

Whitehorse, Yukon**Tuesday, October 30, 2007 -- 1:00 p.m.**

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

Prayers

DAILY ROUTINE

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

Tributes.

TRIBUTES**In recognition of Influenza Immunization Awareness Month**

Hon. Mr. Cathers: I rise today on behalf of the government members to encourage all members of this House to roll up their sleeves for the annual flu shot on November 8 and 9, when the Department of Health and Social Services public health nurses visit the main administration building to host flu clinics. I offer this reminder today, on the second last day of October, which is Influenza Immunization Awareness Month.

This year's influenza awareness campaign is beginning a little later than normal because of late delivery of the vaccine across the country; however, our health care professionals in Yukon are as diligent as ever in getting the word out about the need for individuals to protect themselves and those around them from getting the flu.

Last year, Mr. Speaker, more than 7,100 Yukon residents took advantage of this universal, free influenza vaccine, and we are hoping to increase that number this year.

Clinics are planned throughout various locations in Whitehorse as well as at the Kwanlin Dun and Whitehorse health centres and in the community health centres in rural Yukon.

Influenza is a common, infectious respiratory illness that affects between one in four and one in 10 Canadians every year during flu season, which runs typically from October to April. Flu can be serious and deadly. Every year up to 1,500 Canadians, mostly seniors, die from influenza-related pneumonia and many others die from influenza-related complications that aggravate existing medical conditions.

The most effective way for an individual to protect themselves from the flu is to be vaccinated each year in the fall. Regular handwashing is another very effective way to minimize your risk. By washing your hands often, you will reduce your chance of becoming infected.

It's time to take the flu seriously and again I encourage all members of this Assembly and all Yukoners to protect themselves and those around them by getting a flu shot this year, not the flu.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

In recognition of Healthy Workplace Week

Hon. Mr. Cathers: As minister responsible for the Yukon Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board, I would like to recognize Healthy Workplace Week, which we've just completed. This is a week set aside each year by the Cana-

dian Healthy Workplace Council to increase awareness about the importance of workplace health to personal and organizational performance.

The council consists of a number of leading Canadian organizations and practitioners, whose members are dedicated to fulfilling the council's mission of providing a comprehensive and integrated approach to workplace health in order to improve and sustain the health of Canadian organizations, their work environments and their employees.

The council believes, as do I, that creating healthy workplaces is more than just a good idea; there's a solid business case to be made. Workplace health is also an economic issue linked to the overall performance of the local economy. Unhealthy workforces are costing Canadian organizations billions of dollars every year. Statistics Canada indicates that the cost from all causes of employee absence alone is about \$8.6 billion per year.

Research consistently demonstrates that healthy employees are absent less often, have higher morale, are more productive and have lower health care costs.

I strongly encourage each member here and every Yukoner to show their support for the continuing efforts of the Canadian Healthy Workplace Council and the Yukon Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board to make Yukon workplaces safe, healthy and productive.

Mr. Inverarity: Mr. Speaker, I rise today on behalf of the Official Opposition to recognize Healthy Workplace Week. Healthy Workplace Week is a yearly celebration of workplace health in Canadian organizations. An entire week is set aside each year to increase awareness about the importance of workplace health to personnel and to organizational performance.

This year's theme is all about valuing people. With so much stress in the workplace and at home these days, it becomes difficult to focus on values or the people around us. We risk becoming so caught up in our own problems that we neglect the important relationships in our lives. This includes our professional as well as our personal relationships. It is safe to say that most of us do value our colleagues and appreciate their contributions to organizational success, but sometimes the stress of the job and the place of the organization can leave us focused on failure, instead of on celebrating success.

During this week, Healthy Workplace Week, we believe it is important for organizations to go the extra mile to find ways to adequately and consistently value our people. Knowing what employees want from their jobs is really a good start. Everyone wants to earn enough money to enjoy the lifestyle they choose to have, but an adequate paycheque is not the same as feeling valued in the workplace.

How am I treated? What are my contributions? Am I acknowledged? Am I respected? Am I proud of the place where I work? The answer to these questions determines whether or not I feel valued as an employee. The goal of healthy workplace development is to have motivated, inspired and healthy employees. It is also about organizational health and success as well. Organizations have duties to their employees to create a workplace environment where each individual can nurture their

emotional, physical, mental and social well-being. During this week Canadian organizations are encouraged to go above and beyond the call of duty to encourage their employees to engage in health lifestyle habits. Small personal changes may be made by many people, and they can make a big difference. In the Official Opposition we encourage all Yukoners to move our workplace beyond the status quo to the next generation of organizational health -- one where we can create successful and healthy workplaces.

In recognition of Learning Disabilities Awareness Month

Hon. Mr. Rouble: I rise in the House today to recognize Learning Disabilities Awareness Month. We, in Education, work very hard to enable people with disabilities of all kinds, including learning disabilities, to meet their education goals.

Every day, the Department of Education is working to create a more responsive education system that enables learners to succeed. We know a disability of any kind can create a barrier to learning, particularly if that disability is not identified or accommodated.

Learning Disabilities Awareness Month plays an important role in raising awareness about learning disabilities, and now is a good time to focus on the impact of all kinds of disabilities that people may be living with in our communities and our schools.

If we are all aware of the spectrum of abilities, then we are in a better position to help those who are affected by making resources available and helping them to identify strategies and techniques for overcoming their challenges.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, I'd like to take the time to thank the many organizations in Yukon that work toward helping people with disabilities. The Department of Education looks forward to continuing to work in partnership with organizations such as the Learning Disabilities Association of Yukon, Challenge, the Yukon Council on Disability, Yukon Learn, and the Yukon Literacy Coalition. I'd also like to thank the teachers, parents and students for all of their hard work. Thank you.

In recognition of United Way Month

Hon. Mr. Hart: I rise today to pay tribute to United Way Month. This annual event has grown over the years to become a fixture in raising funds that benefit numerous charities throughout the Yukon.

The United Way mission is clear: to improve lives and to build community by engaging individuals and mobilizing collective action. The United Way of Yukon targets those areas of the greatest need in our communities. It is a society that provides grant funding on an annual basis to eligible non-profit organizations for projects that support United Way priorities. These priorities are: responding to the needs of families; children and youth; responding to the needs of people with disabilities; combating poverty and combating drug and alcohol abuse.

The Yukon chapter of the United Way does a very good job of fulfilling their mission, as witnessed by their focus on local needs and working with other organizations toward fulfilling their mandates. To enrich the lives of children, youth

and families, the United Way works with member agencies such as Many Rivers -- formerly the Yukon Family Services Association, the Child Development Centre, Dawson Shelter Society, Youth of Today Society, Bringing Youth Toward Equality, Old Crow Recreation Society and Skookum Jim Friendship Centre offer educational and recreational programs, as well as support for families, children and youth. These funds and community programs are focused on sharing, learning and growing as a family unit and on developing healthy lifestyles.

To combat substance abuse, United Way is supporting services and rehabilitation programs to help combat abuse of alcohol and drugs, reducing the health risk associated with substance abuse through providing education and offering opportunities for healthy living.

To assist people living with disabilities, the Canadian National Institute of the Blind, Yukon Educational Theatre, Challenge, the Child Development Centre, Association for Community Living, People First Society and Learning Disabilities Association of Yukon are some of the many United Way member organizations providing access to the essential services and care for Yukon people with disabilities.

To alleviate poverty, the United Way is assisting to provide people with opportunities for employment skills and trade development and providing access to services generally beyond reach.

For the past two years, the Department of Community Services, in conjunction with Yukon Housing Corporation and Yukon Liquor Corporation, has coordinated the annual United Way breakfast, the largest single fundraiser of the year. A team of Yukon staff worked together with local organizations, volunteers and the many thoughtful individuals and Yukon businesses who donate products and services to help make the breakfast fundraiser a success.

This year, Mr. Speaker, 27,353.76 was raised for United Way of the Yukon. More than 600 people came to breakfast and contributed to the success of this annual Government of Yukon initiative; 220 items, all donated by local businesses and Government of Yukon staff collaborations, made up the silent auction, which on its own raised \$19,800. Tickets for admission garnered \$4,200, and \$3,200 of peer donations were made during the event. The breakfast is sponsored and supported by a number of local businesses, organizations and media outlets, including CBC North, High Country Inn, Yukon News, Super A Porter Creek, Superstore, Bean North, Copy Copy, Inkspiration Graphics, Northland Beverages, the RCMP and the Government of Yukon. The contributions allow for every dollar raised to go directly to the United Way annual operations in the Yukon, providing help for people in need in all our communities.

On behalf of all the organizations, the United Way and all the organizers and charities that will benefit, I extend our most sincere thanks for your contribution to help make United Way the beneficial, respected and effective organization that it is. Also, Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank all the Members of the Legislative Assembly who attended that breakfast and assisted in handing out the goodies to all those who attended. My thanks to all of you.

Mr. Mitchell: Mr. Speaker, I'll be brief. I just want to also pay tribute to the important work done by the United Way here in Yukon and, indeed, across Canada. As the minister has already indicated, the largest single fundraiser for the United Way in the year is the United Way breakfast, which is held each fall. I know that many members of this Assembly and a great number of Yukon government employees as well as many, many people from the private sector volunteered to put that event together, which did raise over \$27,000 and had some 600-plus people in attendance.

I just want to emphasize that the important work that is done on behalf of families, youth and children, addressing poverty and trying to deal with the effects of drug and alcohol abuse, among other things, is done not on one day a year but on 365 days a year. I would encourage everyone, both in this Assembly and those who may be listening, to continue to contribute, to continue to volunteer, to continue to support the work of the United Way throughout the year, not only on this one day.

Speaker: Are there any further tributes?
Introduction of visitors.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Mr. Rouble: I would ask all members of the Assembly to join me in welcoming to our Assembly Mr. Toews' class and students from F.H. Collins. Welcome.

Applause

Speaker: Are there any further introductions of visitors?

Are there any returns or documents for tabling?

Reports of committees.

Petitions.

Are there any bills to be introduced?

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 39: Introduction and First Reading

Hon. Mr. Hart: I move that Bill No. 39, entitled *Act to Amend the Territorial Court Judicial Pension Plan Act, 2003*, be now introduced and read a first time.

Speaker: It has been moved by the minister responsible for the Public Service Commission that Bill No. 39, entitled *Act to Amend the Territorial Court Judicial Pension Plan Act, 2003*, be now introduced and read a first time.

Motion for introduction and first reading of Bill No. 39 agreed to

Bill No. 42: Introduction and First Reading

Hon. Mr. Hart: I move that Bill No. 42, entitled *Act to Amend the Municipal Finance and Community Grants Act*, be now introduced and read a first time.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Minister of Community Services that Bill No. 42, entitled *Act to Amend the Municipal Finance and Community Grants Act*, be now introduced and read a first time.

Motion for introduction and first reading of Bill No. 42 agreed to

Speaker: Are there any further bills for introduction?
Notices of motion.

NOTICES OF MOTION

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Canada, in partnership with the Government of Yukon, Government of British Columbia and First Nation governments, to comply with the unanimous request of the western premiers to recognize the spruce bark beetle and pine beetle infestations in southern Yukon and in central and northern British Columbia as natural disasters and provide adequate funding to address this serious problem.

I give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Canada and the Government of the United States to give due consideration of the findings of the Alaska-Canada rail link phase 1 feasibility study that was jointly funded by the Government of Yukon and the Government of Alaska.

I give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to work cooperatively with the State of Alaska to continue the early spring opening and maintenance of the Top of the World Highway in the Yukon and the Taylor Highway in Alaska in order to better accommodate the tourism and mining industries within both Alaska and Yukon.

I give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Parliament of Canada to delete the requirement in the *Canada Elections Act* that will disenfranchise approximately one million rural voters by stipulating that voters now need a residential address with a street name and number before casting a ballot.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon and the Yukon Registered Nurses Association to continue working together on the development of legislation that will allow nurse practitioners to work within their full scope of practice.

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

THAT this House urges the Yukon government to live up to the promises in its 2006 election platform, in the substance abuse action plan, and in establishing the community court, to work with First Nations to establish long-term land-based addiction treatment centres so that

(1) this neglected service can be brought to addictions clients living in rural Yukon; and

(2) the Yukon government can respond to the guiding principles of partnerships and integration policies and programs that are outlined in the substance abuse action plan.

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

THAT it is the opinion of this House that

(1) public campaigns around workplace safety can help reduce the effect of occupational injury; and

(2) businesses that flagrantly operate in ways that jeopardize worker safety should have their safety record on public display as a means to warn prospective employees and to shame irresponsible employers into making positive changes in the workplace; and

THAT this House urges the minister responsible for the Yukon Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board to publicly report the names of businesses operating in the Yukon that possess the worst safety records in terms of occupational injury.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to refuse to permit any individual or company that has been convicted of serious violations of Yukon's environmental regulations to engage in any new resource extraction operation in the territory until suitable financial compensation has been made to Yukon and Canadian taxpayers for any environmental cleanup arising from their previous operations within the territory's boundaries.

I give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Canada to demonstrate its support for Canadian men and women serving in Afghanistan by removing them from a dangerous mission with little likelihood of long-term success and reassigning them to peacekeeping and community development tasks they can attain, and which most Canadians support; and

THAT this House urges the Government of Canada to adopt an independent foreign policy with respect to the deployment of Canadian forces that emphasizes peacekeeping, community development and national sovereignty, in keeping with traditional Canadian values.

Speaker: Are there any further notices of motion?

Hearing none, is there a ministerial statement?

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Sherwood Copper ore shipment

Hon. Mr. Lang: I rise today on the occasion of the first shipment of Yukon mine concentrate from the port of Skagway in more than a decade. I also want to congratulate Sherwood Copper, the producers of those concentrates, for developing and bringing the production of the first hard rock mine in Yukon for many years. Mr. Speaker, the Yukon is back in the mining business and there is no finer evidence of that than the bulk carrier that departed Skagway on October 24 of this year.

The Minto mine is very important and symbolic for Yukon in many ways. It is the first mine development to occur on First Nation category A settlement land. Both the company and the Selkirk First Nation showed great vision and cooperation in working together to develop this project.

We are especially proud of the memorandum of understanding that the Yukon signed with the Selkirk First Nation, a memorandum of understanding that guides how the two governments will work together in various permitting processes and other opportunities associated with the mine.

It is the first mine in a decade to send concentrates south to the port of Skagway for shipment. This was an important step for future mine development that will also utilize Skagway for their transportation needs. This is the first major mine to be licensed since the devolution of responsibility for resource management to Yukon from the federal government. It shows what Yukoners can do when they make their own decisions.

This achievement is particularly noteworthy because it demonstrates the success that can be achieved when the public, First Nation government and industry work together for the future development of Yukon.

In terms of the Yukon mining industry, Mr. Speaker, the past six years have seen the level of exploration activities in the Yukon increase greatly. In 2000 we had \$8 million in such activities, in 2006 it was \$83 million, and this year we estimate close to \$130 million will be spent on exploration activities -- a 16-fold increase from the year 2000.

These new developments are providing tremendous opportunities for Yukoners to get good, high-paying jobs and bring money back to their communities. The Minto mine will provide such opportunities for Selkirk First Nation members and other Yukoners. To help with this, the Yukon government is working with the mining industry and First Nations to fund mine training programs through the new Yukon Mine Training Association. We want to make sure that Yukoners are the first to benefit from new developments like the Minto mine.

In addition to direct jobs, Selkirk First Nation businesses and other Yukon businesses have the opportunity to supply products and services that will keep the benefits here in Yukon.

Times do indeed change, Mr. Speaker, for the better. Gone are the days of economic anguish in Yukon. The ship that left Skagway last week was a symbol of Yukon's potential and a new economic reality in Yukon today.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. McRobb: It is truly enjoyable to rise and speak to a positive development for a change. Of course this good-news story about the success of Sherwood Copper's Minto project has little to do with the Yukon government and everything to do with high metal prices, entrepreneurship, perseverance and good working relations between the proponents and Yukon First Nations.

Let's look at copper prices. Since 2001, the metal commodity price of copper has increased from a low of about 60 cents to \$4 last year, and currently trades for about \$3.60. I'd like to table this chart. This is well above the price assumptions of \$2 per pound made in the company's 2006 feasibility study. Forward selling its copper until 2011 at prices up to \$3.10 per pound provided the proponent's financial security and most certainly aided its efforts to obtain financing for this project.

The Minto project also recovers a significant amount of gold, which this Monday reached a 27-year high price of about

\$788 U.S. per ounce. The feasibility study assumed gold prices of only \$550 per ounce. High metal prices have allowed the company to accelerate the repayment of its capital loans and escalate its operating net income projections.

Sherwood Copper currently has a market cap of \$305 million. Entrepreneurship has been a key factor in this Yukon success story. A lot of credit is due to the past efforts of the former proponent, Lutz Klingmann, who made significant progress with the development of the Minto site during hard times such as the low copper prices mentioned earlier, and the huge negative impact of the Bre-X scandal on financing junior mining prospects.

Since purchasing the property more than two years ago, Sherwood Copper's president and CEO, Stephen Quin, has achieved success through his due diligence and ability to work cooperatively with Yukon First Nations.

Incidentally, Mr. Speaker, the *Business News Network*, or BNN, today featured Mr. Quin on its Power Breakfast program, which should be repeated this evening for those who missed it earlier. In his own words, Mr. Quin said that BNN is a leading financial news television service that reaches a wide audience in the investment community and provides an exceptional platform to tell this exciting story. The Selkirk First Nation deserves much of the credit for the success. It demonstrated the vision to negotiate this valuable property within its land claim agreement and continued to work cooperatively with the proponents even when low copper prices hampered the project's economic feasibility. Selkirk has successfully negotiated an agreement with the proponent to ensure its members will benefit for years to come.

Sherwood Copper also showed how it could negotiate a successful arrangement with the port authority in Skagway. I should mention that this was done while the Yukon government could only manage to study the situation.

