

Yukon Legislative Assembly
Whitehorse, Yukon
Monday, March 7, 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 now proceed with the Order Paper. Tributes.

TRIBUTES

In recognition of Pharmacist Awareness Week

Hon. Mr. Hart: I rise in the House today in honour of Pharmacist Awareness Week on behalf of the House, which is celebrated from March 6 to 12 this year. This week was established to raise awareness of the pharmacist's crucial role in managing medication, chronic diseases and self-care.

Les pharmaciens et les pharmaciennes jouent un rôle essentiel à notre bien-être et à notre santé. Ils et elles comprennent bien les divers effets des médicaments qui nous sont prescrits et savent nous donner de précieux renseignements. Leurs connaissances complètent celles de nos médecins et infirmières praticiennes.

Pharmacists are critically important to our health and welfare. They understand the effects of prescribed medication and provide us with important information. Their knowledge complements that of the physician and nurse practitioner.

In Yukon, pharmacists work with other health care providers and the Department of Health and Social Services to raise awareness of public health issues such as the importance of immunizations and the best ways of preventing contagion.

They provide advice and support to patients with chronic conditions, such as diabetes, and their professionalism and caring are a great comfort to us in times of stress and illness.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the territory's pharmacists for their hard work on our behalf.

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

NOTICES OF MOTION

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to continue to ensure that Yukoners have access to a standard of health care that is comparable to the standards in other jurisdictions in Canada by:

(1) encouraging existing medical clinics and practices to expand their services and attract more health care professionals

to reside in the territory in order to improve Yukoners' access to family doctors;

(2) sponsoring the education of Yukon health care and medical professional students and provide incentives for them to return and practise in the territory;

(3) encouraging visiting health care and medical specialists to offer their services in the territory by providing them with the access to appropriate medical facilities, including office space and residences, such as the new staff residence/health service facility being constructed on Hospital Road;

(4) establishing regional health care facilities throughout the territory, such as regional hospitals being constructed in Dawson City and Watson Lake, in order to provide rural Yukoners with access to an appropriate level of health care;

(5) utilizing and expanding telehealth care services throughout the territory; and

(6) ensuring Yukoners have priority access to health care and medical services in other jurisdictions, primarily Alberta and British Columbia, for services not available in the territory, including covering medical travel and other expenses.

I give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to give a status report on the 33 "actions to be undertaken" contained in the Yukon government *Climate Change Action Plan*.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to explain conflicting messages coming from the Premier and the Minister of Health and Social Services on the subject of cuts or the introduction of user fees to the medical travel program.

I give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Premier of the Government of Yukon to add his name to the "I am (Not Steven Harper's) Canadian" petition and instruct the Prime Minister of Canada that:

(1) the Government of Canada should immediately cease official reference to itself as the "Harper government";

(2) this is not Stephen Harper's government; it is the government of the Canadian people;

(3) our country is not Stephen Harper's Canada. It is a democratic Canada;

(4) we are not Stephen Harper's Canadians; we are Canadian; and

(5) we demand that all official reference to the Canadian government continue to use "Government of Canada".

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

THAT this House urges the Yukon government to consult stakeholders on developing and expanding innovative scholarships, grants and loan programs to address financial obstacles to post-secondary education for low- and middle-income students in order to:

(1) decrease the debt load of students;

(2) allow part-time students access to grants and loans;

(3) increase the number of rural and single parent post-secondary students;

(4) encourage the federal government to innovate their post-secondary programs by shifting spending from universal expenditures on tax credits and savings schemes to need-based grants;

(5) eliminate the financial barriers to education for capable students; and

(6) invest in future Yukon knowledge-based accomplishments by investing in our students.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Canada to support Bill C-393, *An Act to Amend the Patent Act (Drugs for international humanitarian purposes)*, standing in the name of New Democratic Party Member of Parliament Paul Dewar, Ottawa Centre.

Speaker: Are there any further notices of motion?
Is there a statement by a minister?

Speaker's ruling

Prior to Question Period, the Chair will rule on a point of order raised by the Member for Whitehorse Centre on March 2, 2011 during opposition private members' business.

The member raised a point of order in response to remarks that the Minister of Justice had made in the course of the debate. The Member for Whitehorse Centre asserted that the remarks were out of order, as they personalized the debate.

The Chair has reviewed the exchange and believes that in this instance there was a point of order. While I appreciate that members may feel passionately about subjects they are debating, I would remind all members to temper their language when referring to other honourable members.

Thank you. We will now proceed to Question Period.

QUESTION PERIOD

Question re: Committee on Abuse in Residential Schools Society

Mr. Mitchell: On Friday, many Yukoners attended an open house and fundraiser at the offices of the Committee on Abuse in Residential Schools Society, or CAIRS. Yukoners pitched in and helped raise \$9,000. CAIRS is struggling to keep its doors open because of cuts in funding by the Government of Canada — or, as it's now officially called, "the Harper government".

We on this side of the House recognize the important contribution CAIRS makes to our Yukon community. The Harper government does not. What efforts has the Minister of Justice made to convince her Conservative friends in Ottawa to continue funding for CAIRS?

Hon. Mr. Hart: Mr. Speaker, I have been in consultation on several occasions with the CAIRS Society with regard to their funding. In fact, this government has forwarded letters on to the federal government requesting additional funding to suffice the CAIRS Society with their funding toward enabling them to continue on with their valuable service.

Mr. Mitchell: In the spring of 2010, the Minister of Justice put a motion on the Order Paper of this Legislature urg-

ing the Harper government to continue funding to CAIRS. The Minister of Justice has never bothered to call that motion for debate.

Funding this program is a Government of Canada — or Harper government — responsibility. We agree that the Government of Yukon cannot afford to take over every time the federal Conservatives cut a program. It has been nearly a year since the Minister of Justice put a motion on the floor and then didn't call it for debate. Now CAIRS is on the verge of having to close its doors in Whitehorse due to lack of funding.

The Health minister said they've sent letters. What other efforts has this government made to ensure that the Harper government funds this program?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: There are some factual issues here with regard to what the Leader of the Official Opposition has brought forward. In the first instance, this is not a cut by any government. This is a program instituted by a former Liberal government that had a sunset date of 2012 in it. These were resources provided to the Aboriginal Healing Foundation, and the Aboriginal Healing Foundation made the decisions on who, on an annual basis, received funding from the aboriginal healing fund. In the Yukon, in particular, CAIRS was one of those agencies that received funding. The decision not to fund CAIRS was not a decision by government at all but was a decision by the Aboriginal Healing Foundation itself. I think the Leader of the Official Opposition should be more factual in his statements.

Mr. Mitchell: The Premier can call it what he will, but the fact is that the Government of Canada funding is running out. Ongoing support for people who went through the residential school experience is making a huge difference in the lives of many Yukoners. Funding this service is no longer a priority of the Harper government — they have said no, they will not extend the funding.

This Yukon Party government should be making the case to Ottawa to ensure funding is available instead of telling this side of the House that it is not really the responsibility of government. Instead, the Minister of Justice tabled a motion almost a year ago and then nothing. The Yukon Conservative Senator has also been silent on this issue.

What has this government actually done to convince the Harper government to reinstate funding for CAIRS?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: The litany of programs and services this government is providing here in today's Yukon that addresses the broad range and spectrum of social programs, of health care needs and so on, is very evident. They are all programs, with the money attached to those programs, that have been opposed by the Liberals in this House. Time and time again, the Liberals have voted against these expenditures, so they have no position on the matter.

Furthermore, the Aboriginal Healing Foundation was sunsetted. It wasn't created by this government. It wasn't created by CAIRS. The sunset date was created by our national government many years ago. Furthermore, what this government is doing is working actively with the federal government, including Health Canada, where there has been a significant amount of money established to deal with programs and issues in this

area — working extensively with Health Canada to do exactly that.

At the end of the day, all that we're doing in the Yukon and all the investment being made has been opposed by the Liberals. They have nothing to say on the matter, regardless of the program or where it came from.

Question re: Fiscal management

Mr. Inverarity: I have a question for the Minister of Justice. As a minister, it is her duty to uphold the laws of the Yukon. When laws are not followed and the minister does not take action to ensure that they are, Yukoners are left to wonder why. Recent events demonstrated the minister takes no action when confronted with proof that legislation has not been followed. For example, the Auditor General of Canada recently reported the Department of Health and Social Services spent more than it was authorized to spend. It had overspent the budget by \$1.4 million in fiscal 2008-09 and another \$3.7 million in fiscal 2009-10.

As a result, the department is not in compliance with the *Financial Administration Act*. The minister has been made aware of this for several weeks now and has done nothing about it. I'd like to know why not.

Hon. Mr. Fentie: The reference being made by the Member for Porter Creek South should be related back to exactly what the Auditor General has reported on. On the matters as mentioned, especially for the health care department, it's right in the public accounts.

The Auditor General had no issues with all material matters as presented and our books have been duly audited and presented. That's the way it is. It certainly isn't the way the Member for Porter Creek South is trying to present it.

Mr. Inverarity: Well, we know what the Premier's opinion is of the law. This is going to be a major issue coming up in the campaign; the major issue is going to be trust. It's the minister's job to uphold the laws of the Yukon. The Auditor General of Canada said the Department of Health and Social Services is not in compliance with the *Financial Administration Act*. What was the minister's response? Has she held the Minister of Health and Social Services or the Minister of Finance accountable? No, she hasn't.

There's another example that the Auditor General of Canada has given when this government invested \$36 million in asset-backed commercial paper, yet did not meet the requirements of the *Financial Administration Act*. She said it is important that the Department of Finance manage the investment of public money in accordance with legislation. Why has the Minister of Justice not followed up on this example either?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: It is all about trust and one must be very factual to gain the trust of any public anywhere. I'll leave the Yukon public to make that determination on who can be trusted when it comes to the facts.

As far as this investment that the Member for Porter Creek South has just mentioned, I'm sure the member will recall when the Auditor General reported this government acted immediately to ensure that no further investments of this type take place. That's what we did. I'm not sure what former Liberal or

NDP governments did, because those kinds of investments were taking place for years.

Mr. Inverarity: It's very disappointing to see that the Minister of Justice has refused to defend her action. There has been a lot of that lately. The Auditor General of Canada has pointed out two separate times that this government has not been in compliance with the financial laws. The Minister of Justice has taken no corrective action. When we asked the Premier why this government wasn't following the *Environment Act*, he said it was just a benign legality. The Education minister failed to review the *Education Act*, as required by law, and the Minister of Justice just sits back and does nothing. Voters will be asking themselves, "Who can I trust? Who will uphold our laws?" They have seen what this government does and they will do it again. Why has the minister not taken any action to uphold our laws?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: For the Member for Porter Creek South to even infer — to even in a cursory manner suggest that someone in the House is breaking the law — is an absolute travesty of democracy. If the member has any evidence that someone on this side of the House has broken the law, lay the charges, proceed with the correct and due process. Then those accused can defend themselves in the arena where it is appropriate. It is about trust. The Liberals are all in it together. They have broken faith with the Yukon public, given that so-called contract they signed. They have broken faith with the Yukon public when it comes to their conduct in this House. They have broken faith with the Yukon public when they have opposed every good thing that has happened to this territory in the last nine years. They have got the problem. Upholding the law is our job and we've done well at it. The Liberals can't even uphold the commitments they made to the Yukon public.

Question re: Yukon College tuition increases

Ms. Hanson: Last week, Yukon College announced a tuition fee hike of 20 percent. The raise has been condemned by the Canadian Federation of Students. It is the highest rate hike they have ever heard of. We do realize the Minister of Education will say he doesn't have control over the college's decision, that it was a board of governors' prerogative to do this, and it was. The spin from the college is they are still among the lowest one-third of fees in the country, and that somehow having low fees raises questions about the quality of education offered. I think many degree holders from countries in Europe would be surprised to hear that the quality of their education is less because their tuition was low.

The minister signs off on college policies and certainly has control over what the territory transfers to the college. He must have an opinion on this exorbitant raise in cost for post-secondary students. Can the minister explain how raising tuition fees at Yukon College supports the post-secondary education objectives of this government?

Hon. Mr. Rouble: The Government of Yukon has made significant investments in education in recent years and will continue to increase the number of post-secondary education opportunities available for Yukoners.

When I took a look at some of the funding amounts, I was quite staggered to see the increases that have been in place

since this government took office. When we first took office, the base funding for Yukon College was less than \$11 million; today it's greater than \$11 million. This year, with the additional planned contributions to Yukon College in the budget, we're seeing a \$22-million planned expenditure and investment into the college.

At the same time, back in 2002, we recognized that student financial assistance needed to be looked at. That's why we increased it and indexed it at that time, so Yukon students, whether they've been going to Yukon College here or another post-secondary institution Outside, have seen their grant — not their loan, but their grant — from the Yukon government increase every year.

This government is very proud of the investments it has made in education, especially in the area of post-secondary education. We're pleased to see the number of opportunities increasing for post-secondary education here in the territory, and we're very supportive of the work that the Yukon College Board of Governors is doing to ensure that Yukon College becomes an attractive, responsible, well-developed, well-researched and well-renowned institution for higher learning.

Ms. Hanson: That's true. The grant has gone up, and so have tuition fees. The minister will suggest next that the federal government loans are available to students. The rise in tuition fees has been accompanied by unprecedented levels of student debt across this country. I would remind the minister that the per capita personal debt of every Canadian has been severely criticized by the same government that forces students into intolerable debt. The Canada student loans debt is currently around \$14 billion and counting. Average student debt reaches nearly \$30,000. Potential students are lost because the most commonly cited barrier to going into post-secondary institutions is financial. Program completion rates plummeted from 59 percent to only eight percent as student debt rose over the last few years. There is now a law prohibiting bankruptcy on student loans. Students are faced with the same type of penalty on default of loans as those people convicted of fraud.

Does the minister plan to increase support for students so they don't have to go into unmanageable debt to get an education?

Hon. Mr. Rouble: One of the biggest challenges we're seeing now is where statistics pertinent to another jurisdiction are being put on the record as being appropriate and applicable here in the territory.

We're certainly not seeing those statistics that the Leader of the NDP has raised being pertinent or accurate to reflect what's actually going on here in Yukon.

We've seen increases in programming at Yukon College. We've seen increases in the number of degrees that are being offered there. We've seen increases in the amount of housing that's available. We've seen increases in the infrastructure in communities with the Pelly Crossing campus and the Dawson campus being rebuilt. We've seen increases in opportunities throughout the territory and, as the member opposite correctly reflects, we've seen increases in the amount that the government has contributed to Yukon College, increases in the amount of responsibility conferred to it and increases to the

student financial assistance program that the Government of Yukon offers by way of grants, whether it's the student grant or the training allowance. We've seen increases in both of those.

