

Yukon Legislative Assembly
Whitehorse, Yukon
Monday, March 25, 2013 — 1:00 p.m.

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

Prayers

DAILY ROUTINE

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

Tributes.

Introduction of visitors.

TABLING RETURNS AND DOCUMENTS

Speaker: Under tabling returns and documents, the Chair has for tabling the 2012 annual report of the Ombudsman, which is being tabled pursuant to subsection 31(1) of the *Ombudsman Act*.

Also, the Chair has for tabling the 2012 Annual Report of the Information and Privacy Commissioner. This report is being tabled pursuant to subsection 47(2) of the *Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.

Are there any other returns or documents for tabling?

Hon. Mr. Kent: I have for tabling the Yukon College 2011-12 Annual Report.

Speaker: Are there any other returns or documents?
 Are there any reports of committees?
 Are there any petitions?
 Are there any bills to be introduced?

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 53: Introduction and First Reading

Hon. Mr. Kent: I move that Bill No. 53, entitled *Act to Amend the Education Act*, be now introduced and read a first time.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Minister of Education that Bill No. 53, entitled *Act to Amend the Education Act*, be now introduced and read a first time.

Motion for introduction and first reading of Bill No. 53 agreed to

Bill No. 56: Introduction and First Reading

Hon. Mr. Kent: I move that Bill No. 56, entitled *Movable Soccer Goal Safety Act*, be now introduced and read a first time.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Minister of Education that Bill No. 56, entitled *Movable Soccer Goal Safety Act*, be now introduced and read a first time.

Motion for introduction and first reading of Bill No. 56 agreed to

Speaker: Are there any further bills to be introduced?
 Are there any notices of motion?

NOTICES OF MOTION

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to work with the Government of British Columbia to establish a reciprocal fishing licence agreement for Atlin Lake.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to increase legislative oversight of capital project spending with the goal of ensuring such projects are:

- (1) undertaken only when there is evidence they will serve demonstrated needs in the most appropriate and cost-effective way;
- (2) planned to anticipate and manage risks;
- (3) delivered on time and on budget;
- (4) developed with greater public transparency and accountability; and
- (5) managed in ways that reflect the best practices outlined in numerous reports prepared for the Government of Yukon by its internal auditor and by the Office of the Auditor General of Canada.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon

- (1) to immediately implement all the recommendations of the Select Committee on Safe Operation and Use of Off-road Vehicles; and
- (2) to immediately develop and implement a plan, in conjunction with user groups, to protect environmentally sensitive areas from off-road vehicle use while allowing responsible access to the backcountry.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to immediately work with Yukon doctors to ensure the ongoing operation of the Yukon Medical Council so it may continue regulating the practise of medicine and medical care provided by licensed physicians in the Yukon.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to invite officials from the Yukon Hospital Corporation to appear as witnesses in the Legislature this spring to answer questions related to:

- (1) the delayed and overbudget Dawson City hospital;
- (2) the delayed and overbudget Watson Lake hospital; and,
- (3) plans to expand the emergency room at Whitehorse General Hospital.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to invite officials from the Yukon Development Corporation to appear as witnesses in the Legislature this spring to answer questions related to the pending energy shortfall facing the Yukon.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources to provide a breakdown of submissions received from Yukoners regarding the Peel land use plan, indicating what plan they supported.

Speaker: Is there a statement by a minister?
This brings us to Question Period.

QUESTION PERIOD

Question re: Capital project expenditures

Ms. Hanson: Mr. Speaker, this government's record when it comes to capital project management is startling. Over the last few years, the Whitehorse Correctional Centre went from \$30 million to \$75 million after repeated delays and design changes. Now we have the government going back to the drawing board on the reconstruction of F.H. Collins Secondary School and throwing the \$5 million already invested out the window. At this stage, who knows when the school will be ready?

To top this off, the Auditor General indicated that the Dawson City and Watson Lake hospitals are overbudget by millions and won't be delivered on time. This government has lost control on capital project expenditures and Yukoners are tired of the same old excuses. Will the Premier stand and take responsibility for the Yukon Party government's inability to meet timelines and respect budgets on major capital projects?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: I will rise and say that when a project comes in, such as F.H. Collins, which is already \$10 million overbudget before we even begin construction, we are not going to go forward with that project because there are a lot of things that this government can continue to do for Yukoners with \$10 million, such as housing for seniors, such as health care, such as roads and bridges, such as building other schools. This is a project for which we initially budgeted \$52 million. We increased it to over \$56 million.

This government is adamant that we continue to spend our money responsibly and we will go forward, committed to F.H. Collins school. We will look at a plan that has already been constructed economically. We will ensure that we incorporate the work of the building committee — the work that they have done. We'll make sure that the design also meets the specifications for Yukon.

Ms. Hanson: That's interesting. The Premier has focused on F.H. Collins, a project that before the election was shovel-ready, and suddenly it's not designed and it's too costly. You know, what we hear repeatedly from the Yukon Party government is their rhetoric not matching the numbers.

Yukoners have had enough of their tax dollars being mismanaged by this government. The lack of planning by this government is costing the territory millions of dollars, and Yukoners are not getting the services they deserve. This government urgently needs to learn from its mistakes before Yukoners have to pick up another tab for another multi-million-dollar boondoggle.

