

**Yukon Legislative Assembly
Whitehorse, Yukon
Tuesday, February 8, 2011 — 1:00 p.m.**

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

Prayers

DAILY ROUTINE

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

Tributes.

TRIBUTES

In recognition of Safer Internet Day

Hon. Ms. Horne: Good afternoon. I rise today to pay tribute to Safer Internet Day, which is recognized by 65 countries around the world. Safer Internet Day is organized by In-safe each year in February to promote safer and more responsible use of on-line technology and mobile phones, especially among children and young people across the world. The topic for 2011 is “our virtual lives” around the slogan “It’s more than a game, it’s your life.”

Yukon has one of the highest per capita usage of high-speed Internet in Canada, which is 82 percent. With this high usage of the Internet, we must be especially vigilant with our children who are vulnerable to on-line dangers, particularly on-line chats. In 2009, twenty-nine cyber bullying incidents were reported in 13 Yukon schools, most involving pupils in grades 6 to 8. Also in that year, Canadians aged 50 to 59 suffered the highest total dollar loss and most number of fraud attempts. The Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre received 91 complaints about Internet fraud from Yukoners involving 16 victims and a reported dollar loss of \$5,143. Across Canada, 26 victims lost over \$128,000 to fraud operations apparently based in Yukon.

In Yukon, we are taking steps to ensure our children and families are more aware of the threats that the Internet poses to their safekeeping and financial well-being.

This government formed the Internet Safety Advisory Committee in 2009, with unanimous support from the House to reach the growing problems associated with Internet usage. The Internet Safety Advisory Committee was mandated to examine the extent to which issues identified during the legislative debate are affecting Yukoners; to review educational and public safety initiatives that are now in place in the Yukon to address these issues; to examine best practices from other jurisdictions including, but not limited to, best practices for developing and implementing effective targeted public awareness campaigns and to develop options; to make recommendations for how government, law enforcement officials, educators, citizens and information technology professionals might address these concerns.

We are now closely studying the recommendations made in the report to develop an implementation plan that is effective for all Yukoners. I would especially like to thank the members of the Internet Safety Advisory Committee, the RCMP, North-

westel and the departments of Justice and Education for the work they have done to create this report.

We have learned that educating our children, our seniors and our business people on the harms associated with using the Internet is critical to protecting them from harm. This harm can come in many forms, from on-line predation to business scams that cost Yukoners their livelihood, if they are unaware of the scams that are out there.

Today I urge all Yukoners to think carefully about their children’s Internet use and their own.

Günilschish. Thank you.

In recognition of Scotiabank Hockey Day in Canada

Hon. Mr. Lang: I rise today to pay tribute to an event that is focusing national attention on Yukon and proving once again that Yukon volunteers are the greatest in this country. Thanks to them, the territory is alive with true Canadian hockey spirit, as we host the Scotiabank Hockey Day in Canada, a first for Yukon. We are the host to NHL alumni, Olympians, a minor hockey team from New Brunswick, the Governor General of Canada, a number of celebrities, plus the Stanley Cup and the Memorial Cup.

This celebration of the great Canadian pastime of hockey is intended to stimulate the same kind of enthusiasm for sport, recreation and healthy living that this government’s active living strategy promotes in all our Yukon communities.

Whether you are a hockey player, a hockey parent or a hockey fan, this weekend’s Hockey Day in Canada events are reminders to us of the benefits of an active life. That is why the Yukon government is particularly proud to be providing funding for travel subsidies so that our young people from all our communities can take part in the festivities, including a school tournament and hockey and life skills clinics geared specifically toward our young people.

This government is also very pleased to provide funding to support a number of our events this week, including: a new Yukon hockey history exhibition at MacBride Museum; *Stolen From a Hockey Card*, an evening of music and film at the Yukon Arts Centre; and the alumni rematch of a Stanley Cup game over 100 years ago between the Ottawa Senators and Dawson City Nuggets. For Yukoners, the 11th annual Hockey Day in Canada is also a celebration of community involvement. I would like to thank the local organizing committee for its hard work and, of course, its dedication, and for showing hockey fans across this great country just what “community” means in the Yukon.

I hope you will join me in celebrating Scotiabank’s Hockey Day in Canada from February 8 to 12, and I look forward to seeing Yukoners from across this great territory at all this week’s events.

Mr. Elias: Mr. Speaker, I, too, want to pay tribute to Hockey Day in Canada on behalf of the Official Opposition and the Third Party. This Saturday, the eyes of the entire country will be on the Yukon as we play host to Scotiabank’s Hockey Day in Canada. Host Ron MacLean will be live from the Canada Games Centre for over six hours this Saturday broadcasting images from the Yukon all across the nation.

There are many events to enjoy over the course of the entire week, starting tonight at 5:00 pm at McBride Museum with the opening of our own Yukon hockey history exhibit. I hear there are a lot of pretty unique and old jerseys from across the territory, so I encourage Yukoners to go and have a look. There are concerts, films, skating parties and more — all to celebrate Canada's hockey history. More information can be found at www.hockeyday2011.ca.

I also want to thank City of Whitehorse Councillor Ranj Pillai for his work in making this day possible. He made the pitch for the Yukon to host this event and he deserves credit for doing so. I also want to thank all members of the organizing committee for their work over the last number of months in putting this event together, as well as our territory's numerous excellent volunteers.

To the coaches and players and the fans: enjoy the day. It is an honour to have all of our great nation's eyes on our territory in celebrating the game that we all love so much.

I want to send a special thank you to Mr. Bob Cole for his decades of spine-tingling, exhilarating and downright awesome play-by-play of NHL games and especially in the playoffs when he starts each game with "Good evening, everybody." You're the best, Bob, and mahsi' cho.

I want to tell a story that I think is very relevant about how hockey can change children's lives today in this tribute to Hockey Day in Canada. But first I want to take this opportunity to congratulate the Yukon Native Hockey Association Board of Directors for continuously putting on such a spectacular event year after year, led by their president, Karee Vallevand, and to the fans, players and coaches for your tireless dedication and commitment to this tournament, and all of our territory's other minor hockey associations — job well done, year after year.

The story is about last year's youth division final at the Yukon Native Hockey Tournament. The final game was between the Gwitchin Braves from Old Crow and the Wolf Cubs from Watson Lake, and believe me when I say, Mr. Speaker, each and every one of these boys and girls were champions. The boys and girls, aged 10 to 13, on each team played their heart out for 60 minutes and ended up tied at the end of the regulation — five goals apiece. They then went into a five-minute, sudden death, or sudden overtime, and each team hit the post in overtime, but they didn't score. The crowd was amazing, cheering on these kids. They went into a five-player shootout and after the shootout they were still tied. So now it's a sudden death shootout. If a team misses, they could lose. The teams couldn't use the players who already took a penalty shot in the first round.

There was a young man on the Gwitchin Braves that had never played hockey in the tournament before. He was a shy, young man who just started to play hockey. When the coach asked the players, "Who wants to shoot?" this young man's hand shot up. The coach said, "Okay, you're going to shoot." The Wolf Cubs shot first and the Braves' goalie made a spectacular save — I was there — to keep the Braves in the game. Now it's up to this young man — this shy young man — and the coach said, "Okay, you score, we win." His teammates cheered him on. He scored, Mr. Speaker. The Braves won and

after the game, hockey legend Reggie Leach said to the coach, "That game is what hockey is all about," and he said, "It was the best game of the tournament."

Months passed and the parents of that shy young boy came to the coach and said, "You don't know what that goal did for my son; it changed his life." That's what Hockey Day in Canada represents, Mr. Speaker — just give a kid a chance.

Our youth have the feeling that their teammates are counting on them to do their best, and yet they play the game knowing that they don't always have to win. I'll end with a quote from the great Bobby Orr when he said, "Growing up, if I hadn't had sports, I don't know where I'd be. God only knows what street corners I'd be standing on and God only knows what I'd be doing, but instead, I played hockey and went to school and stayed out of trouble."

I wish all Yukoners, our visitors, our great nation, a wonderful Hockey Day in Canada hosted by Whitehorse, Yukon.

Speaker: Are there any further tributes?

Introduction of visitors.

Returns or documents for tabling.

TABLING RETURNS AND DOCUMENTS

Ms. Hanson: I have for tabling Bill C-474, an act respecting the seeds regulation analysis of potential harm.

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

Any reports of committees?

Any petitions?

Are there bills to be introduced?

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 112: Introduction and First Reading

Mr. Inverarity: Mr. Speaker, I move that a bill, entitled *Disclosure Protection Act*, be now introduced and read for a first time.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Member for Porter Creek South that a bill, entitled *Disclosure Protection Act*, be now introduced and read a first time.

Motion for introduction and first reading of Bill No. 112 agreed to

Speaker: Are there further bills for introduction?

Are there notices of motion?

NOTICES OF MOTION

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to recognize that a 28-day addictions treatment program is insufficient and that this government take immediate steps to provide a long-term, intensive detoxification and rehabilitation centre that:

- (1) is located in downtown Whitehorse;
- (2) provides medical detoxification services;
- (3) provides immediate access to quality health care delivery;

(4) is staffed by personnel who are trained in the specifics of addictions medicine and who will be provided annual training; and

(5) has an intervention team that includes a peace officer authorized to detain, if necessary, and respond to calls for service within the Whitehorse city limits.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to extend the period of time in which mining companies must permanently affix a tag to a stake claim post to a full two years, in order to lighten the burden on the mining industry from having to return to each claim post to affix the tag.

Ms. Hanson: I give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Minister of Health and Social Services to immediately begin an in-depth review of the *Yukon Substance Abuse Action Plan* and alcohol, drug and gambling addiction services in the Yukon and in the appropriate western provinces, with a view to determining the adequacy of established programs and the need for implementing new programs specifically in the following areas:

- (1) medical and housing support for substance detoxification;
 - (2) group and one-on-one counselling support;
 - (3) residential treatment options;
 - (4) after-care services;
 - (5) preventive programs;
 - (6) support in communities outside of Whitehorse;
 - (7) special needs clients such as FASD-affected persons;
- and,
- (8) piloting innovative detoxification, treatment, and after-care options.

I further give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House encourages Yukon's Member of Parliament to continue to vote in support of Bill C-474, *An Act respecting the Seeds Regulations*, tabled by New Democratic MP for B.C. Southern Interior, Alex Atamanenko, which would require that an analysis of potential harm to export markets be conducted before the sale of any new, genetically engineered seed is permitted in Canada.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to review the policies and procedures for issuing mineral claim tags to ensure fairness for all engaged in the prospecting industry.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Yukon government to act on the demonstrated need for housing in the *Whitehorse Housing Adequacy* study and the *Dimensions of Social Inclusion and Exclusion in Yukon* report by:

- (1) assisting lower income households with the cost of buying a home;
- (2) providing more rental accommodation;

(3) supporting non-government organizations working with the "hard to house"; and

(4) allocating more financial resources to address the long wait-lists for social housing.

Speaker: Are there any further notices of motion?
Is there a ministerial statement?
Hearing none, that brings us to Question Period.

QUESTION PERIOD

Question re: Whistle-blower legislation

Mr. Inverarity: In 2006, the Yukon Party made a number of promises to voters, and as their mandate winds down it is time to take stock of some of those commitments. For example, this government promised to implement effective whistle-blower legislation, which protects the anonymity of public employees who report abuse within the government and provides a clear process for full and fair investigation.

Despite the fact that this government has decided to hang on to power until the bitter end of its mandate, they will still not complete this campaign commitment. They have had five years to get this done and they have failed to do it.

Why has this government not brought forward whistle-blower legislation during its time in office, as promised?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Well, Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member opposite for his question. Again, it gives us an opportunity to reiterate our commitment to develop whistle-blower legislation, as the member opposite has outlined. As the member opposite knows full well, this is a matter that is before a select committee comprising all parties, of all representatives of the Legislature, to oversee the development of the whistle-blower legislation. We certainly commend the work of the select committee thus far, and we very much look forward to the completion of that work.

Mr. Inverarity: The committee has to meet more than a few times over the course of five years in order to get the job done.

Mr. Speaker, when something is a priority, it should get done over the course of a five-year mandate. This government has had five years to bring forward whistle-blower legislation. It has failed to do so and Yukoners deserve to know why this commitment has not been kept. Yukoners no longer trust this government and this is the reason why: they make commitments and don't live up to them.

Today we tabled our own whistle-blower bill that demonstrates our commitment toward protecting workers and letting them speak out. Employees are afraid to speak because there is nothing in place to protect them.

Why did this government not bring forward legislation to protect workers?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: For the fear of being called out of order, I would like to bring to the member opposite's attention that there is public sector legislation; there are collective agreements in place, which are negotiated between the respective parties to provide a variety of dispute resolution mechanisms available to all our employees for the purpose of challenging actions taken by the employer.

As I just reiterated, this matter is before a select committee to oversee and assess the central issues, to gather the views about whether there should be legislation and, if so, what should be included in the bill and to report its recommendations to the Legislative Assembly. That work is underway. I commend the work of the Legislative Assembly in that regard and we look forward to the conclusion of that work.

Mr. Inverarity: This government has promised surplus budgets but delivered deficit budgets instead. It has promised to spend \$23 million next year on F.H. Collins and now has backed away from that commitment as well. There is a pattern here and it all comes down to trust.

Can Yukoners trust this government to keep its commitments? The answer is no.

In 2006, the government promised to develop whistleblower legislation, and five years will go by — the entire mandate of this government — and the government will still not have completed this task. Why is this minister so unwilling to take responsibility for failing to keep a promise that this government campaigned on?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Again, I will reiterate for the member opposite that the Government of Yukon is committed to developing whistle-blower legislation. This is a matter that is before a select committee, comprised of members from the Liberal Party, the New Democratic caucus and from the government side. That work is well underway; it has been underway for some time. We look forward to the conclusion of the select committee's work.

In the meantime, I want to reiterate for all employees that there are provisions in current legislation while we wait for that committee's work to conclude. There are provisions within our collective agreements that were negotiated by the parties that provide a variety of dispute resolution mechanisms that are available to each and every employee.

So, Mr. Speaker, I will reiterate that the government is doing its part; we are contributing to the select committee and we look forward to the outcome.

Question re: Auditor General addressing the Assembly

Mr. Mitchell: Mr. Speaker, this House will shortly receive the Auditor General's report on the Department of Health and Social Services. That department comprises a significant portion of the government's activities. It claims one-quarter of the billion-dollar budget before us and it is responsible for providing a range of essential services to Yukoners. Under the Yukon Party, this department has experienced significant and troubling financial issues. Health care costs have ballooned beyond the minister's control, including being \$30 million overbudget just last year. The Auditor General's audit findings will be timely and Yukoners should hear them directly from her.

Will the government allow her to publicly appear in this House next week to explain her findings?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: Let us respond to the Leader of the Liberal Party in this manner. In the first instance, the Liberals do not agree with the budget at all. Secondly, they have not told Yukoners what the real budget is in their mind.

Thirdly, they take great issue during the course of the fiscal year when it comes to meeting the health care needs of Yukoners — be it physician visits, hospital visits — oh, and by the way, even increases to social assistance in meeting needs of those who require that assistance during the course of the fiscal year. Because we, the Yukon Party government, have created a savings account, we have stepped up and met those needs. We don't tell Yukoners, "Sorry, you can't go to see the physician because you have a bad heart, because we have tabled an estimate that says you can't." We meet their needs because of our fiscal management and because we actually care about Yukoners not about our political future.

Mr. Mitchell: Well, Mr. Speaker, in 90 seconds the Premier managed to do everything but answer the question. Now, Mr. Speaker, the Auditor General provides objective and independent information about this government's activities and how it spends Yukoners' money. The Auditor General is already familiar with the expansion of the Watson Lake and Dawson City care facilities. She criticized the handling of those projects in a 2007 audit. Four years have passed and the public should be granted her update on these and other projects. Yukoners deserve to hear the Auditor General's findings on the Department of Health and Social Services publicly in her own words and in this House. Why won't the Premier let Yukoners hear her findings publicly and on record in this Legislative Assembly?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: You know, it's going to be pretty hard for the Liberal leader to present any reasonable alternative to good government with the position he has just taken. This Leader of the Liberal Party is actually the chair of the Public Accounts Committee, the very institution that the Auditor General is to appear before. Why doesn't the Liberal leader stand up and tell Yukoners why he's not doing his job and why he wants to fob it off on this Assembly?

Mr. Mitchell: I'll ignore the partisan attacks and simply say that this Assembly is in session and this Assembly could adjourn for a day to hear the Auditor General, and this Premier can make it happen if he chooses to.

Now, Yukoners deserve a government that works in the public interest and does so effectively. The Auditor General can tell us if this is the case in the Department of Health and Social Services. Instead of allowing the Auditor General to appear as a witness in this House, the Premier has scheduled the chair and CEO of the Yukon Hospital Corporation. Information about Health and Social Services should come directly from the Auditor General, who has reviewed the entire department in preparing her audit. Why won't the Premier make time for Yukoners to hear directly from the Auditor General of Canada — publicly and in this House?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: Why won't the Liberal leader do his job as chair of the Public Accounts Committee and let Yukoners know exactly what the committee's business is all about? That's why the Auditor General appears before it.

This member — this Liberal leader — has just mentioned the fact that governments should represent the public interest. Let's talk about that — one of the best economies in the country, lowest unemployment rate, one of the best financial posi-

tions in Canada, financial management — that's the public interest. Yukoners will tell all of us, we have a very good health care system thanks to the Yukon Party government's attention to the public interest. Yukoners will say that we do have good policies, good balance when we approach economic development and protection of our environment. That's in the public interest and, Mr. Speaker, we are about to head to the polls. The Yukon Party government has a plan. A plan that has been unfolding for nine years and we just laid out another five years' worth of that plan. What did we get from the Liberals? Running on empty, Mr. Speaker. I hear that tune now.

Question re: *Landlord and Tenant Act*

Mr. Cardiff: I regret that it's necessary to ask questions for yet a second time about recommendations of the Select Committee on the *Landlord and Tenant Act*. When he was asked last week, the Minister of Community Services said twice he would get back on the timelines involved on bringing forward new legislation. That's all he said and he hasn't done that yet. He didn't need to make another promise; the timelines were already agreed to by this government in the motion that was debated here in this Legislature on November 18.

The minister said at that time, in *Hansard*, that he fully supported the motion to table landlord and tenant legislation in the same sitting after the committee's report was tabled.

