural options for birthing in Yukon. As mentioned earlier, there are events today in Whitehorse at Arts in the Park at 4:00 p.m., but also in Dawson City at the Dänojà Zho Cultural Centre tonight at 7:30 p.m., the Community Midwives Association of Yukon will be hosting a film screening of *Birth Story: Ina May Gaskin and The Farm Midwives*. The CMAY president — and midwife also — Kathleen Cranfield, will be saying a few words before the screening.

In honour of the International Day of the Midwife, I renew my call for proper regulation of midwifery here in the Yukon, a group of people who do one of the most important jobs in the territory, which is helping to bring life into the world for new Yukoners.

### In recognition of National Hospice Palliative Care Week

**Hon. Mr. Nixon:** I rise today on behalf of all members of the Legislative Assembly in honour of National Hospice Palliative Care Week, which runs from May 3 to May 9. This is the perfect opportunity for me to highlight the excellent work being done by Health and Social Services' palliative care program. This program has been providing high-quality services to Yukoners since 2008, working collaboratively with family caregivers, Hospice Yukon, First Nations, Whitehorse General Hospital, community nursing and community care staff.

The program employs a clinical resource nurse, a clinical resource social worker, a community liaison coordinator and a contract physician in an advisory role. Together they provide education and consultation to all programs that deliver end-of-life care. This year's National Hospice Palliative Care Week theme is "The power of 10: Let's talk about hospice palliative care."

The Canadian Hospice Palliative Care Association is asking Canadians to talk with 10 people — friends, family and acquaintances — about the importance of quality hospice palliative care across Canada. Mr. Speaker, in Yukon, the population is aging more. Yukon seniors are choosing to retire here more than in the past. Excellent end-of-life care for our citizens is important. This requires planning for future needs and continuing training of volunteers and of professionals.

I'm proud to say that Yukon has one of the best low-cost home care programs in Canada. If the services are required, it is provided for the duration that it is needed.

In 2014, Continuing Care received 46 palliative-specific referrals for home care: 32 were from Whitehorse and 14 from the outlying communities. There were 38 palliative care residents in continuing care facilities. These services are essential for individuals to live well until the end of their life.

In Yukon, there are advanced care planning options that provide information and tools to help Yukoners prepare should they one day be unable to speak for themselves. These tools are designed to help us talk with our families and friends about what we want if we are incapacitated or at the end of our lives. I invite my colleagues to start a discussion on palliative care with 10 people from their social networks during the national week. Let's all be prepared.

I would ask all members to join me in welcoming the executive director of Hospice Yukon, Stacey Jones, to the gallery.

*Applause*

### In recognition of Teacher Appreciation Week

**Hon. Mr. Graham:** I rise in the House today to pay tribute to teachers throughout the world. Teacher Appreciation Week is an occasion to celebrate our teachers, administrators and paraprofessionals here in Yukon and around the world for their hard work and their tremendous contribution to our lives and our society.

The writer Mark Van Doren described teaching as "... the art of assisting discovery." Each day, Yukon teachers and paraprofessionals are engaging our students in their journeys of learning with daily discoveries of new ideas, interests and passion in science, arts and other subjects. These educators are preparing our children to succeed in our communities and our workplaces. Teachers are giving Yukon students the foundational skills in reading, writing and numeracy to build their communication, thinking, personal and social competencies.

Every day presents new challenges, but also yields new rewards as students demonstrate how they are learning and improving. Teachers are there to witness their students' moments of connection and triumph when they correctly answer math questions, when they master public speaking skills in class presentations, when they express themselves creatively through the arts and when they make keen observations of ecological cycles in the world around us.

Teachers shape our society for years to come through our younger generations. This week, we honour and thank them for everything they have done and continue to do for communities around the world. They are more than instructors; they are leaders, role models, coaches, librarians, negotiators, counsellors and mentors to their students.

I would also like to take the opportunity to recognize other people who provide invaluable time to teach our youth. Throughout Yukon there are parents and families who are deeply involved in their children's educations. There are First Nation leaders and elders passing their wisdom on to the next

generation. There are volunteers participating in our sports and tutoring programs in true community spirit, setting a great example for our children. It is said that it takes a village to raise a child, and our teachers and paraprofessionals are essential members of this village.

By engaging children in their education, teachers are engaging and laying the groundwork of the future, nurturing informed citizens for our society. Let's all thank a teacher this week for what they contribute to our world and to our territory.

**Ms. White:** I rise on behalf of the Yukon NDP Official Opposition to tribute national Teacher Appreciation Week. Teachers are phenomenal forces. They are tasked with not only educating our children — they help shape the child they know into the adult they will become. I remember as a child thinking that my teachers were so grown up. They knew everything. Any question I had, they could answer; any problem I had, they could fix it.

I think that elementary school teachers are an even mix of educator and superhero. They instill confidence and they set the stage for lifelong learning. It takes a special sort to teach in high school — let's be honest. Speaking as a former teenager, teenagers are equal parts charming, challenging and frustrating.

When I have run into some of the teachers I had in high school, I have both thanked them for the care and patience they showed, and I have occasionally apologized for the teenager I once was. I remember each and every teacher I ever had. When I see them, I can't bring myself to use their first names because, in my world, they earned my lifelong respect. Anything less than "Mr." or "Mrs." feels strange rolling off my tongue, and in some cases, I am not even sure of what their first names actually are.

I look at my friends who themselves are now teachers and realize that those grownups from my childhood weren't that grown up after all, and it casts a whole new light on things. We are so lucky to have such dynamic and vibrant people who have chosen to be teachers in our communities.

Teachers, I know that your job isn't always easy, but know that you make lasting impacts on the lives that are lucky enough to cross your paths. To the teachers I was lucky enough to know as a student, thanks for helping to shape me into the adult I have become.

To all teachers, both past and present, thank you so much for what you do each and every day.

**Mr. Silver:** I rise on behalf of the Liberal caucus to also add my voice today and to thank my colleagues in education. I would like to start with a quote from John F. Kennedy: "Our progress as a nation can be no swifter than our progress in education. The human mind is our fundamental resource."

Mr. Speaker, today as I prepared for this tribute, I started thinking about all of the gifts that I have received along the way, as I learned from my mentors and from my elders, and the gifts that I attempted to pass on to my students as I taught in the Yukon. I thought about the gift of confidence that I

received from my very first experience with bullies in grade 3. Ms. Anne McGillivray — she went and took away that bully's power and she gave it to me. She taught me a thing or two about self-worth. I had no clue up until that day that bullies are cowards. The confidence that she gifted me became a bully repellent. I still own that gift. It has become a prized possession and it's one that I shared with all my students.

Mr. McIntosh, in grade 5, was the first teacher to ever open my eyes to the joy of learning and sharing. There wasn't a day that he wasn't happy to be in the classroom sharing his knowledge. He taught me how to find the moral in a story. He taught me to question everything, as long as you're open to changing your perspective and thus expanding your mind. He also lent my brother and me motorbikes and sleds — things that our family couldn't afford. His gift that I applied as a teacher was to do more than just your job description and always share whatever you can.

Mr. Burke, in grade 9, was my favourite teacher — and before I go any further, don't worry — I am just going to grade 9. He was my favourite teacher. He had the uncanny ability to see a student's unique abilities. His gift was exposing you to the truth of yourself and how, every day, you need to get to know and to love yourself more and more. He would say, "Don't be just okay with who you are. Love what sets you apart."

In grade 9, my friends and I were in a heavy metal band, and that sure set us apart. We had all the instruments but we didn't have a lot of talent — lots of volume, not so much rhythm, not so much tone or timbre — but Mr. Burke would never miss an opportunity to watch us play, and he would always let us know when we were getting better and he would always ask us, "How do you learn?"

"Practise will set you apart," he said. "The best musicians in the world — they might be born with a certain degree of natural talent but what sets them apart is dedication." His gift was the understanding of the payoff of hard work.

The privilege of teaching in the Yukon and applying what I've learned from my teachers remains one of the greatest gifts that I have ever received, and I know that all good teachers can relate with that statement.

I cannot begin to express how enriching it is to teach. In the first few years, it's chaos. A university degree does very little to prepare you for the classroom. You learn what it means to teach and how students are supposed to learn but you are ill-prepared to deal with teaching humans, especially humans who are dealing with hormones of puberty or family issues, or just life and where they fit in.

But you slowly hone your craft. You learn from your peers and administrators more and more about implementing curriculum and assessment models and the like. You rely on what you have, and all those gifts that you received along the way — they come out and you learn to share. You learn together with your students and you build connections that will last a lifetime. What an honourable profession and what a gift. Those are the gifts of teaching, but the greatest reward is a thank you from a parent or, better yet, from a student.

I urge us all today to reach out to a teacher in your life and say thank you for some specific gift that you received from them. It will mean the world to them. On that, thank you, Ms. McGillivray; thank you, Mr. McIntosh; thank you, Mr. Burke.

**Speaker:** Are there any visitors to be introduced?

### INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Hon. Ms. Taylor:** I would ask all members to join me in a warm welcome to one of my constituents from Whitehorse West, Mr. Mark Carter, who has just recently returned from university and home for the summer. Welcome.

*Applause*

**Ms. Stick:** I also ask members to join me in welcoming one of my constituents, Phil Gibson, to the House.

*Applause*

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

Are there any reports of committees?

Are there any petitions to be presented?

Are there any bills to be introduced?

Are there any notices of motions?

### NOTICES OF MOTIONS

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to establish a working group including representatives from the Community Midwives Association Yukon, the Yukon Medical Association, the Yukon Registered Nurses Association, Government of Yukon and other stakeholders that will examine the regulation of midwifery in Yukon by reviewing previous studies, conducting a cross-jurisdictional survey and by supporting a conference to inform concerned Yukoners about the merits and challenges associated with midwifery.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to take all necessary steps to ensure that the Klaza caribou herd is not significantly impacted by the development of the proposed Freegold Road extension.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to consider adapting the way it collects graduation statistics to include not only students registered in grade 12, but all graduation-age Yukoners, and not including leaving certificates in that total.

**Speaker:** Is there a statement by a minister?  
This then brings us to Question Period.

### QUESTION PERIOD

#### Question re: Land use planning, north Yukon

**Ms. Hanson:** You know, Mr. Speaker, it's no secret that Yukon's land use planning process is off the rails. One regional land use plan has been completed. The Yukon Party government threw out the recommendations of the Peel land use plan and unilaterally imposed their own plan against the wishes of Yukoners and Yukon First Nation governments. The Dawson regional land use plan is on hold and the remaining land use plans contemplated in the UFA are nowhere in sight.

Land use planning was intended to bring certainty. People would know what land was available for development and under what conditions. This government's decision to stop land use planning not only affects potential developers' confidence in Yukon, it also confirms there is no broad vision for future development in Yukon.

Does this government recognize that the lack of land use plans throughout the Yukon causes uncertainty and stalls economic growth?

**Hon. Mr. Kent:** The Yukon government has supported the establishment of four planning regions under chapter 11 of the Yukon First Nation final agreements. Only one plan, the *North Yukon Regional Land Use Plan*, has been jointly approved by the affected parties and that was done by a Yukon Party government. The Yukon government is collaborating with the Yukon Land Use Planning Council and CYFN on a third party review of the common land use planning process currently used by the commissions and the council. We've stated our support for a revised process with a focus on producing approvable plans in a cost-effective manner.

Again, Mr. Speaker, as the member opposite noted, we are currently before the courts with respect to one of our planning processes. We've set aside the Dawson planning process, in partnership with the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nation as well as the Vuntut Gwitchin Government, pending resolution of what we need to hear from the courts with respect to the Peel process and the process overall as we move forward. We want to ensure that all parties understand the process before embarking on future land use plans.

**Ms. Hanson:** Mr. Speaker, all parties did understand the process; it was set out in the agreements.

One would think that a government that has dragged the economy into a recession would want to ensure certainty for economic growth. When the final agreements were negotiated, the land use planning process was clearly described and the objective of land use planning is to ensure that the management and use of land, water and resources is done in an integrated and coordinated manner so as to ensure sustainable development.

This government's decision to throw out the final recommended Peel plan and force First Nations into court has achieved the exact opposite of the certainty and sustainable development envisioned in the final agreements.

When will this government recognize that their unilateral actions on the Peel land use plan has destroyed any confidence

Yukon First Nation governments, developers and Yukoners have in the land use planning process?

**Hon. Mr. Kent:** Again, this government has supported the establishment of the four planning regions and has accomplished the implementation of the only plan that exists in the Yukon, the *North Yukon Regional Land Use Plan*.

When it comes to the Peel, we've been very consistent in communicating our goal — that we need to ensure that democratically elected public governments retain the authority to make final decisions on public lands.

Mr. Speaker, this has become about more than just the Peel regional plan and the Dawson regional plan — it's about future plans. We need to ensure that these commissions that are put together provide recommendations. The Yukon government worked on modifications to the recommended plan and, in the end, First Nations didn't agree with them and now we are before the courts to settle our differences.

Our consistent goal has remained to ensure that democratically elected public governments retain the authority to make final decisions on public lands. That's something that is important to this government and it's important to future governments as well.

**Ms. Hanson:** Throughout the final recommendations of the Peel land use planning commission, it suspended the land use planning process, pending the outcome — as the minister said — of this government's court challenge. They'll probably do another. At the same time, the Yukon Land Use Planning Council has begun a review of the land use planning process.

It's interesting that this review is being undertaken by a former minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, the same individual who laid the groundwork for this government's unilateral rejection of not only the final recommended Peel plan, but a rejection of the fundamental principles of the land use planning process. This individual was appointed to the Land Use Planning Council by the same federal government that introduced Bill S-6, legislation that undermines another foundation of Yukon First Nations' constitutionally protected final agreements, YESAA.

Does this government support the notion of rewriting the land use planning process, contrary to the constitutionally protected provisions of chapter 11 of the final agreements?