What I'm asking Mr. Speaker is, what concrete steps has the Premier taken to ensure future capital projects are delivered on time and on budget?

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: This is the first question I get to answer. I like this, Mr. Speaker.

I just listened to the first question on the first day of the sitting. A few Yukoners informed me that they were probably pretty happy — actually they said, "Happy, happy, happy" — that the Official Opposition isn't managing our finances.

I'd just like to speak a little bit to our procurement office and some of the stuff that we are doing that was asked by the member opposite. We're looking at modernizing how it procures goods and services to make government contract regulations, policies and procedures fair, consistent and accessible for businesses. We heard from many of the contractors and suppliers and we're simplifying procurement processes so that it is easier to do business with the government. What suppliers told us they wanted was increased information about and access to government business opportunities. We're looking for the local suppliers. We're looking at providing more training to government employees to increase excise inconsistencies — done, with more to come. Increased centralized support for procurement — done. Introduce more electronic tools without negatively affecting smaller business — done. Recognize the contributions of local businesses to Yukon's economy, revise thresholds, create a new supplier directory — that's underway.

I could go on and on, Mr. Speaker, but this government is for working with contractors and for procuring our services better.

Question re: Resource wealth sharing

Ms. Hanson: Mr. Speaker, last week an e-mail was sent from the Government of Yukon to Yukon First Nation governments regarding the negotiation of a revenue-sharing agreement. In this e-mail, an ultimatum was given to Yukon First Nation governments that unless all self-governing First Nation governments agreed by 10:00 a.m. this morning, the deal was closed. There would be no extension, no further discussions, no room to manoeuvre. Just take it or leave it, and if you leave it, then the opportunity is done for good.

Mr. Speaker, there is a difference between negotiating and issuing an ultimatum to other governments. Would the Premier talk to Ottawa like that, to Alaska, to other Canadian territories or provinces? I would think not. So why does the Premier believe that it's okay for his government to give ultimatums to Yukon First Nation governments?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: As this House is aware, back in August 2011, the Prime Minister announced a tentative agreement with Government of Yukon, upon that consultation with Yukon First Nations, to venture forward with a new resource revenue-sharing agreement that would tremendously benefit all Yukoners. That was done after consultation. During that time, we went forward with the proposal to increase the amount of sharing of resource revenues — resource royalties — with all First Nations over and above our obligations, Mr. Speaker.

I've risen many times to talk about the millions of dollars that we invest in First Nations while having no fiduciary responsibility to do so. We continue to work with the First Na-

tions — to work because it is in the net benefit of all Yukoners and we continue to talk to them about resource revenue or resource royalty sharing. We'll continue to do that. We'll continue to work with First Nations on a myriad of things that occur every day across the government.

Ms. Hanson: Mr. Speaker, the facts contradict the rhetoric. This is actually a government that does not believe in negotiation; rather, they have fostered a culture of their way or the highway.

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Point of order

Speaker: Government House Leader, on a point of order.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: I believe that the Leader of the Official Opposition just contravened Standing Order 19(g) by imputing unavowed motives to another member with her last statement, and I would urge you to have her retract that statement.

Speaker: The Opposition House Leader, on the point of order.

Ms. Stick: On the point of order, I heard my colleague provide her opinion of the actions of this government and the consequences thereof. While the member opposite might not agree, I do not believe this assessment imputed false or unavowed motives to the government.

Speaker's statement

Speaker: This is a difficult one. I would like to look at it in the proper context of *Hansard*, but I would also like to take this opportunity to remind all members of their stated efforts during the election campaign to raise the order and decorum in here. That is not helped by taking potshots at one another for various reasons.

It is a caution right now. I will have a look at the Blues tomorrow to see the exact context in which the word was used.

Ms. Hanson: This government seems intent on picking fights with First Nation governments. We have seen that with the Peel. We saw it with last year's amendment to the *Oil and Gas Act*, and we saw that with the last-minute cancellation of the Premier's meeting with the Yukon Forum. The list goes on.

Mr. Speaker, this is a government that seems to hold First Nation governments in contempt. Why is the Premier so intent on —

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Point of order

Speaker: Government House Leader, on a point of order.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: The accusation from the Leader of the Official Opposition, I would argue, directed at any member of this Assembly would be contrary to the practices of this Assembly — to accuse a member of this House of holding contempt for First Nation governments, let alone to direct that to the government as a whole. I believe that is clearly in contra-

vention of past rulings, and I would urge you to direct her to retract that statement.

Speaker's ruling

Speaker: It is not up to the Chair to determine the facts as presented. The interpretation of the facts is left to the members. At the same time, the level of order and decorum in this House has been raised, and it takes the effort of all members to keep it as such. I would remind members that if they are not cautious with their statements, they will have to accept that similar types of statements will be coming back at them.

At this point in time, there is going to be no point of order, but as you reap, so shall you sow. If that is not clear — be careful of the words you use, the context you put them in, because if it's going to be permitted, it will be permitted for both sides of the House.

The Leader of the Official Opposition may finish her question.

