



Yukon Legislative Assembly

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HANSARD

Wednesday, November 25, 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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Hon. Elaine Taylor	Whitehorse West	Deputy Premier Minister responsible for Tourism and Culture; Women's Directorate; French Language Services Directorate
Hon. Brad Cathers	Lake Laberge	Minister responsible for Justice; Yukon Development Corporation/ Yukon Energy Corporation
Hon. Doug Graham	Porter Creek North	Minister responsible for Education
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Hon. Currie Dixon	Copperbelt North	Minister responsible for Community Services; Public Service Commission
Hon. Wade Istchenko	Kluane	Minister responsible for Environment
Hon. Mike Nixon	Porter Creek South	Minister responsible for Health and Social Services; Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board
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Kate White	Takhini-Kopper King

Liberal Party

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**Yukon Legislative Assembly
Whitehorse, Yukon
Wednesday, November 25, 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 at this time with the Order Paper.

Tributes.

TRIBUTES

In recognition of International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, the 12 Days to End Violence Against Women Campaign, the White Ribbon campaign, and Woman Abuse Prevention Month

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I rise today to pay tribute to the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women. We acknowledge this day, November 25, every year, along with others around the world.

In Yukon, today also marks the beginning of the 12 Days to End Violence Against Women Campaign with special events coordinated by the Victoria Faulkner Women's Centre and Les EssentiElles, as well as the launch of the annual White Ribbon campaign.

These events also coincide with Woman Abuse Prevention Month, which also occurs in the month of November. The campaign runs until December 6, the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women.

It is very critical that we recognize these days with remembrance and action as violence continues to be a pervasive issue for many women and girls in our country and across the world. We are reminded every year to honour the resistance and strength of those overcoming violence and to support one another to speak out when we witness acts of violence in our networks, our workplaces and our families.

As a vibrant community, we have many opportunities to champion when it comes to violence against women. The 12 Days to End Violence Against Women Campaign is an important catalyst for working together to bring an end to this very pervasive issue. This year's campaign brings together some 17 partners, which speaks to the extraordinary diversity of the community partners that have come together to collaborate. It speaks to the level of awareness and commitment in our territory to break the silence on violence and to find new ways of challenging our thinking and actions in order to improve our own response.

Violence against women, from sexualized violence to intimate partner abuse to workplace harassment and assault, are extensive. In Yukon, the problem is acute, with higher rates of sexualized and intimate partner violence than we see

in southern Canada and even higher rates of violence affecting indigenous women across the country.

The recent announcement that planning will begin for a national inquiry into murdered and missing indigenous women and girls is welcome news and is something that our entire Legislative Assembly has been working toward. The upcoming family gathering and Regional Roundtable on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls are further steps in the right direction. These are only steps, however, and we still have a very long way to go.

We are all responsible for ending violence against women. We need to have the courage to challenge violence in our community by listening to women and supporting those who have experienced violence and to never blame the victim. We can do this by speaking up when we see injustices, from sexual harassment to demeaning jokes made at the expense of others. We can do this by recognizing when we see language that mutualizes violence and blames the victim, taking steps to correct it.

Given the compassion and the fortitude that this community has demonstrated, when challenges arise, I know that our combined efforts are indeed making a difference in bringing an end to violence, and every year we must renew that commitment together.

Over the next 12 days, I encourage all Yukoners to take part in the variety of events — in fact, there are 14 in total — that will be taking place over the next week and a half.

There is a fantastic informative website called endviolenceyukon.com where you can find out all of the details for the 12 Days to End Violence Against Women Campaign.

A few highlights include the annual Take Back the Night march tomorrow at 5:00 p.m., a keynote talk by Monique Lépine — the mother of Marc Lépine — who is speaking on the evening of December 1, a short-story reading and films, a free skate at the Canada Games Centre, the ceremony for the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women on December 4, and a special sweat-lodge ceremony for missing and murdered indigenous women, among many others.

As I mentioned, the 12-day campaign runs in conjunction with the annual White Ribbon campaign, a project targeted at involving men in ending violence against women.

Mr. Speaker, our brothers, fathers, uncles, sons and grandfathers are all encouraged to join in promising to never commit, to condone or to remain silent about violence against women. With the strength of this partnership and collaboration, we have a very unique and amazing opportunity to pay tribute and to work together over the next 12 days and thereafter.

I want to acknowledge the hard work of the various groups involved in organizing the 12-day campaign to end violence against women and girls — in particular, the Victoria Faulkner Women's Centre, Les EssentiElles and the many other incredible women's groups, White Ribbon Yukon, BYTE and Yukon College, which just recently kicked off the launch of the campaign, and our own Women's Directorate.

Also I want to offer my sincere gratitude to every single one of those individuals who are working on a daily basis, both professionally and personally, to end violence against women and girls.

I want to close my remarks by encouraging Yukoners to reflect over the next week and a half on how we can personally support and assist women in our community who have experienced violence, how we can change the narrative, how we can end victim blaming and stand up to those who commit this violence. Together we can make all of our Yukon homes, our neighbourhoods, our communities and our nation safe places for everyone.

Ms. White: Today I rise on behalf of the Yukon NDP Official Opposition to pay tribute to the 12 Days to End Violence Against Women Campaign.

In 2015, you might expect that women would have reached the desired goal of equality — that men and women are equals. You might think that, in 2015, women would be regarded in the same light as men, that they wouldn't be objectified, face discrimination or violence based on their sex. In 2015, you might think the contributions of women to society would be rewarded in a similar fashion as men. In 2015, you might think that women could safely walk down any street alone, without scanning for risks or for safe spots.

The reality is that, in 2015, women continue to experience violence, objectification, lower pay, inequality and discrimination on a daily basis. In 2015, half of all Canadian women will have experienced physical or sexual violence. Statistics suggest that every six days in 2015, a Canadian woman will be killed by her intimate partner. Each and every woman has, at one time or another, walked down a street at night with keys held in the palm of her hand between her fingers, in fear that she might be grabbed or sexually assaulted.

Inequality is rampant in all workplaces, even ours. In 2015, in a country as enlightened as Canada, the newly elected female premier of Alberta is being targeted for her sex and not her politics. The comments that have been publicly posted on social media sites are shocking and sexually violent. These comments seek to degrade her but say nothing of her policies. They don't call her stupid — instead, they use the “c” word. They aren't saying she's too progressive; they're calling her the “b” word.

Here is a female leader experiencing violence for just doing her job. Do her male counterparts across the country experience the same discrimination? How often do we hear about the clothing worn by a male politician? How often do we talk about the tone of his voice? Do we speculate as to whether or not he's a good father, based on the number of hours he works? Is he objectified in the same way as a woman in the same position?

I would suggest that objectification is not an equal opportunity offender.

Recently, we have had elected women leaders speaking of horrifying personal experiences of trauma and violence publicly in legislatures, sharing their painful journeys and

calling for change to improve the outcome for women facing violence. In a recent election, we witnessed male politicians rewarded for being violent against women. How is this gender equality? How does this move forward the safety of women in our communities? What are we in this Chamber doing to support Yukon women's involvement in territorial politics? What are we doing to ensure that it is a safe and supportive environment? It's definitely not by maintaining an environment of lateral violence, by calling our elected members “shrill”, policing the way they dress or calling them “passionate but in need of reason”. If we want more diverse legislatures that reflect the electorate, which can only be a good thing, then we need to make sure it is a welcoming place for women, both inside and outside of the Legislature. It's about leading by example with our actions.

Mr. Speaker, violence and sexism against women is a community problem. It's a reality for women in all walks of life and in all places of employment. Violence prevention and education is a community affair and it starts here with us. Violence against women hurts us all. There is a ripple effect in our communities. We all are the sister, the brother, the mother, the daughter, the son, the friend or the colleague of a victim or of an abuser, and we must come together to end violence in our communities. Let our actions and behaviours in this Legislature serve to amplify and support the 10 Yukon organizations that have planned 14 different events for the support of seven other community groups to end violence against women.

I want to thank them for their leadership, for their demonstrating in the 12 Days to End Violence Against Women Campaign and for showing us the way.

Mr. Silver: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise on behalf of the Liberal caucus to also pay tribute to the White Ribbon campaign and the beginning of the 12 Days to End Violence Against Women Campaign.

This campaign is run locally by Victoria Faulkner's Women's Centre and Les EssentiElles and also in Dawson by the women's shelter. This year, there are 17 organizations, Mr. Speaker, participating in 14 events over 12 days. The kickoff was at noon hour at Yukon College and it was very well-attended.

Mr. Speaker, in Yukon, rates of violence against women are three to four times higher than the national average and there are 39 known cases of murdered or missing aboriginal women. Community organizations have come together every year at this time to create awareness for the campaign. The goals of the campaign are obviously to educate Yukoners about the rates of violence in the Yukon and to engage them in creating change in their community and to give them the tools to do so. There are many different scheduled events until December 6, as I mentioned, and I want to encourage all Yukoners, Mr. Speaker, to attend and to participate. For more information, they can go to a couple of different websites: endviolenceyukon.com — and I would also encourage all men to go to whiteribbon.ca and read the 16 ways men and boys can make a difference. It offers the reader a chance to draw

down on this year's theme of prevention. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Tredger: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today on behalf of the NDP Official Opposition to acknowledge and embrace the White Ribbon campaign. The White Ribbon campaign runs in conjunction with the 12 Days to End Violence Against Women Campaign from today until December 6.

As men and boys, we have a collective and ongoing responsibility to actively oppose all forms of violence against women. Sadly, systemic forms of gender-based violence are still ongoing problems. As men, and the main perpetrators of this violence, it is our responsibility to proactively speak up, condemn violence against women and advocate for gender equality.

In short, we need to call it like it is. That's why the White Ribbon campaign, whose Yukon chapter supports the 12 Days to End Violence Against Women Campaign, is so important. The movement educates men and boys to challenge sexist and misogynistic language and behaviours as well as harmful ideas of manhood that lead to violence against women. We know what happens when men and boys remain silent about gender-based violence — the sexist joke that gets cracked by a man is not harmless. Women are still regular victims of assault, rape, harassment and abuse. Our culture of male permissiveness where men and boys remain silent in the face of gender violence and discrimination is an unacceptable reality.

As the father of three girls and working in the NDP caucus with four strong women, I am often startled by how they must constantly be aware of how uncomfortable or awkward or potentially dangerous situations can be. I am appalled by the pervasiveness of gender-based violence in our society. Just the other day, while at a business reception in Whitehorse, a young professional woman came over to stand beside me to avoid an unpleasant, awkward and unwelcome advance she had received in another part of the room. This year we were made aware of the harassment of women parliamentarians and staff in Ottawa. Far too often and for far too many women the need for constant vigilance is part of their daily reality.

I want to thank the brave and strong women in my life and in my community who have spoken out and taken time to educate me, who have described their experiences and shaken me from my ignorance. It is more important now than ever that men follow the example set by the White Ribbon campaign to confront gender violence committed by other men and support the women and girls in their lives. I look forward to seeing white ribbons on my male colleagues' lapels in the days leading up to the December 6 International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women. But more importantly, I look forward to the day that the women in my life and in my Yukon community can go places, attend receptions and parties and walk in the woods with the same carefree sense of freedom that I, as a male, take for granted.

In recognition of Crohn's and Colitis Awareness Month

Hon. Mr. Nixon: I rise in the House today on behalf of all members to recognize November as Crohn's and Colitis Awareness Month. Crohn's and colitis are debilitating diseases that result in abdominal pain, cramping, gas, bloating, fatigue, diarrhea and loss of appetite. Also known as inflammatory bowel disease, they are hidden away in the shadows. We are embarrassed to speak about them and use humour to hide our discomfort. For those suffering from Crohn's and colitis, however, there is absolutely nothing funny about them.

According to Crohn's and Colitis Canada, a genetic tendency and a trigger in the environment combine to set off an inflammation in the gut.

A few things are known about these inflammatory bowel diseases, or IBDs. They are more common in developed countries, in temperate climates. Here in Canada we have some of the highest rates in the world. Men and women are equally affected. Most people are diagnosed before they are 30, and Crohn's disease has doubled in children under the age of 10 since 1995. Across Canada, one in every 150 Canadians is living with Crohn's or colitis. In Yukon, more than 800 people have IBDs.

The impact of IBDs on the quality of life is severe. They affect the ability to work, as well as leisure time, limit the ability to travel, the choice of careers, not to mention the social stigma. Imagine all the upheavals of being a teen — now add Crohn's or colitis.

There's no cure for these IBDs but there are treatments, and research to find more effective treatments is ongoing.

If you or someone you know have symptoms of an IBD, see your doctor and get tested. They can help.

As for the rest of us, we can educate ourselves about the very real cost of the individuals affected by Crohn's and colitis and the very real costs to society.

In recognition of CPR Awareness Month

Ms. McLeod: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise in the House today to acknowledge that November is Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation, or CPR, Awareness Month. It's the perfect time to be reminded of the importance of being trained in CPR. In Canada, up to 40,000 cardiac arrests occur each year. That's one cardiac arrest every 12 minutes. Also there are an estimated 70,000 heart attacks each year in Canada. That is one heart attack every seven minutes.

Heart attacks claim the lives of almost 16,000 Canadians each year. The statistics tell us that nine in 10 Canadians — 90 percent, Mr. Speaker — have at least one risk factor for heart disease or stroke. These are smoking, alcohol, physical inactivity, obesity, high blood pressure, high blood cholesterol, and diabetes.

In the past, heart disease and stroke were affecting more men than women, but that is no longer true. In fact, most Canadian women have at least one risk factor for cardiovascular disease.

It's important for everyone to know about their risk factors and recognize the signs for heart disease and stroke to prevent and manage them. It's something to think about, and taking a CPR first-aid training course is a small commitment to make when you consider the huge impact it can have on someone's life.

In Yukon, courses are available from the Canadian Red Cross and St. John Ambulance. Several workplaces now also offer the course to their employees. Every minute counts when someone's heart has stopped beating, so the more you know, the better prepared you are to apply this lifesaving technique.

I encourage all Yukoners to be proactive and take training in CPR. There would be nothing worse than feeling helpless during an emergency because we don't know how to administer CPR.

Speaker: Introduction of visitors.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Mr. Nixon: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would ask the indulgence of all members to join me in welcoming the president of the Yukon Federation of Labour, Vikki Quocksister, who is in the gallery.

Applause

Ms. Hanson: I would also ask members to join me in welcoming to the Legislative Assembly the regional executive vice-president of the Public Service Alliance of Canada North, Jack Bourassa, who joined us here this weekend for the 50th anniversary of the Yukon Employees Union.

Applause

Hon. Ms. Taylor: I would ask all members of the Assembly to also join with me to extend a warm welcome to Alex Hill, who is our pretty new, albeit not too new, communications director for the Women's Directorate. Welcome.

Applause

Hon. Mr. Graham: I would like all members to join with me in welcoming a very old friend of mine and a constant support to me as Minister of Education, especially when it comes to things dealing with French immersion, Sandra Henderson.

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

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

THAT this House urges the Yukon Police Council to seek input from Yukoners on Yukon's policing priorities for 2016-17 and provide recommendations to the Minister of Justice.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to ensure that all Yukoners over the age of six months can get free flu vaccines at their community health centre, the Whitehorse Health Centre, the Kwanlin Dün Health Centre or at special clinics held throughout Yukon.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to provide up-to-date cost estimates for the new F.H. Collins school project.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to inform Yukoners how much money it will cost to heat the empty F.H. Collins school from January until spring.

Speaker: Is there a statement by a minister?

This then brings us to Question Period.

QUESTION PERIOD

Question re: Business incentive program

Ms. Hanson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Yukon New Democratic Party is a long-time advocate of a strong and locally anchored Yukon economy. We know that, with our remote geography and relatively small local market, our private sector faces higher cost structures and lower revenues. That's why we want to work with local Yukon businesses and industry to make a strengthened Yukon business incentive policy, or BIP, part of the *Agreement on Internal Trade* renewal negotiations. This government has implied that there is no need to improve Yukon's BIP — that there are already sufficient benefits to local companies.

Will the minister tell this House the number and total value of BIP rebates issued in the last fiscal year, along with the percentage of rebates issued to local businesses versus outside companies?

Hon. Mr. Hassard: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Of course, as you may or may not know, the Yukon business incentive program was launched back in 1990. Two categories of rebates are available to contractors and Yukon manufacturers under the business incentive program: (1) the Yukon government construction contracts — rebates are available to contractors for labour, apprentice costs, youth employment and Yukon-manufactured construction materials and products; and (2) goods and services purchased by the Yukon government. Rebates are available to Yukon manufacturers for items produced in Yukon and sold directly to the Yukon government.

Over the last five years — 2010-11, there was \$173, 516 in rebates; in 2011-12, we saw \$351,317 in rebates; 2012-13,

\$571,693; 2013-14, \$804,311; 2014-15, \$452,419; and, so far this year, \$205,469.

Ms. Hanson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's good to get the numbers from the minister because, in fact, what we're seeing here is a decline in the use of the business incentive program rebates for local businesses. So as the minister just said, what we've seen — with the rebates for 2014-15 at \$452,419 — is nearly half the value of business incentive policy rebates issued from 2007-08. In fact, on the public website, the only year we could find numbers for was 2007-08, and in that year they totalled \$842,452. Although last year's capital budget was nearly 40 percent larger than it was in 2007-08, the benefits provided through the business incentive program were half the value of 2007-08.

The business incentive program is Yukon's primary incentive to hire Yukon workers and to use Yukon-manufactured products on government contracts.

Will the government explain why this government is not fully utilizing —

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

Hon. Mr. Hassard: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Of course, this program is application-based, so we can't force people to use it.

Also, in terms of the numbers for this year — or last year, even — the program supports large construction projects that span multiple years and contractors have up to a year after substantial completion to make a claim. Due to this constraint, the financial reconciliation often takes a year or more after the initial fiscal year to complete, so those numbers could change.