**Hon. Mr. Kent:** The Yukon government, as I mentioned in my initial response, is collaborating with the Yukon Land Use Planning Council and the Council of Yukon First Nations on a third party review of the common land use planning process currently used by the commissions and the council. We have stated our support for a revised process with a focus on producing approvable plans in a cost-effective manner.

With respect to the initial part of the member opposite's preamble, I think that all members in this House, before they arrived here, served this community in various capacities and served this community very well in various capacities. I think to cast aspersions on members who are no longer here is unfair to them as former members of this House. Eventually, Mr. Speaker, all of us will leave these Chambers and will find other things to do, and I hope we can do so without enduring

the wrath of individuals such as the Member for Whitehorse Centre, the Leader of the Official Opposition.

I find it quite shameful that individuals who have served this Yukon — a very privileged few have served this Yukon on either side of this Chamber, and they should be able to move on in life and be able to do things without incurring the wrath of the Leader of the Official Opposition.

#### **Question re: Land development within City of Whitehorse**

**Ms. Hanson:** This week, the public spat between the Yukon Party government and the City of Whitehorse took yet another turn for the worse when their Premier effectively called for a new city council on a Friday radio show. This time, the Premier's problem was that the city was uncomfortable passing a zoning change for a soccer complex that has been pushed by this government as part of their pre-election spending spree.

When the city asked the Minister of Community Services over 50 outstanding questions regarding the territory's vague plan, the minister answered in the letter that he would — and I quote: "... rather try to provide general answers that will hopefully address all of them..." General answers? Hopefully?

This is not how to treat other levels of government with respect. When will the government realize that the father-knows-best approach to intergovernmental relationships is bad for Yukon?

**Hon. Mr. Dixon:** With regard to this particular issue, the proposed sports complex in Whistle Bend, the NDP have been very clear that they have been against this project from the get-go. Obviously they don't see the value that the Yukon government has in providing those kinds of sports facilities for Yukoners.

Now with regard to the City of Whitehorse, obviously the Yukon government has expressed our disappointment with the decision taken by the City of Whitehorse with regard to the zoning, but we respect their ability and their job when it comes to making those decisions. We will continue working on a number of other issues with the City of Whitehorse, whether it is the rural well program, whether it is land development or whether it is any of the other important issues that our two governments face. We believe that Yukoners expect and deserve our working together with other levels of government and we will continue to do so with the City of Whitehorse.

**Ms. Hanson:** The Premier has a strange way of expressing his respect. How can the city trust this government's plan to maintain a new soccer complex when this Yukon Party government let our current soccer fields fall apart? As a parent of a former soccer player — and yes, I was once on the Whitehorse Minor Soccer Association board — it's troubling to see the state of our fields. The Yukon Party government has no one else but themselves to blame. It's easy to say that we need more new soccer fields because there are gopher holes in the old ones, but it is a lot like buying a car and then never changing the oil. The Yukon Party government



is responsible for the current state of soccer fields in the Yukon.

So when will they stop playing politics with our kids and stop this game of brinkmanship with the Whitehorse City Council?

**Hon. Mr. Dixon:** I know the Minister of Education wants to respond to this as well, but I will step in and discuss the issue. One of the reasons we proposed artificial turf soccer fields was because artificial turf wasn't subject to the whims of Yukon weather or wildlife — in the case of gophers — like grass fields are. Everywhere else in Canada they use artificial turf fields, and we thought it would be a good step forward for us to propose that for Yukon as well. As I said before, the City of Whitehorse obviously made a decision to deny that zoning request. We found that disappointing, but we will move on.

We believe that Yukoners deserve and expect us to work together with other orders of government and we will continue to do that — whether it's on land development, which is something we look forward to signing the agreement on with the city very soon; whether it's on the drinking water well program that we hope to sign an agreement on very soon with the City of Whitehorse; or whether it's on recycling, which is something where we continue to work with the City of Whitehorse on an ongoing basis.

We respect the role of the city council as well as the mayor to make decisions in that order of government, and we will continue to work with them collaboratively in the interests of all Yukon citizens.

**Ms. Hanson:** Two soccer fields will not replace the 14 existing fields. Whitehorse soccer season for kids starts today. The tender to maintain Whitehorse's soccer fields was opened on May 1, and that means there won't be a contractor for field maintenance until June at the earliest. Field maintenance happens every year. It's simply unacceptable that it's already May, the season is starting and the government still doesn't have a contract in place. The government is pushing for an \$8-million sports complex while only giving general answers to the City of Whitehorse's detailed and responsible questions about potential liability for future city councils.

If the government can't even tender a field maintenance contract on time, how can the city be asked to trust the Yukon Party government?

**Hon. Mr. Graham:** I think the member opposite just revealed her total and complete lack of understanding about the current situation in the City of Whitehorse.

In the first place, we don't have 14 soccer fields in the city of Whitehorse. What we do have is a number of multi-use fields that happen to be attached to Yukon schools. These multi-use fields, for lack of any other facility, have been used for soccer over a number of years. I know; I spent a great deal of time playing on these fields myself; I coached on these fields; my children played on these fields — so we are more than aware of the difficulties.

It really doesn't matter at what time or when the maintenance on these fields is carried out and it really makes very little difference to the condition of the fields with respect to the ongoing maintenance, because the very fact is that

many times during the maintenance of the fields themselves, children are out there playing, or dogs, or individuals with their dogs are out there as well. These are multi-use fields; that is what the member opposite doesn't seem to realize.

What my colleague, the Minister of Community Services, is proposing are specific fields for soccer and I applaud him for his efforts and I hope that he is eventually successful.

#### **Question re: Economic outlook**

**Mr. Silver:** Yesterday the Minister of Economic Development said that his focus remains on growing and diversifying the private sector economy. That is a good thing, Mr. Speaker, because our private sector needs some help right about now. Last week, Statistics Canada confirmed that we are in a made-in-Yukon recession. All around us in B.C. and the other two territories, the GDP is growing.

Under this government, Yukon has the worst-performing economy in Canada and our GDP has shrunk for two years in a row now. Now the latest employment figures show that the number of private sector jobs has dropped by 400 jobs from this time last year.

If the focus of this government is growing the private sector, why has the number of private sector jobs dropped in the last 12 months by 400 jobs?

**Hon. Mr. Hassard:** I think it is important to note that in a jurisdiction as small as the Yukon's that when we have a single project go down or a project get stopped it changes the GDP numbers significantly. The member opposite spoke about the GDP in other jurisdictions. Those jurisdictions also have a small number of working people in them and so, fortunately for them, they have a different type of mineral sector and those sectors have actually done quite well in the past year, so their numbers look a lot better than ours, even though they don't really have a lot more mining — or a lot more mines — on-line than the Yukon, but the numbers reflect differently.

**Mr. Silver:** The government's efforts to grow the private sector have failed — full stop. We have heard a lot from this government about growing the private sector; however, the stats don't back up the picture that the Yukon government is trying to paint. Private sector jobs are declining under this government and the number of private sector jobs has dropped by 400 since last March. The number of private sector jobs has dropped 2,000 — 2,000 — since July 2014. Even accounting for the seasonal nature of jobs in Yukon, it is still a very large number. The number of public sector employees, on the other hand, is going up — 500 more jobs in the public sector than just a year ago.

Can the minister explain to us why this so-called private sector-friendly government is only growing jobs in the public sector?

**Hon. Mr. Hassard:** We do understand that when we have such a case as we have with Wolverine mine and we lose a couple of hundred jobs, that makes quite a difference to a jurisdiction as small as ours. I think it's important to understand that our focus does remain on growing and diversifying our private sector economy and providing jobs

and opportunities for Yukoners, we're continuing to move forward with infrastructure, we're continuing to move forward with improving our regulatory regime, and we're continuing to educate and train Yukoners for Yukon jobs so that, when the economy does turn around, this Yukon will be in a very good place.

**Mr. Silver:** The Yukon Party continually presents itself as the party that is best suited to grow the private sector. The reality is something quite different as we can see from the numbers from Statistics Canada. The private sector is shrinking, our GDP is shrinking and we have the worst performing economy in Canada over the last 24 months. This is despite record transfers from Ottawa and record spending from this government. The only jobs being created are public sector jobs — 500 more than last year alone.

Is the minister prepared to admit that the only job growth we've seen in the last year is in the public sector?

**Hon. Mr. Hassard:** I think the member opposite doesn't seem to realize what this government is trying to do, and I think that you only have to look at the budget that was tabled by the Premier just a few short weeks ago. It is the largest capital budget in history. Those jobs from those capital projects are going to the private sector. This government continues to work for Yukoners and will always work for Yukoners.

#### **Question re: Freegold Road extension and Klaza caribou herd**

**Ms. White:** One of the components to the proposed Casino mine is a 132-kilometre extension of the existing Freegold Road. The new road will have an impact on sensitive habitat, both through its construction and daily traffic that is expected once it is in operation.

It has come to our attention that the Department of Environment has been consistently raising concerns about the impact that this road will have on the northern mountain population of caribou, which includes the resident Klaza caribou herd. The northern mountain caribou are currently considered a species at risk, and the Freegold Road extension would see a number of disturbances introduced to both the caribou and their habitat. There are a number of route options on the table, each of which will have varying levels of disturbance on this species at risk.

Can the Minister of Environment assure Yukoners that his department will be pushing the Department of EMR to ensure that the route selected for the proposed Freegold Road has the fewest impacts on the Klaza caribou herd?

**Hon. Mr. Istchenko:** Human-wildlife conflict is a priority for the Department of Environment, and we're committed to sustaining healthy wildlife populations. When it comes to the Klaza caribou population and habitat ecology monitoring, we have been doing this for the last few years. They are located in south-central Yukon, and that is included in where the Casino mine location is. Significant, previous and ongoing work has been done on monitoring, and we will continue to determine their range use and the population attributes.

I just want to talk about some of our partners. The local First Nations, our local resource councils, our Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board — these are some of the partners that we work with collaboratively on this as we move forward.

We know this project will have to go through the YESAA process, but we're getting ahead of the game and working on this, whether it's our Fortymile caribou herd, Klaza caribou herd, the Kluane caribou population, the Hart River caribou or the Tay River caribou.

We're concerned about all of these herds and we monitor them. That's why we have fish and wildlife inventories and we'll keep working on this in due diligence.

**Ms. White:** This government doesn't have a good track record of protecting species at risk, especially when resource extraction is in the mix, so forgive my scepticism. Internal documents obtained through ATIPP show that the Department of Environment's primary concern regarding a Freegold Road extension is — quote: "... if the road is constructed, is expected to result in significant and unmitigable impacts to the caribou population. This has been and continues to be our primary concern with the proposed construction and all-season use of the Freegold Road."

Yet, as it stands, the Freegold Road extension will be built in sensitive late-winter habitat for the Klaza caribou herd. The Minister of Environment has a duty to ensure that the Yukon species at risk are afforded all available protection. What is the Minister of Environment doing to protect the Klaza caribou herd and its sensitive habitat?

**Hon. Mr. Istchenko:** In my first response, I do think I answered most of the questions. Every caribou herd, or every population, is always a concern to us. That's why we continue doing monitoring and working with our First Nation partners, our local resource councils, local trappers, and local community members. When it comes to the Klaza caribou herd, this is exactly some of the stuff we're doing.

Understand, Mr. Speaker, that this process is going to have to go through the YESAA process, and some of these things will be mitigated in the departments working with due diligence and getting all the information so we can have this if and when that process goes through.

#### **Question re: Midwifery regulations**

**Ms. Stick:** Reproductive choice is a fundamental component of reproductive justice. The option of having a midwife present during childbirth is one such choice for women and their families, yet the Yukon remains one of the last jurisdictions in Canada to not recognize and regulate midwifery.

Regulating and funding midwifery makes this reproductive option safe for both families and practitioners. Why has this government failed to uphold women's reproductive choice when it comes to an option for regulated and funded midwifery care?

**Hon. Mr. Nixon:** This government recognizes that the regulation of midwifery as a profession is of interest to many Yukon families and many Yukon women. We're supportive of

the work that the midwives do in our territory and the services that they provide for Yukon women and their children.

Government of Yukon is currently considering regulating and funding midwifery services. Regulation and funding are two separate processes, obviously, so we — as I put a motion on the floor of the Legislature today, and as the Member for Whitehorse West provided a tribute today in the Legislature — will continue to work with the Community Midwives Association Yukon and, as I indicated in my motion, we look forward to the work that they'll do over the coming months — in particular, setting up some sort of a forum where we can bring people together and talk about the good work that has been done and talk about how we can move ahead in the future.

**Ms. Stick:** This is a long time coming. Not funding and not regulating is not supporting the midwives who are currently working in the Yukon Territory with women and families. In 2015, the Yukon received a C grade for infant mortality in the Conference Board of Canada's report card on provincial and territorial health in Canada.

Midwives provide safe, accessible and cost-effective maternal health care services and are the key to decreasing infant mortality in rural areas. We're one of the last jurisdictions. This motion speaks to reviewing previous studies and conducting cross-jurisdictional surveys. Mr. Speaker, the information is there.

When will this latest consultation process begin and when can we expect to see support with regulated and funded midwifery in the Yukon?

**Hon. Ms. Taylor:** Mr. Speaker, as I was talking about earlier in my tribute this afternoon, the Yukon government has actually been working to address the regulation of health care professionals in this territory over the past number of years, one of which includes the actual legislation — recently passed actually — pharmacy and pharmacists' legislation — also inclusive of nurse practitioner legislation that went through in 2012.

As my colleague, the Minister of Health and Social Services, as well as myself and the Minister of Justice — we recently had the opportunity to meet with the Community Midwives Association Yukon, during which time we had the opportunity to talk about the merits and the challenges associated with regulating midwifery in the territory and we also received very invaluable insight as to what steps we can thoughtfully proceed with in terms of regulating midwifery in the territory.

Mr. Speaker, as we have just articulated, we are very pleased to engage with that association. We're committed to work together on those next steps, including a working group being created — comprised of health care professionals, government officials and other stakeholders — reviewing the work that has been done to date and of course developing a plan detailing those options for next steps.