Will the minister now tell the House what those timelines are and when we can expect to see that bill tabled in the Legislature?

Mr. Nordick: Once again, it gives me a great opportunity to speak to the *Landlord and Tenant Act*.

Mr. Speaker, a committee of this Assembly went out and spoke to Yukoners, received input from the community at large and gave the recommendations to the Department of Community Services. The Department of Community Services needs to take that information, review it and draft legislation from that. Before they can draft legislation, government is obligated — obligated — to speak to First Nation governments, municipal governments and citizens of this territory before presenting legislation. The NDP of this House would just do it their way and their way only, and draw up legislation on the floor.

Mr. Cardiff: Once again, the government's private member, who was the chair of the select committee, has tried to rescue the minister during these questions.

He said they can't rush things; they have to go out and further consult with Yukoners. Well, I don't know where he was when he sat on the select committee, when we received 22 written submissions, when we received the questionnaires, when there were submissions by groups representing large numbers of individuals, when there were people attending the meetings we were holding. There were representatives of landlords and representatives of tenants. If that wasn't good enough for the member when he was on the committee, maybe he should have been more accommodating about allowing for more presentations when the committee was actually sitting.

Once more: will the minister tell us who was missing from the consultation, and what's so important that he refuses to move forward and table the legislation, as he agreed to when we debated the motion?

Mr. Nordick: I will take a completely different approach. I will thank the members for their hard work on the committee, and I will also thank Yukoners for the work they did in providing information to the committee, a committee that was mandated to put its recommendations forward to the House.

The government department needs to look at those recommendations and do their due diligence.

The member opposite wants to know who the government has to consult with — First Nations, community members, people in the territory — everybody in the territory — the government is obligated to consult with.

Like I said earlier, this government is objective and plans legislation in a proper, succinct manner with consultation.

Mr. Cardiff: Well, Mr. Speaker, the problem here is that they agreed to do something on November 18, 2009, and now they're reneging on that. They've gone back on their word because they said they would actually table the legislation and bring it forward.

If they want to consult on the piece of legislation, they should have amended the motion at the time. Now, we can't help but wonder why the government is doing this, why they're dragging their feet, who is lobbying to have this issue and this legislation put on the back burner? But it's one more example — it's just like the whistle-blower legislation. It's one more example of asking for public input and then ignoring the responses for their own reasons.

This is not social inclusion, Mr. Speaker. This government made a commitment —

Speaker: Order please. Ask the question.

Mr. Cardiff: — to Yukoners to bring forward important legislation. Why are they not keeping that commitment?

Mr. Nordick: I guess the member opposite missed my previous comments when I said we are committed, but the government has to follow protocol.

We are obligated as a government to listen to Yukoners with their concerns, their pros, and their negative comments toward legislation. The job has to be done properly and correctly. It can't just be rushed. The member opposite expects the department to receive recommendations one day and have legislation drafted the next day. That would mean, "Don't even bother looking at the recommendations, because we expect that you have it done already." It has to be done properly.

Question re: *Deep Creek infrastructure*

Mr. Cathers: The 2010-11 budget set aside \$2 million to develop a Deep Creek community well. I want to again thank the Minister of Community Services for that commitment and follow up with him today on the status of the project. In the fall, the minister indicated a consultant had been contracted to report on matters, including hydrogeology and identify prospective, suitable locations for the community well. Would the minister please tell me if he and his department have received a report from the consultant yet and, if not, when he anticipates they will have that consultant's report?

Hon. Mr. Lang: We have been working on the Deep Creek well for a period of time. I can tell him an update on what's happening at the moment. We are in the planning and

assessment stage. Once the technical options are evaluated, we will then consult with the community.

In other words, we have the technical options in the department. Once we get them evaluated, we will move ahead with working with the community on the well itself.

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

Can the minister tell me when he anticipates the pre-engineering phase of the Deep Creek community well project will be completed and the planning phase will commence?

Hon. Mr. Lang: I would have to wait until the technical options are assessed, and then I could give those timelines to the member opposite. Until those technical options are put in front of me, I couldn't answer that question correctly.

Mr. Cathers: I appreciate that and look forward to hearing back from the minister.

Earlier when the minister and I discussed this, he confirmed that there would be public consultation on the design of the Deep Creek community well, and he confirmed that earlier in questions today. The minister also committed to ensuring that consultations with the fire marshall's office occurred to ensure that fire trucks can be filled from the community well. Although he didn't specifically say it, I assume that means members of the Hootalinqua Volunteer Fire Department will have a chance to provide input both through that process and during the public consultation process.

Will the minister please confirm that is correct?

Secondly, I understand he doesn't have precise timelines, but is he able to give a rough estimate of when public consultation on this project is likely to occur?

Hon. Mr. Lang: That's why we're going out for consultation. We'll be working with all the affected individuals in the area who are prospective users of the well. As far as the timelines are concerned, I could get back to the member when we're closer to making those decisions.

Question re: F.H. Collins Secondary School reconstruction

Mr. Fairclough: Yesterday I asked the Minister of Education why this Yukon Party government was breaking the promise it made in the fall to commit \$24.4 million to the replacement of the F.H. Collins Secondary School for next year. The minister told me, "The project has already received the implementation phase and has gone through the Cabinet and Management Board process ..." yet the budget released last week contradicts that.

According to the budget documents, the F.H. Collins project has not yet received final approval by Management Board. So my question for this minister is, has the construction of the new F.H. Collins school been approved or not? Is the minister wrong or is the budget document wrong?

Hon. Mr. Rouble: The Government of Yukon is committed to reconstructing F.H. Collins, to building the new facility there. We have been working very diligently on this project with all our partners in education over the last couple of years, and we're very excited about going forward.

Earlier this month, Management Board did provide partial approval of the implementation phase for the F.H. Collins Secondary School replacement project. This is a very large and

complicated project and one that is essential we get right. This is a \$50-million school that will meet the needs of students, teachers and the community for decades to come.

I committed yesterday that we would continue to work very closely with all affected on this. There are items in the budget for site work for this summer as we get started with it. We will continue on with and complete the design phase. As I explained yesterday, we expect to have this out to tender within this fiscal year.

Mr. Fairclough: The students, teachers, and parents affiliated with F.H. Collins Secondary School deserve a new school that they were promised by this Yukon Party government. If this government is holding back funding, and as a result, pushes back the deadline for completion, these people deserve to know why. Yesterday the minister said, and I quote: "We're committed to working with our teachers, with our students, with educators, and with people in the construction and design committee..."

It's interesting, because in an interview with the chair of F.H. Collins Secondary School Council, she said that she was not informed of this government's plan to delay construction. If this government is so committed to working with the community on this project, then why won't it tell Yukoners about major changes that will impact the project?

Hon. Mr. Rouble: As I just mentioned, we had a meeting with Management Board earlier this month at a tabling of this budget. We've been asked numerous times to respect the process of how we go through these and how we make announcements. This is certainly one of the issues the government has been working very closely on. This is a very large project. We've had numerous conversations in here about this. I know it has been very much discussed in the public. People are very interested in it. We have an obligation to get this right — to get this right for the students attending it, for the teachers working there, for the community at large and for the taxpayers who will be paying the bill on this project.

Mr. Fairclough: The Minister of Education told Yukoners last fall that there would be a \$24.4 million in the next year's budget set aside for F.H. Collins Secondary School. There isn't. He has claimed that he's working with the community on this project, but comments from the chair of F.H. Collins Secondary School Council shows he is not.

The Minister of Education has handled this whole situation wrong. Rather than being open and accountable by working with Yukoners, he makes major decisions behind closed doors and then doesn't bother to tell the people with whom he is supposed to be working.

Did the minister break his promise just so this Yukon Party government can free up an extra \$20 million to try and balance its books for next year?

Hon. Mr. Rouble: That's a very interesting take from the Liberal member — that we have gotten this whole project wrong.

Let's take a look at how this started. The Yukon Party government recognized that we had an issue with F.H. Collins Secondary School. We took a look at the facilities within the

City of Whitehorse — the Hold Fast report — and again recognized F.H. Collins was the most important priority to deal with.

We then went to work on the secondary school programming side of things to take a look at how education was changing and how the facility needed to change to meet the needs of students now and into the future — not to build a replica of the school the member opposite went to, but one that is forward-looking.

We then went to work with the building advisory committee and indeed, Mr. Speaker, sent teachers, other people, our facilities people to visit some of the projects and some of the exciting new work in education and some of the new buildings, so they could see first-hand what new construction looked like and what this new facility could look like.

We have taken a very careful, considered and responsible approach to this and are fully committed to building this school. I look forward to starting the site work on there this summer, and I look forward to tendering the project later this fiscal year.

Question re: Old Crow drinking water well

Mr. Elias: The other day the Premier, during his budget speech, said, “Ensuring Yukoners have access to clean drinking water is another major 2006 commitment. Our government has designated a considerable amount of financial resources to meet that commitment.” Well, Mr. Speaker, that Yukon Party promise is simply not true in my community of Old Crow.

The drinking water well in Old Crow — after five years, very little has been done. There is no line item in this year’s budget. Five years ago, the *Guidelines for Canadian Drinking Water Quality* highlighted the dangers of consuming levels of certain elements, including arsenic and manganese. It put in place new, more stringent restrictions on arsenic levels.

Can the minister explain to my constituents why the Old Crow water well doesn’t deserve a line item in this year’s budget?

Hon. Mr. Lang: In addressing the member opposite’s concerns about the Old Crow drinking water system, there is an ongoing plan on how it will be managed.

All the design work has been awarded; the conceptual design report has been completed; YESAA and water licence have been approved as of April 2011; detailed design and tendering May 2011; construction awarded June 2011; construction complete October 2012; terrain work and commissioning and project completion in November 2012.

Mr. Speaker, this government has been addressing the water issue in Old Crow.

Mr. Elias: I want to get on record that I’m a lot more than just concerned about the only potable drinking water in my community of Old Crow. Five years and billions of dollars in the budget and not one shovelful of dirt has been moved. My community has heard this minister’s song and dance before, and this is about trust.

I believe in a territory where hard work is rewarded, and my constituents have done nothing but communicate with this minister year after year about the number one priority in my community, and that’s clean, safe drinking water, in the only

well my community can get drinking water from — year after year after year.

Why isn’t there a line item in this budget for the Old Crow drinking water well?

Hon. Mr. Lang: We have been working on the issue of potable water throughout the territory.

It’s not just Old Crow that has to be upgraded; it’s communities throughout the territory, and this government has invested money in potable water throughout the territory. No government has put the investment in solid waste, grey water and potable water as this government has done over the nine-year period. I just read the schedule on how this project will unfold. We’ve committed to invest in the Old Crow potable water situation, and we’re doing just that, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Elias: This is an outrage. I’m glad the minister mentions other communities, because Watson Lake, Haines Junction, Ross River, Carcross, Dawson City, Mayo, Teslin, and I mentioned Marsh Lake — all of those projects started at the same time as Old Crow started and not one shovel of dirt has been moved in Old Crow. It’s pathetic. They have advanced so far that they’re even removing arsenic from all these other wells, and they haven’t paid attention to Old Crow’s water well. The fact of the matter is that there’s not one line item in this year’s budget that says Old Crow water well on it; that’s a fact. I’ve asked for face-to-face meetings with this minister; he said, “No.” I’ve sent emails and letters; he said, “No.” I’ve asked for briefings about the Old Crow water well; he said, “No.” You know what this is? This is shameful for this Yukon Party government to be playing politics with the drinking water in my community of Old Crow.

When is my constituency going to be able to see the upgrading of the water well in Old Crow?

Hon. Mr. Lang: I’ll correct the member opposite; I have never had a communication from that member opposite on the water well at Old Crow.

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Point of order

Speaker: The Hon. Member for Vuntut Gwitchin, on a point of order.

Mr. Elias: I don’t know what Standing Order is about uttering falsehoods, but I can prove that I have communicated with the minister.

Speaker’s ruling

Speaker: There seems to be, from the Chair’s perspective, a dispute between members. The Chair has no information either way, so it is simply a dispute between members.

The Minister of Community Services has the floor.

Hon. Mr. Lang: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We at this time are working with Old Crow water, development of the Tagish, Mendenhall, Ross River, Deep Creek, Rock Creek, Keno and Burwash Landing. We are doing our job as a government; we are working with the Old Crow situation, regardless of what the member opposite says. We have a timeline; we made a commitment and we will do the job.

Speaker: The time for Question Period has mercifully elapsed.

Notice of government private members' business

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Pursuant to Standing Order 14.2(7), I would like to identify the items standing in the name of the government private member to be called on Wednesday, February 9, 2011. They are Motion No. 1260, standing in the name of the Member for Klondike, and Motion No. 1275, standing in the name of the Member for Klondike.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

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

Unanimous consent re debate of Motion No. 1269

Mr. Cardiff: I'd like to request the unanimous consent of the House to debate Motion No. 1269, standing in the name of the Member for Whitehorse Centre.

Speaker: Is there unanimous consent?

Some Hon. Members: Agree.

Some Hon. Members: Disagree.

Speaker: Unanimous consent has been denied.

GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

Motion No. 1255

Clerk: Motion No. 1255, standing in the name of the Hon. Ms. Taylor.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Government House Leader

THAT, notwithstanding any Standing Order or usual practices of this House, on Wednesday, February 9, 2011, the House shall recess at the appropriate hour, in order to receive an Address from the Governor General of Canada, the Rt. Hon. David Johnston, together with all introductory and related remarks,

THAT, upon completion of the Address the House shall continue with the business before it,

THAT, the Address and introductory and related remarks shall be printed in *Hansard* for that day and form part of the records of this House; and

THAT the media recording and transmission of such Address, introductory and related remarks be authorized pursuant to established guidelines for such occasions.

Hon. Ms. Taylor: The motion before the House today is to request the consent of all members to recess the House for the purposes of receiving the Governor General of Canada, the Rt. Hon. David Johnston, to the Legislative Assembly on Wednesday, February 9, 2011.

This upcoming visit is especially noteworthy for several reasons beyond the significance of a visit to the Yukon by a Governor General. To the best of my knowledge and that of the Legislative Assembly, no Governor General has stood on the floor of the Yukon Legislative Assembly and addressed members, such as what is being proposed by way of this motion.

Looking to our past, Governor General Roland Michener presented the Mace to the Territorial Council as a gift from the

people of Canada back in March 1972. The House, however, was not sitting at the time.

For my part, it is both an honour and a privilege to be able to witness and be part of this history in the making for Yukon politics. I would like to extend our warmest invitation to the Governor General on behalf of the Yukon government.

We wish him the very best during his travels throughout the territory and are pleased he will have the opportunity to take part in a number of events, including the celebration of Hockey Day in Canada, the running of the Yukon Quest and others.

I look forward to his inaugural visit and look forward to advancing this motion, in order to welcome him to the Legislature on Wednesday, February 9, 2011. Thank you.

Mr. Mitchell: It is indeed a unique occasion as outlined by the House leader for the governing party, and we, too, would like to express our support for having the Rt. Hon. David Johnston, Governor General of Canada, address this House tomorrow afternoon. This is a unique privilege and an honour for this House to receive the Queen's representative in our Assembly and to listen to remarks here in Yukon.

As noted, this will be the first time that any Governor General, to our knowledge, has addressed this House. The Governor General has spoken out on a number of issues already during his term, including his desire to see a northern university — an Arctic university — occur at some point in Canada. It will be interesting to see if he addresses us on that topic and others. I understand that the Governor General was a hockey player at Harvard University in earlier times during his career and no doubt will very much enjoy being in Yukon in this very unique week where we have Hockey Day in Canada being celebrated here.

We on this side all look forward, with great interest, to his remarks and obviously will be supporting this motion.

Ms. Hanson: On behalf of the New Democratic Party caucus, we too support this motion and look very much forward to the words of the Governor General and to having him present in the Yukon during this auspicious week.

Mr. Cathers: I also will be supporting this motion and want to take this opportunity to welcome the Governor General to the Yukon. I'm very pleased that he's taking the time to visit both the territory and the Legislative Assembly, and I commend this motion to the House.

Motion No. 1255 agreed to

GOVERNMENT BILLS

Bill No. 24: Second Reading — *First Appropriation Act, 2011-12* — adjourned debate

Clerk: Second reading, Bill No. 24, standing in the name of the Hon. Mr. Fentie; adjourned debate, the Hon. Mr. Edzerza.

Speaker: The minister has 17 minutes, 56 seconds, I believe.

Hon. Mr. Edzerza: Mr. Speaker, I started my budget response by thanking all the Environment department staff for their hard work, and today I would like to extend my appreciation to all the political staff. They, too, provide many hours of hard work for the elected officials. Yesterday when I left off I was describing a lot of the progress that has been made by the Yukon Party government over the past eight years with regard to environmental issues. Today I will continue that.

Mr. Speaker, Environment Yukon is currently working on assessing the vulnerability of Yukon tree species and ecosystems to climate change and their capacity to adapt. Starting in 2008, through the federal climate change adaptation program, our government has invested \$1.3 million over four years in four projects. Environment Yukon is an active partner involved with the community ecology monitoring program, the Arctic Institute Research Station and Yukon College monitoring programs and community involvement are other partners in this program. The Community Ecological Monitoring Project — CEMP — collects information on a number of species of both plants and animals to use as indicators of change in Yukon's boreal forest ecosystem. Originating in the Kluane region, the program was expanded in 2005 to include Mayo, Watson Lake and Whitehorse. The Town of Faro was later added in 2007.

The Government of Yukon is participating with many organizations regarding climate change. The exchange of information regarding new technologies, adaptation, mitigation and how climate change is affecting the rest of Canada and other regions around the world is supportive of how we develop our policies and programs to help Yukoners adapt to our changing climate.

Environment Yukon is collaborating with our sister territories to develop a draft pan-territorial adaptation strategy. "COP" means the United Nations climate change conference, or multinational meetings that are held every year. This past December I was fortunate to be able to attend COP16, which met in Cancun, Mexico.

I am impressed with the process and progress made in dealing with climate change at the global level. The Cancun agreements included emission reduction targets, created a new \$100-billion global green fund to help the most vulnerable developing nations and a new technology-sharing mechanism.

I believe our participation helped the Government of Canada delegation develop realistic, comprehensive proposals, such as reducing Canada's overall greenhouse gas emissions to 17 percent below 2005 levels by the year 2020.