Ms. Hanson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the minister for that.

When the government asked the Yukon Chamber of Commerce, the Yukon Contractors Association and the Vuntut Development Corporation in 2009 what was needed to improve the Yukon procurement process, they said: local hire, local content and more opportunities for supplier input.

Instead, this government chose to remove local provisions from the Yukon procurement directive back in 2013 and flat out told Yukon businesses that there would be no consultation about the *Agreement on Internal Trade* renewal. The fact is this government's support of local Yukon hire and content, as signalled by the business incentive program, is lower today than it was before they unilaterally changed the procurement directive.

Will this minister reconsider his position and work with local businesses and industry to make a strengthened business incentive program?

Hon. Mr. Kent: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Our government, of course, when it comes to procurement, supports the principle of open competition and encourages responsible contracting practices that are fair and open to Yukoners and Yukon businesses and that achieve best value for our taxpayers' dollars.

As I've mentioned previously on the floor of this House during this Sitting, 14 of the 15 large vertical infrastructure or building projects that have been completed were awarded to

local Yukon companies. When it comes to the 15th — F.H. Collins — we saw 75-percent local hire on that project so the numbers are doing very well.

Mr. Speaker, earlier this year, under the leadership of the former Minister of Highways and Public Works — shortly after the shuffle, I was able to attend the first annual industry procurement forum. It was viewed as a great success. The Procurement Support Centre will again lead the planning and organizing of the second annual industry conference, which will be held in early 2016. Later today, Mr. Speaker, we will be announcing the appointment of an expert panel on procurement to look at a number of aspects when it comes to our procurement policies. We're enlisting the support of the Yukon Contractors Association, as well as the Consulting Engineers of Yukon and external experts as well from other jurisdictions so that we can take a look at the processes that we use here in the territory and try to build on the successes that we already have.

Question re: Continuing care facilities

Ms. Stick: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Yukon NDP has been asking in this House and asking this government if they have consulted Yukon seniors, elders and health care professionals about the proposed 300-bed Whistle Bend continuing care facility since March 2014. That was nearly two years ago, Mr. Speaker, and more than two years now after the final report on this project was completed.

I'll keep the question simple today in hopes of getting an answer: Did this government formally consult Yukoners about the proposed 300-bed Whistle Bend continuing care facility before putting this project out to tender?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Certainly I appreciate the question from the member opposite. I know that this afternoon in the Legislature we'll be debating Motion No. 1080. I certainly look forward to that dialogue. What this government has done over the course of probably 15 years is collected data, and we've continued to receive input from our stakeholders in the territory to build the case to go forward with a needs assessment. In fact, we've completed two needs assessments that supported our business case to move forward with a 150-bed facility that will be located in Whistle Bend. Certainly that facility, if needed, can be expanded to 300. We're looking at design options, expanded kitchen and laundry facilities just to make sure that if we need to expand that in the future those options are there.

What we continue to do is work with our Yukon stakeholders, whether it is YMA or YRNA, in looking for opportunities to reach out to seniors' groups. We certainly see great interest from around the country with nurses and other health care professionals looking to do placements in our facilities here in the territory. So there's a lot of good work being done and this Yukon Party government is certainly proud of the work that the officials and people on the ground are doing. We'll continue with that work.

Ms. Stick: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Data collection, needs assessments, business case plans — those are not

meaningful public consultation and that's what I was asking about.

Yesterday, the minister said his government has been collecting input from stakeholders for a number of years, yet the former minister said in the month after the Whistle Bend facility was announced — and I quote: "I don't know what kind of community consultation you would talk about at this stage". Two days later, the Deputy Minister of Health and Social Services said it was way too early to do public consultation.

Mr. Speaker, will the minister confirm that there was no public, meaningful consultation with Yukon seniors, elders or Yukon health care providers before this government's announcement of its proposed 300-bed Whistle Bend facility, and in fact this government did not begin offering information sessions to Yukoners until after the Yukon NDP held our public town —

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

Hon. Mr. Nixon: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and in addressing the member opposite, certainly our needs assessments that were conducted supported our business case. That really does determine a level of need.

What the members opposite fail to recognize is that the continuing care facility that we are looking forward to building in Whistle Bend provides a high level of care to individuals who can no longer stay in their homes. This Yukon Party government has increased the home care budget by almost 400 percent over the last 10 years — I believe it is. Those increases were provided to keep people in their homes as long as possible but, when that's no longer possible, Mr. Speaker, we have to move forward with a facility such as the one we're looking forward to building in Whistle Bend. I might add as well that there are investments that we've made in occupational therapy and physiotherapy in working with those people to keep them in their homes longer.

As I indicated, there comes a point in time when that's not an option any more. We need this facility, and we need it right away. At any given time, there's a wait-list of 70 to 80 people waiting and wanting to move into a facility like this to receive this high level of care.

This government will continue dialogue with Yukon stakeholders; we will continue down a path, and we're confident that we'll see a wonderful facility —

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

Ms. Stick: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Yukon NDP obtained documents through an access to information request that shows that the only public information sessions this government held were organized after the Yukon NDP announced our town hall on continuing care. The new director of the Whistle Bend complex even sent an e-mail referring to the list of the four information sessions, raising concerns that it was brief. In fact, any sort of conversation with seniors currently living in continuing care started this past spring, well after the NDP raised the issue about the 300-bed continuing care complex in this Legislature.

Mr. Speaker, will the minister acknowledge that he did not talk to Yukoners about their plan for the Whistle Bend complex before we brought it up in the Legislature?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In addressing the member opposite, she clearly isn't paying attention to the work that has been done. We are listening to Yukoners, and that's what has gotten us to this point. We have determined that there are needs for seniors in the territory, not only through the conversations that we've had with Yukoners, but from the needs assessments that we've created within government that supported our business case and moving forward with this model.

We certainly thank the people who have done the hard work on the ground. We recognize and thank those individuals working at places like the Thomson Centre, Macaulay Lodge, Copper Ridge, and McDonald Lodge in Dawson City, doing that work. The people we've talked to who are working in continuing care are looking forward to this facility and looking forward to opportunities.

We know that the continuing care facility will provide a higher level of palliative care, dementia and mental health care for seniors. In addressing the member opposite, we have talked to Yukoners. We have listened to Yukoners. That is what has gotten us to this point, and we'll continue to do so.

Question re: Sheep hunting regulations

Mr. Silver: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Department of Environment is proposing new restrictions on resident hunters' ability to hunt Dall sheep in certain areas near Whitehorse. This was the subject of a lively public meeting a couple of weeks ago in Whitehorse.

Can the minister explain why these restrictions are being placed on Yukon hunters?

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do want to thank the member opposite for the question. We go through regulatory change proposals on a regular basis. Sometimes it's hunting regulations, fishing regulations or trapping regulations. When it comes to issues related to any of those three, they go through a rigorous consultation process, which is something that comes out of chapter 16 of the *Umbrella Final Agreement*. There was a good meeting — I wasn't at the meeting — and the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board does a great job — one of our partners — and we look forward to using many of our tools to work with the board and Yukoners on this issue.

Mr. Silver: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A question from the floor at that public meeting confirmed that the only reason, in the opinion of the folks at this meeting, for the restrictions being imposed on local hunters was because of the reintroduction of an outfitting concession in that same area. There is too much pressure on the sheep population and Yukon hunters are going to pay the price if this government's solution goes ahead.

Can the minister or the government explain why they are taking hunting opportunities away from resident Yukoners?

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do thank the member opposite again for the question. The

proposed regulation change aims to manage the harvest of sheep in a popular and accessible hunting area in the southern Yukon. The Department of Environment has worked with the outfitter to establish quotas for moose and sheep for most of the outfitter's area, and a combination of resident sheep permits and established outfitter quotas for this area will help manage the sustainable sheep populations. I look forward to what comes from the dialogue from the meetings that the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board has done and look forward to seeing what their recommendations are as we move forward.

Mr. Silver: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The dialogue is that it was the government's decision to reintroduce outfitting in the area, and now resident hunters are seeing their hunting opportunities reduced because of it. There is another solution that the government could pursue. It could restrict the number of permits given to the recently reintroduced outfitting concession.

Is the government open to this possibility?

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: These are proposed recommendations, and I am not going to predetermine the outcome of the proposed recommendations. They go through a rigorous set of consultations. I have spoken to this in the House before, and I sure do look forward to having input from all stakeholders in the Yukon on this issue and many other related issues. We have seen great success when it comes to how this system works with the regulatory change proposal process, and I look forward to this being among the other ones that are up there and seeing what comes out of it.

Question re: Mine closure security

Mr. Tredger: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When the Keno Hill mine site was sold to Alexco in 2006, it was envisioned that the company would conduct remediation and develop a closure plan while also operating the mine.

It has been nearly 10 years now and the Elsa Reclamation and Development Company, along with government stakeholders, have completed a closure approach. Under the agreement for sale with Alexco, the company and territorial, federal and First Nation governments are responsible for developing a closure plan for the site.

Is the selected closure approach for Keno the same as a closure plan? If not, when can Yukoners expect to see a finalized closure plan for the historic Keno Hill mine site liabilities?

Hon. Mr. Kent: As I mentioned yesterday during debate on Energy, Mines and Resources, the Elsa Reclamation and Development Company, or ERDC, is the care and maintenance operator for the Keno site and leads remediation design efforts.

When the Minister of Environment and I travelled to the mine site this fall and were given a tour of the mine site by company representatives, at that point they indicated that they were just about to embark on open houses to share the remediation plan. It's my understanding that this remediation plan is close to going into YESAA for environmental assessment and socio-economic assessment, so we'll await

that and look forward to the potential for an approved remediation plan and work to start sometime in the very near future.

Mr. Tredger: I thank the minister for that answer.

Yesterday, the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources said that the expected construction costs for the Mount Nansen remediation plan are higher than the initial closure option evaluation estimates. He said that the Government of Canada was looking at options on how to cut the cost of this construction plan, and one of the options Canada was considering was — and I quote: "...the sale of the residual claims and leases of Mount Nansen and passing the responsibility to design and execute the selected overall remediation plan on to the successful purchaser."

Does the Yukon government support the Government of Canada selling the Mount Nansen mine site to a private developer in a similar fashion to Alexco's operations at Keno Hill?

Hon. Mr. Kent: When it comes to the operations at Keno Hill, as I mentioned yesterday, I think Yukoners should be very proud of the work that ERDC as well as the Alexco company is doing. They are taking valuable resources and they are identifying resources still in the ground up there. Some of their more recent discoveries are extremely exciting and these will provide mining jobs and economic opportunities for Yukoners and citizens within that immediate area going forward.

When it comes to the Mount Nansen site, of course as I mentioned, the member opposite correctly quoted me from yesterday with respect to what the Government of Canada is considering. Again, this is an option that is up to them as the ones that are responsible for the Mount Nansen site, so we will see where that goes. But again, when it comes to the model that we have seen at Keno Hill, I believe it has been very successful. We will see them provide a project proposal to the Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Board for the remediation of the type 2 liabilities in the 2016-17 fiscal year. We're excited by the work that they continue to do. When it comes to looking at other options to deal with our other type 2 sites, we are of course open to dialogue with the Government of Canada and the affected First Nations.

Mr. Tredger: If the Mount Nansen site remediation plan is coming in higher than initial estimates, I think it is an understatement to say that the Faro project is experiencing similar difficulties.

The stabilization of the historic liabilities at the Faro mine site has run into significant problems and that has led to delays and a ballooning budget. The north fork of Rose Creek is facing high levels of zinc contamination with the permanent solution for this area alone costing over \$100 million.

In light of the delays and ever-increasing costs occurring at the historic Faro mine site, is the minister aware of any proposed options from the Government of Canada to sell the historic Faro mine site in an arrangement similar to what is in place at Keno Hill and what is being considered at Mount Nansen?

Hon. Mr. Kent: As we discussed yesterday, the current status of the Faro site is that it is under care and maintenance. There's a remediation plan completed to 20-percent design definition, but there are emerging environmental issues requiring significant changes to previous plans.

This mine site, of course, is the largest type 2 site that we have in the territory, and there are certain economic aspects that still exist within that site. There are companies that have spoken to our government, and I believe the Government of Canada as well about accessing additional economic opportunities when it comes to the Faro site, but I'm not in a position to comment on that. We just had a change in government in Ottawa with new Cabinet minister responsibilities. I look forward to reaching out to Minister Bennett on this file and getting a sense for how Canada would like to proceed with remediating this asset. Again, it's their responsibility as the owner of the asset.

Question re: Pelly Crossing airfield

Mr. Tredger: With another legislative Sitting comes another question to the Yukon Party government about upgrading the Pelly airfield to accommodate medevac flights.

Mr. Speaker, when a critically ill Pelly resident needs transport to Whitehorse, they are driven by the Pelly ambulance to Stewart Crossing. There they are transferred to another ambulance for transport to Mayo hospital. Then they are finally loaded on to a medevac to Whitehorse. There they are again transferred to one last ambulance from the airport to the hospital. The process is so time-consuming that relatives of patients often arrive in Whitehorse long before the patients themselves. The Yukon Party government's inaction to resolve this safety issue is unacceptable.

Does the government have a plan to upgrade the Pelly Crossing airfield so that it can be accessed by medevac flights?

Hon. Mr. Kent: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The runway surface at the Pelly Crossing aerodrome is in fair condition. There are some soft sections that occur in the spring and following moderate precipitation in the summer months. Resurfacing of the existing runway was scheduled to begin in the fall of this year, subject to a tender award — and I'll investigate that further for the member opposite as to the schedule of that resurfacing.

Again, as the member mentioned, the local community and EMS would like to use that aerodrome as a primary medevac site. Some changes, however, would be required before that could happen and the department plans to investigate what the cost is of those additional improvements. It could require extending the runway for approximately 1,000 feet. Health and Social Services, the medevac carrier and other users are the partners we'll work with on this issue.

I know it is an important issue to the member opposite and his constituents, so it is certainly something that department officials in our Aviation branch are looking into.

Mr. Tredger: This is an unacceptable and long-standing issue of public safety. Many years after requesting the airfield be upgraded, the fact remains that Pelly Crossing

faces a critical health and safety shortfall every day that medevacs cannot operate from the village airport.

I would like to be certain that this is the only instance in Yukon where more than two ambulances are needed to transport a medevac patient to an airstrip. Are there any other Yukon communities forced to perform such an operation to get their patients to a medevac?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

I'm not aware of any other situations that require that type of logistics, but I should note that, in exceptional circumstances, sometimes accommodation is needed to be made to accommodate unique interests. For instance, if a person is in a very remote area and they need to get into Whitehorse, sometimes there needs to be a transfer that occurs.

The specific question about whether or not this exact model is used elsewhere, I don't know for sure, but I'm fairly certain that it is unique and, as the Minister of Highways and Public Works outlined in his response, we are working at improving the facilities at Pelly to ensure that they have access to the proper medevac services as well.

Question re: Renewable energy strategy

Ms. White: Climate change is the foremost challenge facing our generation. Yukoners know that now is the time to shift our dependence off of fossil fuels, but the Yukon Party is still stuck in the past. Their main plan for economic diversification is based on oil and gas, and they base this on Yukon's annual fossil fuel dependence. We know that there are carbon-neutral, affordable alternatives for much of Yukon's dependence on fossil fuels, so why is the government continuing to push an environmentally risky and financially flimsy business case to develop Yukon's oil and gas, instead of looking at viable alternatives that: (1) create more local jobs; (2) keep more money in the Yukon; and (3) are cost-effective and carbon neutral?

Hon. Mr. Kent: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

As I've mentioned on a number of occasions in this House, we feel that responsible oil and gas development is a big part of our economic diversification plan. It could be a significant contributor as well to our energy needs in years to come. When it comes to our current energy picture, though, I think we are very fortunate — 95 percent of our energy electricity needs are met by renewable sources, mostly hydro with a little bit of wind. I know the Energy Corporation is looking at enhanced wind projects as well to bring online.

I think we are in one of the most favourable positions in Canada. One only needs to look at a province like Alberta that relies heavily on coal to generate electricity. I know that recently the Premier of Alberta announced that she intends to convert that coal-fired electricity generation to natural gas over the near term, so kudos to the Premier of Alberta for that. Again, we're not in that position.

A jurisdiction like Alberta really longs to be where we already are, where 95 percent of our energy electricity needs are met by renewable sources, but we're not sitting on our laurels by any stretch — of course, the work done by the

Energy Corporation on the next generation hydro and a suite of energy-efficiency initiatives offered by my department, Energy, Mines and Resources.

Ms. White: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's interesting that the minister never speaks of space heating or the transportation industry when he speaks about his successes.

Electrical thermal storage is a great alternative for space heating and could displace a good chunk of Yukon's fossil fuel dependency. The scientific community is clear: much of the world's fossil fuels will have to stay in the ground if we are to avoid costly and dangerous climate change effects. Yet the Yukon Party is spending millions of public dollars to do the exact opposite. In their rush to oil and gas, the Yukon Party is leaving a trail of neglected renewable energy options, abandoned pilot projects and shelf studies from gasification to geothermal.

Mr. Speaker, Yukon has a large amount of biomass that could be converted into a clean-burning fuel that could replace another good chunk of Yukon's dependence on fossil fuels.

Where is the business case that supports the Yukon Party's fixation on oil and gas?

Hon. Mr. Kent: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Our energy suite is very diverse indeed. Obviously the largest part of our energy output is through hydroelectricity. We're looking at wind opportunities. We're looking at additional renewable opportunities through our microgeneration program. We provide subsidies to those individuals who want to use and install renewable electricity generation systems in their homes. Up to \$5,000 is provided to them through that program.

