

Yukon Legislative Assembly
Whitehorse, Yukon
Tuesday, April 27, 2010 — 1:00 p.m.

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

Prayers

Reinstatement of motion

Speaker: The Chair wishes to inform the House of a change which has been made to the Order Paper. Motion No. 1031, standing in the name of the Member for Mount Lorne, which was removed from the Order Paper on Monday, April 19, has been reinstated in its original form.

DAILY ROUTINE

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

Are there any tributes?
 Introduction of visitors.
 Returns or documents for tabling.
 Reports of committees.
 Are there any petitions?
 Are there any bills to be introduced?
 Notices of motion.

NOTICES OF MOTION

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to investigate the possibility of enacting Good Samaritan legislation in Yukon.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to ensure that proper procedures and policies are being followed to minimize and decrease the number of injured workers in Yukon.

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

THAT this House urges the Yukon government in light of the current confusion and controversy over the Slinky placer mine in Dawson City, to work collaboratively with other levels of governments and affected residents to reduce the potential for conflicts among jurisdictions by:

(1) revisiting its decision to reject the recent recommendations of the Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Board regarding the Slinky mine and a proposed residential subdivision on the Dome Road in Dawson City;

(2) facilitating a discussion among all levels of government, including Yukon First Nations, on the question of mineral staking within municipal boundaries; and

(3) supporting the intent of the recent resolution by the Association of Yukon Communities concerning land-based conflicts arising from mineral staking and mining activities within municipal boundaries.

Speaker: Is there a statement by a minister?
 Hearing none, this then brings us to Question Period.

QUESTION PERIOD

Question re: Tourism statistics

Mr. Inverarity: Tourism and Culture recently released its 2009 visitor statistics and there is little good news to be had. Overall visitations are down, border crossings are down, European air charter arrivals are down and marine arrivals are down. As well, visitors from six of our 10 top countries are down. Visitors from four of our five key regions are down and visitors to four of our six main visitor information centres are down. How does the minister explain such dismal tourism results?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: I thank the member opposite for his interest in the Department of Tourism and Culture. First off, I just wanted to remind the member opposite that everything that we do in the Department of Tourism and Culture is in collaboration with industry — the tourism industry. We remain committed to ensuring that all tourism marketing is industry-led, research-based, market-driven, and particularly, involving industry in all decisions coming up with implementation, evaluation and development of all marketing programs.

Mr. Speaker, what are we doing in anticipation of this year's tourism season and what have we been doing? We continue to work with our tourism partners closer than ever; that is, all of our tourism associations, industry partners and individual operators. We continue to ensure that our tourism strategy is developed in partnership with industry. We continue to ensure that our investments are sound and that they have a solid return on investment. We are partnering more than ever with our neighbours, with our sister territories, with Alaska and many others, and we continue to invest in areas that have significant growth.

Mr. Inverarity: Thank you, Mr. Speaker; it sounds like there's a lot of sharing of the blame going around here. The department's recently released tourism implementation plan states that one of the branch's objectives is, and I quote: "Generating long term economic growth and revenues for the benefit of Yukon people through the development and marketing of Yukon's tourism industry."

The minister is responsible for providing leadership in developing Yukon's tourism industry. Instead, under her watch, visitation has become stagnant or worse. There's something like 17,000 fewer people who visited the Yukon this year than they did the year before, and that number was down from the previous year. Given these poor results, does the minister feel she is accomplishing that objective?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Well, Mr. Speaker, if the member opposite is asking me if I individually have responsibility over the global economic recession that this worldwide globe has been experiencing over the last couple of years, the answer is no.

What we are doing is working closer than ever with industry through our tourism associations, through individual operators and through many other partners across the country to ensure that our tourism marketing is sound, that it's based on de-

cisions that are industry-led, market-driven and research-based. We continue to invest in areas such as the tourism cooperative marketing fund, to which we were able to increase another \$200,000, for a \$700,000 investment. We were able to increase dollars for domestic tourism marketing by an additional \$500,000 this year.

We continue to build on successes such as the Olympics, which was one of the greatest marketing initiatives ever undertaken by the Yukon and this country. We continue to invest in areas where we see growth, as I mentioned — whether it's domestic, Canada or overseas marketing, and certainly other areas as well.

Mr. Inverarity: Mr. Speaker, according to the minister's own visitor statistics, Yukon attracts fewer visitors now than it did before her government took office. In 2001, border crossings totalled 283,400 people. In 2009, they totalled 282,800. That's about 600 fewer now than eight years ago. In the meantime, the minister spends about \$10 million every year to fail at increasing tourism. In the eight years the Yukon Party has been responsible for tourism, they have spent more than \$72 million of Yukon taxpayers' dollars with little to show for it.

Does the minister think that it's good value for money to spend \$272 million to attract 600 fewer people?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Mr. Speaker, I'm absolutely appalled at the member opposite and the Liberal Party's position on tourism marketing. When it comes to tourism, tourism is in fact a major economic engine, one of our largest private sector employers in the territory. And for that reason alone, this government will continue to increase its level of investment when it comes to tourism marketing.

We will continue to invest in the tourism cooperative marketing fund, Destination: Yukon, domestic marketing campaigns, and scenic drives that cater to the rubber-tire traffic. We'll continue to invest in our Yukon tourism brand strategy and our new Travel Yukon website. We will continue to invest in media relations and familiarization tours with media. We will continue to invest in photography and high-definition video. We will continue to invest in enhancing our marketing campaigns with our sister territories, with the Canadian Tourism Commission, and with the State of Alaska.

We'll continue to invest in initiatives and infrastructure, such as the Whitehorse airport terminal, in which we continue to invest to the tune of \$20 million. We'll continue to invest in cultural centres in both Kwanlin Dun First Nation and Champagne and Aishihik First Nations — these two initiatives alone. We continue to invest in significant programs that continue to deliver return on investment.

Question re: Tourism industry promotion

Mr. Inverarity: I have some more questions for the Minister of Tourism. We want to know why this government failed in its mandate to cultivate and promote the Yukon tourism industry. The visitor statistics report gives us a clue. It states that: "Visitation in 2009 was negatively impacted by the global economic downturn with economic issues in the United States being the primary contributor to the 2009 decline." The numbers for 2010 don't look any better.

What changes have been made to reverse this steady downward trend?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Again, at the leadership and direction and with strategic advice provided by our Senior Marketing Committee of the Tourism Industry Association of the Yukon, we are continuing to invest in marketing programs that continue to have a return on investment.

Every initiative that we do, in terms of developing, implementing and evaluating all of our programs are industry-led, and that is held by the Senior Marketing Committee. As such, we are continuing to invest more dollars, to the tune of \$500,000 more in Canada on marketing, building upon the success of Look Up North, our national marketing campaign in 2007, and building upon the success of the Olympic marketing initiatives that were launched just recently, the last couple of months.

We will continue to invest in important infrastructure that facilitates the growth of the tourism industry, including airport access, a new airport terminal building, and enhancing access to our attractions, including new investments in museums, heritage sites, arts and culture and very much in First Nation heritage cultural centres. We will continue to invest in overseas marketing. We will continue to invest in many programs, and the member opposite should very much take a look at the implementation plan that was developed in collaboration with industry.

Mr. Inverarity: The Tourism department analysis identifies the global economic downturn as a major force behind our low tourism numbers. Specifically, economic issues in the United States were singled out as the greatest contributor to the industry's poor performance last year. Over a year ago, we warned of the downturn's effect on the Yukon economy. We specifically warned about the potential effects on the tourism industry. The Premier replied that, "... the member should not be comparing the Yukon to the United States and to what's happening in the United States. There's no correlation whatsoever with what the Yukon is experiencing and the situation the United States finds itself in."

Does the minister believe the Premier was correct, or are the officials who drafted this report?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: The 2010-11 tourism implementation plan was developed in collaboration with the tourism industry. The member opposite knows full well that we do this each and every year and have for the last several years, and it is thanks to the very good, strong working partnership with industry that we have been able to be resilient in terms of our presentation of all tourism marketing programs.

Again, tourism marketing programs, in terms of development, implementation and evaluation of all our programs are assessed and reviewed and given strategic advice by industry each and every year. We are very proud of the level of investment that this government contributes to the tourism industry in support of the tourism industry, whether it be tourism marketing or on the environment side, in terms of the creation of new parks, or a new Tombstone Interpretive Centre, in terms of working with the Department of Economic Development in

implementing all of its programs in support of the tourism industry.

We will continue to again invest in areas where there is the best return on investment. Given the downturn that we have seen, particularly in the U.S. market, we are making up for that by investing more in the domestic market.

Mr. Inverarity: Mr. Speaker, we understand the minister is not opposed to the Premier running her departments. She didn't object when he made angry calls to her Environment officials to tell her how to conduct her department's business. She didn't object when she was eventually removed from that department and her portfolio was given to someone else. Apparently she took him at his word when we didn't need to worry about the economic downturn affecting us here in Yukon's tourism industry. When the minister drafted the plans to increase tourism in the Yukon, did she account for the economic downturn or did she rely on the Premier's assurances?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm not even going to respond to what the member opposite just articulated or tried to articulate at best.

What I will respond to is the direction of the tourism industry as represented by the Senior Marketing Committee of the Tourism Industry Association of Yukon.

Mr. Speaker, one of the first things that we did when we were first elected in 2002 was reinstate the Department of Tourism and Culture after the Liberal government had destroyed it — dismantled it completely.

What this government has done is re-establish the Department of Tourism and Culture. We have invested millions of dollars more in our domestic, in our overseas markets, in conventions, meetings and incentive travel. We will continue to deliver, implement and evaluate all tourism marketing programs in collaboration and in partnership with industry. We will continue to invest in areas that have the best return on investment. We are working more closely than ever before with industry, with our associations and with operators. We will continue to develop, in partnership with industry, our tourism strategic plan. We will continue to partner more with our neighbours, sister territories, Canada and so forth. We will continue to invest in areas such as infrastructure.

Question re: *Young Worker Protection Act*

Mr. Cardiff: Mr. Speaker, it has been over a year and a half since the New Democrats introduced the *Young Worker Protection Act*, which would have, among other things, established a minimum working age, placed age restrictions on certain high-risk occupations and put a greater onus on the employer for supervision and training of young workers.

The government took the bill out for consultation to the Yukon public, and the first action from that consultation was the development of a code of practice for young workers which came into effect on January 1 of this year. I would like to know what the experience is so far with the code of practice, whether or not it has been effective, how it is enforced and if it has resulted in any measurable improvements to workplace safety for young workers.

Hon. Mr. Hart: I would like to state up front here for the House the fact that this government places a high priority

on safety for all of our workers in the workplace, and that is young and old alike. The member opposite is correct. We did do public consultation with regard to dealing with young workers and we did take action on that process. We have a code of conduct that took place effective January of this year. We are in a process of doing an assessment where our officers go around and check the employers and see how they are doing. It is a little too early to actually put a number or anything on this with regard to what kind of impact it is having.

I will say to the Legislature today though that the employers have endorsed the code of conduct. They are aware of what's going on now and we hope to see a large improvement with regard to our young workers in the workplace.

Mr. Cardiff: In December, the president of the Yukon Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board described the code of practice like this: The code of practice "provides the standard that employers are expected to meet. If they do not meet that standard, they have to prove to our Occupational Health and Safety officers that they have something in place that meets or exceeds that standard."

We'd like some details from the minister. Are inspections of workplaces taking place to determine that the code of practice for young workers is being respected and adhered to and can the minister tell us if there have been any orders under this code of practice issued to employers?

Hon. Mr. Hart: For the member opposite, I will just reiterate what I said earlier. The government is committed to ensuring that there is a safe workplace for all employees, young and old, and we do provide constant vigilance of all of our employers through our Occupational Health and Safety officers throughout the Yukon.

As I indicated yesterday, we have a process in place to ensure that all businesses are looked at and we do place a bit of a high priority on areas where we know we're having higher incidences. So yes, we are looking at those particular businesses ahead of time and we're also looking at them on a critical basis to ensure that they are following the processes that they need to follow to ensure the safety of their workers.

Mr. Cardiff: The government indicated that it would handle the issue of young worker protection through regulatory changes to the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* and the *Employment Standards Act*. Right now, on the eve of the Day of Mourning, there is no minimum working age and there is very little in the way of age restrictions in high-risk industries. There are no restrictions on hours of work related to age.

The president said they were aiming for an implementation for regulatory changes by January 1, 2011 — that's just over half a year away — but we've heard nothing to date. I'm still awaiting a response to the question on this issue that I wrote to the minister on May 13 of last year.

Will the Minister of Community Services provide this House with an update on his progress in drafting changes to the *Employment Standards Act* that would address the protection of young workers?

Hon. Mr. Hart: For the member opposite, as I've indicated in this House before, we are working with Community Services on these regulations — again, to ensure that the regu-

lations are brought forth, are representing the issues and concerns that were brought forth during our consultations in that process. I will remind the member opposite that our consultations in many of these areas were not 100 percent one way or the other; there were lots of concerns by many parents of whether the government should be involved in ensuring whether their child works or not. So, yes, we did — we are — we did do a lot of work on the items that we got general approval on from the consultation process and we went forward with that. Code of conduct was a good result of that process.

We are working on several incidents with regard to specific industries on timing and age and, once those are brought forth through the Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board, I am sure that we will have some in time to meet our deadline of January 1, 2011.

Question re: Lake Laberge potable water supply

Mr. Cathers: The Yukon government's territorial water strategy identified several areas in my constituency where there is sufficient demand to warrant developing a community well. I'd like to begin by asking the Minister of Community Services about one of those areas.

The minister has announced that the budget contains money for Deep Creek water treatment infrastructure, but has not yet explained the details of this project. Possibilities that have been considered in the past include a community fill point and a refill station for fire trucks.