Ms. Hanson: My question: Why is the Premier so intent on an approach that will lead to ill will, legal wrangling, and economic uncertainty that will ultimately harm Yukon First Nation and non-First Nation citizens alike?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: This government continues, on a daily basis, to work with First Nations in a manner that not only benefits the public government, but benefits the individual First Nations by supporting them and helping them, in terms of building their capacity.

For example, developing and implementing asset construction agreements — for example, the Whitehorse Correctional Centre and the Carcross infrastructure works — support of various economic development programs, such as the community development fund; then there is access to partnerships through the Department of Education, and the recently signed MOU with Canada and Yukon First Nations on an action plan for rural education; a negotiation of resource revenue-sharing that we're talking about. That was a joint effort — an agreement at a Yukon Forum to move forward to approach Canada for a different deal to ensure that all Yukoners will benefit from resource royalties going forward. We just recently hosted another successful capacity development conference last month.

Things such as the recently signed forestry management agreement for the Klondike with Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in will ensure that we continue to manage our environment and create economic opportunities for First Nations and industry.

Ms. Hanson: My question is simple: Can the Premier confirm that the ultimatum contained in the e-mail last week holds and that the revenue-sharing agreement is no longer on the table?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: We reached a tentative agreement with Yukon First Nations, I think in May of last year, in terms of the sharing of resource royalties, as I have stated. This is over and above what was agreed upon in the *Umbrella Final Agreement*. There is a formula in the *Umbrella Final Agreement* that stipulates the sharing of resource royalties. With this new agreement, we thought it was important for us, as partners in the economy, that we also share in this enhanced royalty capability. I know the First Nations are continuing to ensure

that they have worked out an amenable agreement among themselves, and I'm sure we will continue to get an update on this. I look forward to signing that agreement one day soon.

Question re: F.H. Collins Secondary School reconstruction

Mr. Silver: I have a question for the Minister of Education in regard to the reconstruction of F.H. Collins school. In regard to the handling of this project, there has been a great deal of well-deserved criticism directed at the government. After spending at least \$6 million on this project, the Yukon Party decided just weeks ago to start all over again.

There is an opportunity to get it right this time. There is an opportunity to build a school that fits a community's needs as opposed to one that fits an existing footprint. I believe the government made the wrong decision the first time around when it decided not to rebuild the tech and trades wing at the school. The government has essentially given itself a do-over.

Will the minister consider including a new tech and trades wing in the new F.H. Collins Secondary School?

Hon. Mr. Kent: I guess the short answer to the member's questions is yes. We'll look at options under the designs that we are looking at from other jurisdictions. If those do, in fact, contain shops or tech and trades facilities within them, we will be able to include them in the new school. Of course the commitment by the government is to fiscal responsibility. Those bids did come in \$10 million over, but the existing tech and trades facility that is on-site at F.H. Collins offers a number of different programs, so we want to make sure that we are able to transfer all those programs over to a new school. Otherwise, it will perhaps become part of our campus model that we have talked about.

Mr. Silver: The transferring of existing programs is great. We are talking about an academic emphasis. The Liberal caucus would like the government to examine the potential of building a tech and trades wing in the school now that the project has been scrapped. The recently completed feasibility study for a centre for northern innovation in mining at Yukon College has demonstrated a strong need for something more. The demand is on the rise in Canada and in the Yukon, and it makes sense to examine these possibilities. The Minister of Education himself has spoken about the need for more training of this type. I know that the government wants to see the building completed before the next election, and maybe that's driving this timetable, unfortunately.

We need to focus more on educating students and less on having the school ready for another pre-election ribbon-cutting. \$27 million has been set aside in this year's budget to start again on a new F.H. Collins school. My question: What is the total budget for this new school?

Hon. Mr. Kent: Mr. Speaker, the total budget for the school that we've appropriated or asked for so far is in and around the \$56-million mark. When it comes to the tech and trades issues that were brought forward by the Member for Klondike, he rightfully mentioned the centre for northern innovation in mining. We're excited about the opportunities that exist there. The Minister of Economic Development and I attended the graduation for the introduction to mining class that

occurred on Friday. We have ordered a new trades trailer that will offer that type of training around the Yukon. There are tremendous opportunities, I think, that exist for us in expanding the role of trades and technology. It is about the programming; it isn't necessarily about the bricks and mortar and we look forward to building that programming, working on dual credit welding as early as this fall in the member's home community of Dawson City. So I think there is a tremendous number of things we can do with respect to trades training, and it's something that I remain committed to as minister and indeed, our government is committed to on this side of the House.

Mr. Silver: I appreciate the minister's answers. The Government of Yukon should take the time necessary to plan properly for this new F.H. Collins building. When we are talking about an expansion of the tech and trades wing, I mean academically it should include CAD training, robotics and other trades that are in high demand locally.

When the Premier announced he was pulling the plug on the old design of F.H. Collins Secondary School, he said the approved construction budget — as detailed by two separate independent estimators — was \$38.6 million. So far the government has refused to release these two independent estimates. The more information the public has, the better. Perhaps these documents will shed some light on why the government was so far off on their cost estimates.

Will the Premier release these estimates so the public can see whether or not they actually do match up with the construction budget?