**Ms. Stick:** It has been five years since the last consultation and we're talking about midwifery.

The highest number of intakes at the Whitehorse General Hospital is for maternity care. According to this year's budget,

nearly a quarter of these intakes are women coming from Yukon communities to give birth in Whitehorse because they can't do it at the new hospitals. Because midwifery is not regulated, rural women who travel to Whitehorse to get the level of care they choose from a midwife — they're not able to get their travel expenses covered. We heard from the previous Minister of Health and Social Services that midwifery was not a priority.

Why the change, Mr. Speaker? Does the current minister believe it is fair that rural women and families who choose midwifery are penalized by not having the same financial supports as other rural women and families?

**Hon. Mr. Nixon:** As I indicated in my first response, we're very supportive of the work that the midwives in this territory do and the services that they provide to women, children and their families.

But, Mr. Speaker, I want to just point out that the group — the Community Midwives Association Yukon — was established in November of 2013. They have contacted a number of ministers to discuss their interest in regulating and in funding midwifery services in the territory, so midwifery is being considered for regulation under the *Health Professions Act*. But as my colleague indicated, we are hoping to form a working group with the Community Midwives Association Yukon, the Yukon Medical Association, the Yukon Registered Nurses Association, Yukon government and other stakeholders to look at these very issues as we move forward.

I believe that there will be good work done with this working group because, as I indicated at the beginning, we are very supportive of the work that midwives do in the territory and we commend them for that work.

#### **Question re: Alaska Highway corridor construction plan**

**Ms. Moorcroft:** I would like this opportunity to applaud the Minister of Highways and Public Works for his interventions and corrections around contentious issues with planning on the Alaska Highway corridor. He talked to business owners and provided assurances that they wouldn't be forced to move. He has said that the plan is subject to change, based on the will of the Yukon public. I applaud the minister for recognizing that a complicated, expensive capital project needs a high level of public scrutiny and buy-in. There is a flaw, however, in the consultation process: namely, that the public is not given an opportunity to have a say on the construction plan.

Will the minister correct this omission and promise that Yukoners will have a chance to have their say on the government's Alaska Highway corridor construction plan before any work is done?

**Hon. Mr. Kent:** With respect to the Whitehorse corridor functional plan, consultations are still underway. They close on May 15. Recently there were a series of open houses hosted at the Transportation Museum for individuals to come forward and bring forward their concerns.

This project is a multi-phase project that has a number of significant benchmarks, including population benchmarks,

along the way. We have made no decisions with respect to how this project will proceed and what areas will be of priority until we hear from the Yukon public. The consultation documents went out to each and every Yukon home because this is an important corridor, not only for residents of Whitehorse and those who live in the Whitehorse periphery, but all Yukoners who travel through Whitehorse to the south or use our international airport to fly to different locations. I would not want to prejudice the public consultation phase. Once that is closed, we will come forward with some options and will be happy to present those publicly at that time.

**Ms. Moorcroft:** A construction plan is very different from a functional plan. Here are the timelines and steps for the corridor: spring of 2015, public engagement to refine the functional plan; summer of 2015, report back on what we heard and resulting changes to the draft plan; later in 2015, Yukon government finalizes functional plans and undertakes environmental assessments and 2016, begin the initial construction. What is missing is for the public to see the construction plan for the corridor and be able to provide comments.

Again, will the minister agree to give Yukoners the chance to see and comment on the construction plan before any work is done?

**Hon. Mr. Kent:** Just to repeat the answer that I provided in the initial response, we are currently in the public consultation phase. It closes on the 15<sup>th</sup> of May. We will await the documentation and results of the public consultation. This public consultation has been recognized internationally for how effective it is. There was a firm — I believe it was out of Washington, D.C. — that recognized some of the work that was done with respect to the website presence. We are receiving tremendous responses on the website. There are mail-in responses.

I haven't had the opportunity to be fully briefed on the results of the open houses, but I am assuming that they too were very helpful and informative for Yukoners who are concerned about this. As the member opposite mentioned, I have met personally with the business community. Several of the ministers and MLAs on this side of the House have heard directly from their constituents who are affected by this as well, and I am sure MLAs opposite have heard from interested individuals about the plans.

We will await the closure of the public consultation phase and look forward to implementing safety measures and measures in the Whitehorse corridor that will reflect a growing economy and what is needed for this important piece of road infrastructure.

**Ms. Moorcroft:** Some of the concerns about the draft functional plan I have heard from Yukoners who use the highway on a regular basis are: the raised concrete dividers are problematic; no sound barriers or noise mitigation measures for nearby residents; few of the high- and severe-collision areas are getting any attention; twinning between Robert Service Way and Two Mile Hill is too much, too complicated, and it makes crossing the highway difficult for non-motorized users; that frontage roads will kill businesses;

there are problems with proposed multi-use trails; and the perspectives of tourism operators in Whitehorse are lacking.

There are many legitimate concerns about this corridor project and the public wants to see any final plan before work goes ahead.

When this round of consultation wraps up on May 15, will the Yukon public have the chance to fully vet and comment on any corridor construction plan before there are shovels in the ground?

**Hon. Mr. Kent:** Many of the concerns that are outlined by the member opposite are similar to concerns that I have heard — not only from the businesses that are active in the corridor, but other individuals. There are many Yukoners who are providing input during this 60-day public consultation phase on the Whitehorse corridor functional plan. I think it would be premature to suggest any outcome prior to hearing from the Yukon public, allowing this process to take its course.

I know the members opposite are anxious to move ahead quickly on this, or to jump to specific conclusions, but we are in the midst of a public consultation plan. I will be attending a Yukon Transportation Association lunch very soon, as was asked of me by one of the members of the Yukon Transportation Association — I believe it is this Thursday, if I am not mistaken. I am out there listening to Yukoners and listening to their concerns so that we can ensure that the Whitehorse corridor of the Alaska Highway is good in the near term, the medium term and long term so that we can support economic development in the territory and address the safety concerns that so many Yukoners are concerned about.

**Speaker:** The time for Question Period has now elapsed.

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Hon. Mr. Pasloski:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to take the opportunity to introduce a few people in the gallery. One is certainly no stranger to this Assembly, as a former MLA and former Commissioner and, in his day, not a bad hockey player as well. Mr. Ken McKinnon is here. Joining Mr. McKinnon today is Justice Stewart Enderton and his daughter Torri. The Endertons are in town right now. They have come to help celebrate Rolf and Marg Hougen's 60<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary. Back in the 1960s, Stewart Enderton was a part of a very distinguished law firm here in town — Nielsen, Enderton and Hudson. Included in the accomplishments of that firm is that they produced a deputy prime minister and two judges.

I would like to invite all members of the House today to welcome them to the Legislative Assembly.

*Applause*

## Notice of government private members' business

**Mr. Elias:** Pursuant to Standing Order 14.2(7), I would like to identify the items standing in the name of the government private members to be called on Wednesday, May 6, 2015. They are Motion No. 970, standing in the name of the

Member for Watson Lake, and Motion No. 972, standing in the name of the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin.

**Speaker:** We will now proceed to Orders of the Day.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

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

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

*Motion agreed to*

*Speaker leaves the Chair*

## COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

**Chair (Ms. McLeod):** Order. Committee of the Whole will now come to order. The matter before the Committee is Vote 54, Department of Tourism and Culture, in Bill No. 18, entitled *First Appropriation Act, 2015-16*.

Do members wish to take a brief recess?

**All Hon. Members:** Agreed.

**Chair:** Committee of the Whole will recess for 15 minutes.

*Recess*

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

### **Bill No. 18: *First Appropriation Act, 2015-16* — continued**

**Chair:** The matter before the Committee is Vote 54, Department of Tourism and Culture, in Bill No. 18, entitled *First Appropriation Act, 2015-16*.

#### **Department of Tourism and Culture**

**Hon. Ms. Taylor:** It is my pleasure to introduce the Department of Tourism and Culture's main estimates for the 2015-16 fiscal year.

Madam Chair, first I would just like to extend a warm welcome to our two officials here in the Assembly.

I would also like to extend a huge thank you to our department staff who work day in and day out on behalf of the Government of Yukon and on behalf of all Yukon citizens in support of tourism and culture.

The budget that is currently before debate builds upon the diversity of achievements made by the department, which allow for the continued economic growth of the Yukon's tourism industry and the social and cultural benefits to Yukoners and visitors through arts and various cultural initiatives.

One example of the department's significant achievements this past year was that of the production and broadcast of Yukon's first-ever original television commercial that was developed to market Yukon. With funding from the

Yukon Now marketing program, the new winter tourism television commercial is definitely paying off. In the first month since the commercial was launched, which was in February of this year, there were some 22,000 visits to the Travel Yukon website, almost double the website traffic from the previous February.

The commercial was viewed on YouTube over 60,000 times in the initial six weeks, and preliminary estimates indicate it was seen over 30 million times on television during its run. We also are very much aware that there have been reports among some of our local tourism operators, who have reported an increase in winter bookings with many clients crediting the new Yukon television commercial for their decision to come see the Yukon for themselves.

Building upon the success of the first commercial, further summer and winter commercials are being developed and will be broadcast as the Yukon Now program unfolds with the next new Yukon commercial to air later on this year.

The Yukon Now commercials are the first-ever original television commercials developed to market Yukon to national television audiences. As members will recall, we have had the opportunity to be in the marketplace on the broadcast stations in years past starting back in 2007 with the Look Up North campaign during the Canada Winter Games. Later on, during the 2010 Winter Olympics, we partnered up with our two sister territories to showcase all that Yukon has to offer. It is not only a place to travel, but also to do business, to invest and to raise a family to reside.

The Yukon Now commercials really draw upon the wealth of talent here in the territory and demonstrate a growing maturity of our film and sound industry. Close to 40 Yukon actors and crews were involved in the production of the winter television commercial. As Yukon Now continues to unfold, the department will be — and is — undertaking and seeking Yukoners' input in a series of community meetings throughout the territory to gather additional perspectives on what makes Yukon unique to them. This information will continue to help guide the department in creating commercials that first meet the targets, the needs of our targeted visitors and to instill pride in Yukoners for the place they call home.

Yukoners' input is also central to a second element of the Yukon Now marketing campaign, the user-generated content project. The project provides a social media platform where Yukoners and visitors are able to post pictures, videos, stories and other content to tell the world about Yukon and what a great place it is to visit and to live, from Yukoners' perspectives.

The digital storytelling project also has a similar purpose, and that is to raise awareness of Yukon as a year-round travel destination through the use of social media platforms such as Facebook, YouTube, Tumblr, and Twitter to reach new target audiences. The project has called on Yukon content creators to submit their ideas for a series of videos that showcase Yukon as a very unique and a great place to visit.

A number of videographers were selected, and they each produced a series of three webisodes showcasing Yukon — again, from a Yukoner's perspective — and promoting Yukon

as a travel destination. The projects, along with the commercials, are targeted toward the Canadian tourism market, of which we have seen significant growth in recent years.

Yukon Now dollars are also being used to fund tourism marketing initiatives to our Asian partners in Japan and China, specifically, and that is inclusive of the recent first-ever tourism trade mission that was held in late February into early March.

On the nine-day mission, I had the privilege to be able to lead a delegation of a dozen industry members from Yukon's tourism industry, representing a multitude of various businesses from the various sectors — again, all for the purpose of promoting Yukon as a travel destination of choice.

I can say that we participated in many, many business meetings with over 80 tour operators in Osaka and Tokyo and a number of tour operators in Beijing. As well we held interviews. We had a number of head-to-head meetings with Japanese travel media outlets in both countries and interviews with media and tourism operators. Those are just a couple of innovative ways that we were able to continue to build awareness of year-round travel opportunities in Yukon.

We were able to meet with the Canadian Tourism Commission and officials, including ambassadors from the Canadian embassies in Tokyo and Beijing, and it certainly was a very unique and a very opportune time to be able to visit China and Japan. We have seen tremendous growth in both markets in recent years. Particularly with the added increase in the air access from both countries, we see there is great potential and further opportunity to be able to grow these particular markets.

We were very heartened to see additional air access coming in from Osaka, as one case in point. That particular leg, direct air travel coming in from Osaka into Vancouver, starting this month had not been up and running for a number of years; I think it has been around five to seven years, if I'm not mistaken. It's a great opportunity for us to promote this particular area of the world to increase those particular visits coming to our territory.

Likewise, the Chinese tourism segment — we're very pleased to see significant growth there as well. We know that even from 2013 to 2014, there has been really a doubling of the number of individuals coming from China over to Yukon to visit Yukon. We attribute significant growth ahead due to increased air access, but also with the recent introduction of the 10-year multi-entry visas available for Chinese travellers coming over to Canada as a case in point.

During our time in Asia, we were able to launch Tourism Yukon's first-ever Chinese language Mandarin-based travel website. We were able to launch this particular website onto one of the Chinese social media platforms, Sina Weibo, which, I might add, has a following of about 500,000 registered users — to just make light of one of the various media channels available in China.

We were able to also sign off, with the Canadian Tourism Commission in Japan, Yukon's largest ever partner agreement for consumer and trade marketing initiatives in Japan,

building on the key relationship building and market intelligence from CTC and government officials.

I really want to thank the CTC for being able to partner with Yukon tourism on this particular trade mission. We relied heavily on their expertise in bringing to the table key travel trade operators — the buyers themselves — to the marketplace to meet with each of our tour operators and to be able to also establish those key ties with those travel trade media representatives. We were overwhelmed and it had superseded any and all expectations that each of us had going into that trade mission.

We since had a great debrief with each of the representatives who came along and participated in the trade mission. We had some great feedback, and now we will be taking that and engaging with Yukon's travel industry to determine next steps, in terms of taking advantage of the growth opportunities and how that looks in the overall scheme of our priorities within the travel trade.

I don't have to share this with other members, but tourism has and continues to be a robust industry. Yukon's cultural sector is equally strong and healthy. I'm very proud of the many initiatives and many programs that are available within the Department of Tourism and Culture in support of the cultural sector.