Ms. Hanson: I didn't quite get an answer to that question. You know, a New Democratic government would invest in the education of young Yukoners. Public policy should grow the knowledge sector of our territory, not make it more difficult to achieve. With the higher cost of living and the number of single parents attending college, we have to be creative and supportive in our post-secondary policies. Higher education should be equally accessible for all on the basis of capacity, not on the level of family income.

We must not be putting financial obstacles in the way of post-secondary lower- and middle-income students. There are many good ideas on developing expanding programs to address the financial obstacles facing students.

Will this minister agree to consult with students, professionals and other stakeholders on how to develop new programs and expand present ones to give reasonable support to Yukon post-secondary students?

Hon. Mr. Rouble: It is encouraging to hear the member opposite speak of support for creative solutions. It wasn't that long ago when we were faced with a situation in the territory where the people involved in organizing the Canada Winter Games were planning to spend \$3 million and expense that for some kind of rental accommodations. Instead the Government of Yukon went to work with that group and invested significantly more. We built a residence at Yukon College and additional residences for Yukon seniors that are administered from Yukon Housing Corporation, but we built a residence. That was a pretty creative solution. We also built the appropriate accommodations that had multiple bedrooms so people with families from Yukon communities could come in from the outlying communities and have places to live here in town.

We are continuing to make these kinds of investments and continuing to work with the community. I would encourage the member, if she hasn't had the opportunity already, to take a look at the labour market framework that was presented to the Yukon public and the Yukon Legislative Assembly earlier this session, where we went to work and looked at what long-term skills and training we need here in the territory and went to work with those stakeholders she is referring to — working with students, labour organizations, employers and training organizations to ensure we're responsive in meeting the needs of Yukon and helping to prepare Yukoners for Yukon opportunities.

Question re: Mineral staking within municipal boundaries

Ms. Hanson: Arcturus Ventures Inc. has significant quartz mineral claims staked along the Yukon River just south of downtown Whitehorse and within city limits. The company announced recently it intends to run a drilling program this month in the hopes of finding copper and gold. There is a problem with this plan, though: the company's claims are within and surround the country residential community of Spruce Hill, including private residence property.

Is the minister aware of this and has he sat down with Spruce Hill residents who are concerned about impacts adjacent to or on their private property?

Hon. Mr. Rouble: We've had this debate in the Assembly many times about the prohibitions in our Yukon placer and quartz acts regarding staking, whether it's in municipalities or outside of municipalities. We've gone through these a number of times. We've also gone through the number of assessment processes that have to be undertaken with prescribed activities going on in the territory. That's the whole YESAA process that has to be followed before activities are undertaken on Yukon's landscape. Additionally, if there is activity that's being looked at within the City of Whitehorse, of course there are municipal bylaws that would also come into force and effect.

Ms. Hanson: In fact, we have raised this issue many times before and we're going to continue to raise it because this minister and the Minister of Community Services will not address it with the citizens of Whitehorse. I've walked through the neighbourhood of Spruce Hill and talked with residents who have real concerns. They've seen trees cut along their hiking trails. These people have invested a lot of time and money into their homes and properties. There is a real sense of anxiety that they could wake up one day with a major development in their backyard. We could all wake up to this reality. Maybe someday the minister will find that someone has staked a claim on his property because, under our system of free entry, virtually any land can be staked.

Why is this government so committed to a free-entry system where staking could take place virtually anywhere when there are other models that exist that could minimize land use conflicts?

Hon. Mr. Rouble: I would encourage the member opposite to revisit the Yukon placer act and to revisit the Yukon quartz act and look at where prohibitions for staking occur. There are prohibitions that do include these areas. In many cases, there were claims that existed within municipal boundaries before boundaries were expanded out. We've seen that situation here in the territory, and we are sitting here, living with a legacy that was created previously.

We also recognize, Mr. Speaker, that there are important tools that we have, whether it's legislation or whether it's regulation, to address these, to ensure that we have appropriate, reasonable, responsible development. That's the whole point behind our permitting processes and our assessment process — the YESAA process — which does look at the socio-economic impacts of projects as well.

Mr. Speaker, I'm confident that Yukon has appropriate regulatory processes in place. I am confident that we will have appropriate mechanisms to look at large-scale projects and to provide appropriate responses to them.

Ms. Hanson: Mr. Speaker, we are not talking about legacy issues here; we are talking about here, today, now. Yukon New Democrats are committed to providing new opportunities for the growth of a progressive and environmentally responsible Yukon mining industry — one that demonstrates a world-class, best-practice approach. Last year, over 83,000

mineral claims were staked in the Yukon. This is a record. A typical year sees about 10,000 to 15,000 claims staked. The backdrop is a free-entry staking system that enables mineral staking to take place virtually anywhere and the snail's pace at which this government conducts land use planning — Spruce Hill, Dawson's Dome Road, the world-class ski trails at Mount McIntyre in Whitehorse.

We now have three significant areas where free entry has led to conflict over land. How many more land use conflicts is the minister prepared to tolerate before we look at changing the free-entry approach to something a little more suited for modern times?

Hon. Mr. Rouble: First the member opposite chastised me for bringing up legacy projects and saying we're not looking at a legacy, we're looking at right now, and then clouded the whole issue by bringing into question the area on the Dome Road and the area on the ski trails. Some of those claims date back to 1902. It's always a challenge to debate when we have shifting terms of references going on here.

Government of Yukon is clearly working responsibly in a post-devolution era. We're obviously working with our partners in developing appropriate land use planning. When you take a look at the areas under protection in the Yukon right now — whether it's in a territorial park, a federal park or some of the other SMA areas — we have over 11.8 percent of the total land mass provided with some increased level of protection or greater conservation. We'll continue to work up and live up to our requirements and our responsibilities for appropriate land use planning.

We'll continue to work toward ensuring that there is protection for Yukon's pristine areas. We'll also work with our responsible resource industries to ensure that we have appropriate development throughout the territory.

Question re: Education Act review

Mr. Fairclough: The *Education Act*, by law, must be reviewed every 10 years to ensure that it is meeting the needs of our education system. Reviewing the act was a promise that this Yukon Party government made in the 2006 campaign platform, but like many promises, they have been broken. We have constantly reminded this government of its obligation to review the act. The review of the *Education Act* has not been a priority, although it should have been one of the Education minister's main responsibilities to complete.

Why has the Education minister refused to review the act?

Hon. Mr. Rouble: There have been significant changes and growth in the Department of Education in response to reviews of the *Education Act*. When I speak of the reviews of the *Education Act*, I am not just speaking about the *Education Act* review that the previous Liberal government had undertaken — we all know how that ended up. Also, when we took a look at the education reform project, there were areas in the *Education Act* that were reviewed there, and many areas involved changes that can be made without making changes to the act.

I would encourage members opposite to remember April 11 to 13. That's when our next education summit will be held here in Whitehorse, where we'll sit down with our partners in

education and provide more information about changes that are going on Yukon's education system in order to be more responsive to the demonstrated needs that are out there.

Mr. Fairclough: All we heard today from this minister is excuses. The MLA for Lake Laberge has said of this minister's record in Energy, Mines and Resources, under this minister, quote: "targets were missed". He also said that he has not provided timelines and the key issues, quote: "might be put on the back burner".

As we can see, the same minister also has the same problems setting and meeting timelines for the Education portfolio. When we reminded the minister in 2006 of his obligations to review the *Education Act*, we told him that consultation was important. We also repeated this message in 2008 when we raised this issue again. The minister had five years to consult with stakeholders on this issue and he still hasn't reviewed the *Education Act*. Why wasn't this done?

Hon. Mr. Rouble: We've seen a growing trend from the Liberal government — excuse me, what a nightmare that would be — the Liberal opposition, and I expect that as this session winds down, they will continue their approach.

We've seen the Liberal opposition be unable to comment about the performance of this government. We've heard them be unable to comment about policy. So what are they left with? Well, they're left with personal attacks. Let's rise above that one. Let's take a look at the initiatives going on in the Department of Education. Let's look at the work that New Horizons has done to increase curriculum areas to make school a more engaging place. Let's take a look at some of the progress that we've made in working with Yukoners to ensure that our education system is meeting the needs of all Yukoners throughout the territory.

Mr. Fairclough: This minister has talked at great length about all of the consultation he has done and the ideas that he has heard. But in five years, he hasn't updated the *Education Act* to incorporate anything that has come out of his meetings. I'm sure that all of the hardworking stakeholders who have attended these meetings would like to know that something will come out of this, but so far the minister has dropped the ball.

In 2006, the minister said, and I quote: "The issue here isn't legislation specifically, it's the education system." Well, I have news for the minister. It's not for him to decide whether this legislation is reviewed or not. It's something that the law says he must do. So why did the act not get reviewed, as required by law?

Hon. Mr. Rouble: Mr. Speaker, we have learned a lot from the reviews done in the Education department — whether it was the *Education Act* review that the Liberal government undertook, whether it was the reviews of legislation undertaken by the education reform project, or whether it was the review by the Auditor General. We've learned a lot and benefited from that and made changes within the Department of Education. The member opposite has talked a lot about wanting to see more community input. Well, Mr. Speaker, that's certainly reflected in the school growth plans, just as one example. This is a way where the local community can work with the school

to ensure their community-specific initiatives, ideas and concerns are being addressed specifically in their school.

Mr. Speaker, if the opposition wants to see governance in action, I would encourage them to come to one of these meetings and take a look the contributions the community is making with the school growth plans and see the positive impact that's being made in Yukon schools today. There are a lot of people doing a lot of very good work in this area, and I would encourage members of the Liberal Party to recognize this, to take their heads out of the sand and to realize what is going on in Yukon's education system today.

Speaker: The time for Question Period has now elapsed. We will proceed to Orders of the Day.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Mitchell: I would just like to ask all members to join me in extending a warm welcome to a constituent and also an author, a columnist in the areas of conservation of forests, fish and wildlife and a sometimes political correspondent, Mr. Murray Martin.

Applause

ORDERS OF THE DAY

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

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

Motion agreed to

Speaker leaves the Chair

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Chair (Mr. Nordick): Order please. Committee of the Whole will now come to order. The matter before the Committee is Bill No. 24, *First Appropriation Act, 2011-12*. Committee of the Whole will now consider Vote 54, Department of Tourism and Culture.

Do members wish a brief recess?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

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

Recess

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

Bill No. 24: *First Appropriation Act, 2011-12* — continued

Chair: The matter before the Committee is Bill No. 24, *First Appropriation Act, 2011-12*. We will now proceed with general debate in Vote 54, Department of Tourism and Culture.

Department of Tourism and Culture

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Mr. Chair, it is indeed my honour and privilege to rise in today's Assembly to address and to present the 2011-12 operation and maintenance and capital budgets for the Department of Tourism and Culture.

I would first like to take a few moments just to recognize and thank the many individuals who work in the Department of Tourism and Culture for their expertise, for their knowledge and their professionalism.

I have very much enjoyed the opportunity to serve as the minister responsible for the past eight and some years. I have very much learned and continue to learn, thanks to the professionalism and the multitude of knowledge — the corporate memory — housed within the Department of Tourism and Culture.

The 2011-12 budget for the Department of Tourism and Culture reflects expenditures of \$20.194 million, and \$1.841 million, respectively, all in support of various programs and services delivered by the department in recognition of both Yukon's social and economic well-being and that which the department contributes to.

The objectives of the Department of Tourism and Culture are as follows: to generate long-term economic growth and revenues for the benefit of Yukon people through the development and marketing of Yukon's tourism industry; to generate long-term economic growth; and to maximize socio-cultural benefits for Yukon residents and visitors through the preservation, development and interpretation of historic resources, visual, literary and performing arts and cultural industries in the Yukon.

Our government is very proud of the investments we have made over the last number of years to grow tourism in the territory. Strategic investments such as the tourism cooperative marketing fund, Yukon tourism brand strategy, Travel Yukon website, and investments in media relations and product development are but a few examples of how the government is working with industry to position Yukon as a destination of choice.

This government recognizes the value of tourism to our territory and has worked to also increase its level of investment in marketing the territory with millions of dollars to our key target markets within Canada, the United States and overseas. It is, indeed, working. Last year alone, in 2010, we were able to see a 10-percent increase in visitation over the year previous to that.

One of the mechanisms that we have been able to utilize over the last number of years is investments in what we have coined as the Destination: Yukon marketing campaign. Recently, the department was able to announce just over \$600,000 in funding toward the 2011 Destination: Yukon summer campaign, aimed at expanding awareness about the Yukon to southern Canada, mainly in our key gateway cities identified as Vancouver, Edmonton, Calgary and the Greater Toronto area.

Through television spots that ran February 12 during the Scotiabank Hockey Day in Canada on CBC, to print ads and Internet advertising, this campaign builds on the equity invested previously and on the awareness generated through

Canada's north consortium national marketing campaign and 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games marketing initiatives in Vancouver. It also significantly builds upon the investments made in 2007, when we were able to work with our two northern territories — the Northwest Territories and Nunavut — on the first-ever pan-north marketing campaign, entitled "Look Up North".

The 2011 Destination: Yukon summer campaign began in April and runs through to June. We were also very pleased to be able to announce in collaboration with the Government of Canada — speaking of pan-north marketing initiatives — a pan-north marketing campaign to carry on what we completed in previous years with the assistance of CanNor for a multi-year funding allotment that will be going to the three northern territories.

Again, this builds upon the momentum that was garnered in 2007 and again in 2010 and the many investments the Yukon government alone has invested in over the last eight and a half years.

Trade and consumer shows are also essential for increasing awareness of Yukon as a travel destination to the travel trade industry and to potential travellers. In this regard, the government is also pleased to continue its investment of \$700,000 in ongoing annual funding for the tourism cooperative marketing fund. Since the fund's inception in 2004, more than 500 applications have received support for marketing tourism products, as well as participation at key trade and consumer shows. It's an excellent program that has helped leverage millions of dollars in investment to Yukon's tourism sector, helping to further increase awareness of Yukon as a travel destination year-round and, of course, to grow tourism revenues. Our industry partners, including the Senior Marketing Committee, have indicated the value of this fund over the years and their strong support for it.

TCMF is designed as a 50:50 cost-share program supporting marketing initiatives and partnerships and attendance at trade and consumer shows. Speaking of consumer shows, we were also very pleased to just recently announce that the GoMedia Canada Marketplace 2012, will be coming to Whitehorse, Yukon, for the very first time ever. In fact, it is the first event of its kind that will be taking place north of 60. We are really excited to be able to work with the Canadian Tourism Commission and of course Yukon's tourism sector on this particular event. It is a coming together of over 300 national and international travel trade journalists as well as representatives of the tourism industry, Canada wide. It is an opportunity to network, to tell stories, to come up with unique stories for the coming year and to also partake in pre- and post-familiarization tours throughout the Yukon.