At the Climate Leaders Summit, I took great interest in how other regions are working with their people to adapt to climate change and to change harmful behaviours. I had the opportunity to describe some of the changes Yukon is experiencing and how our government is working to adapt to a changing climate. I shared how our territory is powered by over 90 percent renewable energy and our government's commitment to reduce internal greenhouse gas emissions by 20 percent by 2015 and to become carbon-neutral by 2020.

I also spoke about our experiential work with road building techniques and materials to help make our highways safer due to melting permafrost and frost heaves. I was proud to share

that our government is building over 120 new housing units to SuperGreen standards and our new Tombstone Interpretive Centre was also built to green standards.

The Yukon government representatives at COP16 shared and learned with our provincial and territorial counterparts and will all representatives from governments and organizations from every corner of our world.

I am energized after attending COP16 and encouraged that the work of our Climate Change Secretariat, guided by the government's *Climate Change Action Plan*, is already making a difference. I am appreciative of the opportunity I had to represent our territory and to share both Yukon's accomplishments and challenges at COP16. Our government will continue to support and participate in national and international efforts and processes to address climate change that is facing us all.

Environment Yukon is also a partner with the Yukon Wildlife Preserve for the construction of a new animal care facility. Our government secured \$1.9 million in funding from Canada. Environment Yukon has provided \$1.8 million over three years to the Yukon Wildlife Preserve to help the organization expand its programs.

I am also very proud to say that we have budgeted \$252,000 to fund a new Conservation Officer Services branch in Carmacks. This position will allow officers to better respond to human-wildlife conflicts and increase services in the area. This has been a request for many years and is now a reality.

Due to the expanding resource exploration, our government is expecting increased economic activities on the land will require everyone to increase their attention to their use of water and the importance of protecting Yukon's water resources. The Water Resources branch is working on a series of documents to help developers understand how their activities will affect water when carrying out their activities. The information will help developers prepare their applications for the environmental assessment and licensing processes and outline how they can minimize their impact when working in or near water.

Work is ongoing to offer a water data and information website at the end of March to give governments, the public and industry improved accessibility to data and information about Yukon's water resources. This action not only helps Yukon to meet several of the goals outlined last August by Canada's premiers when they signed the Council of the Federation *Water Charter*, but it also meets one of the major recommendations of the government's *Climate Change Action Plan*.

I would like now to switch a little of my presentation toward a traditional perspective with regard to the environment. I know that First Nation people do have a lot of traditional knowledge, values and beliefs with regard to respecting Mother Earth and the environment. For example, we must respect all two- and four-legged animals that walk and live on Mother Earth, all those who fly in the sky, all those who live and swim in the water, and all of those who live and crawl under the earth.

To respect the two- and four-legged, we must not abuse our powers as human beings. Without the use of firearms, man is quite possibly the weakest species on earth. One-on-one they

would lose the confrontation with most animals with which we live with and share Mother Earth. To respect those who fly, we must not pollute the air. With the technology we have today, we must be able to minimize the pollution we put in the air.

There has to be a way to minimize, for example, the exhaust that comes out of a vehicle. To respect those that live and swim in the water, we must do everything possible as humans to ensure we do not pollute the lakes, oceans, rivers and streams. Without good, clean water, animals' lives are threatened.

We only need to look at what happened in the Gulf of Mexico with the oil spill there. It's one thing to be able to see those birds and animals covered in oil, but what about the ones we can't see, like the plankton in the ocean? Man has to put in safety checks so these kinds of tragedies don't happen.

For all of those that live and crawl under the earth, we must not pollute the earth. Oil spills and using the earth to dispose of harmful and hazardous wastes must be monitored with caution and respect. These are very simple examples of how we as humans can, and have a responsibility to, respect all on Mother Earth.

Mr. Speaker, it is man who creates a lot of disruption on Mother Earth. I don't know of any other animal species that, for example, mine or log. Man does and it can be done with respect because we have all grown used to the luxuries that we receive.

Mother Earth is a provider — provides food, medicines, and all essentials humans have grown to accept as luxuries. When I speak about luxuries, I refer to all modern transportation — cars, motorcycles, bikes to jets and high-tech trains. Mother Earth has provided the raw materials to build all of these modes of transportation. Man has been able to take advantage of all the luxuries that Mother Earth provides. But again, we must also respect how we repair the damage that happens while extracting things from Mother Earth.

Mother Earth is one that can and will provide all essentials to sustain life on this Earth for as many years as humans will be here; however, that's not to say that humans can't destroy this, because they can. They can pollute the water to such an extent that there will be no more drinking water. So we have to be aware of all these things as being a reality.

I can talk for many hours on this topic because Mother Earth provides much more; however, due to the time, I will stop here and again respectfully ask all people, as individuals, right across this territory, to be aware of what they can contribute and what they can do to ensure they are not destroying the water, or disrupting animals when they are calving, or taking an abundance of birds in the spring when they are young or mating.

There are so many things that an individual can do without being regulated by government or any other means. It is strictly up to the individual, in my opinion, to govern themselves, and that includes every citizen in the territory. I know First Nations have repeatedly stated that they have subsistence rights to hunt, while along with that goes traditional law on how you use that right. So you can't have one without the other. You have to honour all traditional knowledge, values and beliefs when it

comes to the harvesting of any animals, whether they are birds, moose, caribou, sheep, whatever. There is a possibility that if everyone, every citizen in the territory, does not do their due diligence in harvesting, we can actually be without moose in the future, and it will happen.

My final message in this budget response is that this government has been delivering a billion-dollar budget plus for three years in a row now and have laid out a five-year financial plan into the future. I will end with a quote I heard on the street when I was told by an individual, "Why would anyone want to replace a Premier or government who can produce a billion-dollar budget for three years in a row for 34,000 people? One would have to be insane to do so." Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Ms. Hanson: It is an honour to stand in my place as member of this Legislative Assembly representing Whitehorse Centre to speak to the 2011-12 Budget Address. I'm especially proud to stand here as a New Democrat. The legacy of dedicated New Democratic representation for Whitehorse Centre is long, including Roger Kimmerly, Joyce Hayden, Margaret Commodore — the first aboriginal woman Minister of Justice in Canada — my predecessor and friend and respected colleague, Todd Hardy. What each of these Whitehorse Centre MLAs held in common was a strong commitment to the New Democratic principles of equality, democracy, sustainability, community and cooperation — principles that are more than just words. They are the measure of every initiative we undertake and support on behalf of Yukoners. They are the principles that served as a guide for both the previous Leader of the New Democratic Party, as well as the Member for Mount Lorne, as they worked across party lines to initiate many legislative initiatives, such as the *Smoke-free Places Act* or the *Landlord and Tenant Act* review, to name just two, or to support government initiatives because and when they were the right thing to do for Yukoners.

Mr. Speaker, over the course of the past months, I've had the opportunity to talk with many Yukoners. In particular, I've spoken with many of the residents of Whitehorse Centre, not just in the month-long by-election campaign, but in the months leading up to it and since. Stretching from the banks of the Yukon River to the clay cliffs, along Robert Service Way to the Marwell industrial area, Whitehorse Centre is a riding that gives new meaning to diversity. Home to light industrial and service industries, arts and cultural organizations, the only full immersion elementary school in the Yukon, book stores, box stores and independent businesses, art galleries, carving studios, coffee shops, bicycle shops, a Harley shop, feed stores, medical practitioners of every sort, fine restaurants and the wienie wagon, high-tech industries and those that are decidedly low, Whitehorse Centre has it all.

Whitehorse Centre is also home to several levels of government. The Ta'an Kwäch'än First Nation, the City of Whitehorse and, of course, this Legislative Assembly are all situated within the boundaries of Whitehorse Centre. Many, if not most, non-government and service organizations are also headquartered in Whitehorse Centre. All that being said, it is the people who make Whitehorse Centre a unique amalgam of all that is

Yukon. I'm honoured to represent First Nation people, francophones, long-time residents and recent immigrants.

One of the uniting factors of Whitehorse Centre is pride of place. As you wander about the riding, you realize that over the years, Whitehorse Centre, whether it is downtown or in Marwell, has developed a number of communities within the community. So, Mr. Speaker, you can understand why I'm so proud and humbled to have been elected on December 13 to represent this eclectic riding.

As I looked around this Assembly on my first sitting day as an MLA, I realized that there are certain differences between me and the majority of the sitting members. One that I think worth commenting on is that I come to this new job after a long career as a public servant for provincial, municipal and federal governments. I note this because of the frequency with which the Premier and his Cabinet colleagues bring the public service into their comments when questioned about the budget or about issues to do with their portfolios. To be frank, this is wrong.

As Premier, as ministers, the members opposite are accountable and responsible for their departments. The Premier has challenged the opposition to say what they would do differently. Well, Mr. Speaker, as Leader of the New Democrats, I start by recognizing that public servants are not in the public sphere and they should not be dragged into this Assembly as a means of deflecting attention from the fact that the political direction comes from the Premier and Cabinet. The public service must not only be seen to be separate from the political, but it must be allowed to operate at arm's length if it is to be expected to offer quality, objective policy advice, even at times telling the Premier or minister that an idea may be good politics but poor public policy. That is, they must have the freedom to speak truth to power.

Listening to the Budget Address and the budget presented by the Finance minister on February 3, I was reminded of the voices of the constituents of my riding as he spoke. Over the past 17 months, as Leader of the Yukon New Democratic Party, almost to a person, the first thing I heard when the conversation turned to politics in Yukon, is a lack of trust in government — in this Yukon Party government. You know, Mr. Speaker, people are quick to recognize the vast amounts of money that the Yukon Party has had to spend and they are glad they have done some good things with it. However, money cannot buy respect. Respect is an important element in the relationship between those who are elected to serve the public and those they serve.

When a government tells its citizens that it wants to hear their views and then ignores them, they may find forgiveness if it happens once but when — as has been the case with this government — it becomes the way of doing business, people notice and they don't like it. If one chooses not to listen to the people but rather to tell them what is good for them, people notice. If over 900 Yukoners invest their time and energy to participate in not one but two health care reviews to address the serious issues surrounding sustainability of health care in Yukon, only to have the government announce the construction of two acute care hospitals rather than embracing the recommendations for the more cost-effective and coordinated care

that would result from implementing a collaborative care model, people notice.

If hundreds of Yukoners provide input to a treaty-mandated land use planning process only to find that the Yukon Party government does not intend to respect either the process or the input, people notice, and if people from every community in every sector of society provide input to a review of policing in Yukon and a task force on a specific aspect related to that review that is an appropriate community response to the severely intoxicated and they are ignored, people notice. I suggest, Mr. Speaker, that the fundamental difference between the Yukon Party and the Yukon New Democratic Party way of working with and for the citizens is the starting premise.

The Premier has demonstrated that he prefers the father-knows-best approach: tell the people that things are great and if they don't believe you, tell them again, more forcefully. Cast disdain on those who dare question any aspect of the decision or how it was arrived at. As a New Democrat, I know that Yukoners have a collective wisdom that can guide this territory to achieve great things for all Yukoners, not just a select few. I know this because history has shown that when asked for their views, they respond with enthusiasm and careful thought. Proof of this is the legacy of previous New Democratic governments which set the foundation for much that we as Yukoners take for granted. Yukoners were asked to share their vision for the Yukon. Not only were they listened to, their ideas were transformed into real and lasting action. From significant legislation still in place today, such as the *Health Act*, the *Education Act*, the *Environment Act*, human rights legislation, to programs such as the mining incentive program, small business incentive programs, community development funding, institutions such as Yukon College, the Yukon Arts Centre, Yukon native teacher education program, and many more foundations for good government in Yukon and all without once having a government deficit. So, in response to the Premier, another difference in approach between the Yukon New Democrats and the Yukon Party is that we do believe that Yukoners have much to offer in developing a new vision for the Yukon in the 21st century.

New Democrats believe it is time to engage in real conversations within and across the Yukon community, to imagine a Yukon that reflects and acknowledges that the fundamental building blocks of Yukon have changed with the settlement of most land claims and with the devolution of provincial-like responsibility to the Yukon.

The 11 First Nation final and self-government agreements are not optional accessories or window dressing.

I spent over 20 years of my professional life working through the complex world of Yukon negotiations, primarily garnering support within the federal system at all levels. As Yukoners, we have a right to be proud of what we have achieved through these agreements: the potential to do things differently, to make our government systems work more effectively for all Yukoners. At the same time, we have a right to be dismayed by the lack of political will demonstrated by this government to truly breathe life into the negotiated agreements.

To do so will require all of us to step back, take a deep breathe, and say, okay. Sixteen years after the first four agreements were signed — 16 years February 14 — is this what we really intended? Did we really want to see the Yukon vulcanized into 11 or 15 government enclaves?

As a Yukon New Democrat and as one who listened to elders in every community in Yukon, I know the message was truly, “We do this for our children and grandchildren. We do not want to be forced to be separate any more.” A new vision for Yukon can be achieved with political leadership from First Nation and Yukon government politicians committed to change, focused on outcomes that will come as a result of suspending our adherence to how we have done it in the past. Imagine an education system that was truly reflective of the cultural, historic, linguistic and demographic reality of Yukon — or a child welfare system designed to accommodate those same dimensions. Systemic change with Yukon government is possible with thoughtful and insightful political leadership. The Yukon public service has demonstrated time and again their capacity to be creative in response to positive political leadership and direction.

Much has been said already about this budget — surplus, no surplus. Really, it is about credibility. The Premier has tabled a budget that projects a \$38.5-million surplus, but his credibility has worn thin given recent history of surpluses predicted in the main estimates that have become deficits through the supplementary budgets. For 2010-11 fiscal year, which still has two months to go, the Yukon Party government predicted a moderate surplus of \$2.9 million. Instead, the supplementary tabled last week revealed a \$20-million-plus deficit. This is the second deficit in a row. As we have heard, the result is that the savings account that this government started out with has been spent down to \$18 million. It's gone from \$202 million to \$18 million. So now Yukoners have been asked to believe that for 2011-12, we will see a surplus of \$38.5 million based on the notion that there will be \$10 million more in revenues from personal income and corporate taxes and a reduction in spending by decreasing O&M spending by \$10 million.

Mr. Speaker, I do not always agree with my colleague, the Leader of the Official Opposition, but on this point I do. There is no surplus; there will be no surplus. You know, I almost feel like that character in the Monty Python sketch — “This bird is dead. It is really, really dead.”

It has been previously noted that in 2011-12, our own-source revenues will account for 11.1 percent of the budget. This is actually down from 12.4 percent in 2009-10. So despite a \$1 billion budget plus — the largest ever — we are still pretty much at the same level of dependence on the federal government. The Premier is fond of paraphrasing a version of section 36 of the *Constitution*. I, too, believe that as Canadians, Yukoners should expect reasonably comparable levels of service for reasonably comparable levels of taxation.

I think the Premier confuses tax effort with budgeting. It is part of it, but so is effective planning and management of our fiscal resources.

It is time for this Yukon Party government to get a grip. The federal core transfer has grown from roughly \$550 million,

when they were elected almost nine years ago, to approximately \$745 million. The other \$250 million over the last few years is time-limited or one-time funding, yet the government has spent it and more, year after year.

History has a tendency to repeat itself. The last time a federal government was facing a serious deficit in the mid-1990s, it made arbitrary cuts to the territorial financing. A five-percent cut in federal transfers at this point in time, when we're running a deficit, would have a significant negative impact on all aspects of Yukon.

So what is this government doing to build a resiliency into our economy? Yukon is riding a boom — not a boom of this government's creation. World commodity prices are driving this boom, and it is great that Yukon has been able to catch a part of the wave, but let's not be swallowed by those waves.

Yukon New Democrats have a strong and proud history of supporting responsible mining in Yukon, and we will continue to do so because we believe that all Yukoners deserve to benefit from the resource riches that lie within our territory. The Yukon is no longer a protectorate ruled by Ottawa. Yukoners expect to see a real and lasting return on the access granted to resource extraction industries.

This Yukon Party government has put a lot of its political capital into the success of the mining industry. The work done to date to modernize the Yukon Geological Survey and to market the territory has been good. I think the world now knows that we have many valuable resources. At least, that was certainly the take-away message from the sessions I sat in on at the Cordilleran Roundup and with the people that I spoke with while I was there. But now is the time to set the ground rules for the future — for Yukon's future — not by dictate, but by thoughtful and open discussion.

As government, we need to ensure that the benefits flow to the Yukon public, not just to shareholders. We need to decide what those benefits should be, and we need political leadership that is prepared to lead the discussion in a respectful way, to avoid the fear-mongering that is often attached to any suggestion that the status quo regarding mining is open for question. It's a serious issue for Yukon and it's not simply a question — as my Liberal colleague has suggested — of going cap in hand to the federal government and asking that the \$3-million threshold in the devolution agreement be raised.

As Yukoners — as the Government of Yukon, we need to assert that we are *maîtres chez nous* and decide how we modernize the mining regime to ensure that the return on our non-renewable resources is significant and lasting and to determine what portion of any future resource rent is socked away for a rainy day for future generations and not to be used for day-to-day operations. Yukon non-renewable resources are just that — non-renewable. We need to ensure that there is an enduring financial legacy.

By April this year, we are told there will be three operating mines — three more mines in the permitting stage. The value of the minerals to be extracted is estimated to be in the billions and yet the revenues to Yukon for those mines will be small to nil for many years because of the mine royalty regime currently in place.

Despite the significant investment by Yukon taxpayers in everything from new roads, infrastructure, grid extensions, et cetera, the current royalty regime under the Yukon quartz mining system works against the likelihood of a real return to Yukon in the near future. Similarly, we know that today gold is valued at more than \$1,350 U.S. per ounce. When you ask most Yukoners what they think the royalty revenue from gold in the Yukon is, you get all sorts of answers and a shocked look when they realize that the total land and minerals, leases and royalties for 2011-12 is projected at \$187,000.

This government might not get it, but most Yukoners do. Valuing the gold extracted from the Yukon at 37.5 cents an ounce is bizarre. Before we run off to Ottawa asking for a greater share of resource royalty revenues, let's engage Yukoners — miners, economists, citizens — in economic modeling, in a discussion about what we as Yukoners believe is fair value to be placed on our resources. Then let us, together with First Nation governments, renegotiate from an informed stance.