Mr. Speaker, our recently announced residential energy efficiency program also provides significant benefits to homeowners. As I mentioned before, we're revolutionizing the way that homes are built in this territory. What used to be five to eight homes built to high-energy efficiency standards is now close to 100 homes in the territory — all done through our incentives package.

When it comes to biomass, the consultations on the biomass strategy have just wrapped up, and we'll be looking forward to bringing that document forward to Yukoners very soon as well. Included in that will be a significant opportunity for space heating of government buildings.

So I thank the member opposite for the question because it always gives me a chance to speak about all the great things we're doing on the energy file over here.

Ms. White: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Per unit of energy produced, natural gas represents at least 10 times the greenhouse gas emissions of solar power and 20 times the emissions of wind. There is no economic or environmental justification for the Yukon Party's decision to increase the territory's dependence on fossil fuels. Unfortunately, the Yukon Party's renewable energy management is also hard to justify. They are so out of touch with modern technology that they spent \$100 million — public dollars — for 10 megawatts of renewable energy.

Mr. Speaker, Mayo B is this government's next generation debt. Will the government commit to an

independent analysis that compares and costs the non-carbon renewable alternatives for Yukon's fossil fuel dependence?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

First of all, I would like to remind the member that in fact some of the largest investments that the government has made are in renewable energy, and those far exceed any investments in support of looking at the oil and gas industry.

Mayo B, of course, was a commitment made by government. It was a project recommended by Yukon Energy Corporation. With that investment of over \$100 million, including federal support, additional energy capacity was added to the grid. The investment in the third turbine at Aishihik — in part from the Yukon government and in part with \$5 million of federal money — coupled together, those two projects added 17 megawatts of hydro capacity to the existing 75.4-megawatt system, exceeding the 20-percent increase to the renewable energy target set out in our 2009 energy strategy.

But, of course, we are continuing to work on that with continued investments in areas, including exploring next generation hydro and investing in some wind and solar, as well as the changes we've made to allow Yukoners, through the microgeneration program, to contribute to the system with home-based renewable energy.

We will continue to work in these areas, and, I should also add that, with the connection of the two grids, we have improved overall system stability and are continuing to invest in renewable energy.

Speaker: The time for Question Period has now elapsed.

We will now proceed to Orders of the Day.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

OPPOSITION PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

MOTIONS OTHER THAN GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

Motion No. 1034 — *adjourned debate*

Clerk: Motion No. 1034, standing in the name of Mr. Silver; adjourned debate, Mr. Silver.

Mr. Silver: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As you know, we began this discussion on November 4, and I am happy to pick up the debate on this important question here today.

For many years of legal battles with the Commission scolaire francophone du Yukon — legal battles that cost us about \$3 million in external legal fees — the Yukon Party government has changed and has decided to negotiate, and we welcome this negotiation. One of the main issues was the construction of a new francophone school here in Whitehorse. I won't go into the entire history of the Yukon Party's court battle with the francophone community but, at the end of the day, Yukon taxpayers are out \$3 million because of the Yukon Party's actions therein.

Let's pick up the story on August 26, 2015. On that day, the Commission scolaire francophone du Yukon and the

Government of Yukon issued a joint public statement. It said in part — and I quote: “...the Yukon Francophone School Board and the Government of Yukon asked that all proceedings for a potential new trial be put on hold until November 18.

“Both parties wish to allow the newly created settlement committee and construction subcommittee the opportunity to settle outstanding issues and make progress on the most urgent files. The Government of Yukon has recently committed to constructing a French high school...”

November 18 has come and gone. It would have been a great, ideal time to update the public about what progress has been made on this project, but instead the public got another statement from the government saying that none of this is ready for public consumption. The last statement read, in part — and I quote: “The Government of Yukon and the Yukon Francophone School Board have requested more time for the joint settlement committee and construction subcommittee to continue negotiations on outstanding issues from the court case.

“Both parties asked the court for an extension of negotiations until April 2016.”

The decision by the Yukon Party to commit to building a new high school is a change from the old view of the Yukon Party. This summer, when the Premier provided new direction to his Minister of Education by way of mandate letters, there was no mention of a new school in the Minister of Education’s letter. It was a curious omission, for sure. To date the Government of Yukon has provided little information to the public about the new school, and that’s basically the purpose of the motion here today — to get some information on the public record and to provide some answers to questions being asked by the public. In fact, the commission has been much more forthcoming with information than the government itself. Thanks to the commission, we do know that the new school will contain a theatre, for example, and other public spaces. We know that there are conceptual drawings that have been produced.

Mr. Speaker, there has been a great deal of debate about the location of the new school. To date, the minister — and correct me if I’m wrong — there has been no explicit confirmation from the Government of Yukon of where the new school will be built. There has been a great deal of talk about it being in Riverdale as part of the F.H. Collins campus but, for me and for many Yukoners, the location does remain an open question — again, a reason for the motion here today. Can the Minister of Education confirm the location of the new school, for the public record, and is that a final decision?

Mr. Speaker, we would also like the government to table these drawings that were referenced earlier. The public also deserves to see a rationale behind decisions, as far as size or location, and also what reports have been produced to support these decisions? There have been questions raised about traffic, underground infrastructure and many other details that this government has not made public. There has also been the relocation of the skateboard park to consider.

The supplementary budget before us does contain \$75,000 for planning. There has been no mention of even an estimate of what the school will cost. Would it be \$10 million, \$25 million or more? The public deserves an answer, Mr. Speaker. A new school would require other major infrastructure to be put in place. Cost estimates — if there are any cost estimates that have been put together to address this aspect of the new build, it would be great to have that dialogue in the public sphere.

Another question that has been raised is the construction schedule for the project. Will there be millions of dollars in the spring budget to begin construction or — and this is important — will the lion’s share of the decision and the dollars be delayed and become the responsibility of the next Yukon government?

Given the new extension until April 2016 for negotiations to conclude, it doesn’t give a lot of time, so I’m wondering if this will affect the timeline of the project — another good question for the minister.

Mr. Speaker, the situation that is shaping up for the new francophone school looks awfully familiar — to the way the Yukon Party handled the building of F.H. Collins, for example. It was a rush decision at the end of a mandate with an election looming, just in time for people to go to the polls. We saw some photo opportunities. The deadline turns, in that case, from a practical deadline to a political one, and we really don’t want to go down that road again with another school in Riverdale, where we have a situation where we don’t have a lot of information other than we’re moving forward. I think the Yukon public deserves to hear more about these public builds, Mr. Speaker.

There have been several occasions in this House when the government has simply used its majority to end debates, so I hope that doesn’t happen today. I hope we can have a debate about any new information, and Yukoners deserve to get answers to these questions that I have raised, and they deserve to see where, when and how we plan on moving forward with this very important issue in Education.

I hope we have an opportunity to engage in debate and I look forward to hearing from the minister responsible and from other members of this House on this very important issue.

Hon. Mr. Graham: I’m constantly amazed at the statements made by the Member for Klondike, the Leader of the Liberal Party. It seems to me that he has completely missed the point with all of the transactions or all of the conversations between the francophone school board and Government of Yukon. They’re called negotiations and negotiations — I guess to the member opposite — should be carried out in the public eye and should be done in the newspapers or with him in particular.

French education is extremely important to the Government of Yukon and I’m proud to say that since the French first language instruction was introduced here in the territory in 1984 for grades 1 to 6, it has since expanded to

kindergarten to grade 12 and has been a tremendous success here in the territory.

The Yukon francophone school board, the Commission scolaire francophone du Yukon, is responsible for delivering French language programming in the Yukon. In fact, they are the only Yukon school board operating at the present time. We as a government work with them. We provide them with an annual operation and maintenance budget. In fact, we were just able to conclude a funding agreement with the francophone school board for, I believe, a three-year period, and that provides security to the francophone school board for an annual operation and maintenance budget to maintain or to manage their programming costs.

We are also working with the francophone school board on a number of different items directly related to their school and the operation of their school and, as those negotiations progress, we will be only too happy to make them public.

As the member opposite accurately — in this one instance — did state, the Yukon government has committed to building a new French first language high school here in Whitehorse and planning for this project is part of the discussion and the negotiations that we are currently involved in with the French school board.

The member did a fairly good job of quoting from a couple of news releases that were prepared by the government and the francophone school board in cooperation. In those news releases, we attempted to ensure that people were aware of what was going on, but the fact remains we are not carrying out these negotiations in a public manner.

On August 3 — the member opposite did not quote from that one — we issued a joint school press release that said: “Yukon’s Francophone School Board and the Government of Yukon have together agreed to appoint a settlement committee to work on a number of outstanding issues and a sub-committee to assist with managing the construction of a new Francophone secondary school.” I was very pleased at the time to report on the progress together with our partners at the francophone school board. I also said that we are focused on finding solutions and ensuring a high quality of education for francophone students in the Yukon.

I met, at that time, with the board representative to discuss a number of long-standing issues. I believe there were 18 issues in all, and we believe that we have found a path forward. The board trustee that I met with — Ludovic Gouaillier — added that he was very encouraged by the recent discussions with the Yukon government and felt that progress had been made on some of the pressing issues facing the Commission scolaire francophone du Yukon.

The settlement committee was tasked to work to resolve issues that remain, following the Supreme Court of Canada’s May 2015 decision. The committee’s main objectives at the time were to find common ground for the management of Yukon’s French first language program and the resources dedicated to it. We have found a way forward to work with the French school board on resources. The settlement committee, we went on explain, would work closely with the subcommittee, whose mandate would be the construction of a

new francophone high school in Whitehorse. The school board and the Yukon government would each appoint members to both the settlement committee and the construction subcommittee. The press release went on to say, “Our government remains committed to building a new Francophone secondary high school in a reasonable time frame.” It also went on to say that, “Funds will be allocated this fall to begin the planning process...”. Mr. Speaker, what part of that statement does the member opposite not understand? We said at that time: “Funds will be allocated...to begin the planning process, followed by additional funding for the project in the 2016/17 budget.”

A date had not at that time — for the start of construction — been determined, but a date would be when the planning process is further along. Mr. Gouaillier went on to add that the board hopes that these two committees will quickly lead to concrete actions on the construction of a new school. At that time, we also committed that we were still reviewing options for a temporary home for the French first language high school program — the elementary school — and hope to make an announcement regarding an interim solution in the near future. As members will have seen recently, another announcement was made for a temporary solution, picked by the French school board itself.

That was the first in a number of releases done in combination between the Government of Yukon and the francophone school board, where we’re trying to keep the public aware of what is going on, without revealing either negotiating positions or sensitive material being discussed at that time.

On September 10, Mr. Speaker, the joint settlement committee of the Yukon francophone school board and the Government of Yukon met for the first time. The committee’s goal was to settle outstanding issues raised during the case between the two parties about French first language education in the Yukon. The settlement committee is composed of six members, three nominated by each party.

We went on to indicate that Marc Champagne, Julie Dessureault and Lee Kubica would be the French school board nominations, and the Government of Yukon nominated Judy Arnold, Cyndy Dekuysscher and Richard Provan. Both parties have asked that all proceedings for a new trial be put on hold until the next case management meeting on November 18, 2015. During this time, the settlement committee will work to come to an agreement on unresolved issues.

That one was fairly clear, Mr. Speaker. We were working; we had appointed a committee; the committee met. Then on September 21, the construction subcommittee was announced, made up again of equal membership of the Yukon francophone school board and the Government of Yukon. The francophone school board nominated, again, Marc Champagne, Julie Dessureault, Rock Nadon and Marie-Hélène Gagné. Government of Yukon appointed again Judy Arnold, Cyndy Dekuysscher, Gord DeBruyn and Paul McConnell as our committee members.

We again announced that funds would be allocated this fall to begin the planning process, which we did recently —

\$75,000 was announced — and a date for the start of construction will be determined when the planning process is further along. So once again we clearly stated that, once the planning process is further along, we will announce a start of construction.

On October 15 another news release went out, again a joint release between the Government of Yukon and the Commission scolaire francophone du Yukon. The Yukon francophone school board has chosen temporary arrangements for its French high school program. Several options were seriously considered for the program and, at the time, I was encouraged by this progress as we continued to work with the Yukon francophone school board to focus on finding solutions together.

The francophone school board had, at the time, chosen to move to a portable at École Émilie Tremblay to house an elementary classroom so that all their students could be located together in a wing at the existing École Émilie Tremblay building. The Yukon francophone school board consulted with students, parents and teachers to find a temporary solution for the lack of space. The option the school board selected had the support of the vast majority of parents, staff and students.

Executive director of the Yukon francophone school board Marc Champagne said: “We have studied various options for temporary arrangements with the Department of Education over the past few months...” and that the success of the elementary program is a “priority for us.”

“The total student population at École Émilie-Tremblay has been growing consistently. The school has 241 students as of October 2015, compared to 112 students in 2005-06.” With this overall growth in enrolment, there is less space for the elementary program.

“The Yukon Francophone School Board and the Department of Education will meet to plan next steps.”

That was on October 15. I’m happy to say that the groups have met and they’re proceeding as quickly as possible to locate and purchase another portable that will be located at École Émilie Tremblay to handle the students who are currently attending that school.

That brings me, Mr. Speaker, to an interesting comment made by the member opposite when he talked about — why is it being built at this time, the size, and where it would be built. He said something to the effect of — that we will rush into this at the end of our mandate to make some promises. Mr. Speaker, nothing could be further from the truth. We’ve put together these committees to ensure that we’re taking our time to do the planning correctly, that we’re consulting all of our partners, that we’re ensuring that the facility we build will be the correct size in the correct location and that the budget will be adequate. I know the member opposite would love to have a number attached to this building right now, before any planning is done, so that then we would be able to be criticized in the future by him for not following the estimate or the concept or whatever we did at this time in advance of doing our planning.

Mr. Speaker, we’re not going to do that. We’re going to meet with the francophone school board. We’re going to negotiate with them. We are going to speak with the City of Whitehorse on an ongoing basis to ensure that they are involved in our negotiations as to the location of this school. We’ve recently had a traffic study being conducted by the Department of Highways and Public Works, which I understand will be ready within the next very short time frame. We’ll be meeting again, once we get that traffic study, with the francophone school board along with the City of Whitehorse to determine what impact that will have on the location of the French high school.

I stated previously that, if the French high school was to be located on the Education reserve next to F.H. Collins, the skateboard park would have to be relocated first, but we haven’t done any planning in that area, Mr. Speaker — until we determine, first of all, that the school can actually be located over there. I made a commitment to the francophone school committee that I would do everything in my power to ensure that the school was located on the Education reserve in Riverdale. However, once the studies are done — that will have of course an impact on the final location of the school.

Mr. Speaker, the Commission scolaire francophone du Yukon and Yukon government met with the case management judge for all proceedings for a potential new trial to be put on hold. Once already — it was put on hold until November 18, 2015 because we both felt that we were making adequate progress and it allowed the joint settlement committee and the construction subcommittee to address the issues and make progress on the most urgent files. Both parties agreed, before the November 18 deadline, that we would not publicly comment on our negotiations. We intend to stick to that, Mr. Speaker, because we believe that it’s a commitment we made to the French high school board and we will stick to that commitment.

We have also allocated funding, as I said — \$75,000 this year. This money will be used, I expect, to hire someone to act as a functional programming consultant to help establish updated requirements for a new school, because there was a rough concept done previously — I believe it was during the planning of the Education reserve in Riverdale — that said there was a potential for this school to be located next to F.H. Collins if the skateboard park was relocated. That was a concept. That was a concept developed by an architectural firm that gave people something to talk about. It gave a base, I guess, to talk about. It also gave us a base from which we could determine whether we needed a traffic study and the other associated components that would be necessary to build a school.

We expect that the functional programming consultant, who will be hired soon, will have related documents to be ready toward the end of March 2016. I guess we will be held to that date once again by the member opposite. This is the time frame that has been given to me by the construction subcommittee. They hope to have it ready by that time. If it’s not, it will give the member opposite another question to ask in the House — why it isn’t ready. Again I say that we have

not commented, to this time, and we will not be commenting on the ongoing work or progress of the negotiations.

I think the biggest reason we wish to do it this way is to encourage the honest and direct discussion of the issues without being in the public eye. I am reminded over and over each time I say “negotiations” of all of the negotiations I participated in as part of a union with various managers and then later as a manager with various unions. We were able to discuss in private very controversial issues — issues that, if discussed in the public eye, would increase the ownership. It would increase the tension between the parties, and it sometimes led to disagreements and failure of negotiations taking place on an honest basis.

We will continue to share our frank discussions with the francophone school board, but we will also continue to share our milestones publicly. As we reach milestones in these discussions with the French school board, we will jointly announce our solutions to various issues, as we did with the arrangements for the Académie Parhélie students. We will continue to do that.

I’m sure that the member opposite is curious about the skateboard park relocation. As I’ve previously said, the skateboard park would not be removed before a new location is found and a new skateboard park is constructed. The joint settlement committee’s work also includes discussions to locate the school, of course, on the skateboard park so we really can’t comment on when or where that resettlement or relocation will take place.

The early concepts, the hypothetical design options — I guess you could call them — from previous discussions with community groups, both we and the francophone school board have agreed to ignore because that’s what they were. They were concepts. They were hypothetical designs without any clear idea of the numbers of students who would be attending those schools and without clear direction from the school board and the government. Once we hire the program consultant and once the work is completed — hopefully by March 2016 by the consultant — we will be only too happy to make further comments.

I can say, Mr. Speaker, that to date the negotiations have been very, very positive. We have managed to achieve solutions in a number of areas, but we have also decided that when we reach substantial conclusions or substantial agreement on a number of conclusions, we’ll be happy to do a more formal signing process with the French school board.

Until then we will continue our discussions. We will continue consulting with all of our partners and hopefully we will find solutions to all of the issues raised by the francophone school board, which I know irritated both groups during the whole court process. I have instructed my negotiating group to avoid at whatever costs — not at no cost, but at whatever cost — to avoid going back to court because I don’t think that would do either group any good whatsoever.