We are thrilled to be able to partner with the tourism industry and our respective municipalities to ensure that it is indeed a great success, as other events have shown to be. Another initiative that is in this year's budget is the scenic drives initiative worth \$350,000 in annual funding. It's also committed toward the implementation of the scenic drives marketing program — again, an increase designed to target rubber-tire travellers to come to the Yukon to visit and to lengthen their duration

of stay in the Yukon by highlighting Yukon as a travel destination and, of course, highlighting our transportation and our cultural corridor assets to potential visitors.

Also contained in this year's budget is the www.travelyukon.com website. We have approximately \$125,000 for the maintenance and ongoing development of this website. It's the key foundation of this tourism marketing program and has been around for the past 16 years. Over the past number of recent years, we have invested heavily in the make-over of this particular tool. It has very much become the basis for tourism marketing worldwide and is integral to the effective, as well as efficient, promotion of Yukon as a travel destination, which puts us on par with the best of the best.

In addition to Destination: Yukon, marketing operations in North America also include expenditures toward our participation in a tourism north partnership with the Alaska Travel Industry Association, Tourism British Columbia and Travel Alberta to increase rubber-tire visitation from the United States. We are also very pleased to contribute over \$1 million to organizations such as the Yukon Quest, Yukon Convention Bureau, Wilderness Tourism Association of Yukon and Tourism Industry Association of the Yukon, to name but a few, to deliver key domestic tourism products and initiatives.

It was building upon the investments in domestic marketing and North American marketing. We are very pleased to continue with our efforts to market Yukon overseas as well. It was recently announced through the Government of Canada — through CanNor funding — \$2 million over the next four years for overseas marketing campaigns.

These funds are in addition to the marketing operations overseas budget housed within our Department of Tourism and Culture of \$1.3 million for activities and consumer marketing, trade sales and media relations. Together, almost \$1.8 million annually will be used to market Yukon in our overseas markets.

I should say that last year alone, in the year 2010, visitation in our overseas markets was actually up by 16 percent, which is very good news for the Yukon. Again, it is to be attributed to the strong partnership that we have garnered with the tourism sector and being very strategic in how we invest our dollars and collaborating on very unique and strategic partnerships. The Fulda Extreme Arctic Challenge, for example, is one of those very initiatives.

This funding coming from the Government of Canada enables the department to leverage exposure and opportunities based on our previous investments. Of course, we know that our visitor services program is also essential to seeing that visitors get the most of their travel experience in the Yukon, that visitors are encouraged to stay longer and they're introduced to all of our products and services. In this year's budget, approximately \$1.8 million is committed to this program.

As I mentioned, over the last 12 months in 2010, we saw a significant increase in visitation resulting in 10 percent over that of 2009, reflecting increases for both border crossings and in private vehicle traffic, as well as motorcoach traffic. As I just referenced, we also saw an increase of 16 percent in foreign visitors and U.S. visitors. We also experienced a significant increase in the use of the Erik Nielsen Whitehorse Interna-

tional Airport. In fact, we saw an increase of about nine percent over 2009. In fact, since — probably over the last five years, we have seen more than a 25-percent increase in planing and deplaning, which speaks volumes to the very importance of air access to the growth of the tourism sector and the very privilege that we have here to be able to work with our local carriers, including Air North, Yukon's airline, and international carriers such as Condor Airlines.

We continue to work with our partners in industry, in particular with our Senior Marketing Committee and the Tourism Industry Association of Yukon to ensure that all of our dollars targeting markets are spent in an efficient and effective manner and that they are reported as such on an annual basis. Of course, it's this ongoing willingness and ability to work with the business and tourism sectors and to be able to ensure that all our marketing programs are industry-led that contribute to Yukon's successful programming on an annual basis.

Investing in culture is also integral to our success as a travel destination. This investment also contributes to the well-being of our communities through public engagement and capacity building. Our commitment to culture is supported with over \$9 million toward the arts, heritage resources, historic sites, museums, First Nation cultural interpretive centres and Yukon archives. Heritage resources, for example, will receive \$866,000 in support of its programming of archeology, paleontology, geographical place names, licensing and scientific research.

I see that my time to end is growing very close, but I did want to certainly hone in on a couple of facts. It is unfortunate I don't have the time to give the department its full credit that is fully deserved.

I do want to spell out that the department delivers a great number of programs and services when it comes to advancing the stories of the Yukon — whether it's working with Yukon First Nation, on co-owned or co-managed historic sites: Fort Selkirk, Rampart House, Fortymile, to name but a few. They are all ongoing, significant investments that have been enhanced in this year's budget.

We have approximately \$1.5 million in direct support for the maintenance and operation of our museums and First Nation cultural centres, as well as for some of the capital projects undertaken by museums.

An additional \$350,000 is identified for special projects, safety and security upgrades, and another \$141,000 is going toward the implementation of the heritage and culture certificate program in partnership with Yukon College and the Vuntut Gwitchin government.

Mr. Chair, moving over to the arts — we recognize the very importance of this sector and have worked to enrich a number of programs over the years, as well as develop new initiatives over the eight years plus. The touring artist fund and Culture Quest are two examples of initiatives that this government has created, and they have proven to be extremely successful.

There is support of the Old Fire Hall and Arts Underground as cultural venues, and other initiatives that have helped further the growth of cultural industries. For community groups

and organizations, the arts fund will contribute some \$500,000 toward art projects that engage people, animate communities and build capacity.

Of course, the Yukon Arts Centre and the Dawson City Arts Society combined will receive over \$1 million in core funding for their operations, to enable them to continue to grow and deliver innovative and diverse programming to the performing and visual arts.

The arts operating fund will provide some \$668,000, which was previously \$425,000 in years past, to not-for-profit societies engaged in literary, visual or performing arts activities with annual and ongoing programs, including both developing and long-standing groups.

We have also enhanced the Artist in the School program from \$25,000 to \$100,000, and this budget sees that expenditure reflected at the same \$100,000 — again, enabling more communities in the territory to subscribe to arts programming in the Yukon and enriching the lives of a multitude of students.

By supporting the promotion and professional development of artists through the visual arts and crafts strategy, programs including *Art Adventures on Yukon Time* studio guide and created-in-Yukon products continue to benefit Yukon's growing arts community.

I could go on for a long, long time but I will just wrap up my comments and again thank the Department of Tourism and Culture and all officials throughout the Government of Yukon for their continued support of the tourism industry, whether it's waterfront improvements in Carcross, Whitehorse, or expansion of the Whitehorse International Airport or improvements to our road infrastructure or ongoing investments made by the Department of Environment to enhance the state of our wildlife and our environment.

I'll just conclude my remarks. I look forward to the upcoming debate with members opposite on the Department of Tourism and Culture.

Mr. Fairclough: I thank the minister for her remarks and the information she has provided in her opening remarks.

I would also like to thank the officials for their work in preparing the budget and for passing information on to the opposition parties in the briefings. I do have some questions in regard to this department. I do not want to spend a whole lot of time on it. The minister made mention of some of the issues that I would like to raise. Perhaps she can give more detail to some of these dollar amounts and what the department is doing. I'm sure she has that information; she says she has a lot more.

In regard to Destination: Yukon 2011, the minister said that they are spending \$600,000 on summer marketing and this is targeted to Vancouver, Edmonton, Calgary and Toronto. I'm glad to see the department going out and taking these initiatives particularly to these cities. The minister said that they'll be using television, the Internet — which is becoming more popular these days — and print ads. I also raised an issue with the minister in the past about the print ads that came up in the *Calgary Sun* and how, perhaps, we should be moving away from that type of ad and presenting Yukon as an exciting, beautiful place to be.

I am hoping that when former Yukoners who live in the cities recognize and look at these ads, they will see something totally different from what we have had in the past. If the minister would like, I could show her one of these ads. It didn't promote Yukon all that well, I thought — and neither did the person who was living down in Calgary. The minister said we will use everything from television to the Internet, and that's fine, and that's good — and also, in the papers that are still out there, even though many of them are on-line in the cities — the four cities that she has referred to. I would like to know how the impact of the initiatives will be measured. How will they be measured? What is the cost-benefit analysis, if that was done? What values will Yukoners be getting for this money?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: I think we have had this discussion a time or two in the Legislature on the concerns that were raised by the member opposite. I think it was probably about two or three years ago that the member opposite raised the campaign in question. Since then there has been significant, I would say, improvements to the way we deliver our marketing campaigns.

The one thing that I want to say is that, as of last fiscal year, 2010-11, we were able to actually bring security and stability to our Destination: Yukon campaign. We have, in the past number of years — when we took office there was an investment of about \$200,000 in what was called the gateway cities initiative at that time. That has grown substantively because of enhanced awareness in the consumer market, thanks to the 2007 Look Up North campaign and of course the 2010 Olympic initiative where we were able to get together and continue our partnership with the two northern territories. As a result of that, we have seen our investments grow.

Last fiscal year, 2010-11, was really the first year that we were actually able to build to our A-base secure ongoing annual funding of about a \$5,000 increase to this initiative. This is really key because it gives partners to the Yukon tourism sector the ability to participate and leverage that consumer awareness. For example, if we happen to be taking out a half- or full-page ad in the *Vancouver Sun* — and I just throw this out hypothetically — it gives the ability of other partners, such as Air North or other individual tour operators here in the territory, to also market in tandem. It really just leverages that reach substantially when we're all working together. It has worked successfully over the years. The Department of Tourism and Culture has been working very closely with the Senior Marketing Committee in taking strategic advice as to where to invest those dollars and how to invest those dollars — whether it's in television ads or on-line or print advertising — how much and at what time.

The advertisements that we just recently launched — the summer campaign — so, in other words, people are thinking about finalizing their vacation plans for the summer. This campaign was launched on February 12 — my son's birthday, which happened to be Hockey Day in Canada. In fact, I'm not sure if members opposite had the opportunity to see some of the 10-second clips that were aired on CBC television. They were really well done. They were very short and very succinct and highlighted the cultural diversity and also the wilderness

strengths we have here in the Yukon. Everything is driven to our website. I just mentioned earlier in my introductory remarks that www.travel yukon.com has really become our main source of driving individuals to the site in order to obtain additional information or to book directly with a Yukon tour operator. It has worked very well.

I also articulated earlier in my remarks that everything that we do in terms of our marketing plans in all of our key markets, whether it's North America, United States, Canada, whether it is overseas — what we're doing in product development or in the research unit.

Everything is articulated, outlining recommendations made by our Senior Marketing Committee, the department's performance targets and what we are trying to look at in terms of qualified responses and return on investment.

There are specific targets that are included in our annual *Tourism Yukon Implementation Plan*. In fact, we are just working off the *2010-11 Tourism Yukon Implementation Plan*. Then at the end of the year we are able to report progress in a report card. I applaud the department for being very open and very forthcoming. In fact, it's a well-deserved expectation by industry that we're able to show that we are delivering on their key strategic advice. Evaluation and implementation of marketing programs are based on numbers and on research. They are market-driven and industry-led at all times.

So this recent initiative, which was just launched on Hockey Day in Canada, will go until June and that marks our summer marketing campaign. Then we will launch in early fall, targeting the winter marketing campaign — targeting those individuals looking for winter travel experience. We will be launching that — I can't tell the member opposite exactly when that will be.

The summer marketing program is to the tune — I think it was just over \$618,000. It is marked by a series of television ads, such as what we just saw on CBC, which was a really great response — very much so when one takes a look at the inquiries made on the Travel Yukon website. It was incredible to say the least. When Hockey Day in Canada aired in the Yukon on February 12, I believe I had heard reported that it was actually the most popular Hockey Day in Canada to be reported on and to be received by Canadians at large. That was really great to hear, because those individuals would also be watching our ads being aired. Of course, in tandem with that, we will also have dollars going into on-line and print advertising, whether that is newspapers or magazines, and so forth.

I would say they're first-rate, first class. I've seen a draft of them and I will be happy to showcase or share with the member opposite some of the draft ads. I thought they were very well done.

I also wanted to make clear that this does not include the recent dollars we just received through the Government of Canada's CanNor program for pan-territorial tourism funding. This is really great news for the Yukon; it's great news for Canada's north. On February 11, the day before Hockey Day in Canada, we were able to announce \$3.4 million for the continuation of Canada's north marketing campaign, which will target key market segments within our gateway cities of Vancouver,

Calgary, Edmonton, Toronto and Montreal over the next four years.

As I mentioned earlier, it's building upon that momentum garnered over the last number of years, such as the Look Up North campaign in 2007 and the 2010 Winter Olympic and Paralympic Games in Vancouver.

It'll focus on advertisements and promotions with the aim of driving "more bums in seats", as the tourism sector likes to make reference to. In fact, our first territorial ad will begin airing on March 18 for a period of three weeks, so stay tuned and look out for that. The campaign, very much like our Destination: Yukon, will also drive individuals to our travel website. The incremental building and investing in marketing initiatives such as Destination: Yukon, will now be enhanced or enriched through the addition of the continuation of the pan-north marketing campaign. This bodes really well for the Yukon, and we're really thrilled that the Government of Canada has seen the very importance and the results of previous marketing initiatives, and we're very pleased. It is the first substantive investment made by the Government of Canada for many, many years since the last economic development agreement, I believe it was, which expired probably in the mid to late 1980s, if I'm not mistaken.

We're working with Nunavut. We're working with Northwest Territories and their territorial tourism entities throughout. It is a campaign being managed by Nunavut Tourism. Of course, I just remind members that in 2007, the Yukon government led that initiative and the Northwest Territories led the Pan North Marketing Consortium in 2010. So, now it's Nunavut's turn. We're very pleased to be able to enhance expenditures in that regard. Then, of course, there is the additional funding for overseas — but I'll just keep my remarks specific to domestic.

Mr. Fairclough: That's a lot of information for the minister to provide. I asked the minister about the \$600,000 for summer marketing to Vancouver, Edmonton, Calgary and Toronto using Internet, television and print ads and how the initiative's impact will be measured and what cost-benefit analysis was done. The minister said that the last fiscal year — what we've seen in the territory was a lot more security and stability in the marketing.

The minister went on to explain part of that. Are we then going to be seeing a stable number of dollars going toward summer marketing in the budget? Is this part of the stability in keeping the interest here in the territory? I know the minister explained part of it, but it wasn't completely clear what she meant by having both security and stability in marketing as of the last fiscal year. I'll give her that opportunity.

Hon. Ms. Taylor: The expenditure I was referring to earlier was \$618,000 for the summer Destination: Yukon marketing campaign. Unfortunately, I don't have the specific breakdown of how much is going to television, Internet, print and on-line advertising, but it is all-inclusive. We have built-in performance measures and evaluation tools for each of our marketing programs, and that which is reflected in our annual tourism implementation plan.

In fact, just in our report card for 2009-10 — I believe all of this is posted on-line, if the members opposite are interested — there were significant performance measures and, of course, reported for the 2009-10 fiscal year because we are not quite complete this current fiscal year. In all, it was a good overview. I could certainly go over it word for word, but I think members opposite can take a look and see what the performance measures are and how we performed, relatively speaking.