Will the minister please clarify what is being developed at Deep Creek? Will it be open to the public for personal use? Will it be able to refill the local fire hall's tanker and where exactly will it be located?

Hon. Mr. Lang: What I can commit to the member opposite is an overview of exactly what the investment will entail and I can do that in the form of a letter.

Mr. Cathers: I look forward to receiving that letter from the minister.

Another one of the locations the territorial water strategy identifies for a future community well is near the junction of the Hot Springs Road and the Mayo Road. There is a very high demand for a community well in this area with many potential users. Last year, as then Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, I had department staff identify several locations where land could be made available for a community well. I wrote a letter to the Minister of Community Services listing those sites, including the recommendation that the most promising one seems to be land on the north border of the research forest that could be used without impeding research work.

Will the minister please tell me if planning and design work for a community well near the corner of the Hot Springs Road and the Mayo Road has begun and, if not, when his department will begin work to develop this much-needed well?

Hon. Mr. Lang: There is no money in this year's budget for that investment, but I'm sure, going forward, eventually those kinds of needs will be met, but there certainly isn't money in the budget this year.

Mr. Cathers: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the minister's indication. I would also encourage him to have the department have a look at this and begin the preplanning work this sum-

mer. Again, the location for this well has been identified — or potential locations have — and, prior to some of the expensive work, there is preliminary work that will need to be done.

Another one of the locations the territorial water strategy identifies for a future community well is near the Ibex Valley fire hall. This is another area where quite a few of my constituents will never be able to drill a personal well due to the spatial or geophysical limitations of their home property.

Will the Minister of Community Services please tell me when my constituents in the Ibex Valley can expect development of a community well for their area to occur?

Hon. Mr. Lang: Again, Mr. Speaker, the need for access to potable water goes through the territory, not only drilling of wells but upgrading wells to meet the demands of today's standards. In addressing the member opposite, there is no money in this year's budget for that, but it is something that we could look at in the future.

Question re: YESAB recommendations

Mr. McRobb: Last month, YESAB recommended against allowing a placer mine to go ahead on the Dome Road in Dawson City. A few days later, this Yukon Party government ignored that recommendation, based on the reasoning that it was the only way to allow for further discussions with the proponent.

Well, that was about a month ago, so this government bought itself some time. Meanwhile, the operator has started his activities at the site. As we know, the government has planned a subdivision on this same parcel of land. I'm sure everybody could agree that both a subdivision and a mining project cannot proceed simultaneously.

Can the minister responsible give us an update on these discussions with the proponent?

Hon. Mr. Rouble: I appreciate the question coming from the member opposite. Indeed, the Dawson City area has a long history of mining and placer mining. The area he's referring to — I believe it's the Slinky mine — was first staked in 1903 and has been the subject of mining activity ever since then, really.

A number of years ago, about two decades ago now, the City of Dawson expanded its boundaries and included that placer claim in it. I'm sure all members appreciate that, under our *Placer Mining Act* in the territory, it prohibits staking claims within municipal boundaries, and under the *Quartz Mining Act*, there are significant conditions under staking those similar types of claims.

Mr. Speaker, this has been an operating mine for some time, operating under a previous mine authorization and under a previous Water Board licence. I understand that that is due to expire in the near future. However, there are due procedures going through for the application of appropriate permits, including permits from the City of Dawson, permits for land use, mining authorization and also the permitting stage for the water licence, should one be necessary.

It is at this stage that we can ensure that there are steps in place to mitigate negative impacts in the community.

Mr. McRobb: Well, Mr. Speaker, the minister was asked to update us on discussions with the proponent, not give us background information already on the record.

Last month this Yukon Party government ignored the “no” recommendation from YESAB. In doing so, it also ignored the significant adverse effects on environmental quality, public health and safety, heritage resources, community value, interest and quality. This government has refused to deal with the inherent conflict of allowing mining within municipal boundaries. It has refused to do the hard work of developing a policy to deal with this situation.

We understand that the miner has recently said no further discussions have occurred in the past month. So I’ll ask the minister: what further discussions, if any, have occurred with this proponent?

Hon. Mr. Rouble: I’m not sure where the Member for Kluane is getting his information, because it is not consistent with the facts. The Department of Energy, Mines and Resources officials were in discussions yesterday and today with the proponent behind the Slinky mine process. Last week there were ongoing discussions between the proponent and Energy, Mines and Resources.

Energy, Mines and Resources has also been working very actively with the municipality, with affected neighbours in the area, and with the First Nation. The Department of Energy, Mines and Resources has been working very closely with the people in the Dawson area as to how to balance going forward with both these projects because, as the member rightly said, they both can’t happen at the same time, but they can happen in a sequential manner. Through proper licensing, with appropriate mitigative steps, we can reduce the impacts on the neighbourhood and, at the same time, prepare the land for future subdivision.

Mr. Speaker, the Government of Yukon, with all of its various branches — whether it is Energy, Mines and Resources, the DAP branch or the Executive Council branch — are all working with the appropriate orders of government and the citizens of Dawson to address this issue.

Question re: Health care facility costs

Mr. Mitchell: As the Yukon Party winds down its time in office, it has decided to go for broke in terms of borrowing money. The Minister of Health and Social Services has approved \$67 million in borrowing for new health care facilities. This includes new hospitals in Watson Lake and Dawson City; \$100 million is also being borrowed for energy projects. The government is charging ahead with these new hospitals without having adequately consulted Yukoners and health care professionals about whether or not this is the right direction to go in. A recent review of health care services certainly didn’t recommend it and, according to a letter to the editor, the former chief of medical staff at the Whitehorse General Hospital doesn’t support the idea either. He described this government’s plan as, “wishful thinking.” Perhaps if the government had asked physicians for their opinion, it would be doing things differently. Why does the Health minister think he knows more about health care than the former chief of medical staff at the Whitehorse General Hospital?

Hon. Mr. Hart: I thank the member opposite for the question. I think we’ve gone around this one many times here in the House and I’m sure we’ll probably go around many more.

With regard to the hospitals in Watson Lake and Dawson City being proposed to be built, we just recently signed an agreement with the Yukon Hospital Corporation for the transfer of the Watson Lake facility, effective April 1, 2010. There was a substantial amount of consultation underway by the Yukon Hospital Corporation with regard to both facilities. They extensively used consultants to ensure that the necessary information was available to ensure that the Yukon Hospital Corporation was in a position to assume the management of the Watson Lake facility — and was able to do so by utilizing the facilities that were currently down in Watson Lake at the time to ensure that a hospital could be built there in that facility to address the concerns and provide enhanced health services to all citizens of Watson Lake.

Mr. Mitchell: The minister didn’t answer the question. In the dying days of its time in office, the Yukon Party has embarked on a radical new approach to health care in the Yukon, and doctors are going public with their opposition to this plan.

The government is borrowing the money to build these new facilities and the taxpayers will be on the hook for millions of dollars of interest payments for years to come. Taxpayers are also shelling out \$80,000 for a PR campaign designed to defend the government’s approach.

The former chief of medical staff at the Whitehorse General Hospital said that, under this government’s plan, Yukoners will see “a dilution of care and expertise to the point where WGH could lose its accreditation.” Predictions like this from doctors who have worked here for 40 years raise big, red flags about this government’s plans.

Why were people like the former chief of medical staff at the Whitehorse General Hospital not consulted before the government barged ahead with this radical change in health care delivery?

Hon. Mr. Hart: There was a substantial amount of work done with regard to dealing with the situation in Watson Lake in particular, in addition to the Dawson City facility — hospital facilities for both those regions. Again, Yukon Hospital Corporation did a substantial amount of work. There were studies done by this government as well as others and the Hospital Corporation with regard to those facilities. I might add that a substantial number of people, doctors included, were consulted — and nurses — with regard to these facilities.

Again, for the member opposite, better than 90 percent of those in Watson Lake agreed to the terms and conditions of the Yukon Hospital Corporation and they transferred with the Hospital Corporation over to that facility so they could continue providing the excellent services they provide in Watson Lake for those citizens. They provide that process.

As I said before, a substantial amount of consultation took place with regard to the citizens of Watson Lake, the staff, the unions, and both ourselves and the Yukon Hospital Corporation, with regard to ensuring that each one of those staff and

hospital staff, as well as nurses and physicians, would be accommodated in the new facility in Watson Lake.

Mr. Mitchell: Mr. Speaker, Yukoners will trust doctors when it comes to health care before they will trust this government. It's very unfortunate: the minister and the Premier made the decision to build these two new hospitals without asking health care professionals for their opinions. The fact we are borrowing the money to complete these projects only compounds the problem.

The former chief of medical staff at the Whitehorse General Hospital offered a suggestion to the government. He said, and I quote: "We should concentrate on keeping a high standard of care at WGH, which is the direction Yukoners turn when they are worried about their health. The nurse practitioners do a fine job of running the community health centres with help from visiting GPs from Whitehorse. This is a good example of the collaborative care model."

Good advice. Too bad the government didn't ask health care providers for their opinions. Who knows more about health care: doctors or this government?

Hon. Mr. Hart: Mr. Speaker, we are fully aware of his stance of not wanting to provide health services in Watson Lake to the citizens of Watson Lake, where they have had a hospital since 1979, and for not providing services in Dawson City, so they can have the same rights and services as those we provide right here in Whitehorse.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the member opposite for his sharing in the process of ensuring the citizens of Watson Lake and Dawson City receive the same health care as they do here.

Speaker: The time for Question Period has now elapsed.

Notice of opposition private members' business

Mr. McRobb: Mr. Speaker, 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, April 28, 2010. They are Motion No. 1050, standing in the name of the Member for Copperbelt, and Motion No. 989, also standing in the name of the Member for Copperbelt.

Mr. Cardiff: Mr. Speaker, 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, April 28, 2010. It is Motion No. 1031, standing in the name of the Member for Mount Lorne.

Speaker: We shall now proceed with Orders of the Day.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

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

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

Motion agreed to

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Chair (Mr. Nordick): Order please. Committee of the Whole will now come to order.

The matter before the Committee is Bill No. 20, *First Appropriation Act, 2010-11*. Do members wish a brief recess?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

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

Recess

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

Bill No. 20 — *First Appropriation Act, 2010-11* — continued

Chair: The matter before the Committee is Bill No. 20, *First Appropriation Act, 2010-11*. We will now continue with general debate in Vote 54, Department of Tourism and Culture.

Department of Tourism and Culture — *continued*

Mr. Inverarity: I welcome everyone back this afternoon. I look forward to a fun afternoon of interesting debate and nothing but challenges and opportunities before us, so I think we'll just get on to it. I understand I only have a short time left in which to address my next set of questions. I did leave a few on the table yesterday afternoon. I know the minister is anxious to respond to those questions that I put forward yesterday, so I'm not going to get into too many more at this point in time, other than to say that I am still concerned about the trend that is happening within tourism. There are two specifically that I would like to mention.

One is the longer term one. When I look back over 15 years within tourism, I would have hoped to have seen steady growth within the tourism industry. I am concerned that the numbers have been flat at best. They did peak, obviously, in 1998 when we had the anniversaries, and I think we were at somewhere around 365,000 visitors in all. They have slowly gone up and down, but nowhere close to those numbers, down to where we are today, which is around 282,000.

The other trend, which is more immediate, is the general trend in the last two years where the numbers are consistently dropping. What bothers me even more is that it looks like the actual dollars being spent on an annual basis for the tourism sector are also dropping. If my numbers are correct, we are talking about \$795,000, give or take — let's say \$800,000 down from the previous year. I would think that if we're trying to encourage tourism, we should be looking to increase those numbers and encouraging the industry to step up and also contribute to try to change the trend.

While I fully appreciate the challenges that the economy nationally and internationally has caused us, earlier today we heard assurances from the Premier in the statement that I quoted that we're totally isolated from the rest of Canada and

certainly from the U.S. marketplace, so our numbers should be going up. That's how I would interpret that.

I think the minister should clarify and just make sure that she's on-board, that we are going to look forward to some positive numbers in the future and that the department, along with its stakeholders, will do everything feasible to increase and show a major turnaround in tourism numbers so we can look forward to a brighter future, because we never know when some of the other industry sectors are going to crash.

As we pointed out early on, tourism has always been there, will likely always be there, and we need to make the investment in tourism, because at least it's dependable and has been steady, certainly over the last 15 years. Despite the two comments I made, the numbers are not really significant. If you're talking about the 282,000 to the beginning of the century here, which was around 283,000, it's flat, but we need to turn them around so that we become a major tourist attraction throughout the world.

I guess on that, Mr. Chair, I will leave the minister to respond to my questions from yesterday and comment on her budget and the reason for the decrease.

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Thank you, again, for the opportunity to debate a very important department, the Department of Tourism and Culture. As I have often articulated, tourism remains a main economic engine in the territory. It creates jobs. It creates revenue. It creates quality of life, and therefore it is very good for the social well-being of the territory.

Mr. Chair, as I believe I tried to articulate in some of my responses to the member opposite's line of questioning earlier today, the mandate of the department, when it comes to marketing, is that we continue to ensure that all our decisions, in terms of tourism marketing programs, are industry-led, research-based, and market driven.

I've often said that tourism never ceases to amaze me in just how very resilient the industry is and continues to be.

There's no question that, since 9/11, the tourism industry has been hard hit. Not just in the Yukon, Mr. Chair, but all over the world. The fact is that we have been hit by a number of factors, the global worldwide recession being one of them. Also there was the SARS outbreak a few years back. Even war taking place in other countries — all of these have a tremendous impact on how individuals make their decisions as to where they choose to go and how long they choose to stay, to choosing not to go to any destination, period, and that is what we have been seeing in the United States over the last number of years. Also, there's our exchange rate of course. One only has to take a look at — and I know the member opposite may be more familiar with what he referred to as the farmer's digest and the radio that plays the hog features — the national news every evening and take a look at the exchange rates. The Canadian dollar happens to be very high; in fact, it's almost on par with the United States dollar.