Hon. Mr. Kent: When it comes to the F.H. Collins school replacement project we are certainly committed to the principles of fiscal responsibility, and we won't be proceeding as mentioned with the design concept. We're able to use the work of the building advisory committee. They put a substantial amount of time and effort into coming up with programming options for the new school, and we hope to incorporate all of those into the new design that will be based on something that has already been constructed successfully and economically in other jurisdictions and will incorporate other elements from the previous consultation process.

I had the opportunity last week to attend the F.H. Collins school council meeting and had a very good dialogue.

The Member for Riverdale South was in attendance, and we look forward to coming to that school community — the school council and the administration and staff at F.H. Collins — and seeking what their must-haves are, as far as educational programming at the new school. I'm sure some of the ideas that were brought up by the Member for Klondike will also be incorporated into their list, as far as tech and trades and some of the other high-demand skills that are required in the territory right now.

Question re: Peel watershed land use plan

Ms. Stick: Regarding the Peel land use plan consultation, the Energy, Mines and Resources website says — and I quote: "Government of Yukon continues to meet and work with affected First Nations during the ongoing First Nation consultation process, which will end on March 25, 2013."

Mr. Speaker, today is March 25, and I would like the Premier to tell this House how many meetings he has had with the four affected First Nation governments during this month-long consultation process that ends today.

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: I would again like to thank all those individuals and groups who took the time to indeed submit their comments through the commission. That four-month consultation was one of the longest consultations that the Yukon government has ever endeavoured to do on a topic. It was preceded by some initial consultation work with the First Nations. Following the close of public consultation on February 25, we then entered into a phase of meeting for the final consultation with the affected First Nations. There has been some work done at the officials level. I have had conversations with the chiefs. We continue to ensure that we review all the comments that we've heard. We will shortly be coming out with posting those comments in a *What We Heard* document.

We will ensure we follow the *Umbrella Final Agreement* and seek a balanced plan that will ensure we can protect the environment and respect all sectors of the economy.

Ms. Stick: We have heard differently — though the government promised to consult with the First Nations of Na Cho Nyäk Dun, Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in, the Vuntut Gwitchin and the Tetlit Gwich'in Council after the public consultation, this has not happened. It was to run from February 25 to March 25. It would appear to us that there has been no consultation with these four affected Yukon First Nation governments, as promised.

Can the Premier explain to this House why no meetings have taken place between his office or his minister's office and the First Nation governments?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: Thirty days was not a hard-and-fast number; in fact, that was a minimum number. We will continue to do our diligence. We will continue to ensure that we work and consult with the four affected First Nations. We will live up to all of our obligations that we have under the *Umbrella Final Agreement*, and we look forward to the conclusion of this planning process.

Ms. Stick: I'm just seeking clarification here. The quote I read in the first question with regard to what was on the Energy, Mines and Resources website did mention that it would end on March 25, 2013.

Can the Premier then confirm for us that this consultation date will go beyond today?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Again, as the Premier alluded to, what Yukon government officials have said to the representatives of the First Nations in consultation, and what has been conveyed as well, I believe, by the Premier during phone conversations with chiefs, is that 30 days was a minimum. We are prepared to go a reasonable amount beyond that in the interest of having good discussions in the conclusion of our obligations under the consultation process. In reference to comments made by members earlier, I'd also like to remind members that although we did see petition/form letter campaigns conducted during this process, 86.5 percent of the feedback was from outside the Yukon.

We have made it clear from the start of this consultation process that the consultation is about thoughtful, constructive input. It's not about how many names someone can get on a petition, particularly when those names are from outside the territory.

As I said on Thursday, make no mistake: We were elected to represent Yukoners. We were elected by Yukoners. We were not elected to represent the people of Düsseldorf, Pasadena or Toronto.

Question re: Affordable housing

Ms. White: In reference to those Yukoners that the government was elected to represent, the lack of affordable housing continues to be the single biggest failure of this government. The government had only one plan for affordable rental housing and we all know it failed. The much-trumpeted Lot 262 scheme has been quietly scrapped without a word of explanation from the minister. The government likes to list the millions of public dollars they have spent but those millions have meant almost nothing to people looking for affordable rental accommodation. The number that counts to Yukon residents and Yukon businesses is the vacancy rate. Under this government, the vacancy rate is stalled at around 1.5 percent and rental unit costs are through the roof.

Mr. Speaker, is the government ready to admit its only plan for affordable rental housing — the Lot 262 scheme — was a failure?

Hon. Mr. Kent: I think one of the things recently announced that the Yukon Housing Corporation has undertaken to address some of the issues in the rental housing market is the down payment assistance program. I know there has been a lot of positive response from the community. I think we're close to processing the first couple of applications for that program. What we hope that that program will do is allow hard-working Yukoners who can afford a mortgage payment to move out of the rental market, freeing up much-needed rental spaces for those who are trying to get in and perhaps increasing the supply to the point where we could have some downward trending on the rental rates.

That's in addition to some of the other projects that we have underway, such as the 34-unit seniors housing complex for which construction will begin this year on Alexander Street here in Whitehorse. Again, many of the individuals who will be moving into that project are currently in the rental market. We see supplies increasing through not only our investments in projects but also our investment in programs.