You know, when it came to 2010, it was significant and at the end of the day — and I have to go back a few years because I have said this time and time again. Over the last decade, the tourism industry has been hit by a number of hardships — some global, some local. If there is anything that I have learned in my tenure as minister responsible for Tourism, it's that this industry is anything but stagnant. It has learned to be resilient and it is 100 percent due to the efforts of industry and the government working in partnership, specifically the Department of Tourism and Culture, to be strategic in where we invest our dollars and to evaluate those dollars and say, "You know, that wasn't a good decision. We need to go back or we need to fine-tune the expenditures here." That's why all those recommendations are reflected in our implementation plan.

We haven't had that. It hasn't been that way in the past decade. The Senior Marketing Committee was first introduced through the Tourism Industry Association of the Yukon a number of years ago, and it has grown and really advanced and become very strategic in its deliberations, not only on how we implement or introduce but how we evaluate all our programs. I would just encourage the member opposite to go on-line and see specifically how we are evaluating each of our programs.

Likewise, at the upcoming annual meeting of the Tourism Industry Association is when I would assume the Department of Tourism and Culture, in collaboration with industry, will launch the tourism implementation plan for 2011-12. That is really key to making it known.

The long and short of it is, because we have been strategic over the years, and because we have been able to recognize the impact of global events such as the economic recession, volatile — whether it's financial, fuel, stock markets, wars overseas. We have been able to look at the impacts of those on our performance and our revenues. It is these events that have provided the incentive to be collectively more strategic and more efficient and integrated into how we develop, implement and evaluate the marketing, product development and the research programs.

I would just like to thank the Senior Marketing Committee who has been and continues to be fully engaged in establishing our goals and objectives for the annual plan. I would just re-emphasize the key role they play in tourism marketing by providing that meaningful contact with the tourism industry and communicating the industry priorities for tourism marketing in the Yukon.

Mr. Fairclough: I'd like to move on to the initiatives that tourism has taken in Germany. Last September, the minister and industry representatives went to Germany to encourage Yukon tourism and to encourage people to come to the territory. I would like to know what was gained from that meeting.

Should Yukoners expect an increase in German tourists as a result of that meeting?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: That was some time ago, but forgive me. I will try to provide an overview. At the time, it was really an opportunity for us, in collaboration with the members of the Yukon Tourism Industry Association and the Wilderness Tourism Association to go over and to meet with key German overseas travel trade representatives, as well as the airline carriers, such as Condor Airlines. It was a great opportunity to meet one-on-one with the sector and be able to garner a reflection or a better sense of their reaction to Condor Airline's decision to — how do I put it? — readjust their schedule for the upcoming season. I just wanted to ensure that we hear directly from them in terms of what we need to do as a tourism sector and Government of Yukon to ensure that visitation continues to be strong to the Yukon from German-speaking Europe. In fact, last year was another significant year in terms of overseas visitation. We received about a 16-percent increase in those key target markets overseas. Germany makes up about 25 percent of that target market. It was very valuable to have those meetings to be able to strategically plan for the year ahead and ensure that we were all on the same page.

At our meeting, we had representatives of Condor Airlines, for example, together with the top seven or eight German travel trade representatives and representatives of the Department of Tourism and Culture, as well as representatives of Yukon's tourism sector. It was a great session — it was a series of different meetings we had — to garner a better understanding of what faces us going into this year's season and how we can further grow these key markets that we have been able to garner. The good relationship with the Department of Tourism and Culture, through their officials, has lent great success. Through CanNor's overseas tourism funding, this bodes really well for us as well.

Currently, the Department of Tourism and Culture spends just over \$1 million per year. It will now bump that funding up to about \$1.4 million to carry out a four-year marketing and awareness initiative to overseas markets, which include German-speaking Europe, the United Kingdom, France, the Netherlands, Australia, Japan and South Korea.

Mr. Fairclough: It was a bit difficult to hear over some of the conversation that was taking place, but the minister did answer a portion of the question.

On the agenda was the changing of the flights from Frankfurt, Germany to Whitehorse, to once weekly from twice weekly. This is to take place during the summer of 2011, this coming summer.

Will the change be taking place, as I understand it will? Will there be an impact on the Yukon tourism operators?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: The changes — I don't have at my fingertips the actual schedule for Condor Airlines. I believe it's the end of May. I'm sorry, I don't have that at my fingertips, but it will go until mid-September, if I am not mistaken.

The changes to the 2011 flight schedule is basically from two flights per week, to one flight per week. It's really important to bring clarity to this issue because I know a lot of individuals have said it's a significant reduction. While it is a re-

duction in the number of flights, there is still the capacity that we have continued to receive year in and year out, meaning that the flights that will be coming over from Frankfurt, Germany to Whitehorse, Yukon once per week during the summer months will be geared to Yukon and back to Germany. There will no longer be a double-drop flight. That is, what we have traditionally experienced and enjoyed over the last number of years is a flight from Frankfurt, Germany over to Whitehorse and then on to either Fairbanks or Anchorage, Alaska. That will no longer be the case. So that one flight will now solely be bound for Yukon and then solely back.

There are a couple of advantages to that. One is that we think that direct flights will likely result in a better overall experience for individuals coming to the Yukon for visitation purposes, as the passengers will no longer have to incur the transit time, for example, associated with the extra stop in Alaska and also the need to clear U.S. security and immigration.

So, based on that information, Condor Airlines made the decisions to reduce their flights to be able to accommodate one flight directly. When all is said and done, there will be the same number of seats available to individuals coming over from Germany as we have previously enjoyed because all of the seats will now be solely dedicated to the Yukon. So those changes are proceeding. Those changes were announced last fall by Condor Airlines. We know that the Department of Tourism and Culture has been in contact and continues to work with the Yukon tourism sector to work with any of the capacity issues that may come up during the upcoming season, because there are significant numbers. There will be a significant increase in the number of passengers deplaning from Condor Airlines flights into the Yukon once a week versus the double-drop flights previously. So we shared a lot of those passengers with Alaska.

I hope that is clear enough. It's a bit complex, but we feel pretty optimistic about the upcoming season and carrying on our good relationship with the German travel trade, which works very closely with the tourism sector and also put the most bums in the seats, when it comes to flying on that particular airline.

Mr. Fairclough: I asked the minister whether there will be an impact on the Yukon tourism operators. I do understand, and I think the public does, too, that there will be the same number of people coming over, even though there is one fewer flight weekly. From what I understand from what the minister is saying, this could benefit Yukon more than how it was arranged in the past. If the minister can elaborate on that — what does that mean? Does that mean we'll be seeing more rubber-tire traffic going from Whitehorse to some of the communities and a longer stay, which would mean more money being spent in the territory by the German tourists?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: In terms of impacts felt by industry by this change in schedule, as I referenced earlier, the Yukon's tourism sector feel — of course in communication with our own Department of Tourism and Culture — that they can handle the capacity. They are up for the challenge and it is up to us to make it work. We are very thankful that Condor Airlines

continues to make Yukon a destination of choice. We are perhaps the smallest — if not the smallest — jurisdiction in North America to receive direct flights such as this. We are very thankful because, as the member opposite just pointed out, individuals specifically coming from overseas markets tend to be a high-yield market. That is, they tend to spend more dollars. They also spend more time throughout all our communities.

They are a great contributor to the fly/drive business, which is contributing to RV rentals or pickup truck/camper rentals and individual car rentals. In turn, they spend a significant amount of time in each of our communities; they're ones to go into rural Yukon and spend a lot of time. That is really good news.

We are working with the tourism sector and we'll continue to work with them and pay close attention to how things evolve.

When it comes to Condor Airlines I was just given the exact dates — their flight schedule begins May 18 and ends September 14. At the same time, we know that, from working with the German travel trade, they too want to ensure that this remains a successful story for the Yukon. Having flights international direct air access does help raise consumer awareness of the Yukon and Canada.

We also recognize that significant opportunities continue to be made available in the shoulder seasons, as well as through our own regional local carrier, Air North, for example, in taking advantage of working on the first couple of weeks in May or the second couple of weeks in September and so forth, but also throughout. There are significant opportunities, and we are keen to work with carriers such as that as well.

Mr. Fairclough: The government has invested a large amount of money to increase international capabilities at the Erik Nielsen Whitehorse International Airport. Now that we have the German flights set to decrease, it is of some interest to the public. I heard the minister say, though, that we had a nine-percent increase at the airport this past year. The Premier also said that Edelweiss Air is looking to set up charters from Zurich, Switzerland to Whitehorse beginning this summer.

I might have gotten that pronunciation wrong. When will this start and how likely are these charters to materialize?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: I would first just like to clarify: it's Edelweiss from Zurich, Switzerland. In fact, we know that they have been working to initiate service to the Yukon once a week also. In fact, they have been promoting those fares to customers since last October, if I'm not mistaken. As far as we know, they are scheduled to begin service May 30, with the last flight September 12. Again, this is really good news for the Yukon. Just to make things a little bit more complicated, Edelweiss will be providing not only a direct flight to the Yukon, but they will be going on to Alaska. It's what we consider to be a double-drop flight, similar to what Condor Airlines has been doing up until this year.

When we talk about the expansion of the Whitehorse International Airport, that's really critical because, without that expansion, the United States — for example, Homeland Security and CBSA, our own border security agency here in Canada — would not be able to clear individuals coming off the flight.

For example, when individuals come en route from Zurich to Whitehorse, everyone has to get off that plane, regardless of whether or they're going on to Anchorage — if I'm not mistaken — in order to clear. Before that wasn't the case.

Now everyone has to get off. They have to have a holding or a transit lounge, a secure holding area. That was specifically one of the requirements made by the security agencies that clear these individuals. That is why the government constructed a holding area to ensure that clients such as Edelweiss would be able to continue to use the Whitehorse International Airport.

Again, it is a good-news story for the Yukon. It will just enhance the level of visitation. They will be coming in on a different day than Condor Airlines, which is also very good news. I know that industry is very excited as well to receive visitors coming off of Edelweiss Air.

Mr. Fairclough: The minister said that as far as government knows, as far as the minister knows, this will be happening. I asked the minister when this would start, and she says May 30, and it ends September 12. How likely are these charters to materialize? Has the minister been given the word that, yes, this is actually going to happen? Or we don't quite know yet, but things are scheduled and these are the schedules that we may see?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: I know that when we are working with our own Department of Tourism and Culture in communication with the Government of Canada, it is our understanding that Edelweiss Air has been working with the proper authorities to obtain the necessary paperwork to approve their flights coming in.

At this time, I'm saying that, according to information provided through the Department of Tourism and Culture, as far as we know or at least the information provided to us is saying the flights are coming, but I haven't seen the exact sign-off, nor would I on the respective paperwork from Canada.

Mr. Fairclough: Does this mean that at this point the tourism businesses here in the territory are to operate without having that knowledge, or are they actually planning to have Edelweiss come over and a bigger number of people in the territory, and accommodate them through their businesses? I haven't heard that from the minister. I know she says that we're basically waiting for the signing off of whether this is even going to materialize or not. I'm just wondering how the tourism operators are going to gear up to be able to handle this increase in number of tourists in the territory?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: According to the Department of Tourism and Culture, I'm not aware. I don't have the information at my fingertips on exactly who has been working in collaboration with Edelweiss. We have been working with our key overseas target trade — I suppose the proper term is the overseas travel trade. We know there is a Swiss wholesaler, for example, that we have been working with for years. They are working with Edelweiss, to the best of my knowledge. That is the best update I can provide at this time.

Mr. Fairclough: I'm sure the tourism industry would welcome the increase in the number of people coming over to the territory. I'd like to ask the minister about another thing: Great River Journey. The government invested a large amount

of Yukoners' money into this venture. It was about \$118,000 from Tourism and Culture and about \$577,000 from Economic Development.

Now, I know the minister made an announcement in the past and had high hopes for this project. She did say that she was confident that this would be a success story, and it was a flagship enterprise. Since then, Great River Journey has gone bankrupt. I think Yukoners are interested to know where things are going to go. Have there been impacts on how the minister reviews projects and the allocation of funding? As a result of this bankruptcy, what are the impacts on the tourism industry?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: We have gone through this at great length in previous debates. Again, as I tried to articulate to the members opposite last sitting, I believe it was, the funding that was received by Great River Journey was applicant-driven. It was made available through programs such as the tourism cooperative marketing fund.

It was also available through familiarization tour assistance that we provide to industry. Of course, funding was also made available through the Department of Economic Development through their funding mechanisms. But again, this funding was applied for and it was received. I should also add that it was also endorsed by the Tourism Industry Association. In fact, at the fall TIA Roundup, I believe it was, the chair of the association did state that he believed and that the TIA board believed that the government support was appropriate and for a number of reasons. First and foremost, the monies were disbursed from funds that are available to any operator. In fact, when it comes to criteria there is criteria when it comes to TCMF, the tourism cooperative marketing fund, one of the funding mechanisms that was made available to Great River Journey. There is a review committee made up of representation from the department, from TIA, from Wilderness Tourism Association of the Yukon, the Convention Bureau, First Nations Tourism Association, and the chair of the Senior Marketing Committee.

They have all had a hand in providing recommendations to the department in the establishment of criteria for the tourism cooperative marketing fund. Likewise, the department's fam tours — there are protocols in place, which the Senior Marketing Committee has also recommended and approved and oversees mechanisms such as this.

Again, I have outlined the significant value of the tourism cooperative marketing fund. Of course, for every dollar put forward, it is leveraged by a dollar put forward by the tourism sector — by the private sector. I just wanted to say that when it comes to the tourism cooperative marketing fund — whether it is Air North, for example, that leverages dollars made available through the tourism cooperative marketing fund or through assistance made available through our fam tours — it doesn't just solely benefit the one industry or the one business of Air North. By having Yukon front and centre, it also enhances the consumer awareness many times over.

I just wanted to put that forward. Again, the funds were made available to Great River Journey, just as they're available to many other individual organizations and companies. In fact, there have been over 500 applications made and supported since TCMF was approved back in 2004.

We do have protocols; we do have criteria in place that have been developed, approved and wholly endorsed by the tourism sector.

Mr. Fairclough: Great River Journey is now bankrupt and is not a success story. I would like to ask the minister another question. There may be several questions to ask, but I do want to go through this, and it's in regard to the exit surveys.

The tourism product development and research unit carries out exit surveys of tourists in the Yukon every four to five years.

The last results that we have are for the year 2004. In April of 2010, the Member for Porter Creek South asked when the next one would be completed. The minister's reply was that she expects to do one in 2011. I would like to ask what the plans are for this. The minister also said there would be no surveys in 2010 because, in her words: "We chose not to do one for this year for the very reason that we wanted to consult in a meaningful way with industry, tour operators and the tourism association across the Yukon to ensure that, when we do go out and spend dollars — I know the last one we did was about \$500,000." In her words, "It is a fairly large amount of dollars. We want to ensure that the information that we provide is timely, that it is accurate and that it is relevant and responsive to the needs of industry."