Here in Whitehorse, the Old Log Church and Rectory was officially designated as a Yukon historic site. The Yukon government is proud to have worked with the City of Whitehorse, the Yukon Church Heritage Society and the Old Log Church Museum to officially designate the church and rectory as the ninth Yukon historic site. We'll be very pleased to be able to host, along with the Yukon Heritage Resources Board and the City of Whitehorse, a formal designation ceremony to commemorate this very important piece of Yukon's heritage.

Also, later on this summer, an exhibition at the Yukon Arts Centre will feature new works of craft acquired as a result of the annual call for submissions for the Yukon permanent art collection. In recognition of 2015 being the year of craft in Canada, the call was really focused on the works of fine craft.

The Yukon permanent art collection captures the territory's rich culture through diverse works and contributes to Yukon's cultural legacy. Yukon's museums and First Nation cultural centres likewise also provide a very vital role in preserving and promoting Yukon's cultural legacy. In recognition of their contribution and in recognition of the rising operational costs borne by these essential organizations and governments, the Yukon government was very pleased to announce a 20-percent increase in funding for those cultural centres as well as Yukon museums over the next two years.

Funding inclusive within this year's budget's main estimates is approximately \$154,000 and will increase by a further \$170,000 in the following fiscal year, bringing the total annual budget to almost \$2 million.

I'm very pleased, and when we look back to years' past in terms of supports for Yukon museums and when we look to supports for Yukon First Nation cultural centres, this government has really worked hard with all communities throughout the Yukon to recognize the significance that these very important institutions play in our community in being able to preserve, promote and protect Yukon's heritage assets. We are very pleased to be able to grow the funding program on the capital side as well as on the operational side on a number of different fronts.

When it comes to the operation and maintenance budget for the Department of Tourism and Culture, this fiscal year includes just over \$26 million. The Cultural Services branch, as we were just discussing, contributes significantly to our economy and to the quality of life that we as Yukoners have come to enjoy — to strong commitments made by this government for all Yukoners. The Cultural Services branch has a budget of just over \$11 million for operation and maintenance — an increase of just over \$700,000 from last year's estimates.

When it comes to the arts section, the arts will be receiving just over \$4 million this year to continue our government's support of the thriving and vibrant arts and culture community. We are very pleased to provide ongoing funding of \$830,000 for the Yukon Arts Centre — an increase from the previous fiscal year. In addition, we are very pleased to be able to partner with the Yukon Arts Centre in the renewal of a new agreement with the Yukon Arts Centre to administer the Old Fire Hall as well as the Whitehorse wharf — again, part of our overall commitment to revitalize the Whitehorse waterfront and to be able to enable artists and community groups to take advantage of the new capital infrastructure along that waterfront and to be able to showcase and market performing arts, literature, and visual arts and crafts. This year, as part of that \$175,000, is \$25,000 in new funding to help further animate Whitehorse's historic waterfront, specifically in support of arts, community and cultural activities on the Whitehorse wharf. A further \$157,000 is allocated for the Yukon Arts Centre to administer Culture Quest in support of projects that showcase Yukon culture. It is something that our government did endeavour to include in its last election platform.

Year-round, the arts section delivers programming support to foster public appreciation of the arts and to assist artists, arts organizations and collectives in the pursuit of their goals. The Advanced Artist Award, for example, is one such way this assistance is accomplished. Thanks to my colleague, the previous Minister of Tourism and Culture, who was able to announce an increase to the Advanced Artist Award. It was almost doubled last year by bringing the total annual budget for the award to \$150,000.

Twice each year, Advanced Artist Awards are given to individual professional artists to further their careers. In the most recent announcement back in mid-January, artists shared \$75,000 for music, dance and video design projects.

We are also very pleased to include \$100,000 in support of the touring artist fund and \$500,000 for the arts fund, both of which are distributed four times a year.

There are a lot of specific initiatives in this year's budget, which I hope to elaborate on as the day and days progress, for this particular department. Let me just say that it is a real honour and a privilege to be able to be back in the Department of Tourism and Culture as the minister responsible. I have enjoyed meeting with numerous stakeholder organizations and governments throughout the territory, talking about ways we can further strengthen the delivery of tourism and culture in our territory in support of all Yukoners.

**Ms. Hanson:** I thank the minister for her remarks and welcome the officials to the Legislative Assembly today. I am going to ask for your patience, Madam Chair. I haven't done Tourism for a while. It is an area that I am keenly interested in, as is the whole of the Official Opposition. However, I would say that my ability to focus on it is probably not as great as my colleague from Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes.

There were a number of areas and I think that we can see the linkages, Madam Chair. I have raised this, even as recently as yesterday, when we were debating Economic Development — the huge potential that the tourism sector has as a strategic economic driver for Yukon's economy. I think that there are a few areas that I would like to touch on just in general comments, and then certainly I have quite a few questions.

I am hoping that we will be able to engage in, as we did with the Minister of Economic Development yesterday, sort of an exchange of ideas and not simply reading statements from each other because I don't think that helps us get too far in terms of furthering a mutual understanding of the potential of this industry. As the minister said, the current minister has been minister before and we have had the opportunity to be in a number of sector meetings and have heard from many of the same people about the significant opportunities that tourism provides to the Yukon as a whole. I think we are at a particularly opportune time to be taking advantage of that.

The fact of the matter is that the Yukon economy is in a decline. We are effectively in recession, from a Statistics Canada point of view, from an economic point of view. We're not the first economy that has faced that and then used tourism as a way to sort of, with great creativity, climb out of that.

A previous minister of Economic Development had an opportunity at a meeting that I attended of the Tourism Industry Association in Haines Junction a few years ago, where they had invited the representatives of the Government of New Zealand to talk about how New Zealand capitalized on a situation of an economic collapse. Distance is far — New Zealand is not close to anywhere; it's not even close to Australia. People think it is, but it's not. So you have a difficult economic situation and you have the apparently insurmountable difficulties of being far away and so you develop a strong ethos of tourism and recognition that tourism involves everybody. It involves the local population. It's everyone's business and an understanding that tourism is not a product that you buy, but tourism is an experience that you remember.

That's the reality of the opportunity that we have in this territory. We're not France, where we have the Louvre and you're going to get a picture of the Mona Lisa, but people walk away from the Yukon with the experiences they remember, the authentic experience, whether it's the ability to be in a pristine wilderness setting or it's having the opportunity of a cultural experience that they don't have in other locations.

The potential is enormous. The tourism sector already contributes over four percent — 4.3, according to the government's statistics — to our total gross domestic product. It's clear that this is one of the sectors of our economy that has seen steady growth over time, year over year. It's sort of like, if you have a steady winner, why aren't you investing in it more?

I note, Madam Chair, that despite the fact that we have strong words of commitment to tourism, we're not matching it with money. The O&M contribution this year is effectively the same as it was this past year, \$26 million. So overall, the budget is roughly the same, \$29 million, if you take into account the cost of living and other indices. We're sort of static. So it seems to me we're losing an opportunity here. If we want to grow something, we need to think about where we invest, where there are solid winners. It seems to me this is demonstrated to be a winner. It has great potential.

But it does need, as the minister identified — there is a need. We see this all around the territory. There are conversations going around this territory about the need for recognition of public investment in infrastructure to support tourism. There are good examples of where that works. I applaud the joint efforts of the Government of Yukon and the Carcross-Tagish First Nation where we've actually seen some community infrastructure built. Unless you have that essential infrastructure, people don't come; they don't stay. They may flit by, as they did for the last 30 years, coming by bus or whatever, or from the boats out of Skagway. There's a real difference. I've been going out to the Carcross area for the last 37 years and I can tell you there is a difference in what's going on now than what was going on 10 years ago, 15 years ago or 20 years ago.

We saw that most recently even with the workshop that was held in Haines Junction on looking at the tourism opportunities for the Kluane region, and again community investment and infrastructure was identified as a really important aspect of growing the tourism sector in that hugely impacted region of our territory.

So there are significant opportunities, but they do need some thinking that is beyond the silos of government departments. When I asked yesterday questions of the Minister of Economic Development about economic investments and various indices that were used to calculate the contributions to the economy for various sectors, I was also asking him about tourism. I've asked and I've mentioned to the new Deputy Minister of Tourism who, the morning I was briefed by him, was the Deputy Minister of Economic Development. I've given him notice that I think that this is hugely important and I see this reflected repeatedly in the

contributions of citizens, area experts, tourism operators and people involved in the tourism sector. When they come together in these various workshops that are being held throughout the territory, they talk about the importance of cross-sector cooperation, and about more cooperation between the Department of Economic Development and the Department of Tourism and Culture so that we can maximize the opportunities that exist.

One of the challenges that we face in terms of infrastructure is that we often think about it as roads and sewers and that kind of stuff, but it is not simply limited to that. It's how we travel and how we get about this territory. Whitehorse is one of the few capitals in the world where you land from the airplane — and it's great to have flights coming in from Germany or encouraging tourists to come from Japan and elsewhere, but they get to the airport and how do you get past the airport? There is no public transit system. There is no public transit system that gets you from Whitehorse to the communities.

There are very few places in the world where you would land in the capital city and not be able to get to other communities — very few places — by any form of transit.

I pose that as an opportunity to support local initiatives. We know of some local initiatives, such as one operating out of Dawson that, through the dint of very hard work, has expanded to be everything from carrying canoes to couriers to tourists, but it's sort of thinking outside of our silos of how we do it and why we do it.

A lot of our opportunities that we have had — and we have, I think, benefited from the exposure in the Yukon in terms of tourism to a lot of major events — and the minister is correct in pointing out the significant advantage that came to the Yukon Territory through collaborative approach that was established through the 2007 Canada Winter Games of the pan northern approach to tourism advertising.

There are events and we have many, many opportunities and many examples of events that build up a sound reputation. We increasingly have the facilities — we have a number of facilities. I give great credit to the Kwanlin Dun First Nation and the investment that they, Canada and Yukon made in the development of the Kwanlin Dun Cultural Centre, re-establishing the place of the Kwanlin Dun on the banks of the Yukon River. It has become a centrepiece, not just for Kwanlin Dun First Nation, but for many — for not just cultural events, but tourism events and other draws. Increasingly, people from across the country are beginning to realize that this is a significant venue to be used for many purposes.

When I was speaking about events, there are also opportunities such as one of the events that came out of the 2007 Canada Winter Games, which was the Adäka festival. It has grown significantly over the last few years. One of the questions I will be asking the minister is: What studies have been done to determine what kind of economic return there is to Whitehorse and to Yukon, to the people who participate in that directly as artisans or craftspeople or cultural performers, as well as the broader spinoffs? What potential does the



department see for a signature event like Adäka in terms of an economic contributor for the future two, three, five, 10 years from now? How much do they see in partnership with the organizers of Adäka? How much growth potential of that early summer event do they see?

Certainly, the one that was staged last year, I would say, was a significant shift in terms of the realization from a national point of view from players in the cultural field who had heard about it, but really hadn't given much thought to coming here. Then having come here, they were really blown away by what they saw and the potential of what they saw. It begs the question: How do we leverage that? How is the Government of Yukon viewing its opportunities to leverage its participating there, particularly in terms of resourcing any aspects of it? I really don't know what is planned, but I am most interested, having been involved in the very first event that was cobbled together and did remarkably well at the Canada Winter Games. It was really put together at the very last moment and with a lot of struggle by some of the same players who are involved in the current Adäka. I give them great credit, but I also give it to the government partners who have worked with them. I encourage all levels of government to work with this non-profit organization because I see that it has huge, huge potential.

There are some other areas that need to be thought about as we look at tourism and tourism potential. It came up both in the Tourism Industry Association meeting in Dawson City when we were talking about some of the opportunities that exist. There were a number of very good presentations there. When they talked about some of the trends around wildlife — it was around the whole issue of wilderness tourism and wildlife viewing, and wildlife and wildlife viewing was the panel — there was a recognition that, in keeping with the statistics, the department's own data has shown that people were looking for the more authentic experience and ways to become more engaged with wildlife viewing and the protection of animals. That lends itself to the importance — the absolute imperative — of having land use planning, having certainty about how land will be used or where there are quality ecological areas that have provided protection of wildlife, so there is — to quote one of the speaker's words — a sanctuary, or a sense of sanctuary, so that, if you were looking at engaging in that high-yield form of tourism, you actually have an opportunity to do so.

That was echoed again in the messages that came out from the workshop in Haines Junction. One of the key things identified by the participants in that workshop just a few weeks ago was the importance of completing land use planning in the Haines Junction area. They identified that they can only promote and use the amenities, but they need to be able to take into consideration the protections that are in place to ensure their longer term attractiveness remains.

There are a number of those recommendations. I see you're giving me the signal, Madam Chair. I want to say that I think, when we get a chance to talk about cultural tourism, there's so much in terms of questions that I can ask the minister about — the importance of determining and being

able to quantify the contribution that tourism currently makes to local businesses, not just in Whitehorse but in communities, and how we're developing the kinds of instruments to monitor that and to see where we could be putting new investment, particularly in terms of the cultural sector.

I will want to ask the minister some questions about the current status of the cultural labour force study. There was one done in 2004, and one, I understand, is to be released this spring. Since we're now past the beginning of spring, I'm looking forward to what the outcome of that is. I'll be looking forward to asking the minister some questions about that.

No doubt the minister also identified some of the questions with respect to Yukon Now, and that's the marketing sector. I certainly have questions about that and aspects of that. The six marketing pillars — so there's the Yukon Now, which the minister referenced a little bit about the determination of those pillars.

I guess that is going to do it because I don't have any more time left. I guess I will turn it over to the minister.

**Hon. Ms. Taylor:** There were a lot of questions — a lot of statements made — and I will try to do the best I can, but I want to provide a bit of a thorough overview of where we were, where we are today and where we want to go.