That also has a tremendous impact on American travel patterns for obvious reasons. So, what we are finding is that, yes, there is lower visitation from the United States, but in coming together with industry and in looking at projected declines in visitation from the United States, for example, we have been

developing marketing plans to attract more Canadian travellers from the highest potential designated market areas as identified within our tourism strategic plan, now known as the "Yukon tourism implementation plan". Specifically, those are: metro Vancouver; to a degree, Toronto; Edmonton and Calgary. That is why we have been able to enhance additional monies toward the Canadian market consistently over the years. Last year alone, we actually saw a 13-percent increase in the Canadian visitation, many of whom came from the specific markets.

I know the member opposite made reference to marketing to farmers elsewhere. While I believe we would love to market in just about every jurisdiction worldwide, we also know we have to be smart. We have to be strategic in making decisions and ensuring that every dollar has the best return on investment.

Again, thanks to the input and strategic advice and guidance provided by our Senior Marketing Committee, which is comprised of representatives from the Tourism Industry Association of Yukon — thanks to their marketing expertise and also thanks to the marketing expertise provided in the Department of Tourism, we have been able to realign, readjust, enhance, perhaps reduce in other areas, be resilient and be responsive to market trends globally.

I'll just put on the record that the Yukon stands head to head with other jurisdictions in this country and, in fact, has outperformed a number of other jurisdictions in this country, and it is because of our ability to work with industry, but also to work with our partners, as I mentioned — Northwest Territories and Nunavut, for example.

We just concluded one of our largest marketing initiatives ever, called the Olympics 2010. That, in part, was done so in collaboration, from a pan-northern marketing perspective. It was a success, I believe. It raised awareness about Canada's north and the unique attributes that make the north such an attractive place to visit, as well as invest. Of course, it is the best place on Earth to live.

We also do much of our marketing very closely with the Alaska Travel Industry Association when it comes to marketing in the United States, and it makes really good sense to do this — even marketing overseas. In my couple of visits overseas over the years, it's always quite remarkable that when you talk about Yukon, you also talk about Alaska. Obviously Alaska has staying brand power, and so does the Yukon. But because of our small jurisdictions we have relatively small resources compared to other jurisdictions worldwide.

Yes, tourism has become much more competitive globally. There are more tourism destinations to compete with worldwide. Again, for that reason, we have to be strategic and we have to invest accordingly.

So all of these factors account for why we invest where we do invest. The Canadian Tourism Commission, I also alluded to earlier, as well. They are undertaking a very large domestic marketing campaign in Canada. The way we have designed our domestic marketing campaigns has been completely in sync with the Canadian Tourism Commission so that we are able to further leverage our marketing dollars.

As I mentioned, last year alone, we had a tremendous increase in Canadian visitors. We do market to those areas that have a very good return on investment, and those are areas that some of our air carriers, such as Air North, fly to direct, such as Vancouver, Calgary and Edmonton.

Mr. Chair, it is very important to note that we have been successful over the years. A decline in visitation could have been more substantive if we weren't working with industry and if we weren't paying attention to the research provided through our Canadian Tourism Commission and through our own area, and working with Alaska and the three territories and many, many others.

The member opposite makes reference to the Tourism Yukon implementation plan. This plan was developed with the strategic advice of industry. It sets out the blueprint for the year ahead. We're very proud of this document, as we are of previous documents. Later on this year, in the fall, when the Tourism Industry Association gathers for their fall roundup, we'll be delivering our next report card. We will see what has worked and what needs to be tweaked, and where we need to readjust our funding allocations.

Unfortunately, the line of questioning the member opposite referred to earlier, I don't get the feeling the member opposite is completely informed. In fact, I feel the member opposite does not know or have a full understanding of what the Department of Tourism and Culture provides, what the role and responsibility is — the mandate — and how we do make decisions on all tourism marketing campaigns, in developing, implementing and evaluating those campaigns.

Now, Mr. Chair, I believe the member opposite had an opportunity to be briefed somewhat by the department's representatives during our departmental briefing on the budget on some of these questions, but it's very clear from the questions received that we need to do more. So, again, we would be very happy to sit down with the member opposite to explain how we conduct marketing campaigns — the process. We can go through the implementation plan, return on investments, how assessments are done and how we implement them, so I just extend that offer to the member opposite again.

I could go on at great length as there were a number of questions raised by the member opposite. I believe I have answered some of them, but again, in going forward, we are hoping to — through our implementation plan — build on the momentum that has been created, thanks to the Olympics and also build on the momentum that was created during the Look Up North campaign. We continue to collaborate with the two sister territories on future pan-northern marketing campaigns as a means of raising consumer awareness of Yukon as a travel destination. That also has been identified as a priority by industry, by the Senior Marketing Committee, and we are following through on that.

Now over the years, the Senior Marketing Committee has made a number of recommendations including the development of a new Yukon tourism brand strategy. We were able to dedicate the required resources. We did research; we also used research from the national marketing campaign, again, which helped us define our Yukon brand. Another recommendation

made by our Senior Marketing Committee was to dedicate more resources to media relations and into Yukon tourism, the www.travel yukon.com website — all of which we have been able to deliver. In fact, in this year's budget — which I know the member opposite has already voted against — there are dollars allocated for the ongoing operation and maintenance. I believe it is \$100,000 per year to operate the website, and we have invested about \$750,000.

I know, to the member opposite, it sounds like a lot of money, but again we were very strategic in how we designed and developed it in close collaboration with industry. Compared to other jurisdictions' marketing initiatives, I believe the department and industry did a superb job. We know that more and more visitors are going to the website and looking for information that is relative and up to date on how to travel or plan for their travel in the Yukon. That is another recommendation that we were also able to follow up on. We were also able to follow up on emphasis on product development. In fact, industry, just recently, has made a recommendation to us to do an inventory of product in the territory, which the Department of Tourism and Culture is doing. There were a number of various recommendations made, including more emphasis along with long-term, stable, ongoing dollars for marketing in Canada. That is why we chose to invest in our A base — that is ongoing annual funding of \$500,000 in additional monies for Destination: Yukon, which targets our gateway cities of metro-Vancouver, Calgary, Edmonton and, to a degree, Toronto. We have also chosen to invest an additional \$200,000 in the tourism cooperative marketing fund, for a total of \$700,000 in ongoing annual funding. Again, that is a very substantive investment, which was a direct recommendation from industry.

We're very pleased to invest in initiatives such as this. We recognize that there is always more work to be done, and we recognize that there is no true science to marketing but, again, by working together with operators and with industry associations in other jurisdictions, we're able to leverage our resources in the best possible way. I think that's a very important point to make, as we move forward.

We rely on services provided through the Department of Highways and Public Works in providing good access to road infrastructure, working with the Department of Environment, the new Tombstone Interpretive Centre for example, and the new Tombstone management plan that was signed off with the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nation and Environment last fall. These set the stage and the blueprint for how we market, but also how we do business and be culturally responsive to opportunities in that particular park, which has been deemed a tourism icon in the Yukon along with other areas, such as Kluane National Park.

We continue to work with the Department of Education in labour market initiatives, for example. We talked about the accessibility and availability of staff for each of our tourism operations, no matter if it's in the restaurant business, retail or in the RV business. These are all very important positions. Again, thanks to the good work of the Department of Education working with the Government of Canada and other jurisdictions through the Yukon nominee program and other initiatives,

we've been able to increase the pool of labour as well, which has been reflected in the increase in population over the last five years, I believe, to just over 5,000 additional people in the territory.

There are a whole host of initiatives that the Government of Yukon has been working on. I really look forward to the next year. I am very optimistic that we are off to a good start. I always am loathe to talk about specific numbers going forward in terms of the final visitor account, but as I mentioned yesterday, it's not all about numbers; it's all about revenues as well. It's a combination of both.

Mr. Chair, one other department that I am remiss in mentioning that has been working to develop infrastructure is Community Services — waterfront improvements, for example. There are other initiatives going forward, such as our First Nations' cultural centre. Kwanlin Dun and Champagne and Aishihik are two First Nations that we currently working with and have dedicated financial resources in collaboration with those self-governing First Nations.

Mr. Chair, I look forward to continued debate with the member opposite and continuing to share information. Thank you.

Mr. Inverarity: If the minister wants to lower the level of debate, she is starting off well here today. I was hoping we could keep it a little bit up there.

Just for the record, during the departmental briefings that I have, I did ask for the numbers. I was told that the numbers would not be available until the TIA convention. I have been looking on the website. It is only in the past few days that they appeared here on the website without any notices and without any press releases. I can understand why — because they are so dismal. If the minister wants to get into any kind of a slugfest here this afternoon, I am more than prepared to go down to that level.

The minister does note, however, that the dollar certainly was a significant factor in the reduction in tourism numbers over the past couple of years. While I can appreciate that, I am not sure if the minister actually believes in the Premier's school of business or not but if she does, it would seem reasonable —

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Point of order

Chair: Mr. Rouble, on a point of order.

Hon. Mr. Rouble: Mr. Chair, I believe I just heard the member use the word, "slugfest". I would bring the member's attention to Standing Order 19(i), which cautions against using abusive or insulting language, including sexist or violent language, in a context likely to create disorder.

Encouraging members to get into a slugfest is certainly beneath the dignity of this Assembly, and I would ask the Chair to caution the member in his choice of words.

Chair's ruling

Chair: The Chair actually does agree with the point of order with regard to that terminology being used in this Assembly. The Chair was going to wait until the member had finished speaking to comment on that, but since it has been

brought to my attention, I would encourage members not to use that type of language in this Assembly, please.

Mr. Inverarity: It was a figurative use of the term and I'll try to avoid it.

Chair's statement

Chair: Order please. When a Chair makes a ruling on an order, the Chair is not expecting people to explain their comments or to discuss the ruling afterward. I would like members to abide by the rulings, please.

Mr. Inverarity: Getting back to my point regarding the high dollar rate and the Premier's school of business, which the minister probably subscribes to, I would think the minister should be out there advertising that because of the high dollar all the Americans should be coming to the Yukon because it is at par — opportunity to show everybody in the world that the Canadian dollar is at par and it's a good thing. That's how I feel the Premier would probably handle this particular situation. Obviously, it is a deterrent and I recognize that for what it is.

I think the minister referred to the North American marketing plan and the good work that has been done there, and I think I'd just like to turn my attention briefly to the marketing plans. I noticed in the report card from 2008-09 for the tourism industry and the Destination: Yukon program that one of the objectives was to increase month-to-month unique visitors to the www.travelyukon.com website by 25 percent during the campaign.

I bring this number to the minister's attention because I would like to also then look at the next year's report, which is the Tourism strategic plan for 2009-10 under Destination: Yukon. The objective there was to increase the month-to-month unique visitors to www.travelyukon.com by only 10 percent.

To me, it's fine to be able to set objectives and goals, and if these are the objectives and goals of the committee, and the minister and her department certainly, it's kind of going the wrong way here. It's easy to bend the objectives to meet the demand. However, I think that, unfortunately, even in the North American plan for 2010-11, that particular objective has been reduced to eight percent.

So while there are great things happening on the website, certainly the goal of trying to increase traffic in that area is not materializing. I think that it deserves some comment by the minister as to why they would keep lowering the bar, rather than raising the bar and trying to achieve a better marketing plan.

One of the other ones that I noticed in the — actually in this one — again, back to 2009-10, under the joint tourism plan, they were going to increase investment in the Ontario and Quebec markets. We discussed the Quebec markets briefly yesterday, but in the current plan they're only looking at investments in the Ontario market and have dropped Quebec from any of the strategies around the joint Alaska-Yukon marketing plan.

I would be curious to hear what the minister has to say about why they would drop the Quebec market, particularly in

light of the fact that Ontario and particularly Quebec are both significantly large regions of people who could be coming to the Yukon, and I think that is worth some comments.

While the minister is up and talking — because I know she is probably going to go on for 20 minutes — perhaps she could comment on whether or not an exit survey was done last year, when the last one was done, and perhaps if there is any coming up in the new year, or if there were any recommendations that came out of the last exit survey, and if any of those recommendations were actually followed.

In regard to the questions raised by the Liberal member, pertaining to visitation, again, when we talk about overall visitation, there was a decrease of 5.6 percent from 2008. We know that U.S. visitation was down, Canadian visitation was up. We also talked about motorcoach travel being down some 16.5 percent — again, that's mainly attributed to the United States travel market. I don't want to get into too much debate about the visitation numbers, but I do know that, at the upcoming conference of TIA, those numbers should be made readily available.

In terms of the bright spots, I made reference to the Canadian market. As I tried to reference in my remarks earlier, Canadian visitation was up substantially by about 13 percent. The other bright spot we can reflect on is the number of people enplaning and deplaning at the Whitehorse International Airport. We continue to break records in this department. That's a good thing.

We know that visitation, again, was up last year from where we were a year before. Again, this is not quite the case when it comes to other jurisdictions in the world, but also in Canada as well. So for that reason we are enhancing air access services at the Whitehorse International Airport. That is why we continue to work with Air North and others in investing in gateway cities through Edmonton, Calgary and Vancouver. I think I tried to explain to the member opposite that it is these very markets and, again, working with Canadian Tourism Commission, that we see the greatest return on investment. As I mentioned, it is all about being wise with the dollars. It is all about being smart and being strategic in how we invest in these markets.

The member opposite made reference to some school of business and I think that what the member opposite meant to say was that — surely the member opposite isn't making reference or inferring that we should be politicizing tourism marketing, because I can tell you the member opposite will get an earful from industry.