Those were the words of the minister. Has that consultation been completed? The minister also said that they're looking at not doing a single survey every four years but possibly smaller segment-oriented surveys each year.

Is this still in mind and have there been steps taken to this end?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Further to what I had stated previously in regard to the visitor exit survey, it is a very important survey. It is one that requires a lot of resources as well, to the tune of anywhere from \$400,000 to \$600,000 in its current state. What we have talked about over the last couple of years is that in order — before we actually go out to do a visitor exit survey, what is really required is to ensure that whatever we do is relevant, is timely, is effective, efficient and that meets, more importantly, the needs of the tourism sector. What the Department of Tourism and Culture has been undertaking over the last several months is a number of consultations with the tourism sector Yukon-wide.

I believe if consultations haven't just wound up, they are near winding up. That also includes going out to an RFP. In fact, it's being advertised, if I'm not mistaken, in the papers right now and is for the creation and implementation of a Yukon tourism visitor program that would look at various options going forward for conducting a visitor exit survey.

As I tried to articulate earlier, it may be that every four years is not good enough; maybe we need to do something bi-annually; maybe we need to do something on an annual basis. We also need to look at our airport, for example, to see how we can conduct surveys on those individuals planing and deplaning at our airport, seeing the significant 25-percent increase over the last five years alone at the Whitehorse International Airport.

That's where we're at with this. I understand, we've gone out to a request for proposal for the implementation and design of this visitor program.

I can't tell you exactly what that looks like — what the end result is. That work has yet to conclude, never mind start.

Mr. Fairclough: So there will be an exit survey done at the end of this tourist season?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: What is being envisioned here is coming up with the building blocks for implementing a program. The timing has yet to be determined because, as I understand, it will be looking at reviewing what other jurisdictions do but looking at conducting an airport assessment or study, visitation, highway-based study, enhanced re-contact study to facilitate visitor-spend, and profiling data. That's really critical because it's not only about the number of visitors we receive, but the revenue that is derived by Yukon businesses.

So it's coming up with a new, modernized way of tracking, measuring and monitoring that really capitalizes on our visitor volumes through our visitor information centres as well. Again, as I understand, it is out for RFP right now and we should hear the outcome of that particular contract sometime this summer.

Mr. Fairclough: The minister did say there is much work to be done in designing this exit survey. She didn't say yes — that it will be done at the end of this tourist season or not. Is there a likelihood that this exit survey may not be done at the end of this tourism season?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: I really don't want to pre-empt the outcome of who wins the contract and what comes out in terms of the development and implementation. Although, I think that it is the intent to go with a pilot project, for example, to evaluate that pilot, and hopefully this year. I think they're looking at this season and then going live with a full tracking program including reporting on all those programs.

Mr. Fairclough: I thank the minister for providing information to this side of the House. I am going to turn it over to the Third Party for questioning in this department. I thank the minister for her answers. I may come back and ask a couple more questions in regard to the department.

Ms. Hanson: I also would like to thank the Department of Tourism and Culture's staff for the briefing they provided recently. It helped orient me to some of the activities of what I consider to be one of the most exciting and dynamic areas of the Yukon. When we think about tourism and our iconic landscapes and Yukon as a destination, as well as culture — and I'll come back to that in a minute — I think that any of us who travel outside of the territory — if we have the opportunity to travel across this country or outside of the country — we realize how very, very important the tourism industry is and the huge potential that this industry has for the growth of this territory in a sustainable fashion long into the future.

When you think about culture, just the depth of the arts community in this territory — and you know, the fact is we celebrate it today because of the amazing talent pool that we have presently in this territory. I've travelled many places in this world and whether it is in eastern Africa or in Canberra, Australia, one of the first things you hear when people ask you where you're from and you say "Yukon", they'll immediately

start talking or reciting something from Robert Service, and you think, where does that come from? It comes from the absolute identification that people have and have developed with this territory as a very unique place and it's something that we need to treasure and build on.

I stayed at a bed and breakfast three years ago in Capetown. The fellow had never ever been to North America, but the one place he knew in North America was the Yukon. He knew it because of the Yukon Quest. This gentleman watched and tracked the Yukon Quest every year on the Internet. I think we have a huge understanding and ability to transcend the borders of Canada, of the north, and build on the absolutely fundamental appeal that this landscape and this land has. We've known this historically, First Nations have known it historically, and now we have an opportunity, I think, to build on that.

I'm interested, when I look at the budget of this Yukon government, in where we put our investments. I'd like to talk with the minister a little bit this afternoon about some of the approaches being taken by the government and get a sense of strategically where we are going here. What I would like to hear from the minister is, first of all, what assessment has been done in terms of the net contribution to Yukon — the gross domestic product of both the tourism and cultural sectors to the Yukon GDP — the number of jobs that have been created. Then I would like to step back and ask: what is the assessed potential? We have done an awful lot of work on the resource-sector side in terms of assessing the potential for development in this territory, and I would be very interested in hearing: strategically, are we doing similar assessments and developing scenarios for growth and capacity of this territory with respect to the growth of both the tourism and cultural sectors? I'll step down from that. Just one point with respect to that: when I talk about the comparative data — it is interesting to me that when we take away the federal transfers to the territorial government for contaminated mine sites, the investments that we are prepared to make on the resource development side and resource extraction side are more than double what we are prepared to put into the tourism and cultural sectors in this territory.

That's sort of the backdrop as to why I am interested in pursuing the questions with respect to the assessed potential, the net contribution and the scenarios for growth and development in this territory.

Hon. Ms. Taylor: I am very proud to represent a government that has been very supportive of this department, whether it is the tourism sector or the cultural industries. You know, one of the first things that we did upon taking office in 2006 — upon being re-elected, I should say — was take a look at the cultural industries. One of the first things that we did at the onset of our early mandate was to take a look at the programs — those that were working and those that were really needing to be enhanced or enriched. I think that it has already been said, but the arts play an important role in our community, for example.

We all know this. We know an enhancement in resources made available for artists and artist organizations ensures their success in a wide range of activities. The arts are an important contributors to our economy. They contribute to our well-

being; they contribute to our communities throughout the Yukon and we all benefit. That is exactly why this government went ahead and introduced a major investment in increased funding of around \$568,000 for arts and culture. It took the form of enriching and enhancing the Artist in the School program from \$25,000 to \$100,000. We established a new touring fund. We have seen performing and visual artists mature over the last number of years. As a result, they are now looking outside our borders to export their wares and to be able to also along the way help promote the Yukon and all that it has to offer.

The touring artist fund has proven to be a great success. In fact, I was just able to speak to one of the recipients of the last round of funding through the touring artist fund and it has enabled this one particular performing artist to be able to leverage other funds through this fund. It has helped him open a number of creative doors in enhancing his tour, for example, in Germany, and there were many other countries that he will be seeing along the way. In turn, that's good for him; that's good for his business, but that's also good for the Yukon because the Yukon, in terms of adding to our capacity, in terms of the performing arts and very much in terms of promoting the Yukon as a destination — as a place to visit, to invest, but also to live as well.

I've had more comments on the touring artist fund than I have on just about any other program. We have been able to enhance the arts fund by enhancing funding made available to the Yukon operating fund. That fund was around \$400,000. We have been able to enhance that to just over \$650,000 — I think it's more than that, if I'm not mistaken. That provides the stability to a multitude of arts organizations to facilitate the growing needs and expectations of Yukon artists. It's very well received, because they're also able to provide that stability of ongoing annual funding and able to concentrate on where the needs of the artist community are.

We have also been able to enhance funding through the Dawson City Arts Society. In fact, when we took office in 2002, it was around \$100,000. They now receive about \$400,000 and do incredible work on behalf of the Yukon arts community — the establishment of the School of Visual Arts, for example, through the Department of Education.

They've done a great job as well. It's the first accredited offering of a first year of a fine arts degree through this institution north of 60. They have established — through their work and through the Yukon College and others — transfer agreements with the Northern Institute of Arts and Culture and Emily Carr, for example. So, again, that's just another one example of how we have chosen to invest in this particular sector.

We know that, according to Statistics Canada, Yukon enjoys one of the highest, if not the highest, per capita funding for arts and culture in Canada. We're very pleased to be able to build upon those enhancements. Likewise, when it comes to heritage — our budgets have grown substantially over the last number of years in investing in operations budgets for the museum community, of which there are 18 by last check.

Not only have we been able to increase the number of museums eligible for museums programming, but we have estab-

lished a new program and ongoing operations, support and maintenance for First Nation cultural centres throughout the territory. We are also in partnership with two self-governing First Nations — Kwanlin Dun, and Champagne and Aishihik — and we are working on some really unique partnerships. The combination of a new community public library with Kwanlin Dun cultural centre on the waterfront — which we were able to take a tour of just recently. It is magnificent and it is really going to be a very unique facility that not only houses or showcases the history and the heritage of the Kwanlin Dun people, but will be able to tell the many stories, as only the people of the Kwanlin Dun can, and the importance of their self-governing First Nation, their evolution in terms of governance and their continuing contributions to the development of our economy, as well as the social economy here today.

In terms of Champagne and Aishihik cultural centre — again, the construction of a brand new visitor information centre, in collaboration with that cultural centre. It's another very unique opportunity that will see increased revenue for the First Nation, in terms of visitation, but also increased numbers because the two will be housed in tandem with each other.

That doesn't include expenditures we have made over the years in Culture Quest, which was first initiated in 2003 to provide those lasting benefits to both the tourism and culture sectors as a result of having the Canada Winter Games and the 2010 Winter Olympics and so forth. We've seen great things coming from this unique program, which was funded by the department and delivered through the Yukon Arts Centre. It's to initiate new programming and advance the development of the arts and heritage in the Yukon. It has helped increase capacity in the cultural sector. It has provided many lasting legacies, whether it's through the Canada Winter Games or the Olympics. They are two major iconic initiatives.

The majority of individuals who performed during the Winter Olympics, for example, up on the international stage, first were recipients of the Culture Quest program. So that program has in fact met the litmus test that it is effective, and it has also helped strengthen ties between our contemporary and our traditional cultural heritage.

When it comes to programming, in addition to the Dawson City Arts Society, we have also been very pleased to be able to work with Yukon Arts Centre, which has been doing a wonderful job over the last number of years in working with communities Yukon-wide to nurture and to grow capacity and to grow the arts community. Indeed, as the member opposite just articulated, the arts community is in fact very much flourishing — continues to flourish — and the Yukon Arts Centre is a major contributor to this successful growth over the last number of years. From when we took office, the funding arrangement with the Yukon Arts Centre has grown from about \$499,000 to — I believe it's just around \$750,000 today.

In addition, we also partnered with the Yukon Arts Centre on the growth of the cultural sector through cultural venues, such as the Old Fire Hall. We've entered into a contribution agreement with the Yukon Arts Centre of \$150,000 each year over three years. That's in addition to their main core funding program. As I mentioned before, they also help administer the

Culture Quest on our behalf and they've done an amazing job in that regard.

Those are just some of the examples. I could go on at great length about the other investments the government has chosen to enhance over the years when it comes to historic sites and enriching some of the funding mechanisms we have. They are working. When it comes to tourism, I was just on my feet not long ago talking about how each expenditure is recorded, evaluated and reported on, housed within our annual implementation plan. We're very pleased to see the results thus far.

We have endured a number of challenges, both global and local, over the last number of years but, by and large, we have been able to do very well. Last year we were able to outperform if not every, just about every other jurisdiction in the country when it came to visitation. We are very pleased with those results, especially when you compare them to the national results. We just received just over a one-percent increase overall in visitation.

We recognize that challenges will always be before us but, by working in collaboration with industry, it is important to be able to continue that long-standing partnership, to have that understanding of the return on investment, to continue to evaluate where our programs are working and to report progress to the Yukon public on all these programs and more.

I also wanted to say, when it comes to the arts, one body I haven't taken the opportunity to thank is the Yukon Arts Advisory Council, which provides a jury on the Yukon government's behalf for many of our funding programs, and I think they do a great job. I would just like to commend them and thank them for their ongoing work.

Ms. Hanson: Mr. Chair, I was hoping that we could move this into an actual exchange about ideas and improve on something, I think we all agree, is a really important area — tourism and culture. I will say, at the risk of being repetitive, when you are talking to the Yukon New Democratic Party, you are preaching to the converted. We do support tourism; we do support investment in culture. My concern when I raised it, and the question I asked had to do with the contribution to the Yukon gross domestic product from these two sectors, culture and tourism. I think it's really important to be able to build the case to say why these are so important and why it's important for the Yukon government to invest in these areas.

The minister has repeated again the contributions that this government has made to a number of groups throughout the territory, but Mr. Chair, when I look at things like the Dawson City Arts Society, the number is static. 2009-10 — \$400,000; 2011-12 — \$400,000. There has been no change across the board.

When I look at the issue of the touring artist fund, it has gone from \$121,000 in 2009-10 to \$100,000. When I look at the Artist in the School program, \$132,000 to \$100,000. When I look at just any number of them here, they just keep going either static or down. I raised this question in the briefing and I'll raise it again. In terms of determining how the Yukon government's Department of Tourism and Culture makes the decision with respect to investment — because my experience is that costs don't go down. The operating costs for industries or

organizations, or non-profit organizations, don't go down because the cost of living doesn't go down. When I see static or lower amounts of money for key areas of our tourism industry, like the Yukon Convention Bureau funding going from \$300,000 to \$200,000, the Wilderness Tourism Association going from \$274,000 — a minor decrease, but a decrease nonetheless — to \$264,000, Tourism North from \$136,000 to \$110,000, Yukon Quest being static — Yukon Quest, we all know, has faced significant challenges. So, how do we do that, and how do we work together to ensure that the proper investments that we assert that tourism and culture are significant areas of importance for this territory and that we need to invest in it?

One of the areas — this is why I threw it out to the minister at the outset — was to be able to demonstrate the significant contribution that these sectors make to the Yukon economy. So, that's the underlying premise of my question. I'm not trying to be argumentative. I really am trying to find ways that we can work together to make sure that we're putting the right amount of investment into these two very important sectors.

Hon. Ms. Taylor: At the risk of sounding repetitive, I had tried to do my best to outline some of the very many examples that this government has invested in the Department of Tourism and Culture. I will point out for the member opposite that when we look at the budget document, we look from mains to mains. When you look at mains to mains, then you will see that expenditures haven't gone down. Expenditures may remain the same. But again, it was this government that actually invested, early on in our mandate, in a \$300,000 increase in the Dawson City Arts Society. I'm very proud of that.

It was this government that introduced the touring artist fund not long ago. We were also the first government to increase the Artist in the School program from \$25,000 to \$100,000. It was this government that took the Yukon Arts Centre contribution agreement from \$499,000 to some \$760,000, I believe it is. It's this government that initiated the Old Fire Hall funding agreement, a three-year agreement — \$150,000 over three years. I believe that's a \$450,000-investment — a great partnership with the Yukon Arts Centre as well as the Whitehorse Chamber of Commerce.