Yesterday my colleague from Mount Lorne talked about other ways we could look at retaining more of the benefits from the resource exploration and extraction industries. The N.W.T. government has looked at some innovative tools to achieve social, economic and environmental goals, including capturing a portion of the tax paid to workers who normally reside outside the territory and so do not pay income tax where they work. As we know, the Yukon government has no control over world mineral prices, but it does have some control over how a boom is managed, and it has a responsibility to ensure that the social safety net is not breaking under the pressure of increased economic activity.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to see the inclusion of additional money for land development for residential purposes. The lack of housing is at a critical state in this territory. The Premier boasts daily of the low unemployment rate and the influx of people into Yukon. The downside to this for individuals and for employers alike is that there is no available housing. Just ask the many small and medium local employers who face the daily challenge of locating qualified people wanting to move to Yukon, only to have them turn down the job offer, because there is no housing available — no land available to build on and no housing.

On housing, all aspects of housing — from availability of lots to build on to social housing — the Yukon Party government took no action until too late. Now it has been desperately playing catch-up. Having addressed a number of the social housing demands by virtue of access to a variety of federal stimulus and short-term funding arrangements, the budget appears to have no capacity to address the need to keep up to the identified need for housing for those who cannot afford market rents or purchase prices.

Yet there is no mention in this budget of how the Yukon Party plans to address the real and still unanswered question of how we will provide safe and adequate housing for the most vulnerable in our society: the homeless and the hard-to-house.

Despite the recommendation of the Task Force on Acutely Intoxicated Persons at Risk, despite the collaborative efforts of many not-for-profit agencies working together on the Northern

City Supportive Housing Coalition, there is no mention in this budget of how we, as a community, will address this pressing need. There is no mention in this budget of a real and sustained initiative to address the situation of homeless youth.

As I read through the budget documents and listened to the Budget Address, I had a sinking realization that nowhere in this budget is there a real sense of how this government is going to address the long-awaited social inclusion strategy. As you will recall, this was an initiative that the NDP championed and were pleased to support because we know that all the studies, evidence-based research, shows that when we begin to address inequality in a real way, we begin to build a socially and economically inclusive society.

A government with a vision for the future listens to its citizens. A government with its eye on the future will make sure that land use planning is done in an expeditious manner before, not after, the land has been claimed for development purposes. The Yukon is fast becoming a world tourism icon. Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure if you saw the January 1 issue of the *Globe and Mail*, which featured the Yukon as one of the top 10 destinations in the world. We cannot risk this cultural icon of Yukon as a tourist destination.

If this government were listening, it would know that climate change is a significant concern to Yukoners across this territory. Whether it is the transition towns groups that have been formed, or those who live on the land and see the impact on the changing landscape, people are asking where are the measures to make sure that the immediate and long-term impacts of climate change form the basis of all our policy decisions, not just those that may be called "climate change".

Where is the support for the expansion of public transit? How will this government address one of the main greenhouse gas emitters — the transportation of goods, all goods? Where are the plans and resources for food security in Yukon? Maybe the lack of vision is a product of the disconnect with the public. Maybe what we see is what we get when it comes to this government — a big budget, the biggest ever — with no guiding vision.

I do not want to end on a negative note. As I noted in my earlier comments, as Leader of the Yukon New Democratic Party, I believe it is important to offer suggestions as well as to point out problems. I noted that this budget has certain credibility gaps. The spend-everything-in-sight approach to budgeting clearly doesn't work. The NDP has suggested and does suggest the need for a critical evaluation of stimulus measures in Yukon budgeting. As a starting point, the Finance minister could provide information to Yukoners to assist them in making up their minds on their own on the success or effectiveness of this government's approach.

For example, can he tell us how many jobs have been created through the stimulus spending over the last few years? How many — the number — Yukon residents employed on capital projects as a result of this spending splurge? The number of equity-targeted groups that have been accommodated by this spending? Of the historically high unemployment groups, how many of those are getting jobs or have gotten jobs?

We suggest that a stimulus involve human or social capital investments, not just bridges, roads or other infrastructure. We suggest a review and a report on stimulus measures. So far we haven't received any reports on the stimulus or any numbers on job creation measures, et cetera, but it would be interesting for the Finance minister to produce them for this House.

In conclusion, the 2011-12 Budget Address and budget leave one clear message: there is not one, but two deficits at play in Yukon. There is a financial deficit and there is a democratic deficit. We have seen the attempts by this government to play with the facts regarding the financial deficit. In fact, we are used to the games. Yukoners hold the key to correcting the democratic deficit, and the NDP stands ready to work with them, to work for positive change for Yukon. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is indeed my honour and privilege to be back in the Assembly and be able to provide some remarks in support of the 2011-12 budget that was tabled by the Premier, the Minister of Finance, some days ago.

First I would just like to take the opportunity to welcome all members back to the Assembly and to thank, very much, a number of individuals. I would like to thank my family who has supported me as I have lived the political life over the last couple of years. I have very much appreciated their support, their patience and level of tolerance at the best of times. But at the end of the day, if it weren't for those individuals — family members — who have been able to stand behind individuals such as ourselves, we wouldn't be here today.

I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to the public service, for it is the public servants who, in fact, provide guidance, they provide direction, they provide financial expertise, they provide the support to each and every one of us as ministers in this government. It has been a real privilege and an honour to work with many, many, many professionals housed within the Government of Yukon. I can speak for the respective departments that I have held over the last number of years. Again, I continue to learn from each of the ministries and continue to ask questions and continue to listen to Yukoners, stakeholders, other governments and Yukoners at large in regard to the direction of the territory. Above all, I would like to thank especially the constituents of Whitehorse West for their support over these past eight years plus and for taking the opportunity to raise their views, their suggestions on a variety of issues of importance.

The constituency of Whitehorse West is very much a growing community. It is comprised of the neighbourhoods of Arkell, Logan, a large portion of Copper Ridge, as well as the new subdivision of Ingram. It is an area that has grown significantly since our family first made the Copper Ridge area our home some 12 years ago. It's an area that continues to grow with the addition of many new homes, as well, as I just referred to, the recently established subdivision of Ingram.

I was very pleased to be able to take part in the opening of the Ingram subdivision alongside my colleague, the Minister of Community Services, as well as the Mayor of the City of

Whitehorse. The Ingram neighbourhood is comprised of a mix of residential lots, which includes, I believe, development sites for over 70 townhouses, 38 lots for single detached homes and it contains duplex lots and multi-family lots.

I congratulate the City of Whitehorse, which led the process of the neighbourhood planning and design for the subdivision. I also say congratulations to the Yukon government — to the Department of Community Services — which was responsible for clearing, pre-grading, constructing the underground utilities and the roads and so forth.

The new zoning standards incorporated within the Ingram subdivision include green building initiatives and sustainability, which is of significant note. The lots, as I understand, were all sold to individual home owners and/or by home builders. Of course, we are very much supportive of this particular housing initiative, as we are with the next largest residential development in Whitehorse, which is Whistle Bend, which will be, and is, another great partnership between the City of Whitehorse and the Yukon government.

This year's budget coming up — 2011-12 — does contain significant dollars for the development of this residential area — over \$40 million, to be exact, with looking to phase 1 lots being made available to the public next year and thereafter. It will be a significant development and we are very pleased to see dollars allotted to this particular area. As has already been mentioned, the growth of the territory lends itself to the growth in demand for infrastructure, such as housing.

I would also like to recognize to a number of entities within the Copper Ridge area and a number of institutions — two, to be exact — that have also evolved over the past decade within the constituency. I speak of Copper Ridge Place and École Émilie Tremblay. Copper Ridge Place, as I've said repeatedly on the floor of this Legislature, is really a home for many Yukon residents — over 90, and growing.

It provides a full range of specialized care for seniors, elders, adults and children. It is what I have always coined as a special community within our broader community. Like our territory, it too has grown over the years housing, as I mentioned, over 90 individuals. I know that since our government was first elected, Copper Ridge Place has grown to its capacity, with the opening of an additional 24 beds over the last several years, which recognizes the very importance of this particular facility to the lives and well-being of Yukoners who require a much higher level of care beyond what family and friends are able to provide.

I would like to recognize and thank the staff of Copper Ridge Place for their ongoing professionalism and their continued commitment to quality care that is second to none in this country and for their exemplary efforts in making the facility a home for many. I would also like to pay recognition and extend my thanks to the many, many, many volunteers from the community who have given of their time to enhance the quality of life for each of the residents, whether it's providing or assisting with recreation programs, special events, one-on-one visits, helping with the local store and so forth. The list goes on.

I would also like to recognize the ongoing work of École Émilie Tremblay and the staff who have done a very good job

at maintaining a community school within a community, yet a very distinct institution that has provided a quality education to many students over the years.

I would like to express my congratulations to the graduating class of 2010 for doing well and for advancing to the next stage of their lives. Of course, it never ceases to amaze me the community spirit within the school that serves the broader francophone public at large.

I would also like to recognize the outgoing director of La Garderie for her exemplary efforts over the years. I understand that she has chosen to retire and that another individual will be taking her place. I just wanted to recognize her ongoing work and great attention to early learning and to the exemplary services that are provided to many parents throughout the City of Whitehorse.

I also want to thank the Copper Ridge Neighbourhood Association for its ongoing work on behalf of citizens within Copper Ridge. They have been involved in a number of community-driven events, as well as infrastructure, including the local skating rink that was installed a few years ago, thanks also to the support of the community development fund, and of course its ongoing work with Copper Ridge Place and many individuals within the community to further develop the Lazulite Park, which is continuing to evolve as well.

I'd like to thank the association for their ongoing FireSmart initiatives. The neighbourhood association has been approved for funding by the FireSmart program year after year for their continued fire abatement initiatives in the Copper Ridge area. Again, I'd just like to express my appreciation for projects, and in particular to the many volunteers of the neighborhood association, all of which, I might add, are helping to reduce the risk of fire to area residents.

I would like to now just take some time to speak to this particular budget as well as reflect on where we were some eight years ago and where we are today and what the future holds for the Yukon as I see it.

Mr. Speaker, the budget before us very much reflects significant changes that have occurred in the Yukon. The economy has and continues to flourish from sector to sector. Tourism for example outperformed every other jurisdiction in the country in terms of visitation to the territory in 2010. Compared to other jurisdictions and despite global wide economic challenges — and if there's one thing that I have learned over the years in tourism — is that it is anything but stagnant, there are changes all around.

Thanks to a vibrant tourism industry, thanks to the ongoing efforts and work of many stakeholders involved in the tourism industry, tourism is holding its own compared to the rest of the country. I congratulate the many stakeholders for their ongoing efforts in ensuring that we remain a destination of choice, not only during the summer, but year-round, and that is by continuing to invest in initiatives and events. The Yukon Quest is underway. The 28th running of the Yukon Quest is but one example, to be sure, of how investments in icon events such as this are ensuring that we continue to be on the map when it comes to destinations for winter travel.

We are very appreciative of the ongoing work of the hundreds of volunteers, the staff and the board of directors of institutions such as the Yukon Quest for their ongoing work. This speaks to the very importance of tourism in not only the Yukon but Alaska. It also speaks to the continued friendships that have been garnered between our two countries — between Alaska and Yukon.

Mining has also been referred to here today. It also continues to flourish. As was referenced in the Budget Address, exploration expenditures are expected to exceed \$140 million, whereas mineral production for 2010 was expected to total some \$260 million.

When you compare this to 2002 when there were no operating mines and exploration amounted to about \$5 million, there really is little comparison.

Yukon's cultural industries also continue to thrive, whether it's film and sound or arts and culture. I know there is reference within the Budget Address to Yukon hosting the Western Canadian Music Awards, a significant feat in itself, which will put Yukon on the cultural map. We have been on the map for many years, but this is a resounding success for the sound-recording industry.

Filming continues to be a huge net contributor to Yukon's economy, as well as Yukon's social well-being.

There were a number of great, wonderful productions that were shot in the heart of the Yukon — the Tombstone Park, I believe it was — I am just trying to think of the name of the one show or the one film. I think it was *The Big Year*, which showcased a number of celebrities. Again, I congratulate the film industry for being able to provide for such a talented and complex industry that has grown significantly over the last number of years and for being able to accommodate productions, but still be able to initiate new productions, of which there are many events in recognition of the industry itself.

Yukon's unemployment rate remains the lowest in the country at just over 3.5 percent. Our population is at an all-time high, marking the arrival of many individuals from all over the country and elsewhere.

I know that on the weekend we were at our friend's place for an open fire pit, where we were able to roast some marshmallows and hot dogs. It was a great family gathering of individuals, at which time I had the opportunity to meet a number of new residents to the Yukon coming from Colombia or Argentina and again just reflect on the growth of the territory. The diverse cultural makeup of the territory is continuing to influence the Yukon as a very rich and wealthy place to live and to raise our families, and I speak of the human potential, of course.

In going door to door over the last number of years, it has been duly noted that there are individuals from all over the world who have sought the Yukon — they are making the Yukon their home. I think that is wonderful. It's fantastic that we have a climate that is conducive to the growth of the private sector and our cultural community, and we can only flourish as a result of that.

As a lifelong Yukoner, I can say that this is in fact the best place in the world to live and to raise a family.

That has been repeated by many new immigrants coming to Canada and coming to the Yukon. In fact, it was relayed to me again over the weekend. I always ask individuals who have just moved to the Yukon: what made you choose the Yukon to become your place to live? Again and again, it is about the landscapes — the natural landscapes that we have. It's about the economic conditions, the opportunities — endless. But it's also about the people, and the people here are so full of hospitality, so friendly, giving and generous. That is in fact what makes us the best place on earth to live.

Everyone I have met over the last number of years — whether they are from the Philippines, from Colombia, from Germany or Argentina — the list goes on — we are so very thrilled that these individuals have chosen the Yukon to make their home.

I'm very proud to have been part of a government that has helped contribute to the economic success of the territory by way of making strategic investments in infrastructure, as I mentioned — strategic infrastructure, which helps the growth of many industries — tourism, mining, the cultural sectors. When we speak of venues such as the Old Fire Hall, for example — I was at the Old Fire Hall. It's a fine example of a cultural venue and a very creative partnership that was garnered between the Chamber of Commerce, the Yukon Arts Centre and the Government of Yukon. It has worked very well over the years, and we're very pleased to continue to support it with a contribution of about \$150,000 within this budget. It is venues such as this — venues such as the two cultural centres that are currently being constructed — Champagne and Aishihik First Nation cultural centre and, of course, the Kwanlin Dun First Nation cultural centre. These are also wonderful examples of partnerships when governments work together to advance interests of mutual benefit for the public good. I think that when we look at the Kwanlin Dun cultural centre — this has been a dream in the making for many, many years.

I thank the people of Kwanlin Dun for their vision and for their collaborative efforts in ensuring that, at the end of the day, we have a beautiful, culturally valued facility that will be able to show and tell the many stories of their people over the years. It will also be a home to a new community public library on the Whitehorse waterfront, yet another accomplishment indeed.

Likewise, the Champagne and Aishihik cultural centre, which is also housed in this budget, contains a new visitor centre. In fact it is really wonderful to see significant progress being made on each of these institutions. Again, it will very much result in net benefit to the Yukon public, but particularly for the respective First Nation governments.

I would like to thank the Government of Canada for its contributions and the Yukon government for its contributions, because these are partnerships, and to the First Nation governments for making their financial and in-kind contributions. Without these partnerships — financial, in-kind and human — these would not be off the ground as they are.

Investment such as education: there has been a lot of discussion — new schools — and I know some of us tend to forget that a school of visual arts is but one fine example of a new school that has gone up, thanks to this government's contribu-

tion and the vision of the Klondike Institute of Art and Culture. They have done a magnificent job showcasing this first institution of its kind north of 60 and for implementing ongoing transfer agreements with other institutions, such as Emily Carr and the northern institute of art and culture.

I would be remiss if I didn't recognize the new Yukon College campuses in Dawson City and Pelly Crossing; the ongoing work in replacing F.H. Collins; the individualized learning centre — that's a really fine example of a creative idea that was put forward and this government did work toward its fruition. It has helped hundreds of individuals complete their education and succeed in moving forward to post-secondary education. It's a tremendous accomplishment itself.

There is programming ranging from early learning; funding for childcare; full-day kindergarten to post-secondary training; community training trust funds — the list goes on. I know that at Yukon College, for example, one of the first things that the Government of Yukon did — upon our government being elected — was increase the space funding. I know there has been a lot of discussion about Yukon College evolving as a university and I know that those discussions will continue to proceed. In the meantime, Yukon College does have degree-granting status as a result of this Legislature bringing in legislation that enables the college to do just that. As a result, we've seen a resounding success of post-secondary degree programs coming about — bachelor of science, bachelor of education. There is a licensed practical nurse program — again, another amazing example of a project that was initiated just over two years ago and has produced a number of graduates, all of which, I understand, have been hired to work in either Copper Ridge Place or soon to be in the Thomson Centre.

In this budget we have been able to continue to provide and ensure that Yukoners receive accessible, affordable, quality health care. For Health and Social Services alone, it has to be duly noted that in this budget there is a 14-percent increase. The department's budget back in 2002 reflected about a \$143-million expenditure. Today we are looking at almost \$263 million.

There has been a lot of discussion about where the dollars have come from, who earned it and so forth but, at the end of the day, I do want to pay credit to our Premier for working, for garnering and establishing a very strong relationship with our two territories, which set off the example of a pan-north approach to many issues — health care was really one of the most important and symbolic relationships that was struck.

As a result of the pan-northern territories coming together, it was our Premier who stood with the other two premiers stood up to the Prime Minister of the day saying that this wasn't good enough, that the Yukon, that the Northwest Territories and Nunavut, are distinct — that they are separate and that it's not just population-based — that there are distinct differences and that there are distinct, unique needs that must be addressed.

As a result, we were able to have negotiated for the three respective territories the territorial health access fund, which has since evolved. We are very appreciative of the renewed injection of dollars for health care, which ensures that health care does remain a priority in the territory.

As a mom who continues to raise a child, had a child, gave birth to my son some years ago and has utilized the health care system — all our family members have, as I'm sure each and every member in this Legislature has — I'm very appreciative of the quality and professional service that is delivered by our medical community, which is also growing.

This government was very pleased to initiate and implement a program specific to children with disabilities. That is of utmost importance to many of my constituents and many individuals throughout the territory. There was no specific program dedicated to children with disabilities and severe disabilities. There is now. It continues to evolve.

As I mentioned earlier, we were able to open the remaining beds at Copper Ridge Place — about 24 of them — over the last number of years. Soon we will be opening 19 additional continuing-care beds at Thomson Centre. Thanks to the Department of Health and Social Services working with the medical community, we have been able to initiate and deliver a number of medical bursaries for Yukon students, those wanting to establish a new practice.