The power line extension from Carmacks to Pelly Crossing would not be possible without contributions for the Minto project, nor would the proposed future extension to tie together both grids. An area for the Yukon to consider is upgrading the road between the Yukon River and the mine.

While the minister declared the Yukon is back in the mining business, let's not forget the placer miners who --

Speaker: Thank you. Leader of the Third Party, please.

Mr. Hardy: I am very pleased to arise on behalf of the third party to respond to the ministerial statement we have just heard. I have no problem in joining with the minister to congratulate Sherwood Copper and the people of Selkirk First Nation for the milestone that they have reached. It is my hope and the hope of my caucus colleagues that the Minto mine will continue as a productive, safe and environmentally responsible operation for a good many years to come.

Mining has long been one of the mainstays of the Yukon's economy and it will continue to fulfill that role. Our job as legislators is to act on behalf of all people of the Yukon, present and future generations, to ensure that any mining activity in the Yukon meets three principal goals: (1) it must be economically

viable, with Yukoners deriving the best economic benefit possible from the operation; (2) it must reflect and respect the social values of Yukon people and our communities; and (3) it must pass the litmus test of environmental sustainability. Put quite simply, Mr. Speaker, that test is that any economic activity by the current generation must not compromise the ability of future generations to meet their needs and goals.

The minister's statement is all about one thing: the economic impact of mining. It is regrettable that the other two considerations are ignored altogether. It is worth noting that the word "environment" does not appear anywhere in the minister's statement, so I'll introduce that word.

We have no reason for thinking that Sherwood Copper will not live up to its environmental responsibilities. We expect that they will and that this government will make sure that they do. It's our solemn obligation to future generations to make sure the Yukon is never again subjected to the kind of environmental travesties we have seen at places like Faro or Mount Nansen.

Canadian taxpayers will be on the hook for millions of dollars every year, for decades to come, because previous governments did not take action to prevent the destruction of our environment. So when the minister stands up to make his reply, I hope he will finally use the word "environment" and tell us precisely how his government will make sure that we will never again allow our environment to be held hostage for the sake of economic gain.

It doesn't matter if future resource development is undertaken by investors from China or B.C. or right here in the Yukon, this territory welcomes investment. It welcomes jobs, training opportunities, and it welcomes opportunities for First Nations and local suppliers. It does now and always has. What we will not welcome is anything that compromises our environment or threatens the health and well-being of future generations, or diminishes the quality of our plant and animal life or the water, land and air that sustain all life in the territory.

Hon. Mr. Lang: I would like to thank the opposition for their remarks today on the occasion of the Minto mine's concentrate leaving Skagway. For the Leader of the Third Party, we as a government definitely are aware of the environmental responsibility of government -- and all Yukoners -- to make sure that mines are run in a responsible way.

All this ministerial statement was a recognition of the First Nation and the mine itself and the steps that they've taken to put it into production. Certainly the checks and balances are in place to make sure all Yukoners are protected from any ramifications resulting from that mine being on the site, whether it be to the air, the water or the earth itself.

In addressing the third party, we are moving ahead. We have reclamation agreements in place with the mine and, of course, we are looking forward to working with them in the long run, with the prospects of a mine that could run as long as 20 years.

It's a great day for the Yukon, and I look forward to working with the corporation in the future.

Speaker: This now brings us to Question Period.

QUESTION PERIOD

Question re: Workers' advocate job termination

Mr. Inverarity: I have a few questions for the Minister of Justice. Does the minister think that Yukon public servants should be fired because they don't belong to a political party that is in power?

Hon. Ms. Horne: As the opposition well knows, we as a political party have nothing to do with personnel issues.

Mr. Inverarity: It's too bad this government doesn't follow the minister's words. Last week the Yukon's workers' advocate was fired by this government. He also happens to be the manager for the Yukon Liberal Party's 2006 election campaign. It's pretty easy to see the link.

Other than the fact that he belongs to the wrong party, why was he fired?

Speaker's statement

Speaker: Before the minister answers here, the Chair is uncomfortable with the way that this is shaping up. There seems to be an accusation of illegality here. I would ask the honourable member to just be careful with that.

Please carry on with your line of questioning. Minister, could we have your answer, please?

Hon. Ms. Horne: This gives new meaning to a word I just can't bring to my mind, but it's in the dictionary between "devious" and "showmanship". As the member of the opposition knows --

Speaker's statement

Speaker: Order please. Sit down.

Once again, I just asked the Official Opposition to be very careful of the way they use their phraseology, and I would ask the minister to exercise the same caution, please.

You have the floor.

Hon. Ms. Horne: Mr. Speaker, my apologies for trying to remember the word.

As I said, this government does not get involved with personnel issues. That is left to the personnel board.

Mr. Inverarity: I'll temper my notes here. Earlier this year in this House the Minister of Health and Social Services had some comments about the Liberal campaign manager, who is also of course the workers' advocate. He said and I'd like to quote him, "I would point out and remind members that the Liberal campaign manager was on a recently concluded *Workers' Compensation Act* review when he declared his party affiliations. We did not push him off the panel and we did not fire him."

Those promises ring hollow today. On Tuesday of this week, the workers' advocate was fired by the Yukon Party government. Is this what the territory is coming to? Stick your neck out as a public servant and the campaign against you will get you fired.

Hon. Ms. Horne: As I said before, we do not involve ourselves with personnel. I would never involve myself in personnel issues nor would any member of this Cabinet.

Thank you.

Question re: Workers' advocate job termination

Mr. Mitchell: I too have some questions for the Minister of Justice about the firing of the workers' advocate, her employee. The individual in question tried to access his e-mail when he was dismissed. It contains a great deal of information about people who have been using his services as a workers' advocate. Many of these e-mails are of a confidential nature. Many of these injured workers are fighting with the Yukon government and now the government is taking control of this information. This raises a serious question of confidentiality.

Why is the government taking control of these e-mails and when does it plan to return them to the workers' advocate?

Hon. Mr. Hart: For the member opposite, I'll try to bring some order to this situation. This government does not deal with any employee matters. That is handled by the Public Service Commission. They are responsible for dealing with staff issues of all kinds. We are not involved, nor do we have any influence on that situation. We do participate in dealing with situations as they come through the collective agreement, but the Public Service Commission handles all employee issues.

Mr. Mitchell: I don't believe I heard an answer to the question of the e-mails.

The Yukon Party government has fired the workers' advocate -- that's bad enough. Now they're refusing to allow him to access his client files. They have essentially confiscated them, and it gets worse.

He attempted to access other e-mail in order to defend himself over the termination of his position. He was told that all his files had been corrupted and he would not be given access to them. This is a little hard to believe: firing someone and then not allowing them access to defend themselves. I guess it doesn't pay to cross the Yukon Party -- this is the type of treatment you will get.

Will the minister --

Unparliamentary language

Speaker: Order. No, no. Those kinds of accusations are entirely out of order. I would ask the honourable member to retract them and not do it again.

Withdrawal of remark

Mr. Mitchell: Mr. Speaker, I will change the wording. I will retract that particular phrase.

This is not acceptable treatment of an employee. Can the minister give his assurance that the government will stop blocking access to the workers' advocate's e-mail? Can he do that?

Hon. Mr. Hart: As I indicated to the member opposite, this government does not get involved in employee-staff relationships. We provide that service through the Public Service Commission and they handle their personnel matters in accordance with the collective agreement.

Mr. Mitchell: I would like to point out to the minister that this correspondence with the workers' advocate did not come from the Public Service Commission; it came from the Department of Justice.

The workers' advocate, who was fired by the government, has received praise from injured workers and from all three parties in this Legislature for the good work he has done on behalf of injured workers in this territory. He has an exemplary record, yet he was fired, apparently because he carries the wrong political card.

On top of that, the government is blocking access to his e-mail accounts. Can the minister assure us and assure workers that these personal files and client files will be returned to the workers' advocate?

Hon. Mr. Hart: For the member opposite, I will try to rephrase in a different manner just for him. The issue is we do not deal in personnel matters. The Public Service Commission deals with employee situations. They have reasons for enacting their authority with regard to this individual, and I am sure they can defend that particular stand.

Question re: Elk, winter tick infestation

Mr. Edzerza: Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the acting Minister of Environment. A few months ago, we started hearing reports about an infestation of winter ticks being found in the territory's wildlife population. Will the acting minister tell us if there is any evidence of these ticks in the commercial elk population, in any domestic livestock, or in the moose population in areas near the wild elk habitat?

Hon. Mr. Kenyon: For the member opposite, a winter tick infestation certainly does have potential to spread to moose populations, but evidence so far indicates that it has not done so. The department will continue to make its plans and deal with the issue. Also for the member opposite, I know of no transfer of these ticks, which are very specific to certain species that they cross to, to either livestock or humans.

Mr. Edzerza: Mr. Speaker, we don't want to make light of this situation. It's very important to protect the moose population, but it's also important to treat all animals with respect, even species that have been brought into the territory. We urge the acting minister to proceed with caution. We've already heard one former wildlife biologist advocating the most extreme solution -- slaughtering the wild elk herds. In my view, Mr. Speaker, that should be the last resort solution, only after all reasonable measures have been taken. What is the acting minister doing to assess the situation, and what measures is the government currently taking to deal with the tick infestation in the wild elk population?

Hon. Mr. Kenyon: The current risk to moose has not actually been determined. Moose and elk, as the member opposite is well aware, tend to use different habitat types and so there is a limitation to the degree of risk of transmission. However, as elk herds continue to grow and expand into higher density moose areas, this is something that the department is carefully assessing and an expert risk analysis is definitely planned by the Department of Environment.

Mr. Edzerza: Many Yukoners -- and I'm one of them -- were horrified by this government's handling of the reindeer

situation a few years back. The government had the option of euthanizing the few reindeer that showed signs of illness and putting the rest in quarantine until the extent of the problem could be determined. They rejected that option because it would cost too much. For the sake of saving a few dollars, this government chose a brutal last resort measure as its first resort.

Now, once again, we are hearing calls for an entire animal population to be slaughtered when there may not be any need to do that. Will the acting minister give assurances that all other means of controlling the tick infestation will be seriously considered before any decision is made to slaughter any or all of the elk population?

Hon. Mr. Kenyon: I would recommend that the member opposite reread the article in the media and our local advertising supplement -- that this was a recommendation made by a private individual -- retired -- and it is not a recommendation of the department.

We will allow our officials to do their due diligence, to assess the risk and to make their recommendations at the same time.

I do hope, Mr. Speaker, that what I didn't hear the member opposite say was that the government, following our good officials and their recommendations, should have risked a private operator with diseased animals to turn them into the wildlife to accomplish exactly what he is arguing against. I hope he isn't suggesting that.

Question re: Workers' Compensation Act review

Mr. Cardiff: A drive past the Yukon Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board building would reveal that more than 1,600 Yukon workers have been injured on the job so far this year. With a current workforce of nearly 15,000, that means that more than one worker in 10 has been hurt on the job so far this year.

The minister responsible just made a tribute to healthy workplaces, but his actions don't match his words. The *Workers' Compensation Act* review was completed quite awhile ago. The stakeholders have made their recommendations and this government continues to sit still while injuries pile up.

After years of review and unanimous agreement on virtually all points by the stakeholders, will the minister finally table the legislation this sitting to modernize and improve the systems of workers' compensation health and safety?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: I know the point the member of the third party, the Member for Mount Lorne, is trying to create, but the member ought to know very well that, as important as the act amendments are, the more important steps in ensuring safe workplaces are actions such as the board is taking in programs such as the choices program, in trying to encourage safer workplaces. Of course, the onus is on every employer and all employees to ensure they do their due diligence -- working with the board, of course, and being supported by the board and its administration in making the workplace safer, in identifying the risks, in complying with regulations, of course, and in taking steps to ensure it's a safe and healthy workplace.

In answer to the member's question about the act, we received the recommendations provided by the former panel in this area and, most importantly, by the stakeholders coming

together and agreeing on joint recommendations. I can advise the member opposite that work is proceeding, drafting is proceeding, and the act will be tabled in due course. I expect that, subject to Cabinet approval, of course, we will have the act tabled in the spring sitting of the Legislature.

Mr. Cardiff: I am glad the minister recognizes the important and good work of the board, the employers and the Federation of Labour, and all that those people are doing. It's too bad the minister wasn't doing the work that he is supposed to be doing.

In April, labour, business and the board unanimously requested that the minister move nine priority issues forward in the fall sitting so they could take effect as of January 1, 2008. These nine issues include the obligation of the worker to mitigate the effects of their injuries, tying maximum compensable earnings to the consumer price index, ensuring that employers and employees communicate and cooperate -- these are pretty standard amendments that could be made. They also included incentives for workplaces with good health and safety and return-to-work programs -- something that the minister has praised before.

At the very least, will the minister introduce the amendments to the act encompassing these nine priority items by this Thursday's deadline for tabling the information?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: As I advised the member in my first response, drafting work is taking place right now.

I appreciate the member's request and the request made by those who suggested that it should be tabled this fall. Drafting is currently underway. All matters, of course, in the final legislation are subject to Cabinet approval.

As I have indicated before in the House, we very much appreciate the joint work and collaboration to come together on a shared point of view by major stakeholder organizations. We will certainly take that into strong consideration -- I will, and I'm sure all members of Cabinet will -- in the development of the final legislation, which we anticipate will be tabled in the spring sitting of the Legislature. It is not complete at this stage. It will not be tabled in this sitting of the Legislature.

Mr. Cardiff: It's too bad the minister is ignoring the stakeholders. The sad fact, Mr. Speaker, is that the Yukon is on pace to break last year's record of 1,984 workplace injuries.

At a return to work symposium hosted by the Yukon Federation of Labour and the Yukon Chamber of Commerce in September, the director of the National Institute of Disability Management and Research said that one way to improve workplace safety is to publicly name companies that are not safe places to work. Naming businesses that flagrantly jeopardize their employees' safety would help shame those businesses into making changes. It would also warn potential employees about those businesses and could also serve as a warning to other employers.

Will the minister commit to beefing up the Yukon's occupational health and safety legislation by including a provision that employers with the worst health and safety records will have their names published?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: I appreciate the suggestion from the member opposite. I will note again that the consideration

we will be giving is based on the feedback received. The joint agreements by stakeholders will be a key factor in developing final legislation. All other opinions and suggestions will be considered. I would refer the member, to refresh his memory, to the 88 identified issues that were developed under the act review process and note that the member's suggestion and his reference to someone coming in and making a suggestion will be considered. In the context of the identified issues, not to limit further development, the focus will be on the identified priority issues, and the key consideration will be the joint recommendations of major stakeholders.

Question re: Workers' advocate job termination

Mr. Mitchell: How ironic that we're talking today about the *Workers' Compensation Act* review panel, considering what has happened to one of the members of that panel. Let's go back to the firing of the workers' advocate. Let's see what the Deputy Premier has to say. It is pretty clear what happened here. The campaign manager for the Liberals in the last election got under the skin of some important people. They wanted him gone and now he has been fired. It's as simple as that. There's a message here for public servants: don't get involved in politics and campaign against the Yukon Party. You'll lose your job.

The minister responsible for the Public Service Commission keeps insisting that this is a personnel issue; it's not something dealt with by the department. It is at the ministerial level. The workers' advocate is not a regular member of the public service. He's actually hired directly by the Justice minister, which is right out of the *Workers' Compensation Act*, section 13.

Why was this person fired and under whose orders?

Hon. Mr. Hart: For the member opposite, I will try again to deal with the situation. He's making accusations that members of this side have had direct input into the firing of the individual about whom he's questioning. That is not the case. The Public Service Commission is dealing with staff right through the process. If there are conditions and issues on which they made a decision, we are not privy to those. That is their prerogative.

Mr. Mitchell: The minister responsible for the Public Service Commission is not going to get off that easy. This firing is politically motivated. There is no doubt about it. It sends a strong message to public servants: don't get involved in politics because you'll regret it. The workers' advocate is paying the price for being involved in the last campaign.

Now, we have been very critical of the Yukon Party's campaign manager and his role as the chair of the Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board and at the hospital, as we should be, based on performance in those roles, and this is payback. How can the minister justify --

Speaker's statement

Speaker: Order. This is entirely out of order -- suggesting payback. You're suggesting illegality. The honourable member knows full well that that is not acceptable.

Now, I've asked and cautioned you on this line of questioning. If you do not change your tactic, sir, I will ask you to sit down. You have the floor.

Mr. Mitchell: This is the unfortunate consequence of political support for a party. How can the minister justify taking away someone's job to settle political scores? Shame.

Hon. Mr. Hart: I find, Mr. Speaker, that it's kind of incredible that the member opposite can accuse us -- and I'll use the word, if I can -- of having direct involvement and then turn around and indicate that it was okay for them to do the same thing.

Mr. Mitchell: Mr. Speaker, it's bad enough that this individual has been singled out and fired because of political participation.

Speaker's statement

Speaker: Order. Sit down, please. I've asked the honourable member to temper his remarks here. Now, from the Chair's perspective, you're not doing that. I am going to give the honourable member one more chance. Please temper your remarks.

I understand that this is a very delicate situation, and I am trying to allow the members as much latitude as I possibly can without breaching our Standing Orders. So please keep that in mind. You have the floor.

Mr. Mitchell: I'm presuming we are in the final supplementary of a question?

Speaker: You are indeed.

Mr. Mitchell: Mr. Speaker, is the minister prepared to reinstate this employee, or are we going to go along with this approach?

Hon. Mr. Hart: I will try to respond quickly to a couple of items. Personnel matters are handled by the department. Any minister cannot comment on personnel matters. Personnel decisions are not political. These decisions are subject to an array of labour relations law and case law.

Discussion of personnel matters is governed by the *Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act*. Individuals have different avenues of appeal they can pursue regarding certain kinds of personnel decisions. These avenues include grievance procedures, adjudication, the courts and other complaint processes, depending upon the individual's circumstances.

Question re: Workers' advocate job termination

Mr. Mitchell: This is Canada; it's not a Third World republic where we go around dismissing people who disagree with us. People have rights. Yukoners demand that their government respect those rights. The right to participate in the political process is one of those fundamental rights. It should not get you fired.