When it comes to Tourism and Culture, I am very grateful that the Yukon government — in fact, three consecutive Yukon Party governments — has actually seen great value in this particular department. Of course, it is not just within this department; it is throughout the Government of Yukon, as you can see — wholesale — in terms of investments being made throughout each and every department, which can speak to support of our tourism and cultural sectors.

In fact, I just want to go over the budget again because I do recall the Leader of the Official Opposition taking issue with flatlining of expenditures in support of this department. I want to go back, and I am not even comparing to 2002-03, but effectively, the very first budget we ever had — I had actually tabled — on behalf of the Yukon government was back in 2003-04. In fact it was this government that actually re-established the Department of Tourism and Culture. At that time, it was known as the Department of Business, Tourism and Culture.

One of our major platform commitments was to really place even added emphasis on Tourism and Culture as a stand-alone entity. That was one of the first items that we did. Of course, then we also re-established a Department of Economic Development and that too has grown in terms of programs and in terms of initiatives in support of many strategic industries throughout the Yukon, inclusive of Tourism and Culture.

I want to go back, because if you look at the main estimate at that time and if we're comparing apples to apples, in 2003-04 the actual estimate at that time — just considering the operation and maintenance — that's all I'll focus on here. At that time, it was sitting at just over \$14 million. That was inclusive of Corporate Services and Cultural Services, Industry Development Research and Marketing. Today that number, as the member opposite just alluded to, sits at just

over \$26 million. That does not include many expenditures in support of the waterfront investments, for example, that we have seen in recent years, thanks to partnerships with the Government of Canada and other governments.

Of course I refer to the Whitehorse waterfront investments — something to the tune of just over \$33 million to \$35 million. That does not include investments, such as the Kwanlin Dun First Nation cultural centre and what an icon that particular facility is, and the unique creative partnership, coming together with the new Whitehorse Public Library as an anchor tenant over 10 years. That was the first of its kind, in terms of Yukon government ever partnering up with a self-governing First Nation on settlement land, I might add.

It's but one example of a partnership such as this. It doesn't include investments, such as the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations cultural centre, the new visitor information centre, and the Parks Canada centre, which is also housed within that beautiful facility within the Village of Haines Junction. It does not include expenditures and improvements in terms of our telecommunications, which the Minister of Economic Development has announced in recent years. Likewise, trail networks — I know that was but one of a number of areas of importance that have also been identified by communities throughout this territory. Through the community development fund and other initiatives, the Government of Yukon has very much supported an expansion of trail networks for the benefit of all Yukon citizens.

In terms of highway improvements that we have seen throughout the territory, in terms of campgrounds — the construction of the new Conrad campground, the first campground of its kind in many years — we're very appreciative of that great partnership with Carcross-Tagish First Nation and the Yukon government in being able to proceed with that. I know that everyone I talk to is very excited about that new campground coming on board, and so are we.

In terms of improvements to our airports within the territory, I just look to Whitehorse — the international airport and the expansion of that particular facility and parking improvements was over \$20 million in increased investment in support of maintaining our access to international travel, sustained through Condor. We have seen other airlines over recent years as well, but there have been increased investments throughout the territory — including the Dawson airport, in recognition of the increased air access coming through that particular airport, again working very diligently with Holland America, working with the visitor industry in the community of Dawson, working with Highways and Public Works and Yukon's airline, Air North — all of which is of great benefit to our airline, which I cannot say enough about.

As a result of improvements such as this — and I know the member opposite referred to transportation between communities and I certainly congratulate private transportation companies — Husky Bus being one of them, which has really seen and has been very, very quick to rise to the occasion to provide that invaluable transportation between

the community of Dawson to Whitehorse and providing that daily or routine service to the community and to and fro.

Likewise, I was just apprised by another local tourism operator and I believe if it has not started up that private transportation operation between here and the community of Haines Junction, it will soon be doing that twice weekly, as I understand, all the way to Kluane Lake, to take advantage of Sheep Mountain and some of the hiking opportunities and wildlife viewing opportunities.

So we are seeing this, which is a very good sign because we're seeing more tour product available throughout all of our communities and we're seeing better infrastructure in place. As a result, we're seeing greater interest among our visiting travelers coming from all parts of the world looking for that unique experience, as the member opposite has recognized and rightfully so.

There are many attributes that make the Yukon one of its kind — unique, a destination unto itself — and we also recognize that there are finite levels of resources, and that's why we work seamlessly in partnership with a multitude of other parties in terms of our sister territories, Nunavut and Northwest Territories. We have been working with them to expand awareness marketing to continue our efforts that were really started up during the Canada Winter Games and continued on through the Winter Olympics and beyond that time as well to raise awareness about Canada's north as a collective, recognizing the unique realities and the unique attributes associated with each of our territories as unique destinations as well.

Likewise we also continue to work with British Columbia and Alberta on the Tourism North initiative. That agreement has been in place for many years and has worked very well in terms of really highlighting and showcasing the attributes of the Alaska Highway and the other corridors within those respective regions. Since 1989, in fact, that agreement has been in place and again we're able to leverage those great assets, attributes and financial resources from those other jurisdictions by pooling our resources.

The Canadian Tourism Commission, as I also mentioned — more and more we are partnering up with them collectively — as I just referenced, our largest ever market campaign with the Japanese travel trade through CTC — and they are very aggressively getting back into that market.

Likewise, CTC — we know that, in the recent federal budget, there were announcements of new investments looking to partner with industry — Tourism Industry Association of Canada — in going back into the United States. We haven't seen that in some time. Obviously we are quite thrilled about that.

The State of Alaska — I would be remiss if I didn't talk about our partnership with the State of Alaska. In previous years, it was through ATIA, and with Alaska — it is one of our longest-standing international marketing agreements in North America. That has boded very well for our territory. We recognize that the Alaska Highway, which will be celebrating its 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary coming up in 2017, is a whole different discussion unto itself, but there are opportunities that lie ahead

in terms of taking advantage of that particular anniversary. Through Alaska we have been able to market Yukon alongside Alaska, taking advantage of individuals coming to the Yukon and to Alaska as two destinations — or whether or not they are on their way to Alaska — ensuring that they recognize all of the opportunities and travel points throughout the territory and all that there is to offer — whether it is for one day or whether it is for a month or longer. It has very much helped us leverage the marketing reach of that particular agreement.

Holland America is another great partner with us — just for the fact of being able to advertise their Yukon-Alaska products. They are in a marketplace of well over a million individuals throughout the world. When it comes to Yukon and Alaska, that is effectively free advertising for us. We see there is great merit in terms of being able to capitalize on these new investments going back into the United States, courtesy of the Government of Canada and working in collaboration of CTC and TIAC, but also leveraging the resources that we have had in play with Holland America. In the past, we have benefited from having those resources available for cooperative marketing agreements with individual companies such as Holland America, and how best to partner with all of those partners to be able to extend the reach.

One thing about tourism is that it is becoming more competitive as the years go by. The needs of our industry, the needs of our clients and the face of our tourism industry continue to evolve and change as well — and so too must we. I can't really talk about Tourism and Culture without talking about our partnership with industry and how we have benefited from having expertise within Yukon's tourism industry over the years in helping to review and evaluate, in terms of helping to set the stage and pointing to whether or not we need to pull back on a particular marketing campaign, whether or not we need to go further in a particular market or whether or not we need to reduce in this market to be able to continue to be flexible and very strategic with our dollars.

Yukon Now money is the largest single investment in domestic marketing that Yukon has ever seen — \$3.6 million over two years, of which Yukon government has partnered half with the Government of Canada. It provides new opportunities for us in terms of welcoming more Canadians, of which we have seen a recorded increase in our particular territory over recent years. I attribute a lot of that to the result of expanded air access connectivity with our major partners — Yukon's airline, Air North being one of them. Their expansion of flights into Ottawa, into the Northwest Territories and into Kelowna, our key gateway cities — the greater Ottawa area, as I mentioned, and Toronto — not into Toronto, but looking to Calgary and Edmonton and Vancouver. All of these are very key to having that direct entry point into those markets via having that air access.

I haven't even gotten into the international markets and all that that has to play for us as well. We do benefit. As I mentioned, we have great partnerships with Tourism Industry Association of Yukon through the tourism marketing

committee. It once was known as the Senior Marketing Committee and is now viewed as the Tourism Marketing Committee. It provides strategic advice in terms of the direction that we are heading in terms of how much or how little in every particular market, the return on investment that's evaluated on an annual basis, in terms of potential partnerships, whether it's meetings, conventions, incentive travel, whether it's working to expand on wilderness tourism — and the list goes on.

I do want to thank TIA Yukon and all the many partners that we work with. There are a multitude of various stakeholders, which, as I mentioned, we've been very pleased with, and I've been very happy to reconnect with them over the past number of months in terms of getting up to speed on what investments and what new initiatives they are undertaking, where they see the future opportunities are, and how we can best work with them to continue to leverage our marketing reach best.

Madam Chair, I see my time is up, but I have lots more to say in this particular area and look forward to talking about future directions.

**Ms. Hanson:** I would like to go back to the tourism domestic marketing program, which seems to be referred to now as Yukon Now. As the minister alluded to, the Tourism Industry Association several years ago asked for \$2.5 million a year for two years, subject to an evaluation, and then having it built into ongoing funding so there would be an ongoing commitment for domestic marketing.

In return, as the minister said, the Yukon government was offered the Tourism Industry Association or offered for domestic marketing — not to TIAY — to invest in tourism domestic marketing \$1.8 million times two, for \$3.6 million, of which half comes from CanNor, effectively meaning that Yukon's contribution is \$900,000 a year.

I have three questions: What is the current perspective of the Government of Yukon to further leverage this investment and to make — at what point and on what basis will the government be determining whether or not it will be extending this program — because if we're going to be planning marketing strategies going out, you would think that you will need to be doing that before the end of this current fiscal year. Then, in effect, this announcement should be made rather soon. If this is a successful program, what indices are being used to determine that?

What portion of Yukon Now — so of this \$1.8 million a year — is being used with respect to marketing overseas? At the TIAY meeting in Dawson City, during the marketing sector's overview of the Yukon Now program, they talked about the commitment of \$1.8 million over two years. Then in the explanation of Yukon Now marketing campaigns there was a comment made that we're now using some of the new dollars for overseas. My question is: How much of the Yukon Now is for overseas marketing and what impact does that have in terms of actually making a real assessment of what was intended, I thought, for domestic marketing?

My last question in this area for now, Madam Chair, is: What was the budget — two parts I guess — for the initial

commercial that was filmed as part of the series of the six marketing pillars and the northern lights one that was done, and what portion of that initial budget was spent in Yukon and what portion was spent outside of Yukon? To reframe that question, I was asking the cost of producing that initial commercial and other components that were related to it that were used, as the minister referred to in a different format, and what portion — so the total cost of it and what amount of that was spent locally and what portion was spent outside of the Yukon?

**Hon. Ms. Taylor:** I would like to thank the member opposite for the questions.

As I was just articulating — and I know that there were a number of other questions and references made to other expenditures in her previous questions, so I just want to go back to those as well while I can and I'm up on my feet.

As I mentioned, there are a whole host of significant investments made in support of tourism. It's one thing to be able to market and to bring individuals to the territory, but it's another thing to be able to deliver on the ground. In fact, it is fantastic to be able to see the maturity of the tourism industry over the years and to see that grow and for the industry to be very resilient to change. We have seen many changes and impacts over the many years that I can recall, but what it does serve for each and every one of us is as a reminder that we do have to be flexible, we do have to be resilient and we do have to be ahead of the curveball in terms of looking to the future and seeing those opportunities.

When it comes to the Yukon Now initiative, I want to just thank my counterpart — the previous Minister of Tourism and Culture for his leadership on this particular file — and our Premier as well, who really worked on this initiative to be able to work with industry. I want to thank also TIA Yukon and of course the Yukon Chamber of Commerce, which both also made this a priority in terms of seeing the need for investments in the domestic market — and the Government of Canada for being able to step up and be able to partner with the territory on this particular initiative and bring it to fruition.

As I mentioned, tourism is a strategic industry; it's a critical component of our economy — critical to the diversification of our economy. It touches every single one of us in this territory, whether or not you're directly employed by the industry. We all have a role to play when it comes to promoting tourism in our territory. Having grown up in the territory, I have subscribed to that industry in many different capacities. I know first-hand how very important it is to our territory and how very critical it is for us to work seamlessly with industry to be able to continue that diversification.

The television commercials of course, as I just mentioned, are one of three major components of the Yukon Now campaign, as it has become known, that will really help maximize opportunities for increased visitation and revenue for Yukon businesses. It is the first time that an original television commercial has been really developed and filmed to market Yukon on broadcast television. It aired for about three weeks in February over some 24 national networks.

I don't want to go over some of the preliminary results that we have already articulated to Yukon, but obviously we're pleased with the results so far. There is more to come. That one commercial was the first of six commercials to be able to come out over the next year, and that is inclusive of summer-related as well as winter-related commercials as well.

We will be working with industry — specifically our Tourism Marketing Committee — to go over some of those results. Formal evaluation will continue to unfold as we have more in the marketplace and, just like each and every other tourism marketing campaign, we will be taking the time to assess those factors related to the objectives of the campaign. The department tracks the number of visits to the Travel Yukon website, the number of readers, the publications carrying ads, the number of viewers of television commercials — that's very high level. I don't profess to be the marketing professional here. That's why we have an actual branch that has been tasked to do just that, but success of any marketing campaign has to be monitored on a routine basis. It is.

In terms of this particular campaign that is underway, it is being monitored on a weekly basis to determine where those targets are being met and where they're not being met, and then adjusted accordingly. There will be a formal final evaluation done as well to identify those recommended approaches for the success of those future campaigns.

Again, prior to the launch — and I know that this was also described by our Tourism officials from the department in Dawson, which I know the member opposite was part of. Target markets were evaluated prior to the launch of the Yukon Now marketing campaign to determine how aware Canadians were of Yukon as a travel destination. We will continue to provide surveys at the end of each of those commercials to help determine where changes need to occur after being exposed to that Yukon campaign. There are a number of different segments. As I said, there will be, in total, six various commercials based on the various pillars that have been identified by industry individuals, by experts within industry and within the Department of Tourism and Culture, highlighting the northern lights, midnight sun and the list goes on.