Ms. White: We're talking about hard-working Yukoners who cannot afford home ownership and who also don't meet the qualifications as being a senior. The government's repeated failure to address the root causes of our housing crisis shows that an evidence-based strategy with clear and measurable goals is necessary. Millions of dollars have been sunk into Grizzly Valley and Whistle Bend subdivisions. An average single-family dwelling is over \$400,000.

That is not the affordable housing people need and people are not buying. Seventy percent of the 30 families and seven individuals on the Grey Mountain Housing waitlist report being homeless. Twenty percent of the 91 individuals on the White-

horse Housing wait-list report being homeless. Mr. Speaker, will the government admit that not having affordable housing strategy is perpetuating homelessness?

Hon. Mr. Kent: I believe what the member opposite is referencing is the update released today by the Yukon Anti-Poverty Coalition — initial results of the housing progress report. In there they also recognize that the Yukon Housing Corporation has a new five-year strategic plan with an expanded mandate, also referencing Habitat for Humanity, signing a landmark agreement with Champagne and Aishihik First Nation to build a triplex at the Takhini River subdivision.

One of the other exciting things that we're on the eve of is a northern housing conference that has been organized by the Yukon Housing Corporation. The purpose is outlined in the letter that was sent out by the chair of the conference. The real success of a conference is what happens afterward. That's really what we're looking forward to: taking the ideas that come from this conference, especially when it comes to partnerships. While the government has invested significantly in land and of course the transitional housing, Betty's Haven, and the Options for Independence, and a youth shelter — a number of initiatives on top of what the Yukon Housing Corporation has done — the government clearly can't be the only answer to this. We have to continue to seek out partnerships and leverage dollars on projects and programs that we introduce to address

Speaker: Time has elapsed.

Ms. White: The government's trickle-down ideology will never adequately house all the Yukoners who need and deserve homes. Reannouncing housing projects is not getting people into affordable rental units. When people are adequately housed, our communities — both individuals and businesses — are healthier. The Yukon Party government approach is, unfortunately, a home for some, but not for all.

The Yukon government approach leaves out in the cold people on fixed incomes, newcomers working at entry level jobs, small businesses that can't employ staff because those staff can't find housing. These are the people who need affordable housing. They are not looking to build in Grizzly Valley or Whistle Bend. It's time for this government to set targets with timelines and deliver concrete results.

In the coming fiscal year, how many affordable rental units will the Yukon government assist in bringing to market — and not those for seniors?

Hon. Mr. Kent: Again, in the budget that is before the House right now there are planning dollars for a seniors residence in Mayo. There is the replacement of the McDonald Lodge in Dawson. There are other initiatives that the government has yet to undertake, such as the emergency shelter — working with the Salvation Army — and an Abbeyfield project or an assisted living project for seniors.

There are a number of initiatives that we look forward to delivering on. Again, it's not all about projects; it's about programs as well and identifying programs that will assist individuals who are currently renting with moving through the housing continuum. That seems to be one of the biggest issues here in the Yukon Territory and where individuals are stalled.

They are hard-working Yukon families and can't afford to move out of the rental market into their first homes — and those individuals who are trying to get into the rental market as well, referenced by the member opposite. Those are the types of programs and projects that we are interested in. We are interested in partnerships with other governments, NGOs, a number of individuals and the private sector to come up with solutions that work to address the housing needs of all Yukoners.

Question re: Genetically modified products and seeds

Mr. Tredger: Yukon farmers have worked hard to develop a more sustainable form of agriculture. They produce wholesome foods, largely free of the more controversial aspects of large agribusiness. They work to protect the environment while nurturing their land. Their efforts are threatened by the introduction of genetically modified products and seeds. Crops like genetically modified alfalfa can get into the land and act like an invasive species, supplanting native plants and destroying the habitat. This is in addition to potential health risks and the potential for large corporate control of global agriculture.

The government has been asked before, and I'm asking again: Will the government ensure that genetically modified crop seeds are not allowed in Yukon?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: As the member should be aware, there was a petition presented last fall on this topic by the Member for Watson Lake, which the government will be responding to early in the spring sitting. We are also very much interested in hearing from Yukon farmers and particularly groups that represent them. I understand concerns have been expressed recently by the Growers of Organic Food Yukon about the potential for genetically modified alfalfa to be grown here in the territory.

In the past, of course, this has been a debate that has largely revolved around the potential for future crops, since the crops that have been grown in southern Canada have generally been agreed to not be viable here. So we will be responding on this matter in due course, but it's very interesting to continue to talk with farmers and groups about all their concerns, including this.

Mr. Tredger: Five years ago the government responded to a citizens petition signed by 1,700 people, calling on the government to ban genetically modified seeds. The government at the time said they wanted to gather information and talk with their federal counterparts and local farmers. Last year I raised the issue of genetically modified foods and crop seeds with the current Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, and he said his government was very supportive of dialogue.

First the Yukon Party government spends five years gathering information, then last year they said they wanted to have more dialogue. Mr. Speaker, the time to act is now. It has come to our attention that genetically modified alfalfa seed may be made available to farmers in Canada as early as next week. After five years of inaction, what will the minister do to keep genetically modified seed out of the Yukon?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Actually I'm not sure if the Member for Mayo-Tatchun is simply trying to be clever in the way

he's crafting the question or if he actually doesn't understand the facts. When this matter first raised its head in debate within the Yukon's agriculture community, there was a very divided response from Yukon farmers on the issue of genetically modified organisms on whether they should, in the view of some, not be allowed at all, or, in the views of others, that government restrictions in this area would not be well-justified.