Where's this going to end, Mr. Speaker? Is the government keeping a list of Liberal and NDP campaign workers and executive members, so they can pick them off one by one? This was a wrong decision.

Speaker: Order. Sit down.

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Speaker's statement

Speaker: Be quiet. Again, this is going over the line. Now, to suggest anything illegal on behalf of the government or any member of this House is not in order. The honourable member knows that full well. The Leader of the Official Opposition still has the floor but I caution him. I will ask the member again to sit down if he does not follow my instructions.

The Leader of the Official Opposition has the floor.

Mr. Mitchell: When people make mistakes -- and we think this was a mistake -- we forgive them if the wrong is corrected. Forgiveness is another wonderful Yukon trait, as this Yukon Party government well knows; however, stubbornness and relentless punitive pursuit of rivals is not something Yukoners want or will tolerate.

I will ask again: in the name of common sense, will the minister stop this ridiculous process, reinstate the workers' advocate and stop this vendetta before irrevocable harm is done to the workers' advocate?

Speaker: Thank you.

Hon. Mr. Hart: I will try to stay at the \$30,000 level here. With regard to individuals dealing with their firing situation, they have options, as I mentioned earlier; they have avenues. They can apply for a grievance. They can go through the Human Rights Commission. They can go through the Ombudsman. They have those options available to them, if they think they have been incorrectly handled. And I recommend, if the members opposite wish, that they direct that individual to do that.

Unparliamentary language

Speaker: Before the honourable member asks his next question, I refer you to your term "vendetta". That is not an acceptable term either. The honourable member knows that. If you want to keep me out of this debate, sir, temper your words. You have the floor.

Mr. Mitchell: Well, Mr. Speaker, it is a very serious issue. I'm trying to find words that can show the gravity of this issue while still passing the rules of the Assembly. The fact is, Mr. Speaker, an individual came to work for a political party in a political campaign. Prior to that, this individual had long served Yukon workers and the Yukon public in not only the office of the workers' advocate, but also, at the request of a former minister, had served the public in the process of the *Workers' Compensation Act* review. Every year there were exemplary comments made about this individual's service. Something changed after the fall of 2006, Mr. Speaker. I am suggesting that this is a step back in history, and it is a step that is going to be at the expense of Yukon workers whom this advocate has so successfully represented.

We believe that something very wrong has occurred here, and we believe that there is a mean-spirited reason behind it. Will the minister now give this House the assurance that this ill-conceived plan to fire this individual will be reversed?

Hon. Mr. Hart: For the member opposite, I will reiterate like I have many times, as well as my colleagues: we do not get involved in personnel situations. As I indicated before,

and on previous occasions on many of these questions, there are processes and procedures available to the individual in which to bring his case forward. As I mentioned, he can go through a grievance procedure, he can go through a process, he can go to court, he can go through the Ombudsman, and/or he can go to the Human Rights Commission.

Question re: Alcohol and drug addictions

Mr. Edzerza: Mr. Speaker, this government has announced that, now that it has given us such a wonderful economy, it will start dealing with the social problems in the Yukon.

As I said yesterday, we can build all the roads and open all the mines you want, but it's just as critical to look at a healthy community as it is to look at a healthy economy. One works in conjunction with the other. Helping to create a healthy community is something this government has failed to do now. Let's hope the future is a little brighter than the past.

I want to ask about one of the biggest social problems we have, and that is addictions. Will this Minister of Health and Social Services be given the Yukon Party's platform promise from the last election to establish long-term, land-based treatment centres?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: I would have to again take this opportunity, as I believe I have in the past, to remind the member opposite of his history, to remind the member opposite of the facts. When the member was on this side of the floor, as the then Minister of Justice, the member had responsibility in proceeding with this area. The member did not do so.

The current Minister of Justice and I are proceeding in this area. Both the Department of Health and Social Services and the Department of Justice are working with First Nations as well as others, such as NGOs, in developing improved therapeutic options in this area, in improving the treatment programming. This is in addition, of course, to the steps that we have already taken, as the member ought to recall, in areas such as the establishment of the domestic violence treatment option, the community court, the substance abuse action plan, funding for the Outreach van and increased funding for FASD, to name but a few of the many areas where this government has stepped in to increase investment and action on the social side of the ledger in areas that previous governments have failed to do so. We have taken action; we will continue to act.

Mr. Edzerza: I know how this government works and it's called "working the issue." I'm happy to reply to the minister's claim from several months ago, and again today, that I was given the opportunity when I was a minister in this government to take the lead in developing land-based treatment centres. I want to say that I was shocked at this offer. It was given to me at the 11th hour when the Cabinet knew I was leaving. It was an attempt to persuade me to stay. Shame on this government that they would use such a serious issue as addictions in a political move. I am proud of my refusal to be taken in by that pressure. Let's get on with the question that I have repeatedly asked of this government.

Will this minister live up to the promise, not only in his party's platform, but also in the substance abuse action plan,

that he will be working with First Nations and NGOs to develop more treatment centres throughout the territory?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: We are working on this area. The member is trying to create a different image of the past. I would remind the member opposite the conversation I referred to took place between him and I immediately after my appointment as minister -- within a month. Be that as it may, we know where things are today. Today, this government is continuing its action on the social side of the agenda, continuing the investment, continuing the support we have already given in investing in support for individuals with FASD, investing in the substance abuse action plan with its four pillars, as outlined in our platform, including harm reduction, prevention and education, treatment and enforcement.

We are continuing to work in this area and I would refer the member again to the election platform, which he will find on-line through the party's Web site, if he doesn't have one, to see very clearly demonstrated in commitments this party's -- this government and all members of this government -- commitment to acting further in the area of treatment, including land-based treatment centres. I have to advise the member that this is not just being done in one department but, in fact, in two departments through me and the Minister of Justice.

Mr. Edzerza: What we do know for sure is that this government is at a standstill with regard to land-based treatment centres. The safe is closed and no one knows the combination to open it again.

This government and this minister have promised land-based treatment centres, not only in their platform and in their substance abuse action plan, but also when they created the community court dealing with offenders who have drug or alcohol addictions. But like many other promises, this one seems to have disappeared into the file named "This year, next year, sometime, never".

Will the minister tell us exactly when we can anticipate action on all these promises to respond to the crying need for land-based treatment centres in the Yukon?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: The member knows full well that we are acting in this area. The member realizes and knows this government continues to act on its commitment to Yukoners. We continue to deliver and will deliver in this area -- and deliver our platform commitments.

I again refer the member opposite to a copy of our platform and urge him to review that to see clearly our commitments in this area in not one section, but two, of the platform where it outlines our strong commitment to continuing work on addressing substance abuse, continuing to implement the substance abuse action plan and to implement increased services, particularly in this area.

One of the areas outlined -- and it will be acted upon -- is the commitment to develop land-based treatment programming.

Speaker: The time for Question Period has now elapsed.

Notice of opposition private members' business

Mr. Cardiff: Pursuant to Standing Order 14.2(3), I would like to identify the item standing in the name of the third

party to be called on Wednesday, October 31, 2007. It is Motion No. 178, standing in the name of the Member for Whitehorse Centre.

Mr. McRobb: Pursuant to Standing Order 14.2(3), I would like to identify the items standing in the name of the Official Opposition, to be called on Wednesday, October 31, 2007. They are Motion No. 176, standing in the name of the Member for Mayo-Tatchun, and Motion No. 10, standing in the name of the Member for Copperbelt.

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT BILLS

Bill No. 7: Second Reading

Clerk: Second reading, Bill No. 7, standing in the name of the Hon. Mr. Fentie.

Hon. Ms. Taylor: I move that Bill No 7, entitled *Fourth Appropriation Act, 2006-07*, be now read a second time.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Minister of Tourism and Culture that Bill No. 7, entitled *Fourth Appropriation Act, 2006-07*, be now read a second time.

Hon. Ms. Taylor: I rise to introduce on second reading the *Fourth Appropriation Act, 2006-07*, for the 2006-07 fiscal year.

It has been very interesting listening to the deliberations taking place in this Assembly today. Of course, this is always an opportunity to make one's views known about various issues of concern and importance to Yukoners. It is really incumbent and responsible on each of our parts to respond in a responsible manner.

I am here today to present, through second reading speech, the *Supplementary Estimates No. 3*, pertaining to the last fiscal year in closing out. I certainly want to take a bit of time over the next little while to outline some of what we have been able to accomplish and achieve as the Government of Yukon over the last number of years but, more specifically, with respect to the last fiscal year.

It is a very great pleasure to rise on this occasion, again, to speak to many components of our election platform since being first elected in 2002, as well as in 2006.

On October 10, 2006, Yukoners voted for political stability. They voted for continuity. They voted to hold the course, while continuing to address the social concerns and the social side of the ledger, and also moving forward on economic progress in the territory.

And at that time, we asked Yukoners to imagine tomorrow by re-electing a Yukon Party government to carry on with the direction that we first established in 2002. We had asked Yukoners for a second mandate to enable us to implement our particular vision, and that is building Yukon's future together, a clear vision for a bright future. We were able to achieve just that. We did receive a second mandate, the first time in many years. It is with great pleasure that we, with the assistance of all

of our colleagues in Cabinet as well as with the assistance of the many hundreds of government officials working within the Government of Yukon, working in collaboration with our respective First Nation governments, municipal governments, communities, non-government organizations and so forth, do just that.

Mr. Speaker, our vision for Yukon's future is built on four major pillars. One is to achieve a better quality of life by building healthy, safe communities with skilled and adaptable people. The second major pillar was protection of Yukon's environment, preserving our wildlife and studying, mitigating and adapting to the impacts of climate change. The third pillar is promoting a strong and diversified private sector economy and practising good cooperative government with strong fiscal management. Certainly, over the last number of years, we've been able to work on many of those accomplishments, and we certainly have much more to do, as is outlined in the 2006 election platform.

I will start with achieving a better quality of life for Yukoners. Look in particular at the last fiscal year and Canada Winter Games as a wonderful couple of weeks in the lives of all Yukoners and the lives of many Canadian athletes and so forth.

We did pledge to make the 2007 Canada Winter Games a complete success, and a resounding success it was, thanks in good part to the hundreds of volunteers who volunteered community-wide, throughout the Government of Yukon, the City of Whitehorse and so forth. We were able to build upon the success of the Canada Winter Games and make it a resounding success and a memorable experience for Yukoners and guests alike. It has left a lasting legacy and provided state-of-the-art facilities for future sport venues.

It is with great pleasure we again thank the many volunteers who participated in this event, whether on the sport side or in a cultural role, and ensured that the games went off without a hitch, which they certainly did.

I still receive comments from my colleagues country-wide that they had never seen such a majestic set of games produced. Who would have thought the Yukon, the very first jurisdiction north of 60, would be able to host such a tremendous sporting and cultural event -- in fact, I would say the largest ever held north of 60.

When we look at the events that were held, despite the weather, it was a tremendous opportunity for the Yukon to showcase our destination as a place to come and visit as well as to live, drawing upon our quality of life in terms of what we can offer, as well as it being a great place to invest and work.

The national marketing campaign we launched prior to the Canada Winter Games was another example of the collaborative approach we have taken to governance in this territory. Thanks to the good work of our Premier and the premiers from the Northwest Territories and Nunavut, we were able to host our very first national marketing campaign, which reached thousands of Canadians, country-wide, and built upon the qualities that make us all proud to call the Yukon our home.

So we were very pleased to be able to provide a national Look Up North marketing campaign -- having recently re-

ceived some of the initial results in the national marketing campaign, indeed it was well worth the investment of \$5 million of which the Government of Yukon contributed \$2 million and, again, \$1.5 million respectively from our two sister territories. It was not only a compilation of television spots -- whether it was shown on, I believe, the Oscars or whether it was shown through an episode of *CSI*, et cetera, we got a lot of play for our advertising.

Those songs, those images that were reflected in our marketing campaign, still resonate with many Canadians today. One only has to take a look at the number of hits on our respective Web sites. I know that travelyukon.com was by far the most visited site of all the sites throughout the games and after. Whether it was images portrayed from the advertising campaign within the national marketing campaign, it was shown in many cinemas throughout the country, which received very popular, rave reviews from the audience at large. We also were able to incorporate a number of promotional events, which our Premier and the other two premiers from the other two territories took part in. It was a wonderful collaboration and resonated, putting the Yukon on the national stage as coming of age in conjunction with Canada's north in terms of -- whether it meant settlement of land claims, the devolution of our resources, lands, minerals, waters over to the Government of Yukon. The Yukon and Canada's north have become a very interesting and intriguing opportunity to invest, but also to come and visit as a very unique destination -- something very different from what many Canadians have participated in in the past.

Certainly, Yukon continues to be a place of population growth. Members only have to reflect upon the population statistics over the last five years. In fact, previous to our government taking office, our population was actually plummeting. There were high unemployment numbers -- one of the record unemployment statistics in the country.

This, of course, has turned around, and it can certainly be attributed to a number of factors: providing some stability within government, sound policies and governing in collaboration with our partners -- whether that be First Nation governments, self-governing First Nations, the federal government, whichever stripe it may be, and working with our municipal governments, our community organizations, our non-profit organizations and so forth. We have certainly been able to provide numerous examples of good governance over the years.

Over the last year, we have very much put a renewed emphasis on maintaining and creating a safe environment for Yukoners. Certainly, we have taken a tough stance against those who choose to live a life that is less than desirable, with a focus on new treatment facilities for our respective Yukoners in need. We were able to hear about a little bit of that earlier today in Question Period. This is one of five pillars that were addressed in the substance abuse action plan.

We are very pleased to be able to deliver on a number of initiatives. In fact, I just want to outline a number of the initiatives that were comprised in 2006-07, but also ongoing initiatives such as VictimLINK.

We chose to partner with the Government of British Columbia to provide Yukoners access to VictimLINK at no cost, and this is really a wonderful arrangement with the Government of British Columbia. In turn the Government of Yukon has been able to provide needed access to resources, victims of crime, and support to victims and families of sexual violence among those citizens of Lower Post, British Columbia, as well as Atlin, British Columbia. So that is certainly a very important initiative that we have undertaken and, again, we are very happy to be able to provide -- that is housed within the Department of Justice.

We continue to be able to deliver a number of very creative initiatives based on submissions put forward by respective community organizations, and in support of these initiatives that support crime-free and healthy activities in our respective communities. We actually were able to deliver a number of amendments in the fall of 2004, which actually increased the amount of resources available to programs to address victims' needs and crime prevention needs. This particular fund is called the crime prevention and victim services trust fund -- again, another fund that is housed within our budget and has been for the last number of years and continues to be very successful. Of course these added resources, thanks to our amendments a couple of years ago, continue to be able to produce many creative and very effective results in our communities.

I refer to another exciting initiative. We have been working with the citizens of Watson Lake, for example, to further their community efforts to address some of the issues of importance to their community. I just refer to the Watson Lake community wellness committee, and I recall when I was the previous Minister of Justice there was a plea for some assistance to work together to identify and move forward with a concerted plan of action to address some of the social ills that had been very evident in the Town of Watson Lake. It was at that time when we were able to garner our resources from all our respective agencies, as well as community partners -- the RCMP, respective First Nations and so forth -- to come together to talk about the issues, from vandalism to domestic violence in the community.

As a result of those concerted discussions, there was a plan put together for community wellness. As a result, we are very happy to continue to work with the community of Watson Lake, the Liard First Nation, many local organizations and community members in addressing some of these social issues. That is yet another example of a very creative approach, and one that many members of the government and the public service continue to work on. Housed within the Department of Justice, the family violence prevention unit does a very stellar job day in and day out. Whether they work with victims of a crime or victims of abuse, they provide a number of very well-received programs. The women's program provides counselling and treatment services for the perpetrators of crime through the spousal abuse management program. We are very pleased to have been able to enhance those resources, which has actually effectively resulted in very innovative approaches to treatment of domestic violence such as the domestic violence treatment options being expanded to places such as the Town of Watson

Lake. This budget we are referring to houses this particular unit and the very services that we continue to provide, which contribute to healthier communities, places that we all strive to become.

Another program that was announced and introduced a year ago was the counselling for children who witness domestic violence. Again, it is another well-subscribed program. It is thanks in large part to funding from the Department of Justice in the Government of Canada. We actually received five years of funding to establish this particular program that provides counselling to children who very unfortunately witness domestic violence. It has really enabled us to support children who witness these crimes and to provide the counselling service they require to help them cope with the trauma.

In doing so, we have been able to help reduce the risk that they may carry with them when they grow up. So it's another initiative that has been very creative. It's a relatively new initiative but so far it has been very well-received.

As I made reference to earlier, the Yukon substance abuse action plan -- and again, over the last year and a half, we have seen great movement on this particular area, through the Premier and through our respective ministers and their officials. We have certainly made addressing substance abuse in our communities a priority.

Again, building on the five pillars, we have been able to address a number of items. One such initiative was the creation of a community court, which was also talked about here earlier today in Question Period. Community court is a very creative approach. It's an alternative therapeutic court that makes provisions available for offenders with addictions, mental illnesses, substance abuse, FASD, and so forth, to receive the treatment they require.

Again, very similar to the domestic violence treatment option, this has received a lot of national attention over the last little while, and many eyes are on the territory. This is not what I would classify as a drug court, so to speak, but it is really a holistic approach to addressing alcohol and substance abuse issues, which, of course, certainly combine or contribute to the root causes of criminal activity in our territory. It's fully underway right now. We will see what the results are in terms of being able to address some of these root issues. Again, it's very creative and I congratulate the Department of Justice for their initiative in making this a priority within the department and the Government of Yukon.