Just a heads-up, because when it does come to tourism marketing that is in fact why we have been able to generate a really strong working relationship with industry. Again, I'm really proud of the work of the Senior Marketing Committee, which is comprised of representatives of the tourism community who hold a great degree of expertise — much more than I could ever provide, because that's actually not my forte. My forte is to do the best that I can to represent the wishes of the tourism industry, to listen to their advice and to put faith in and work on and hopefully deliver on most, if not all, requests and directions as provided by the tourism industry. I have worked

hard over the years as the Tourism minister and I am proud of the work of, again, not only the Senior Marketing Committee but also our Tourism department.

I would also be remiss if I didn't mention Cultural Services, which comprises heritage institutions, the arts and cultural entities — there are many different partners we work with, day in and day out.

When I go to our annual tourism ministers gathering, I often use the Yukon as a model example in terms of being able to show great examples of the strong working relationship between culture and tourism, because I think it's a great working model. It happens to be housed in one department and it has worked exceptionally well. One only has to make reference to the 2010 Winter Olympic and Paralympic Games. That was a once in a lifetime, unprecedented opportunity for artists and cultural performers, the tourism industry, youth ambassadors, elder ambassadors, traditional sport athletes and many others to come together for the purpose of showcasing the Yukon, presenting the Yukon — who we are and why we are so unique, not only as a tourism destination, but as a place to invest and also, a really amazing place to live. I know the member opposite and I can agree on that at the very least.

Again, everything that we do is industry-led, as I mentioned before. It is research-based. There is a great amount of information. Every time the Senior Marketing Committee convenes, there is a lot of information to go over and to pore over, assess, review and evaluate. And from that — that is where the direction is, and which also culminates into the annual *Implementation Plan* and then is evaluated a year later and culminates into the annual report card as well. So it just speaks to the transparency of the department. It speaks to the transparency and openness of how we conduct business with the tourism industry. I'm really proud of that very fact.

Again, the member opposite made reference to a specific reference within the implementation plan — the website, for example. As I mentioned, the www.travel yukon.com website has proven to be a great success, but when one looks over that it is difficult, at best, to sustain a cumulative 25-percent increase year over year over year. It would be wonderful, but it would be very difficult to do that.

So I believe that where industry is coming from and where the department is coming from is that we want to be realistic, we want to be ambitious, but we also want to ensure that our recommendations are viable, and we continue to look at the return on investment.

Again, the www.travel yukon.com website is an amazing and very important tool used in all of our marketing campaigns. It is one of a number of tools we use to drive visitors from afar to the website. It is not only driving visitors to the website for information, but we want to see those visitors click on to those tour operators and that is where that converts, hopefully, into a visitation and into a dollar.

That's where it really counts, at the end of the day. So we're able to also track that. As to how we actually track that, I can't give that specific information, but we do have resources in the department to do just that, and we share that information with industry. It's that information we're able to assess — if

we're making the mark here or we're not making the mark here and need to adjust or realign, and that's what we do.

The member opposite made reference to the visitor exit survey. The visitor exit survey is a huge undertaking and we are looking to next year convening or conducting the next visitor exit survey. I recall the last one we did was in 2004. We chose not to do one this year for the very reason that we wanted to consult, in a meaningful way, with industry, tour operators and tourism associations across the Yukon and to ensure that, when we do go out and expend dollars — I know the last one we did was about \$500,000. It is a fairly large amount of dollars. We want to ensure that the information that we provide is timely, that it is accurate and that it is relevant and responsive to the needs of industry. I commend the work that has been done in the past in previous visitor exit surveys, but we also want to ensure that this information that we provide — community profiles and information as detailed in previous ones — is actually meeting the needs. Is this the information that operators really want? Or is it something different?

We are actually even looking at should it all be one every four years, or should we look at doing smaller segments every year to ensure that it's timely and more accurate? All of this we're looking at and I've said for a number of years that it's one area that I always thought we could always look to improve and it's one that we haven't given as much emphasis as perhaps we should have in the past, but we are doing that. It is expected that, hopefully, the global economic recession does recover somewhat, that we are into some more stable territory and that we receive the necessary information to move forward on the visitor exit survey next year, as well.

I can't recall what the other questions the member opposite referred to were. I think there was reference to the French market — Quebec. We actually have been working with l'AFY, through their economic arm, RDÉE, on a number of initiatives. The most recent initiative was the launch of the French www.travel Yukon.com website. I have to say that I really congratulate the work of RDÉE, as well as the French Language Services Directorate and the Department of Tourism, but it was really those two entities that stepped up to the plate and did a stunning job.

As we just referenced, the website is a really important tool. It continues to drive visitors to the website. It helps convert visitors. It's an informational tool, but it's also an ability to put up on the site travel deals, travel specials, whether it be winter products, summer products, fall or spring and so forth.

So that is but one. I remember when we first launched it — it was last June, if I'm not mistaken, during Tourism Week. I was very proud, because Yukon again was the first jurisdiction and first destination marketing organization to actually be able to come up with a full French language translation of the current Travel Yukon website. It was a first in western Canada. Since then, I think Alberta may have come through with theirs, but again, we were able to showcase that.

We also work with l'AFY on their French language vacation planner as well, which is a very important tool as the member opposite knows. It's made readily available through tourism entities, but again, through the website, it also drives

them to make a call or click through for more information, which is afforded as well.

We also for the first time had a delegation that went to IFTM Top Résa in France as part of the overseas marketing initiative as well. It was a very interesting first time entry way, so to speak, for industry to go in a greater force to this particular travel trade show.

It was amazing — the differences, for example, in how the German-speaking Europe market compared to the French operators. We learned a lot and it was a great information gathering initiative. Again, we were able to partner up with l'AFY in being able to participate in their respective participation in that trade show. We have also been able to support a number of French travel media. Familiarization tours, as well, organized by RDÉE, again the economic arm of l'AFY. Again, we have been able over the years to increase the level of investment in media relations, such as media familiarization tours. The stories and the articles and the references generated as a result of that has been overwhelming. The equivalent paid advertising as a result of those stories generated is very well-received by industry.

That also reminds me of the media charter that came to the Yukon during the Olympics, actually on Yukon Day, and it was a tremendous success. Again, I very much congratulate industry for coming to the plate and that included all of the Department of Tourism and Culture — those who were here and not in Vancouver during the Olympics. Everyone stepped up to the plate and every single official within the Department of Tourism and Culture had a role to play in supporting our trade industry. But again, it was an amazing collaboration of our contractors of the tourism industry, of our operators and the City of Whitehorse and the Klondike Visitors Association. They came together as well.

I believe there were 53 media from 10 different countries who were represented in the media charter, including 50 industry suppliers that supported the fam tours. It was very well-received. I know that there will be a presentation made during the TIA AGM coming up here by the contractor and the results are quite positive — very positive — so far.

We'll see later on just how positive and how effective that initiative was, but we were very proud of the collaboration that took place between industry and government in that regard. I think it worked exceptionally well and it's just another example of a good working rapport.

Mr. Inverarity: I guess by way of a bit of clarification, I would like to just concur with the minister that the goal here, from my perspective, is to try and make the tourism industry and certainly the Department of Tourism the best they can be. If I bring forward critiques regarding the material we're going over, I guess there are a couple of reasons for it: one, it has been awhile since we've been able to actually debate the department in the Legislative Assembly here to any great degree; and two, my overall goal is, again, to try to make tourism the premier industry, as the critic. So I think we share those goals and certainly the idea that Tourism overall is doing the best job they can, considering some of the whammies that

we've received over the years starting, as the minister says, as far back as 2001.

However, the numbers weren't that great before that, in terms of growth, and I think we need to try to keep our eye focused on the ball in trying to create new and innovative ways for the industry to move forward. We may need to think outside the cube, as they say sometimes, and try to come up with ways, other than some of the old ways of doing it.

I am a little concerned — the minister's knowledge about the department, certainly about tourism — I guess I should clarify that because I know she is well informed about the department. She speaks very well of the department and I have heard her speak a number of times. I wish I could only wax as eloquently as the minister does in my delivery of speeches, and I would like to commend her and thank her for her great representation of the department. I have heard, actually, from people as far away as Germany who have heard the minister speak, and I know that she has done an excellent job representing the tourism industry in Yukon.

My concern, I guess, would be more that the department's budget is something in the neighbourhood of about, I think, \$9.8 million, \$10 million. I think I may have misunderstood her, but I got the impression that while the industry gives a lot of advice and a lot of feedback, it's still her \$10 million that needs to be justified in terms of expense here. The minister should ensure that the approach she takes regarding the dollars being spent is the best.

I know occasionally — having sat on the board for TIA Yukon — that we sometimes need to look at strategies and things that we could do differently to improve everybody's overall picture, certainly from a financial perspective. Perhaps the minister, the next time she stands, could just perhaps explain the role of the Senior Marketing Committee that oversees the advice given to the minister regarding tourism. I think there are 15 or so individuals who sit on the Senior Marketing Committee.

I would like to know what role the minister actually plays on this committee, whether she participates actively in the committee or if it is just a committee that meets and reports to the minister to give her advice regarding this information. Certainly I think that the committee is a good thing. I think that it is important that we take the advice from the industry. It is also important that we look at the research that is being done by the department and the dollars being spent and ensure that both of the groups work together to achieve the common goal, which is a strong tourism industry. So I would like to hear from the minister regarding her role in that area and the role her department plays with regard to the monies that are being divvied out and spent on the different industry associations.

I think it was last year we talked about the wilderness tourism and the high-end tourism market. I think that there is a change in that area this year. There is not as much money being spent and, if that is coming from the committee, then perhaps she could give us some background as to why the industry is dropping.

I know one of the tourism operators in that area has been having some difficulty. Perhaps the minister could inform us as

to what, if anything, the government is doing with regard to the businesses having some trouble — I'm not going to mention it — if there's any money being considered to keep that sector afloat or that industry's individual afloat, if there are any policies regarding that area. Just a brief comment would be worthwhile.

The last thing in this go-around of questions that I would like to ask is for a bit of an explanation regarding conversion and conversion rates. I know it's a little off-topic. The minister mentioned about the website and how they get so many hits to the website. The goal or objective there, if I understand the minister correctly, is to have them click on to some of the tour operators as a click-through. Is that what we were referring to as a "conversion" to that and it's up to that individual to actually make the sale in that regard?

I wasn't quite sure about what happens after that, but maybe she has had time to find out as to what, if any, actual sales are driven from the click-throughs and if not, she could maybe get back to me if she doesn't have it handy. Thank you.

Hon. Ms. Taylor: The member opposite raised a number of questions and I didn't quite catch the middle one. One of the questions on the particular sector — sorry, we were talking here. Maybe the member could repeat that. I just asked for a very quick snapshot of some of the preliminary analysis of — I know our presence at the Olympics, for example — in terms of coming back with a return on investment. I think it has already been made known that the complete analysis will be forthcoming, probably later on this fall when the Tourism Yukon report card comes out in terms of the 2009-10 activity. Our preliminary analysis indicates that over 27.5 million consumers were exposed to Canada's north through published stories and articles and that's through the formula of the Department of Tourism and Culture that they provide through equivalent advertising dollars. We also know that over 2.5 million consumers were also exposed to Yukon through the stories and articles published as a result of our media fam tours thus far.

It has been a very positive result thus far and I understand the contractor that the Department of Tourism, as well as the other two territories, used through a tendering process, will be actually giving a report on that at the AGM coming up, for which I am sure the member opposite will be present.

In terms of the role of the Senior Marketing Committee — and I have referenced them a lot, because I think it is really important to reference them because they do make a really important contribution to the delivery of tourism marketing programs. But the actual role of the Senior Marketing Committee is to provide strategic advice and recommendations to the department in the development, implementation and evaluation of the department's marketing, product development and research programs. The Senior Marketing Committee is a subcommittee of the Tourism Industry Association of Yukon, so when they do come forward with recommendations it is actually the Senior Marketing Committee who will make recommendations to the Tourism Industry Association of Yukon, who will then follow up with the Minister of Tourism and Culture in terms of go-forward recommendations.

So there is a formal process to go through, but I also, from time to time, like to say hello to the Senior Marketing Committee. I do not take part in their meetings. I respect the dialogue and want to ensure that the dialogue is very open and also very candid. I don't want to hamper that in any way, but I do make myself available to the Senior Marketing Committee and, from time to time, I always like to go and say a few words just before they open up for their meeting.

The Senior Marketing Committee — I know the member opposite made reference to a question regarding the implementation plan yesterday, about a strategic retreat, I think it was, and what that was. That's actually an annual retreat that the Senior Marketing Committee embarks on every year. It's an opportunity to have a broader dialogue on tourism marketing.

It's a great opportunity to assess the year's activities and to see where we've come, where we need to go. Again, I don't engage myself in that retreat, but they do provide that retreat on an annual basis.

I just can't recall the other question the member opposite made reference to in terms of — I think it was support for operators. Maybe the member opposite could make reference to that.

Mr. Inverarity: Actually, it was in reference to the wilderness tourism — well, I'll just leave it for now; that's probably the best place to put it. There was another question that was regarding the conversion rates and the structure around conversion rates. I'll let the minister answer that part of it. Do you want me to repeat the question?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Without getting too technical, because I think I'll — I wouldn't say the word, because that might be a violent term, but I might annihilate the technical information. As I mentioned, the www.travel yukon.com website is a very important tool. It's an integral tool and that's why we invested a great amount of dollars — I think it was three years ago, if that — to develop a new website. I'm sure the member opposite appreciates it more than I do, but it's an ongoing improvement. We have to keep up with the times and make it obviously attractive, and you also want to ensure you have new information up on the site and keep it relevant and accurate. Even more important is the follow-up.

In terms of conversion, yes, we track the conversion of visitors, so for those visitors who go to the website, we track how many clicks there are, right to the main home page. We will then also track where they go, how long a time they spend on the particular area that they're looking for, but the minute that they go on to an individual tour operator, that means good things for the operator because that means, hopefully, that could be a potential conversion.