One of the things that occurred in the past years is government encouraging farmers to talk to each other and to try to as much as possible get the Yukon's main farming organizations and the farming community on a similar page and hopefully come up with more of a consensus viewpoint on this issue.

So, again, that is something government encourages all to do, but with regard to this specific question, if the member would reference the journals or *Hansard* from the last sitting, he'll know that a response to the petition is due shortly. The government will be responding on that matter at that point, but we very much appreciate the viewpoints of all Yukoners who have expressed their views on the subject, whatever those views may be.

Mr. Tredger: The time for action is now. Once a genetically modified organism — especially alfalfa — is introduced into the Yukon or gathers into the Yukon, there will be concerns. With potential introduction of genetically modified alfalfa seed, we are risking our sustainable farming. We are risking the livelihood of Yukon farmers. We are risking the environment. We are risking our food supply. All we've had is five years of government inaction.

Will this minister — this government — act decisively and ensure that genetically modified alfalfa seed does not get into the Yukon environment and food supply?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Again, as I indicated to the member — as we said in the fall and I've said in past debates — we very much appreciate the viewpoints of Yukoners and particularly of members of the farming community on this subject. There will be a petition response very shortly, but again I would point out to the member, contrary to his assertions and characterizations, in fact, this is a topic that government encouraged the farming community — since there was a very divided response to this issue — and if the member will recall, the differences of opinion within the farming community in the past have spilled into the local media because of the strong feelings on both sides of this issue. Government did encourage the industry organizations and farmers to try to work together rather than both coming to government — in one case asking us not to put on any additional restrictions that might prevent them from growing a new crop and the other side seeing the potential for use of that crop as a threat, in their view, to their farming and potentially, the environment.

So again, we started from the standpoint of encouraging industry associations and farmers to talk together and try, as much as possible, to get on the same page on this important issue and achieve, as much as possible, consensus within the farming community.

Speaker: The time for Question Period has elapsed.

We will now proceed with Orders of the Day.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT BILLS

Bill No. 10: *First Appropriation Act, 2013-14* — Second Reading — adjourned debate

Clerk: Second reading, Bill No. 10, standing in the name of the Hon. Mr. Pasloski; adjourned debate, Ms. Hanson.

Ms. Hanson: Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to be the first from the Official Opposition to respond to the 2013-14 Budget Address. As Leader of the Official Opposition, I, along with my colleagues, take seriously the responsibility vested in us as elected Members of the Yukon Legislative Assembly, to hold the government to account for its actions and policies, including the spending of Yukon citizens' financial resources.

This morning, an article authored by the Premier appeared in the *Globe and Mail*. This article, touting the Yukon's path to devolution, diversification, and the consensus in relationship forged between the First Nations, the territorial government and the Yukon public, stands in stark contrast to the Premier's Budget Address, which was divisive and dismissive.

It seems at times that the Premier has two voices. His outside voice is the quieter, contemplative voice. It's his election-time voice, his moving-forward-together voice. His inside voice, the voice he uses on Yukoners outside of election time, is "my way or the highway", the full-speed ahead, open the Peel, open shale gas development, dismiss the Auditor General. That's the voice we hear most frequently, Mr. Speaker.

But before I go further into examining the Budget Address, I first want to thank my constituents for placing their trust in me to serve them as the Member of the Legislative Assembly for Whitehorse Centre. Whitehorse Centre is one of the most diverse ridings in the territory. As the heart of Whitehorse, Whitehorse Centre has been seeing significant changes over the past number of years. Many of them are positive, such as the redevelopment of the waterfront and new construction throughout the riding. Whether it is the new business parks in the Marwell area or the new office buildings, the face of Whitehorse is changing. Whitehorse Centre is the business hub of the territory, the home of a great many small businesses, big-box franchises and government offices, a place where Yukoners from around the city and the territory come to work, to play and to live.

Consider the economic engine that is the city centre. We have hospitality and tourism industries centred here with restaurants, hotels, the museum, visitor information centres. We have residential areas, both historic old town, the heritage area, and are evolving a new development in terms of residential development downtown.

We have a growing range of recreational spaces, walking trails, parks, spaces for children. Services — we have many service industries in this downtown core of the Yukon. People buy their groceries here, their fuel, vehicles, get their vehicles repaired and there are also bicycle repair shops. It's home to

the animal shelter. Whitehorse Centre is also an industrial area and it's where we find our power generation station.

The city centre — Whitehorse city centre, Whitehorse Centre — faces distinct challenges. The rapid densification of the downtown core brings new challenges for residents and businesses alike. It is Whitehorse Centre that bears witness daily to the impact of the growing inequality gap in this territory. It is Whitehorse Centre that presents unique opportunities to bridge that gap.

Whitehorse Centre is home, for example, to the Salvation Army shelter, the food bank, CAIRS, the social assistance office and many other NGOs such as FASSY and Yukon Anti-Poverty Coalition, which work together to find and propose constructive ideas to address the growing inequality gap that this territory is facing.