Another exciting initiative that was funded through the northern strategy in 2006-07 was the feasibility of establishing a northern institute of justice. This makes a lot of sense. It's a very creative approach made in the Yukon. We are looking at particular ways to address shortages across the north -- not just in the Yukon, but north of 60. We are looking for more individuals to become interested in working in the justice system and related fields. Providing training and education for Yukoners continues to be a priority of our government. This particular initiative builds on the suite of programs that we are looking at building, whether that is through Yukon College, through distance learning initiatives and so forth. We are working with our northern neighbours in N.W.T. and Nunavut. We're working

with Yukon College; we're working with First Nations, the Department of Education and the Public Service Commission on this particular project.

Also housed within the supplementary budget that closes out last fiscal year are significant resources that have gone toward the development of a corrections action plan. I could speak about this for many hours. I won't because there are many areas to lay out this afternoon. One area is that of corrections. I recall that when I was the Minister of Justice there were discussions about proceeding with the correctional centre that was being proposed by the previous Liberal government. A decision was made by our government to take a very holistic approach to corrections and to work collaboratively in partnership with Yukon First Nations on taking a very creative approach to it, to see what is working and what is not working.

It is certainly not a process just to design a facility; more importantly, it is to define how we can actually better deliver services and programs within a facility that are responsive and culturally relevant to the Yukon. It is also looking to see what we can do in partnership with our respective governments in delivering these services in the communities.

It all falls in with our approach to addressing substance abuse, which is a major factor in contributing to the level of crime in this country and in North America.

We went to work with Yukon First Nations to develop a comprehensive corrections action plan. Through the good efforts of the Council of Yukon First Nations, their respective leaders and so forth, and the Department of Justice, we were able to complete a 15-month, territory-wide public consultation on how to better meet the needs of offenders, victims and communities through the corrections system.

The correctional redevelopment strategic plan is an implementation framework that was approved by First Nation chiefs and by the Government of Yukon at the Yukon Forum in November 2006. Shortly thereafter, we were also able to announce a redevelopment strategic plan, which was released to the public a few months later, in February 2007.

The strategic plan has two main goals: one, as I mentioned earlier, is to substantially improve the quality of programming, whether offered to victims or offenders in communities; the second priority goal was to fundamentally change the way we do corrections in the territory, how we can change the operation of the corrections system so that the Government of Yukon and First Nations can deliver high-quality correctional services in a more culturally responsive manner building upon the prevention and treatment when it is being delivered, if that should be the case, in the corrections system. More important is the aftercare provided to individuals.

We often hear that is the case; we may provide a lot of emphasis on programming within our facility; however, there isn't much in terms of aftercare. That is something we continue to hear as a priority among Yukoners. We have very much heard it during a recent round of community consultations this past fall, and we will continue to deliver on this particular area.

As members opposite may be familiar, a building advisory committee has been created to look at options for the new correctional centre and implement plans for programs and services

in our respective communities. So this work is very much underway. There was funding identified in last year's fiscal main estimates, and we continue to endeavour to build upon the very efforts that were set out about three years ago. In fact, in this particular period, in 2006-07, members will recall that we actually designated just over \$3 million toward the redevelopment of the correctional centre. So that work is well underway, and we look forward to seeing not only a renewed facility, but also a renewed emphasis on the new vision of corrections in the territory.

Of course, I would be remiss if I didn't mention the fact that, while this continues to go on, we also continue to provide enhanced awareness and emphasis on offender programming that is currently delivered at the facility. Again, we are very pleased to expand on some of those opportunities available to the inmate population, whether it be through various counselling services made available from First Nations, or providing a number of various program options: traditional parenting, traditional medicine, elders circle, wood carving, and, of course, I'm very pleased to continue to promote the various solstice gatherings that take place in the corrections facility. I've had the occasion to attend a number over the previous years as Minister of Justice -- very well-received.

It is great to work closely with the Council of Yukon First Nations and their particular liaison officers in that respect. As I mentioned earlier, building upon the substance abuse action plan, one initiative that received a lot of good discussion and collaboration in this Legislature was that of the creation of the *Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods Act*.

As members opposite will know, this is legislation that has been very well-received in jurisdictions of Saskatchewan and Manitoba. We have taken great liberty to work with our community and our stakeholders in making sure that we have a made-in-Yukon piece of legislation that will be effective and yet another part of the solution to addressing crime in our communities.

As members opposite will recall, we actually passed that legislation in May of 2006 and we were very pleased to open the safer communities and neighbourhoods -- SCAN -- office on November 29 -- just about a year ago. It has received numerous complaints. It has also resulted in closing down a number of dwellings in the City of Whitehorse. It has been very well-received and, as I understand, very well-subscribed to. It certainly has exceeded the expectations of many individuals I have talked to. But more importantly, it is another tool in the toolbox -- as many of us would say in addressing combating crime in our communities and combating the spread of substance abuse in the Yukon.

This is really a piece of legislation that is civil-led -- that is, it enables any citizen of the territory to launch a complaint to an independent office that will receive those complaints and determine whether or not they wish to provide a full-blown investigation. If that is the case, they have a number of legal mechanisms at their fingertips to deal with the matter at hand.

It has worked very well. We're pleased with the legislation and its great success thus far. We are very fortunate to be able to provide an attractive area in which to do business and

pleased to attract quality individuals to operate this particular facility. Their efforts, combined with the efforts of the RCMP, have worked very well. We were looking to some of the challenges identified in Manitoba, Saskatchewan, but were able to glean the good work of those two jurisdictions and so able to provide legislation that was very much Yukon-led and Yukon-made.

A topic of importance is building upon services delivered through the Whitehorse Correctional Centre. We were recently able to enhance our ability to manage a number of mental health cases with the completion of a mental health room about a year ago. The room can accommodate individuals with such issues. Providing adult protection and supported decision-making services has come out of the legislation that we were able to pass not long ago. It is a very important legal framework and we have provided the necessary funds to make effective legislation work. It provides for the appointment of guardians for people with reduced mental capacity to make decisions for them. It's all part and parcel of providing safe and healthy communities.

Through legal aid, housed in the Department of Justice, we're blessed to have a relatively healthy amount of dollars available. This has been made possible through Yukon's contributions and those of the Government of Canada. As a result, we're pleased to see the opening of the neighbourhood law clinic, providing legal aid to individuals in non-family civil law matters, whether it's impacting the livelihood of families, physical or mental health, or the ability to provide various things like shelter, food, clothing, et cetera.

We're pleased to provide the delivery of those services, another budgetary item that's housed in the Department of Justice.

Building upon our family- and child-oriented approaches to justice, I was pleased to take part in the annual conference earlier this year -- January 2007, I think -- where funding was made available for the child-centred family justice initiative. Thanks to this funding, which was allocated a year ago, it has enabled us to pay for a part-time project officer position and particular projects, such as the continuation of the parent education program, which addresses the effects of separation and divorce on children.

There was also the development of a resource centre for family law information. A family law Web site was developed, which provided instant, accessible access to readily responsive information made available through this particular Web site. We are funding the updating of the Yukon Public Legal Education Association's publication, *Splitting Up: The Yukon Law on Separation*. The Women's Directorate was very pleased to be able to provide funding for this particular initiative a couple of years ago, but as you can imagine, with family law always changing on the federal level, it's really important to be able to update our publications and our resource materials so that they are available to Yukoners. Of course, this particular initiative also provides resources for an annual information session on family law projects, again, given to front-line service providers, which I was able to participate in earlier this year. So there really are a number of very interesting developments going on.

Again, it just builds upon our very pillar that I identified, first and foremost, by achieving a better quality of life by building healthy and safe communities in the Yukon.

Building upon that, we are also very pleased to be able to provide additional dollars toward educating our own Yukon citizens. Again, it is very much a high, important priority, as identified in our platform. Certainly, we have made great strides over the last number of years. In fact, it was this government that reinstated -- I believe it was the community training fund after it was cut by the previous Liberal government, just prior to taking office in 2002. We actually went above and beyond that. Not only did we reinstate those funds, but we also were able to enhance dollars made available to vocational experiential programs, as I mentioned yesterday, but we also enabled Yukon College to further expand its delivery, its suite of programs available for trades training, for example.

A recent example of that was on the news the other day, I recall, with new monies being made available for the expansion of actual infrastructure -- so another great thing. We were also able to enhance our base funding -- we reinstated the fund to \$1.5 million. I believe it was reduced by \$500,000, if I'm not mistaken, or perhaps it was more. Anyhow, we were pleased to come along and we saw the importance of trades training and training of our own Yukoners. We were also able to enhance the base funding for Yukon College by an additional \$1 million, as I seem to recall. These are all very worthy investments.

I don't even have to remind members of the shortages that Canada is experiencing on the national stage, particularly when you look at trades -- electricians, plumbers, sheet-metal workers, journey-level carpenters. There is a shortage clear across the board. With the economy doing so well in the Yukon, there is an ever-increasing need to train more Yukoners and attract more people to come to the Yukon to build the many infrastructure projects we have identified, as I alluded to yesterday.

I was pleased to learn recently at a Yukon Chamber of Commerce meeting in Watson Lake that our trades training programs -- the pre-apprenticeship programs, I believe -- are all fully subscribed to. In fact, we have more individuals who have entered those various occupations than ever before in Yukon's history. It speaks volumes of the importance. As of October 4 of this year, there were 365 residents registered as apprentices in 31 of the 48 trades designated in the Yukon. Of these, 68 were members of First Nations and 29 were women.

Speaking of women in trades, we have taken a very active interest in promoting the development of more women becoming tradespeople in the Yukon. Through the women's equality fund, the Women's Directorate has just recently been able to make available \$104,000 to Yukon women in trades and technology over the next three years to build that capacity in our respective communities and to build upon those partnerships.

One recent partnership was that between the Liard First Nation and the Department of Education. We are really pleased that the Department of Education was able to provide \$50,000 toward Liard First Nation women in trades and, as a result, there have been two sets of women -- one set, I believe, graduated earlier this summer, and the other group of women was also about to graduate.

Again, using the trades and skills they were able to garner through the assistance of other women, journey-level carpenters, they were able to put their skills to task by building, or certainly renovating, existing infrastructure in the Town of Watson Lake.

This is another good-news success story. In fact, in partnership between the Department of Education and the Women's Directorate, we were very pleased, again, to see the second round of the 16-week course of women in trades. Again, this provides an introduction to women throughout the territory, to give them a better understanding and a bit of a better appreciation of skills available in various trades -- in electrical, sheet-metalworking, carpentry, or so forth -- I think there were about six or seven different areas -- as well as identifying women in the workplace -- their rights, their roles and responsibilities -- and just generating more awareness of the importance of trades and how women have very much become important players in terms of advancing the trades in the country.

Mr. Speaker, building upon education in our territory, as I mentioned yesterday, there was a lot of emphasis on literacy becoming a priority as a fundamental building block of education. Our government has, over the last number of years, placed incredible emphasis on literacy and, in fact, I believe it was in 2006, through the Literacy Action Committee, that we were able to fund 136 literacy projects throughout the territory -- an incredible amount of very creative work put forth by community organizations, which has been very, very well-received by Yukoners.

Is there more work to do? Of course there is. There is always more work to be done, but it is our government that has really been able to raise the awareness of the importance literacy plays as a key component of breaking down the barriers in terms of addressing poverty in our territory and as a fundamental skill in being able to advance the territory further.

Building on the quality of life in the territory, we have been able to announce some incredible infrastructure projects over the years. Of course, in January, in conjunction with the Government of Canada, a number of initiatives were announced through the municipal rural infrastructure fund, including the Hamilton Boulevard extension in Whitehorse, road improvements in the Mayo region, a new playground in Dawson City, and a new sewage facility for Pelly Crossing, for example. These are but a very small number of areas where we have been able to work in partnership with communities and First Nations to address some of their infrastructure shortages.

Of course, I would be very remiss if I didn't make mention of improving the quality of life for Yukon seniors and elders in the territory. One only has to take a look up to the Yukon College area and see the 48 brand new units being made available to our senior and elder population in the Yukon. It very much has addressed many of the pressures on our housing stock in the Whitehorse area, of which we had the most, and has been very well-received.

I had the opportunity to take a tour early this year -- I think it was in about January 2007 -- and I just wanted to see it for myself and to have the opportunity to tour with some of the seniors and elders who were taking a look around at the pro-

posed new facility. It was amazing to see the reaction at first. At first there was a bit of apprehension as to what to expect. It's not downtown and so forth. Is it going to be close to services? What about the infrastructure challenges? It was very interesting to see, at the end of the tour, that their reactions were very much, "Sign me up. I really want to be able to reside in this place."

It has worked out very well and I understand they are all fully subscribed -- every one of those units. I think it is a wonderful area to reside. The college is home to many trails, beautiful walking places, green spaces and, of course, they are also able to continue their life-long learning education path. We've heard nothing but rave reviews from that particular population about the benefits of making that particular facility available.

Of course the other half of the old athletes village units are being made available for family residences, which are now under the purview of Yukon College. In terms of moving Yukon College further, we're looking right now through a strategic review as to how we can better deliver services and what programs we should or should not be in the business of delivering. As we proceed to make more options available for Yukoners to address some of these critical shortages that we're experiencing all through the country, there is wonderful opportunity for us to house additional families. This particular part of the housing is very much in need, building upon our pillar of providing quality of life for Yukoners.

That doesn't end there. We are also in the midst of delivering dollars available for a new seniors facility, housed in the village of Haines Junction. I had the opportunity of taking a quick tour preview of that facility during our recent community visit to Haines Junction. It was just about three or four weeks ago. I had the opportunity to tour it with the assistance of a number of other seniors who were there at the time. It was very impressive. The nice thing about that is there is room to grow those units. There is room to expand upon the current facility as well, if need be, and there will be a need down the road. It was very much appreciated by all the residents of the village.

As well, we continue to work in the Town of Watson Lake for the construction of a new seniors facility, housed right beside the hospital. Again, it's great to see the footprint of the project on the ground, steel going in, and concrete being laid. It's great to see that particular project is going very well.

Of course, we will continue to work with our other communities, including Teslin, and even in the City of Whitehorse, on expanded accommodations for seniors and elders living, whether that be assisted living, independent living or so forth. We know that the demographics are changing very fast and that we have to be very prepared for what is coming, and that is a need for secure, affordable housing, independent living, and so forth and for you, Mr. Speaker, and maybe for the member opposite from Porter Creek, as well. But I'm not pointing a finger at any others here.

So we have certainly made great strides in being able to enhance our complement of programs and services available to Yukoners and in being able to deliver on the quality of life. Of course, housed within last year's budget is the territorial health access fund, the continuation of that funding -- a very instru-

mental piece of resources that have been designated for many worthy initiatives. I was actually just reviewing some of the announcements that we had made over the last fiscal year in this respect. I just wanted to remind members opposite of all the initiatives that we are doing to address the shortage and the need to attract and retain respective health care professionals to our communities.

It was an amazing reminder of the shortages and how we have been able to address some of these critical areas. Thanks to the immigration program -- the Yukon nominee program -- we were actually able to recruit two medical doctors to our medical community last year. That was thanks to the program that was designed to fast-track immigration of skilled professionals. This was very well-received by Yukoners and the citizens of Whitehorse, where we have really been experiencing some challenges.

As I made reference to earlier, thanks to the territorial health access fund, we have been able to make available new bursary programs for students entering the medical profession. This particular bursary has been very useful in supporting Yukoners who are studying to become doctors. It is in addition to an increase to the nursing bursary program, which I believe has doubled the dollars available.

Successful applicants have been able to receive \$10,000 per year for up to four years in medical school, plus an additional \$15,000 a year for two years for those who take their residency in family medicine. We know that there are a number of students currently subscribing to these programs, and we are really excited about the net result. Yes, it does take time for Yukoners or any individual students to become full-fledged family physicians. The key is that if we have the tools to be able to educate and support our own students -- we know that their roots are here and we know that their hearts are here and their families are here, and that they are very likely able, above all else, to stay in the territory and raise their families and continue to make a very good living here in the Yukon.

Earlier in February, actually, we were very pleased to be able to introduce a pacemaker clinic at the Whitehorse General Hospital, meaning that Yukon residents with pacemakers would not have to leave the territory for medical checkups -- again, saving upon the costs of medical travel, but also just increasing the availability of services very close to home. So again, it's another improvement in making health care accessible and affordable in the Yukon.

A new vaccination program for infants started up in January, earlier this year -- again, it was the chicken pox vaccine that was made available for Yukon infants upon reaching their first birthday, expanding upon the vaccinations that we have available for infants. Having one myself -- albeit almost the age of three and a very busy time -- I have been very appreciative of the service delivery and the programs made available to toddlers, to babies, and certainly the expansion of vaccinations such as this is wonderful. Having twice had chicken pox in my recent lifetime, I care not to have that repeated by my son as well.

As I mentioned earlier, we were also able to improve mental health services available. As I mentioned, a new room is

available within the corrections facility -- but also in the way that we deliver these particular services in the Yukon. Again, with the earlier announcement in August 2006, we were able to announce a new mental health clinician in Dawson City to support individuals and families with health problems such as this -- and again being able to build on the local capacity available in our respective communities.

Again, that's a very important service and it also reduces some of the pressures that perhaps are being experienced in other areas as well. We have been helping new doctors set up practices in the Yukon. I know that we've had a lot of debate in the Legislature over the last number of years about how we can better attract physicians to come here, how they can set up practice, and we certainly have taken up those constructive ideas, and we have actually put money where our mouth is, and we have been able to deliver. This is just another example of a very good initiative. That initiative is, as I recall, providing an incentive of up to \$50,000 for every new doctor setting up practice in the Yukon. The key, of course, is providing \$20,000 at the time they move to the Yukon, another \$20,000 at the end of the second year, and then the final \$10,000 at the end of the fourth year, so there is a real incentive in terms of providing long-term services to the Yukon and being able to provide that local building capacity in our communities as well.

In addition, we were able to also announce another health bursary being made available for Yukon students entering post-secondary education in the health profession field, whether it is in pharmacy, physiotherapy, occupational therapy, speech-language pathology and audiology, medical laboratory, radiology, dietetics, nutrition, licensed practical nursing and so forth. This makes available \$5,000 per year for up to four years for their education. Again, this is an investment in Yukoners, and what better way to do that than by providing these attractive financial incentives?