Obviously we track that but, in terms of follow-up, we will also follow up with visitors who have gone to the website and who have requested information because we have their contact information as provided. We'll follow up with them and we'll say, "Did you receive the information?"

I'm just putting this out there. I don't have the exact script, so I'm sure you can come back in Question Period, but we will ask them if they actually made the decision to come to the

Yukon, how long they came here and so forth. That is also considered a conversion.

There is quite a science to it, but again, I'm not a marketing expert. I don't think the department wants me to become a marketing expert. I think I've tried a time or two, but I failed miserably, so I'll leave that in the hands of those who have been educated and they know what is to be done in that regard.

We do, in fact, track all of those and others. We also have an 800 number, which we have individuals following up with individuals and we will track that information if we have their contact information. Likewise, the Canada's Northern House, for example, the member opposite may recall — I don't know, maybe he even entered the draw for the gold and the diamond and the tapestry; I didn't because I would be in a conflict — just to put that on the public record. If in fact, the member opposite did, we would get your information and, who knows? You might get a call too. You are here already so likely not.

Those are just some of the examples. I think I will just sit down before I go on at any greater length about something that I can't articulate as well as the officials can. In terms of the adventure tourism sector, the Department of Tourism and Culture works very closely with the Wilderness Tourism Association of Yukon on promoting Yukon as an adventure travel destination. We work to ensure that their guided adventure program, "Yukon Wild" — is what it is coined — and our programs work in sync with one another. They do an exemplary job and we worked on a number of policy-related matters with them over the years as well — *Marine Liability Act*, for example, and the regulations. Deletion of waivers, I recall, was an issue at one time. Thankfully, though, thanks to the good work of the Wilderness Tourism Association and their respective operators, we were able to convince Transport Canada otherwise.

River raft regulations have also precipitated some discourse, but again, working on these together, we were able to address some of the issues, but not all.

But again, they do a great job. We have entered into, I believe, a cooperative marketing campaign with them a time or two, with other businesses elsewhere in British Columbia, for example, and they do a great job. They are a very committed group of operators and I've gotten to know a lot of them personally over the years and I commend them for their passion for the sector and for the environment and I just, again, commend them for the good work that they do.

Mr. Inverarity: I suppose I could probably go on all day and all tomorrow and all the next day, in terms of trying to go through this debate, in terms of tourism. While I have a few more questions, there is a general trend in what I'm trying to focus on today. I talked to the minister about conversion rates. It reminds me of my days in the airline industry, where my boss said to me one day that it's all about butts in seats.

It's something we need to focus on when we do marketing — that getting people to actually come to the Yukon is the whole purpose, I think, behind trying to develop marketing strategies: get people to come and experience Yukon and spend money in the Yukon. It is an industry and we do all these exercises to increase not only the profitability of the industry itself,

but to perhaps even encourage some people to move to the Yukon.

The reason I had focused on conversion rates — and the minister is right that it can be sometimes complicated in terms of how we deal with conversion background, certainly on the website. The web industry has given me a bit of an understanding of conversion rates and how you look at conversion rates, and she is right — it can be fairly technical. It isn't just the websites that we deal with when we talk about conversion because it's every time we make a contact with a prospective client and get them to come to one of the industry's websites. Or, if they look at magazine and they see an ad, and they go to the website or send off a card to get more information about the Yukon, they become a qualified lead. And the degree they are qualified and then get converted into actual sales is important.

I just wanted to bring some statistics, and I don't want to overindulge on it but I think it is important for us to look at it. In the joint Yukon-Alaska description of market here, I guess it would be, in 2008-09, one of the goals was to increase the rubber-tire visitation to Yukon-Alaska from Canada. The goal was to generate at least 9,000 quality leads. In the report card, they had indicated — and I can appreciate the reason why, certainly in 2008-09, with the market crashing literally around us — that the objectives were revised down to around 6,000 leads. Eventually, I gather, they actually generated about 5,100 leads.

What's missing from the statistics in this particular one is what actual number of those 5,100 individuals may have actually come to the Yukon and then convert it into dollars and cents. When I look at the strategic plan for 2009-10 — and I know we don't have the report card yet. I can only hope it's optimistic. That campaign also led to a conversion campaign of about 15 percent. If I understand this right, I think the report indicated that the conversion rate for 2007-08 was around 18 percent, and they were looking at about 15 percent in this one.

When I go to the 2009-10 conversion rate for a joint Yukon/Alaska, the number had been left at about 6,000 and the conversion campaign for the leads was down to about 11 percent of the — I'm not sure if it's good or bad; it's lower than it was the previous year. Again, if I look at 2010-11 at the rate or the increase of rubber-tire visitation, Yukon/Alaska from Canada, the objective was to generate 5,000 qualified leads through the Canadian advertising campaign. I assume that's all advertising, be it print, radio, TV — you know, the works sort of thing, and Internet for sure — and then have a conversion campaign that leads to eight percent. So the numbers are kind of going the wrong way. While I can appreciate the tide that we're in — a general downtrend — I think it's important. These are just numbers, okay? I understand that they are attempts to try to get people to look at the material and go to industry websites. The one component that's missing from all of this, in all three of these years is actually — out of all of this, how many real people came to the Yukon based on the marketing plan and the marketing strategy we have for tourism?

In other words, how many physical bodies bought services from the industry within the Yukon? Perhaps the minister has that number. I'm not sure, but I would think the committee or certainly TIA Yukon should be able to do that. I understand it

may be a big job to try to actually say how many of these originated through one of these campaigns, whether it's a website or whether it's printed material or whether it was going to the Olympics. It comes down to butts on planes and butts on rubber-tire traffic and charter flights from Europe. At some point, we need to know whether the \$10 million that's being spent on tourism marketing and all of the things that go into that are actually doing a real return on investment. I'm not saying that they're not, I don't know. I'll be honest; I'm hoping that the minister can tell us that each individual that actually comes not only generates X amount of dollars, but how much it costs us to get that individual to the Yukon.

That's what a return on investment is — a comparison between how much the individual spent and how much it cost to get the individual here, and whether or not we're running a deficit in terms of that investment. We need to look at the big picture and see what the long-term objective is, what the goals are, but we also need to put in place a way to track and monitor it, rather than click-throughs, in the hope that they actually did buy something down the road. This material may be important; I think it would be even more important that it is included in some general sense within these report cards that are produced on an annual basis, and that that material is there. Then we can all look at it and say, these programs are working or are not working.

I would appreciate it. Again, the goal here, as I stated earlier, is to ensure that the marketing plans are effective. I know they're industry-led, but we need to see, if they are industry-led, that they're actually returning the kind of investment that the industry really wants — that they are making a profit. I know last year was difficult for some, and we need to know if the Government of Yukon is spending its money wisely on the programs that it's doing, to make sure that it gets a return on its investment.

Hon. Ms. Taylor: The member opposite made reference to "butts in seats," and it is true, you know, that is really the ultimate goal, which is to have "butts in seats", whether it is on airplanes, whether it is on trains, whether it's on a raft — you know, we'll take it. Everything that we do and all of our programs and our services are to generate consumer awareness of the Yukon. That is first and foremost and identified by industry as a strategic priority. We have been able to do just that. By generating awareness, you are also stimulating interest in our products.

At the end of the day, it is our ultimate objective to drive more traffic to our websites but, as the member opposite referenced, there are many other venues we gather information from.

I was just looking at some information. The Destination: Yukon campaign, for example — the member opposite also made reference to the joint Yukon/Alaska program. That has actually proven to be very successful in conversion rates; again, that's by being able to partner with a strong tourism partner, such as Alaska Travel Industry Association. We pool our resources and we jointly market the destination.

In turn, we're able to collect contact information about potential visitors; with that information, we are able to also follow

up, as I mentioned before. Every year, we do follow up with phone calls, other leads or other means of contacting individuals who have provided us with the information, and we're again, able to determine what that conversion rate is on each of the respective programs as outlined in our implementation plan — the strategic plan, as it's formally known.

The member opposite made reference to the 2008-09 report card, I think it was, and pointed to the joint Yukon/Alaska program. They had wanted to convert the campaign leads at 15 percent. At the time of going into production, we didn't have all the information possible, so what was provided was 2007-08, but I was just informed that we were superseded. That conversion rate is deemed as 15 percent for 2008-09, and that's under the performance report if the member opposite was looking for that conversion rate.

We do measure the value of tourism spending and we provide data to analyze the effectiveness of all our advertising campaigns.

When we look at the Destination: Yukon campaign, for example, I made reference to how this is really building on successes of previous campaigns over the years. These campaigns first started with the gateway cities marketing campaign. At that time there was only \$200,000 in that campaign. We've been able to build that up by looking at all of our resources, realigning resources and building on to that over the years, so now we have a campaign to the tune of about \$750,000.

We have, in the past, had a fall campaign, and we've had a summer campaign as well. I should say a spring campaign, so looking to drive visitors to come in the summer and the winter, which are our two biggest markets. How we do that is through targeted on-line advertising and tactics and, again, using the Internet for travel planning purposes. We use a significant number of resources in that regard.

Again, all advertising links direct the consumer to the www.travel yukon.com website and, by directing all the traffic and the inquiries to the website, we're able to quickly and easily review results while efficiently advancing potential visitors through the purchase process.

It also ensures that, again, our private sector partners, our individual operators who supply the product, are very much highlighted throughout our campaigns. We also promote Yukon through mass media and, again, that could include newspaper, magazine, experiential marketing, social media, sponsorships, out of homes — so whether we use the outdoor billboards or broadcast — and that's television and/or radio.

Again, this really capitalizes on the investments made available through Canada, for example, in enhancements to our imaging library, high-definition video assets and other initiatives as developed through our national marketing campaign, for example. It is really important to note that we invested a significant amount of money jointly among the three territories but, through that investment, while it was kind of a one-time through 2007 for very good reasons, we were also able to use a lot of that information to this day.

Really important is the research component that helped guide and inform where we were, how we were to market and what the messages were about our brand — that should really

appeal to consumers. We knew that through the national marketing campaign, through the research before we even launched it, that we needed to do some homework in terms of educating and informing Canadians as to what Canada's north is and holds and all its traits. We needed to reassure individuals that we have top facilities for use, we have access to medical facilities, for example, we have access to good infrastructure, whether it be roads or air access, that we also have a great tourism winter product, and that we have good bed and breakfasts and hotels and motels and lodges, and that we have the superb attractions as well.

We were able to do that through our research and then articulate those messages through the national marketing campaign. A lot of that has also been carried on because of that research through subsequent campaigns, such as our pan-northern marketing campaign that we utilized through the Olympic period with our two partners from the other two territories.

Another tool that we use in marketing Destination: Yukon is looking at trade and consumer shows. This has been something that has been asked for or requested by industry time and time again, to have a Team Yukon approach whenever there are tour operators present in major travel trade shows, and it makes a lot of sense.

We just actually had two successful shows, one in Edmonton — I think it was the Home and Garden Show — and the Vancouver outdoor show recently, where we were able to partner up with industry — I think Klondike Visitors Association was there and other businesses were there represented as well.

But again, that in itself is helping to promote and raise awareness about the Yukon in general and, if we keep Yukon top in mind, or at least near the top of mind for many potential visitors, that helps when we are tactically making those decisions, whether it is through media outlets as I just referenced or whether it is through electronic means, media relations, public relations — I made reference to fam tours. We also looked to media fam tours for journalists from identified key media outlets and in our key target markets, specifically leisure, obviously. We're not trying to directly market to the heavy metal conference but perhaps more so to the leisure market.

Again, everything that we do, we do measure in terms of visitation, in terms of direct spending, and then we convert that in accordance with our annual survey follow-ups with the individual prospective people who come to the Yukon, or don't, and their potential leads and we're able to follow up accordingly.

It's quite an intricate process and it varies from program to program. Destination: Yukon joined Yukon-Alaska program — that's just within North America; in terms of overseas and other markets, we also track that and we'll also report that in the report card, but that wasn't always the case. We didn't always report that in previous years. That is something that was really important to industry and for Yukon as well because, at the end of the day, as the member opposite said, these are taxpayers' dollars. We do have to be wise in how we spend, but we want to generate business for our operators, which also has spinoff

effects for all of tourism operators, whether they're tourism or non-tourism related.

Every Yukoner enjoys the business of tourism and that's why we take great efforts to recognize leading operators in the territory. The Yukon tourism champion award is for recognizing individuals who aren't necessarily in the tourism sector, but who, through their efforts and their enthusiasm in their work, have helped generate interest and helped raise awareness in other parts of our country, outside of the Yukon, in bringing business home here to the Yukon.

I could go on at greater length, but I look forward to additional questions.

Mr. Inverarity: I thank the minister for those comments. I appreciate them. I know that, when we talk marketing, there is a significant lag time from the time you actually start your strategy to see the results and whether they're effective and fruitful or not, in terms of their overall impact. And, as the minister has indicated, it's important to constantly look at these indicators to tweak and Twitter the results as best we can to ensure that the overall objective is met, which is to ensure that tourism as an industry in the Yukon continues to remain viable.

I have to say that the report card concept in 2008-09 is the one that I have had and, as the minister had indicated, I'm looking forward to the report card coming out in the fall — again, I understand it's because of the lead time that's required to develop the plan and execute it and then to assess and evaluate it. The format is good. I found some of the comments poignant, I think. It's good to not sugar-coat the results, so to speak, because we all benefit from that directness. Only good can come out of critiquing the results that you do from your plan, and I look forward to doing that — to seeing the one in the fall.

I look forward to the end of the week, obviously, with the TIAY convention here in town. I'm looking forward to talking to industry leaders at it, participating as best as I can, and hearing what they have to say about, not only the past year, but about what's going to be happening in the near future and seeing what the industry and certainly what the Government of Yukon can do to move this agenda forward to ensure that the Yukon tourism industry is kept in the forefront and that the business side of the tourism industry is vibrant, well-developed and it continues to do the job that it has done over the past 100 years, which is to keep the economy in the Yukon moving through the good times and the bad times.