I guess that is about all the information that I have available at the time on the potential high school and on negotiations with the francophone school board.

Ms. Hanson: I thank the minister opposite for his comments and for the Member for Klondike for bringing forward this motion. I sort of feel like I’m caught in the middle of this one here because having watched this situation evolve — the situation that we now find ourselves in today with one party seeking detailed information and another being mindful of the negotiating framework within which he now finds himself.

Over the course of the last number of years, we’ve watched as the situation between the Government of Yukon and the Commission scolaire francophone du Yukon has had its ups and downs. It occurs to me, Mr. Speaker, that sometimes it appears that the Yukon Party finds it difficult to acknowledge rights-based entities, whether it is the rights of aboriginal Yukoners recognized — most aboriginal rights that we see recognized in section 35 in the Constitution of Canada; those rights that are expressed in First Nation final agreements or the section 23 rights under the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* that are really the subject of the of the matters with respect to what has transpired over the years between the Commission scolaire francophone du Yukon.

We do know what the outcome has been with respect to the deterioration of the relationship with First Nations. Unfortunately, it has been my observation that the same attitude with respect to Yukon’s francophone community led to the costly and ultimately frustrating series of court experiences. It was difficult, I think, for this government to get its head around the fact that when, in 1996, the Yukon francophone school board was actually recognized as a school board — not a school council, but as a school board — under the provisions of Yukon’s *Education Act*. As such, as the minister has said, as the first and only school board in the Yukon to date, the Commission scolaire francophone du Yukon has had many challenges in establishing that respectful working relationship.

I can recall attending both annual general meetings of the Commission scolaire francophone du Yukon and subsequent meetings with the executive of the CSFY to make sure that I did understand what was at the core here. What was at the core of their concerns, and why they persisted with respect to the court cases, was a lack of respect, a refusal to include the francophone school board as a school board in terms of their involvement in management decisions affecting the operations of that school board.

When I attended the AGM of the Commission scolaire francophone du Yukon in September this year, I was pleased with the president’s report. I am going to quote from it because it was a good sign, and it speaks a little bit to what the minister is saying there — and I quote: “The long-awaited decision from the Supreme Court of Canada was handed down, without resolving the dispute between the CSFY against the Yukon government regarding the recognition of the Board’s rights under section 23 of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. Although the commissioners are prepared to continue the battle with the support of the community, we are happy about the Yukon government’s decision to collaborate with us through a Rules committee to

try to find a negotiated solution to this dispute. The CSFY is also happy with several achievements during the year that represent concrete steps towards this negotiated solution. These include the government's announcement that it intends to build a new school for our high school students...and the adoption of a new funding formula that clearly establishes the resources available to the CSFY for the coming years."

As good as that is, what it speaks to is the importance of not only saying publicly that we are going to change the way we do our business, but it is living up to the expectations that have been set out, because we have been there before. The expectations were high when CSFY was recognized as a school board. Over time, that whittling away of the relationship and the respect leads to the kinds of issues that we saw that led to the court case. We are on the cusp of the opportunity to be celebrating.

Just as we celebrated the 30th anniversary of École Émilie Tremblay this fall, next year the CSFY — Commission scolaire francophone du Yukon — will be celebrating its 20th anniversary. Wouldn't it be good — better than good — to be able to celebrate that anniversary as an opportunity for the Yukon government to demonstrate its full understanding of the current and potential role of the Commission scolaire francophone du Yukon?

You know, Mr. Speaker, at the annual general meeting, the Commission scolaire francophone executive outlined a bit of the history of the aspirations of the francophone community with respect to how École Émilie Tremblay — the campus there — would evolve, because it's one thing to establish an elementary school, but then the strategy or the strategic vision is to keep in mind that you would want your children, as they progress through kindergarten and elementary and junior high, to be able to achieve — and you want to be attracting and growing that community so that a full high-school campus would be established there. The original plan, as was outlined at the AGM, wasn't using the campus of École Émilie Tremblay — that there would be established a high school and there would be a community centre. Absolutely consistent throughout all of the discussions I have heard, Mr. Speaker, has been that aspect of community — *communauté* — that the Commission scolaire francophone du Yukon is speaking about — not just the French school board, but it's inclusive of the French association, l'AFY — and we see that reflected in the committee structure that the minister opposite referenced earlier today — that the committee structure today that is jointly appointed by the minister and by the Commission scolaire francophone du Yukon does include representatives of both the l'AFY and the Académie Parhélie.

So it's really important that, as much as the francophone school board still envisions and described to their members at the AGM that their vision for the future francophone high school will include that this high school will be representing approximately 200 to 225 kids, that it will have, as part of a joint venture — and this is where it's so important that the respect and the relationship between the Yukon government and the francophone school board continue, and that it's not just one singular or narrow focus in these negotiations. I

appreciate fully the minister's role with respect to establishing the mandate for negotiations — but again, the expectations are out there. It has been stated publicly. We need to have an assurance that this government is willing to work with the francophone school board and the francophone association — l'AFY — when they approach the federal government to cost share with them the costs associated with building a community theatre — because it was very clear, as part of the vision for a vibrant francophone school community as part of a community, that the inclusion of this community theatre would serve both the francophone community and the broader community.

The importance of establishing and making sure that the commitments made and referenced in the annual report that — and this is a quote: "The funding formula was adopted by the commissioners in council at the April 16, 2015 public meeting. The formula will be reassessed by the parties after one year, and then after three years."

The minister made some reference to some commitment around a funding formula with the Commission scolaire francophone du Yukon, but it will be in the details and it will be in the delivery on that commitment because that is yet again another aspect of the faltering, and then failed, relationship with the Commission scolaire francophone du Yukon that led to court. We have to make sure that those commitments that were made in terms of the formula financing arrangement are made and then carried out.

There were questions raised at the AGM about how they came to the location. There has been some controversy created in this community because of the sort of ad hoc approach to announcing that there is going to be a school, there is going to be a school here, and it is going to be on top of where the skateboard park is. Sort of a peremptory appearance — I actually attended city council when the minister attended city council with a crew of young folks and others from the skateboard community who were kind of alarmed at the notion that it was suddenly being announced that they were going to be displaced.

I appreciate the minister's position that the skateboard facility will be relocated. We've seen and we've suggested in this Legislative Assembly many times that there are real benefits to recognizing this sport as something that's quite vital and an integral part of many communities — actually around the world now, where skateboard parks have become a focal point and a positive focal point for youth. We certainly heard at the city council meeting how there was a transition of responsibility and maturity from several generations of skateboarders. I never thought there was such a thing as generations of skateboarders but I certainly heard from them that evening.

I think there is a lot of goodwill and there is huge potential and a huge opportunity for this government to deliver on what it has publicly announced as its intent to follow through with the commitment that it has made to the Commission scolaire francophone du Yukon to build a new high school, to work in partnership with that same entity, to work with Heritage Canada — or whatever its current name is

— at the federal level with respect to the establishment of a community theatre — community centre — primarily focused on the francophone community, but accessible to others.

Mr. Speaker, it will require delivery on those commitments and it will require a timely delivery. This issue has dragged on for years. We cannot afford another F.H. Collins debacle. We had a minister announcing in 2009 that the F.H. Collins school would be ready in the next couple of years. I'm quite hopeful that it will be opening in January 2016. That is a heck of a long time after it was originally announced.

I appreciate that there are many, many factors that are still at play. I have been involved in negotiations myself.

I understand that the details are not something you want to be setting out in public, but it's important to set out the broad parameters of the mandate to clarify both parties' expectations so that the public can assess how well you've achieved your mandate and how well you delivered on the expectations that people have a right to hold governments to account on behalf of the people who are doing those negotiations. My hope is that this government has not held out a straw man here, and has not built expectations and is planning to dash them. That would be something that would not serve anybody well.

So I'm on the hopeful side; I'm being optimistic. I look to the effective collaboration and certainly the good will that I heard expressed at the annual general meeting of the Commission scolaire francophone du Yukon. They are quite prepared to work in good faith with this government, so I hope that we can as members of this Legislative Assembly assure that the work bears fruit and that it will serve all of us well because the health and the vibrancy of this community is reflected in the health and vibrancy of our schools. Certainly we want to ensure that the francophone schools and the kids who attend them feel that they actually do have a place that respects them and respects their unique status within the Canadian family.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and we look forward to seeing a resolution of the issues raised by my colleague from the Klondike.

Hon. Ms. Taylor: I want to thank the MLA for Klondike for bringing forth this motion which speaks to — requests, actually — the Government of Yukon to release costs estimates, drawings and all background information on the new francophone school.

There has been a lot of great discussion here this afternoon and I just want to add a little bit more context as well to some of the comments that have already been made on the floor of the Assembly — but I want to thank again the MLA across the way for bringing forth the opportunity to actually talk to this motion and talk to this very important matter.

I have been the MLA for Whitehorse West now for 13 years. In fact, we just celebrated our anniversary just recently — the MLA for Lake Laberge and I — and it has been a real privilege serving that constituency. The reason why I say that

is because École Émilie Tremblay sits in the heart of my riding and has for all of those years. Over those years, I really had the privilege to attend a number of various meetings, from AGMs to graduation ceremonies, to barbecues, to Christmas concerts — and the list goes on. I can tell you that the school — and it is incredible that the school is actually celebrating 30 years of it being in operation, how time flies. During those 30 years, it hasn't always sat in that spot, but we've certainly witnessed the evolution of the school and we've seen the flourishing of French first language education. In fact, alongside that we've seen a tremendous amount of growth in all of the French language programs delivered by the Department of Education.

I was just recently at a public meeting speaking to the various language programs. Whether it's early French immersion, late French immersion, intensive core or basic core French, there has been a whole variety of programs that continue to be offered throughout our Yukon schools. I think I heard a statistic that approximately 48 percent of all students are taking some stream or form of French programming in our schools, which is significant, to say the least. Having grown up in Watson Lake, the first opportunity I had to take French was in grade 7. Again, it speaks volumes to how very important making French programming and education is to all.

The delivery of French first language programs, however, has and continues to be delegated to the Commission scolaire francophone du Yukon. This time, École Émilie Tremblay is the only French first language school in the territory. The French first language program actually began in Yukon back in 1984 with some 34 students, from grades 1 to 6, on the premises of Whitehorse Elementary School. As more grades were added, the school moved into portables on the grounds of what is now Christ the King Elementary School, back in 1990, and then in 1995, École Émilie Tremblay opened at its present site on Falcon Drive.

When we look over the years — in September 2006, École Émilie Tremblay opened a junior kindergarten program, K4, and enrolment at this particular level and on has really grown substantively — significantly, to say the least — since that time. I remember in 2007, at the debut of Académie Parhélie, I was there at the school at the time when they launched it. The intent of that particular program, which is still in existence and doing very well and thriving, was to bring a very unique way to attract and retain students by combining those academic studies with experiential and integrated learning, both in the outdoors and in the fine arts.

I've seen students over the years who have subscribed to the program, and they have had the opportunity to travel widely with their instructors or teachers, who have incorporated the outdoors and the arts learning opportunities within their schedules and their learning curricula. It has been a huge success.

As we have seen over the years, we have seen the enrolment of that particular school increase steadily since about 2006, primarily within the grades 1 to 7. For the

remainder of the grades, enrolment has really varied significantly over that course of time.

As the Minister of Education has spoken to, we see the importance — the merits of looking to the future and working — and that is the instrumental word of the day; it is working collaboratively with the francophone community. I say that with the community at large, the school is — and I think that the Leader of the Official Opposition already made reference to this — really the heart of the francophone community. It's not just a school to house the students themselves, but has provided the source of growth and vitality within the francophone community over the past 30 years. It's wonderful to see all of the additions and changes in the school, and it continues to evolve as time goes on.

I think that the work that the Department of Education has and continues to make, and the progress being made with the community itself, has been significant. We have made a number of fantastic strides on many different fronts. The minister just referred to arriving at a funding formula for the school and its administration of programs for the next number of years. That is no small feat indeed. I know that has been at the crux of many discussions over the past number of years — to be able to come to a solution. I know that these are discussions not unlike those that are transpiring in other jurisdictions, other provinces and territories as we speak.

I want to congratulate the Department of Education for being able to work with the commission on arriving at a new funding formula. We have had to add a couple of portables in the last handful of years to accommodate the significant growth at the elementary level. That has really placed a lot of pressure. I have seen the school over the years, and to see the movement in the school — more classroom space and more learning spaces being incorporated because of the elementary stream — and the significant growth is fantastic. We have seen the significant growth in our francophone population.

The last census in 2011 actually showed that Yukon is the third-most bilingual jurisdiction in the country, right after Quebec and New Brunswick. It is to be attributed to the quality and the vibrancy of the education system and the French first language system in the territory. It also speaks volumes to the Association franco-yukonnaise and their work with the community on many different fronts. We spoke of francophone immigration and their great work in working with the Department of Education to enhance those efforts. We have been able to attract, grow and retain the population here in the territory. As such, we are seeing significant growth in all of our French secondary language programs as well. The department is now engaging in discussions as to how we can be collaborative and creative, responsive to the needs of that growth and that significant demand within our territory as well.

As I mentioned, in addition to making more space available, there have obviously been many discussions, many meetings over the past couple of years. I know that when I was first asked to take on the Department of Education just recently — and I had the opportunity to hold and host a number of those discussions as well. We continue to work on

many different files from the funding formula to the addition of new portables, to coming together with a potential working group to address the issue of a new French first language high school in the territory.

There has been a lot of momentum that has been built, and I want to thank the community, the CSFY, as well as the Yukon Department of Education for all of their very strategic work, their openness and their renewed desire to strike a partnership in a very meaningful, relevant and responsive way.

As the minister recognized or made reference to earlier, there has been a joint settlement committee that has recently been formed and, from that joint settlement committee, there has now been a subcommittee that has been formed that speaks to the construction of a new French first language high school. There has been funding that has been allocated — \$75,000 toward the planning process. Some of the funding has been used to hire a consultant to help establish those requirements for a new school, what that would be, what its footprint would be, learning spaces and so forth.

As the minister alluded to, that information is not going to be ready until next year. There is a significant amount of other work being done on that part. As the minister made reference to, we have been able to again find a temporary solution to keep all of the high school — the Académie Parhélie — students together at École Émilie Tremblay, and that was the choice that was made by the francophone community until a new French high school is being built.

As a result of the progress being made, as the Minister of Education alluded to as well, the courts have granted an extension for our respective parties to continue to find solutions together for issues relating to the court case. We have until next year. We can't speak to those individual negotiations because of the nature of those negotiations and simply because it is still technically a matter before the court, but what I can say is that it is a very timely and interesting discussion that we have.

I know that the motion that the MLA for Klondike has put forth refers to having to release those specific cost estimates, those specific drawings and all of the background information, and I think that there has been a compelling case made by the Minister of Education and by others speaking to the motion here today thus far in why we're not in a position to release drawings and cost estimates — because we're not in a position to do so.

I think that it is a work in progress, and certainly that's not to say that we won't be in a position at a time, but we're not there yet and so we would not be in a position to release any of those estimates, drawings or specific information because it is still a dialogue. It is still in negotiations and a work in progress.

So Mr. Speaker, with that, I do want to present an amendment to the motion.

Amendment proposed

Hon. Ms. Taylor: I move:

THAT Motion No. 1034 be amended by:

(1) removing the word “all”; and

(2) adding the phrase “when such information is available, and with the agreement of Commission scolaire francophone du Yukon” after the phrase “francophone school”.

Speaker: The amendment is in order. It is moved by the Minister responsible for the French Languages Services Directorate:

THAT Motion No. 1034 be amended by:

(1) removing the word “all”; and

(2) adding the phrase “when such information is available, and with the agreement of Commission scolaire francophone du Yukon” after the phrase “francophone school”.

Minister responsible for the French Languages Services Directorate, you have just about five minutes on the amendment please.

Hon. Ms. Taylor: When we look at the amendment, it really responds to the fact that discussions are underway. As I referenced earlier, we have a joint settlement committee and we have a subcommittee struck of the respective parties to really look at the particulars when it comes to the construction of a new French first language high school. There is more work to be done on the location. As the Minister of Education referred to, those discussions, when we’re at a time, will also include the City of Whitehorse in terms of planning. There were traffic studies that have already been underway, and whether or not there were any zoning changes to occur — again, we’re not at a specific position right at this particular time to be able to release those cost estimates, drawing specific information on the new school, because those decisions have not yet been made.

As I referenced, there have been dollars that have been allocated in this year’s budget for the \$75,000 in support of planning. I think that the Minister of Education has really outlined for us all of the work that has transpired over the last number of years in terms of discussions and progress made over the years. Just recently, as a result, we’ve been able to hire a specific consultant to provide that specific information on the requirements for a new school — what that would look like, as I mentioned. Because of that progress that has been made, we have been able to remove this area of discussion and progress of the courts as well.

Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to allude to the fact that these discussions have been underway for some time, and I know that one of the first things that I did have to do — or that I had the privilege of doing — was to accompany the former Minister of Highways and Public Works to visit the actual school in Alberta, which the new F.H. Collins school is actually modelled after although there were significant modifications done in response to our specific needs. We were able to take the chair of CSFY at that time and to showcase what the school looks like and the opportunities. I know that, before that, the previous Minister of Education also worked on this file a great deal. There has been a great deal of

momentum. There is a renewed partnership with CSFY and the francophone community on many different fronts. I am very pleased to see this work underway. We’re going to be very happy to be able to share the information pertaining to specific information as it comes along but, at this particular time, we are not at a point to be able to provide that information because of those ongoing discussions and the fact that decisions have not been made as of yet.

Mr. Speaker, I do commend this amendment to the motion and look forward to the ongoing debate on this important matter.

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

Are you prepared for the question?

Amendment to Motion No. 1034 agreed to

Speaker: Member for Riverdale North, on the motion as amended.