We will continue to engage with major stakeholders and continue to tweak and to monitor according to those assessments throughout the coming year but, to be sure, we're quite excited about this and we're seeing some great uptake to begin with. I have heard great positive feedback about the first television commercial. You know, I have also heard others who would not agree.

At the end of the day, it's about ensuring that we do have more bums in seats and that we do have more bums in beds as well, so to speak, to be able to derive more tourism revenue to the territory. I know there were some questions yesterday about how we measure that. I was just reminded that the tourism business survey that was conducted — I think 2013 was the last one — was a very comprehensive report. The next one that will be coming out will be this year, as I understand.

That's one tool. We have our Yukon visitor tracking program as well. That was another major investment by

Industry Services. It was identified by the Tourism Marketing Committee, by TIA Yukon, as something that we needed to continue to invest in on how we track visitors on a monthly basis — not just border crossings, but those individuals who are coming off the planes in Whitehorse and in Dawson, airport passenger counts, and those individuals who are coming to our visitor information centres. We have a tracker on the Alaska Highway, but there are a whole variety of ways of determining, to give us a better understanding of where individuals are coming from.

That was deemed to be very important, and we were able to benefit from CanNor funding from the Government of Canada a couple of years ago. We undertook that survey, and now we have in place a new Yukon visitor tracking program to be able to build upon the information we were able to glean from 2012 — again, keeping the original statistics that we had in place through the border crossings, but being able to augment those statistics with others, such as the airport passenger counts and other studies.

Again, it's one way that we are taking into consideration tourism revenues, in terms of accounting for individuals coming through the territory. We do know that not everyone coming in from China, for example, or coming in from Germany, or coming from any place outside of the country, is coming through the Yukon as the first-time entry point. We do know that a lot of individuals are flying into Vancouver and they may be going on into the Yukon. They may be, either through air or through travelling individually or through a charter motorcoach or the like, or through even a ferry or through a cruise ship — and how we need to better take into account where those individuals are coming from.

It's something we continue to strive to improve. I do think the way we are counting through this new model is an additional augmented way in terms of giving a better assessment for industry, in terms of where we go from there.

As we are talking about the Yukon Now investments, from all accounts, we are receiving some positive uptake from industry on that. We do know that the first three months of this year have been positive in terms of looking at increased travellers coming to the territory. Looking ahead, it's looking very positive to say the least.

I know that the department has put a two-percent growth out there. At the end of the year, we will see if that holds true or not. When you look at the global economic factors, including low oil prices driving our Canadian dollar to its lowest point in more than a decade, it does bode well for Yukon's tourism industry. We know that Canadians are more likely to travel in Canada and international visitors will also experience greater value by coming to the Yukon and spending time in the Yukon. We know that whether it's individuals coming from German-speaking Europe or whether it's individuals coming from Japan or China, that the lion's share of these are high-yield, independent travellers. They are coming here to stay for a longer period of time. They will spend time getting off the beaten track and will certainly get around to many of our communities, as we have seen.

I know that when you look at some of the companies, such as Driving Force, they were actually on the tourism trade mission to Asia with us. They were describing a real expansion of their services in this country as well as the greater uptake from many of their international partners. Likewise, we see increases on many other fronts as well. We see that the future looks good, particularly looking to the summer season and the fall and the winter ahead. We know that also augmented to those global economic factors is now the enhanced awareness through the Yukon Now initiative, also to be attributed to growing air access, growing interest in aurora viewing in the fall — particularly when those fall colours are coming out — and in the winter.

We know that the U.S. economy is on a recovery — perhaps a slower recovery — and we also see an expanded investment in overseas marketing. The Yukon government did benefit from increased investments through CanNor funding through the Government of Canada. That was a great example of how we were able to benefit from that increased investment and how we saw good returns on investment and how we were able to continue on with that investment through general revenues. In fact, that increased expenditure alone has gone up significantly by about \$500,000 per year. It does mark the commitment by the Yukon government.

That is where those programs with CanNor, albeit maybe not on the long term but for the short term — to be able to test drive new initiatives, like television commercials, new initiatives overseas, and being able to determine that return on investment, being able to evaluate that with industry and then making a better determination on a business case in terms of where we want to increase or where we want to re-divert those expenditures.

When they do come to the Yukon, visitors will be able to also benefit from added tourism infrastructure on the ground here, throughout just about every community in the territory. Haines Junction is a very interesting community and it is one that I have had the benefit of being able to go to a couple of times in the past month alone, and I attended the last workshop that the Village of Haines Junction offered. I know we had Department of Tourism and Culture representatives there, Department of Economic Development representatives, Parks Canada representatives, tour operators, and individuals from the whole community — not just solely about tourism, but really looking to the future of the community and where they want to see themselves grow as a community on a sustainable path forward, and not just for the benefit of visitors, but also for the benefit of attracting new individuals to call Haines Junction and the Klucane region their home — so how they brand themselves, or what current investments could be reallocated to be able to position them in the best light possible.

That is where we're really able to really coordinate our branding messages in terms of being able to accentuate what they are doing but, at the end of the day, being very strategic in how we showcase our destination as a whole and being able to drill down, community by community and region by region, with that community.

I commend communities like Haines Junction that are really taking tremendous leadership — Village of Haines Junction and Champagne and Aishihik First Nations — and working with the residents and working with the governments alike to be able to work on a plan and some strategic steps forward in how they wish to position themselves.

Madam Chair, I see my time is up again, but I look forward to further answering questions.

**Ms. Hanson:** Wouldn't that be a novel idea — let it be recorded: 19 minutes and not an answer to the three questions I asked. I look forward to an answer too.

They were relatively straightforward. I am not going to repeat them because I don't think that seems to be this minister's intent — to actually answer questions.

I will try again. We didn't get an answer with respect to what percentage, or what portion of the Yukon Now — the \$1.8 million per year that was mentioned at the tourism meeting — is being spent — of these new dollars that are being spent — for overseas advertising. We didn't get an answer about the cost for the initial commercial and what portion of that budget for the initial commercial was attributed to expenditures in Yukon or outside the Yukon.

I think we started — I take that back, Madam Chair. I do think there was a beginning of an answer with respect to there being an ongoing evaluation at some point. At some future time, we might hear whether or not the government itself will commit to an ongoing investment to domestic marketing. Whether or not it will do that, independent of a federal contribution, is unclear.

One of the things that the minister commented on and that I would like to go back to — the minister said that tourism touches every single one of us in tourism dollars. I guess my question is: How do you know? What studies have been done and are being done — are being projected — to assess that multiplier effect of the tourism dollar currently and what is projected? I would believe that would be a factor that you would need to take into consideration to determine the success of investments, for example, in marketing campaigns. There must be an element of that campaign and investment there that says, "Well, we'll know it's a success if we've achieved..." — whatever. We know that the Tourism Industry Association talks about a 27:1 or 28:1 multiplier effect on the tourism dollar. Well, how is that determined?

When the Yukon tourism plan speaks about the fact that there's \$180.5 million in visitor spending and another \$250 million — I don't know how that works — in revenues by Yukon businesses attributed to tourism, I guess I would like a little bit about what work is done to get those factors or those figures. I would like a clarification.

This is another question, in case the minister is keeping track. The information that we're given all the time is the number around 443,000. Every time I ask that question, I'm told that's the number of people coming to the Yukon. We know the number actually in terms of air arrivals — so air arrivals we know for sure — but if we're looking at targeting an increase in our domestic market and we say there are 443,000 visitors in the Yukon, are those simply the number of

people who are clicked going across the border into the Yukon from Skagway and near Watson Lake? How and where is the 443,000 derived from? Of those, how many are in transit — they're transiting through the Yukon for business or other reasons to get to Alaska and really aren't tourists? They're transiting through here. I'll leave it at that, Madam Chair.

**Hon. Ms. Taylor:** I'm really pleased to see that the Leader of the Official Opposition is very appreciative of my responses. I thank her for that.

I'm really pleased to go back to visitation and maybe just spend a little bit of time for the member opposite on how visitors are tracked and the work that has been undertaken over the past years and recent years. In fact, in my absence, under the previous Minister of Tourism and Culture's watch, there has been a significant amount of work done in this regard. There's a lot of information. I don't know if I'm going to get it all done within 20 minutes, but I will try.

When we go back to assessing the economic impact of tourism in the Yukon, as I mentioned, we have a couple of different ways of tracking that, one of which includes the Yukon visitor tracking program. This is a program that was really deemed as being a priority area by industry some time ago — I think back in 2012, if I'm not mistaken. It was an initiative that was brought forward by industry, backed by the Senior Marketing Committee in 2011.

It was a way to better capture, maintain, analyze and report visitor data on a monthly basis and provide governments — not only the Yukon, but all governments — and businesses with data to support strategic marketing and investment decisions. It was developed to replace the existing visitor exit survey that we have traditionally held on several occasions in years dating back. When you looked at the visitor exit surveys, there were a number of different issues. One would be the cost of that limited scope. It was conducted during the summer season and conducted every five years or so.

That said, we went to work at the request of industry, so hence came in the Yukon visitor tracking program. It was developed in collaboration with industry, a number of government stakeholders, including Tourism and Culture, the Department of Economic Development, the Yukon Bureau of Statistics and the Tourism Industry Association of Yukon.

During the process, there were a number of consultations that were also done with many other groups, including tourism business owners and many other key stakeholders across the territory. 2012 was the first year that both summer and the winter visitors were surveyed. Data was collected. Reports were produced on the results of those surveys, as well as the methodology of the tracking program.

From that came the new model to be able to continue to track visitors that was started. In fact, I believe the department began to use that model to estimate visitors starting in 2014. So that number is now included in the tourism visitation report, which is produced and published on the department's website on a monthly basis, so members opposite can go on to the website and see that for members' viewing.

I know that particular time back — I should just go back to the visitor tracking program again. The model that I was just speaking to estimates the number of visitors to Yukon on a monthly basis and is tracked and reported on the department's website. It incorporates various factors including border crossings and, as the member opposite alluded to, those are the numbers of individuals who cross those various borders, whether it's at Fraser or other, and of course it also takes into account counts of passengers entering Yukon, whether it's on the White Pass & Yukon Route railroad, passengers departing from the Whitehorse International Airport or highway traffic counts.

It is an expansion of what we have done in the past and we continue to monitor those border crossings as we traditionally have in years past. This information is in addition to that, so in fact it's just in response to industry's changing needs and it's in response to what we have seen in years past, which is really an increase in the individuals coming in via air into the Whitehorse International Airport — or it could be into the Dawson airport now, primarily being served by individuals via Holland America coming in from Alaska.

So again we were able to subscribe to dollars through CanNor through the Government of Canada with the full support of the industry. We were able to benefit from that additional funding and of course because it is of strategic importance — I'm not saying that this is by all means the full extent as to what could be incorporated, but it is significant data in order to make those sound business decisions, whether for investment or for marketing decisions or the like. It is really the first of its kind in many years and so we want to ensure that Yukon does remain an attractive destination, and that we are able to be able to fulfill some of those requests from industry in terms of the visitation reports that they're looking for and that it is an overall improvement.

In terms of the Yukon Bureau of Statistics, which collects, compiles, distributes and promotes the Yukon business survey — the last one that was undertaken was in 2013. The next one is to be undertaken this year, as I understand it. It has been conducted periodically since 1993. It surveys over 3,500 Yukon businesses, compiles information about their industry types, the employees they hire, their revenue levels, their hiring and their expected growth. It is very comprehensive.

The Department of Tourism and Culture is one department that has partnered again with the Bureau of Statistics in terms of seeking that expanded level of information that the business survey can provide us. We look forward to the outcome of that information. The full report can be found I believe on the Bureau of Statistics website for any and all to enjoy, to take in and to review. I can certainly read it page by page, but I don't think we have the time to be able to go over it, sector by sector. It is comprehensive. I want to thank the Bureau of Statistics for the expertise that only they can provide and being able to accentuate the information that is provided by the Department of Tourism and Culture.

We continue to work with industry and continue to work with communities in terms of how we can best meet and serve

the needs and the differing trends among those communities. We are very flexible and very open to working with them in really fine-tuning specific needs identified within those specific communities if need be as well.

All tourism visitation reports, as I mentioned — all the tracking and survey reports are available on-line at the Department of Tourism and Culture's website for individuals who want to really capture a better look, unless the members opposite want me to go page after page, which I certainly am happy to do, but we could be here awhile.

We are quite pleased with the overall visitation and the outlook for the year ahead. The Department of Economic Development, together with Tourism and Culture, are forecasting about a two-percent growth in tourism this year. We know that there have been some preliminary results already shared on the first three months of this year — the first quarter. It looks very encouraging with the added enhanced awareness marketing in Canada's domestic marketplace and also because of global economic factors with fuel prices and the lower dollar. We are coming off of a relatively strong winter season. Operators are telling us that bookings are looking strong for the year ahead. We certainly know that.

I was able to talk with many of the operators, whether in Asia or whether in Dawson, whether in Haines Junction, here in Whitehorse and beyond — very excited indeed and optimistic about the future of tourism and culture.

We are quite excited about that. We are quite excited about continuing to roll out the remaining commercials and the remaining tenets or pillars of the Yukon Now marketing initiative and seeing how the results end up at the end of the day.

We also continue to market not only in Canada, but continue to direct marketing efforts to travellers from the United States. This year, we'll have more than \$500,000 to be spent on promoting Yukon in the United States. Many of those initiatives are working in collaboration with other stakeholders. As I mentioned, Tourism North is working with the State of Alaska to leverage those results, working with companies like Holland America and those that were already in the United States marketplace. The U.S. is Yukon's largest visitor market, with over 200,000 border crossings last year alone, representing about 65 percent of Yukon's total visitors. This has actually gone down, because we have seen that the number of visitors coming from Canada has actually risen significantly. I attribute that to many different factors, one of which includes increased air access, courtesy of our airline, Air North, and being able to have that readily available air access.