Mr. Chair, I'm going to wrap up my comments here today and turn the questioning over to the member of the Third Party. I know we're strapped for some time. My biggest single concern as we go through both the report cards and the actual strategic plans is that we keep focused on the goal, which is to ensure that the individuals come and visit the Yukon, enjoy the Yukon and encourage their family and their friends to also come in the years to come. If we achieve that, then I would say that the marketing plans and the strategic plans we've laid out — the minister has laid out — will be successful.

I'd like to thank the department officials for coming to the briefing that we had earlier. The only comment I have is that I would have appreciated the information in a more — or at least being made known that it was on the website. It is more a mat-

ter of courtesy than anything else. I felt a little bit pressured that I had been looking for them and then I missed a few days and they appeared there, so I can't say exactly what day they arrived. It caused me a little bit of concern when I finally found them because I wasn't expecting them until the end of the week. But that is fine. I think we've made pretty good headway here today. I do appreciate the department and what they've done. I do appreciate the Tourism Industry Association. I have been a member for a number of years in the past. Certainly the marketing committee is playing its role and it looks like there is a cohesive team there. I would encourage you to continue to utilize that team. I would like to see the actual — and it is difficult, I understand, but at least try and plan to see whether the dollars that are spent are returning the investment to the industry. I would encourage the minister to continue to do the good job that she is doing.

Hon. Ms. Taylor: I just wanted to follow up, because I forgot a few key points. Again, getting back to that issue of putting bums in seats — it reminds me of that Lana Rae song, you know, "I've been looking at bums" — anyway, I have a five-year-old who says that.

That actually has nothing to do with putting bums in seats — okay, Mr. Chair, now we'll try to get back to tourism marketing.

I just wanted to say that in Tourism, all the programs and the services provided are designed to get the lead, to follow up and to convert those individuals. That's everything that we do — it is to raise awareness, but more importantly, it's also about going after those leads, names and contacts, converting them into actual visitors, spending dollars and putting bums in seats. A perfect example of a program that has worked really well in the Yukon has been the tourism cooperative marketing fund. This is something that this government introduced in 2004. At that time it was introduced at a level of about \$500,000.

As I said perhaps earlier yesterday or today, the thing about that program is its ability to leverage the marketing reach of individual tour operators. So for every dollar, assuming that one is eligible for the program first and foremost, put forward through the fund, it will actually match that dollar. Since the fund was first introduced back in 2004, there was \$500,000 every year and now it's up to \$700,000 in annual funding. One only has to think about the millions of dollars that helped extend the marketing reach of individual operators. I know that operators from all over the Yukon, in just about every Yukon community, have accessed this fund. The lion's share is primarily dedicated toward marketing programs, so marketing your actual product, either within the territory or outside of the territory — if you're a Whitehorse operator and you're looking to market to a person in Faro, or vice versa, as long as it can generate bums in seats and also generate a night's stay in that community, that's a good thing.

There is also another separate component and that is the trade and consumer show participation. It has helped generate more consumer awareness by having more Yukon products and Yukon operators present showcasing the Yukon, but there are specific products at these consumer tradeshows, deemed as eligible by the tourism industry. So that has worked exception-

ally well and it is a good program that is designed to get those “butts in seats”. It is just one program, but it has worked effectively and it is a great impetus for the recommendation coming forward from industry to increase it by \$200,000, and we were very pleased to do just that.

The second point that I also wanted to point out is that the implementation plan does mark what the recommendations made by SMC have been and it also talks about the departmental action. So again, I am just pointing out that it is quite transparent. It's for everyone to see and to review and agree or disagree. But, you know, if individuals are interested in learning more, I encourage them to contact the Department of Tourism and Culture and learn about the programs and services being delivered through the department to assist them in helping them do their very important job. The programs have grown over the years. Some, like the tourism cooperative marketing fund, have become subscribed and hence, the additional infusion of dollars couldn't have come at a better time, especially given the global economic recession that we find ourselves in. Again, we have to be more pointed and more strategic in our approach to tourism marketing, but also assist tour operators in this regard.

I gave many examples of recommendations that have come our way from SMC over the years and we've been very fortunate and very pleased to be able to make them happen.

As I mentioned earlier, there are programs also offered through the Department of Economic Development. I think the one thing about the Olympic experience is that I think it was coined by the Chief of Champagne and Aishihik First Nations that the Olympics were about legacies. There were a multitude of legacies left by the Olympics, but one of the legacies for us was the ability for departments to work with one another really closely. There was a multitude of departments who worked on the same mandate. Everything that we did, even if it was through our youth ambassadors or through Economic Development on the couple of events that they hosted, or through the Department of Tourism and Culture — we had many media events. I think there were 14,000 unaccredited and accredited media who were present during the Olympics and that is why we've coined it as one of the largest marketing initiatives of our time. Also it was through, like I said, Community Services support, through traditional sports athletes and many others.

I think that it generated an even closer working relationship with one another. We learned a lot from each other and I commend every official in every department who worked on the Olympics. I know for a fact that in our Department of Tourism and Culture pretty much every single individual worked on the Olympics file as well, and I commend them for that because it just didn't start a few months ago. It actually was a two- to three-year initiative and a lot of hard work and effort went through it.

Also our working relationship with the Council of Yukon First Nations, through the Yukon First Nation 2010 initiative, was an overwhelming success and there were a number of legacies left as a result of that.

In terms of building capacity, raising awareness, in terms of just building strength — it renewed a sense of confidence in every Yukoner, I feel, just like the 2007 Canada Winter Games.

We are very motivated to do more, although I've said we've really raised the bar over the years. We've gone to raise awareness at the national level through the national marketing campaign and through Canada Winter Games and now the Olympics and I often hear, “Now what?” I think, well, you know, there are always other opportunities out there.

But, again, that's where other funds, funding mechanisms like the touring market fund — the touring artist fund, I should say — that, again, is another interesting tie between the cultural community and the tourism community, because it is our artists and cultural performers whom we're able to assist with their travel and with their performance-related costs, who are able to help spread the message, as well, about Yukon as a destination — either here in Canada or elsewhere in the world.

I know we haven't spoken a lot about the cultural services side, but it's a really important economic engine, and is really important to the social side of the ledger. Again, the Olympics were a perfect opportunity for Yukon to shine, and I think everyone did an exceptional job.

I could go on at greater length, but I know that the Member for Mount Lorne probably would like to ask a few questions.

Mr. Cardiff: It's a pleasure today to enter into discussions on Vote 54, the Department of Tourism and Culture. I've been listening both in the Legislature and in the office to a lot of the conversation and hope that the parts that I missed I won't duplicate too much. But I do have a few questions and will try to be brief and get through them in the next short while.

I'd like to pick up on something the minister just was talking about — the legacy of the Olympics and the fact that it was one of the largest marketing campaigns in recent history with regard to tourism that we've undertaken here. I know that it's just short days since the Olympics were over and what I'm wondering is — the experience, from what I gather, was a good experience by those who both participated on behalf of government and on behalf of tourism operators, that they found the experience to be good.

I guess the question for me is, do we plan to build on that experience? Is this something where we plan to take that experience and use it? There was a Yukon Day that was hosted at the Olympics. Specifically there was Northern House and our participation in that. What I am wondering is, are there any discussions to try to recreate or build on that experience to do it either at future Olympic events or were there other future opportunities to do something like this?

Part of the reason why I think this is a good plan is the minister talked about the legacy of partnerships and the partnerships that were created within departments and working together to get this done. There's also the partnership and that's the pan-northern partnership between the territories, and that pan-northern partnership goes back, for me, two decades.

A pan-northern partnership was developed by Yukon College with educational institutions among the Arctic College — which later became Aurora College, I believe it was, and Nunavut Arctic College — and Yukon College. That partnership has grown into something where we now see the potential for circumpolar partnerships as well. What I'm talking about is taking that legacy, the partnerships that were built within gov-

ernment and the partnerships that were built across the north between the three territories — and when I look through the budget there's actually even basically a partnership with the federal government and some of the funding that they help provide for some of these initiatives, I believe.

So I'm just wondering whether or not the minister — whether or not there's any work going on within the department to build on that legacy and what the plans are for the future for attending events like that and bumping up the marketing through events like that — where there's a big audience. It's kind of like they're a captive audience, anyhow.

Hon. Ms. Taylor: I thank the member for his questions and interest in Yukon's participation at the Olympics. I don't think — I guess I didn't think it was going to be near the success that it was, but Yukon's participation at the Olympics was really something unprecedented. I had the opportunity to actually attend Canada's northern weekend for — it was about three days during all three northern days. It was unbelievable. I made great efforts to try to get around to most of the venues.

There were some 15 different venues that Yukon artists and performers were present at. It was really difficult because of logistics — getting around the community was pretty challenging at times, to say the least.

I guess, just getting back to the reason why I think Yukon's participation during the Olympics was such a success — and again, we're in the process of doing that finer analysis, and we'll have more to report later on this year. It was attributed to a lot of different factors. I go back to partnerships. The success of the tourism industry is all about partnerships. If it was just the government rolling around on its own, it wouldn't work. You need partnerships with industry. There were partnerships with the Yukon Arts Centre, partnerships with the Yukon Council of First Nations, partnerships with the City of Whitehorse. It came down to the very fact that the Olympics, which were hosted in our own country — there was an invitation to all provinces and territories to become a contributing partner. That afforded each of the provinces and territories that signed on — and I believe everyone signed on, with exception of one province.

It gave us access to participation in the Cultural Olympiad, so we had a number of artists who were selected by VANOC, the Vancouver organizing committee, to participate in the Cultural Olympiad and are actually still participating in the Olympiad touring different parts of the country. It gave us the right to host our own day — Yukon Day — which was held in February. That was an amazing success because, as part of that right, we had the ability to present a multimedia presentation about the Yukon — a live performance at B.C. Place. It doesn't get much bigger than that. I don't know if the member opposite had the opportunity to see the show. "One Word: The Yukon Experience" — Yukoners got a sneak preview at the Yukon Arts Centre. It was phenomenal. It really was. I had seen a little bit of it before, and I wondered how it was all going to connect and how it was all going to work, but it all came together and it was an amazing plethora of artists and performers coming together and telling the story in one word.

It was great and to see all of our Yukon participants performing at B.C. Place was a pretty major feeling. I say that that one production — let alone all the other things that were going on — was a major investment because it helped raise the bar.

It all started when Yukon hosted the Canada Winter Games in 2007. That was not just about sport, it was just as important to talk about our culture and our history, our heritage. The opening and closing ceremonies at the Canada Winter Games gave us so much exposure that a number of those acts, like Root Sellers and Manfred Janssen, were actually chosen by the Olympic committee and were asked to perform at the Paralympics closing ceremonies, if I'm not mistaken. Seeing them on international television was amazing.

So it's an investment in capacity to help raise the bar from performing at the national level, but bumping it up now to the international level. That is never to be viewed as a waste; it was an investment. I know the member opposite concurs with that approach as well.

In terms of carrying forward, I think I mentioned before that we will continue on a number of fronts to seek ways to capitalize on the momentum generated during the Olympics experience, and it goes on. We just spent a great amount of debate here today talking about Destination: Yukon and also following up with our two northern counterparts from Northwest Territories and Nunavut on pan-northern marketing and continuing to raise consumer awareness of Yukon, particularly in those areas with the best return on investment — Vancouver is the perfect example. So that's why in fact we have increased the level of investment in that particular area, in addition to other areas.

We have again been able to capitalize with additional investments to the tourism cooperative marketing fund to help operators to also capitalize on the momentum generated by having those 50-some media representatives — business representatives — coming to the Yukon, and they will then go back to their jurisdictions, they'll write about the Yukon and that, too, will help generate awareness of the Yukon.

In terms of getting back to the 2010 Olympics, getting back to being a contributing partner — because of that very fact, it was a good reason to get engaged and to take full advantage of all the opportunities that became available through the Olympics. In terms of future Olympics — I know that the next winter Olympics will be held in Russia, for example. That's going to be very different, first of all, because it's not held in Canada, but in a whole different country — but the fact that we're not going to be asked as a contributing partner like we were here in our country. So, obviously, we'll have different involvement, if we have an involvement.

All I can say is that, you know, should Canada, through the Canadian Tourism Commission, or through the Government of Canada — you know, should they have a presence — I think that through the Tourism ministers and other venues we'll look at ways and see if it is in the best interests of the Yukon to participate. There may be other means that have a better return on investment, but any and all opportunities will always be looked at. I just wanted to give it in the context that it is a different perspective to look at other Olympic venues, such as Russia,

compared to Vancouver, especially because Vancouver is direct flight from Yukon — a couple of hours — and it makes it all the more attractive to participate with a media charter and so forth.

I always say “never say ‘never’” but every opportunity obviously comes with a cost as well, but we would have to look at whatever opportunity presents itself.

In terms of other legacies though, one that I firmly believe in is the Yukon First Nations 2010 project that was instigated by the Council of Yukon First Nations, and we also contributed, I think, \$325,000 toward that initiative.

It was very well-received. I was able to go to the aboriginal pavilion on Yukon First Nations Day and see firsthand our own First Nation performers. *The Land Remembers* is another stunning example of an investment in Yukon First Nations’ culture, which tells a multitude of stories about the Yukon and it really instilled capacity and pride in all of us. Again, we are very excited to continue to work with Yukon First Nations to see what we can do, how we can continue to harness that momentum and that capacity that has been gained, whether it was on the economic perspective, tourism perspective, sport perspective and so forth. There are a multitude of legacies to be sure.