Every week the Official Opposition caucus bears witness to those who are not benefiting from the prosperity the Premier touts as all around. We receive constituents, including those seniors who are struggling to pay their bills, single parents with serious, serious daycare problems, people having to justify on a repeated basis their disability to receive the supplementary allowance from social assistance. We have received many concerns about rental housing, rental increases, repairs not completed and fears of eviction. This is the flip side to the picture of prosperity the Premier attempts to paint. It is the day-to-day reality of Whitehorse Centre.

As I move toward the initial response of the NDP Official Opposition to the Premier's Budget Address, I want to agree, as we will, with many aspects of what government does from time to time. When he mentioned that this is a year of many anniversaries, the Official Opposition joins in paying tribute to these significant landmarks of the development of this territory.

The significance of having a Yukon college that's celebrating its 50th anniversary is an important one. The fact that we can now have our children and our children's children educated here without having to leave the land that we love is an important piece, and the potential for growth there is also very important.

Earlier in February — February 14 — we joined with First Nation leaders as they gathered to celebrate the tabling of *Together Today for Our Children Tomorrow*. That 40-year anniversary is incredibly important, not just for the First Nation leadership and for their citizens, but it's also an important reminder that the colonial legacy of the past is just that — past — and that the vision that was put forward by Elijah Smith and the other leaders is only slowly becoming a reality.

As the budget speech identified, we also note the fact that we're looking at the anniversary of the Yukon Quest — we're building on this as yet another one of the unique tourism products that celebrate an aspect of our heritage.

May 29 we will be celebrating the 20th anniversary of the signing of the *Umbrella Final Agreement* and the first four final and self-government agreements that were intended to and have the potential to ensure that we work together to build and make the new relationship of cooperation and shared decision-making work.

On April 1 this year, we will also celebrate the devolution transfer agreement and the amended *Yukon Act*, which allow us to assert greater autonomy and exercise local decision-making. All of these initiatives were truly significant developments in the history of this territory. The Official Opposition reflects very proudly on the contribution that New Democrats have made in many of these areas.

You know, Mr. Speaker, we can't let it go without saying that not everyone in this territory and in this House was in favour of land claim agreements. At certain times, there was a persistence of a mind frame that rejected them. I think it's to the credit and the perseverance of First Nation leaderships and enlightened leaders from all levels of government, and ultimately from all parties, that saw the successful conclusion of those agreements.

Mr. Speaker, there's another anniversary that we marked in November that doesn't really register on those significant achievements — actually it's October — and that's the 11th consecutive year of Yukon Party rule. After nearly 11 years in power, the public is tired of seeing a tired old Yukon Party government, employing the same tired old approaches. That was abundantly clear in the Budget Address. What we heard in the Budget Address is a government that is attempting to employ divide-and-conquer tactics, which often result in expensive court cases. It is picking winners and losers rather than listening to all views and trying to pick a common ground.

It is a government that is more interested in dancing to the tune called by the federal government and outside multinationals than Yukoners and Yukon businesses, a government that is making reactive and ad hoc decisions and shows no leadership on big social policy issues, that claims fiscal responsibility despite the overwhelming evidence to the contrary and has consistently politicized capital decisions.

Mr. Speaker, what we heard last week was a government that is prepared to pursue a reckless agenda of industrial development at all cost while Yukoners, as the true owners of our resources, continue to receive a pittance —

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Point of order

Speaker: Government House Leader, on a point of order.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Yet again the Leader of the Official Opposition is contravening Standing Order 19(g) by imputing unavowed motives to another member, in this case accusing the government of pursuing industrial development at all costs and putting it ahead of other interests, which is clearly contrary to government statements and not factually correct.

Speaker's ruling

Speaker: There is no point of order. The member is free to interpret and express her interpretation of the facts and other members will have an opportunity to express their interpretation of the facts at the appropriate time.

The Leader of the Official Opposition has the floor, please.

Ms. Hanson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I was saying, this is a government that has shown it has little interest in

tackling some of the major issues and challenges that will be more difficult in leaner times, like poverty reduction, renewable energy projects, action on affordable housing — a government that boasts of budget surpluses and refuses to address these very critical issues. It's a government that picks and chooses statistical measures to sell their spin, emphasizing private sector growth relative to GDP, despite little change to dependence on the federal government, little diversification of economy, cancelling of projects like F.H. Collins without considering the impacts on local contractors or local jobs.

There is another way; there is another option, and the public has woken up and has seen the communication spinning. The Yukon public is writing letters, demonstrating, making their voices heard. They are not content to take this government's word for it. They are not prepared to give them a blank cheque to run roughshod over agreements. This government can count on the public to be watching them very, very carefully — like the ravens, Mr. Speaker. A raven is known to have the ability to remember things for a very long time. The raven is an important symbol in this territory, and I would suggest to the Yukon Party that the ravens are watching. The public can count on the NDP to hold the government accountable, to challenge them, and to fight for the issues that matter as time counts down on their regime.