As I was mentioning just recently, having the increased flights coming over from Japan and Osaka, as one case in point, we haven't see that actual leg in place for many years. As a result, those individuals coming in from Osaka can be in the Yukon within one day, without having to overnight anywhere else in the country. That bodes well because, within moments, you can be outside in a wilderness setting, and that is something that is near and dear to our Asian visitors. \$1.5

million will be spent on overseas marketing activities and it does include \$195,000 additional dollars from Yukon Now funding. I know the member opposite had raised that question.

The European market, as I mentioned, is a significant contributor to Yukon's overall visitation. In 2014, we saw a nine-percent increase in travellers from European countries, amounting to significant benefits from missions to Germany and the Netherlands in the past couple of years, which have led to new marketing agreements and stronger ties with our partners.

As I mentioned, we have other key overseas markets that we continue to see tremendous growth in as well, from Japan and China — looking to increase this, following our very first tourism trade mission and increased air access between western Canada and Japan.

Some of the results from the letters I have received and some of the comments from that trade mission — very significant indeed. In fact, I just wanted to make reference to a letter that we just recently received from TIA Yukon, and one comment was that the mission to China, for example, opened up new dialogue opportunities for the tourism industry.

It was a privilege to showcase our business to media and trade in China together with Tourism officials from the Yukon, and likewise the mission to Japan enforced our industry's position in this important market for the growing winter tourism in the territory.

We have also received great uptake from the Yukon Chamber of Commerce, which has also spoken quite glowingly in terms of having that added presence through that tourism trade mission. We have received letters from the Chamber of Commerce as well. There is no one specific action when it comes to growing tourism in the territory that will lead to significant increase in revenues or visitation, but it also points to a series of strategic and long-term investments being really key — like the partnership with the Canadian Tourism Commission that we were able to sign off in Tokyo — and can help place us on the map — those considering their next visit overseas to Yukon.

We are very pleased. Some of the Yukon Now dollars did go in support of that particular trade mission, and we are very pleased with the results — pleased to have had the key contacts that our operators and industry, like Air North, Yukon's airline — many other businesses representing various sectors in the tourism sector.

There are great things ahead and it is now how best to capitalize on those opportunities with those resources that we have and how best to really invest with the best return on investment. That is where our Tourism Marketing Committee comes into play in the presence of having that expertise available at the table, through our representation from representatives in the industry.

Madam Chair, I do see my time is up again. I do have lots more to share in this regard, but I just want to thank our tourism industry for their tireless partnership in promoting our territory as a destination of choice for all travellers.

**Chair:** Would members like to take a brief recess?

**All Hon. Members:** Agreed.

**Chair:** Committee of the Whole will recess for 15 minutes.

*Recess*

**Chair:** Committee of the Whole will now come to order. We are resuming general debate on Vote 54, Department of Tourism and Culture.

**Ms. Hanson:** I would note that we now have had a total of 60 minutes of responses from the minister, with a partial answer to maybe one question, which I think was the \$100,000 — it wasn't exactly attributed to which overseas market but, for Yukon Now, some overseas market from the domestic marketing program, so \$100,000 for some part.

I would forgive listeners who thought this was a budget debate and not a stream of consciousness with occasional flybys.

However, I did hear an interesting comment — which begged the question that I had asked earlier and wasn't answered — when the minister noted the actual number of tourists from Canada. She noted that the domestic market was an area that was for potential increase. Ironically, that's exactly why the Tourism Industry Association of Yukon had asked for a significant investment of \$2.5 million a year to really go after that domestic market. The fact that, for whatever reason, the Yukon government chose to go less than that with its contribution of \$900,000 a year is kind of disappointing.

I wanted to come to another area and ask the minister — because there's a significant portion of the discussion we've had so far on the marketing and all that kind of stuff. There was another area that I had mentioned in my opening comments.

I just want to come back to the panel that was held in Dawson City on wildlife viewing — not just wildlife viewing, but it was big game outfitters and wildlife viewing. The panel made the point that we're not Banff and that we have these unique high-value experiences. One of the examples that was given — and I referenced this yesterday in terms of trying to get a sense from Economic Development about what their role is in some of the figuring and the cross-sector cooperation that one expects from government departments.

The example I gave yesterday was Bear Cave Mountain Eco-Adventures on the Fishing Branch River established in 2005, which has a seven-week season, and that they're booking now until 2017. This is not an inexpensive expedition. It is \$1,750 per person per day, which is not insignificant, but what it does do is it highlights an interesting niche market. In the ensuing discussions, there seems to be some considerable recognition that this activity is a very profitable form of land use and that Yukon — to quote one of the panelists — has potential for awesome tourism opportunities in the wildlife viewing experiences and we have the critical components here in the Yukon — that being the quality of ecological areas.

We have the ability within the existing frameworks that we have established in the Yukon for the protection of wildlife



in a sanctuary. I will come back to that in a moment. We have the abilities for access. Most of the places that are sanctuary kinds of areas are accessible — not easily, and that is particularly what you don't want — easy access. You don't want driving in these areas because you are looking to protect the wildlife. As two of the panelists pointed out, the more the wildlife in these areas become aware and acclimatized to the fact that they are not get shot at but are being protected, then you raise the bar in terms of the potential for this wildlife viewing experience. Then you are forming a form of habitat protection.

Another interesting element of this is that we are not talking about massive tracts of land being necessary. In fact, the example that was given was that the wildlife viewing within, for example, the Bear Cave Mountain portion of the Fishing Branch park is done in an area that is less than 10 percent of the total area of that park. It is within a smaller element of that area and similarly for the Nakina site on the big Taku River system, it is a small area that has been made into a sanctuary. In order to take it to a commercial level, it was identified that there was a need for a land tenure policy for tourism.

So this will form part of my question for the minister: What work is being done to develop a land tenure policy for tourism? There's the need for a modern wildlife management strategy — apparently, accordingly to a variety of participants in the Tourism Association meeting, there is no modern wildlife management strategy within this context in the Yukon — whether or not there has been work done between Tourism and Environment to develop that, including a wildlife utilization plan — wildlife utilization not in the form on consumption, but in the form of being able to develop these niche marketing ideas. Of course, there's a need for some form of ecological intelligence, which may be harder to come by.

One of the things that was fascinating to learn was that when we look at the — and I raise this because we're looking at opportunities and I said in the very first comments about how tourism is good now and, as we say, it's 4.3 percent of our GDP — but can you imagine what we could do in terms of growing the potential of that? So if we looked at the example of Alaska, where there have been studies — and this is why I raised it and will raise it again — when a jurisdiction actually does do analyses, it's helpful for others to learn from them. In Alaska, they had looked at the net economic benefit from wildlife — hunting and viewing — so there was the net economic benefit from these various activities.

There are a lot of indices of satisfaction that contribute to that — just from the normal thing of being outside and seeing wildlife and scenery and all that kind of stuff, which we sort of take for granted here in the Yukon at times. One of the things and why this potential may be higher in the Yukon, given that the Alaskan side of the border seems to have saturated this market, is that one of the areas that they found was that, because of the number of outfitting operations and the number of people participating in both wildlife viewing and hunting in Alaska, a number of people are saying that they

are looking for a more unique experience — an experience where they are not going to be in with groups of dozens or hundreds, but just a few. As I mentioned yesterday, Bear Cave Mountain, with only a seven-week season and only taking four people in at a time, is still a viable business.

When you look at the contribution — the net economic benefit in terms of visitors to Alaska from hunting, it is \$12 million and from viewing wildlife, from a study done by the department — they don't call it Economic Development, but something longer than that in Alaska — it was \$833 million, which is a significant contribution, when you look at these.

When you look at the amount of contribution — again, this is where it would be interesting if the Yukon government would be able to identify the amounts of in-territory spending in these areas, the number of jobs, the labour income and what the net government revenue is. Until we begin to develop those kinds of indices and the kinds of metrics that give us that — I keep coming back to this — it's hard to figure out and it's hard to know whether or not you're targeting your obviously limited dollars. I stand by my observation that, over the last few years, the budget has not increased significantly in comparison to other sectors of the government's operations.

I just wanted to raise the issue of wildlife viewing as one of the — and I'm going back to the comments that have been made over and over again, that people come to the Yukon for authentic experiences and they're looking for an experience that they will remember that is different from and unique from any other experience elsewhere. We're not looking at replicating. We don't need to do Disneyland or any sort of ersatz experiences here. We have genuine experiences here. What work has been done by the Department of Tourism and Culture to look at the various factors that I have outlined, which would be factors for success for commercial-level wildlife viewing?

I'm aware that the Government of Yukon does have its own programs for wildlife viewing, but those are largely roadside and fairly modest in terms of both the scope of the programming and the expectation, whether it's Swan Haven or the road signage along the various highways and roadways, or the little booklets that are put out. I'm talking about commercial-level tourism operations that will require cooperation among not only operators but, given the fact that a lot of these opportunities may occur within various land holdings that are established through various land claim agreements — so intergovernmental cooperation. Here's a great opportunity for collaboration and cooperation between the Yukon government's tourism sector and the First Nations Tourism Association as well as the various First Nation development corporations and their respective governments. I'll leave it at that.

**Hon. Ms. Taylor:** When we look at product development — and wildlife viewing is a very important component of what Yukon has to offer. It is interesting. I know the member opposite keeps referring to the presentations made in Dawson, and I found it very interesting as well. There were some really insightful presentations made and I have already started engaging with the department about

taking better advantage of what we have in place, not necessarily adding new resources — because it was duly noted that we have the resources, we have programs in place, we have initiatives underway. We just need to further connect the dots and, of course, it's always that — where we can work collaboratively and where we can recognize where gaps are and how we can better integrate all of those programs and initiatives underway for the collective good of one particular industry — but really all of the Yukon.

Wildlife viewing is one, as the member opposite referred to. We had some representatives from the Department of Environment from the wildlife viewing program, and it was very insightful, plus we had a number of other operators present there as well. I have to say hats off to the individuals working pretty hard in our Department of Tourism and Culture as well as in the departments of Environment, Energy, Mines and Resources, and Highways and Public Works. As we often talk about when we talk about product and we talk about infrastructure in support of tourism and culture, it runs throughout the government. Whether it is interpretive signage, highway pullouts, wildlife viewing sites — Swan Haven was listed as one — or establishing parks, this government throughout the years has established more habitat protection areas, more special management areas, more territorial parks, and Yukon's one and only land use plan as well, under the tenure of the Yukon Party government.

These are all opportunities in collaboration, partnership and co-management with First Nation governments. Tombstone Territorial Park — I was very honoured to be the Minister of Environment at that time to actually sign off the territorial park management plan with the chief of the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nation at that time. I was also very honoured to be able to help open the new Tombstone Interpretive Centre, a stunning facility that is very natural, utilizes all the natural components of the area in its construction and how it is laid out and how it generates its power, to the individuals who work there.

Tombstone Territorial Park is a great example of what can be done to showcase all there is to offer in that particular area. It's a great partnership with the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nation. Whether it's utilized for visitors, for residents, for students, for research purposes — the whole gamut — it is a flagship in terms of a great partnership, in terms of setting direction as to how we move forward with the co-management of that park, in terms of trail development, in terms of visitation — and in collaboration with tourism industry operators, Holland America included, and many others.

I know the Minister of Environment has a lot to offer and articulate in terms of all of the various areas we have worked on throughout the years. It's interesting — thanks to the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin. He just handed me a copy of the Fishing Branch management plan, which our Yukon Party government had signed off on in 2004 in collaboration with the Vuntut Gwitchin Government, and then, from there, the special management area and management plan that was later signed off for the Old Crow Flats, falling out of that and in addition to that area as well.

It helps to set direction but is yet one of many examples of how the Yukon government is working with First Nation governments to be able to not only preserve, but to protect and promote and be able to utilize these resources in a sustainable way and in a way that reflects who we are, as Yukoners, and who the people of the Vuntut Gwitchin are, in a very culturally sensitive way and one that reflects the spirit of the individuals of that traditional territory — and we as Yukoners as well.

When we look at wildlife, in the Department of Environment there are many different programs in place, many different mechanisms triggered under the *Umbrella Final Agreement* when it comes to management of wildlife to ensure that it is sustained. Compared to other places in the world, we are very blessed to have abundant resources all around. That can change due to changes in our environment, in our climate; it can change as a result of different economic pressures due to population influx. That is why we have management streams in place through the Department of Environment as lead, establishing management plans for various species, from bison to elk to the Porcupine caribou herd.

I know that the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin and I have had many debates over the years — perhaps less so now that he is over on this side of the Legislative Assembly — but ever since we were able to sign off that management plan in collaboration with all those respective governments and the various departments within the Government of Yukon, that is the co-managed approach of wildlife species — utilizing our renewable resources councils, setting direction, providing recommendations as to how to best suitably administer wildlife populations in the territory.

There are many different mechanisms, of which the Department of Tourism and Culture does provide input. It provides perspectives on behalf of our industry in terms of providing that input as well. The department, or the Minister of Environment, can talk at great length about the strategy that we have in place for developing and promoting viewing opportunities, and a bit of that was spoken to in Dawson at the recent Tourism Industry Association AGM. The Wildlife Viewing Technical Committee — Yukon government actually established that back in 2007 — with representatives from the Department of Environment and the Department of Tourism and Culture, as a means of updating what was then the strategic plan for wildlife viewing in the territory. Now we have, as of 2013, an official strategy for developing and promoting those viewing opportunities, taking all of the various elements into consideration.

The current plan that we're operating from — just a couple of years old — builds on those efforts of the past and reflects not only the short term, but also the longer term interests of departments and Yukon industries, as well as the potential of new partnerships between other levels and orders of government, organizations, communities.

Information that was used to develop that strategy that was compiled back in 2013 was consolidated into a technical report. It is also available to individuals who are interested. It

was made and reflects the recognition of the importance of wildlife viewing opportunities for not only visitors but for residents as well, and how important it is to involve all partners in implementing the strategy.