It's this government that enhanced the investment in our museums, inclusive of community interpretive centres and First Nation cultural centres, for which, by the way, this government has also introduced a new program in support. In fact, this government has invested significantly into museums.

I believe at the time we took office, there weren't any funding programs for the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nation cultural centre, for the Selkirk First Nation or for Little Salmon Carmacks First Nation. There was no funding for the Teslin Tlingit Council; today they receive \$100,000 in Teslin and Dawson City, for example — each for their ongoing operation and maintenance budget.

We also introduced a capital fund for the museums community of \$350,000. We also introduced a heritage training fund. There are so many initiatives to talk about, not to mention the millions of dollars, the \$20 millions plus in the Whitehorse waterfront. We have made significant investments inclusive of

the \$3 million plus investments in the Carcross waterfront initiatives, all of which are contributing to the social and economic regime of this territory, and it is working. I'm very proud to be part of a government that works very closely with the tourism and the cultural industries. I go out to many FPT — federal/provincial/territorial — ministers meetings and they are often deliberating and talking about the challenges of how to make these two industries work. You know, I think that when you take a look, for example, at the Old Fire Hall — I keep coming back, but it's a wonderful initiative.

It not only was the opportunity for our government to refurbish, to rehabilitate that historic building, it was this government that did that through the community development fund, which, by the way, we also reinstated. That has also provided millions over the last number of years in support of the growth of the tourism and cultural industries. When it comes to cultural venues like the School of Visual Arts or the Old Fire Hall, it's not only driving visitors to experience the cultural presentations made available at the Old Fire Hall, it is bringing the waterfront to life. It's also helping revitalize the downtown core, which is something that the Main Street Society has very much wanted to do over the years — investments in that venue, Arts Underground, new investments in arts operating funds to provide that sustainability to arts organizations. Now, I'm not saying that's as far as we go. There is always room for improvement, and I agree. I want to say that I get it. This government does get it. That's in fact all the reasons why this government continues to invest in infrastructure in support of the tourism industry, whether it's airport expansion at the Whitehorse International Airport, whether it's investments in other airports and runways to facilitate the growth of our jet service, courtesy of Air North.

Also, when it comes to meeting the demands of rubber-tire traffic, having good highway infrastructure, and of course, when it comes to a multitude of other infrastructure needs and services, this government is working across the board in support of these industries. I just want to make myself very clear to the member opposite that it is reflected in the budget. The budget may not reflect a direct increase, but if one looks over the last several years, they will see millions of dollars in increased investment in these sectors.

Ms. Hanson: The question I'm driving at here is that, as time goes on and as the Yukon becomes the focal point of many competing interests, it becomes more and more important for the minister responsible for this important area of tourism and culture to be able to assert very clearly the net contribution to this territorial economy of these two sectors.

The minister is clearly aware of a memorandum of understanding that was signed a few years ago — I'm not sure of the exact date; I didn't write it down — between the Yukon Chamber of Mines, the Klondike Placer Miners Association and the Tourism Association of Yukon. One of the things that struck me when I was looking at it was the principle that they raised. They're both resource industries that are dependent on access to land in order to create wealth from the Yukon's land base.

It is increasingly important that the values that are ascribed to a healthy tourism industry are going to be well-respected.

The minister is no doubt aware of a report that was done by the Tourism Industry Association called the “Land Asset Identification and Analysis Project”.

One of the areas that was noted in that report was criteria theme 10, “Conflict with Industry”. It says, and I’ll quote: “An often-repeated concern of Yukon tourism operators is potential and actual conflict with resource industry operations. The mineral exploration industry, in particular, has been highly active in recent years and operates across the territory. Helicopter traffic and landscape damage are the primary impacts on tourism potential. Forestry and the oil and gas industries are also in potential conflict with tourism. The assumption in this theme is that a prospective operator would prefer to locate in areas where conflict with these industrial land uses is limited.” They’re talking about potential operators, in terms of tourism operators, and that speaks to the issue about private sector being willing to invest in tourism if they are jeopardized in that potential investment by unplanned and unregulated exploration and other industry development.

So my question to the minister: what link does she play, as the Minister of Tourism and Culture, and what role does the department play in proactive engagement in land use planning?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: What we have done and what we continue to do is to make resources available within the Department of Tourism and Culture, and we do have representation at every level when it comes to contributing to and participating in land assessments through YESAA. We contribute to land use planning exercises, the *North Yukon Regional Land Use Plan*, which was approved not long ago. We contributed to that process — as we did with the Peel watershed — as did other departments, such as Economic Development or the Department of Environment and so forth. We are making resources available so that Tourism’s interests are represented at every table.

There are a number of different planning exercises. It is not just land use planning, but it is forestry planning, it’s park plan planning. The Department of Environment has been contributing to several planning processes over the last number of years on a number of habitat protection areas, special management areas, territorial parks coming about. So, again, these are all very important planning processes that we contribute to, providing technical advice, providing the information required, and providing that corporate memory to many different files.

Ms. Hanson: Over the last couple of years I have had the opportunity in travelling about the territory to travel down the highway — well, it is no longer really a highway — but the road to Keno City. The first question I will ask the minister: over the course of the last eight years, what resources have been provided for tourism and tourism-related activities for the Silver Trail leading to and including Keno City?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: It’s a good thing we have time. First of all, I want to say this is a really important area. The Silver Trail region is one of several key destinations within the Yukon. We have dedicated resources through the scenic drives initiative. It’s an electronic way of driving travellers, potential visitors, to the website. It has worked very well.

The Silver Trail region is also showcased in our annual vacation planner. In addition to that, resources are also made available through our funding mechanisms, whether through our product development partnership program through the Product Development branch or the tourism cooperative marketing fund, which we were also able to introduce and enhance in last year’s budget to approximately \$700,000.

In terms of individual expenditures, I can say that expenditures have grown. Many of these are applicant driven. Some are not. But in the Mayo region, for example — I was just looking back in the fiscal year of 2002-03, the year that we first took office. I think expenditures were about \$15,000. In this fiscal year, 2010-11, it’s almost \$110,000. Just some of those expenditures in the fiscal year for 2010-11, which we’re in but we’re not talking about, include the contributions for the Binet House, the interpretive centre.

That’s one thing that this government did. When we talk about how we increased the eligibility criteria for the family of museums, the Binet House actually was receiving nothing in terms of annual funding. We changed that early on in our mandate. Likewise, we also included the Watson Lake Northern Lights Space and Science Centre, as well as the cultural centres, which I’ve already alluded to.

We also included Miles Canyon Historical Railway Society and others. I know that in this current fiscal year, I believe that the Binet House will have received \$35,000. We also helped fund the kiosk that one will find at Stewart Crossing through our Stay Another Day funding initiatives and that is almost \$8,000. Through the historic properties assistance — which, by the way, we also increased from \$25,000 to \$100,000 in our mandate — they have also received funding of \$13,000 and an additional \$17,000.

I believe under the arts operating fund, there are various recipients of \$5,000. My mistake, actually: the Binet House will be receiving \$65,000. It’s a combination of operating funds and support for artifact inventory cataloguing, heritage attraction site support and so forth.

As I said, some are applicant-driven and some are not. In the past, we have issued funding through other mechanisms as well. I don’t really want to go through all these expenditures, but it has grown incrementally. When it comes to funding in Keno City, for example, we have also helped fund the Keno City Mining Museum management and operation. I don’t have that number at my fingertips, but I believe it’s around \$30,000 or \$38,000 in annual funding. It’s a wonderful facility; it helps tell the tales and the stories of the heritage of the communities along the way.

We have also helped with the production of information brochures for the museum and the visitors who use that information. We have helped support the restoration of heritage initiatives, such as *The Loon* and Wernecke House within that area. We have helped in past years with new outhouse structures. I could go on, but I think the member opposite gets a fair idea, anyhow. We’re very pleased with the investments made; they are an important part of the tourism sector.

Ms. Hanson: Those are interesting and useful background tidbits. Of course, we all know the Binet House is a

lovely little place to spend some time. They have a lot of history there — particularly the medical doctor and his family. That and the Keno City Mining Museum are really a credit to the people in those communities who worked hard to see them come to fruition, which is why I think it's really important that, as we talk about tourism as an important industry in the Yukon, we look at how we balance the competing pressures. That's the gist of the question I'm trying to get at with the minister, here.

We know that Keno is one of the oldest communities in the Yukon. Over the last thirty-some years that I have gone there, I've always been charmed by the fact that you could take this community — that it just shows you how hard the mining was at the turn of the last century and the survival skills of many people and the ingenuity — you know, the bottle house and all those kinds of things. So, Keno and the people — the 13 or the 23 or whatever it is in terms of population — who live there are very committed to this area.

The minister says that a financial commitment has been made over the years and continues to the mining museum and to Keno itself, but I guess one of the concerns that I have in travelling there last summer was the competing values. How are tourism values being protected in the face of the mine and mill development that is going on there? If you were driving up and you read the historic information and the tourist information, you would be thinking you were coming into an old mining area where you are going to be seeing some of this turn-of-the-century stuff — and actually some of that is there — but now you have deposited right in the middle an operating mine that is very loud.

The road into Keno is scary. What role does the Minister of Highways and Public Works play with respect to ensuring the safety of these tourists who want to venture up there to see Keno Hill, to see the butterflies that Keno is well renowned for? It is an important issue because, if we are talking about tourism, we need to talk about tourism as it balances with the other industries, the other sectors of our economy. I have put forward the case this afternoon that I think tourism is an incredibly important aspect of our economy.

What I'm looking for from the minister, is does she share my concerns that, unless these issues can be addressed — for example, fixing the road so it is safe — that you may in fact see a decline in tourists going to Keno City over this year and the coming years? I'd be very interested in knowing what role the Minister of Tourism and Culture plays with respect to ensuring that the investments that she through her department, and this government through her department, have made in this historic area of the territory are protected and that we can see a future growth for tourism in one of the most beautiful parts of the territory.

I think we would all agree that the Wernecke Mountains and those valleys are beautiful and they deserve to be shared with tourists from around the world.

Hon. Mr. Lang: In addressing the member opposite over the resources that we are committing to the Silver Trail or the road between Mayo and Dawson, there are more resources going into the road from Mayo to Keno City. It's certainly being monitored on a daily basis to make sure that we are doing

the work we have to do with the increase in traffic on that road. The mill has been put into production.

The corporation built a road to access it separately from the road that goes into Keno City, so it's independent of Keno City. To correct a statement the member opposite made, the noise is minimum to Keno City. There was a question about the loudness of the operation and it is minimum to the community of Keno City, and the corporation is also monitoring that.

We are working with Keno City; we're working with Mayo; and we're expanding our strength there because we all know that over the next four or five years there will be an expanded interest in that area, whether it's tourism, the exploration industry or a producing mine, which Alexco is today.

I remind the member opposite that the area was a mining area. Keno City was built because of its access to those resources. It doesn't diminish the fact that the community of Keno is a very historical community and is certainly worth saving because it is unique. The Minister of Tourism and Culture is very concerned about keeping that part of the area to remind people of bygone days.

Certainly, I'd like to compliment the people who work in Keno City on a daily basis, whether it's at the museum or working inside the community, delivering water and doing the things you have to do in a small community.

As a government, we are monitoring the road access to the town itself and also investing some money to improve that access for everybody who works in that general area. I'll remind the member opposite that there is also a use of that road by the outfitting industry. A lot of their horses are taken into McArthur Lake there and trailed into different hunting concessions. It's an important part of the territory, used by many users. Certainly, it will be expanding over the next year if, in fact, exploration expands the way it looks at the moment. This government is resourcing some improvements to the road and also monitoring the road to make sure it's safe for all the travelling public.

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

Recess

Chair: Order please. Committee of the Whole will now come to order. The matter before the Committee is Bill No. 24, *First Appropriation Act, 2011-12*. We will now continue with general debate in Vote 54, Department of Tourism and Culture.

Ms. Hanson: I just have a few more questions. I don't want to take up too much time this afternoon.

Following up briefly where we left off with the Minister of Highways and Public Works or the Minister of Community Services, whichever hat he was wearing at the time, with his undertaking to ensure that the road to Keno City would be passable this year, which is, I'm sure, wonderful news to those both in the resource extraction industry side as well as those who live in Keno and those who might like to venture up there as tourists.

I would be happy to hear from the minister, if she could please: the number of visitors to Keno; the number of visitors to Southern Lakes/Carcross — because I always view those together — the Southern Lakes region. Most people do light at one point, when they are making that journey, in Carcross; and thirdly, the number of visitors this past year to Dawson City.

Hon. Ms. Taylor: I just wanted to follow up on a question that was raised earlier by the Leader of the Third Party and that was with respect to tourism and tourism interests.

I just want to point out that when it comes to growing tourism, it's not just something that falls on the shoulders of the Department of Tourism and Culture. I think that, as already articulated by my colleague, the Minister of Highways and Public Works, it is our responsibility to work together, to work with industry and to work with other governments to grow the tourism sector. I've been very proud of the actions taken by industry and all governments working together for the interest of growing tourism in the territory, as well as all industries.

I just wanted to say that one of our key mandates in every department is to work strategically through interdepartmental cooperation. I think it's really critical to point out how we do work. We work with Environment, we work with Economic Development, we work with Community Services, Energy, Mines and Resources, Highways and Public Works and others on many projects and many planning processes.

We contribute toward and we participate within YESAA, whether it is providing the technical expertise of the department officials, whether it's from the tourism perspective or whether it's from the heritage perspective. As I mentioned already, we contribute to land use planning in the territory. We contribute to the park planning processes — I listed off a number of them — and we have made significant strides in that regard. I thank the department officials, just like I thank the Department of Environment officials for the work that they do.

Of course, we have been working with Economic Development. You know, that's one department that I haven't made too much mention of today, but Department of Economic Development also continues to identify and support strategic opportunities in the tourism sector. That is a department that was re-established after it was removed by the previous Liberal government, just like the Department of Tourism and Culture, because of the very significance of that department.

First off, within Economic Development, I know that when we looked at previous years, a whole host of funding was made available for strategic initiatives in support of the growth of tourism through the strategic industries development fund, enterprise trade fund, the regional economic development fund, the community development fund and others.

Of course, I know that perhaps some of the members opposite would take issue with some of those funding mechanisms, but if you were to talk to industry, they have great accolades for many of these things in support of funding that has been made available in support of our museums — the Yukon Wildlife Preserve, for example. When it comes to even making funding available for the Sourdough Rendezvous Society, when it comes to waterfront revitalization — the list goes on. There is a multitude of different examples.

Also housed within the Department of Economic Development is the Film and Sound Commission. That's something that this government undertook to work on with industry and brought to fruition. It has been working very well. They are a very effective team of professionals working to build capacity in the film and sound industry. They're doing great things. I was just saying over the break that for the first time ever, Yukon will be hosting the Western Canadian Music Awards this fall.