I was very pleased to see changes to the medical travel program that was announced about a year ago, in April 2006. It was to enhance the travel subsidies that Yukoners are eligible to receive for having to travel outside the territory.

I know that with the changes in demographics and the complexities involved in health care these days, there is added pressure upon our travel but, thanks to the territorial health access fund made available through the good work of our premiers, we were able to deliver this particular incentive. This is increasing the subsidy from \$30 a day to \$75 a day, as well as having the subsidy kicking in on the second day instead of the fourth day, which has been very well-received in the territory. It also provides resources available for those who have to travel within the territory for medical treatment. Those individuals who have to travel by car were able to see an increase in their travel support by extending the dollars made available per kilometre. For Yukoners living in rural areas, outside of communities, services are also being made available for the very first time. This particular initiative has been very well-received. It is part of the funding that was made available through the territorial health access fund.

Also housed within last year's budget was the funding to assist the Yukon Hospital Foundation in its fundraising efforts.

I think one only has to take a look at the upcoming activities here in the next month and a half with the Festival of Trees and the number of fundraising initiatives to raise dollars for capital expenditures at the hospital for cardiac care equipment and so forth. This initiative has been hugely successful in the Yukon. This money -- I believe it's \$75,000 for each year for the next number of years -- has been very well-received in the territory. Again, it is funding that was identified in last year's budget.

As I mentioned earlier, bursaries for nurses -- we were able to double the amount of assistance available for nurses, from \$2,500 annually to \$5,000 annually.

It's great to be able to support these professionals. We certainly know by experiencing first-hand the quality level of service made available to us -- the nursing professionals throughout the communities and their very integral role in providing quality health care in the territory. Indeed it's wonderful to see.

These are just some examples of where the health care funding has been used, despite, perhaps, what has been made known by the members of the opposition.

Speaking of contributing to the quality of life, I would be very remiss if I didn't touch upon the very good initiatives that are being delivered through the Department of Tourism and Culture. Whether it be through the advanced artist awards, the arts fund in support of community cultural projects or the Yukon arts funding program, it is again building capacity in our arts cultural community through direct financial support to arts organizations. I know that one of the groups, the Dawson City Arts Society, is housed in your home community, Mr. Deputy Speaker, as well, and it also receives dollars through that.

Certainly we have learned that the contributions on the economic or social side of the ledger by the cultural industries are very vast. Here in the Yukon, we are very appreciative of being able to provide a whole suite of funding programs in support of artists to further their capacity in the communities. It has been very well-received. In fact, I just read a report recently that reported that Yukon provided the highest level of funding in support of the arts. In fact, for every person in the Yukon, I think it was quoted that we spend, on average, \$113 per person in support of the arts. So that speaks volumes about the level of commitment by this Government of Yukon -- and me as the minister responsible for the Department of Tourism and Culture -- to support the community.

About a year ago, we were very pleased to provide special projects assistance to our Yukon museums. We have about 16 different institutions, varying from museums to community interpretive centres to First Nation cultural heritage centres, as well. This particular fund has made available a number of very astute projects. In fact, let's look at some of the projects that we have assisted over the last year. In 2006, the Dawson City Museum and Historical Society received \$10,000 toward their own strategic planning initiative; MacBride Museum received \$26,000 toward specialized building upgrades and a further \$73,000 for inventory and cataloguing of its collection. Our government has been very, very proud to be able to provide a total of \$729,000 toward the expansion of the MacBride Museum. I understand that the actual grand opening of the facility

won't be for a while yet, but again, that was another worthy initiative and investment in building upon our quality of life.

The Town of Watson Lake received almost \$47,000 for the development of a new aurora borealis production for the facility. In fact, I was just in Watson Lake for the AGM of the Yukon Chamber of Commerce. They had a reception at the Northern Lights Space and Science Centre, and I had the opportunity to view the production. It was very well-received.

We have also made dollars available to the Yukon Church Heritage Society -- that is the Old Log Church Museum. They received dollars for the travelling exhibit featuring the bishop who ate his boots and the gala opening. I had the opportunity to be able to take part in the official launch of this travelling exhibit. It is a wonderful exhibit and I would certainly encourage all Members of the Legislative Assembly to take a look at the exhibit. Understand, however, that it is on the national road, but here is another great investment that is very well-received.

Mr. Speaker, we were also pleased to actually double the amount of dollars a year ago for the preservation of historic properties. It was made available through the historic properties assistance program. We increased it by \$100,000, and it has gone very far in helping individual Yukoners preserve the properties that they have on their own purview. Just some examples of that include the Moosehide Cemetery, through the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation; the Old Log Church in Whitehorse, as I mentioned earlier. It gave them dollars for replacing the cedar shingles on the church itself. Money was given to *The Loon* in Mayo. I know that this project is a large project, and a very great investment in the Silver Trail area. They received dollars from this fund to restore the hull of *The Loon* -- yet another exciting adventure in the communities as well.

The historic resources fund, which was also funded in last year's fiscal year, supported four heritage projects. This fund was just recently created. That is, the terms and criteria were just created by our government upon taking office. It is actually administered by the Yukon Heritage Resources Board. It has been a great program.

In fact, over the last couple of years, they have allocated a number of great innovative projects, including MacBride Museum. They were given some funding for the relocation of Engine 51. Yukon Historical and Museums Association were allocated dollars toward a two-day non-academic symposium: "Discovering Northern Gold". This was another great initiative I was able to take part in about a year ago.

Building upon the quality of life, we were also pleased to be able to introduce new funding available to address violence against aboriginal women in our territory. This is an initiative that comprises \$100,000 on an annual basis. It provides resources to local aboriginal women within our respective communities to creatively address violence. Last year's initiatives included dollars for Young Women Regaining Their Power and that was made available through the education department of the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation. The Ta'an Kwach'an Council Women's Craft Healing Circle funding was made available through their health department; It's Okay to Tell -- Kwanlin Dun First Nation justice programs; Healing Through Participation -- White River First Nation; and Aboriginal Young Men

and Women Against Sexualized Violence was available through Skookum Jim Friendship Centre. This is an area of utmost importance to me in my capacity as minister responsible for the Women's Directorate and to our government. It is also an issue, one of the three identified priorities at the national level, in terms of working with aboriginal women and in helping them to advance women's equality on a national, territorial, and provincial front.

We're very pleased to be able to provide results from the National Aboriginal Women's Summit, which was held earlier this summer in Corner Brook, Newfoundland and Labrador. We are looking forward to the two aboriginal women's summits that will be held in Whitehorse and Watson Lake later on next month and to be able to share with women the recommendations coming out of the national summit and, more importantly, what those priorities are for local Yukon aboriginal women and coming up with a plan of action as to how we can move these items forward at the national level and in our respective areas.

The next national forum will be presented in Yellowknife, I believe, in 2008. It's an initiative that has been identified by the Council of the Federation. We as a government are very committed to being able to address some of these issues of importance to women in the Yukon.

One initiative that we were able to announce earlier this year was the priority housing policy -- and it was specifically for victims of violence as well as other applicant categories. This has long been an outstanding concern among the women's community and others -- the fact that Yukon didn't have the priority housing policy in effect up until recently. Certainly topping the list are our victims of violence. This makes available housing to women who are in need, particularly those who are fleeing abusive situations and relationships. We are very pleased to be able to provide housing in this regard to better accommodate some of these areas of importance.

One of the other pillars of the Yukon government, of course, was to protect and preserve Yukon's environment. I know there has been a lot of discussion at the table here regarding what the Yukon government is doing to address some of the pressing issues of concern pertinent to Yukon's environment. I just referred to a number of recent initiatives but, with respect to earlier this year and last year, we've been able to make progress on a number of fronts: coming up with a Yukon climate change strategy, looking at four goals to enhance awareness and understanding of climate change impacts on Yukon's environment, people and economy; reducing greenhouse gas emissions; building environmental, social and economic systems that are able to adapt to climate change patterns and impacts; and supporting efforts to establish Yukon as a northern leader for applied climate change research and innovation.

As outlined in our recent platform in 2006, we are very much committed to working with the federal government to support a climate change research centre of excellence with the assistance of Yukon College, as well as a cold climate technology innovation cluster. We have had discussions. The Premier in his capacity as Minister of Environment, but also as the Premier, was able to advance this initiative even further. We

were able to hold, earlier this year, the first-ever Yukon Environmental Forum with over 165 delegates representing various interests from around the Yukon to discuss how fish, wildlife and environmental data collection can be improved for sound natural resource management. As a result, enclosed in this fiscal year's budget, there are substantial enhancements to the funding made available for inventories, data collection on wildlife inventories, and so forth -- again being very responsive.

Looking at impacts of climate change on our herds -- the Porcupine caribou herd, for example -- and other wildlife species was also a major commitment made during the 2006 election platform.

Building upon those successes, I would be remiss if I didn't mention that in August 2006, our Premier in collaboration with the Selkirk First Nation -- they were able to announce the Lhutsaw Wetland Habitat Protection Area management plan under chapter 10 of the *Selkirk First Nation Final Agreement*. It contains an area approximately eight kilometres southwest of Pelly Crossing in the lowland areas -- building upon our relationships with First Nations and, more importantly, meeting our obligations as contained in provisions of the respective treaties. This is but one clear example of collaboration.

Likewise, earlier last year Old Crow Flats also received protection as a special management area -- again, moving forward in collaboration with First Nations to agree upon and approve a management plan for this particular area in the Yukon, located just north of Old Crow. This project has been in the works for many years -- I believe about 20. We are very appreciative and acknowledge the long-standing contribution of all previous and present Vuntut Gwitchin members, elders and leaders, along with the Yukon and federal government, which really provided the framework for the implementation of this special management area in their traditional territory.

So again, that is but another very big example of our commitment to address our commitments and obligations, as outlined in the treaties, and also to meet our commitments to address environmental issues of importance.

Mr. Speaker, I could certainly go on about other initiatives that we have tackled on the environment front, but I just wanted to make reference to a couple of those examples that we were able to address in the last year. Promoting a strong, diversified economy is the third pillar of our platform, and we have seen great enhancements in our economic picture over the last number of years. Exploration activity in the Yukon, when we look at 2002 to 2006, really went from about \$8 million to over \$80 million. Really, when you look at this year's projected expenditures, it's double that, at least.

We have also looked at tourism, as I mentioned earlier. Tourism is a huge economic mainstay for the Yukon. It remains one of the Yukon's backbones in terms of the economic engines, and we have been pleased to be able to provide new investments of dollars available for marketing the Yukon over the last number of years. The \$5 million, of course, that was launched for a national marketing campaign is but one small example -- or I should say a very large example -- of our commitment to again raise the profile of Yukon tourism as a desti-

nation of choice, and not just to visit but also to invest in and live here.

Earlier this year, as I alluded to before, we were very pleased to provide support to the Canada Winter Games on a whole host of different levels. One of the exciting events on the cultural streams, however, was the Gathering of Northern Nations Trade Show and Cultural Expo, of which we were very pleased to provide \$100,000 in new funding available last year for that particular initiative.

For those who took part in that gathering, it was very well-received. There were line-ups every single day and night it took place. Again, it instilled confidence in all of us in Yukon's ability to showcase quality, world-class products on a national and international scale.

This is really a wonderful event and we look forward to working with the Yukon First Nation Tourism Association, for example, to advance its efforts through the development of an aboriginal tourism strategy, which was also funded through the northern strategy that was made available last year.

When you look at tourism and culture, we also look to the cultural industries -- film and sound -- and there is a whole suite of programs and new initiatives under the purview of the Department of Economic Development, which we were able to reinstate upon being re-elected. We were able to incorporate and introduce new programs and new funding mechanisms and promote the further growth of the cultural industries.

In terms of forestry, we look to further diversifying the economy through forest developments, oil and gas innovation and technology, and so forth. These are but some of the opportunities that we have been moving on, as well.

I don't have to spell out or list a number of the infrastructure initiatives, because I already did some of that yesterday in my opening remarks to this year's supplementary budget. Certainly, I am very pleased to be able to provide new programming, available through the investment attraction strategy, the enterprise trade fund, and sport and marketing export projects for Yukon business; as I mentioned, film and sound incentive programs, and working toward the implementation of a new placer regime. These are all initiatives where we have put the wheels in motion over the last number of years. These investments are housed within these particular supplementary estimates.

We continue to invest in our post-secondary students, as well as in new learning opportunities for our secondary and elementary students in the Yukon, and there are new investments in our public service through the investing in public service initiative, which was announced two or three years ago. They are all very well-received.

Our fourth pillar, which is one of the most important in my eyes, is that of practising good government. Practising good government includes our vision of the Yukon coming of age through effective leadership, political stability, cooperative governance and strong fiscal management.

As I mentioned yesterday, we're very pleased to provide for the fifth consecutive year another clean bill of financial health from the Auditor General of Canada. This is also the

fifth consecutive year we've been able to garner an accumulated surplus.

It's great management, and thanks to the good officials working in all our departments. To the Department of Finance in particular, thank you for your many contributions along the way and for keeping us on the good road.

As I mentioned earlier, good governance -- partnering with our many orders of government in the Yukon -- is of fundamental importance to this government. We don't profess to have all the good ideas and we certainly cannot advance this territory without the full participation of Yukon First Nations, the Government of Canada, our municipal governments, community organizations and so forth.

We were very pleased to introduce and implement the *Co-operation in Governance Act*, establishing the Yukon Forum. That was almost two years ago. Out of the *Co-operation in Governance Act* came the Yukon Forum, which has served as an instrumental mechanism to establish a common ground on issues of importance to our respective governments and to move forward on some of these issues of importance.

We were able to garner \$40 million in northern strategy funding through the Yukon Forum. Likewise, also in 2005, an agreement was reached on the \$27-million northern economic development fund. We have also been able to make great use of the Yukon Forum in terms of looking at major joint initiatives, whether that be the *Children's Act* review, the corrections consultation or education reform. Certainly these are just but a few of the examples of the collaboration that we have been garnering with First Nations over the last number of years and making great use of economic partnerships with First Nations. I only have to take a look at the north Yukon economic partnership agreement, which was reached with the Vuntut Gwitchin, Tr'ondek Hwech'in and Na Cho Nyak Dun First Nations. Partnerships were established with Kaska and Selkirk First Nations on the Faro mine closure planning process and so forth. We are very committed to continued collaboration with the respective leaders in making great use of new investments of dollars for helping to build capacity in our communities while forging ahead with new economic partnerships, new economic initiatives and working to address social challenges as well. Again, these are just but some examples, and I am very pleased to be able to talk about some of the initiatives that we have outlined in our platform and the progress we have made over the years.

With respect to the finer details of the supplementary estimates, I just wanted to make a couple of comments regarding that. As members opposite know, this actual supplementary appropriation is required in order to fulfill the requirements of the *Financial Administration Act*.

It provides the statutory authority for expenditures of one department that exceeded its existing vote authority. As I mentioned yesterday, while departments strive to make every effort to manage their respective appropriations so as to not exceed their vote authority, there are occasions from time to time when expenditures in excess of their vote authority are necessary. As a result, year-end expenditure appropriations are generally minor, as I believe departments do a very, very great job of managing their budgets.

The total value of the supplementary appropriation before the members today is \$82,000 in operations and maintenance for the Department of Community Services. The department incurred this modest expenditure increase over its appropriation primarily in the provision of services to unincorporated communities.

On the bigger scale of events, departments collectively came in just over two percent under the overall operations and maintenance budget. This indicates, certainly to us, that departments have developed very fair and realistic budget plans and have been very effective in delivering on these plans.

On the capital side, departments lapsed approximately \$39 million, I believe, of the total capital expenditures voted. Given the multi-year nature of major capital projects and the potential for delays, it is quite usual to experience lapses in the capital vote on this side.

Mr. Speaker, the Government of Yukon has tried and true practices and procedures to revote funds to ensure that capital projects, as identified, continue to move forward as appropriate, and items lapsed in this supplementary, estimates and approved for revote have been included.

I'm sure that my colleagues will use the opportunity to debate some of these expenditures at the required time.

Since this supplementary budget document reflects the content of the public accounts for 2006-07, I am going to avail myself of the opportunity to highlight some important points related to the public accounts. This will assist members and the public to garner a better understanding of this budget document as it relates to the last fiscal year.

First, I would like to point out to all members of the Legislature, as I mentioned earlier, we were very pleased to receive for the fifth consecutive year a very good bill of financial health from the Auditor General. For the fifth consecutive year, we've received a financial audit without any qualification. It's a very important testament from the Auditor General as to the transparency and quality of the financial statements. We are certainly extremely proud of this achievement, since this was not always the situation before we took office. We know that to be the case.

I am very pleased to say that Yukon is only one of two jurisdictions in the country -- the other being Alberta -- that have positive net financial resources -- that is, Yukon is one of only two jurisdictions that are not in a net debt position.

Further, as I mentioned earlier, the public accounts for last year's fiscal year represent the fifth consecutive year that Yukon government has realized an annual surplus. The consolidated surplus for the year -- just for clarification, that is all government enterprises captured in the consolidated statements -- is \$67 million, resulting in the consolidated net financial resources of \$269 million and a consolidated accumulated surplus of \$714 million.

The non-consolidated statements that reflect the operations of just the government departments reflect a surplus for the year of \$57.5 million, resulting in non-consolidated net financial resources of \$135 million and an accumulated surplus of \$546 million. The non-consolidated financial statements indicate that the government's cash position increased by \$59 mil-

lion, from \$131 million as of March 31, 2006, to \$190 million as of March 31, 2007. The single item contributing to this increase is the \$50 million in northern housing trust money received from Canada. These are some of the reflections of this particular fiscal year and the appropriation bill before members today.

As stated earlier, this appropriation request before members today is required by the *Financial Administration Act*. We look forward to hearing comments and perhaps questions from members opposite with respect to this supplementary. This is another reflection of where we are heading in today's Yukon. There are some good things to look forward to, and I have laid out some of the challenges we have yet to address as well.

I thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and I look forward to hearing from members opposite.

Mr. Cardiff: We're here today to speak to the supplementary estimates for the 2006-07 year. This is basically the final accounting of Bill No. 7, *Fourth Appropriation Act, 2006-07*. We've just listened to the Deputy Premier, the Acting Minister of Finance I suspect, speak for two hours about what's in the *Fourth Appropriation Act* and explain the financial situation of the territory.

The reality is that there is one expenditure in this supplementary budget, an \$82,000 expenditure in Community Services, and there are some changes to recoveries and revenue. We discussed the third appropriation act this spring and the first supplementary budget, second appropriation act, a year ago when we came back to the Legislature.

It seems that two hours is a lot of time to spend on what is actually in this document. This is a final accounting. This is wrapping up, it's like a year-end. It seems to me that we spent a lot of time this afternoon talking about this, when what we should have been talking about was the government's priorities in the *Supplementary Estimates No. 1*, the *Second Appropriation Act, 2007-08*.

I am going to try to be brief. I know the Member for Copperbelt wants to say a few brief words about this as well. What we see is a pattern of spending, a trajectory of spending, in this government -- a trajectory that the Minister of Finance said was not sustainable five years ago, but spending continues to increase.

Promises get made in budgets. Communities are promised infrastructure -- it could be the multi-level health care facility in Dawson City. It could be any number of things that have been promised over the years -- services and programs in communities that never materialize; receiving homes being refurbished or retrofitted or replaced, even -- but we don't see all of those things come to fruition.

Hence, what we have is lapses. That's how we end up with the government, a lot of times, in the financial position that it's actually in. They like to say that it's good fiscal management, but there are a lot of needs out there in the Yukon and in communities that need to be addressed, and the government proves time and time and time again that it has the financial resources. It's here in the *Fourth Appropriation Act, 2006-07*, and we'll be discussing it later in the *Second Appropriation Act, 2007-08*.

So that said, I look forward to hearing the comments of other members here in the Legislature today with regard to this. It seems like we listened to the Acting Minister of Finance go on too long, so I'm going to sit down. I look forward to hearing her closing remarks.

Mr. Mitchell: I too will be fairly brief today, as the Member for Mount Lorne has been. I really think that the acting Finance minister got to the meat of the discussion after almost two hours, when she said this is largely a bookkeeping exercise to stay in compliance with the *Financial Administration Act* and make sure that any spending that was done has been authorized. You know, I guess it is an amazing record. It may be the best value for dollar that we've gotten in a speech in this Legislature, since that one only cost \$82,000.

There is only one new expenditure in here that we are asked to authorize -- even if it's after the fact -- and that is an increase of \$82,000 in operation and maintenance for Community Services. There is actually a reason given here, and it says that it's due to increased cost of providing services to unincorporated communities. Obviously, if there was a need to perform certain services in communities and they cost more than anticipated due to rising costs, then we're happy that there is the ability to provide the additional funding. We're glad that the government was able to accommodate this.

Although the acting Finance minister has indicated that this is the only expenditure, it's in fact not the only thing in this budget. There is a great deal of change in numbers, even if it's referring to a previous year.

The remainder of this supplementary budget consists of adjustments to expenditures to properly record sums not required -- in other words, lapses. Now, most of these funds may have since reappeared as revotes. Much of it may be in the *Supplementary Estimates No. 1*, the second estimate bill for 2007-08, as has already been mentioned. We don't know and will wait for that explanation.

There is no explanation, other than the breakdown of capital versus O&M, in the *Fourth Appropriation Act, 2006-07* as to what has not been spent or where it has not been spent. We are left to only speculate. There was a slogan that the Yukon Party used during the last election that said "Imagine the future". There were all kinds of rosy pictures painted of what the future might bring. More pertinent right now, considering we are looking at a previous year, is what could have been. Let's imagine the past, because we are dealing with the past here.

As I look at the breakdowns under Schedule A -- and I do question them -- under O&M for Health and Social Services it states that there is \$2,058,000 of sums not required for this appropriation. What an interesting description: "sums not required". Apparently there was some \$2 million in O&M money. Perhaps some of this money could have been applied in 2006-07 toward addressing the need -- apparently now agreed upon by both sides of this House as long overdue -- to address the hopelessly outdated social assistance rates.

Perhaps sums not required were sums that could have been used to raise the rental allowance for a single person on social assistance from \$390 a month to some amount that might actu-

ally rent something in the City of Whitehorse or elsewhere in the territory. Perhaps the amounts might have been there to have provided sufficient funds during the 2006-07 year for families who are struggling to put food on the table, to have a better diet, and perhaps they could have been better clothed -- again, imagining the past and looking at sums not required in this appropriation under Health and Social Services.

Perhaps there could have been additional funds to pay childcare workers, because that comes out of the Health and Social Services budget. So perhaps there could have been a better rate of pay for childcare workers taken out of sums not required and there wouldn't have been a turnover of more than 100 percent that year in the workers at the francophone day school, La Garderie Le Petit Cheval Blanc. They told us that they actually went through more than 100 percent of their workforce in one year.

Perhaps there could have been measures taken sooner. We've been promised yet again that these measures are on the very near horizon and I'm going to accept the promises made by the Health and Social Services minister.

I believe there is something that is forthcoming soon to deal with youth at risk. Perhaps there might have been a few more young people with a warm and comfortable place at night if some of these funds could have been spent to allow some of the existing NGOs, as has been discussed, and some of the existing organizations to budget for providing shelter for these children.

So I think that "sums not required" really gives us reason to stop and think about what we mean by that. I think they were required; they simply weren't revoted and applied.

Again, I look at the Yukon Housing Corporation -- \$673,000 in O&M. There is \$2,100,000 in capital expenditures -- sums not required. There were certainly Yukoners who required affordable housing in 2006-07 who struggled to find a decent place to live, who had to live in very substandard housing. Perhaps we could have had some more affordable housing out of the sums "not required".

I look at the Department of Highways and Public Works capital -- \$8,487,000 and over \$1 million in O&M. Yet, in this very Chamber, we held hearings in public accounts regarding the Auditor General's report on Highways and Public Works and we heard some serious concerns expressed by the Auditor General's office about the state of the highway surfaces in Yukon and about the situation of deterioration on a number of bridges. Again, it says, "Sums not required". They were required, Mr. Speaker. They simply weren't revoted and spent at the time.

Education is over \$1 million -- "sums not required". Perhaps there could have been more educational assistants in classrooms. Perhaps there could have been more special education teachers. Perhaps there could have been more innovative programs to help young students who are struggling with learning disabilities out of "sums not required".

FASD -- "sums not required". We know that recently there has been an additional \$200,000 of support for the Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Society Yukon to improve programming, but perhaps a year earlier there could have been more assistance

provided, because we know from the executive director of FASSY that some of the young people that she has dealt with are now among these young people who are showing up as youths at risk on the streets. I think I've gone on long enough about it. I really do believe we should be spending our time in this Assembly talking about money that's now being requested, talking about new expenditures, analyzing and examining those expenditures and making sure that the money is best spent to provide services to Yukoners, as well as to the number of new bills before us in this fall sitting. I don't want to speak any longer about this, except to say that all of us as legislators should take a look at these funds when we see them lapse and think about that title, "sums not required" this appropriation. I think they were required, and I think the programs that have been promised to Yukoners should be put in place when promised and not delayed and deferred into the future.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Mr. Kenyon: I always find some of these debates rather interesting. As usual, they say it's interesting in this job that, once you think you've seen sort of the end of bizarre things, you run back into more bizarre things the next day. I find it difficult to understand how one of the previous speakers, I think in the same sentence, actually, complained that the spending trajectory was too high for this government, and yet at the same time complained that we need to spend more. That will get a few more people scratching their heads.

Or the Official Opposition which, in previous debates, spent 5.8 days debating what had already been spent. It was all right then but, goodness, it certainly isn't all right now. And they have steadfastly argued in many, many debates here, in many general debates in budget, that it's general debate and it should be kept general and it should be open and we should really be discussing these things. In other words, there is lots of time to complain but no time for good news. I'm suspicious that the real philosophy here is that they don't want to be confused by facts. That's a little disheartening, but that's the nature of the business, I guess.

One of my favourite authors -- and the member opposite always likes to remind me of this, but I'll start off again with that, with the quote from Lewis Carroll: "Would you tell me, please, which way I ought to go from here?"

"That depends a great deal on where you want to get to," said the Cat.

"I don't much care where," said Alice.

"Then it doesn't matter which way you go," said the Cat.

That has always been another one of the mysteries of government that the Official Opposition, when in government, felt that the best way to promote economic development was to disband and scatter the Department of Economic Development. Why did they disband the one department that could take a look at where we want to go and perhaps even look at how we might get there? I haven't been able to make a lot of sense out of that in five years. And many Yukoners are still scratching their heads over this probably less than wise decision.

It was with this in mind that our government decided to bring the department back and give it a strong mandate to look

at the big picture and determine where we wanted to go. It was not to look at things -- as the previous speaker said with a little less rhetoric than earlier, and I do thank him for that -- as the sums not required. Let's look at some of those. The Yukon Housing Corporation budgets money for mortgages, but if the mortgages are not picked up on -- it has to be there in the budget, but they are sums not required. There are projects under the community development fund that are funded, but the project may not be done until the next fiscal year. It is a sum not required, but it will be revoted in the next year. I can go on and on through government departments. Again, there is a dismal lack of understanding or something else in terms of understanding what the budget process is all about.

I have another quote from Lewis Carroll: "I don't see how he can ever finish, if he doesn't begin." We started the long process of looking at this picture some time ago in terms of where we wanted to go with it. It was certainly part of the year's budgets that we are talking about. First, we should look at the long-term view and how we can attract outside investment. We have to look at the global picture and how the Yukon fits into it.

As most members opposite know, I hope, any kind of a business -- and government is a business. We are in the business of providing a social safety net. We are in the business of doing a lot of things, but make no mistake: it is a business. There is both an income and expense side. Through a lot of work by officials in this government, we have increased the income to our fair share. We would hope that more is coming. With more income, we are allowed to do more things and develop more things. In other words, we can keep that spending trajectory higher. We can do more things with the money. That's really what this is all about.

According to The New World of Integrative Trade Conference Board of Canada 2005: "Of the G-7 nations, Canada is the most dependent on international trade. Canada is also one of the most prosperous nations in the world. These two facts are connected."

We are looking at serious population growth. You don't need a PhD in demographics or statistics to know that. There will be an increase in world purchasing power. There will be an explosive demand for natural resources. There will be a growing innovation in technology.

World population doubled from 1952 to 1992. It will nearly double again by 2050. Much of this population growth will be in China and India, with significant growth in the U.S., Japan and Europe. If we look at the world demand for lead, a metal obviously near and dear to Yukon, that demand doubled from 1964 to 2004. Indications are that it's still going up quite dramatically, as the curve really is exponential. It's significant that, when General Motors and Ford contract, usually the price of zinc goes down, but lately contraction of General Motors and Ford saw the price of zinc go up.

From 2004, China has been a major consumer of zinc and they are in a serious deficit position. Korea needs to import 99.3 percent of the metal used in its manufacturing -- a staggering figure. The Yukon has a number of advantages in the world market. We're strategically located; we sit between Alaska and

the so-called Lower 48 with good port access to Asia or anywhere else. With rich resources, we're a much more attractive trading partner than Ontario or Atlantic Canada and most of the United States. Add the congestion of the ports in Los Angeles, Seattle and others: we're very much more attractive.

We have an abundance of natural resources: zinc, lead, copper, coal, tungsten, molybdenum, silver, gold, selenium and antimony. We have a distinct people advantage. We have skilled and adaptable residents and First Nations who see the benefits of economic development.

As we look at the pathway from a vision to action, we must consider Yukon's risks and constraints. We must always consider our environment and what we leave for our children. That's a given. We must consider the pressures on health, education, social services, land access, housing stock, and so on. We must be aware of our human resources, and not only their quality but their very real limitations. We have to be proactive rather than reactive. We can't simply react to what happens, but we must plan carefully for each step. Again, in the words of Lewis Carroll, "Take care of the sense and the sounds will take care of themselves." Growth planning is critical and must be done carefully.

This, to a large degree, again brings me back to the two sides of the ledger. Obviously, with more money, more resources, more tax base and a fair share as Canadian citizens in the north, we can do so much more with that. I had the great fun the other night of watching the pilot of *Ally McBeal* and, with the character of the lawyer named Fish and his so-called "Fish-isms", one that came out of the pilot was, "Make lots of money and the rest will follow." Without having something that generates that income and generates the money, nothing is going to follow.

But the former Liberal government disbanded the very department that was doing this. That was their vision. Hopefully somebody will pick up the slack; it wasn't going to be them.

So what's the final strategy? Population growth plus emerging markets give a strong demand. Major resources in the right location with good people to extract them with care and diligence give us a good supply. This global demand and Yukon supply will give the Yukon economic prosperity. That is our vision.

But what's the overall vision for the Yukon? The quality of life is obviously second to none -- arising from intense global demand for Yukon resources and value-added products, the natural beauty, the high levels of investor confidence. In some international surveys on a good place to do business, we've moved in from the 70s under the Liberal government to number seven in the last publication.

We have a skilled labour force, rewarding career opportunities, strong First Nations participating in domestic and global economies, safe communities and healthy, well-educated people. With this as our vision in the development of proper infrastructure and support industries, we can generate wealth and a quality of life we can be proud of, but we need to promote and facilitate business and industry. We have to develop the capacity and growth.

We must stay on top of our policy and regulations to keep Yukon a good place to invest in and a good place to do business in. We've already come from one of the poorest places in the world to do business to one of the best, and we've grown significantly in our global status. We've done that with the same world mineral prices and the same world economy as everyone else.

The Leader of the Official Opposition would say that we've simply ridden the train, so to speak, with the increased wealth or metal prices. Everybody else is dealing with the same one. Why have we gone from somewhere in the 70s to number seven as a desirable place to do business?

The mineral prices and an upswing in the world economy have certainly helped, but to say this is the sole thing responsible for our huge improvements, compared to other jurisdictions that enjoy exactly the same benefits, is folly at best, politics at the most likely, and something quite different at the worst.

Five years ago when the rest of the country was benefiting from rising mineral prices and an upswing in the world economy, the Yukon was flailing. Now, five years later, after our fifth unqualified audit from the Auditor General -- and compliments on the state of the economy -- we can take advantage of the same world factors as the rest of Canada because we're making sound decisions and encouraging investment and growth in our economy.

We must continue to develop our research and innovation potential. That has to be very high on our list. We have to continue to develop our economic infrastructure, such as fibre optics and transportation. We have to seek partnerships and linkages with the private sector, with First Nations, with regions and communities, with all our citizens and with all levels and orders of government.

It's interesting, Mr. Speaker, when our Deputy Premier referred to the fact only two jurisdictions in all of Canada have a positive bank account -- are not in debt and have money to work with -- Alberta and Yukon. When you put that on a per capita basis, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Yukon is in much better shape than Alberta. We hear about Alberta, we look at the oil sands, we look at benefits, and problems within Alberta and everything else, but when it comes down to a per capita basis each person in the Yukon has more money in the bank and we have no debt.

So what are the next steps? We do have to develop discussion papers for our enabling factors. As each new initiative and project comes on board, we have to evaluate it carefully to see just how it fits into our overall strategy. Collaborating with our partners is essential for each action and it is critical that these steps move toward a shared vision, strategy and actions.

But at the same time, we must look carefully at the smaller parts of the puzzle -- and we can't overlook each small part. So I'm very pleased that the Department of Economic Development has increased its focus on small business and on how we can help small business accomplish what they need to do in this overall plan. Too often, traditional institutions are quick to point out the problems of why a project cannot proceed.

Our department, our business and trade branch, our strategic industries branch, and our regional development branch,

have emphasized how it can be done rather than why it can't be done. We hear enough about that every day in Question Period. We have an exceptional staff and I have every confidence that they will continue to do this well. This message has been clear from our chambers of commerce and from all our partners, and our department looks forward to this continuing the challenge.

Continuing on, I would like to describe in some detail the initiatives that we have undertaken in order to meet our government's objectives which, in turn, improve the lives of Yukoners for generations to come. I could first touch on an emerging industry, one that we've placed a high priority and emphasis on, and for very good reason, as it is proving itself to be a very profitable one. I am referring, of course, to the Yukon's film industry.

As you may know, looking back prior to the budget year under discussion, 2005 was a banner year for the Yukon film production. Yukon had a record year for film production due to incentives from the Department of Economic Development and, yes, favourable weather. I'd like to take credit for that but, what the heck, you can't win them all.

Film production generated \$4.1 million in 2005, compared to \$2.5 million in 2004. The film industry leverages between \$9 and \$10 for every \$1 invested. The dollar figures have risen dramatically, demonstrating film is a viable and growing contributor to Yukon's economy. More locals are working in film on new and more productions. We have had some incredible developments within the film industry.

If I move around and look at some of the other programs and things that we have been looking at: the Carcross waterfront contributions and commitments -- we put almost \$3.8 million into various programs there. Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, or INAC, committed \$90 million to support northern economic development -- \$30 million being allocated to each territory. Of course, they kept 10 percent of that for their own use but, what the heck, we are at least getting \$27 million out of this, so that's a good start.

If you look into the housing scene and what we've done with some of the housing programs -- I will go forward to that -- we've had an increase in house prices. We know that. It was occurring during the term of this budget and it is occurring more now. Looking back historically to the range we are talking about, the average price of a home in Yukon went from \$152,000 in 2001 to \$200,000 in 2005.

Beginning in January 2006, the Yukon Housing Corporation started implementing new financing options within its existing home ownership program to assist low- and middle-income earners to access home ownership. This has helped young families purchase their first home. We included a one-percent reduction in posted interest rates, provided longer amortization periods of up to 30 years and set a higher maximum lending threshold. These are constantly being adjusted and will continue to be in the future. \$7 million was allocated to this program.