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

Recess

Chair: Order please. Committee of the Whole will now come to order. The matter before the Committee is Bill No. 20, *First Appropriation Act, 2010-11*, Vote 54, Department of Tourism and Culture. We will now continue with general debate.

Mr. Cardiff: I thank the minister for the information she provided. I would like to ask the minister — I didn’t hear this question get asked, so my apologies if it was asked by the Member for Porter Creek South and I just didn’t hear it. Recently, I understand that the municipality or town of Skagway has proposed a head tax on cruise ship passengers.

We were talking earlier about how many people come to the Yukon, and the fact that this has the potential to negatively influence visitation numbers to the territory, as well as to Skagway, obviously, unless we can find another way to get those cruise ship passengers here from Haines. I don’t know if there’s a head tax in Haines, but I’m wondering if the government has done any analysis of the potential impacts this may have on visitation numbers in the Yukon. Is the government having any discussions with the town of Skagway in this regard to try to either convince them to reduce it or work out something so that it has less impact on our tourism industry?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: I thank the member opposite for raising the question and no, it hasn’t been raised yet, although not unexpected. I think the initiative that the member opposite makes reference to is a long-standing debate about a citizen-led ballot initiative — the cruise ship ballot initiative — that was first swirling around some years ago, which precipitated us to raise this matter with the State of Alaska immediately. We did

so, even as most recent as with Gov. Parnell during his last visit here. I was the first one to engage with him on this very matter.

It was a citizen-led initiative, which, according to the State of Alaska legislation, provided an opportunity for citizens to put their names on what is almost like a petition. They were petitioning the fact that there should be a head tax and there should be a lot of other measures taken to further regulate the cruise ships entering Alaskan waters.

The one thing that we took issue with was the actual head tax, as the member opposite alluded to. They got enough signatures; they implemented it. It has only been in place for, I believe, a couple of years, but as one can well imagine, it has continued to instill a lot of discourse, not only in Alaska but also here as well for obvious reasons. Yukon has been able to benefit from a lot of cruise ship business, especially those land tour excursions coming through the Yukon. It actually is a state initiative — \$50 per person. Any person coming into Alaska on a cruise ship would be taxed that amount. I made the same argument to the governor recently that I had made to the commissioner multiple times — as well as in written correspondence — for a family of four, that adds up to \$200 U.S. extra on a cruise ship excursion, which means that is \$200 less for individuals coming through to the interior of Alaska or perhaps other places such as Yukon.

I am pleased that, as of just recently, I think it was just a few days ago or a week ago — not even that — the Alaska Senate approved a measure that would lower the head tax on cruise ship passengers by at least \$11.50 per person. It has not all been reduced, but it a substantive difference. I know that the Alaska Travel Industry Association, which we have been working with pretty closely, is quite thrilled with that and I know that the cruise association is also pleased with that move.

As I understand, this initiative came into play to generate more revenue for tourism and marketing, almost like a bed tax that is implemented in other places — and no, we’re not implementing a bed tax any time soon. But with this initiative — this measure — when they chose to lower the head tax amount, they also chose to increase the bridge marketing dollars by about \$7 million to compensate for lost revenue from lowering that head tax. So, that’s also a good thing. I believe the cruise ship association launched a lawsuit, as well. Apparently that has now been withdrawn, since this measure has been undertaken.

We were closely watching this. We do know the good news is that next year, Disney Cruise Line, for example, and also a couple of other new cruise lines, announced that they’re bringing in new ships next year. That’s a very positive initiative for all of us and for the State of Alaska, as well. It has been a long-standing issue that we have continually raised with the State of Alaska and have made the case to Alaska to do what they can to address this matter.

Mr. Cardiff: I thank the minister for that answer and for the information she provided on that. There were some rumours that the flights from Europe might be extending the season on either end at some point, depending on, I guess, marketability, number one. I’m just wondering whether or not the

minister is aware of any discussions ongoing with the airline about that.

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Getting back to Alaska, I just wanted to reiterate that we have a really close working relationship with the Alaska Travel Industry Association and, in fact, we are going to be hosting their AGM this fall, which is a major undertaking and hasn't happened since the early 1990s, I think — 1994 — a long time ago. We do a lot of joint tourism marketing initiatives with Alaska, which have really proven to be very effective in terms of conversion rates. We were just talking about that earlier; about generating more bums in seats, like we were also talking about.

In terms of overseas flights, I can only talk about Condor at this time. We have a long-standing relationship with Condor as well and it's interesting that, when the first overseas charter came here, which was just over 10 years ago, 1998 — at that time I think we had more than one charter. In fact, I think at the best of times we had three separate charters coming here — or two or three.

That's right. At that time, it is interesting that over the years we've seen those numbers grow slowly but surely. Now we have the one charter and those numbers have more than doubled, actually, since we had the two or three at the same time. It is a growth market, but we recognize that overseas markets are also having a bit of a difficult time through the economic global recession. We continue to work with some of the major largest overseas wholesalers and we have a very a good working rapport with them. We also have a German sales agent who is present and covers marketing and assists the department with intelligence and other associated duties in German-speaking Europe as well. We are thrilled that the Whitehorse international airport terminal will soon be opening. That will also contain a 230-passenger in-transit lounge, if I am not mistaken.

That will help ensure that we receive international status in receiving flights, such as Condor. We're also very much cognizant that we have to meet United States' security requirements, because those direct flights leave from the Yukon, go to Fairbanks — not Frankfurt — and also Anchorage. So we have to meet those requirements and also the requirements of the Canada Border Services Agency. We're very pleased to expand the space for security clearance, but with an additional passenger baggage carousel, and so forth, so there are significant improvements.

In terms of — now I've lost my train of thought — numbers of individuals coming, we continue to work with Condor and our tour operators here in the Yukon to see what we can do to continue to expand the market and continue to expand the seasons. I think that the first flight will be coming in pretty soon, in the first week of May, and they'll be going through until October again.

We've been very fortunate to have that direct air access. I think we're about the smallest jurisdiction in probably North America to receive such direct flights. We're very appreciative of that and we certainly do not take that business for granted. I know that on a recent visit to Germany and France — I think it was almost a year ago — I had a number of discussions with

some of the carriers, including Condor, and it was at that time that we decided to carry forward with a meeting of tour operators, industry and some of the major wholesalers were present, and Condor itself, to engage in a discussion about what is it going to take to extend flights into perhaps the winter season. We are continuing to look at opportunities for growth in this regard. There is no immediate expansion at this time. Ultimately, it comes down to a business decision at the end of the day, but again, there is the very fact that we had that discussion here in Whitehorse and it was very well-attended, as I understand, with lots of good discussion.

But again, there are ongoing challenges. You need to have access to services and to retail and to accommodation, but at the same time, you're not going to open your business unless you're going to be rewarded as such. We recognize that it is a bit of a to-and-fro, but industry is very much committed to continuing to work on expanding winter tourism growth opportunities by leveraging the marketing efforts through Yukon Quest, for example, Sourdough Rendezvous and through the Fulda Extreme Arctic Winter Challenge — those being some of them. If we can capitalize on some of those opportunities already here, all the better.

Mr. Cardiff: I'd like to thank the minister for the answer. On another tourism-related subject, when you look at the total tourism budget in O&M, we're at about \$20 million, and in capital, almost \$3 million — or approximately \$2.8 million.

I believe this is a good way to allow industry to work in partnership with them, but to also give them resources. Of the tourism area in Tourism and Culture, the total allotments are \$9 million, and \$1.9 million is in transfer payments to organizations and groups that support the tourism business. I think that is a good thing. I think we need to show our support for them much the same way that we show support for other industries in the territory.

I would just like to point out that in the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources, in the oil and gas and mineral resources area, the total allotments are twice what they are in Tourism — in the O&M at \$53 million, a lot of that in support of industry.

We've heard the minister talk about how tourism is one of the major pieces of a diversified economy, and I don't disagree with that. I mean, we need to look at diversifying the economy in other areas too: in manufacturing, in the IT sector, in the knowledge economy. I'm going to come back to this a little bit in my next question, I guess.

But what I'm wondering is — we're supporting industry, and one of the things we're doing in the tourism area is transferring money to these organizations, and the other thing we're marketing is our culture. There are transfer payments to cultural organizations, as well, in the arts, with historic sites, with museums, and I believe those are all good things.

Some of the things we're trying to sell here in the Yukon are these various aspects. One of the ones I believe has potential for growth is wilderness tourism. It's my understanding that there are 89 licensed wilderness tourism businesses, and they guide some 35,000 clients annually.

We're spending lots of money to support and subsidize other industries, like resource extraction industries, and it would be nice to see the wilderness tourism sector get some support as well because I believe — I honestly believe that if we support that, we will see growth and benefits. Just as natural resources, non-renewable resources are in high demand, I believe experiences are too, and they're becoming more rarified too. They're becoming less available. Because of human encroachment — the growth of the population around the globe — these experiences are going to become fewer and fewer. We need to preserve them and promote them in a sustainable, responsible way. We want people to come and see what it is that we have to offer, but I believe we also want those who come to see it to respect that resource we have, which is the natural, pristine beauty of our territory and the wilderness experiences we can offer. But I believe in order for it to develop and thrive, we need to provide more support.

I'll await the minister's answer. I'd appreciate it if she could tell us what it is we are doing, and what changes she might make or what improvements she might make in supporting the wilderness tourism industry.

Hon. Ms. Taylor: I could take a long time here. Just making reference to some of the comments the member opposite has made reference to — and that comes to funding mechanisms for the arts and for heritage institutions and tourism, including wilderness tourism — I've been very proud of a government that has afforded the support to me, but it is to the Department of Tourism and Culture in support of industry all around.

In terms of arts funding programs, the member opposite will probably recall that it was just a couple of years ago — or three years ago, perhaps, that we were able to increase the level of funding support to the arts by, I think, just under \$700,000 on an ongoing annual basis. That afforded us additional monies to the Yukon arts funding program, which is primarily operational funding for arts organizations. In turn, it also gave us the opportunity to free up additional dollars through the arts fund that was sometimes being taken up with operating funding through the other program, a new touring fund. And we talked about the benefits to tourism, for example, in leveraging the marketing reach through our artists telling the multitude of stories about Yukon culture and the Yukon, in its entirety, as a destination for travel, but also as a place to live and also to invest.

We were also pleased to be able to provide a big boost to the Artist in the School program. I think it was sitting at \$25,000 a year; we were able to raise it to \$100,000 annually, which has really opened up a lot of different opportunities for arts programming in all schools, for those who wish to subscribe to those programs.

One of the other things we pride ourselves on is also increasing support to the Dawson City Arts Society. That was a major boost to their funding, but they provide a whole raft of various programs and services to the Klondike region and also beyond, which has also helped to provide ongoing support to the School of Visual Arts, the very first of its kind north of 60.

We were also very pleased to enhance the base funding to the Yukon Arts Centre a couple of times, which has given them some stability. It has also given them the opportunity to continue to fulfill their mandate of providing arts programming throughout the entire Yukon, working with all arts organizations, individuals, schools and so forth.

One of the programs that I was really proud to introduce quite a few years ago was the "decade of sport and culture". It was around the time that we first hosted the Canadian Senior Games. It was at that time that we introduced this program, decade of sport and culture, of which the lion's share has gone to a new program called Culture Quest. Culture Quest is administered through the Yukon Arts Centre and I have to say that with pretty much every performance that took place during the Olympics and all of those venues, each of those recipients or those who participated in the Olympics was also a recipient of the Culture Quest program. It speaks to the very importance of this program for building capacity, but also for providing assistance to emerging artists who aren't necessarily established. It has been a tremendous success, bar none, and continues to be.

In terms of museums and First Nation cultural heritage centres, that is something that we have been able to increase as well. We've been able to provide ongoing operational funding support. Something that was made known as a priority among the heritage community was to have ongoing three-year funding made available to our heritage institutions. So we were not only able to increase the level of funding in ongoing support, but we were also able to provide a new program of operational support to First Nation cultural centres for the very first time. We continue to add to that family. The John Tizya Visitor Reception Centre in Old Crow is one of the latest members of the community to be added to that. So that has also helped provide ongoing programming, and expanding their services in the community as well.

We have also been able to add on a number of Yukon museums, including the Miles Canyon Historic Railway Society, Watson Lake Northern Lights Space and Science Centre, to the Binet House in Mayo, to — I believe it's the Faro or the Campbell Region Interpretive Centre. All of these have made a big difference. We have since introduced new funding in special capital operating assistance for exhibits, provided conservation assistance and security-related assistance — also other small capital assistance. In fact, we were just able to announce the last round of recipients of that fund.

So we've been able to build, incrementally, over the years, a number of funding supports for these very critical institutions that do an amazing job on behalf of Yukoners. They all work hard — board of directors, volunteers — and I am really, really proud to be able to work with so many stakeholders, and there are hundreds. I think that I said that there were over 200 contribution agreements that go out the door every year through these respective funds. They have been very well-received and we continue to work with them.

In terms of adventure tourism, I believe I mentioned earlier that we work closely with the Wilderness Tourism Association of Yukon, for example, on the promotion of the Yukon as an

adventure travel destination. In fact, we have a direct contribution agreement with the association that is reflected in this budget and also previous budgets as well. They deliver on Yukon's behalf the adventure wilderness marketing program. As I mentioned earlier, we also work to ensure that the guided adventure program — Yukon Wild — provided on Yukon's behalf, works in sync with all of our programs, objectives and goals as outlined in our implementation plan.

The member opposite made reference to wilderness tourism. I don't exactly have all that he said before me but I believe I also made reference earlier that, in the past, we have always conducted a joint marketing and public relations program with them. I recall speaking to one of their AGMs and congratulating them on the partnership with, for example, the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society and coming together with wilderness tourism and Mountain Equipment Co-op across Canada, which showcased Yukon and its pristine wilderness attributes in a number of Co-op stores throughout the country. Obviously that generated additional awareness and inquiries about travel to the Yukon. It was very successful.