Hon. Mr. Kent: It’s a pleasure for me to rise here today and speak to this motion as amended.

I’m going to speak from a couple of different positions that I’ve had over the past while. Previous to the Member for Whitehorse West, I was the Minister of Education in 2013 when discussions on possibly locating the French first language school at the site of F.H. Collins first emerged. Secondly, I would like to speak to this as the MLA for Riverdale North. This is something that I know is very important to my constituents and residents of Riverdale in general when it comes to, particularly, some of the traffic issues that could be anticipated with the potential positioning of a new school.

I just want to step back to April 4, 2013 and read into the record a news release that was issued that day. The title of the news release is: “Discussions to begin on possibility of French First Language school at site of new F.H. Collins”.

I’ll quote the news release, Mr. Speaker: “Yukon Education and the Commission Scolaire Francophone du Yukon (CSFY) have begun preliminary discussions regarding the possibility of building a French First Language high school on the F.H. Collins site, which would be connected to the core facilities of the new school.

“At a meeting on March 27th with the CSFY trustees, Education Minister...introduced the idea of building a new Académie Parhémie at the F.H. Collins site. Since then, F.H. Collins school council members and staff at both schools have been made aware of this possibility.”

This is in quotes — a quote from me within the news release: “While nothing has been decided and this issue is complex, we look forward to exploring the possibility of incorporating a French First Language high school into the design of the new F.H. Collins...We will not delay the F.H. Collins process as a result; however, we want to choose a flexible design in case Académie Parhémie is included on the F.H. Collins site.”

The president, at the time, of CSFY, Mr. Luc Laferté said: ““The CSFY is willing to consult about having a French First Language high school on the F.H. Collins site...To that

effect, the CSFY is arranging a community meeting in order to get direction as to what would be the best solution for Rights-Holders students.’

“A bilingual public meeting will take place Tuesday, April 16” — again, this is of 2013 — “at 7 p.m. in the École Émilie-Tremblay gymnasium. All community members are invited to share their thoughts on including a French First Language high school that would connect to the core facilities of the new F.H. Collins design.”

This is the final quote from me: “In addition to discussions with the francophone community, the F.H. Collins community would need to be consulted, as well as other relevant partners”.

Mr. Speaker, I think that’s really where the discussions started. I congratulate Mr. Laferté and the CSFY at the time. I think we had good discussions — as the Minister of Education. I know I personally attended that community meeting, as did the Member for Whitehorse West and the minister responsible for French Language Services. I found that there was a very lively debate and discussion at that meeting, and I thank all of those representatives of the francophone community who came out to share their concerns. There were concerns about the facility being placed there by some members, and other members of the community were in support of it at the time.

In August 2013, the Premier reassigned Cabinet portfolios and I was no longer the Minister of Education, but of course work continued in that intervening time between Education officials, the new Minister of Education at the time, and now the current Minister of Education is also obviously involved — as that process moved forward throughout the balance of 2013 and into 2014.

What I’ll do now — I’ll read a second news release into the record. This has more to do with my responsibility as MLA for Riverdale North. The Member for Whitehorse West, the minister responsible for French Language Services and the Minister for Education at the time, asked me to chair a planning committee with respect to the Education reserve that hosts F.H. Collins as well as a number of other education facilities.

I will just read some excerpts from the news release into the record. This is was a quote by the Minister of Education at the time: “A planning committee, chaired by...MLA for Riverdale North, will be established to explore options and make recommendations to the Yukon government regarding the use of the government-owned facilities and lands within the land reserve for the benefit of students and the community at large”.

That’s a very large Education land reserve. It’s known as Reserve 850103. It consists of the site of the current and new F.H. Collins Secondary School, the adjacent lands that include Selkirk Elementary School, the Gadzoosdaa residence, the Teen Parent Centre and other lands.

The Education Reserve Planning Committee will be an advisory committee that will consider the short-, medium- and long-term use of the reserve. The guiding principles for the committee are as follows: to maximize the site for student

achievement and success; maximize future flexibility of the site for both education and community use; be as fiscally and environmentally responsible as possible with the site; respect and provide opportunities for First Nation connections with the land; complement existing and planned facilities in Riverdale and, more broadly, in the City of Whitehorse.

Some of the representatives who were invited to join that committee — I sat on it as MLA for Riverdale North. There were representatives of the F.H. Collins Secondary School Council, Selkirk Elementary School Council, CSFY, Kwanlin Dün First Nation, Ta’an Kwäch’än Council, City of Whitehorse, the Teen Parent Centre, the Gadzoosdaa residence, Riverdale Community Association and Sport Yukon. They were all asked to participate on the planning committee, and I thank those individuals who did participate.

We had a series of meetings late in 2014 and early into 2015 to discuss plans for the site. I think there was a good discussion around a number of aspects. We wanted to ensure that there was a spot for the eventual replacement of the Selkirk Elementary School. We wanted to ensure that there were opportunities for a possible future expansion of the Gadzoosdaa residence as well as the Teen Parent Centre, recognizing that the tech ed wing at F.H. Collins was going to be preserved, and to make sure there were opportunities around that facility moving north on the property toward the new school and the skateboard park on the north end.

As part of those discussions, there were three concepts put forward for the potential location of a French first language high school on the site. These were concepts that were developed. One was over top of the existing skateboard park, another one was adjacent to the new school, and the third was adjacent to the tech ed wing. Those were three options that were discussed. Obviously the francophone community needed to make a decision, and I understand that work continues with the francophone community on a potential location for the school.

As Minister of Highways and Public Works earlier this year, one of the things I was mandated to do, in partnership with Education, was to conduct a traffic study to look at additional traffic that may be in the Riverdale area. There are a number of schools in Riverdale that service the community as a whole. Grey Mountain Primary — I believe there are students who come from across the city to attend that school. Vanier Catholic Secondary School and Christ the King Elementary School are two Catholic schools that attract students not only from Riverdale, but the broader community as well. Selkirk Elementary School and F.H. Collins Secondary School as well have students from outside of the Riverdale area who come into Riverdale for school.

Selkirk, I believe, services the English stream students from the downtown area and F.H. Collins of course is a dual track school. Selkirk is a dual track school as well, thanks to the Minister of Education, who introduced French immersion at that school last fall, but F.H. Collins is the primary high school for French immersion students in the City of Whitehorse as well. There are a number of traffic flows to those schools. Of course the hospital and Health and Social

Services have offices in Riverdale on Hospital Road and the Education building and the Child Development Centre are also on Hospital Road.

As a Riverdale resident, there have been a number of times when you get stuck in some fairly heavy traffic. I've been stuck when the bridge is closed on occasion as well, so we want to be mindful of additional traffic pressures into Riverdale. As part of the development of the new F.H. Collins School, there have been turning lanes placed off of Lewes Boulevard heading north, and off of Lewes Boulevard heading south, into the Hospital Road for the northbound lane and into the new F.H. Collins parking lot for the southbound lane.

There have been some initiatives undertaken, particularly by Education, that will hopefully have a positive effect on the traffic numbers into Riverdale. There was a pilot project started under my watch with Education, expanded by the following minister and expanded even further by the current Minister of Education, to have students provided with transit passes. I think that has been a very well-received project that has given a sense of independence to some of the high school students who use that program. I'm not sure of the numbers, but I think most high school students within the City of Whitehorse have the opportunity to get a Whitehorse transit pass and use those buses to travel around.

With the traffic study, that work is yet to be complete and also part of that was to take a look at what it would cost to move overhead and in-ground infrastructure if the site with the skateboard park is chosen I guess, or if any of the sites are chosen on the Education reserve for a potential francophone high school. That is an important piece of work. I have not seen the final report for that yet and it will have to be shared with partners. Not only CSFY, but the City of Whitehorse is also very interested in that work, as it impacts some of the infrastructure that they have.

Again, the amendment put forward by the Member for Whitehorse West to the Member for Klondike's motion is a good one because there is quite a bit of work that still needs to be done with respect to any potential location for a French first language high school. Speaking as the MLA, I just want to say that I also attended a Riverdale Community Association meeting, subsequent to some of the media reports on this, and there were concerns primarily with traffic at that site, and concerns that have emerged on social media sites as well with traffic into Riverdale.

Mostly for the reasons that I previously spoke to, there are a number of facilities that are located across the bridge in Riverdale that service the community as a whole, so I want to be mindful of the concerns of my constituents and the residents of Riverdale when it comes. I'll certainly represent those concerns at our caucus and our Cabinet table, as well as the MLA for that area.

Again, a big thank you to the Riverdale Community Association and the residents who attended that meeting; it was helpful to me to hear directly from them as to what types of issues they had with respect to another facility located within Riverdale that may add to some of the traffic volumes there.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I will conclude my remarks, and we look forward to additional information with respect to this project and additional engagement with our partners, CSFY, the City of Whitehorse and others, as we move forward on this file.

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

Mr. Silver: I would like to thank my colleagues for their comments here today. I think we've done a thorough job of identifying the concern. There was a promise made to CSFY to build a school and, as other major projects go, we're afraid of one or two things happening: either a decision would be made that does not go through with enough due diligence and we're left with a final building that does not adequately represent the needs of the francophone school community; or worse, a promise is broken and we will not see dollars needed for this project in the final budget of this current legislative mandate.

Mr. Speaker, the minister's tone on answering the question was a bit concerning. He did seem perturbed by the motion. If this is an open and forthcoming government, I would expect the minister to relish an opportunity to discuss not only the successful cooperation that they are professing today on this project, but also relish an opportunity to identify the challenges. This allows the department to address the concerns of the public now, as opposed to when it's too late.

But we missed an opportunity today. I don't think we heard very much new information on the project, per se. The problem is that, every time the government says "wait and see", we see a government that makes a decision that fails to address the needs of the community, or a rushed product that lacks adequate planning. We're hearing from the minister that there is no more information to relay at this time, and that is concerning, because we are running out of time, Mr. Speaker.

When the plans, for example, for the Dawson hospital were released before construction, the community had many questions and concerns, but it was too late at that time when the information started to finally flow from the Yukon Party government. The decisions were all made, and no changes were to be discussed at that time. Major issues on operation and maintenance, on special programming, on care models — the Yukon Party representative at that meeting wasn't very helpful, and said, "If you don't want this, we'll build it in another community."

So again, there's a reason for these questions at this time. The Yukon Party didn't listen to my community at that time, and the project moved forward. Later the Auditor General had a scathing report on the planning of this project. Sadly this is not an exception to the rule.

This is the most information that we've heard from the minister, and I do appreciate the update. I think the minister is confused though. We don't want a decision that's rushed. That's not the point or the intent of this motion. We want to trust that the vision of CSFY is properly reflected in the end results.

Based on other major builds in my community and in the Yukon as a whole, I am concerned that the end result is either going to be a rushed product or the decision will be pushed to the next government to deal with, which is a broken promise.

So with our concerns on the table today, I want to thank my colleagues for the dialogue and hopefully we'll have unanimous consent on this motion as amended.

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

Some Hon. Members: Division.

Division

Speaker: Division has been called.

Bells

Speaker: Mr. Clerk, please poll the House.

Mr. Elias: Agree.

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Graham: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Kent: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Nixon: Agree.

Ms. McLeod: Agree.

Ms. Hanson: Agree.

Ms. Stick: Agree.

Ms. Moorcroft: Agree.

Ms. White: Agree.

Mr. Tredger: Agree.

Mr. Silver: Agree.

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

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

Motion No. 1034, as amended, agreed to

Motion No. 1080

Clerk: Motion No. 1080, standing in the name of Ms. Stick.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to implement a continuum of health and housing options to support Yukoners to age in place safely and with dignity by:

(1) halting all work on the proposed Whistle Bend continuing care facility until such time as meaningful consultations provide evidence of a need for this facility, including its size, location and model of care;

(2) engaging in meaningful consultation with Yukon seniors, elders, their families and communities throughout Yukon;

(3) engaging in meaningful consultation with Yukon health care professionals; and

(4) working in collaboration with Yukon people, health care professionals, and supportive housing experts on all future continuing care projects and initiatives.

Ms. Stick: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We've been talking about this situation in the House for a number of years now, and I would just like to read over that motion again, because it is important. It is:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to implement a continuum of health and housing options to support Yukoners to age in place safely and with dignity by:

(1) halting all work on the proposed Whistle Bend continuing care facility until such time as meaningful consultations provide evidence of a need for this facility, including its size, location and model of care;

(2) engaging in meaningful consultation with Yukon seniors, elders, their families and communities throughout Yukon;

(3) engaging in meaningful consultation with Yukon health care professionals; and

(4) working in collaboration with Yukon people, health care professionals, and supportive housing experts on all future continuing care projects and initiatives.

This is about meaningful consultation, Mr. Speaker.

We acknowledge and we agree that the government does have a final report, *New Whitehorse Continuing Care Facility*, dated June 2013. Yes, that document — a huge document — exists, with lots of statistics and data, but nothing in there about public consultation. We know that this government has a new Whitehorse continuing care facility functional program, dated August 2014, which reviews the previous information and changes mostly information about size.

We acknowledge that there is a business case analysis for a new Whitehorse continuing care facility, dated July 2014. Again, it looks at statistics, potential floor plans and what is needed and it does a cost analysis. Nowhere in it does it talk about meaningful public consultation.

What I want to talk about — what the NDP wants to talk about — is what Yukoners are talking about and about the opportunities for meaningful consultation that have not occurred when planning for this facility that is now scheduled to be built in Whistle Bend. It does not respect Yukoners' thoughts, feelings and ideas on what they want to see for themselves as seniors or what they want to see for their family members when they are caregivers. It certainly impacts all Yukoners regardless of their age.

The Yukon government says they have done their homework and that their health system decisions are based on evidence and effective strategic planning. Given this, one would think that a decision to build a \$300-million, 300-bed, long-term care facility in Whistle Bend — the largest capital project in Yukon's history — is the result of clear and transparent decision-making, but, Mr. Speaker, it's not. On the contrary, neither the plans nor demonstrated need for the 300-bed institution can be found in their own 2008 *Yukon Health Care Review*, the 2014 *A Clinical Services Plan for Yukon Territory*, which looked at services throughout the territory, or the *Health and Social Services Strategic Plan 2014-2019*, released this past December. There was no mention of this facility in any of those reports produced by this government.

We know that the final report, *New Whitehorse Continuing Care Facility*, was received at the department in June, 2013. It's a large document — I've mentioned that before — so this document, this research, this information-gathering had to have been taking place for awhile, I would imagine, but no mention was made of this planning exercise or the thoughts about this new facility in the 2013-14 Budget Address.

It wasn't until 2014 when this document was mistakenly posted on the department website and I found it myself. I often go through department websites to see what's new and what's happening. But then it was removed because it was declared not a public document, but the cat was out of the bag. It was interesting reading because it came out of nowhere. It was not something we were aware of. It did get mentioned in the 2014-15 Budget Address, but really, that was the first public announcement about this enormous project.

Let's review some of the data. The number of Yukon seniors being assisted by home care services is falling as our population ages, yet even today, we heard that funding has increased now nearly up to 400 percent for that program. But we also need to remember, Mr. Speaker, when home care started, there were only two staff. So yes, it has grown because the program that started with two people to provide service to seniors was going to grow and it has.

The Yukon has the highest ratio of seniors aged 65 and older living in long-term beds compared to other Canadian jurisdictions. But these Yukoners are relatively younger and more independent in activities of daily living than their national counterparts. Some of these numbers can be attributed to the fact that our long-term care facilities also accommodate children and adults who have not yet become or are not considered seniors. We are also aware from the data that our territory has a higher incidence of seniors who live by themselves and do not have a network of family, friends or caregivers who might be able to assist them as they age and who do put them at higher risk.

What this government hasn't done is focused on addressing those root causes behind this high demand and reducing the ratio of seniors using long-term care beds to more closely reflect the national average. Shouldn't we be striving for that? If we could meet that national number as do other provinces and territories, we could reduce the projected needs for these long-term care beds considerably. This government did not look at other options that could ease the demand on long-term care beds in the Yukon. They did not consider other options in looking at how to address these needs. Where is the long-term strategic planning? As I mentioned, there is a Health and Social Services strategic plan. Why isn't that in here?

What is the most cost effective way to meet the health care needs of Yukoners? We've not seen comparisons of other programs, of what it would cost. We're just told that bigger is better because it will cost less. Where is the strategy for smaller units, for better home care, for better supports to single seniors living on their own, and possibly in isolation? Where are our assisted living facilities? Most importantly,

where is the meaningful public consultation, asking Yukoners: What do they envision? What do they want? What's best for them? Then, Mr. Speaker, listening to their ideas — and they have many — and listening to how they want their needs met.

This proposed \$300-million, 300-bed continuing care institution will be the largest and most expensive capital works project in Yukon's history, and it's Yukoners who will pay for it. This bigger-is-better approach to health care was selected in the absence of any meaningful public consultation, without analyzing seniors' health needs across the continuum of care, and without costing out other care options. This government has not worked with Yukon citizens or medical professionals to find the most effective and affordable means to meet the needs of Yukoners.

Even if rolled out in two phases, this 300-bed facility will be the most expensive to operate. The institution's estimated operation and maintenance costs will rob the Continuing Care budget of its ability to focus on other options for Yukoners. We don't disagree that there is a need for long-term care beds. We don't support the way this has been rolled out.

Numerous health care organizations across Canada have proven that institutional care is neither the most affordable, nor the best means of care for most people. National data shows that larger institutions are more costly. The cost of recruiting and retaining health care workers to keep such a large institutional operation will need to have a massive increase in the department's long-term operational costs.

We hear from this government about the difficulty now of hiring and keeping health care professionals in Yukon, but we have not even seen an analysis of how many staff this 300-bed facility will require — doctors, nurses, health care professionals like physiotherapists, occupational therapists, recreational therapists, laundry, janitorial, food services — the list is endless. The number will certainly be huge, but we don't know. What is the number? This is not responsible planning and Yukoners deserve better. They deserve more information and they deserve to be consulted.