We have contributed to the seniors housing management fund and increased it. Through the affordable housing program, there was \$830,000 invested into 44 home ownership units and 20 rental units with Falcon Ridge Development Corporation.

That is pretty well complete now. For the information of the members opposite, the rental component of that was not completed, and the money was basically reinvested in a project for seniors in Haines Junction.

From that fund, \$3.5 million was put into the construction of 48 units at Yukon College that were first to be used by Canada Winter Games. The Yukon Housing Corporation was very pleased to acquire these 48 units of new, affordable, barrier-free, energy-efficient housing with an investment of only \$3.5 million. The opposition, some media and our local advertising supplement claimed that the seniors would not want to move there. Clearly, they would not want to move there. Well, I am here to clearly tell you again, Mr. Speaker, 51 percent of the seniors who moved into the former athletes village moved out of the downtown core to move up there. That criticism didn't work out very well for them.

Under the joint venture program, private sector developers can access construction financing for new affordable housing developments and for upgrades to existing multi-family homes. The program not only helps to increase the housing supply for seniors and the creation of environmentally friendly new homes, but results in real economic opportunities through the participation of the private sector.

Previously on this, and being influenced within this budget, were two loans -- fully recoverable, I might add. Again, it appears on two sides of the sector -- funds not needed, according to the Leader of the Official Opposition. They built a 10- and a 12-unit condominium in Takhini and downtown Whitehorse.

There are a number of different programs that are of value, and I certainly commend this budget to the House.

Hon. Mr. Rouble: It's my honour to rise here in the Assembly today to debate and discuss this budget before us. Closing out a budget is always a very important step and a very important situation.

When we take a look at our budgeting process, we see that the main thrust or the main ideas, positions and projects of a government typically come through in the mains tabled in the spring of each year. Then we augment those by supplementary budgets throughout the sitting of the government -- either the spring sitting or the fall sitting, as we're doing right now.

The supplementary budgets allow us to respond to the situations that arise. They allow us to take advantage of new situations. They allow us to respond to new events. We are seeing that now in the supplementary budget, which has a significant investment in it that responds to the flooding of the Southern Lakes area and the Yukon River system. Then we finally close out the budget, which is an important step to do because it gives legislative authority to all of the spending done by a government.

Closing out the budget is also a good time to take stock and take a look at what was actually accomplished. Were the intended projects actually accomplished, and what kind of impact did they have on the community and on the territory?

Governments are often by their nature very forward-looking. We put forward what we are going to do in our plat-

forms. We put forward what we are going to do in our budgets. Another important step is to look back and, indeed, take stock as to what was actually accomplished.

Were the objectives that were set out accomplished? Were the intended goals reached? I think this is a good opportunity to take a look at the budget for this fiscal year that we're discussing now -- well, it wasn't quite a billion dollars but it was getting pretty close to it. So did we actually accomplish what was set forward in the budget from the get-go? I think we did, and I'd like to discuss some of those points today.

Before I continue, I would like to thank the public service for their assistance in implementing the budget and in carrying out all the priorities put forward in it. It is the political arm of government that sets the direction, sets the budget, and it is this Assembly that approves the spending, and then we trust the public service to carry out those programs and to accomplish all the good work needed for Yukoners. So I'd like to thank them for all of their hard work and dedication.

Mr. Speaker, when the budget was put forward, the key things included in it were: building balanced budgets, the way of the future; building partnerships and government-to-government relationships; building a sustainable and competitive economy; building healthy communities, environment and increasing the quality of life.

Mr. Speaker, I'm proud to say that all those areas were addressed by the budget, by the spending of the government, and we've had a significant impact on people's lives and on these areas. I think if you talk to Yukoners on the street now, they will talk about the quality of life -- the increase in quality of life involved in that, and that is manifested by various different things. It could be increased personal revenue, increased job security, increased opportunity for art and culture, and increased opportunities for living in a safe environment.

Mr. Speaker, we've seen unemployment rates in the territory go down significantly, and now I think we're all aware of the wide range of employment opportunities that are out there and the options. Now we have an economy where people are coming back. Those people who left the territory in their U-Hauls years ago are now racing to come back. The students and our children who have left the territory are now coming back and there are now opportunities for them to take advantage of, and they are finding ways to come back to the land that they love and make the Yukon their home again.

We're seeing significant investment, both from Yukoners and from Outside sources of revenue. So, quality of life is going up; stability is going up. Many of the indicators of what it takes to lead a healthy, happy life are indeed increasing.

Many projects were put forward in the budget, and I would like to just take a moment now to do a bit of a performance review on them.

I know there is that often used quote about the nattering nabobs of negativism and how they are constantly in opposition to everything, and they are often looking at and complaining about the minutia. Let's disregard the nattering nabobs of negativism for a moment and focus on some of the positives. It's important to recognize that when one does a comprehensive look at something -- looking at a SWOT analysis, for example,

which is looking at the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats -- the most important things to look at are the strengths and the accomplishments. What are the good points?

I do appreciate some of the comments from the opposition. They do keep us on track and focused. Their criticisms do have value, sometimes, when they are on point. I appreciate those. It keeps us focused on accomplishing the agenda and implementing the work that Yukoners elected us to do.

Once we get finished with our platform, then we might take a look at adopting some of their ideas as well. First, Yukoners did elect us to implement our platform, and that of course has to be our focus.

When this budget was put forward, some of the ideas and projects included projects in Community Services. There were dollars allocated to the athletes village. What happened with that? I think we all know. The building was built -- it was beautiful -- and it was used to house the athletes for the very successful Canada Winter Games -- the best games ever. Now, the athletes village has been turned over to both Yukon College and to Yukon Housing Corporation. Speaking as the Minister of Education, I am very happy with the opportunity to have this new facility right at Yukon College. It makes an awful lot of sense. It's an opportunity for people from the communities -- both singles and people with families or with children -- to come in and take advantage of the tremendous opportunities at Yukon College.

Clearly the investment in building a long-term solution, rather than simply a short-term rental, has paid off for the territory. We will see the Yukon College residence and the Yukon Housing Corporation complex -- hopefully with new names -- provide a lasting legacy and great housing opportunities for years to come.

Mr. Speaker, the budget also included upgrades for fire halls. I was very pleased to see that those came through. The community of Tagish now has an additional bay on their fire hall, which allows for the storage of the ambulance. It is a great addition to the community. It is an investment that the territorial government has made to the community to make it a safer place. There is now adequate storage for the ambulance, so they do not have to pull out the pumper to get the ambulance out when it has to respond to a situation.

I should also add that in the budget there were allocations for pumpers and fire trucks. Again, the community of Tagish received one. Tagish is now a safer community and has better resources to respond to fires in the community and better resources for the emergency medical services.

There were commitments to work on the extension planning, with cutting and brush work, on Hamilton Boulevard. We all see that when we drive by. The budget included funds to finish off both the Marsh Lake community centre, which I have had the opportunity to mention several times in this Assembly, and the Mayo community centre. Mr. Speaker, during the community tours this last fall, I had the opportunity to go there. I must say that it is a beautiful place. It is a great jewel in that community. The citizens there must be very proud of it. Congratulations go out to the Member for Mayo-Tatchun. He now has a great community centre in one of his communities. It

would have been nice to have seen him support the budget and projects like this.

We also saw improvements going on at Mount Sima with the creation of the chalet that was built. Again, it was part of a project that was initially used for the Canada Winter Games and the downhill, mogul, and freestyle skiing and different events that went on up there. It is a lasting legacy for the community.

Additionally there were funds that went into the EMO rescue safety program for the beautiful Southern Lakes. Now, Mr. Speaker, I'm glad to say that, with the assistance of the Minister of Community Services and the hard work that his department has put in, the communities of Carcross, Tagish and Marsh Lake have rescue boats in their communities and the people there have the training as to how to best utilize them. So they are now able to provide that very important emergency response system to boaters in the beautiful Southern Lakes area. Thank you to the Minister of Community Services for working with his EMO people and working with the volunteer organizations in Carcross, Tagish and Marsh Lake to provide that great service and the great training that went along with it.

There were allocations in the budget for the Army Beach area potable water supply. As we've discussed in this Assembly before, it's necessary to have a second source of potable water in the community of Marsh Lake. There are some residents who, when they need water and go to the public access point for water, have to make a roundtrip of -- well, to go from Army Beach to the fire hall and back is probably close to 40 kilometres. That's a significant way to go to get potable drinking water. I'm glad to see the department has been going ahead with this project and that there's a YESAA review underway now to provide the necessary environmental assessments and approvals for this project to go forward.

The budget that is now under debate implemented things like additional lots in Copper Ridge and additional lots on the Mount Sima road. It is looking at developing additional residential subdivisions in the territory.

In the Department of Economic Development, we saw a significant investment and a significant payback then to the communities through the community development fund. I'm sure that every member in the Assembly here is aware of community development fund projects that went on in their communities and which had a positive impact. The community development fund is a great tool for the government to use to work with local people on the ground, those people in the communities who know what's needed in their own backyard, so that they can provide the necessary community infrastructure to increase the quality of life in their community.

The CDF project had, I believe, a budget greater than \$3 million, and that went to a wide variety of great projects throughout the territory. In that budget we also saw an investment going into Destination: Carcross. There is a memorandum of understanding between the Department of Economic Development, the White Pass & Yukon Railroad and the Carcross-Tagish First Nation. It's an important tool to build the Carcross area into a tourism destination.

I was very proud and excited to ride on the rails again this past summer when the White Pass train returned to Carcross, and they returned with regular scheduled service. It was great to see that train coming back into the community. I am proud to see that this budget helped to make that a reality, and it's helping to make Carcross a more vibrant community as well.

I think it was already mentioned, too, that the waterfront development project is going on in Carcross. Members might have had the chance to be at the opening of the walk bridge, which happened just a couple weeks ago. This was a very exciting program of the Department of Community Services, with the assistance of the federal government, where we were able to respond to a need in Carcross and replace a bridge that was an important piece of the community fabric. Unfortunately it was literally falling down. We were able to respond and put in a new walk bridge and it has now been adopted by the community.

There has been a tremendous amount of investment in the territory and Yukoners are seeing the results of that. They are seeing the benefits of investing in schools and the necessary preventive maintenance and repairs needed there.

As well, this budget put in dollars for the Tantalus School in Carmacks, and the Member for Mayo-Tatchun should be very proud of this new school in one of his communities. It's a beautiful new facility. I am glad to see that classes are in there now, that the teachers are teaching in there, and that things are in full swing. I am sure it's going to be a school that is going to serve the needs of the community very, very well for generations to come.

This budget continued to implement the mineral exploration tax credit. We're seeing the results of that now. We're seeing the results of the extensive exploration and mine development going on in the territory, and we're seeing how that's impacting upon our economy. Again, it's providing opportunities for jobs -- jobs for our kids to come back to and it's making the Yukon a very exciting place.

The budget included dollars to establish the Energy Solutions Centre as a unit of Energy, Mines and Resources. It was only a couple of years ago that we all received a copy of the Auditor General's audit on the Energy Solutions Centre and what had gone on there. I think we all agree that it's a very necessary part of our community. The Energy Solutions Centre does some really good work out there, and it has an important role to play, both in providing assistance to businesses and individuals for energy conservation, for cost savings, fuel savings, and to develop better ways of doing things, so we didn't want to shut that department down. Instead, it was brought into the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources so they can appropriately manage that entity.

The budget put investment into the Department of Environment, into the Executive Council Office and tremendous investments into Health and Social Services. We're seeing the benefits of that now. It put tremendous work into the Department of Highways and Public Works for Atlin Road improvements, for improvements on bridges. People are now driving over those bridges.

Far too often we criticize and say we could have done better and should have done more. Well, there were a lot of things that were put forward in this budget that were concluded and are making the Yukon a better place to live.

We're going to build upon the accomplishments of that budget, as we will on the budget that's before us now, and we'll continue to work toward a clear vision for a bright future in Yukon.

I ask all Members of the Legislative Assembly to support this supplementary budget to help us close off the year and to recognize a lot of the very significant projects and accomplishments that were achieved in it.

Thank you very much.

Hon. Mr. Hart: It gives me great pleasure to get up and comment on the supplementary estimates for 2006-07. In keeping with what a few of the members opposite indicated earlier, I would like to provide a breakdown for Community Services on the budget for \$82,000. If members will bear with me, I will give them the analysis and then discuss the issues that relate to Community Services. I will try to carry on with that. If you keep your pencil handy, Steven, in the back office there, I will run through the items for you so you can keep the numbers ready to go.

Under corporate services, I will provide a breakdown. The deputy minister's office has an \$11,000 decrease. This decrease is due to \$4,000 in miscellaneous personnel costs, as well as \$8,000 in miscellaneous other. Under human resources, we have a decrease of \$52,000. This decrease is due to \$43,000 in personnel director, who was on a temporary assignment. The acting director was paid at a lower salary to deal with that. There was \$9,000 for training that was not taken and the consultants were not required in 2006-07.

Under finance, systems and administration, there was an \$86,000 decrease. There was basically a \$109,000 deficit for personnel due to manager account services on a temporary vacancy. That was partially balanced by a \$23,000 deficit from a systems licence cost increase.

With regard to corporate policy and communications, there was a \$68,000 decrease. Of that, \$49,000 was for personnel due to temporary vacant positions. There was \$24,000 for contract work not required, which was partially offset by a \$5,000 increase in communications costs.

Under protective services, emergency measures, there is a \$66,000 decrease that is broken down as \$17,000 due to a temporary vacant position, \$40,000 due to the Canada Winter Games training program, and \$9,000 for emergency equipment repairs due to minimal emergencies during the 2006-07 season.

Under the fire marshal's office we have an increase of \$161,000, and that is basically due to \$10,000 to pay out the retiring fire marshal, \$41,000 out-of-territory travel expense to relocate the new fire marshal, \$22,000 for honoraria due to extra duties for staff, \$47,000 due to repairs and maintenance, \$31,000 for heating fuel, and \$10,000 for miscellaneous.

Under program administration, there is a \$97,000 increase and that's \$27,000 for the reclassification and the retroactive pay of the ADM position, \$10,000 for the administrative assis-

tant, \$52,000 for allocation of the projects, and \$8,000 for miscellaneous other.

Under sport and recreation we have an increase of \$51,000. That is \$8,000 due to a bonus, \$14,000 for back-fill in the administration office, and \$71,000 for additional transfer and payments of the Best Ever program, which is partially offset by \$31,000 for Canada Winter Game secondments, which is less than forecasted.

Under property tax and assessments we have a decrease of \$32,000, which is \$14,000 for temporary vacant positions and \$70,000 for homeowner grants, as the estimated increase was overstated but partially offset by \$52,000, an increase in assessment and appeal board costs as a result of the assessment of Whitehorse properties.

Under community affairs, we also had a decrease of \$176,000 due to \$35,000 returned from the previous CAPC, a late start-up of a new local advisory committee in Ross River, \$156,000 of extraordinary grant to Dawson City, which was not required and was partially offset by \$4,000 for personnel, and \$11,000 for miscellaneous other.

Community land planning had an increase of \$14,000, which was basically made up of two or three items: \$17,000 due to an increase in advertising due to the higher cost for rezoning and subdivision applications, and \$5,000 due to miscellaneous items, also partially offset by \$10,000 in savings from various personnel costs. The end result is a \$14,000 increase.

Under Community Services infrastructure, we have an increase of \$398,000. For this period, \$11,000 is for the vacation payout and overtime for Community Services officials, \$70,000 for labour costs for labour costs for water delivery and dump maintenance in Old Crow, \$322,000 for increased contract services to provide water delivery in various communities throughout the Yukon, increased third party costs in Old Crow and an increased cost of dump maintenance, which is partially offset by a small savings of \$5,000 of miscellaneous other. The end result is \$398,000.

Public libraries has a \$10,000 decrease basically due to two or three items -- \$93,000 due to vacancies at the Whitehorse Public Library, partially offset by \$26,000 from system licences previously covered, and \$57,000 from program materials.

For consumer and safety services, program administration is \$26,000. That's an increase due to \$40,000 due to backfill as the director position was higher than anticipated. It was partially offset from \$14,000 from another position.

Under boards and councils we have a decrease of \$19,000 consisting, basically, of \$8,000 for personnel costs of \$26,000 in anticipated costs for Yukon Medical Council identity projects, which were not expended, and \$2,000 for miscellaneous, and this is partially offset through the \$17,000 in honoraria; the net difference is \$19,000 -- a decrease.

Under consumer services, we have a \$43,000 decrease. This is due to \$32,000 for personnel costs in transition to temporary vacancies of staff turnover and \$10,000 for professional board of inquiries and \$1,000 miscellaneous others.

In corporate affairs we have an \$8,000 increase. In building safety we have a \$5,000 increase. In labour services we

have a \$62,000 decrease: \$53,000 due to an unstaffed position, \$5,000 due to fewer appeals to the Employment Standards Board, and \$4,000 in other minor cost-savings.

Under motor vehicles, we have a decrease of \$53,000, \$72,000 due to vacancy on position overload, and this is partially offset by \$19,000 for program materials.

Basically we have total decreases of \$138,000, an increase of \$217,000 and an overage of \$82,000 for an actual breakdown for the expenses with regard to the supplementary.

Hopefully, that provides everybody with an esteemed process of the breakdown of the items as per the supplementary for 2006-07.

What I would like to do now is discuss a few things with regard to the department. Community Services had a very busy year last year with the culmination of the Canada Winter Games. Many of my colleagues have stressed the fact that it was one of the most successful Canada-wide. I think the people of the Yukon are to be commended for that process.

I'm very happy to see that the legacy from the games is being well utilized, either through the college residence or through the seniors facility, which are the two facilities formerly known as the athletes village. In essence, I think we have to look at the facilities themselves -- which are also being utilized for many sporting events -- such as Mount Sima, the biathlon and curling facilities that were upgraded, as well as improvements to the multiplex to accommodate all the games that took place during the Canada Winter Games.