As I mentioned, the evolution of land claims and self-governance in the territory have brought new opportunities for working government-to-government in terms of realizing this great potential in terms of the economic side and the cultural — the intrinsic value of the cultural elements of wildlife viewing associated with that. It talks about opportunities for Yukoners and visitors to view, to appreciate wildlife, to experience wildlife, and then to be able to identify, to value, to interpret and to promote our special places for viewing wildlife.

The Yukon Wildlife Preserve — I know we had a number of representatives in Dawson who were represented there — and how that has grown in leaps and bounds in terms of promoting for educational purposes and facilitating school-led groups and tours, in terms of speaking to the research and the information exchange about wildlife in our own back yard — now, having that additional capacity and that capital infrastructure there that has been growing over the years — to be able to care and to leverage the resources of other individuals from other jurisdictions, to be able to participate and take part in that exchange of knowledge and information regarding wildlife and how we can better come up with better solutions that are geared to northerners, not just in the Yukon but across the circumpolar north. It is a fantastic facility that is much loved by not only Yukoners but by visitors from across the world. It is certainly a highly revered product in terms of building in that product offering for visitors.

I know Swan Haven — the member opposite referred to that. It is again adding additional infrastructure there to facilitate the increase in the number of Yukoners and visitors going to Swan Haven on any given day at that time of year. It is tremendous indeed.

We spoke about the Fishing Branch already in talking about bear-viewing opportunities. It is overwhelming to hear of uptake and tremendous interest from individuals worldwide seeking that unique, once-in-a-lifetime experience. That's why it is very important for us to work collectively with other departments throughout the Government of Yukon and other orders and levels of government — like the Vuntut Gwitchin Government and Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nation, for example, and others — to be able to capitalize on those opportunities.

When it comes to land tenure, Energy, Mines and Resources is the lead department when it comes to decisions, whether it's outfitting, whether it's commercial wilderness tourism pursuits and so forth. I know that the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources has been working quite diligently on this file, as had the previous minister in previous governments. So too again, that is another table at which the Department of Tourism and Culture very much provides input — provides the expertise at the table — alongside the Department of Environment and other departments.

It's something that, within the Department of Tourism and Culture, in addition to the wildlife viewing strategy that we have in place, we continue to work with our community stakeholders in terms of expanding upon interpretive signage through our various scenic drives we have throughout the Yukon. I know we have a budget specific for that. I think it was around a couple hundred thousand dollars every year that we were able to add to the budget over the years. That wasn't always the case, but we have been able to expand that. It has now been able to enact a number of different interpretive signage plans that have been developed over the years.

I just want to get back to the budget, of course, which is what we are here to also speak to. When you look to the budget, the Yukon government has increased our department expenditures significantly over the years to where it is today on all fronts. We're very proud of these investments. We continue to always look to expand and to increase our programs, but we really prefer to do that in partnership with others, so we can leverage those resources from other jurisdictions, whether it's Alaska, Alberta, British Columbia, Nunavut, the Northwest Territories or whether it's with the Government of Canada — and we do that very well.

We have been able to establish a real leadership position on many different fronts over the years, working with our pan-north colleagues and working with the Government of Canada through the Canadian Tourism Commission. We continue to look at every turn to be creative in how we do deliver those expenditures but, at the end of the day, we have increased our funding from where it was, at just over \$14 million, to the \$26 million it is today on the operation and maintenance side.

We're very proud to be able to promote funding mechanisms like the tourism cooperative marketing fund; a fund that wasn't around before we came to office. It is \$700,000, which helps leverage another \$700,000-plus from industry and stakeholders to attend trade shows to be able to promote their businesses, their organizations and the events that municipalities have to offer.

We have been able to provide support for First Nation cultural centres, something that we did not have in the past. Now we're able to provide about almost \$600,000 in direct funding support for our cultural centres. Museums' operating funds are likewise additional dollars that we have been able to increase, along with capital assistance. The Yukon Arts Centre, again creative programming through the Old Fire Hall and through the Whitehorse wharf — there are a number of funding streams through the Arts branch.

I know I have run out of time, but again all of this bodes very well in terms of various product development opportunities and initiatives and how our funding programs and support in-kind through technical assistance is bringing a lot of those opportunities to fruition.

**Ms. Hanson:** I was wondering if the minister could address some of the issues with respect to cultural tourism. The question I had was that in 2004, there was that cultural labour force study that identified that cultural industries at that time in 2004 — because the economy then, as the minister will well recall, was not as bright as it has been in the last few

years and certainly is more aligned with the current economic sort of decline that we're facing now. So the cultural industries were then one of the few bright spots in the Yukon economy according to that labour force study, and they noted that this sector was already an important part of our economy and had a lot of enthusiasm for the future.

Then there was a great forum. I think it was in November and the idea was to get a sense of how many people make their living from arts and culture and the recognition that, in the last study 10 years ago, it was considered to be the fourth largest sector of our economy, even though the people who were working in that sector don't make very much money in terms of relative to the average wage in the Yukon. I think there were about 750 people or something. I'm curious as to what are the statistics today.

Given our record this afternoon and that it's quite likely I won't get another question, I would like to ask the minister specifically with respect to the support by this government for funding for First Nation tourism. I note among other things that, first of all, with the number of core funding that is provided to various organizations, it seems to be relatively static — as in flat — over the years. So my question with respect to that is how the department determines it is enough? How does the department assess whether core funding is adequate? Is there a review?

Are there reviews or assessments made of the various organizations in terms of the core funding that is provided? I note for example that \$60,000 was provided to the Yukon First Nations Tourism Association — I believe it has gone through a name change — it is now the Yukon First Nations Culture and Tourism Association. How is it determined that \$60,000 year-over-year is adequate for that organization or any other core funding that is provided? Is there any assessment? I am sure that the cost of living — when I ask officials when I meet with them, they tell me that there is always an increase in budgets due to costs associated with various wage increases or whatever; various factors that are taken into consideration that are normal, just costs, whether they are CPI, or whatever. There are some indices that are used to increase the core of the operating budget for various departments. In turn, when government is providing core funding to non-profits, is a similar analysis done?

**Hon. Ms. Taylor:** Here is an area where there was great emphasis being played at the TIAY AGM in Dawson and some really thoughtful discussions and very engaging discussions. One thing that one speaker had actually presented was about — the presenter at the time had likened how we often compare ourselves to Newfoundland and Labrador in how we market ourselves. She was just talking about how, at the end of the day, the number of visitors who come to Newfoundland and Labrador is almost equal to the amount of people who live within the province; yet when you look at the Yukon, we attract over 12 times the number of individuals who live here, in visitation.

She also referred to perspectives when it comes to dollars being spent. At the end of the day, she drew the synergies to taking advantage of assets — and I know the member opposite

finds this interesting and finds it laughable — but I did want to say that when it comes to taking advantage of the assets that we have on the ground, whether built or whether heritage cultural assets, her reference was about how we can work together to take advantage of bringing tourism and culture into cultural tourism, and being able to articulate what we have in place and being able to better promote just that.

I would concur that there is significant opportunity for being able to bring the two areas together, even on a stronger basis. In the Department of Tourism and Culture, we're really blessed to have the Cultural Services within the Department of Tourism and Culture, hand in hand, hand in glove, and how really equally — when you look at the two of them, they are almost funded equally. Cultural Services branch has just over \$11 million for operation and maintenance in this year's budget. It is responsible for a variety of different areas when it comes to historic sites, museums, arts, heritage resources and so on.

We're really pleased to be able to provide funding — ongoing and increased funding — in support of all these different areas. When it comes to taking advantage of the assets on the ground, the member made reference to Yukon First Nation art, culture and tourism sectors. Together with the Yukon First Nations Culture and Tourism Association — they just recently put the culture back into the association — we are very pleased and committed to growing, promoting and celebrating that strong and sustainable First Nation arts, culture and tourism sectors.

We provide funding in support of many initiatives in support of this particular area. One of those includes funding the association, in particular. I want to say how much I commend the work the association does and their expertise. There was a time when the association perhaps could have been in a stronger position but, over recent years, it has very much flourished. I know there has been some discussion here today about 2007 and how, with the Canada Winter Games, it was the gathering of nations — gathering of northern nations, I believe it was. It came about. I remember at that time there was this pitch to put this particular element as part of the consortium of offerings during the Canada Winter Games.

It was really the first time in a long time that Yukon First Nations had come together to promote and be able to showcase the different arts, culture and crafts available, and to be able to showcase their artists in a very meaningful way. It was an overwhelming success. From there, I recall that, after that, we were very pleased to provide some core funding. There was about \$75,000, I think, in funding from the community development fund at that time. The year after, it was then coined as the First Nation art festival, which also turned out to be a great success. That was hosted over at the Old Fire Hall.

Over the years, the Adäka Cultural Festival has really bloomed and has grown tremendously. There is huge uptake not only from local First Nation artists and performers, but it has attracted some superb performers and artists from all over. I want to congratulate the association for providing that expertise and providing the level of professionalism that they

are able to bring with the hosting of that particular festival. As a result, we have seen other cultural festivals originate in other communities like Teslin. I understand that there is now going to be one that is going to originate in Haines Junction with Champagne and Aishihik First Nations hosting. There are many drivers and many festivals that have bloomed as a result of this particular festival that came about years ago. We are very pleased to provide a funding agreement toward core expenses so that the group can implement its strategic plan, its business plan and marketing economic initiatives. Over the years that has also been provided with in-kind resources from the Department of Economic Development. The group also has and continues to receive support through the arts fund for the festival itself.

The most recent award, I believe, was up to \$40,000 toward the 2015 festival. There have been other funding sources as well in support of the festival, but that is the one that really comes to mind from the arts fund. There are specific ongoing other initiatives for arts and tourism training and economic development.

I have met with the association on a number of occasions over the past three months. They were one of the first stakeholder groups that I did meet with when I was first reappointed as Minister of Tourism and Culture. At that time, of course, we had talked about funding. I had said that our budget had been but that I was very much committed to working with them, and I remain very much committed to working with them here in the months out in terms of going over their projected proposal, in terms of working between the departments and seeing the opportunities for recognizing the incredible work that they do and being able to bring together some of these many items that they have been working on.

I know they have a very busy year ahead establishing the website to promote First Nation artists and tourism experiences, updating their travel guide that they had in place when I was minister responsible years back, and conducting a membership campaign.

They are also looking to mount a conference in the fall, really focused on cultural tourism, as well as continuing the festival, the agency services, product marketing and development, and organizational development. They have a lot of initiatives underway that we are proud to be able to support, either through core funding or through individual funding — specific requests under various funding programs as well.

I really appreciate all they have provided and seeing the evolution of dance groups come up in various communities, the evolution of various tourism products, and the evolution of self-governing First Nations. Carcross-Tagish First Nation, for example — working together with many departments in developing area attractions that that special part of the territory has to offer. There is a lot to capitalize on when it comes to this specific area.

In terms of other areas of Cultural Services, I was talking to the initiative of enhancing funding in support of First Nation cultural centres and Yukon museums. I continue to be overwhelmed by the key role that each of these very important

institutions play in educating the public about the world around us and they help promote and preserve our rich heritage for all to enjoy.

We have seen tremendous growth in the heritage community, including the number of museums and cultural centres that there are in the territory. In fact, the number of clients receiving funding under our own assistance program has increased from nine in 2002 to 19 today under our government.

During this time, the annual funding envelope has also increased, from approximately \$500,000 to where it is today. With the 20-percent increase in support of their ongoing operation and maintenance and special project funding to each of these organizations, that funding will have grown more than 300 percent since 2002, specifically growing to \$1.69 million in this fiscal year and to \$1.86 million in the next fiscal year.

It is part of an ongoing dialogue we have with our clients to assess and enhance funding programs to better meet their needs. I really want to congratulate and thank each of these institutions that are working really hard to leverage those resources and to partner with other governments, other private sector sponsors and other organizations. They do a fantastic job in terms of raising the bar and in terms of how they conserve, promote and preserve their history, and how they can best tell the many stories available. That is one example of how we are enhancing the level of product development, inclusive of First Nation art, culture and tourism.

In terms of other areas, we have, through the Historic Sites unit, ongoing dollars in support of research, preservation, management, development and interpretation of our many historic sites and routes. Rampart House, Fortymile and Fort Selkirk come to mind. There are many various examples of how we co-manage and operate those historic sites, in collaboration with First Nations. I'm very pleased to be able to have seen a number of these historic sites over the years, being able to build upon the restoration of many of these areas, and to support our First Nation partners to be able to help deliver programming and be able to articulate their stories as they know best.

We continue to provide a number of different funding streams. I don't necessarily have the time to go through all those funding streams available through the Arts branch but, through the touring artist fund and the advanced artist funds — those are all new funds and enhanced funds we have been able to enhance over the years — likewise, our contributions with the Yukon Arts Centre, which mandate is to work with the communities and be able to help convey and be able to promote and articulate the many various artists performing — visual artists and likewise in just about every single community.

We are very pleased to be able to support new funding in support of cultural venues such as the Old Fire Hall and also inclusive with additional dollars of \$475,000 in support of animating the Whitehorse wharf.

There are many examples, but seeing the time, Madam Chair, I move that you report progress.

**Chair:** It has been moved by Ms. Taylor that the Chair report progress.

*Motion agreed to*

**Mr. Elias:** I move that the Speaker do now resume the Chair.

**Chair:** It has been moved by Mr. Elias that the Speaker do now resume the Chair.

*Motion agreed to*

*Speaker resumes the Chair*

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

### **Chair's report**

**Ms. McLeod:** Mr. Speaker, Committee of the Whole has considered Bill No. 18, entitled *First Appropriation Act, 2015-16*, and directed me to report progress.

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

**Some Hon. Members:** Agreed.

**Speaker:** I declare the report carried.

**Mr. Elias:** I move that the House do now adjourn.

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

*Motion agreed to*

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

*The House adjourned at 5:25 p.m.*