The minister has spoken about the increases in home care, but when we look at the statistics provided by this department, it shows that home care services are lower at this time than four years previously. We've talked about this.

The Yukon NDP's vision of aging in place provides seniors and elders with the ability to choose from a range of options that are more affordable, more effective and more like what Yukoners want. Our seniors and elders want a continuum of care options that will support their health and well-being as they age, including home care, assisted living, continuing care beds, and quality end-of-life care.

Currently we do not have assisted living, even though a local NGO, the Vimy Heritage Housing Society, has been working diligently on this. They have done a needs assessment. They have done a consultation. They have done a seniors survey with members and with the public. They have the information that says that, with what they propose, they could propose it twice and still fill it, and yet they wait for our response.

With this decision, the Yukon Party has provided no choice and it will cost all Yukoners. Yukoners need the right care at the right place at the right time. If government was meeting these needs across the board, we would not have this level of demand on continuing care beds or the growing wait-list and we would not be setting ourselves up to fail the health needs of yet another generation of elders and seniors.

Long-term care planning has not taken place. We have known about this growing population for many, many years, and it's only possibly since 2013 that this government has started to address this. It's late. It should have happened earlier.

No one whom I've spoken to believes that this \$330-million, 300-bed long-term care facility for seniors is the only viable option. The health community agrees.

In its special analysis of seniors care demands on the Canadian health care system, the Canadian Institute for Health Information shone a spotlight on Ontario's Home First program. This program identified individuals at risk for residential care admission and ensured that adequate supports were in place to enable a successful transition home from hospital.

By supporting families to make decisions about future health care at home rather than in the hospital, one Home First initiative in Ontario reduced the rate of seniors waiting in hospital for home and long term by over half in three years and diverted 76 percent — 76 percent, Mr. Speaker — of those at risk of institutionalizing back home over the same period. They helped individuals to return home with the supports that they needed to keep them out of institutional care.

This is the shift toward patient-centred and collaborative care that the Yukon NDP has been advocating for. It is more effective, it is affordable and it's sustainable. We've heard of a similar project here in the Yukon. For it to take root, however, the minister needs to recognize the critical role of home and community care, instead of watching the number of home care clients drop.

Mr. Speaker, this government has selected a 300-bed facility as its preferred model of care for Yukon seniors and elders, and now it is imposing it on Yukon communities and Yukoners with zero consultation. Yukoners have become used to this government saying that they consult the public and then ignore what Yukoners have to say, but when it comes to options to support seniors and elders to age in place, this government made no pretence of asking or listening. They simply told Yukoners that bigger is better.

Yukoners have a right to stay in their homes and in their communities as they age. It's not just about today's elders and seniors either, Mr. Speaker. All Yukoners are being done a disservice by this decision to proceed with a 300-bed facility in Whistle Bend without any meaningful public consultation.

We asked and we continue to ask for public consultations across the territory to listen to Yukoners' views on options for care, and yet this government has stood silent. We know this government did not consult when it came to their views on this 300-bed institution.

Meaningful consultation is at the core of this motion, and even though it's number three, let's begin with the professionals. Certainly this government heard from some of their continuing care staff about their opinions on this continuing care facility, and I will come back to that — but the other professional health care providers in our communities? Not so much. As recently as when we held our public town hall on continuing care in September of this year, we knew that the Yukon Medical Association and the Yukon Registered Nurses Association had not been consulted on this project. In September of this year, Mr. Speaker — that is over two years from when the first final report came out, and over one year from when the Whitehorse care facility business case plan was released. I'm surprised. This is a government that talks about collaborative care; it talks about partnerships. We hear it but we don't see it demonstrated.

How did no one think to speak to the health care professionals in our community? These individuals, these professionals, will be impacted by this project. Why wouldn't they be involved in planning, in consultation, in having their views? After all, they too are impacted by this, but they were ignored.

We've heard this government talk about a palliative care framework, as recently as the spring of 2014. The then Minister of Health and Social Services mentioned a palliative care framework that would be coming out shortly and said that it would not be prescriptive, but a guide to future planning and the development of all services throughout the territory. We're still waiting for that document over a year and a half later, but in place of that we now have a palliative pod or house in this new facility.

Where was the consultation? When did they speak with these people, these professionals, about what they need and what they want? It seems to me that if it was meaningful consultation with those professionals — if that had occurred — it might be a lot different, Mr. Speaker.

For years, health care professionals have been advocating for a palliative care unit in the Thomson Centre. Why the Thomson Centre? Because it's close to the hospital, it's close to physicians, and it's close to a pharmacy. It never materialized. It did not happen. We still don't have that palliative care unit that has been promised.

Now that we are so far ahead on this project, it seems that for the professionals, it's a matter of sharing information rather than listening to their ideas, options and concerns, and then making planning decisions. As for the public, the consultation has been abysmal. It's not just seniors, not just elders, who need and should be consulted, but all Yukoners — seniors, elders, families, caregivers, First Nation governments, municipal governments and our communities.

The information that has been coming out has been confusing. Let's look at what we've heard.

In the budget speech, it was announced — 300 beds. The final report of June 2013 — the options for 300 beds, possibly in two stages. Then there is some backpedaling that says it's 150 beds and may be followed by another 150 in maybe eight, 10 or 20 years, as the need grows. Then it's back to 150,

immediately followed by another 150, as the first construction project is completed.

In March 2013, this government said they would continue planning for a long-term facility in the territory and will consult with seniors and other residents as time permits. In April 2014, Yukoners are told by this department that it's too early for them to be consulted. Mr. Speaker, it was too late.

We hear from this government, back in November 2014, that the government will consult, but it will be targeted — that the government will not be going to every community and that the government will not have massive public meetings, but it will seek input from clients and staff engaged at the departmental level. That is not all Yukoners; that is not meaningful consultation.

We also hear that the government will be having public information sessions where the public can review conceptual designs and learn more. The public will be able to provide general feedback. When we asked this government what meaningful consultations have been done and asked for the evidence of that, we only received reassurances that they were talking to seniors and to groups. So we ATIPP'd this, Mr. Speaker, specifically asking for evidence in the form of minutes or reports from meetings and consultations over a lengthy period. What we received showed us very little in the way of meaningful consultation, and nothing prior to the beginning of this year.

For example, residents of both Macaulay Lodge and Copper Ridge Place were told of the plans. Some heard it in March — some later. These occurred during resident council meetings as an agenda item. It's only fair to include some of the comments from those residents, and here are some from the minutes that I have picked out.

Someone heard that Macaulay may be closed after the opening of the first 150 beds. Will they be split up? Where will they go? What about the distance from amenities like doctors, banking and transportation costs? Will there be transportation, or do people have to rely on buses and taxis or family? What do they mean by a choice? Is Whistle Bend the final choice? What do they mean by a house — excuse me. What about the land conditions for the building in Whistle Bend?

There is an interesting quote from a resident in the minutes — coaxing and sugar-coating does not take away from what residents need, and they need clarity.

What about optometrists and denturists? They're far away and hard to get to.

The residents at Copper Ridge received the same information at similar meetings, and these did occur over a number of months. It was always an agenda item. In June 2015, there was a note that there was to be a public meeting to view sketches of the proposed new Whistle Bend continuing care facility exterior and find out what programming will be offered at the new facility, but that was postponed.

In August 2015, letters started going out to seniors organizations asking if their members were interested in hearing more about the planning of the facility. Letters were sent to some First Nations — if your elders and local seniors

would be interested in hearing about the planning of this facility.

In October, there was a publicly advertised meeting held at the request of the Council on Aging where it is described as an overview of continuing care services and how to access those services and the programming that is planned at the Whistle Bend facility.

So yes, information sharing is going on with a variety of groups but, once again, it's this government telling Yukoners what's being planned for them. I attended the meeting at the Golden Age Society, and some of the comments from that were: location, location, location. Transportation — an issue. We want smaller facilities spread around. This is a political decision made without consultation with Yukoners. We want another meeting and we want it in the evening when more can attend and we want it with the Premier and the minister.

I thought this was one of the most thoughtful comments. The person talked about those individuals we heard about earlier who are living alone and don't have supports — whether they are friends, family or neighbours. To those statistics about people living alone and without social or emotional supports, they said, "How do we" — and they meant "we" as a community — "support those people? How do we be a community that supports each other?" They suggested that there must be ways we can reach out to these individuals who are isolated. Another comment — is it money or is it people? How should decisions be made?

This spring my colleagues and I visited 17 rural communities and spoke with Yukoners about their priorities and concerns. What we heard loud and clear was that Yukoners want their seniors and elders to remain part of their community as long as possible. Seniors play an important role in their communities, as do elders, and rural Yukoners are worried that sending these members of their communities to Whitehorse will remove them from valued roles as community leaders.

This September, the Yukon NDP did what this government has not been willing to do. We invited all Yukon to a conversation about the future of continuing care in the Yukon. Nearly 100 Yukoners came out. A panel of experts was there, and person after person stood to express their frustration with this government and the process it is following to build this continuing care complex in Whistle Bend with the O&M being taken up by that place. Time and again, Yukoners asked: "Where is the public consultation? Where are our voices in this decision?" Meaningful public consultation relies on listening, and this government needs to ask Yukoners what health and housing options they need. Instead they are ignoring them. If there is one thing I took away from this town hall, it is this: continuing care is a deeply personal experience for seniors, for elders and for their families, and we must keep those people at the centre of our health care decisions, our services and our facilities.

It was also very clear that Yukoners' frustration was not with our hard-working and dedicated health workers, but it was with the baffling decisions made by this government that left them out of the process. They recognized that individuals

who work in these facilities and who work in home care do amazing work. They had nothing but praise and thanks for them.

One of the most powerful moments of the town hall was when the former director of Copper Ridge Place stood to speak. She said that the first time she, a leader, a team member in continuing care in the Yukon, heard of the Whistle Bend complex was through an e-mail.

When the president of the Yukon Medical Association asked her if she believed that this model in Whistle Bend would be one that she would recommend, her answer was an unequivocal “No”. The then president of the Yukon Medical Association suggested the minister take her answer and other comments made throughout that evening back to the Cabinet.

It’s not just those at the town hall who know that this facility is far too big. Eighty-five percent of Yukoners who recently completed an ElderActive survey agree — smaller facilities are preferable. We handed out a survey at that town hall and 65 Yukoners completed it. Two out of three said they do not feel supported to age in place. When we asked Yukoners where this government should invest its health dollars, they told us their priorities were wellness, home care and assisted living.

Mr. Speaker, to me — to us; to the NDP — meaningful consultation is important. It’s important to Yukoners and it’s important in the decision-making processes that happen. It’s easy to do. You simply have to ask. You ask individuals, Yukoners and organizations to join the planning conversation prior to making decisions. You ask professionals and Yukoners about what they envision for the future, for patients, for seniors, for elders, for family members and for themselves. You don’t make the decision, wait and then provide an information session after the big decisions have already been made.

That’s what we did. We invited Yukoners to come talk to us, tell us about what they need. We asked health care professionals to come and listen and to add their voice. It’s important that these voices be heard and that the government listen and respond appropriately.

We have people in the gallery today who are interested, who have ideas and who are concerned about the planning process. These are Yukoners who want to be involved, Mr. Speaker. I’m sure there are better things or more entertaining things that they could be doing, but they’re here to listen and to be seen as Yukoners who are concerned about what is happening.

Before this day, I sent out an e-mail to many people who showed up at the town hall, to seniors I know across the Yukon and I asked them, “Send me a note. Drop off something. Give me a call.” So Mr. Speaker, I want to read into the record some comments I have received from Yukoners about continuing care.

I want to start off with the past director of Copper Ridge — and I quote: “I no longer hold a Director’s position in Continuing Care or work for the government. I did however hold the position as Director for Extended Care Branch overseeing Copper Ridge Place and Macaulay Lodge until

November of 2014 and worked with the government until March 2015.

“Something is fundamentally wrong with this process! There is a level of care missing in Yukon. It has been continually stated and recognized by many, including the current ADM of Continuing Care since I first started in Health and Social Services in November of 2000. Why not focus on assisted living and home care? Little has been done to address this missing level of care. Assisted living is critical to the goals of allowing seniors to age in place and to maintain their dignity and independence. The Home Care program in Yukon does not routinely work 24/7. It would not be difficult to verify this fact.

“Ignoring other well-known best practices to keep vulnerable people out of institutions, this government instead chooses a massive, extremely costly and poorly located facility that is not supported by Yukon citizens. Where are the documented results of the in-depth studies, the statistics and most importantly the minutes or records of the consultations that are constantly referred to and led to this decision?

“Most fascinating is that the government employee ... who is overseeing this project, the government employee who has consulted with colleagues both within and outside Yukon over the past several years is on record in writing that ... this project ... specifically the location will haunt the government for years to come. This inflammatory statement attributed to ... the ADM of Continuing Care must be acknowledged and addressed ... The past Minister of H&SS is on record at the NDP open house stating that the location in Whistle Bend is not ideal.

“I trust ... the DM for H&SS and ... the ADM for Continuing Care have the intrinsic professionalism and maturity to embrace public consultation. If not, they clearly have the extrinsic responsibility to hold public consultations to gather public input. Public consultation is a privileged opportunity to meet stakeholders (Yukoners). In addition, public consultation ought to be viewed as an opportunity to clearly explain the supported, documented and thorough statistical information gathered. This would insure concerned members of the public that government had accurate, current information on which to make informed, defensible and legitimate decisions.

“I can’t imagine giving up an opportunity to show off how efficient and effective my dept/division is. Moreover what leader wouldn’t welcome a forthright discussion/debate around important issues? What leader doesn’t want their feet held to the fire? After all, that’s what gets real leadership up in the morning with enthusiasm, curiosity and dedication for taking the time and initiative to make things better.

“...Continuing Care leadership has a real opportunity to demonstrate their willingness to be held to account and their willingness for transparency by demonstrating humility before Yukoners. Demonstrate to concerned members of the public that their engagement is not only welcome, but it truly matters. Public consultation will go a long way to assure Yukoners’ they are indeed receiving the right continuing care services, at the right time, in the right place.

"I share H&SS's assistant deputy minister... concern that this will haunt the government for years to come. Do the right thing; schedule public forums on evenings and weekends and hold departmental public annual general meetings thereafter. Think of it as a shareholders' meeting.

"As public servants you are well compensated for your efforts. To those who much is given much is expected.

"I reached out to..." — the Premier earlier — "...in the year to offer my help, to share my concerns and discuss my departure. His office assured me that someone would get back to me ... to date I have heard nothing.

"I submit my comments with nothing but the best intentions.

"Sincerely, Willy Shippey."

I heard from the Grandparents Rights Association of Yukon: "GRAY has publicly stated that they are unhappy with the proposed seniors' facility at Whistle Bend. If it goes ahead with 300 beds, it will be a huge institution with six times the number of beds of our present hospital. That will likely entail bringing in seniors and elders from outlying communities for efficiency at least in the early years. We believe that smaller buildings designed for greater social contact and recreation are needed. They should be decentralized to the communities outside of Whitehorse as well as in the city. Research has proven that smaller housing designs are healthier for the aging and save money in the long run.

"As well as the size of the Whistle Bend institution, the location at Whistle Bend is not at all satisfactory for seniors and elders. It is too far from the services that are needed for them, such as doctors' offices, recreation facilities, the hospital and the businesses they use. The location is not conducive to visits from friends and family who cannot readily stop by and check on seniors' welfare. At the moment, there isn't even convenient city transit to and from that location. Our negative experience with transit to the college seniors apartment building does not indicate the City of Whitehorse will readily respond...

"The Whistle Bend facility would warehouse citizens who have spent their lifetimes in active contact with the rest of the Yukon. They deserve more."

Another one — "The Yukon Status of Women Council urges the Yukon government to stop work on the current Whistle Bend Continuing Care Facility until such time as consultation with seniors groups, health care professionals and experts on the best models for continuing care are consulted with, their information taken into consideration and acted upon. The size, location, and model of care that will be used will affect all of our futures and quality of life in the territory. Women we have spoken with wish to age in place for as long as possible and, if needed, live in a continuing care facility that is small, easily accessible to their relatives who may be relying on public transit and where it would be possible for them to easily leave the facility with friends and relatives to go for a walk, a cup of coffee or shop. The need for a new facility is obvious and the Yukon Status of Women Council

wants to see this done in a way that will best contribute to the wellness of Yukon seniors and women."

Another one, Mr. Speaker: "We would like to add our voice to the chorus of protest against the Whistle Bend continuing care facility. While we acknowledge there is a...need for services to those requiring critical care, we do not think your government's response is adequate or appropriate.

"Here are some of the shortcomings of the Whistle Bend facility: It is too big. Even if the three-hundred-bed facility is broken into two pods and those are further clustered into smaller units, it is still a mammoth complex where the needs of individuals cannot be accommodated. It is in the wrong place. Whistle Bend is not easily accessible for visitors; it is far from other services in the city and it is not a place familiar to those who will be residents.

"There was no consultation with the public about the kind of care wanted for those needing continuing care."

Mr. Speaker, I could go on. I have more. I think I have one more that I would like to read. This is from the Association for Community Living: "Just my thought that we aren't coming anywhere near to caring for this population adequately in their adult years, and we see the potential for further segregation and isolation as their needs become more complex with age."

I heard many responses. The public is coming forward; they have spoken; they have let us know what they're thinking and what they want and it's meaningful consultation whether its citizens, Yukoners, seniors or professionals.

We need to do this right — \$300 million, 300 beds. Even the facilities that a group of individuals that did not include seniors or elders or Yukoners but staff — even with those facilities, none of them came to 300. Some of them offered different levels of care, different types of independence that seniors could live in, but none of them were 300 beds.