The resulting success of the Canada Winter Games has provided a bit of a demand for more services with regard to sport. As a result, we were looking at items that would assist us in helping local sporting associations carry on with their success. I think I would also like to state that the results obtained in this Canada Winter Games by the Yukon team were the best ever. I believe that this was due to the amount of money that was invested by the government four years ago, prior to us getting the games here. It resulted in this great success, especially in cross-country skiing.

In any event, because of the demand that we anticipated would be coming from these games, we looked at coming up with an additional sport fund -- basically the Yukon sport for life fund -- which would assist many of our athletes in the rural areas, as well as First Nation athletes. This would get them into Whitehorse and get the competition up.

A big factor was coaching. In talking to several of the sporting events and the organizers, coaching was the number one issue we had when it came to swimming and cross-country skiing. The big issue indicated was consistency in the coaching that was being provided, as with swimming. We had great results in swimming and cross-country skiing, all attributed to the excellent coaching that the athletes were getting, because they were able to afford it and get it here, and maintain that coach for more than a period of one year.

We obviously are looking at trying to provide more opportunity for all sporting associations to improve their coaching and also to improve their ability to draw the rural athletes into Whitehorse and to give them the opportunity to excel at their sport.

It is a very important item. It think that this program, along with all the sporting programs, go a long way to providing all of our athletes with an opportunity to excel, as well enabling the Yukon to reach its goal of 10 percent by 2010 of getting people participate -- participate in any kind of sport, any kind of walking, any kind of physical activity, to try to get them away from their television game, or whatever it is. The more that we can get them out there and active, the better we will be in regard to that. We've had some pretty good success with our sport programs so far, and I'll discuss this program later when we get the 2007-08 supplementary -- but, in essence, it was a direct result of coming out of the Canada Winter Games with that program.

During the last year, we also had significant work that involved Association of Yukon Communities, under Community Services. We worked with many communities, and we had many projects underway throughout the Yukon -- from Old Crow to Carcross, and Carcross was mentioned previously. This year, for example, the bridge was commenced early in the year -- and I was just recently there for opening -- and it was a very successful opening and a very successful project. Many local First Nation people, as well as locals, got work on that job and the company was to be commended for utilizing local labour where it could.

Despite the flooding that occurred out there in mid-summer, they had to make some small adjustments in the bridge base in order for it to come across. In essence, it came out and it looks fabulous.

I also understand that, shortly before we opened it, someone pulled a 20-pounder out of there, even though it was miserable and raining. This was right off the bridge, so it was fitting that it took place there. It was well-received by the citizens of Carcross. It was one of the items going on in Carcross that we're looking at. We are working with that community specifically to deal with the development of their downtown area, as well as improving their tourism activities for the years to come.

In addition, we are working with the City of Whitehorse on the continuation of the waterfront development so that we can enhance the downtown atmosphere in Whitehorse and improve the attractions for our tourists. We are working with several other communities in relation to their sewer and water facilities. We are currently working with the Village of Carmacks on their waste management system. It is a matter of being able to move ahead. Hopefully, by the middle of next summer, we will be well underway with the construction of that facility. It took us a little while to narrow down the specific type of system they wanted. We had to go to the public and get some feedback. We had some consultation and the village council received the information they needed and decided to go to a mechanical system. We went ahead and assisted them in moving along there.

With Dawson City, we continue to work on their sewage facility, as well as working with Mayo on their community centre. In essence, we are working very well with many of the communities. With some of the smaller LACs, we have an arrangement now where we have equalized the payment for those people. We hope to continue working with them on the guide-

lines and assist some of the unincorporated communities through the gas fuel tax. Hopefully that will assist them with some of the bigger projects.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I see that my time is up and I will take my leave.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: It's a pleasure to rise here in the Assembly today with regard to the *Fourth Appropriation Act, 2006-07*, commonly known as *Supplementary Estimates No. 3*.

Of course, the 2006-07 fiscal year, as you are aware, was a year of significant investment in many areas within the government. It was a pleasure for me, as that was the first full year that I was Minister of Health and Social Services, and I had the opportunity at that time to begin a number of projects that I am very proud to be able to continue with. Of course, through the hard work of officials, we have developed many of these to fruition and provided enhanced services to Yukon citizens.

It was also a year when there were a number of issues addressed that were of importance to my constituents. I appreciate the ministers responsible for their support in those areas -- items such as the purchase of the mobile abattoir, non-fiscal items such as the approval and the beginning of the implementation of the new agricultural policy. Those are naming but a few.

Of course, work has continued in many areas to address infrastructure such as this year's continuation by Highways and Public Works, through the minister, in ensuring that further work was completed on the Mayo Road resurfacing. That, of course, is a continuation of many years of investment in that and it is related to the engineering study that the government commissioned to analyze the road and what needed to be done to improve it to a 100-kilometre-an-hour standard between the Takhini River Bridge and the Fox Lake campground.

Now, moving on to areas within my department, I'd like to note that the 2006-07 fiscal year was the year we launched the Yukon government's health human resources strategy. This strategy is funded through the territorial health access fund, a fund, as you're likely aware, for which we receive over \$21 million from the federal government over a five-year period. The money is the result of the successful pan-northern approach utilized by our Premier and the premiers of the N.W.T. and Nunavut in their efforts in making it very clear by walking out on the then Prime Minister Chrétien on national television at the press conference following the premiers conference on health care and making it very clear that enough is enough and it was time that the federal government took seriously the health care needs of northern Canadians. That joint approach led to the historic recognition of the inadequacy of per capita funding for addressing the needs of the north with our sparse populations and large areas of jurisdiction.

The funding has continued and we're pleased to see that the current federal government -- the Conservatives -- have been far more cooperative in working in a collegial manner with us in funding, but we will continue to do the work in the pan-northern fashion in ensuring that our needs are heard in the large clamour of the many voices at the table -- the provinces and the territories, of course -- as an individual jurisdiction

among 13. With our small size, in the past we have often been overwhelmed, and through the very successful pan-northern approach, the needs of northern Canada are being addressed in a significant fashion by the federal government.

The territorial health access fund provided us with the resources to fund initiatives such as the health human resources strategy for which we allocated the majority of that fund.

The strategy is aimed at improving Yukoners' access to primary care, particularly in ensuring the availability of the necessary professionals and having the right professionals available at the right point in time. The focus of it, of course, includes a significant investment in supporting Yukon students in a manner that was never done before, to attend medical school, nursing school, and to receive training in a variety of health professions.

At the point when the strategy was developed, we were facing significant challenges as a territory in terms of Yukoners' access to a family physician. I am pleased that that is less of a problem than it was at that point in time although, certainly, it remains an area of priority. We will not be satisfied until every Yukoner has the access to a doctor or other appropriate primary health care provider in as timely a manner as possible, and that they do have access to the appropriate health professionals when they need them.

We will continue to work in supporting the programs developed under the health human resources strategy, as well as working with the related professionals, with staff of the Department of Health and Social Services, and with the Yukon Hospital Corporation, in receiving feedback and working with the member organizations representing professionals in these areas, and in taking the necessary steps to ensure that our system builds on the successful implementation of the programs developed in the 2006-07 fiscal year, and builds on those areas to ensure that the Yukon prepares for the challenges that we will face in terms of access to health professionals.

It should come as no surprise to members, since I've mentioned it on a number of occasions -- not to mention that there has been significant national debate on this issue, noting we have challenges from coast to coast in access to health professionals -- the predictions are that, in the area of nurses alone, within five years, there will be a 25-percent shortfall nationwide in the number of nurses available versus the number of jobs that are open.

So this is an area that we of course are very concerned about. As a small jurisdiction, we are but one small part of the national structure, but we are committed to working with the professionals we have, both in administration and the workers on the ground, to build on the strategies we've already developed to further develop the health human resources strategy to ensure that the Yukon is adapting to the needs of tomorrow, is facing those challenges, and dealing with them in innovative and effective manners -- to keep us at the front of pack, so to speak, in terms of addressing these challenges nationwide.

The components under the health human resources strategy, which were announced for the first time in 2006-07, include the family physician incentive program for new graduates, under which we assist Yukon students by providing them

up to \$10,000 per year to assist their attendance at medical school. We have also provided the incentive to attract them back to the territory by assisting them with \$15,000 per year if they enter their residency in family medicine in the Yukon. That of course is a two-year period under the residency program.

As well, we have the medical education bursary --

I'm sorry, Mr. Speaker, I was getting ahead of myself in my speaking notes. The medical education bursary, rather, provides up to \$10,000 per year to assist them in attending medical school and \$15,000 post-medical school. The family physician incentive program is a program under which we provide doctors, recent graduates of medical school, an incentive to attract them to the territory. In three payments over a period of five years, it provides them with up to \$50,000, should they fulfill that term and, of course, the staggered payments are to provide them both with a significant incentive up front and to assist with moving costs, as well as ensure security to the taxpayer and to the public that they will fulfill their term. This was an issue, of course, with which other jurisdictions with similar programs had challenges, because there was very little security if someone chose not to fulfill their agreement. So we structured it in a way to deliver it effectively through the family physician incentive program for new graduates, as well as ensuring security for the public finances.

As well, in addition to those two programs providing for positions, we have the nursing education bursary. This was a previously existing program. It is the only area in here where there was a previous program; however, we doubled the investment and made it available to twice the number of applicants. It is an area for which we provide \$10,000 a year support.

Further, we have the health profession education bursary, which is the third bursary available to a variety of health professions on an application basis, with up to \$5,000 a year provided. Through these programs, as members should be aware, we are currently supporting a significant number of students. In recent announcements in September, we approved more students under these three programs. I don't have the number in front of me, but I believe we are currently supporting a total of 22 students through these three programs. These programs did not exist before the 2006-07 fiscal year launched them.

We are very pleased that we have been able to act in this area and take effective steps in ensuring greater access for Yukon citizens to health professionals and are assisting Yukoners to become trained health professionals. While it of course takes some time for them to go through their education -- varying lengths of time depending on whether they are attending medical school, nursing or another field covered under the health profession education bursary -- however, through these we will assist in training these Yukon citizens and assist the Yukon to have access to health professionals in the years to come.

Now, Mr. Speaker, another area we are very pleased to be able to act on in the 2006-07 fiscal year was also a result of the work of our Premier and the premiers of the Northwest Territo-

ries and Nunavut at the federal level. That was the medical travel fund that was made available to all territories.

Under that fund, we receive \$1.6 million per year, over a five-year period. Of course, we utilize that fund to significantly increase the assistance we provide to Yukoners travelling out of the territory to receive medical treatment. We provided the per diems that previously used to be \$30 per day -- we increased that to \$75 per day and made that effective on the second day of travel outside the territory, rather than on day four, as had been the case previously.

Other areas that were addressed within the 2006-07 fiscal year -- we provided bridge funding to the Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Society Yukon for a period of one year. We provided them interim bridge funding to address an area where the then Liberal federal government had cancelled the funding. We provided them this bridge funding for a one-year period in the amount of \$200,000 for the Get By with a Little Help from My Friends program.

We have been pleased in this fiscal year to announce that this will be long-term funding from the Yukon government, which is providing the increased funding to FASSY of \$200,000 per year, bringing the total support provided by the Yukon government to this fine organization that delivers many important programs to Yukon citizens -- the total support is just shy of \$400,000. Of course this is in stark contrast to the level of support provided by previous governments that were not very proactive in supporting this area, shall we say. We are very pleased that we have been able to continue the good work with them and to continue assisting them to provide their support to those individuals.

Also within the 2006-07 fiscal year, we were able to assist in opening more continuing care beds. As members are aware, this year we are going to be opening the remaining 12 beds at Copper Ridge Place -- on November 15.

The 2006-07 fiscal year also included the purchase of three new ambulances for the rural emergency medical services stations. We followed up with a similar purchase of allocation for three ambulances in the 2007-08 fiscal year -- yet further evidence and further investment in this area and in providing these services to Yukoners both in Whitehorse and in rural areas.

Through the primary health care transition funding we also developed and released the *Yukon HealthGuide*, developed a chronic disease management and palliative care project, which is continuing forward to date as well, and a new insured health services system for processing and paying medical claims. That, of course, is a component of the electronic health record that we are continuing to build upon and to work with through the partnership of Canada Health Infoway. We appreciate their investment and support in this area. It has assisted us in further projects such as the purchase in this fiscal year and the recent delivery of new telehealth equipment to our nursing stations. The current new telehealth equipment is far more advanced. It has much clearer reception and provides a higher quality signal to enable not only videoconferencing and counselling through that equipment, but they also come with a little mini-camera attached to a wire, enabling a physician, nurse or other health professional to directly point it at an affected area, such as a

wound, rash or other problem area, and transmit that through the telehealth system to a physician or specialist who is not in the community.

This is another step forward in improving the delivery of access to rural areas. Of course it is a cause of hope and optimism in health care that, as we face the challenges such as the ones I outlined earlier, we also face the benefit of some of the new technology that can enable us to deliver systems to individuals quicker in more remote areas. In fact, the level of support in the area of the Canada Health Infoway projects and the investment in initiatives such as telehealth and the systems toward the electronic health record -- the Yukon has done more in this area than either of the other two territories.

We are, in fact, ahead of some of the Atlantic jurisdictions in terms of the number of projects implemented. One key component that has been developed is that billing infrastructure will be another component of the electronic health record, including steps such as electronic prescribing and claims management. These are areas that will assist Yukon, as other jurisdictions, in delivering services effectively and in managing those services.

Mr. Speaker, I understand that I am coming to the end of my time here. I see that members opposite seem to be very interested. Perhaps the Member for Kluane would like to request unanimous consent for me to have another 20 minutes. I would be happy to go on.

I will cap my comments on the 2006-07 fiscal year as I have run to the end of my allotted time. It was a year in which we were pleased to do things such as increase the territorial supplemental allowances for persons with disabilities who are on social assistance. Also, there are other steps that I look forward to outlining in further debates.

In closing, thank you for the attention of the House.

Hon. Ms. Horne: Mr. Speaker, I commend this budget to my colleagues opposite. Along with other budgets, it reflects our direction and our goals. Building Yukon's future together -- a clear vision for a bright future is what we as a government stand for. This budget reflects this vision.

As I have listened to the debate unfold regarding the budget, I have been reminded of the importance of having a government with a clear vision. As the Commissioner identified previously in the throne speech, this government is committed to achieving a better quality of life by building healthy, safe communities with skilled and adaptable people. We are committed to practising good governance with strong fiscal management and a climate of cooperation, collaboration and partnership with our First Nation governments, our two sister territories, our provincial counterparts and the federal government.

These items are a continuation of the work that was initiated by this government in its first mandate. From time immemorial, good governance has been marked by providing safety, security and stability for its citizens. Under this government's watch, we have worked to ensure people's safety, security and stability. We are committed to ensuring people are safe in their homes, their communities and their travels. We are committed to making our communities safer by implementing several new

initiatives. As I have said previously when I was preparing for this portfolio, I read a great deal about the impact of substance abuse in the Yukon communities. I feel comfortable in saying that it is, in my mind, the single largest contributor toward criminal activity in the Yukon. To reduce criminal activity, we must address substance abuse.

Our safer communities and neighbourhoods office has enjoyed great success to date. It empowers the community with an appropriate avenue to deal with undesirable activities in our neighbourhoods. I am also very pleased to see that the street crime reduction team is up and running. I am elated to help address the problems of substance abuse in our communities.

Drug and alcohol abuse have a devastating impact in our communities. By reducing the availability of drugs in our communities, we reduce the harm they do, and that is a very good thing. I congratulate the RCMP on its efforts to reduce the amount of drug activity in Yukon. I fully expect that Yukon's criminal element is getting the message that Yukoners do not condone this activity, and that this is not a place for them to conduct their business.

The government has placed a major emphasis on safer communities and neighbourhoods. The RCMP is a significant partner in this effort. I also appreciate the good working relationship Justice has with the RCMP. I would like to congratulate Whitehorse RCMP M Division attachment on the appointment of its new commanding officer, Barry Harvie. The Department of Justice and the RCMP have a long history of partnering together to provide safety and security in the Yukon. I would also like to thank Chief Superintendent Shewchuk for his exceptional contribution to the Yukon. I look forward to continued good relations and welcome the RCMP's new commanding officer to Whitehorse.

The RCMP and the Department of Justice are working together effectively to address issues of street crime caused by illegal drug and alcohol activities in Yukon communities.

The RCMP street crime reduction team and the Department of Justice safer communities and neighbourhoods unit have been working closely. In addition, we are working with community groups to change the atmosphere of the downtown core of Whitehorse. Along with our partners -- the Whitehorse Chamber of Commerce and the Youth of Today Society -- the Government of Yukon has initiated a graffiti cleanup pilot project to remove graffiti from buildings and structures in downtown Whitehorse. I see our Member for Kluane is getting very excited over there.

Over the past year and a half, the Department of Justice and the Department of Health and Social Services, the Whitehorse Chamber of Commerce, the City of Whitehorse, and the RCMP have been working together on a crime prevention strategy focused on empowering businesses to better protect themselves from crime.

The graffiti cleanup project is a result of this collaborative partnership.

We all share a responsibility for ensuring that our community is a safe and vibrant place to live. Youth were employed by the Youth of Today Society to remove graffiti in the downtown area from July 16 to August 17. The Youth of Today So-

ciety worked closely with the Whitehorse Chamber of Commerce to identify the locations for cleanup. Information from other communities battling graffiti indicates that swift and consistent removal of graffiti is a promising way to combat its spread.

Many Whitehorse businesses and organizations have already been working hard to remove graffiti from their property. This pilot project is intended to provide an opportunity to share information and to develop a coordinated approach in removing and preventing graffiti. It speaks to the areas that we committed to address. We committed to achieving a better quality of life by building healthy, safe communities with skilled and adaptable people. This budget delivers that commitment.

Mr. Speaker, we stand for building Yukon's future together, a clear vision for a bright future.

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

Motion for second reading of Bill No. 7 accordingly adjourned

The House adjourned at 5:30 p.m.