What a great, amazing accomplishment for Yukon and Yukon artists to be able to host a significant event of that magnitude. Of course, that is also in support of tourism and drawing positive attention to our territory. Likewise, last summer, I recall being in Dawson for meetings and events at the same time and they were filming *The Big Year* — Steve Martin and Owen Wilson and Jack Black and all of these heavy hitters in Hollywood. It was great to see a place like the Tombstone Territorial Park being used for that purpose, and the awareness that is being generated as a result of using that location — that natural landscape — is great. Indeed, it's very great.

Those are just some examples of this government's investment in cultural industries such as film and sound as well.

When it comes to working with the Department of Community Services — I think I mentioned it before — waterfront development investments.

We have been able to invest substantively over the last number of years in major investments in both communities of Whitehorse and Carcross, which has created employment while making a contribution to Yukon's tourism, retail and supply sectors. In Carcross, for example, the First Nation carving shed was completed, the walking bridge, the viewing deck, beach access was completed, the public dock and the boat launch, landscaping, signage, and road drainage work done this previous year.

Another exciting project is the *SS Tutshi* memorial in Carcross. What a wonderful idea. I credit the Department of Tourism and Culture for this great idea to come up with a memorial — a framework — and they have brought that to fruition beyond anyone's expectations. It has the full support of the community, and that in itself is a tremendous accomplishment by the Department of Tourism and Culture working in collaboration with the community — the local advisory council, the Chamber of Commerce, the Carcross-Tagish First Nation and others.

In Whitehorse, we have seen a significant transformation of the Whitehorse waterfront. As I mentioned, there is the Kwanlin Dun cultural centre. We're investing over \$10 million for that facility, with a new public library. It will be a main centrepiece and anchor for the ongoing development of the Whitehorse waterfront.

When it comes to the environment, we recognize and value the important relationship we have with Yukon's landscapes, wildlife and the environment. For example, I already articulated — I won't go into further discussion — how our department works on the wildlife viewing strategy. Recently, about a year and a half ago, our two departments came together and revitalized and enhanced that strategy. That's also significant

because the investment in interpretive signage, pullouts, and even to the outhouses — that is all helping to tell the story of Yukon history and heritage.

This government has enhanced its investments significantly through the scenic drives initiative, for example. About \$200,000 of that is allotted each and every year to interpretive signage for restoring older signs and also bringing together signage plans that were developed by previous governments but were sitting on the shelf collecting dust. That's no longer the case. We are slowly putting those plans to work and enhancing the traveller's experience along the highway, of which the Silver Trail is but one of those areas.

We were able to establish the Tombstone Territorial Park visitor interpretive centre, which opened in the fall about a year ago. This is a tremendous accomplishment, and I applaud the Department of Environment officials for their work, in collaboration with the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nation. It's a beautiful facility. It's designed to maximize solar energy and natural air circulation for the purposes of heating and ventilating the building. It has become a focal point and an opportunity to help tell the story of the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in, as well as the natural landscapes that the Tombstone Territorial Park has to offer. We work very closely with the Department of Highways and Public Works each and every year. Road infrastructure is absolutely integral to the growth of the tourism industry, and I applaud the many public servants and the many individuals who work day in and day out every year enhancing and improving the status of our highway network. We are fortunate to be able to have partners, such as Alaska, when it comes to the enhancement of the Alaska Highway, for example. We've also made the pitch to the Government of Canada to enhance dollars made available for the Klondike Highway and the Dempster Highway in terms of national highway programs — at least having that realization and having access to those dollars.

We are making strides and I will again stress that there is always room for improvement. But one thing that this government has been able to do is to be able to grow the revenues, and one way of doing that has been to invest in our strategic industries, and that is inclusive of tourism and culture.

I'm very proud of the investments that have been made. There is always ongoing work — with needs pressing — but this government has been working on them incrementally and strategically, such as working on the expansion of the Whitehorse International Airport facility. Now, I know there was a lot of debate and some opposition raised by the members of the opposition. That's truly unfortunate because the very importance of air access is absolutely integral to the growth, not only of tourism, but all sectors in the territory. Last year alone, we saw a nine-percent increase to those planing and deplaning at the Whitehorse International Airport. As I said earlier, much of the success can be attributed to the collective efforts of industry working to grow tourism, both on the domestic and international front. We are very pleased to be able to build on the monumental initiative of expanding the Whitehorse airport terminal building. It started with enhancing the runway. Previous to our government, it also, of course, went into expanding the amount of parking available, to the actual expansion of the

Whitehorse International Airport terminal building. Had we not proceeded with that expansion, Yukon would no longer have been able to facilitate receiving international flights, which is an important point to mark.

We did see, last year alone, a nine-percent increase, but about a 16-percent increase in overseas visitation from our key target markets. Overall, as I mentioned, we were up 10 percent. We out-performed pretty much every jurisdiction in the country. Compared to the national average, which I think was just over one percent, that speaks volumes. I'll again go back to making those strategic investments in marketing initiatives, such as pan-north and working with our two territorial counterparts. That was something that was very new for the governments to do, but it worked and it worked very well. After the Look Up North campaign that was launched in 2007, we saw a very good increase in visitation coming from Canadians to the Yukon. They're a great market, especially with having direct air access to the gateway cities, such as Vancouver, Calgary and Edmonton.

This all bodes well for the Yukon. Of course, working to implement a new program, the tourism cooperative marketing fund and expanding that program — just like we introduced the scenic drives initiative, we introduced a new tourism brand initiative. We introduced new dollars for media familiarization tours and invested in a new www.travel yukon.com website. These are all very important initiatives in support of the tourism industry. As a result, we have fared relatively well in comparison to other jurisdictions over the last number of years. I'm not saying that challenges are far from gone, but they do teach us, and they do remind us of the very importance of partnerships and the need to work smartly and strategically with all levels of government and all orders of government, and working with industry in particular to identify, develop and implement and evaluate our marketing programs. I am very proud of the Department of Tourism and Culture's initiatives across the board. We are very, very pleased to be able to continue with these investments as is reflected in this year's budget that we're discussing here today.

Ms. Hanson: Mr. Chair, sometimes more is less. I simply asked a question with respect to the number of visitors to three tourism destinations in the Yukon: Keno, Carcross and Dawson. The purpose of asking that question was because I was hoping the minister could then elaborate how these numbers influence her strategy as Minister of Tourism and Culture vis-à-vis investments across government. I appreciate and I think it's wonderful that we see this cross-sector, cross-department collaboration between Tourism and particularly Economic Development. I guess we won't get to that. Rather than belabour the point, and in view of the time, I wanted to come back to and applaud the officials. The minister mentioned the tourism and film industry, or the film association — whatever the directorate there is — and their kind of quirky and I would say kind of corny, but potentially very effective campaign that they're running right now — the *Yukonic* one that is being displayed across, I think — I don't know what the building is in Times Square in New York.

I took the time yesterday to look at all 13 of these two-minute episodes and it's yet another good example where you have the creativity of Yukoners unleashed. It features clearly two potential investors or those who are looking to see the Yukon as a destination to film commercials, feature films. It also features, in quite humorous ways, the cameos by a number of Yukoners whom many of us will recognize. I have a number of questions with respect to this initiative by the department. The first point I would like to make is that I think it's a very interesting and innovative approach. I'd be interested in knowing if this is a one-off. Are there plans to be doing this in other cities or other venues? What was the total cost of this? How are they measuring the uptake or the success or the interest that it may be generating? The last part of it is, as the minister pointed out — the people who came here to Dawson City to film that feature-length film, the people who come here to film commercials, whether they be for vehicles or other types of commercial products — they come here because of the view-scape, the landscape, because they cannot find that kind of beauty elsewhere. I had asked her earlier what — the importance of moving forward with land-use planning and ensuring that tourism values are factored into that. Ironically, the investment by the Yukon government into something like *Yukonic's* display in New York has the potential to backfire if we're not really careful, as Yukoners, to ensure we have those values on display when people actually get here. As I mentioned earlier in my questions to the minister, people driving up the Silver Trail will be expecting one thing and they're going to see something very different from what the tourism brochures say, when they get to Keno City.

Hopefully she has taken some notes about the questions I'm asking. I'm very enthused about the ideas of innovative approaches to marketing the Yukon, but I'm interested in the methods of assessment of the success of these, whether they're one-off, and the costs. I guess I'll find some other way of getting the information I was looking for with respect to numbers of visitors and how that influences the Yukon government's Department of Tourism and Culture strategies for investments in those regions.

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Just going back to tourism performance, I'll just draw again the 2010-11 Tourism Yukon implementation plan and that is posted on our website, I believe. This is something that we have come up with over the years. It has been enhanced; I think it has come a long way, especially since we were initially elected when there was nothing. This document — and I know I am not supposed to hold up props, but here it is — is a really great document. Of course the cover looks great, but more importantly the contents outline our roles and responsibilities, the objectives, the strategic focus of industry and how we market Yukon. It goes right down to talking about our brand, the "Yukon: Larger than Life", each of our market segments, to whom we promote the Yukon; to whom we go after — in a good way — and sustainability. It talks about the recommendations made by industry over the previous year. It talks about performance targets. It talks about the strategy map from hereon forward.

I think that perhaps it was, once upon a time, that the Minister of Tourism and Culture would perhaps sit in their office and dream away all kinds of ideas for marketing Yukon, but actually the marketing branch has come a long way. One thing where I'm very proud of our government is in the ability to be able to work with industry, and that is through the development and creation of the Senior Marketing Committee, which is part of the Tourism Industry Association of the Yukon. Their role is to provide that strategic analysis of our tourism marketing programs in the development, in the implementation and the evaluation and this is a really great document. It does outline all our key markets from North America, whether it is in Canada, United States and the various programs that we have introduced and that have evolved, including Destination: Yukon, the joint Yukon-Alaska program. When it comes to the United States, as the member opposite may not know, the Yukon government has had a long-standing partnership with the State of Alaska. In fact, working with Alaska has been a very, very productive and strategic and very cost-effective way of promoting Yukon.

Likewise, we have continued investments in Tourism North and our joint Yukon-Alaska program. We also work on enhancing meetings, conventions, incentive travel through the Yukon Convention Bureau and work with entities beyond. The plan goes through trade sales, goes through media relations. As I tried to articulate for the Member for Mayo-Tatchun, familiarization tours — the nurturing of media relations has proven to be yet another effective and yet very cost-efficient way of marketing the Yukon. The recent announcement that Yukon won the bid to bring GoMedia Marketplace in tandem with the Canadian Tourism Commission speaks volumes to the Yukon evolving as a competitive destination. This will be the first time it has ever been held north of 60 and it will bring together up to 300 different journalists and representatives of the trade so they can participate in familiarization tours, products made available through our tour operators. They will see first-hand and write about those experiences. It's that unpaid media advertising that works well for the Yukon. We don't have the largesse or the marketing budget that perhaps Travel Alberta has, or Tourism British Columbia, but we have made very good, efficient use of our resources by partnering.

That's one thing I attribute our success to. We're working more closely with industry than ever before in all our marketing programs, whether associations or the private sector — for example, Air North, White Pass & Yukon Route, and so forth.

Our tourism strategy has and continues to be developed in partnership with industry. It's a sound one; it's a reasonable one. We are continuing to invest in markets with the best product/market match and the greatest likelihood of return on investment.

We're partnering more than ever with our neighbours, whether it's the State of Alaska or whether it's our sister territories in Canada's north, which is reflected in the recent announcement of the pan-north marketing initiative of just over \$3.5 million over four years. That funding will help enhance the increased investments we've made in Destination: Yukon and others. We're investing in areas where we see growth op-

portunities. As I just mentioned, on the domestic front it's with Destination: Yukon, through the tourism cooperative marketing fund that's leveraging our investment in partnership with industry. For every dollar put up by industry, in keeping with our target markets, in keeping with our implementation plan developed by industry, we'll match that. We've been able to initiate and increase dollars to TCMF.

We are continuing to invest in infrastructure — we just made reference to that — whether it's our airports, our highways, our parks, wildlife viewing opportunities, interpretive signage, and the list goes on.

When it comes to performance, I know we issued our tourism report card recently. I believe it was just at the end of last year.

We know that in 2010, when it came to visitation, it was a good year. We were up 10 percent and it was 12 straight months of growth in visitation to Yukon, which is very good.

When it came to air arrivals and departures, we were up nine percent for travellers planing and deplaning at the airport. We also saw an increase in overseas, as well as U.S. visitors, whether by private vehicle or motorcoach.

When it comes to the 2009-10 Tourism Yukon report card, which is the last one we just published, it reports on all the department's core marketing programs in our key target markets and through our cooperative marketing initiatives with partners like the Canadian Tourism Commission, the Alaska Travel Industry Association, our travel trade partners and tour operators.

We are able to measure that, to track that, and to be able to highlight that. The numbers are recorded in the report card. I could go over a lot of this, but here are some examples. We were able to generate over 139 million impressions through on-line marketing activities. The lion's share was in North America and the rest was overseas. We were able to implement cooperative marketing initiatives with a consumer reach of over 122 million. Again, the lion's share was overseas in that regard, with the remainder in North America. We were able to host 136 media journalists from our key target markets. There were 69 from North America and 67 from overseas, which generated a media advertising equivalent value of almost \$27 million. What this means is that we did not have to pay for advertisements, but by being able to host travel journalists from our key target markets, we were able to generate written articles featured in publications with a circulation of approximately 100 million people and generating on-line over 22.5 million impressions.

We were able to host nine trade familiarization tours, representing 71 travel trade and meeting planners, 43 from North America and 28 from overseas. We were able to generate 233,329 qualified responses, and those are requests for tourism information through our marketing programs, which were fulfilled either through the Yukon vacation planners, our lure piece or our *North to Alaska* brochure.

We were also able to generate almost 270,000 unique visitors to www.travel yukon.com and our associated overseas landing pages. Something we were able to do was enhance the Travel Yukon website by modernizing it and making it more user-friendly, making it more applicable for industry, which

was the very point of tourism marketing. We were also able to enhance the level of content by providing it in French, German and Japanese, if I'm not mistaken.

When it came to the Olympics, in partnership with our two sister territories, our marketing activities during the Olympics alone generated more than 40 million impressions through paid advertising, more than 27 million impressions through earned media, with a value of more than \$147 million. We were also able to generate enhanced awareness of the north through the 215,000 visitors plus who went through Canada's Northern House, as well as over 15,000 contest entries at Canada's Northern House during the Olympics. We were also able to, on Yukon Day — I believe it was February 20 — during the Olympics we partnered up with industry and were able to provide a familiarization tour to Whitehorse, which included 53 media from nine countries including Canada, U.S., Germany, Switzerland, Australia and so forth, which generated an estimated media advertising equivalent of over \$150,000, generating over 2 million impressions.