I want to thank those who came here today in the gallery to show their support and to show that they care about what happens in the Yukon. It's not easy to sit here all day and listen to us, but I do believe that we need to do these things and not just look at the current situation, but to do the number four — work in collaboration with Yukon people, health care professionals and supportive housing experts on all future continuing care projects and initiatives. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Mr. Nixon: Caring for elders and seniors always has been and always will be extremely important to our government. We understand that seniors are individuals with housing needs and concerns that are unique to them. That's why we have committed to and delivered on our promise to provide housing options along the continuum of care needs. For most Yukon seniors, aging in place in their own homes is the most sensible and desirable option. Other seniors, however, require a level of care that cannot be provided in their existing home. These seniors have care needs beyond what family or part-time help can provide.

Living indefinitely in a hospital is not the answer. Hospitals are excellent places to go for emergency medical

care and for surgery, but they were never intended to house people for long-term care. Although Yukon hospitals are world-class facilities staffed by health care professionals of the highest calibre, medical facilities tend to lack the warmth and comfort of home. It is unfortunate that some seniors end up living in a hospital because there simply aren't any other options.

The new Whistle Bend continuing care facility is being designed to help meet this important need. It will provide the highest level of care to people who require 24/7 nursing care and monitoring. This facility is designed for people who truly cannot remain at home any longer, either alone or with assistance. It is being designed to offer the necessary medical care while still being a warm, comforting and comfortable home to its residents.

I need to correct the record for the member opposite. The department has always had input from YRNA and YMA regarding continuing care and many health issues. To purport that this government is not having those conversations is simply incorrect. We have seen time and time again that the members opposite are confused. This facility that we are building is not seniors housing, it is a long-term care facility.

In Question Period today, the Member for Riverdale South asked to confirm or acknowledge that we had not talked to Yukoners about continuing care in Whistle Bend. I believe full well that the member knows that we have spoken to Yukoners and we have listened to Yukoners. As a government, we are committed to listening deeply and responding compassionately to the concerns Yukoners have about their health and housing needs as they age. No policy or program or building is ever developed in a vacuum. We are listening and we are responsive.

This past spring we began a robust communications effort to ensure Yukon seniors and their families are well-informed about options along the continuum of care. We have been hosting meetings at which interested Yukoners have been sharing their thoughts and concerns and learning about the Whistle Bend facility. We will continue this process. People want to know exactly what the facility will offer and how it will support their specific care needs. Through meeting with prospective residents and families, we are connecting with Yukoners on this critical matter. I would also encourage anyone who is interested to learn more at the website www.hss.gov.yk/whistlebend/.

The planning for the Whistle Bend continuing care facility has been based on input and feedback from residents, from clients and families, staff and key stakeholders, Yukon data and trends gathered over the last 15 years as well as industry best practices for long-term care, programming and staff models.

Continuing Care has ongoing formal and informal dialogue with numerous partners, including residents, clients, families, CYFN, Yukon Hospital Corporation and physicians. Continuing Care is accredited by Accreditation Canada with exemplary status. In the accreditation process, formal surveys and interviews are completed by third-party assessors with clients, families, staff and stakeholders. This is only one of the

numerous processes used to gather input on our programs and service delivery.

Not only has Continuing Care actively sought input, it has heard it and is acting on it. There are currently 70 to 80 Yukoners requiring long-term care who have been placed on a wait-list. This government is acting positively and in a timely way to address the needs of Yukoners for care in their homes as well as in long-term care facilities.

Canada is experiencing a growing seniors population. The Government of Yukon is striving to be proactive in addressing their needs in the best way possible. The size and location of the Whistle Bend continuing care facility was driven by an evidence-informed business plan. Government of Yukon made tough decisions about the size and location of the facility that made sense based on Yukon's needs using research, hard data and business analysis. This facility will well serve current and future Yukoners and will be the envy of other Canadians.

The long-term care wait-list has steadily increased over recent years, which creates stress on Yukoners with care needs and their informal care providers. As well, it creates high demand on acute care hospital beds. In the next 10 years, the seniors population in Yukon will almost double. Generally, Yukon long-term care residents are more complex than those in southern jurisdictions. Six to 15 percent of Canadian seniors aged 65 years and older have dementia. This number is expected to double by the year 2031. Yukon facility residents and home care clients experience the highest rate of cognitive loss related to dementia across all Canadian jurisdictions. Fewer Yukon home care clients have an informal caregiver than nationally. More informal caregivers are a distant family member, friend or neighbour.

Yukon Continuing Care provides services to clients of all ages, with all types of diagnoses and functional losses. There is no wait-list for home care services.

Government is using a design/build process to optimize the return on tax dollars in planning Whistle Bend continuing care facility. Partnerships BC is involved to provide procurement expertise. The design is driven by criteria developed by Yukon government. The facility building with 150 bedrooms will be completed in 2018.

Mr. Speaker, CIHI, or the Canadian Institute for Health Information, collects national health care data to assist organizations and health systems to improve care. There are nine data elements collected for long-term care. The outcomes reported on are: restraint use, potentially inappropriate use of antipsychotics, falls in the last 30 days, worsened pressure ulcer, worsened depressive mood, improved physical functioning, worsened physical functioning, and experiencing pain.

Continuing Care utilizes the data from its submission to improve care to clients and to residents. This data allows a means of comparison to other long-term care facilities across the country and to networking for best practices and benchmarking of standards of care as well as programming models.

Yukon continues to focus on improving outcomes in areas including potentially inappropriate use of antipsychotics and worsened pressure ulcer with new projects led by our nursing staff through joint projects with the Canadian Foundation for Healthcare Improvement and increased awareness through training provided through the Canadian Association of Wound Care.

Yukon was the first jurisdiction to provide these data submissions. Home care provided their data in 2007, Copper Ridge provided their data in 2008, and all four facilities were providing data by 2012. Yukon is represented on the national home care advisory committee since inception. All four continuing care facilities and home care complete assessments quarterly for the submission to that organization.

The resident assessment instrument, or RAI, was developed to provide maximum data through an assessment during specific time increments utilizing medical history, medical diagnosis, physical examination and active participation from the resident and/or their family member, which, when calculated, provide potential and actual health concerns.

Continuing Care began training staff to use this model and the information it provides to us in 2004. Currently each resident receives a full review on admission and then again annually. Each quarter a brief review occurs to ensure that any discrete changes are noted and properly addressed. This is also done when significant health changes occur.

Within our facilities, we have one RAI coordinator for every 48 residents. Coordinators have a high rate of inter-reliability due to their regular upgrading on the assessment instrument.

Due to our small jurisdiction, we have low actual numbers with which CIHI manipulates to provide risk adjustment numbers to create more equality with the rest of Canada.

We're currently working with our software provider, which is GoldCare, to begin using a new tool created by interRAI called the Contact Assessment. It will provide us with direction as to whether someone can be supported in the community or requires hospital supports. We would be the first jurisdiction to provide this type of data submission.

Earlier in Question Period, I mentioned the physiotherapy and occupational therapy delivery. Those services are provided to home care clients in Whitehorse and the communities by staff of Community Care's home care program. In Whitehorse, Dawson and Watson Lake, outpatient therapy services are provided by the Yukon Hospital Corporation. In all other communities outside of Whitehorse, itinerant visits are done by occupational therapists and physiotherapists from home care. This is an important model in keeping people in their homes as long as possible.

Across Canada, many jurisdictions are responding to the increases in care needs of the aging population by implementing initiatives in the home care sector. These initiatives, often called Home First or Home Again, are focused on providing enhanced services and preventing or delaying admission to acute and long-term care facilities. In

January of this year, Mr. Speaker, the Yukon Home Care Program responded to the current pressure on the acute care system, related to the shortage of long-term care beds, by providing additional supports to complex clients right in their homes. This initiative was titled "Complex Care Supports", or CCS.

To date, nine clients with needs beyond the normal service limits of the Yukon Home Care Program were supported to stay at home and/or be discharged to home from the Whitehorse General Hospital. Without these supports, these individuals would require an inpatient hospital stay, or long-term care placement. A social worker from home care was designated to work with the Whitehorse General Hospital to support the coordinator of care and service planning for these individuals. Additional supports from home care were required, primarily home support services.

Currently, as I indicated earlier, there are between 70 and 80 individuals waiting for services in a continuing care facility. A significant number of these individuals are waiting in hospital. The government is committed to meeting the care needs of seniors and elders. Actions to date would include: in December 2014, the Thomson Centre added two additional long-term beds; in June of this year, Macaulay Lodge repurposed space within the building to move two rooms from the upper to the lower floor to accommodate individuals with higher needs; a 10-bed care facility will open on Sixth Avenue early in the new year; the new McDonald Lodge opening in early spring of 2016 will have 15 beds instead of the current 11 and has the ability to have five additional beds constructed, if required.

In Whitehorse, the design process for the 150-bed facility in Whistle Bend has started, with plans to open in 2018. The Yukon Home Care Program continues to look at ways to support people at home, with increasing levels of dementia and complex care needs.

In the 10 years from 2004 to 2014, our Yukon population increased by 19.7 percent. In 2014, Yukoners 65 and older were 10.7 percent of our population. In the next 10 years, the same age group will almost double, as the current Yukon population has 19 percent in the age group of 55 to 69 years old.

People are waiting longer on the wait-lists for long-term care beds. A significant number of these people's care needs are high enough that they are waiting in hospital either in Whitehorse, Dawson City or Watson Lake. Elective surgeries have been impacted because of there being no beds available in the Whitehorse General Hospital. This has an immediate impact on our health system — when acute care beds are not available because of so many spots being used as a substitute for lack of long-term care beds.

The Whitehorse General Hospital reports that approximately eight surgeries were cancelled or rescheduled last year due to bed shortages and reports that the number of people waiting in ER overnight has increased four to five times from what it was five years ago. The cost to care for people in acute care hospital is approximately six times the cost of long-term care. In Whitehorse, there are currently 96

beds at Copper Ridge Place, 47 beds at Macaulay Lodge, and 30 beds at Thomson Centre. There are 11 beds at McDonald Lodge in Dawson City, and that will be increasing to 15, as I indicated earlier.

Earlier in my remarks, I had indicated the reduction in antipsychotic medications. In February 2015, just shortly after I was appointed Minister of Health and Social Services, I had the opportunity to release that information. The release reads: "Six months into an innovative project funded through Canadian Foundation for Healthcare Improvement (CFHI), Copper Ridge Place residents and staff are experiencing positive results." I made that announcement in Dawson City. I said: "Of the residents on the special care unit who are prescribed antipsychotic medications, more than half have had their prescriptions for antipsychotics reduced since the pilot project began in August. Staff report that some residents are enjoying an improved quality of life – this is a huge benefit and a clear sign of success."

Yukon is one of 15 health care bodies across Canada to be accepted into the reducing antipsychotic medication use in long term care pilot project. Yukon receives funding and support from that organization — the Canadian Foundation for Healthcare Improvement.

At the national level, Choosing Wisely Canada, a coalition of physician groups, is also promoting the reduced reliance on antipsychotics for dementia patients. They are also supporting these efforts.

They indicated in the press release that they are delighted to see the impressive results achieved by Yukon Continuing Care, one of the leaders in this Canada-wide effort. They went on to say that: "Through collaboration, we are helping to spread innovative ways of working that are improving care for patients and their families."

The release went on to read: "Over the past six months, staff at the Copper Ridge Place special care unit have worked on person-centred strategies to manage difficult behaviours that resulted in the use of antipsychotics. The unit has now reduced the number of these prescriptions by more than half, and discontinued use completely for some residents."

I went on to say in the press release that one of the benefits of a small jurisdiction participating in pilots such as this is our ability to see immediate results. This is a tremendous success to be celebrated. Adding the initiative will now move into Yukon's other continuing care facilities.

Continuing Care is involved, as I indicated, in this national project to prioritize person-centred dementia care. This project aims to provide the quality of life of residents and reduce serious side effects associated with the family of medications known as antipsychotics. These side effects include increased risk of falls, stroke, heart attack, and even death. This project focuses on using person-centred behavioural strategies to manage challenging behaviours in residents with dementia rather than using medications with significant side effect profiles. Since beginning the project, the use of antipsychotic medications decreased by approximately 40 percent across continuing care facilities.

Yukon has been asked to present at the Institute for Healthcare Improvement's international forum on quality improvement in health care to speak about our success and how we were able to exceed our goal in this area.

Continuing Care is committed to providing evidence-based, person-centred care in all of our facilities. Continuing Care staff work with residents to create an environment that reduces feelings of loneliness, helplessness and boredom. The design for the 150-bed Whistle Bend care facility will be a dementia-friendly facility. It will incorporate best-practice features, including resident control over environment, connection to light, nature and the outdoors, and respect for cultural diversity and the creation of home and community.

The home care program's caseload increased by 252 percent between 2001 and 2015. Home care in communities outside of Whitehorse increased significantly over this period to the point where it is now 41 percent of the entire caseload. Those statistics are from August of this year. In the same period, permanent home care positions have been designated to provide support to communities all across Yukon. Between 2001 and 2015, home care's budget increased by 389 percent. In the next 10 years, the Yukon seniors population will almost double, as I indicated earlier in my remarks, as the current Yukon population has 19 percent in the age group 55 to 69 years.

The referral rates and complexity of care required by individuals continue to grow with the program. Home care is working collaboratively with Whitehorse General Hospital to support discharge and enhanced home care services for individuals with those higher complex care needs. At the same time, home care has enhanced its service to specific individuals to prevent hospitalization. Home care in Yukon offers one of the most comprehensive services in Canada, including professional health care services, personal care and support services, including light housekeeping, meal preparation, shopping and caregiver respite.

Home care participates with the Whitehorse General Hospital on a committee to look at planning discharges for inpatients who are designated "alternative level of care" and awaiting placement in long-term care beds.

In addition, there is now a home care social worker at the Whitehorse General Hospital to help expedite discharge for individuals with complex care needs to home care. At times, elective surgeries have been impacted due to no beds being available in the Whitehorse General Hospital. We know there is an immediate impact on our health system when those acute care beds are not available because so many spots are being used by people who require long-term care.

Yukon's population is aging, and more Yukon seniors choose to retire here than they did in the past. This requires that planning for increased needs in all care areas, including palliative care, occur in a coordinated fashion. The palliative care resource team was established in 2008 with the territorial health access fund. That has continued to receive increases in referrals every year.

This fiscal year, permanent funding has been assigned to support this team's ongoing work. The palliative care resource

team supports care in all Yukon settings that provide palliative care services, including community nursing, acute care hospitals and continuing care facilities, as well as home care and First Nation health programs. The team includes a nurse, a social worker, a community liaison coordinator and a contracted physician.

This year, Health and Social Services provides \$220,000 in funding for Hospice Yukon Society to purchase the house where those services have been provided for the last 17 years. The demand in referral rates for palliative care support has continued to increase through the history of the program. This programming has an ongoing evaluation process to look at effectiveness and use of resources to best meet the needs of Yukoners.

Mr. Speaker, generally, living supports fall across the continuum — home living, supportive living, assisted living and residential care. Home living is for people who live in their home, apartment, condominium or in another independent living option. They are responsible for arranging any home care and support services they require.

Supportive living combines accommodation services with other supports and care. It meets the needs of a wide range of people, but not those with highly complex and serious health care needs. In addition to providing a place to live, supportive living can include meals, housekeeping and social activities. Supportive living residents can also receive professional and personal support services through home care. A Yukon example would be those individuals who are supported through the residential programs offered through Teegatha'Oh Zheh. They access individualized services from home care based on specific individual needs.

The Yukon Housing Corporation provides accessible and affordable seniors housing in Whitehorse and Haines Junction, and home care is accessed as needed. Assisted living services provide housing, hospitality services and personal care services for adults who can live independently and make decisions on their own behalf, but require a supportive environment due to physical and functional health challenges. In some jurisdictions, assisted living is considered a supportive living option. Currently, this type of care is not offered in Yukon. Continuing care, or facility living, includes long-term care facilities, nursing homes or auxiliary hospitals. Continuing care provides 24-hour professional supervision and care in a protective, supportive environment for people who have complex care needs who are unable to remain at home or in a supportive living setting. The Whistle Bend care facility will deliver care for people with complex care needs.

The overall goal of the Whistle Bend facility project is to have a facility that will provide a healthy and supportive home environment for continuing care residents. The facility will be the residents' home, operated with a resident-centred philosophy emphasizing sense of place, sense of community, sense of integration and access to outdoors and light. It will be based on a village concept where the most private level of the spectrum is the house. Each house includes a group of residents' rooms plus a range of family spaces that accommodate activities such as meals, reading and

socializing. Standard houses are connected by routes, which lead to the neighbourhood squares where residents from various houses can socialize informally in a seating alcove and gardening area. They can organize family get-togethers and obtain services, such as medical examinations.

Within the plan for the 150 beds, there will be five standard houses, a specialized mental health unit and a community hospice/palliative care unit. The village centre is the focal point for a range of activities serving all residents, visitors, community programs and the general public. The main entrance to the facility will connect directly to the village centre, which will be configured as an entire lobby surrounded by a variety of services and program routes, such as a gift or tuck shop and a hair and foot care salon.

The need for a significant number of new care facility beds in our territory has been confirmed through two needs assessments and a business case conducted for the government and the current patterns of usage of long-term care and the long and growing wait-lists for facility beds. Acute care beds are also being taken by patients requiring an alternate level of care and who should be in a facility rather than in an acute care hospital. The government is being proactive in planning for the care needs of our seniors and our elders and the significant number of individuals who will be living with dementia in the near future. Design and procurement phases are underway, with the construction set to begin in early 2016. Partnerships BC is being used to assist Yukon government during the procurement phase of the project and, of course, stakeholder input from key groups is being sought throughout the design phase.