You know, it's working. In fact there was just a report in the media recently, and it said that if you need a doctor the Yukon is the place to be. In fact the Conference Board of Canada deemed that Yukon measured up as the highest, instead of the lowest, in terms of presence of doctors per capita, and appeared to be significantly higher than elsewhere in the country.

We are very appreciative of having physicians in place and very appreciative of those efforts made by the department and the officials housed within the department to make incentives available and that which is now providing great benefits to the Yukon. We have been able to increase stipends for medical travel. Whereas, before I believe it was \$30 a day for individuals seeking medical treatment Outside, it is now \$75 a day. Individuals who reside outside of the capital city looking to come to the city for medical treatment are also able to receive funding assistance in support of their treatment here in the City of Whitehorse.

All of this continues to go up in terms of costs. Likewise, physician billings, hospital billings and, yes, it places pressure on budgets, however it is also a reflection of the growth in the community — the growth of families and the growth of individuals looking to make their lives here in the Yukon, and we are working with the community to deal with those particular pressures.

Thanks to previous budgets, were able to replace the children's receiving home. We have been able to negotiate multi-year funding agreements with Kaushee's Place, Help and Hope for Families Society in Watson Lake, Many Rivers Counselling and Support Services and the Child Development Centre. We have been able to increase social assistance — the first time in over a decade — by more than 25 percent. When we look to our seniors and our elder community, we've been able to increase the public utilities grant by 35 percent and we have indexed it against inflation. We have doubled and indexed the Yukon's senior income supplement. Again, we have indexed rates as well as increased rates paid to foster parents, the first time in many years.

We have been able to provide an increased contribution in terms of affordable housing initiatives. We recognize there are pressures, and there are significant needs in terms of housing, but this government — and I know it has been repeated and will be repeated again by the Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation — has invested over \$100 million in new affordable housing initiatives for seniors, families and individuals in need.

We have provided hundreds of housing units, including a new unit — a new sixplex townhouse within the new Ingram subdivision — a beautiful facility — a facility that is very much going to accommodate families. Likewise, there is the new affordable family complex that was just recently opened in the Riverdale area. That received a great deal of criticism from the members opposite, but as a result of that initiative going forward, it is now, as we speak, housing over 30 families. That has been dedicated to those most in need.

Unfortunately, I do have limited time. I did want to speak about the Department of Environment. I did want to recognize the work of the Department of Environment — the officials, the biologists, the planners and those providing the information, which is so necessary to provide land use planning. I just wanted to thank the department officials for their ongoing work in ensuring that programs — look at remediation of contaminated sites across the territory — it is this government that created a new site assessment remediation unit to manage our own government-owned contaminated sites.

It is this government that continues to invest very much in green energy initiatives, such as enhancing out hydro capacity. We are also, of course, very proud of the institutions that we initiated, such as the Yukon Climate Change Research Centre of Excellence, the Yukon Cold Climate Innovation Centre, and the Northern Research Institute. There are many other partners who are doing their good work on the research, whether it's looking at permafrost degradation, the health of our forests, or the health of our water systems and so forth.

I am very appreciative of the work that is going on in the Government of Yukon in addressing landfills throughout the territory. We are looking at investments and transfer stations situated in places like Carcross, Mount Lorne, Tagish, Deep Creek and many other communities. It's this government that has enhanced investments in recycling initiatives for community recycling depots, for example

Again, I could go on, but I know that my time is just about up. I did want to conclude by saying thank you to all the officials who are responsible for putting the budget together. I believe it is a balanced one. It reflects the economic realities, as well as the social challenges we have in the territory today.

There is always more work to be done. There is always work in progress on every front. I do commend this budget to all members of the Legislature, and we look forward to debating each and every department.

Mr. Inverarity: I rise today to respond to the 2011-12 budget. I would like to initially thank my family and my friends, and especially the residents of Porter Creek South for

their continued support. I will go into this tribute or thank you a little bit later.

I know that Yukoners will be going to the polls this year, and it is my hope that the voters of Porter Creek South will choose a government that they can trust, and that they will continue to support me in my efforts to represent them within this House. I believe that over the past five years I have demonstrated to the residents that I have met their needs, or at least attempted to meet their needs and that, despite the fact that I have been in the opposition, that we as a Liberal Party have certainly accomplished much in the last five years.

It's difficult to actually accomplish a lot in the opposition because we need the support of the other members to do that, but it's not impossible. I think over the past five years we have made sure that Yukoners have been protected against what some might call the heavy-handed government that we have today.

One example of us having success within the Legislature, I believe, would be the Yukon driver's licence that we have today. As most people know, the driver's licence is probably the most widely accepted piece of identification we carry on our persons, even surpassing a passport. It's regrettable that over the past five years we've had to resort to using our passport for transportation purposes within Canada. It's difficult to do that, but I think we've managed to accomplish getting one this year. Yukoners told us how embarrassing it was when they had to present their driver's licence, as it was not accepted as valid identification. As life went on over the past five years, it became less and less acceptable to the point where, even this past fall, it was not being accepted as a valid form of identification to get on an airplane flying out of Whitehorse.

I'm reminded of the Premier standing up in the House, and we were debating or trying to bring forward this issue within this Legislative Assembly. The Premier indicated that he remembered little green paper driver's licence, inferring — at least I read that — that it was still an acceptable form of driver's licence and that we didn't even need the laminated one that we had had for the past 20 years. It has been actually close to 30 years since we've had a new driver's licence.

Then, one day, the government changed its mind and decided that, in fact, getting a new drivers' licences for Yukoners should be a priority. As I've indicated, I am pleased to say that, through the hard work and dedication of the department officials, it was able to get fast-tracked through in probably less than six or eight months — from my perspective — to get to the point where we had a valid driver's licence and it was a lot of hard work. I would like to commend those department officials in making it so.

Was the change of government position because the Liberals made sure this problem did not get swept away by the government? Well, perhaps; perhaps not. I think I will leave it up to the electorate to decide in the upcoming election.

Another example of Liberal determination on projects was the *Human Rights Act*. The *Human Rights Act* was out of date and actually needed revision. We tabled a one-line amendment to the Yukon *Human Rights Act* in an effort to address a critical issue in this piece of legislation. However, debate was closed

down by the government after the first speaker — me — and Yukoners' needs fell on deaf ears. It's a funny thing about a good idea, though. Good ideas don't go away. They just wait for the right time.

Did the government want to serve Yukoners by doing their job? Obviously not — or they would have given it serious consideration at the time it was originally brought forward. We did end up with a motion for a select committee and that committee went forward. Out of that came far more changes than just a simple one that I was looking for, which would have certainly been effective in and of itself. But I am pleased that the government changed their mind and we did look at the whole act.

I know that in the fall, I believe, the Minister of Justice indicated that the *Human Rights Act* was still under revision for those issues that we did not pass in the first go around. I wait patiently for this sitting — I believe that we still have two or three days left before the government has to table any more bills or additions — and so I look forward to those human rights changes that should be coming forward. I know the government officials have supposedly been working very hard on it and, if they have been, I thank them very much for doing the hard work and bringing those other issues forward.

It is a funny thing about good ideas; they just don't go away, do they? Instead the government grudgingly responded to the pressure and we in fact have a new *Human Rights Act*, although not, as far as I am concerned, totally complete. We'll get there, Mr. Speaker, if not now, after the next election. We'll leave it to the electorate to decide.

Today was a historic day, and it is repeating itself. During the last campaign the Liberals promised to implement whistle-blower legislation when elected. That promise still stands. Whistle-blower legislation was tabled in the Legislature today. We expect the Yukon Party will do as they have always done. They will resist to the bitter end any efforts by the Liberals to make the Yukon a better place to live.

It's important to note that the Yukon Party also promised to implement whistle-blower legislation in the last campaign and we have been patiently waiting for five years to achieve this goal, yet it still has not come forward. Why? I'm not here to blame or point fingers. I could indicate the infrequency of the meetings that were held, but the reality is that whistle-blower protection is now on the agenda again and it will be addressed.

The disclosure protection bill that was tabled today just represents a starting point for Yukoners. With this bill we are proposing that whistle-blower protection be implemented in the Yukon. We want it to be the best that it can be. We want it to be in the best interests of all Yukoners. This is not impossible; it's just difficult to accomplish from the opposition benches, but we can do it.

There are many more accomplishments that I could speak of, but I think that when we look at how we can achieve things together, the select committee process that we went through over the past few years in some cases has been highly successful and in other cases has not worked well. In fact, if I were to be critical of some of them — not the select committees, but

committee work within this Legislative Assembly — I could be highly critical of them.

Some have been met with obstacles and roadblocks in trying to accomplish tasks that could be very simply sorted out. Without going into directly picking on particular committees — which I think I won't at this particular point, Mr. Speaker — but I think that it's important that we do have committees, that we do even continue to have select committees on issues, but they need to be able to work and they need to have the cooperation of all parties on both sides of this floor in order for those to meet and to work.

Some of the critic areas that I'm responsible for are Highways and Public Works, Justice and the Yukon Liquor Corporation. This has been a change over the last sitting. I had been looking after Tourism but, as you are aware, at the beginning of this five-year mandate, I had been Justice critic initially and have come back to that portfolio. It gives me an opportunity to address those issues around human rights and the Whitehorse Correctional Centre and other issues we will be dealing with over the next number of days.

In regard to the Highways and Public Works portfolio — as we all know — Highways and Public Works is responsible for ensuring safe and efficient public highways, airstrips, building and information systems, among other things. The area of public service is important for Yukon and I'm not sure the Yukon Party government is doing enough in this particular area. Public services are important. We depend upon them and that goes from the highways to airport services.

Over the past three years, operation and maintenance costs for the Department of Highways and Public Works have been underestimated. The Yukon is changing. We have more snow. We have more traffic. The mining industry now relies on the Yukon transportation system to keep our operations going. Budget estimates for the Yukon transportation system have not been realistic. Over the past three years, there have been essentially no increases in the highway maintenance budget. This year there are some minor increases, but the budget does not reflect the kind of increased resources that will be needed to maintain the Yukon's highways in the face of rising operational costs and the increased use of our transportation systems. Just the number of heavy vehicles hauling ore up and down the Klondike Highway, Mr. Speaker, is putting significant stress on highways.

When we add what is going to be happening on the Campbell Highway and the new mines opening up in Elsa and Keno and that area, we are going to see increased traffic. Shoulders need work — they all need some kind of work — and that needs to be reflected in our budget, but we cannot accept our service cuts. Yukon's transportation system is too important to ignore. If we look at the Silver Trail — and I have alluded to the Mayo, Keno, Elsa area already — an example of what I mean by unrealistic estimates — repairs and rehabilitation on that road are needed. Mining activity is picking up and no resources are allocated for upgrades this year. This has been raised before and we are still waiting for an adequate response. It's not just there. We see the north Alaska Highway. While a lot of the funds for that come from the Shakwak project and

American money coming into Canada to help rebuild that, we are now still, I think, over a year or year and one-half into negotiations on the Shakwak project, and we have seen decreases in the amount of money being spent, and yet the highway itself is becoming more and more undriveable. Last summer tourists were complaining that there were accidents on the highway because of the frost heaves, and those issues need to be addressed.

We look at the Department of Justice for a moment and we see that their budget has flatlined. The new Correctional Centre is like an information black hole. We ask questions "Tell us about how it is coming along", and that sort of thing and we get, "On-time and on-budget", and that's it. Is it? We won't know. We won't be able to see anything until after the next election, so that is what we will be paying attention to what is going on within that area. We will never know because the final costs have not been tallied for that project. We hear snippets from individuals saying that there are cost overruns within the new correctional facility, but it is difficult to pinpoint those and what they are; if there is misspending or not, I don't know. We have no whistle-blower protection in order to validate any of those claims because people won't stand up.

I would like to talk about some of the constituents' issues that I have, but before I get into that I think it's important that we look at how Yukoners are reacting to the current government. I feel that they're particularly angry. I walk around and I get — well, anger, quite frankly, Mr. Speaker. I think it's based on the fact that the trust is gone. They are looking for a change. It isn't necessarily that the government hasn't done some good things. They have. The reality is that when you weigh that against how they believe in the government, it's easy to push aside all the good against the simple fact that they've lost trust. Certainly promises have not been delivered on. Budget estimates are unreliable. We see that here. We saw that a year ago and we stood in this House and said Health and Social Services is underbudgeted. More money needs to be had — and what happened? The Premier stands up and says more money needed to be spent this year, so we spent it. They knew a year ago that it needed to be spent. They knew that the budget had to be increased — be realistic — and yet it was not there. Everybody knew that the money had to be spent. You can't decrease Health and Social Services' budgets. They're going to continue with population; it's a logical conclusion.

We talk about the savings account being depleted. I think \$18 million is what we're looking at at the moment. Five years ago, I think we were at \$167 million in the savings account. Certainly that money has been used to offset buildings as our contributions toward things like the hospital in Watson Lake and a hospital in Dawson City. Has that been a good use of our money? Well, we'll see. The election is coming and people will voice their opinions at that election. The result is that almost all of the \$167 million is spent. The Premier likes to talk about how it's okay to spend the savings on a rainy day. Has it been a rainy day in the Yukon? It certainly doesn't appear that way to me. Why shouldn't the savings be saved for a rainy day?

I think one of the most significant things that has bothered me over the last little while has been the way the Crown corpo-

rations are taking on debt — in particular, the Hospital Corporation — and how they're funding the two new hospitals that they're building.

This is off-book financing. It's critical that Yukoners know how much money is really being spent by the government. That's not just this Assembly, but it also includes Crown corporations. They call them Crown corporations for a reason — because they are part of the government. People need to recognize that, although we like to say they are at arm's length — we like to have this picture that we have no influence on them — the reality isn't that, because we have ministers responsible for Crown corporations. How do you have somebody who's responsible for something and says, "I don't have anything. I'm going to wash my hands of this department. I have no input in what they say or do." Let's get real.

In the face of growing population and rising costs, this government — Yukon Party government — has tabled — we heard it, we read it in the newspaper and I'll say it here — a fantasy budget. We need to have some realistic projections. People need to know what's going on. Is it an election budget? Well, it's the last one before an election. We might as well call it what it is.

The Yukon Party government overspent its operation and maintenance estimates in the last year by more than \$50 million and that was just last year alone. Over the past five years, the Yukon Party government has overspent its estimates, both O&M and capital, by a combined total of \$172.5 million. What can I say? The numbers speak for themselves in terms of estimates. We have every reason to disbelieve the budget estimates that are being presented here by the Yukon Party government. The public is angry at this government. They feel let down. Yukoners expect their government to be honest. They want straightforward answers to straightforward questions and we're not getting them.

I'm going to move on to — let's say — the conclusion. I'd like to talk about some of my constituents' issues. I mentioned it earlier in the day. I think I'll move on from the tone that I've had in the past, although I may slip into it and you'll have to forgive me if I get that way.

The area of Porter Creek, and particularly Porter Creek South — my riding — has a number of challenges facing them right now. I would like to thank the Porter Creek constituents. I made mention of them earlier about electing me. I feel proud to be their representative. I have to say that I feel proud to have been part of the Porter Creek Community Association. I attended a lot of their meetings over the past five years. I missed a few, but I've made most of them.

What's of particular importance to me is that they have been a real sounding block for how I represent the community of Porter Creek South and, to a lesser degree, other ridings in the Porter Creek area because they represent all of Porter Creek. Just last night I was at one of their meetings and I said, "How do you want to deal with this issue of infill?" It's a critical issue within our community. I haven't touched on housing here today, but housing in Whitehorse in general is in a sorry state.

Now I could say something like, "The first five years that the Yukon Party was in government, they did nothing in terms of increasing housing," and while the minister stands up and says that they've added another 150 houses in the last five years, we really need five or six times that number in order to meet the needs — and that we are behind the eight ball today. Is the Porter Creek Community Association, which represents the residents there, opposed to infill? Not necessarily. They want logical, rational infill. They think that the area, for example, around the Guild Hall should be used for community services — like a rec centre or something like that — rather than infilling with houses. Why? Because when they lost the Stan McCowan Arena, they had nowhere else in which to build a community centre in the future. It may not be on the books today, but it is something that they had interest in.

Do they have problems with infill in general? Not generally speaking. I even talked to people at the meeting last week. In the area over around Boxwood, for example — it's not in my riding, but I talked to some people who live adjacent to the infill area, and their problem wasn't the infill itself; it was the plan to put in eight or nine homes where all of the resident lots were a little bit bigger and they thought maybe four or five might be a better place to go.

I live on Grove Street. There are six lots that have been infilled this year. They are being built now. One is for sale already and it isn't even finished, so the issue isn't so much the question of infill. I think everybody in Whitehorse recognizes we need lots, and because there has been no development of lots over the past five years, something has to be done because Whistle Bend won't be onboard until the fall of 2012 and there are no lots available in Whitehorse and something needs to be done.

On the area of McIntyre Creek, direction is clear. A road through McIntyre Creek is not acceptable to my constituents, and for the City or anybody — government — to try and plan one, I believe that they will meet with steep opposition to that and it needs to be addressed. Those are issues that certainly are paramount on the minds of my constituents in Porter Creek South, and I get this feedback from the Porter Creek Community Association. As I said, they have been helpful in giving me direction over the years.

Will we see more infill? Probably. But we need a rational, logical and certainly community-based type of infill, where the properties being developed are consistent with the properties in the neighbourhoods, and we will see how that goes.

I'd also like to thank the Porter Creek Liberal riding association — those are the people who are my arms and legs during elections — they have been a strong supporter of me over the past five years in fundraising and helping our caucus.

Finally, I would also like to thank my wife for her continued support. Over the years she has been steadfastly standing beside me, helping me within the community, walking with me every evening that I can get out around the riding to make sure that I am doing what I am supposed to be doing. I thank her.

Mr. Speaker, in wrapping up this afternoon, I look forward to the future. I look forward to an election sometime this year — the Premier has alluded to the fall. It doesn't matter when it

is. It could be tomorrow. I am ready, and I think the citizens of the Yukon are ready for an election.

I think the budget we're looking at today — well, it has been called "fantasy". I saw a play the other day; it was a farce.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the members of the House here today for allowing me to rant on a little bit and, in particular, the citizens of Porter Creek South for their kind support, and I look forward to debate.