We work with them; we have worked with them in the past on a number of policy initiatives. I think I referred to the *Marine Liability Act* and the regulations that went along with that. There were some issues surrounding the proposal of the deletion of waivers, for example, by Transport Canada. We went to work with them and we were very successful, thanks to the good work of the Wilderness Tourism Association and the good work of the Department of Tourism and Culture.

We also have resources in the Department of Tourism and Culture who have taken on the responsibility of representing tourism interests in land and resource planning and development initiatives. In fact, I know the one individual I'm thinking of has assisted in the development of the *Wilderness Tourism Licensing Act*, for example; developed and manages digital maps of Yukon wilderness tourism resources and activities; leads our Tourism branch involvement in the YESAA process and helps operators navigate their way through rules and regulations associated with running and operating a tourism business in the territory.

I know that these resources represent Tourism's interests on a number of park planning processes, including Kusawa, Agay Mene and many others. We work with the Lands branch and Wilderness Tourism Association on a number of different issues, so they're a very important resource in the Department of Tourism and Culture, but is very much present and does a great job on Yukon's behalf — on Tourism's behalf, that is.

Again, I could go on at great length about the wilderness adventure sector, but we have also engaged in the wilderness tourism status report that was issued a couple of years ago. It's a great resource that we worked on in partnership with them. There are many initiatives that aren't at my fingertips at this moment, but I've hopefully given the member opposite some.

Mr. Cardiff: The minister provided much information. Where I wanted to take this next, the minister sort of touched on, and I'm pleased she did. She mentioned the fact that, within the Department of Tourism and Culture, there's someone who

participates in land and resource planning. So it's not just the support — you know, the financial support and the moral support — but it's support at that level, because I know that there have been some land use conflicts and this is one area that I think the government — not necessarily the minister's department, which responsible for land use planning — but that we need to take more initiative on land use planning.

I am glad that the minister's department is there representing the interests of Yukoners in the tourism and the culture industry, because it is not just tourism — it is, but it is also our historic sites and our culture that need to be preserved. My hat is off and kudos to the people in the department who are working on those issues and my encouragement as well for them to work to resolve those issues in the interest of what is best for Yukon and what is best for preserving that heritage and that culture and promoting what I believe is a sustainable industry with regard to wilderness tourism.

I'm going to take the opportunity to thank the minister and the officials today for being here and responding to the questions I've asked, as well as the officials who provided the briefing on the Department of Tourism and Culture to our staff.

I'd like to ask the minister about our heritage resources, because I believe that this is an important aspect of the minister's department as well. It's not just about tourism. It's about our heritage, you know. I know we don't have responsibility for the *SS Klondike*, but it is about the *SS Klondike*, which actually — I'm going to roll that question in one more time this year. Signage has been an issue that I've asked about. It is about the Yukon government — so I'm going to roll it into my final question — working with the Parks Canada in order to get some sort of a sign on the Alaska Highway that will notify the rubber-tire traffic that the *SS Klondike* is sitting on the banks of the Yukon River, waiting for them to come and visit.

That's one of the biggest draws that we have in the City of Whitehorse. We've heard before that you can see motorhomes driving right by; in some instances, they think that Whitehorse exists only on the Alaska Highway, and they miss a great opportunity to stay another day and see the *SS Klondike*, as well as all the other things. They might stay two days when they find out about all the other interesting things that are down here in Whitehorse. But we could use that to draw people in.

I kind of digressed there.

The program objectives say to ensure that Yukon's heritage resources are properly documented, researched, conserved and protected in a manner consistent with the *Historic Resources Act* and regulations, the *Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Act*, and with First Nation land claim agreements. I was talking earlier with the Premier about how we don't necessarily know everything that is out there around environmental liabilities. I am just wondering: what are we doing and who are we working with — there is some money in the budget with regard to heritage resources and historic sites — about \$1.6 or \$1.7 million in the O&M and a little over \$2 million for museums in the O&M. And there is some money in the capital, but there doesn't appear to be a huge amount of money. When we visit these existing sites, we want to ensure that they are maintained and protected. I am wonder-

ing what we're doing to identify — you can't call them new heritage sites, but to identify other heritage sites that haven't come to light or that are documented.

But are we investing money in some of those sites that haven't been invested in before? I'm not going to suggest any one site over another, but there are areas out there of historical and cultural significance. I'm just wondering whether or not any work is being done within the department to identify some of those sites and to ensure that they're preserved, not just for our heritage and our culture, but also for those people who come to visit.

So, once again, I'd like to thank the minister and the officials. Those are all the questions I have today, thanks.

Hon. Ms. Taylor: There is a lot of information there, but the member opposite just made reference to support for heritage. I made reference earlier today to support for Yukon museums, which includes First Nation cultural heritage centres: Kwanlin Dun, and Champagne and Aishihik First Nations — those are two major, very important, initiatives about to be undertaken — and a long time in the making, I might add. I recall talking to the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations several years ago about their visions for their cultural centre. You know, it folds into repatriation of artifacts that have been stored in a multitude of other venues throughout this country — other museums, exhibits.

One of the initiatives that we did implement awhile back was that we actually came up with a new position for a First Nation heritage person or worker. That person has done a great amount of work on repatriation, for example, of artifacts, making presentations in our communities, but also working with cultural centres. We have a number of existing cultural centres throughout the territory.

As I mentioned, we've been able to increase and enhance delivery of funding to these heritage institutions to just under — I think it was \$1.5 million, if I'm not mistaken. There are also funding mechanisms on top of that.

We also have dollars allotted for personnel within our Department of Tourism and Culture. We have a person within heritage resources; we have a toponymist who works with Yukon Geographical Place Names Board. It's a mandated board under the *Umbrella Final Agreement*. We have two archeologists and, in fact, I'm pretty sure it was just a year ago that we added another archeologist to a complement of two and that is in direct response so that we could have full participation in processes such as YESAA. It has instigated additional resources to be incurred as a result of YESAA and, because of the initiatives that we are assessing in order to do a wholesome, good job, we chose to add on to that resource. We have a paleontologist and we also have summer students that we bring in from time to time.

In addition to that, though, we also have dollars allotted to historic sites that we co-own and co-manage with Yukon First Nations, coming out of the treaties themselves. One that comes to mind is Fort Selkirk, for example. There is the Rampart House, Forty Mile and there are many others. We provide a great amount of funding for that very purpose. I think for Fort

Selkirk alone, we have \$148,000 or something like that this year alone for that one particular site.

We also receive funding through the Executive Council Office for land-claim mandated initiatives when it comes to heritage sites. I don't have the list of that, but it is quite comprehensive. So all told, that's an additional — probably just shy of \$1 million as well in terms of that. That does not include all the personnel and so forth.

In terms of support for the heritage sector, though, we also have come up with other resources for heritage institutions, such as capacity. I made reference to the heritage certificate that we're working on with Yukon First Nations heritage working group — Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation and the Yukon College, for example — as a means to deliver capacity. It provides an additional foundation for those people working in the heritage field or hoping to enter the heritage and culture fields, but again it provides a broad range of heritage-related topics that were identified through a former assessment of the needs. It also builds on the heritage training fund that our government introduced a few years back, which has been very popular and very successful in meeting the needs of those working in the heritage sector.

Mr. Chair, I have lots of information here to share in terms of meeting our obligations under chapter 13 of the *Umbrella Final Agreement* — that is the chapter that pertains to heritage. As I mentioned, we work on repatriation of artifacts. We work on the preservation and protection of heritage sites, as identified by First Nations or as identified by processes such as YESAA and so forth.

We assist with the operation of costs of heritage cultural centers. We also assist and provide planning support for cultural centres. So, we're working with both Champagne and Aishihik First Nations and Kwanlin Dun. The department has a long-standing good relationship with First Nations in this regard. I could go on at great length about all the support that we have for heritage, but will to say that it's a very important sector to the territory.

The one other matter that the member opposite raised — and I do recall him raising this I think at least once before. I don't have an actual update on that particular matter, other than I know that we have engaged on a number of occasions with not only the City of Whitehorse, but also Parks Canada, on how we can bring to fruition better signage for our attractions, but also signage coming into the city as well. What I can say, though, is that through our scenic drives initiative — a new initiative that we implemented, and introduced a few years back as well — we now have secure, identified and ongoing annual funding for interpretive signage.

So we actually invest over \$200,000 each year and, since we introduced that program, there has been well over \$1 million invested in interpretive signage.

It's been very well-received, because I have to say that I couldn't help but notice all these wonderful plans — interpretive plans for each of the road corridors — but not a lot of them have been fully implemented. So these additional funds and resources have enabled us to really work on every road corridor; also improving our highway pullouts, on which we also

work in collaboration with Highways and Public Works and the Department of Environment as well.

So I would have to get an update for the member opposite and I would be happy to do so, but signage obviously remains very important for helping navigate visitors, but also an important reminder for Yukoners to explore their own back country. Thank you.

Mr. Fairclough: I have just a couple of questions — whether or not the Heritage branch is planning to put any more money into the Montague Roadhouse about 20 miles south of Carmacks. I also asked the minister in the past about whether or not any more work was going to be put into preserving the *SS Evelyn* on the Yukon River just down from Hootalinqua. I know that work has been put into the preservation of that steamboat in the past, but it is deteriorating fairly quickly and it doesn't look like it is going to stand up all that much longer. I am just wondering whether the Heritage branch is looking at doing more work to preserve that piece of our heritage.

Hon. Ms. Taylor: In terms of the Montague Roadhouse, unfortunately, I don't actually have any information on that. But I would be happy to provide the member opposite with some information.

In terms of the *SS Evelyn*, what I can say is that through funding made available through programs such as — I think it's the historic places assistance program — there's an acronym — HPA — we have doubled that fund over the years as well. Each year we provide capital assistance for restoring and preserving historic properties.

What I can say is that I know that in the past there have been a number of improvements to *The Loon*, for example, out of Mayo. That's one that comes to mind that has received dollars in the past. I'm just trying to find if I have any information on that, but I know we have provided a substantive number of dollars for that alone.

What I can say is that if the member opposite knows of an entity — such as either the Village of Mayo, for example, or the First Nation of Na Cho Nyäk Dun, or it could even be an individual who is interested in preserving or even documenting or doing an assessment or looking to repair, upgrade, or restore this particular craft — we are accepting applications for this fund right now for the year ahead until May 2. I'd be happy to pass along some information in that program, but it is on our Tourism and Culture website, as well, under funding programs — under the heritage programs assistance, I believe it is.

In the past, I know that we have provided funding to venues such as *The Loon*. The community development fund has been made available for the restoration and preservation of entities, such as what the member opposite has made reference to.

But just for example, I know that the First Nation of Na Cho Nyäk Dun in the past received \$17,000 for the Legion hall in Mayo through this program for repairs; it was designated a historic site. There are different examples, but I just throw that out as a bit of information for the member opposite. So I would be happy to provide that for the member opposite, but again, I made reference to a number of funding programs that we could review as well. Also, through museum assistance, there may be

funding made available through that venue. So I'm not sure if that's of relevance to the member opposite, but again, each of these historic sites is very important and we do have obligations as I outlined before with respect to chapter 13.

I talked about repatriation, for example. We have been working with a number of self-governing First Nations on work plans with Canada as well as Yukon on strategic heritage plans. Some of the major initiatives that we have been working on obviously are the First Nation cultural centres — a long time coming. I remember discussing in great length the need for ongoing assistance for implementing some of the chapter 13 requirements — the catch-up/keep-up clause — as well as coming up with capital dollars allotted for First Nation cultural centres.

So thanks in part to funding mechanisms, either through the municipal rural infrastructure fund or Canadian strategic infrastructure fund, the federal government has been able to assist greatly in this regard. Parks Canada, as well, has been able to enter into a partnership with Champagne and Aishihik First Nations, as we have, through the creation of a new visitor centre in that facility. It is a win-win partnership for everyone and we're very pleased to assist.

I would be remiss if I didn't mention that through the northern strategy trust there are a number of initiatives that we have also continued to work with. I know that, through our own Yukon Archives and Teslin Tlingit Council, we've been working on I think year 2 of a three-year project on the First Nation's records diffusion project. It's assisting with looking at identifying, copying archival sources, and documenting stories and oral traditions of the First Nation. It has been able to extend the reach of our appropriate funding sources.

As I mentioned earlier, we have been able to provide funding assistance to a number of different areas. I know that in the past, some of them have been, like I said, in terms of heritage assistance, to some of the historic sites identified through the *Umbrella Final Agreement*. There's Old Crow Flats, Forty Mile and Rampart House. We provide assistance with burial sites identification, preservation, repatriation, and strategic planning.

More recently, we have been engaged in other sites identified through other, newer agreements, such as the Tagish Post, Conrad Historic Site, Herschel Island — we continue to do a lot of work as well. Community archeology and heritage studies — there's a number of different funding mechanisms that we do make available to partners, whether they're municipalities or they're First Nation governments, organizations or individuals, as I just referenced.

Mr. Chair, seeing the time, I move that we report progress.

Chair: It has been moved by Ms. Taylor that Committee of the Whole report progress.

Motion agreed to

Hon. Ms. Taylor: I move that the Speaker do now resume the Chair.

Chair: It has been moved by Ms. Taylor that the Speaker do now resume the Chair.

Motion agreed to

Speaker resumes the Chair

Speaker: I will now call the House to order.

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

Chair's report

Mr. Nordick: Committee of the Whole has considered Bill No. 20, *First Appropriation Act, 2010-11*, and directed me to report progress on it.

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

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Speaker: I declare the report carried.

Hon. Ms. Taylor: I move that the House do now adjourn.

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

Motion agreed to

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

The House adjourned at 5:28 p.m.