Continuing Care representatives spoke before city council on March 16, 2015, regarding the need for this facility to proceed and how it will fit into the neighbourhood of Whistle Bend. At any given time, as I had indicated earlier, there can be upward of 70 or 80 individuals waiting for services of a continuing care facility. The planning is for a 150-bed facility to open in 2018 and there is an expansion if and when needed, Mr. Speaker.

"A detailed needs analysis was prepared by using population projections, a review of aggregate client data, trends analysis and other information to determine the number and type of beds/programs required to provide a range of long term care services. Compiling this report involved meeting with HSSCC to gather the required information including establishing the current staffing condition, identifying individual positions and requirements and finally determining space needs for the new facility.

"In the past 20 years, residential care capacity has tripled. With the population of seniors projected to approximately double within the next decade, continuing significant growth in the demand for Continuing Care resources, including residential care beds and programs ..." those are thing that we need to anticipate.

"... data clearly demonstrate that, relative to Canadian averages, the residential care population in Yukon is more clinically complex and has higher needs. Residents are

younger and more mobile, but tend to have unstable health and are at risk of functional decline.

“Various metrics can be utilized to estimate projected demand for residential care beds. Yukon is unique due to the relatively small and dispersed population, and the array and scope of residential care needs.” Population modeling assumptions underlying projections need to be valid for the demographic and health care needs of the population in our territory, which certainly differ from other jurisdictions.

“The projections for new beds range from a low estimate of a total of 243 beds to a high estimate of 383 beds. The overall average across all scenarios is 321 beds. Health and Social Services has a current stock of 182 beds.

“Based on historic growth in demand and service delivery, and current demographic projections, there is strong evidence that Continuing Care will face very significant demand for increased capacity — nearly double the current capacity within the next decade, and continued growth beyond 2021.

“Additionally there will be a need to upgrade existing facility infrastructure to meet current and emerging care needs that can no longer be safely and adequately accommodated.”

“The scope of demand is significant, and meeting the need effectively and appropriately will require considerable planning and evaluation to meet both operational and capital objectives. The total number of beds required, particularly if existing capacity is replaced, provide an opportunity for renewal and expansion of program capacity and more efficient, appropriate and flexible delivery of residential care resources.”

During the course of the research, eight managers of continuing care facilities in BC were asked to consider the optimum size of individual facilities. Most acknowledged a minimum size of approximately 125 beds.

However, all those consulted felt that the most important element of the facility is the neighbourhood. The size and design of the neighbourhood grouping of rooms has a more significant impact on staffing efficiencies and resident welfare than overall facility size. If the neighbourhood design is flexible, efficient and effective, then a capacity of 200 to 300 or more people in one location is possible.

A high level review and physical evaluation of the buildings and space currently occupied by Health and Social Services Continuing Care was undertaken involving architectural, structural, mechanical and electrical reviews of the current conditions in both facilities.

Mr. Speaker, the review team based their evaluation criteria and the report format on the 2009 Yukon health care facilities building assessments for the purpose of consistency. The technical assessment of Copper Ridge and Macaulay Lodge had relatively predictable results, with Copper Ridge scoring better grades overall due its relatively youthful age. Macaulay Lodge scored much lower due to the fact that the building is nearing the end of its design life.

Mr. Speaker, the mandate of the Continuing Care division of Health and Social Services is the development and delivery of a comprehensive health services approach toward meeting

the needs of the physically disabled and senior population of our territory, achieved through a dynamic continuum of care services that include community- and facility-based care models. Continuing care is not a type of service, but is a complex system of service delivery. Continuing Care has identified the need to increase their residential care bed capacity. All existing beds are filled with significant wait-lists that continue to grow. All current facilities are at full capacity. McDonald Lodge in Dawson City, as you know, is being replaced, Macaulay Lodge is nearing the end of its life and Copper Ridge Place in Whitehorse is now 13 years old. In order to continue to meet its mandate, a comprehensive needs analysis, physical facilities evaluation and functional evaluation report are being completed.

The needs assessment evaluation includes three independent methodologies to estimate projected demand for residential care beds to 2021. The overall average of the projection methodologies is 321 beds. Consistent with historic projections, the evaluation confirms that demand for continuing care beds will continue to increase, with at least 260 beds needed by 2021, with a current stock of only 182.

Of the various projection methodologies, the estimates based on current actuals used are most likely to be valid, as they reflect both current and future population demand, together with actual utilization patterns on the distinct care profiles in our territory. These projections indicate a range of 327 to 383 beds required by 2021.

We are a community that respects, and a community that promotes dignity, individual freedom, choice and lifestyle and a meaningful quality of life. We continue to strive to create a feeling of home and belonging for all that live here by being responsive to the uniqueness of each of our residents.

Through partnerships we lead the quest for best-practice continuing care services — we are better because of that journey — client-centred services that value human dignity and respect for the individual; optimal service delivery based on accessibility; accountability and responsiveness; independence and interdependence based on individual and shared responsibility; collaboration and partnerships, growth and innovation through leadership; personal and professional growth; and, common purpose and vision.

The Continuing Care division of Health and Social Services comprises community-based services and residential care for pediatric, disabled and geriatric populations.

There are a number of different programs, Mr. Speaker, as you well know, which include: Copper Ridge Place, Macaulay Lodge, Thomson Centre, McDonald Lodge and the soon-to-be opened Oblate Centre will be open with 10 beds for an intermediate level of care. Current community day programming is also provided at the Thomson Centre. As you know, in recent years, the utilization of that day program has certainly increased.

We see Meals on Wheels in Whitehorse serving between 600 and 700 meals monthly. Meals are prepared at Macaulay Lodge, which is at the limit of production capacity for Meals on Wheels. Meals on Wheels are also provided in Dawson City through McDonald Lodge and serve approximately 200

meals every month. The active continuing care data indicates that nearly half of home care clients have very high needs and are at a high risk of needing that higher level of care. Fifteen percent of care clients do not have an available caregiver. The Member for Riverdale South had reported that earlier, and she is correct on that point. That is compared with a national average of two to three percent without a caregiver. There are individuals in the community who are assessed as extended care who are able to remain in the community through the use of home care and respite admissions. In the past decade, the trend across Canada has been stability in the numbers of residential care beds, but an increase in the intensity of care provided. Individuals entering residential care are now older and have more complex care needs than they did historically.

In Yukon, the current average age of residents in continuing care facilities is 76, compared with a national average of 82. Residential care facilities in Yukon — Yukoners of all ages who have significant disabilities and require 24-hour support in care. In Yukon, about 15 percent of the residential care population is under 65, compared with the national average of seven percent.

Data clearly demonstrates that, relative to Canadian averages, the residential care population is more clinically complex and has higher needs. Residents are younger and more mobile, but tend to have unstable health and are at risk of functional decline. Many intermediate care residents have been admitted, subsequent to a cycle of respite admissions for stabilization followed by functional decline once they are discharged into the community.

Overall residents, particularly personal care and intermediate care, require less direct physical care and assistance with ADLs, or activities of daily living, but require higher levels of functional supports, supervision, direction and clinical management.

Yukon continuing care residents score above the national average on measures of cognitive loss, delirium, communication and mood. Clinically the data showed a very high incidence of cardio-respiratory issues as well as general pain issues. Lifestyle factors impact on residential care needs. Obesity, smoking, alcohol and drug use all impact health and aging and are related to the cognitive physical and functional care needs of the continuing care population here in our territory. Obesity is an emerging issue with an increasing number of bariatric clients who require specialized equipment in order to provide care.

The respite care program is fully integrated within the residential care operations. Individuals coming into respite care participate within the ongoing residential care program. The current model of respite care program delivery enables the provision of respite care that meets specific functional needs, including special care for dementia and for extended care.

Demand for respite services is steadily increasing, both in terms of numbers of clients and the length of stay. Utilization of respite beds is on a scheduled basis. Emergency respite admissions can only be accommodated if there is a bed available.

There are currently 24 beds within a single secure special care unit at Copper Ridge Place and an additional 24 beds that have been designated for special care. The need for specialized care within a secure, appropriately designated environment for individuals with dementia is significant and it is growing. The growing gap between available capacity and current demand is increasing more rapidly than any other aspect of residential care. The incidence of dementia is higher than the national average, with nearly 20 percent of residential care clients requiring that higher level of special care.

The profile of residents with dementia is diverse. Many residents show some cognitive impairment but do not require a specialized, secure setting. Within the cohort that requires a special care unit, there is a diversity of care profiles. A particular challenge within our territory is a relatively high proportion of individuals with significant dementia who are younger and more mobile than the typical geriatric profile. Some residential care programs include a separate unit for residents with challenging behaviours, particularly aggression. These units tend to be smaller — typically about 18 to 20 beds — and have higher staffing to meet the needs of more active and behaviourally challenging residents. This distinct profile needs to be recognized and accommodated both operationally and functionally. Specific consideration of these needs should be included in the planning and the design of future residential care beds.

Effective, appropriate palliative care is a priority within residential care. The current approach of a clinical resource team enables flexible access to specialized supports, which is critical within a relatively small population with highly diverse and changing care needs. This model is the most efficient and effective approach to delivering appropriate care and developing staff clinical competencies and is consistent with best practices in other jurisdictions, including jurisdictions that have larger populations.

While the current program does not include designated staffing, emerging and future demand may require an expansion of palliative care resources to include designated palliative care beds. The provision for flexible facility capacity that supports the provision of specialized programs such as respite care and palliative care should be considered in the planning and design of all future residential care beds.

Currently, the community-based day program located at the Thomson Centre provides supports to an average of six to 12 individuals each month. This program is a good complement to home care and respite care, and there is capacity to expand this program as a component of the array of supports for continuing care individuals.

Continuing Care has identified an emerging trend of individuals with a primary mental health diagnosis who are now entering the continuing care system due to over-functional decline. The lack of appropriate and adequate community resources — including supportive housing for individuals whose health is at risk of deterioration due to mental health issues, addictions or other lifestyle factors — has a potential emerging impact on continuing programs and capacity, not only here in Yukon, but across Canada. Ongoing

monitoring of potential impacts of this population, which has unique and challenging program requirements, would facilitate the capacity to meet developing needs. Without adequate planning, this population may be inappropriately accommodated and potentially present risk to other residents.

Currently a portion of respite clients come in because they require stabilization and assessment. This could include a medication review, physical assessment, physiotherapy workup and development of a care plan. There may be an increase in future demand for this type of care, and some patients may not be compatible with long-term residential populations, particularly if patients are undergoing medication adjustments or require stabilization. Separation of this client group may be appropriate, based on a program that is oriented toward stabilizing and returning those individuals to the community.

Mr. Speaker, as you are well aware, there are increasing challenges in providing timely and appropriate placement of clients due to the growth and demand for residential care beds and the need to prioritize those referrals. Placement from the wait-list is not chronological; it is based on a priority as determined on the basis of assessed risk factors. Risk factors include safety and the risk of functional decline and quality-of-life impacts.

Wait-listing is a particular issue for specific populations where the demand is highest and the availability of appropriate accommodations is the lowest. There are significant pressures with the wait-list for special care. Of those wait-listed, most of them are in hospital. There are also significant wait-list pressures for intermediate care clients because available capacity no longer appropriately accommodates the current and emerging intermediate care resident profile.

In the past 20 years, the residential care capacity has tripled, with the population of seniors projected to approximately double within the next decade. Continuing significant growth and the demand for continuing care resources, including residential care beds and programs — we need to anticipate that. Three measures have been used to provide comparative estimates of demand to 2021 — existing projections from earlier assessments completed by Continuing Care projections based on national averages — according to that data — and projections based on current and actual utilization patterns within our territory.

These projections indicate that the net residential care capacity will be required to nearly double within the next decade. Based on population projections, growth and demand will continue beyond that time frame.

Capital and operational planning — we need to incorporate the capacity for continued growth beyond 2021. Overall, a minimum of 260 beds is estimated to be required by 2021 based on the lowest estimated scenarios that I spoke of earlier. The projection scenarios that provide the most reliable estimates for actual Yukon demand tend to indicate that the actual number of beds required — as I indicated earlier — is in the range of about 320 beds, but likely higher. Currently,

Continuing Care does not have the bed capacity to meet that existing demand.

There is also an increasing need to provide specialized and functionally appropriate facilities for populations with dementia requiring that secure setting. Populations using power equipment, such as scooters or power wheelchairs, and requiring larger spaces and specialized equipment, such as lifts or transfers, may require extended care.

There are certainly many, many advantages to building a larger scale building. Those would potentially maximize capital and operational efficiencies as done historically. Capacity could be in construction and units opened as the demand increased — looking at a central location for visitors and staff access, close to amenities, and possibly to build the shell and fit that out later.

I hear the Member for Whitehorse Centre speaking off-mic about building it downtown, but we know, when Copper Ridge Place was built, we had these very similar discussions and, in actual fact, Copper Ridge Place is a wonderful addition to the neighbourhood in that area, and we anticipate the Whistle Bend continuing care facility to do the same for that area.

In comparison, they are nearly identical in distance from the downtown core. I know the Member for Whitehorse Centre will disagree and will continue to disagree, but we certainly don't see an issue with transportation and accessing services in the downtown core. The individuals who are able to, from Copper Ridge Place, certainly have access to the entirety of Whitehorse.

Based on historic growth in demand and service delivery, and current demographic projections, there is strong evidence that Continuing Care will face very significant demand for increased capacity — nearly double the current capacity within the next decade, as I had indicated. The scope —

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Point of order

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

Ms. Hanson: At some point, the minister opposite must admit to being embarrassed. This is 19(c). He is needlessly repeating — it's called needless repetition. If I hear one more time the same briefing note being read — I mean, at some point he must be embarrassed.

Speaker's ruling

Speaker: I don't believe there is a point of order. This motion is written quite broadly, in particular in the first section, where it says, "continuum of health and housing options to support Yukoners to age in place safely and with dignity". I believe all of his comments have been directed to that.

Ms. Hanson: Mr. Speaker, he may have made the same point; he may have made those points in a broad way. He has repeated them. My point of order is about needless repetition in reading into the record the same material over and over and over again. That's called needless repetition in my mind, sir.

Speaker: At this point, I will have to look at the Blues to go through it word by word, as I do every morning. I will give a further ruling.

Minister of Health and Social Services, please continue.

Hon. Mr. Nixon: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Within the department, we have certainly developed a communication objective. Our key communication objectives are to advise the general public and our stakeholders of the progress on the new continuing care facility planned for Whistle Bend and to provide assurances that the facility will be built and that the government will continue to support seniors through its continuum of services, and to clearly explain why the facility is being built where it is and why we need it, as well as to clarify the level of services and type of individuals resident in facilities.

Now our target audiences, as you will know, are the general public, seniors and family members of individuals who will require continuing care services in the future, as well as health care providers and rural Yukon residents.

The need for continuing care beds is certainly reaching a crisis level. There are continuing care patients in the hospital, as I've indicated earlier, who do not belong there. There is a wait-list of approximately 50 individuals on any given day. The new facility will house dementia care throughout and include space for day programming, a mental health unit and hospice/palliative care.

The new facility will provide the highest level of care to individuals who require that 24/7 nursing care and monitoring. It is for individuals who truly cannot remain in their home any longer, either alone or with aid. The difference between the Yukon Party government and the members from both the Liberals and the NDP is that we understand that it is not feasible to build facilities providing this level of care in rural Yukon. Continuing Care will continue to support individuals in rural Yukon to remain in their homes as long as possible through home supports and home care, but as I've indicated, at some point, and if necessary, they will be required to come to Whitehorse.

We continue to listen to our stakeholders, seniors, elders and their loved ones — again, I hear the Member for Whitehorse Centre heckling off-mic. She has a hard time believing this, but this is the work that has been done. We continue to have dialogue with the Hospital Corporation, the medical professions associations and a host of —

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Point of order

Speaker: The Member for Mayo-Tatchun, on a point of order.

Mr. Tredger: Mr. Speaker, I believe you ruled previously that unless the comments off-mic were interfering with your ability to pay attention, they were not to be referred to.

Speaker's ruling

Speaker: I believe I was referring to heckling being used as a method to drown out the speaker, but in this particular case, both sides are always referencing the other side when they hear heckling. I don't recommend it. It can lead to discord, but also disrupt the members from their train of thought.

Hon. Mr. Nixon: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There are some difficulties supporting this motion as it is currently worded. This motion is calling on this government to implement a continuum of health and housing options to support Yukoners to age in place safely and with dignity by halting all work on the proposed Whistle Bend continuing care facility until such time as meaningful consultations with a wide variety of stakeholders has proven the desire for such a facility. To support this motion would do a disservice to Yukoners throughout the territory who very much want to see this facility proceed; it would be a disservice to the roughly 70 to 80 people who are currently on our wait-list for a place in one of our facilities, which are filled to capacity, and it would be a disservice to their families who struggle to support and care for them, often to the detriment of their own health. Anything that slows down or halts the process would do irreparable harm. I want to be perfectly clear; this government is proceeding with the construction of the 150-bed continuing care facility in Whistle Bend.

We will not halt the project. We have done our homework; we have looked at the numbers. In fact, we are developing this project with input and feedback from residents, clients, families, staff and key stakeholders, Yukon data and trends — all gathered over the last 15 years.

We've pulled together industry best practices for long-term care and programming staff models. The numbers tell us that we will need additional beds. The current state of our existing facilities tells us we will need new beds. The people who work in the area of continuing care know we need new beds. They are the people who deal with the individuals themselves and the families. They know who is out there and who needs to come into this type of facility.

Our stats tell us that the number of seniors is growing rapidly. The need is there now and it will continue to be there in the future. We know we need these beds. Our new YMA president, Dr. Alison O'Hearn, said she's looking forward to the new, larger, long-term care facility because citizens are in acute care beds who don't need to be there and who would be better served in a different facility, being treated and cared for where they need to be. I want to be —

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

Debate on Motion No. 1080 accordingly adjourned

The House adjourned at 5:30 p.m.