Hon. Mr. Kenyon: It gives me great pleasure to say a few words on behalf of the government, myself and the constituents of Porter Creek North. It has been very enjoyable and a challenge sometimes, but representing the constituents of Porter Creek North — a very unique riding, just like every other riding is unique, I'm sure. It has been a very good introduction to issues of an area from Crestview, and the trail we're now able to put in, so that kids can ride bikes or walk more easily to school or anywhere else.

The sculpting of that trail is now complete, and we will hopefully finish that and pave it as soon as we get rid of all of this darn white stuff.

There have been so many things said in the last day or so on this budget. While there is so much that I would like to respond to, only a couple of things really stand out within the last few speakers that I really have to address. Again, there are so many other things in there that we could.

The Leader of the New Democratic Party says that our prosperity is due to world mineral prices. I would, again, remind all Yukoners to think of the definition of the world. World mineral prices are the same everywhere in the world. Why did the Yukon, in the initial stages of our government, do 16 times better in financial progress and in economic progress than the Canadian average? Sixteen times better — same world mineral prices. So I ask people to really think about that and put that into a little bit more reasonable perspective. A few of the things that the Member for Porter Creek South has said — again, I have to sort of shake my head at. When he talks about a fantasy budget, I have to say it is also a fantasy response.

The driver's licence is a good project. We have moved along with that. To the Member for Porter Creek South, it is something that he created. He ignores the work of the Pacific NorthWest Economic Region, or PNWER. He ignores the extensive meetings with Liz Luce, the director of licensing for the State of Washington, with her counterparts in licensing in British Columbia. He ignores all of the meetings that we have had with the U.S. Department of State and Homeland Security to develop a driver's licence that is useful.

What the Member for Porter Creek South seems to reinforce is the Liberal position of "let's just do it". You know — "Get on with it. Why should be study it? Let's build a high school. What the heck. The fact that the studies aren't done yet — yeah, let's just build it. We can do another driver's licence again later if it's not adequate." Not a reasonable approach — not a sound approach, I would submit, to any evolved government.

The Member for Porter Creek South made a comment that we knew a year ago — I think that was the phrase, and I quote,

"We knew a year ago that certain things were happening." I suppose if somebody has a heart attack or breaks a leg, they knew a year ago that they were going to have that heart attack; they knew a year ago that they were going to break that leg. How would they respond to these emerging issues? The response clearly from the Leader of the Liberal Party last spring was that they would do absolutely everything in their power to meet their budget predictions, so I guess they wouldn't send those patients out. They wouldn't send you to a doctor to be evaluated for a problem. Nope, sorry, but if that's the case and that they would do it, then it really does beg the question, what would they cut? How would they change things?

I think the most offensive comment — and at the same time it's a great compliment and I thank them for it — was in relation to having a savings account in the bank for a rainy day, and he made the comment that he didn't see a rainy day. It didn't happen. I guess he didn't read any newspapers, or magazines, or listen to any radio and realize that there was a huge global economic crisis, but I do take that as a credit because we really didn't see the effect of that crisis here. We managed to weather the storm. We managed to keep people working. We saw an effect, yes, there's no doubt about that, but where are we now?

I do have to correct a couple of comments from our own side. The unemployment rate at 3.6 percent — yes, it is the lowest in Canada. It's also the lowest reported unemployment rate in North America, Mr. Speaker. I think we've done a pretty reasonable job on that. I would suggest — cautiously, I agree — that we don't really want to take that much lower. There is a point where, and there are people who should be relying on a social safety net and should not necessarily be in the workforce; we recognize that. So 3.6 percent — on one hand, I am very, very happy; on the other hand, I do have some reservations.

We have the best increase in gross domestic product or GDP in Canada. Nobody came close to us and only two provincial or territorial governments were above zero. The Canadian average was something like minus 1.2 or somewhere in that range. So the best GDP and the best increase in GDP in all of Canada — here in the Yukon. So the Member for Porter Creek South is right: he didn't see a rainy day. I am assuming that his comment is his way of saying "thank you" to this government for protecting us from that.

Now how was it done? It was done in a variety of different ways — not the least of which is using that savings account. The leader of the Liberal Party has suggested that, you know, we would have a savings account and perhaps should continue to enlarge that savings account. God forbid that we actually spend anything out of it. I think most Yukoners, if they thought about that, would say, no, wait a minute. We have a savings account. We bought a car. We sent the kids to school. We took a course at Yukon College, whatever it happened to be, and we dipped into the saving account to do that. The savings account will go up and down. We didn't drop that savings account into negative figures. I was going to say that we didn't drop into negative figures like other provinces and territories — when in fact, most of those were in the negative numbers to start with.

They didn't drop it into the negative numbers; they just went further into debt.

You want to have some scary moments, look at Ontario; look at British Columbia; look at other jurisdictions that have huge debts. Only two jurisdictions in Canada have no debt whatsoever — Alberta and Yukon. On a per capita basis, we're pretty well even and perhaps even ahead of Alberta on that. I have great fun poking the ministers of Alberta with that little fact. So — no net debt, highest GDP, lowest reported unemployment in North America.

I do have to ask the Liberal opposition — the Official Opposition — and both sides of the opposition — what are we doing wrong to accomplish that? We have the lowest student/teacher ratio in Canada. We have the highest number of computers per student. We have an infrastructure in terms of roads that — with a few exceptions in very well explainable things like the Shawkwak area up around Beaver Creek — are second to none, given the fact that, if you look at a map, we're a long ways up there. We're a long ways up there and I think we've done very well with that.

Again, what exactly is the concern here is a bit concerning, but again, the Member for Porter Creek South says it's a fantasy budget. I think it's a fantasy response on his part and that's unfortunate, because there certainly are things in there that could be criticized. He doesn't appear to have read them, but anyway, they could be.

We really managed to succeed in turning Yukon's economy around from one of the weakest in Canada in 2002 to the best economy in Canada today, second to none. Nine years ago we ranked 36 out of 45 jurisdictions in the category of good places to invest and that survey looked at such things as regulatory duplication, uncertainty over tax regimes. In a recent Fraser Institute survey on good places to invest, in the opinion of 400 companies doing business worldwide — that's not from Carcross or Old Crow, that's worldwide — Yukon is now ranked fourth out of 51 jurisdictions that were mentioned.

Since being elected in 2002 we have turned things around dramatically and for our long-term vision of Yukon's prosperity, we've promoted a stable political, economic and regulatory environment conducive to building the strong economy that we see today and this budget really lays out that plan for another five years. It gives our contracting community a chance to see the plans for the future; it gives them a chance to prepare for that; it breaks things down in a way that some would only be done or only likely be done by large companies, but there are also a lot of things broken out in there — if the opposition takes the time to read it — that would allow opportunities for the smaller contractors and the smaller businesses within the Yukon.

We have promoted a positive investment climate by providing favourable taxation, business incentive programs and royalty regimes. Last fall we amended the *Income Tax Act* so that the corporate income tax small business deduction limit was increased from \$400,000 to \$500,000, which means that small business corporations in the Yukon will be paying less taxes in 2011.

So the simplistic — that's a nice, fancy way of saying we've lowered the tax rate to Yukon businesses, which allows them to put more into employees, their own infrastructure and their own business.

We have the lowest fuel taxes by far in Canada. Compared to British Columbia, our tax rate on gasoline is 67 percent lower. When you look at diesel, it's 64 percent lower.

We streamlined the regulatory processes in support of legislation, together with establishing a system of integrated resource management. During the period of global economic uncertainty — which the Member for Porter Creek South seems to have completely not noticed — we focused our efforts on diversification by promoting natural resource development, tourism, trade, arts, culture, film, sound, research and development, information technology, agriculture, forestry, manufacturing, trapping, outfitting and small business diversity.

Mr. Speaker, we sat here last spring and listened to the Liberal opposition go on at great length about how terrible our tourism would be this summer. Well, we went up 13 percent. Oops — didn't work out too well for them I guess. Arts, culture, sport, recreation — compared to what's spent nationally on a per capita basis, the last time I looked at those stats, our Yukon government spent 10 times — almost 10 times; a hair under that — 10 times the national average on culture, sports and recreation.

I had the great honour of going down to BreakOut West, the Western Canadian Music Awards this year in Kelowna. Next year we will be hosting them here in Whitehorse. I was absolutely amazed at the number of artists who came up to me during that and said, "Why would we support any other government in the Yukon; you have given us almost everything we have asked for; you have supported us as well as we could in our wildest dreams expect". Not bad; I was rather happy with that approach and glad to see that people have recognized the amount of support that we have given.

Shortly after being elected in 2002, our government reinstated the Department of Economic Development as a stand-alone department. It was our government that recognized the importance of doing this to realize Yukon's true potential and the positive benefits that would be provided to Yukoners. What was the Liberal solution in their short-lived time in government — shortest majority government in the history of the Commonwealth of Nations. You have got to be trying to do that. What was their solution to economic development? Disband it; scatter the employees; we don't need economic development.

In 2002, the population of Yukon was officially listed as 30,063. I'm suspicious that actually it was a bit lower than that. But constant streams of people were leaving Yukon to relocate their families elsewhere in order to find work because there was nothing here. People's homes were worth, really, basically nothing. I can remember knocking on doors and the number of single moms that I hit because their husbands were down in Alberta working and sending money home to keep the family here to enjoy the Yukon and enjoy the other benefits. I remember stopping and having a guy working on his car and as we got talking, he said that it's going to take a week or two to get this car fixed up. He said that depending on what happens in the

election, "I'll either stay or I'm driving to Alberta". I'm happy to say that he's still here.

In 2010, the population of Yukon is listed now at 34,005. Again, that's an official population, and I'm suspicious that maybe even that's a little low in this case. People are returning because there are plenty of jobs — the lowest unemployment rate in North America reported. People have the ability to have good careers here. Just look at our advertising supplement that lists the jobs. Page after page of jobs — and not entry-level; not pouring coffee at a coffee shop but good, high-paying quality jobs. They're there.

You can now build equity in homes, although I still shake my head at a real estate agent who doesn't believe in mortgages. This is a valid way I think most people know to get into the housing market and to develop a starter home and increase the value. Certainly we have allowed Yukoners to build equity in their homes.

Seniors are able to stay in their home communities longer as more services are available to them. Stay tuned in the near future for more discussion on that.

Young adults have employment and educational opportunities available to them in Yukon. With all of the talk in the last day or two of a university in the north, it was this government that I believe two years ago passed legislation that allows the Yukon College to grant degrees. So we have that mechanism for Yukon College to develop at their own pace and in their own northern Yukon style.

Infrastructure in the territory has increased opportunities and quality of life for Yukoners. I think of the number of people who have commented in the last couple of days about what other jurisdiction of that size — considering either 34,000 in Yukon or 26,000 in Whitehorse — has access to a \$40 million-plus sports complex? What an incredible legacy that is for this territory.

Our government has worked hard to promote a strong, diversified economy and I think we've been successful in doing so. Over the next few minutes, I will try to expand on some of that. But as minister responsible for the Department of Economic Development, I'm fully aware of the extensive work the department has done in developing and implementing our investment strategy with Asia. Much of the hard work over the last six years has now come to fruition. As we said years ago, working in Asia is not going over, presenting a business plan, and coming back and being upset that it didn't work. It's building those relationships. Those relationships are now coming to fruition. Selwyn Resources and Yunnan Chihong Zinc & Germanium Co. Ltd. has completed a \$100 million joint venture transaction to advance Yukon Selwyn project to bankable feasibility and, if warranted, to production. The Selwyn project in eastern Yukon is one of the largest, if not the largest, undeveloped zinc and lead deposit in the world. We could go through some of the other companies — the Yukon Nevada Gold partnering with Northwest Non-ferrous International Investment Company, to foreign Yukon-Shaanxi Mining Company Inc. — a new Canadian company which will explore the foreign development of mineral resources.

The Wolverine project, Tagish Lake Gold and New Pacific Metals — Korea Zinc is in the mix — China Mining Resources Group. All of these we have seen and depending on what accountant you talk to in terms of money they have directly put in, it is \$400 million or \$500 million. If you look at once those properties are producing and the investment by those companies as they develop the property, I would submit that it is probably closer to a billion dollars — not too shabby. It took a long time, but it has been well worth it. Hundreds and hundreds of jobs will come into that.

In 2009 our government signed a letter of intent to work together to explore a sister-province relationship with Shaanxi Province to the benefit of both jurisdictions. This was followed up by a visit to Whitehorse in December by delegates from the Shaanxi Provincial People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries — you have got to love some of these Chinese names — to further the development of that relationship.

In November 2010, Economic Development attended mining forums and information sessions and facilitated networking opportunities profiling Yukon's investment opportunities and strategic advantages.

We have sent a contingent to China to attend the annual China Mining Congress & Expo since 2006, showcasing Yukon's mineral potential on a competitive global stage. It really has been quite amazing to see each year how the response worldwide has been increasingly enthusiastic. The department delivers support for small- and medium-sized businesses through partnerships with chambers of commerce, non-government organizations and the private sector. The department is working with industry and other stakeholders to build a new small- and medium-sized business strategy and that will be completed in the coming year.

The programs for medium-sized and small businesses include microloan program, Yukon venture loan guarantee, enterprise trade fund, Yukon small business investment tax credit, the business incentive program and partnerships with the Whitehorse and Yukon chambers of commerce and Yukon Chamber of Mines and Dana Naye Ventures. Now the enterprise trade fund supports business development, market expansion, and enhancing revenues for Yukon businesses since its inception in 2004, two years after the then Liberal government completely wiped out the Department of Economic Development. Since its inception we have spent \$2.88 million in funding.

The department maintains ongoing consultations with key industry stakeholders to ensure Yukon businesses achieve a competitive advantage in external markets. The Yukon small business investment tax credit program encourages Yukoners to invest in small Yukon companies. Since its inception, the program has assisted eight Yukon businesses to raise \$5.2 million.

The business incentive program promotes the hiring of Yukon residents for Yukon government construction projects and for manufacturing and use of goods and services. Since the transfer of the business incentive program to Economic Development in 2003-04, close to \$5.2 million in rebates have been contributed to various projects in the territory.

In partnership with the Whitehorse Chamber of Commerce, Economic Development continues to support the Yukon business development program, which has assisted eight Yukon businesses, substantially increasing their business and export revenues. The department delivers the North Yukon business advisory outreach program in seven Yukon communities through a contract with Dana Naye Ventures. Approximately 80 businesses have used the program since its inception.

The Film and Sound Commission continues to administer five film funding programs and one sound recording program. I could go through some of those programs, but I think most people are well aware of it. As I say, I was really quite happy and quite complimented when we were at BreakOut West with the Western Canadian Music Awards to have so many different artists — very talented artists down there — very happy with the support that they had received and, again, the comments like “Why in the world would we support another government when you have given us virtually everything we have asked for” — 10 times the national average in spending. So we’ve had a lot of successes with that.

Major motion pictures — *Anash and the Legacy of the Sun-Rock* — the second season of live-action animation. I had the good fortune of going over and watching some of this high technology — combination of live acting and animation — just an amazing technology, and it’s done here.

The Yukon government initiated the development of a strategic action plan for the research, innovation and commercialization sector. As part of that plan, we have provided major funding for the Yukon Cold Climate Innovation Centre and the Yukon Technology Innovation Centre. We have administered programs, such as the community access program and e-Commerce Yukon program, utilizing the Internet for developing economic and also cultural development, of course.

We have worked in partnership with CanNor, Northwestel, Vuntut Development Corporation to significantly upgrade the Internet bandwidth into and out of the community of Old Crow. That has been a challenge, but it’s in keeping with the fact that, in the Yukon, virtually 100 percent of people have access to at least 1.2 to 1.5 megabyte high-speed Internet, with the majority of the territory, of course, being closer to 5 and have access to more, should they choose to purchase that.

The highest bandwidth penetration in Canada — something like 75 percent to 80 percent of people actually have taken advantage of that and have actually connected to it. It means that the Internet is a huge driver to our economy and it is critical that we do something about the fact that our Internet continually goes down because we only have one fibre link available to us. We are actively working with Northwestel and other proponents within the Pacific Northwest economic region to have a redundant line, so that when one goes down, the others would pop right in — not only surfing and Googling.

I always think of how many years ago — not that many — when you would go to an auto dealer or a parts dealer and there would be four feet of catalogues of parts on the counter. You don’t see that any more; it is all on-line, but if that Internet goes down for four or five hours during the day, they don’t even know what part to sell you. They are dead in the water. It is a

lot more than just being able to pay for your coffee at Starbucks. It is a whole economic environment and it is essential that we do that.

The Yukon Cold Climate Innovation Centre recognizes the commercialization for cold-climate technology will contribute to the diversification of the Yukon economy. Economic Development is partnered with the innovation centres and chairs the advisory council. There are two funds in there — the cold climate innovation fund, which provides financial assistance for researching, developing and enhancing applications and opportunities of innovative cold-climate technologies. It will also provide seed money to help individuals and businesses establish partnerships and leverage funding from other sources for the development of innovative, cold-climate technology applications. The technology innovation fund provides financial assistance for developing and enhancing applications and opportunities for technology-based employment, special and/or technology initiatives in Yukon.

It is, I think, a huge eye-opener — I sort of expected it, but still it was an eye-opener and I think it would be to a lot of people — that at least for one major publication in the Yukon, all of typesetting and layout is done, if memory serves, in Mexico City. Distances are no longer a problem as long as that net works and somebody down south doesn’t decide to dig us up. That is just a huge emphasis that we have to look at and it’s something that we have to develop.

I could go on with some of the partnerships that we’ve worked on that, but I think all of this shows that the Member for Porter Creek South is correct in that we were not significantly impacted by the global economic recession and in fact, you know, we’ve probably benefited from some of the increase in capital spending by the governments of Yukon and Canada in terms of construction projects initiated in 2009 and our whole response to the global economic downturn, which took place in late 2008.

It’s interesting to note on that that we came out of it relatively unscathed. We had a good, solid savings account, which the opposition seems to forget about. We were not in the position of the very short-lived Liberal government — shortest majority government in the history of the Commonwealth of Nations — which actually had to run a line of credit with the banks in order to pay government employees. We went up to a very substantial — as opposition members have pointed out — a very substantial savings account, which we have been able to judiciously spend down and utilize. We now are in a position to start judiciously spending that back up and rebuilding that, and it’s this budget that will begin that process.