That is pretty detailed information. It is outlined in our report card for the Department of Tourism and Culture, which is published every year on-line. When it comes to the Film and Sound Commission, I'd just like to remind the member opposite, as I was making reference to the commission, it is housed in the Department of Economic Development. It has been from the very beginning. Of course, I don't want to go over how we work with Economic Development, but certainly, the webisodes that have been airing in New York City's Times Square, and other initiatives that the department is doing — we work with them, we applaud their initiatives. Again, everything that they're doing, everything that we're doing, is all incremental success. We garner a great number of visitors from New York and surrounding area each and every year. In fact, U.S. visitation was up substantively last year alone. I think it was about 16 percent, if I'm not mistaken.

We are very pleased to be able to continue to work with Economic Development. We applaud their work and we applaud the work of the film industry and how much they have built capacity over the years, and how we are now able to attract increasing levels of investment by not only national filmmakers, but also international. It's great to see, because every time the Yukon is showcased, whether it is in a film, in an advertisement, whether it's in a marketing campaign, whether it's through an article written by a travel journalist, it all bodes well for the Yukon and there is no lack of stories available for telling — the story about the Yukon and all that we have to offer as a travel destination.

Chair: Is there any further general debate?

Mr. Fairclough: I do have a few more questions for the minister, just to follow up on the minister's comment about the increase in travel here in the territory, which the minister says results in an increase of tourism in the Yukon.

How does the minister come up with this number and this percentage? Is she looking at the increase in the Yukon population? Is this domestic travel or is it as a result of the population increase in the territory that we're seeing more travel — for

example, in the mining industry, where they are bringing workers in from B.C. and so on? Can the minister elaborate on that?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: The statistics that I have been reflecting upon are housed within our year-end report for Yukon visitor statistics. It is something that is put together on an annual basis and has been for many years, so we do have a baseline from which to compare year-to-date and years previous.

They are a reflection of the border crossing statistics at all our border crossings, in collaboration with the Canada Border Services Agency. If one looks, we're able to track those who come in by private vehicle and motorcoach, those who are United States citizens and Yukon citizens, those who are Canadian citizens — aside from Yukon citizens — and also the others, who are from overseas. They are tracked at all the different border crossings throughout the Yukon, and they are made on a yearly basis. We also track visitation numbers through each of our Yukon visitor information centres and those are also tracked and reported as such, but it is something that we have used for probably decades. It is a good baseline and of course enhancing that are exit surveys that we also carry through.

Mr. Fairclough: Another question I have to follow up with the minister is in regard to the marketing and the marketing campaign for the Yukon, whether it's in the four cities that the minister mentioned earlier or whether it is overseas and that is with the ads and what is in them? I know the departments help in looking at how to design and what to put into the alcohol and drug services. But does the minister preview any of the ads that are promoting Yukon? Does she approve any of the ads, or are they left up to the department?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: All the ads are developed by our agency of record in collaboration with the Senior Marketing Committee and the Department of Tourism and Culture. So they are the ones who come up with what is to be showcased and what's not to be showcased. They're the experts. I'm not the marketing expert. I wish I could be, but I'm not, and that's not my role. So, in fact, the product — I should say, the creative is compiled in collaboration with industry, the department and the agency that is hired to undertake the implementation and evaluation of these programs.

Mr. Fairclough: So is the minister saying that she does not see any of the ads before they go out? There is no approval by either the minister or Cabinet? Is it just the marketing branch that does this, and the minister has nothing to do with it? Is that what I'm hearing?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: I'm not sure what the member opposite is getting at here. I do have the opportunity to see advertisements that are going out, and that's great to be able to see that, so that when individuals ask I can at least be somewhat knowledgeable about what is going out the door. But, again, it's created in collaboration with the agency that has been hired to undertake the actual development and implementation, in collaboration with the Senior Marketing Committee and the Department of Tourism and Culture.

Mr. Fairclough: I'd like to move on to another question, which I don't really want to ask, but it's to do with this department's collaboration with the Department of Highways and Public Works, and it is about painting a picture for Yukon.

I think we've touched on this question before, and it has to do with the pullout stops around our highways. I know the Highways minister perhaps could answer this too.

I know the minister in the past has been on top of this issue of the pullout stops and signage and the outhouses, particularly the wheelchair access. The minister has alluded to some of the outhouses — not all — in the campground areas having wheelchair access, but this is not the case along our highways. We do promote the Yukon by having trails off these pullouts, and I can refer to one, say around the Braeburn Hill pull-off, for example. They do have trails you can follow to look at the effects of the fires, and so on.

It's not a pretty scene and I think there could be improvements there. What influence does the minister have with highways and trying to make improvements, as far as the pullouts and the outhouses that are located on these pullouts?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: When it comes to interpretive signage and pullouts, I'm pleased to see the member opposite has acknowledged the good work that's performed by the Department of Tourism and Culture.

I believe that we're making good strides in this regard. As one can appreciate, this is an ongoing initiative. It's a really important one, however. It is something that we do undertake to work in collaboration with Environment, and Highways and Public Works, and our own department. One of these things that our department did, and I've alluded to in the past, is we initiated the scenic drives initiative a few years ago; it was quite a few years ago. That was approximately \$350,000 to promote each of the several scenic highways throughout the Yukon as destinations. A large lion's part of that is toward interpretive signage. In fact, it's just over \$200,000 every year that we provide in direct expenditures for interpretive signage. Of course, there are also dollars allotted toward in-kind resources and staff made available and so forth.

This year, just for detailed expenditure for 2011-12 — or the year coming up, I should say — there is a whole host of different initiatives coming up.

For the Alaska Highway, we're developing a walking trail along the Yukon River, just from the Yukon River bridge. At Jake's Corner, we're designing and producing signage for the kiosk there, doing some landscaping and installing some small signs.

We're installing a panel at Mendenhall Landing; we are installing picnic tables at the Kluane Lake overlook, Soldier's Summit; we're upgrading the panels and doing some landscaping at Burwash Landing. We are replacing posts and installing panels at the Kluane River overlook; we're installing a new pullout at White River, including panel design and production. We're doing some landscaping at Dry Creek; we're restoring some of the sandblasted signs along the Alaska Highway, including Teslin Lake, Kluane Lake viewpoint, Kluane River.

At the Haines Summit, we have a new panel going in along the Klondike Highway south and the Tagish road.

It's inclusive of the Carcross desert; we're building and installing outhouses. At Emerald Lake we're moving the old kiosk, installing a new kiosk and signage. We're upgrading existing signage panels for Robinson Roadhouse and also installing

new natural history panels. We are providing more interpretive panels at the Carcross Cutoff. We're designing and producing new panels in Tagish. For the Klondike Highway north, we are installing a picnic table at Fox Lake burn; upgrading panels, restoring sand-blasted sign at Montague Roadhouse; at Twin Lakes we're designing and producing new panels; we're installing new interpretive panels at the Stewart River overlook. We are installing panels at the Frances Lake signage; South Canol Road, again, we're designing and producing new panels; Quiet Lake we're installing panels, designing and producing. We are designing and producing new panels again at Nisutlin River, Sidney Lake, Lapie River Canyon, Lapie River Bridge, the Hoole River Canyon, Macmillan River.

We are also designing and producing a mad trapper panel on the Dempster Highway. Again, we are restoring some of the sandblasted signs on the Dempster Highway and the Klondike Highway junctions. We are designing and producing 20 signs for the Yukon River sites. We are installing outhouses as well on the Yukon River sites. We are installing signage on the overland trail. We are installing upgraded panels along the Klondike gold fields loop. We are upgrading three of the pullouts along that loop as well. We are restoring some signs: Dawson ridge road, upper Bonanza road, Callison industrial subdivision. That just about concludes the work for 2011-12. This is just one small snapshot of the work that has been done since we have increased initiated investments for interpretive signage. We have spent well over \$1 million on scenic drives interpretive signage. That doesn't include the work that Highways and Public Works also does and the Department of Environment. It is a collaborative effort and I applaud Tourism and Culture officials — in particular one I can think of, for all of her work over the years. It's not an easy job to say the least but she really makes it look really easy, and she does a fine job at that. I hope that provides a little bit of information. Keep in mind that over the year, for the last several years, we have invested in all areas and continue to invest in all areas where there are plans. I believe every area in the territory does have a signage plan. We're working to fully implement that. Of course, it's an ongoing effort just to revitalize signs as a result of weathering and so forth.

Mr. Fairclough: The minister didn't answer the second part of my question. That's in regard to the outhouses and whether or not there is handicap access and wheelchair access to them and how much influence the minister has with the Highways and Public Works department on these pullout areas. That has been brought to my attention and maybe the Minister of Highways and Public Works can jump up and answer that question. Another is that the design of the outhouse, particularly the toilets, are lower down and some seniors have come and approached me about whether or not the government can install grab handles so they can get up properly.

I'll just leave that question for the minister to answer.

Hon. Mr. Lang: We in the Department of Highways and Public Works are responsible for the pullouts, and we do maintain the toilet facilities in those locations. But, as you noticed, we continually upgrade those facilities. They do take a bit of maintenance because of the nature of what they are. If we

were to get a letter or some kind of correspondence from anybody who did have questions about how we could improve them, we are certainly open to dialogue with anybody who has a better idea of how these things could be improved.

Mr. Fairclough: The minister just heard first-hand about some improvements. I asked about wheelchair access; I asked about grab handles in the outhouses. Where is the minister going to take this? The minister said he's responsible for maintenance of the highway pullouts. These are also areas tourists use, and walking trails are part of these pullouts. Is the minister going to take these issues and try to make improvements to the outhouses, including maintenance?

Hon. Mr. Lang: I would recommend the member opposite bring that up when the Highways and Public Works portfolio is on the floor, when I would have individuals here to work with issues. We work with Yukoners and try to improve our facilities. They have done a great job up to now, but there is always room for improvement. When Highways and Public Works is on the floor, I recommend the member opposite bring that up and we'll answer the question. The individuals who will be here will be able to follow through with the recommendations or suggestions of the member opposite.

Mr. Fairclough: I'm hoping we're able to get answers then and not have the minister refer it back to the Minister of Tourism and Culture, who is in charge of campgrounds and the facilities there.

I want to ask the minister another question. I heard her say several times this afternoon that she works closely with industry and with her colleagues and partners, that she works closely with the Department of Environment and the Department of Economic Development.

There's a big issue out there that's very much on the minds of Yukoners right now. That is the whole issue of the Peel. I want to ask the minister what influence the minister has in promoting tourism in the Peel with her colleagues and how are those influences being recognized in the government position?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: I believe this has been addressed on a number of occasions. As I outlined before in previous debates, when it comes to land use planning, the lead agency is housed within the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources, which oversees land use planning. That's not to say that Energy, Mines and Resources has the monopoly on where things go. In fact, all relevant departments contribute to the land use planning process, including our Department of Tourism and Culture — just like we contribute through YESAA and land use planning, whether it's the Peel, whether it's north Yukon, or whether it is other planning processes, in terms of protected areas and park planning. I believe I made reference to forestry.

We do have resources within the department. They do provide the technical expertise, the information available garnered in collaboration with industry. As the member opposite knows, this is a process that has yet to conclude. In fact, I believe it was the chair of the commission that said the other day that we're about halfway through. There is a great deal of work to be concluded, including consultation with affected communities, but of course the response that has been provided by the

Government of Yukon and by the affected First Nations, as well, is now within the hands of the commission. They are also provided with some direction under the letter of understanding that was signed earlier this year between the affected First Nations and the Yukon government.

We remain very committed to meeting our obligations that are outlined in chapter 11 of the collective First Nation final agreements. We look forward to the outcome of that process but, as I said, there's still more work to be done, including more consultation with stakeholders and receiving an updated plan from the commission.

Mr. Fairclough: There's a reason I've been asking this question. The general public is quite interested to hear what the departments have to say and what the ministers responsible for those departments have to say. We haven't heard anything from the Minister of Environment. What we heard today is really nothing from the Minister of Tourism — nothing at all on this.

Rather, she did say that the minister responsible for Economic Development, the Energy, Mines and Resources minister, doesn't have a monopoly on this. How does the public know, when the Minister of Tourism has nothing to say when it comes to the position of the department or her position on what is to take place in the Peel?

What I heard the minister say is that lots of work is to be done yet on the draft plan. Why would the minister not voice her opinion or position in the department and tell the general public — because the department has no problems. The industry has no problems in saying that they support something like this. The minister says she works closely with the industry. Why is the minister silent on this and why is she so content to let another minister take this on — the position of the department?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: I'll just outline again for the member opposite that the Government of Yukon remains very much committed to meeting our obligations. As outlined in chapter 11 of the *Umbrella Final Agreement* — final agreements of the affected First Nation governments — as has already been articulated, we have a way to go in that process. There was a joint letter of understanding that was signed by the affected First Nations and the Yukon government on the Peel watershed planning process. It was to confirm the joint commitment by the parties to the Peel land use plan, to establish coordinated processes for responding, following the process identified in the final agreements.

We are working with the affected First Nations. We are following the letter of the law. We recognize there is a way to go when it comes to the outcome of this process. We respect everyone's opinions and the integrity of the process. We do remain committed to following the process, and that's where we are. We're in the middle of a land use planning process.

I would just draw to the attention of the member opposite that, even the other day, the Leader of the Liberal Party was on one of the radio outlets. Even that member said he didn't want to prejudge what the commission was going to come back with, because all the parties have asked the commission to rework

that plan. That is exactly where it is. It is before the commission, and the parties have asked them to consider their input.

Now in terms of the Department of Tourism and Culture, that is why we have officials who have information; that is what they work with on a day-in and day-out basis and it is their role to provide that input into land planning processes — YESAA — whether it is providing input into the land use planning process, or the forestry planning process, or into other individual land use plans. The *North Yukon Regional Land Use Plan* was approved by the respective parties.

Again, there is a significant amount of work that has been undertaken already and we applaud that work, but there is more. I appreciate the members opposite may wish to have this work finalized today, but we are obligated by the law, by chapter 11 of the *Umbrella Final Agreement*, and we are committed to following our obligations, as set out in the law. It's also guided by the letter of understanding, which was signed by the affected Yukon First Nations, the Gwich'in Tribal Council and the Yukon government on how we wish to proceed with further consultations, some timelines for consideration, and it goes on. In fact, I believe that the letter of understanding is outlined on the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources website, if I'm not mistaken.

Seeing the time, I move that we report progress.

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

Motion agreed to

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

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

Motion agreed to

Speaker resumes the Chair

Speaker: I will now call the House to order. May the House have a report from the Chair of Committee of the Whole?

Chair's report

Mr. Nordick: Mr. Speaker, Committee of the Whole has considered Bill No. 24, *First Appropriation Act, 2011-12*, and directed me to report progress.

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

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Speaker: I declare the report carried.

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

The House adjourned at 5:30 p.m.