Under Canada’s economic action plan, up to \$53.26 million has been provided to Yukon to build new and renovate existing social housing units. The Housing Corporation estimates that after completion of the new buildings, 101 additional units will have been added to the housing portfolio. Now when you look at some of the things we actually did before that in terms of adding, we actually have constructed 212 units, and what we’ve actually added to the portfolio — the Member for Porter Creek South said 150; it is actually 158; he was close, we’ll give him that; he did at least skim it over, I think.

Much of this has been earmarked — to use the government term — specifically for certain types of housing, and I think this is something that the opposition either doesn't recognize — which is quite possible — or isn't being completely up front with the Yukon public that much of the federal government funds that come in are earmarked for specific projects. They would let you think that we got in X number of dollars, so why didn't we spend it on all of these projects?

Well, most of that money comes in earmarked for very specific projects. Often I'm not totally in agreement with where it is. I'm not going to give that money back; forget it. But we must use it for those individual things.

We've also upgraded the units currently in the social housing portfolio. This possibly reduces — we hope reduces and so far, definitely reduces — the corporation's operation and maintenance because they're energy efficient. We have been very happy to develop those new 158 units. When you compare that to what the Liberals did in their very short — I won't use the term, Mr. Speaker — time, the careful planning that they refer to and their great overall plan for the Yukon — they produced zero, not one single additional housing unit. They did that with the minister, the Liberal minister of housing of the day — who, as we've shown in this House, was seriously interfering with and directing the board.

I think the board has done a pretty good job doing this and I'm very pleased that they continue to do that, but before anyone gets too smug, we go back to two previous and much longer term NDP governments, who did do a lot of very good things. What did they do in the social housing? Zero. They also did not build a single solitary social housing unit. So far, 158 and we've got many more being planned.

The new buildings feature the Yukon Housing Corporation's SuperGreen energy standards, thus ensuring reduced energy consumption, which in turn means fewer greenhouse gases emissions and much cheaper to run and yes, that will lower our operation and maintenance budget.

I remember being criticized by a researcher from one of the opposition parties when there was a course in energy efficiency and he was very critical of the fact that we weren't attending that course, until I pointed out that we were actually teaching that course. The SuperGreen technology and the SuperGreen concept and designs have all been developed in the Yukon and we're very pleased to go out to conferences and such and share that technology.

Some of the projects that we've done on that, of course, include working with Highways and Public Works as the contracting authority to replace the Korbo apartment building in Dawson City. Completion is expected in 2011.

There are 19 units in that building; half are one-bedroom and consistent with the recommendations of the Auditor General. We anticipate that the new structure will pretty well take care of our waiting list in that community. There is an office in there as well for Housing Corporation staff. I am told by our Member for Klondike that he was there a week ago and that we are doing really, really well with it. The contractor has done a superb job on that. The direct and indirect impact of the project is 28 jobs and \$2.7 million contributed to our GDP. The project

actually adds six new units to the social housing inventory in Dawson City, and that as the old Korbo is retired — mercifully. We have also constructed a new six-unit seniors building in Faro. The cost of that project is \$2.2 million. The ribbon-cutting ceremony was held last August, although it wasn't ready at that point because again, what the opposition either doesn't understand or doesn't want to see put on the table is the timing of many of these projects. Because the money is coming from the federal government, we are dependent upon their timing to make the announcements. In other words, we can't make the announcement until the federal government has had their input into the announcement, they approve it and they have somebody present for it. Timing isn't always the best, but again, it's something that we can live with.

The building in Faro is built to SuperGreen energy standards, of course — the accommodating home standards for a barrier-free environment. That increases the total number of senior-friendly units from four to six. The Faro Housing Advisory Board is in the process of accepting applications and allocating units — again, more of that to come in the coming days. Construction is underway on a new eight-unit seniors building in Teslin — \$2.95 million. It's expected that this project will be complete in the late spring of 2011 and this includes seven one-bedroom and one two-bedroom units. It also features energy efficient construction, barrier-free units, common areas, lounge, capacity to accommodate meal preparation, common dining and so on.

Based on the various multipliers provided by the Department of Economic Development — now that we have one again after the Liberals tried to destroy that — the project is generating just over 16.5 years of direct employment and approximately four additional indirect person years of employment.

Construction on the Watson Lake seniors housing project is now complete. This building includes eight one-bedroom apartments and four two-bedroom apartments.

A \$4.85-million project — again, accommodating home standards, SuperGreen. It also has common areas — exercise room, TV lounge, a capacity for meal preparation and common dining area. In what's now called the Whitehorse affordable family housing project or the single-parents facility — four individual buildings, all to the same standards — there are recreational areas and suitable fencing to add to the safety. We have an employee now who is in there. It was \$7.85 million, which generated just over 50 person years of direct employment and approximately 10 additional indirect. We can go on about the children's receiving home, the project — the Yukon asset construction agreement in partnership with Kwanlin Dun. They built the project up at Ingram and boy, I'll tell you, if you need contractors, these are the guys to talk to. The quality of workmanship there is absolutely outstanding. Actually, we've been very, very pleased with all of these contractors we've had involved in this. That was an interesting project. They even utilized employees from Challenge to come in and do some of the work on that.

I really have a lot of praise for Ray Wells and Ted Lambert and the others that were involved in that. The building was

designed barrier-free and each unit has an elevator lift, not already in place, but have the so-called chase or capacity to put that in. The other thing, of course, is the 30-unit seniors building at the waterfront place and what we'll be looking at — it goes on — the Takhini subdivision, double-wide trailers, 158 units so far — more coming — and again, yes, there is a lot more to do, but the Liberal solution and the historical NDP solution of doing nothing is not acceptable to this government.

Mr. Fairclough: I also would like to respond to the budget as presented by the Finance minister in his budget speech and talk about a few things that are in it and what has happened over the past number of years while the Yukon Party has been in government.

First of all, like others, I would like to thank my family and friends and all the volunteers who supported me, my constituents, over the last 14 years plus that I have been elected. During that time I have seen a lot of changes that took place here in the territory. Throughout every election I have had many volunteers and supporters who have constantly encouraged me to bring issues up on their behalf in whatever way possible when we were in government and in opposition. I believe I have done a lot of that and I can point some of this out.

During that time, since 1996, I have been in government — a minister responsible for several portfolios, so I have that experience of dealing with budgets, monies and departments, government processes and so on.

I've also been the Leader of the Official Opposition and have been in opposition for about 10 years now. I can see the mistakes that governments make and have made over the past number of years. It has been brought up to me so many times, whether it's on the street back in my riding, in my communities, that things are not right here.

I know the Yukon Party feels confident going into this next election but, you know, they only won by some 300 votes and an interim majority government could have switched around ever so easily.

My riding is a big one land-wise. It's not quite a quarter of the Yukon, but it's pretty close. It's not that I would be in every corner of my riding because it's so massive, and I would never get to all the places in my riding, mostly because nobody lives there. I have a pretty big riding that is going to play an essential role in Yukon's economy and the future of the territory.

I have been to so many general assemblies, public events, meetings, functions, and potlatches in my riding over the last 14 years plus. I have three First Nations in my riding. All have land claims and final agreements and self-government agreements. I have two municipalities and two communities that are basically small communities, but nevertheless important communities.

The issues that get raised with me are vast, and I try to bring a lot of that up to the government, either through letters, through meetings with ministers, or by raising questions in this House over the years. I've seen tremendous change in my riding and probably the biggest one that I can see right now is the fact that First Nations went through a negotiation process for the final agreement and land claims agreement, to the point of

ratifying their agreements, and now the challenge is to implement those agreements.

All three communities — Mayo, Pelly and Carmacks — have that in place and a tremendous amount of responsibility that goes with it.

In 1997, LSCFN signed off their agreement. I was in government then, and Chief Eddie Skookum's signature is on that agreement. We've had the Selkirk First Nation follow and, before I was elected in 1996, Na Cho Nyäk Dun had their agreement in place. They also have a tremendous amount of work in front of them and see the struggles that lie in front of them in trying to implement the final agreements.

Many of those concerns have, of course, come my way and I've tried to ask questions in the House in regard to this and tried to raise their issues over the number of years. I think the Yukon Party government has responded in some ways and others have just fallen to the side, but nevertheless the fight will continue to ensure that my riding is properly accounted for in government budgets and is taken care of.

I have also been encouraged by the many volunteers and those who have backed me in previous elections to continue to represent them, and that is my plan: to run in the next election and represent the riding of Mayo-Tatchun for the next five years, should everything go well. I think that it is our duty here — all of us who are elected — to thank those people who have brought them to this Legislature. I want to be able to clearly show that that is the case and that they are mentioned.

I'd like to bring up a few things because I said that my riding has changed a lot. The biggest ones are the land claims agreements. I've always said that the final agreements have changed the way in which government conducts its business forever in the Yukon Territory and the struggle, of course, is the implementation of those final agreements — and First Nations are still in their infancy stages in regard to that.

I also want to bring up a few things — accomplishments, I guess — through different governments in the riding of Mayo-Tatchun. When I was first elected, part of the issues raised in 1996, particularly in the community of Mayo, was that they needed to have a doctor within that community. As you know, there is a hospital there and we have not had a doctor locally, but rather service out of Whitehorse, and that took place the very next year. It was to me a tremendous victory on behalf of my citizens to have that accomplishment realized. To this day, that same doctor still resides in Mayo and residents there greatly appreciate it.

Here's another one that the Yukon Party brings up but doesn't really give credit where credit is due, and that's with regard to schools. In 1996 that issue was hot on the agenda around the territory and it was difficult for government to even deal with that. One of the ways — the best way — that we could see dealing with this matter of capital construction was to put it into the hands of the chairs of school councils. That's what took place, Mr. Speaker. They made a decision, they met, they talked about details, they talked about who needs a school replacement more than the other and they came up with a list. On that list were five schools.

The first one that was built went to Old Crow. Well, it was for good reason: the school in Old Crow burned down. I was there a month before the school burned down, and that school needed to be replaced anyway. They were trailers, they moved around, the foundation wasn't solid, they pulled apart, electrical lines broke, there were holes in the floor, and of course that school needed to be replaced. It was. The winter road was put in, materials hauled up and that school was replaced.

The commitment was to build one every year after. This was under the New Democratic Party. The next school to be built on that list created by the chairs of school councils was the school in Ross River. If you can imagine this, I'm elected in my riding — the three other schools that were on that list were Mayo, Pelly and Carmacks.

I've talked a lot with the people in Mayo — the Village of Mayo — Na Cho Nyäk Dun — to the citizens — and I asked for their patience, because we were going to follow this plan that the chairs of the school councils had put forward and they will get a school, it's just a matter of finishing up the other two and they were third on the list.

It did happen; I was there when the foundation was put in and the floor was on. Unfortunately the school wasn't completed that fall. There were all the signs that the school would be completed. I remember going through, walking through the mud up to the post and having the community all there. It was when Prince Charles was in town in the community of Mayo. There was lots of discussion about that, and people said, true to your word, the school was next on the list. As I said, the communities of Pelly Crossing and Carmacks were next after that.

I'm glad that a plan like that is strong enough to survive different political governments in this territory. It went right into the Yukon Party government and they did not change it. That plan was strong; Pelly Crossing got their school completed and, yes, Carmacks had theirs built. I want to touch on that in a little bit, because I've been asking questions of the minister and this Yukon Party government for about five years-plus on this project, and even in the last sitting, I continued to ask questions about it. I will come back to it in a minute.

These are capital projects that have been recognized. The other accomplishment that is also pretty big in the community was to ensure recreation centres were built. I thought the community of Pelly Crossing did an excellent job in putting together their arena and the link building at a very low cost. I think it should be looked at by many. Many of their citizens worked on that building and, in the end, came up with something pretty significant. To this day, they have their hockey ice and curling ice that is artificial ice. Local people have learned how to set them up. They have good bonspiels there. I don't see too many people from around the territory in that community, for example, using their curling rink in a bonspiel.

They are dry bonspiels. There is no alcohol, really, associated with their bonspiels at all, and they're fun. They get so many of the local people involved. Even citizens and elders are involved in curling in that community. It's fun to see because, you know, as they age throughout the years — it was to the point that last year, anyway, we had one senior who just

couldn't bend any more and had to push the rock down the ice with a broom, but they still participated and they still had fun.

Mayo — of course, many have seen their rec centre. It's a beautiful place. The community loves it. They use it. They had some problems with it at the beginning — same with the school, with the foundation and so on that continues to be a bit of an issue. I've raised it with the Education minister quite a few times and somewhat resolved some of those issues.

The rec centre in Carmacks is a good rec centre but it is only phase 1 of two phases for completion of that rec centre.

That community is now talking again about the completion of that recreation centre, and we want it to happen. The community wants it to happen. It's one of the few communities left in the territory that still has natural ice — outdoor ice for the skating rink — and things need to change. Although, I have to say, that the ice is in pretty good shape for natural ice, and their bonspiel is this coming weekend. Yes, it competes with Hockey Day in Canada here in Whitehorse, but they're going ahead. They've done this sweetheart bonspiel for so many years that it makes it difficult to cancel because so many people want to stay in the community and curl. So I wanted to bring that up too.

We've had so many issues that I've raised in this House in regard to roads. I've politely asked in fall sittings — maybe not so much in the last fall sitting — over the last nine years for governments to pay some attention to the condition of some of these roads, whether it's brushing or whatnot, and some have been taken care of.

There has been a very popular program — the rural road upgrade program. Funding has been accessed by some communities to do road improvements — Mount Nansen Road, for example. That hasn't had a whole lot of money put into it for quite some time. The Freegold Road had, I think, about \$200,000 put into it last year. It needed it, simply because of the heavy rainfalls we had the year before that did a lot of damage to our secondary roads, which a lot of the mining outfits and placer miners use in and around Carmacks.

Just to stay on that topic, the community of Carmacks continues to call for road improvements on the Mount Nansen/Freegold Road. As members know, some of the bigger mining outfits have come together and shown their support for the by-pass road around the community of Carmacks.

They have written letters and have shown the government that there are a lot of users up around that area — some 50 different outfits, both placer miners and those looking at hardrock mining. There is a lot of traffic out that way.

I wasn't surprised to see the government come forward with a new position for a conservation officer out that way because roads are opened up and there are a lot more hunters going back farther and farther, as more people around the territory are buying up ATVs and are able to get farther and farther back.

The community of Carmacks wants to see continued support to improve some of these roads, for safety reasons more than anything else. Since the roads have been put in, a lot of the trees have grown to the point where it makes it difficult to see what's coming a corner away, whether it is on the inside or

outside corner. I want to, again, give the heads-up to government on that because it has been raised with me.

The bypass road and the bridge that needs to be put in place — I understand the rationale for the delays. Something like this will not go in until we see a development take place, perhaps Western Copper or even Northern Freegold or anything around the Freegold area. It has a price tag to it. It has been surveyed out, slashed out and part of the road has been built. The community has benefited from this by having residential and commercial lots off of this road. The other one was the replacement of the Nordenskiöld bridge, and this was much needed again with this heavy rainfall that we had a couple of years ago. It washed around some of the concrete that the bridge was sitting on and the bridge shifted down some six to eight inches. It looked like it could just disappear at any time. We had water within inches of the bottom of the bridge; huge trees being smashed under and it looked like it could have gone at any time. I did witness the replacement of this bridge this past summer and I took a lot of pictures and some videos because it is a bit of history for that community.

The bridge is a lot safer now. Guess what? It has two lanes. It is a narrow bridge, but it has two lanes — much safer than what we had in the past. I think there are still some issues there for the Minister of Highways and Public Works to work out with some of the citizens there. I don't know what happened to this bridge. I did, again with the roads, ask the Minister of Highways and Public Works if he would come with me and drive on the Freegold Road just to experience it and look at the Big Creek bridge, which was washed out on one end and threatened to wash down the creek. The minister did not take me up on that offer, but I was really glad to see that he did make it on the Casino Trail on the Freegold Road and he did look at the Big Creek bridge last year. He understands the issue that I have brought up and hopefully there could be a resolution to that because it is part of the Casino Trail. Locals do use it and the placer and mining industry do use that road, too, rather than trying to find whatever way they could to cross the Big Creek bridge. That is definitely one on which government could work with the community and the mining industry to make improvements.

I wanted to bring that forward again about the Nordenskiöld bridge. Yes, Yukon Party was in government when this went in. Local people were quite vocal that this needed to be replaced and it was a good thing for the community of Carmacks. We've seen good road improvements also on the Duncan Creek Road and other roads along the Silver Trail that had rural road monies involved. It's a very scenic drive and again, it does help the community out to have this second access road to the community of Keno City.

Residents of Keno City have a lot of issues with roads lately, but hopefully some of these issues could be resolved.

I want to also talk about another popular program and funding within government — there are two of them. There's the community development fund and the FireSmart program, to which all the communities have access. Since they have fire guards around the communities, they've gone the other step to FireSmart within the communities, and all the municipalities

and First Nations have access to this. It has created local work and jobs and a sense of some safety when it comes to possible fires in and around the community. I think a lot more could be done. This money should stay in government as a line item and within the department for quite some time, because I think there's a lot of work that should be done.

The community development fund has targeted small priorities for communities and has been a pretty successful fund over the years. It continues to be a pot of money that the communities could continue to access by laying out good rationale for why they need it.

We even have seen cooking courses for mining camps as part of this funding, to help fund that. Over the years, of course, communities have liked that, so I'm not always being negative here to the government, but it might soon get that way in a minute.

The other thing that I wanted to raise was safe drinking water within the communities. As you know, Mayo has a system similar to what Whitehorse has. They have town water, but some of the First Nations still have water delivery. As a matter of fact, they ran into a problem with this cold weather when flooding took place in Mayo and their water truck broke down. They used a government water truck from Keno City and that broke down and they had a tough time. A lot of people went without water during the Christmas holidays and it is that type of thing that I think government could respond to quite a bit quicker. Sometimes it's difficult to get vehicles like that fixed in a timely manner.

I've seen a lot of changes. One of them is the power line going from Mayo to Dawson and the extension from Carmacks to Stewart Crossing. These are visible changes, although there is an attempt being made to not have this power line so much in people's view as they travel the highway. This is a pretty major improvement to a place like Pelly Crossing, which ran on diesel and had to listen to these diesel engines run 24 hours a day, seven days a week, all year-round. It has made an improvement to that community. I've had some complaints about so many power failures over the last year. I mean, that's an issue I think Government of Yukon can perhaps address.

Capstone, as you know, accesses power through an extension from this line to their property. We see possibly another that could access that, should they get into development soon, and that is with Western Copper. Alexco is benefiting from being on-grid, which was great for them. Perhaps I need to talk about that a little bit because it's a big issue in my riding.

The people having a better quality of life — that's an issue and that's one we can all work on slowly and try to improve where we can make improvements. Providing work for my constituents — it's pretty tough for a government to do on their own, no matter how many programs they run. The private sector is where a lot of these jobs are being created. With Alexco and Minto mines being in operation, so many of our citizens — even from the community of Carmacks — have been working there. They see the benefits of mining in that territory.

What a lot of the First Nation and local people don't want is to have an environmentally unfriendly operating/developing

mine take place. Many have voiced that over the past years — part of the delay that we have with Western Copper.

Carmacks, Pelly and Mayo will be impacted tremendously by mining, good and bad. We see increased dollars floating into the communities and we see increased social problems — an increase in alcohol and drug use, and that normally goes hand-in-hand with increased dollars that are in the communities.

I wanted to go back to what was raised earlier with regard to royalty revenue sharing. Selkirk First Nation and the community of Pelly Crossing is experiencing this. They are finding creative ways to try and use this \$6 million. Like Yukon, they have a dollar-for-dollar cutback in their block funding when they receive more royalties than \$3 million a year. They feel it. It has been brought up. It has been part of their PST negotiations and it's very much on the minds of many First Nations.

These numbers were negotiated quite awhile back and with inflation, the price of living today, the possibility of increased royalty revenue in the territory has brought this to the attention of the mining community and locals, and particularly we heard a lot of it when we were in Vancouver at the Roundup. I want to get to that because we have so many potential mining outfits in the riding of Mayo-Tatchun and it's going to mean an influx of people — the community is going to grow — it needs government support; roads need to be taken care of; power supply is still an issue with many of these mining companies and some of them were talking about massive change. If we looked at Casino for example, when we talk about royalty revenue-sharing and the Yukon having a bigger piece of the pie, when in operation they could be bringing in some \$240 million in royalty revenue, which would be going straight to Canada, the federal government.

In the meantime, the mining outfits asked the Yukon government for improved roads — “Give us a supply of power” — they want this, they want the support, and their suggestion to us down there was that we should increase this and have more of the dollars coming forward to the territory and therefore perhaps the territory could be doing a lot more to assist the mining outfit.

I'm running out of time here and I just wanted to say a few more things in regard to that, that they also see this as an incentive for First Nations, perhaps, to see some of the dollars that are coming out of the ground in their territory in terms of royalty revenue going to Ottawa coming back, and perhaps you'll see the First Nations buying into this a lot more.

Now, the Yukon Party says it is because of them that Yukon is doing so well and there's only one person on that side of the House that I heard give credit where credit was due, and it was the Minister of Environment of all people — but I didn't hear it from the Member for Pelly-Nisutlin — and that is bringing certainty to the territory where people will invest here. That process started so far back, I think the Yukon Party forgot about this.

One of them is land claims. I heard the members opposite say that, once you have these final agreements ratified and in place, you will see certainty. That is the case. It's happening now. People could see it way back then. The other one was devolution. Devolution giving control over our resources here

wasn't a good thing on the Yukon Party books when it was being developed. I think the NDP had a lot to do with putting this together and it was carried forward by the Liberal Party. That, too, was about bringing certainty to the territory. That was certainly recognized by the mining outfits around the world and it was brought to our attention again.

These two things meant a big change here in the territory. It's about developing the territory from that point on. Of course, we had an influx of metal prices, particularly gold and silver. If you went back to 2002, the price of gold was \$260 an ounce. We're well over \$1,300. The interest is there. There's a bit of fever in the territory. There's a staking rush. I see it in my riding. I see it in Carmacks. I see mineral licks that have flagging tapes and have been staked. They're all over.

There is interest here in the territory. There is interest in my riding and I know that this riding is going to contribute greatly to the territory.

One common message I heard on the street in my riding and around the territory is that you cannot trust this Yukon Party government. They say one thing and do another. When it comes to finances, this is what they say and it turns out to be something else. Look at ABCPs — \$36 million gone. Where is it, Mr. Speaker?

I have one minute left.

When it comes to education reform, the Premier blocked the whole issue of governance. Talking about a bottom-up approach versus a top-down — that wasn't talked about. We had demonstrations outside this House when it came to education — creative signs like: “Dictator go, mahsi' cho” — we have all seen that. Several demonstrations — the forfeiture act. We have seen the Auditor General's report when it comes to grad rates in the territory. There are lots of negative things about this Yukon Party, and it has been brought to our attention over and over again, and no matter what they say, it's done; it's over. People want a change and it is going to happen.

There is so much more that I could bring forward and I wish I could double up the time here, but I'd like to again thank my constituents for their support over the years. We vote on this budget. Our vote will be known. It's a confidence vote, like the public has on this Yukon Party government. Thank you.

Hon. Mr. Rouble: I'm the MLA for the beautiful Southern Lakes.

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Hon. Mr. Rouble: That's a record, Mr. Speaker. I think the heckling has started within 30 seconds of rising in the Assembly. I see the members opposite are still awake. They should be; they were up speaking. It was the opposition point of the exchange. It's great to see the level of decorum has — well, it's just not great to see the level of decorum.

It's an honour and a privilege to rise today as the MLA for the beautiful Southern Lakes. I would like to express my continued thanks to my constituents and my family for their ongoing support and dedication. Also, it's my honour to rise as a minister responsible and responsible for two very different departments.

Having that perspective of being a Cabinet minister in the Government of Yukon means not only am I responsible for my constituents, but indeed responsible to the territory. I also recently had a unique experience to represent Canada at an education conference. As members are I'm sure aware, there is no federal minister of education. Education is the responsibility of the provinces and territories and, when international representation is called for, it falls on the shoulders of a member of the Council of Ministers of Education. That gave me the perspective of not only being responsible to my constituents, to the territory, but also being responsible to all of Canada.

It's those experiences — and certainly it's not unique among myself, but among all of my other colleagues — that help to influence our decisions and influence the work that we do. It's that experience, that wisdom — if I may be so bold as to put that word forward — that has been gained by my colleagues that will help us to continue to guide the territory on to the path of prosperity that it has certainly been headed.

I will note that these added responsibilities of representing the territory often put significant challenges on us and with all of the activities in my constituency — whether it's in Carcross, Tagish, Marsh Lake or soon to be Mount Lorne — it's a challenge to get to all these events with the additional duties of being a Cabinet minister.

I appreciate the optimistic comments coming from the Member for Mayo-Tatchun; he was starting to hit on some of the highlights of what is happening in the territory and I would just like to share with the Assembly a very interesting experience that happened a couple of weeks ago.

I had the pleasure of being invited to the opening of a new office and that is always exciting when a new business is opening up and starting up in the territory. In my previous career with Dana Naye Ventures, I had the pleasure of working with over a hundred different individuals in the creation of their business plans as they were starting their own business and I have always enjoyed the excitement, exuberance and the optimism of entrepreneurs when they are starting a new business.

I got talking to the young fellow that is the manager of this office. It's a story that really exemplifies what's going on in the territory. This was a case of a Yukoner who had gone to school here in the territory and then gone Outside for his university education, then, after university, got a job with a large national company. They have offices really across Canada and are affiliated with an international company. He really enjoyed the work and he excelled at it. He was identified as a rising star within the company and offered advanced positions. Right before he was about to take a promotion, he went in and resigned. He said that he didn't want to live in a major centre outside the Yukon, that the quality of life in the territory was so great that he wanted to move back to Whitehorse. So, here was a case of a Yukon kid growing up, going to school, getting an education and then going to work and then saying, you know what? Life in the Yukon is better than life here. He made that conscious decision. He put all of his stuff in the back seat of his car and drove up the highway to make Whitehorse his home again. He was that confident that there would be opportunities here.

That's a great thing to see — that kind of confidence in the territory.

The company he worked for wasn't letting him go too easily. They tracked him down and said, "What are you doing?" He said, "Well, I'm living in Whitehorse." They said, "Well, how would you like to open up an office there?" Now, Mr. Speaker, I certainly can't take credit for this entire story. The government certainly can't take credit for this entire story. There are a number of different people involved in this, not only this young man, but his parents, his family, his teachers and his company. They all play a huge role. When the company said, "We'd like you to open an office for us," that was a vote of support, not only for the individual involved, but also for where the territory was going. Here was a company that said, "We have a belief in the Yukon that there is going to be more work out there — continued work in the future — and we'd like you to open up an office, hire more people, because we have faith in this opportunity."

Now, Mr. Speaker, that is an incredible vote of confidence. It was great to see this young man who had just opened up an office and had rented office space — great to see the characteristics of the office space, the high energy standards of the building that he had rented. Now there are other people who are being attracted to the Yukon because of the opportunities that are here, because of the potential for being involved in interesting and satisfying projects, and also because of the quality of life that we enjoy here — the tremendous access to recreation facilities, education facilities, cultural facilities, clean air and clean water. Indeed, I don't have to be a champion for living in the Yukon to anyone here. We are all in love with the territory, but it's great to see others who are so excited about coming to the territory and seeking their opportunities here.

At the open house that was held, I had an opportunity to talk to one of the directors of the company. He works on more national issues. He was one of the people behind the decision to open up the office and support the individual here. I said to him point blank: "Why did you decide to open up an office in the territory?"

He let me know that they used to have an office in the territory back in the 1980s, but unfortunately, because of an economic decline and a lack of work, they were forced to cut that back, so they had to close their office, but he was really proud to see people coming back here. Again, another vote of confidence for the direction the territory is going. We discussed some of the opportunities and some of the different projects. They were very excited about looking forward through more of the capital plan of government and looking at some of the projects that have been identified. I'm sure they'll be looking at the five-year capital plan and seeing the projects that are laid out and forecasted before us. They weren't just looking at government work. They were also very excited about industrial work, about work with some of the responsible mining companies that are looking at doing business in the territory. They were encouraged to do work with First Nations, whether it was on water purification systems or road projects or bridge projects. They were very excited about the opportunities that were before them.

We also talked about some of the benefits of being here in the territory. One of the key points that came up was the high level of connectivity and that they could have on-line video chats from office to office. With the degree of air access that we have here in Whitehorse — that people could either travel to or from here, if they had specific experiences or expertise to share. So they were very excited about building their knowledge base here in Whitehorse and using that to support different ventures throughout Canada and indeed throughout the world.

I share this example because it's really in sharp contrast to some of the perspectives we've heard from some of the other Members of the Legislative Assembly who aren't, I don't think, really appreciating the benefits, the optimism, the sense of hope and sense of future that really exists out there among Yukoners and those people that are wanting to become Yukoners.

Indeed, we're seeing a resurgence of economic activity. We're seeing an increase in population. We're seeing an increase in participation in employment. We're seeing growth in our communities — it's not just Whitehorse, but indeed around the territory.

Yes, we're faced with different issues or different problems than we were a couple of years ago. When we first took office, people would often refer to the U-Haul economy, and we weren't having the issue of needing more housing. That issue has been addressed, and now we have different areas on which we have to focus our attention.

Mr. Speaker, with the experience and wisdom gained with the Yukon Party, I think that they are in a very good position to address many of the emerging issues that will be facing the territory. We are certainly taking steps to address the issues regarding housing. One only has to take a look at the budget to see the amount for lot development, which is three times that of what it has been in previous budgets. That's a huge shift.

We are also seeing the benefits of the relationship between the Government of Yukon and the City of Whitehorse — plan development with the launch of the Ingram subdivision. Some of the lots that were up for sale this past fall have been sold, which will see people building these new homes in the coming year. Also there is the development in the coming year and the development of the Whistle Bend subdivision. That will be a huge development for the territory, for Whitehorse in particular, and we will have to manage those issues of growth. I would suggest that those are good problems to have — optimistic problems to have — and I look forward to being part of the solution addressing those.

We're also seeing growth in other communities. We're certainly working with those communities to address some of their infrastructure needs, whether it's access to potable water, whether it's sewage disposal, whether it's solid-waste management, whether it's access to building lots — the budget is filled with examples where the Government of Yukon is working with other orders of government to address these issues of growth.

I'll just touch on the issue of solid-waste management for a moment because that's one for which the government has been

very responsive. When we took office, there was work put into the solid-waste strategy. We went to work in a number of different communities. Those include, in my particular riding, Carcross, Tagish and Marsh Lake, where we have abandoned the policy of burning garbage and instead have increased opportunities for recycling, for reusing, and then transfer of the solid waste to the facility here in Whitehorse.

Also, we have put in place attendants at these facilities to increase the suitable disposal of material to ensure that people are disposing of their materials in a more appropriate manner than they were in past years. Part of this is a knowledge and awareness issue: people becoming more aware of the dangers of inappropriately disposing of some materials and a change of practice. This is an excellent example of how this government has really responded very quickly to address these needs.

There are a number of different opportunities that we are seeing in this budget for the beautiful Southern Lakes. Southern Lakes includes the communities of Carcross, Tagish, Marsh Lake, the Atlin Road and M'Clintock Valley Road. It is a community of tremendous diversity.

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Hon. Mr. Rouble: The member for beautiful Kluane wants to know how many glaciers we have and I think that's an exercise worth conducting. If the member has any free time this coming fall maybe he could participate in a study to identify the glaciers in the southwest Yukon. I think he's looking forward to that one. He just said, "Count me in," so we'll put him on the list of glacier counters for next fall.

Now, some of the other initiatives going on in the Southern Lakes include building upon the work that we've done on the issues of potable water. Members only have to look to last spring to see the opening of the new water treatment facility in Marsh Lake. I can tell members that it has been a tremendous new asset to the community that we now have a second source of potable water for one of the largest communities in the territory.

There is still work being done on that one to provide additional support or access for bulk water haulers. That will certainly help those people who use water delivery in the area. That is an issue with increased hauling costs, access to potable water — especially access to trucked water has become very expensive. I've heard other members lament about access to potable water. I would also encourage them to have their constituents look at the rural well program, which is an excellent vehicle for assisting people to put in a well at their own home. I know many of my constituents have benefited from this Yukon Party program and have put in their own wells to eliminate the need for either personal water hauling or for commercial water hauling.

Some of the other initiatives include continuation of the Carcross waterfront project. Members will realize the tremendous amount of work that has gone on in Carcross in recent years. This has been a real success story. We have been working with the community to identify priorities and identify projects to put some polish on Carcross.

I know local photographers are going around documenting the changes because they're so amazed at the changes that have

happened in the community since the Yukon Party has been in power; whether it's the replacement of the walk bridge, or the beach viewing platform, the realignment of the entrance roads, the work with the First Nation on the carving shed, or the work with the First Nation on the daycare. There has been a tremendous amount of activity going on in Carcross, and it is really becoming a very vibrant and exciting spot. We have also worked with White Pass by encouraging them and supporting them in their move to bring rail service back to the community; it has really been exciting to see the blossoming of the community. Some of the projects there also include the boat launch and dock facility. I am sure people have seen the new "Welcome" sign and the entrance landscaping — perhaps not the landscaping because that would be covered with snow at this time of year — so I will put out an invitation to all the members for next summer to make sure that they make a stop in Carcross to see some of the additional enhancements.

Additional visitor infrastructure has been put in place with the CSIF funds. That has included road upgrades, a bus loop, additional parking, flood mitigation work and a pathway to the footbridge. Clearly, Mr. Speaker, we've seen issues in the community in the past with the buses stopping in the community — all a bit of confusion as to where people should or should not drive. This is an excellent example of listening to the community, working with them, and my hat has to go off to all of the volunteers in the community, whether it has been the South Klondike Local Advisory Council, people with the First Nation or others who have worked with the Community Services department in order to put many of these projects in place. I would also really like to thank the engineers within Community Services for the work that they have done.

Also, I would like to touch on the *SS Tutshi* memorial. People will recall that this has been a situation in Carcross for many years, a situation that has often been ignored by many. We as a government really rolled up our sleeves and went to work with the community on addressing this one and have started to turn this into what will be a very attractive attraction in the community. So that is certainly turning a negative into a positive. That is another project I am very happy to see. That is in addition to the visitor washrooms and the gateway pavilion. Again, this is working with the community to meet some of the needs of visitors who come into the territory. It should be noted that there are more people who go to the Carcross Visitor Reception Centre than any other visitor reception centre in the territory. Really, it is a very welcoming place and obviously one of the necessities in welcoming guests into the community. It is a place for them to find appropriate relief.

No one likes to talk about sludge drying beds for sewage lagoons, but they are certainly a necessity, and work is ongoing with this to put in place the water licence and to address the sewage needs in that community. Again, there is other water system work going on. There is work being done on the landscaping in the commercial area, work in the staging area, water upgrades, utility relocation, the entrance and landscaping signage, the shore cleanup and the dock construction, the tourist pullout, and also the carving facility that's operated by the Carcross-Tagish First Nation.

It's great to see some of the work that's going on in Carcross. That works extends throughout the beautiful Southern Lakes too, with work scheduled for this summer on the Atlin Road. That's in excess of \$4 million. Additionally, there's work for the Southern Lakes forest resource management plan. There are items identified in the budget for the grater station upgrades in Carcross. There are funds in the budget identified for the Swan Haven erosion mitigation program. Also, there are additional water system upgrades and water treatment issues throughout the riding, including addressing the issues of arsenic. It's great to see that the Government of Yukon is looking after the needs of the people in the Southern Lakes.

Also, I should touch on some of the work that has been done recently with the volunteer fire departments. There has been work done to ensure that not only do they have the appropriate facilities but also the appropriate tools. I really would like to put out a vote of thanks to those folks for the tremendous commitment that they make in our community.

Now, I also have the role of being the minister responsible for both Education and Energy, Mines and Resources. It has been an exciting year working on both of these portfolios. It has been very interesting to see how they complement each other. It could be said that part of the role of education is to help prepare Yukoners for Yukon opportunities. The role of Energy, Mines and Resources is to help prepare opportunities for Yukoners. So, it has been great to see these types of synergies, if you will. I will have, I expect, throughout the budget debate, a tremendous opportunity to go through some of the specific initiatives in both the Department of Education and the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources.

Motion to adjourn debate

Hon. Mr. Rouble: I would like to hit on a few highlights, but seeing the time now, I move that debate on second reading of Bill No. 24 be now adjourned.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Minister of Education that debate on second reading of Bill No. 24 be now adjourned.

Motion to adjourn debate on second reading of Bill No. 24 agreed to

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Mr. Speaker, 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 stands adjourned until 1:00 p.m. tomorrow.

The House adjourned at 5:28 p.m.