Last week, the Premier laid bare the myth that the Yukon Party is interested in moving forward together. Their vision does not reflect the diverse voices of the Yukon. They have indicated they are interested in picking winners and losers. They have indicated they seek confrontation rather than conciliation, and don't mind spending the public's money on lengthy court battles instead of seeking mediated solutions.

This Budget Address goes even further to delineate just how far this government is prepared to go in its agenda of picking winners and losers, rather than listening to all views and trying to find common ground.

So Yukoners' concerns about the pace of extractive resource development, about the impacts on water and wildlife, their concerns that the benefits of this development are not flowing back to the Yukon public, their concerns about democracy and how citizens can't make meaningful contributions — or, if they do, the perception that they're not being heard — concerns that the land use planning process, the culmination of the work of a generation of Yukoners, has been hijacked, concerns that community infrastructure needs are not being addressed and concerns that the housing crisis shows no sign of being addressed by this government — these voices are not echoed back by the Yukon Party in the Budget Address. This government has picked who will lose — those who care about the environment, First Nations, tourism operators, the poor, seniors, nurses and teachers.

I was very taken aback by my observations, in terms of the behaviour or the interaction of the Premier, in terms of his relationship with First Nation governments.

In his address, he suggested that appealing the decision on the Ross River Dena Council — the appeal court decision about free-entry staking — is about respectful relationships.

It's like a paradox. What is respectful about appealing that decision?

His attempt to rewrite the Yukon Party's role in land claims settlement is laughable. It's true that the Yukon Party government had the opportunity and the privilege of signing the *Umbrella Final Agreement* on the first four agreements. The truth is that it was not the Yukon Party government that was responsible for the vision and the negotiation of those agreements. So the benefit flowed to the Premier of the time, but it would be incorrect to suggest that those agreements had been negotiated under a Yukon Party.

Those who lived through it won't forget the role that prominent members of the Yukon Party played in the backrooms — played in the land claims debate, primarily against it.

So it's an unfortunate description by the Premier but that's consistent, I suppose. As he signals that we now go full speed away, it's almost like damn the torpedoes. The final Peel plan be damned. What is the Premier really saying about the treaty-mandated land use planning process in his outright rejection of the final recommended plan of the Peel land use planning commission?

When hundreds of Yukoners and other Canadians provide input to a treaty-mandated land use planning process, only to find that the Yukon Party government does not intend to respect the process or the input, people begin to question the integrity of this government. When hundreds of people attend hastily convened meetings to try to gain an understanding of the government's intentions with respect to moving ahead with oil and gas development in the most populated region of the Yukon, prior to the completion of land use plans in the region, and are told, "Industry won't wait for land use planning so just trust us", people do start to get angry.

The public wants to see leadership from their government; they want their government to be proactive; they want their government to listen to its citizens.

As I listened to the Premier, the Minister of Finance, speak last week, it became clear to me that this is a government that has not learned from its mistakes. Despite the overwhelming evidence to the contrary, the Yukon Party claims they are fiscally responsible stewards of the public's finances. The Auditor General would beg to differ and has roundly criticized the way this government plans major capital projects and makes decisions with the public purse. Like his predecessor, the Premier attempts to minimize the importance of the Auditor General's findings about the state of capital project mismanagement and the lack of planning. So it's on to the next massive project like a major expansion of Whitehorse General Hospital, without any sense that they have learned from all their past mistakes — mistakes of cost overruns. The athletes village is an example; Tantalus School; Whitehorse Correctional Centre — building without properly demonstrated need or community assessment — the two hospitals that we've spent many an hour in this Legislative Assembly trying to get an understanding of how this government did or did not make decisions with respect to that; overseeing projects with major functional problems — for example, the Dawson sewage project and renovations of the then-Watson Lake multi-care facility which morphed into a hospital

to avoid scrutiny from the Legislative Assembly; spending millions on planning for projects unlikely to get off the ground without an end project, such as the railway feasibility study and the P3 bridge at Dawson.

Because the Premier seems to wish to dismiss the Auditor General, I think it's important that we take time to review some of the important messages that the Auditor General has delivered to this government. From the 2009 audit of the Department of Education, they said the department has no long-term master plan to ensure that it is managing school facilities effectively and preparing for significant challenges, such as the number of schools that are aging and in need of repair. At the same time, vacancy rates are high in the schools. In Whitehorse schools alone, student enrolment for the year 2007-08 was 3,879, and almost as many seats were vacant. Without a facilities management plan that considers the condition and capacity of each school, it is difficult for the department to plan for maintenance, repairs and improvements where they are most needed.

Mr. Speaker, you only have to go about this territory and look at the schools and talk with the people involved with them to realize how very prescient the Auditor General's comments were.

"The Department does not have a long-term strategic plan for managing challenges such as aging schools and declining enrolment. The lack of such a long-term plan with specific, measurable goals makes it difficult for the Department to track whether it is making optimal use of its resources and progressing toward its objectives. Nor does it have a risk-management plan to formally identify each risk that could impede its achievement of objectives." Clearly that has not been in place as we have moved forward with the debacle that is the F.H. Collins school. They haven't assessed the demographic change or the impact of land claims settlements and how the department plans to manage risk.

With respect to the audit of Highways and Public Works, the Auditor General noted that many of the transportation infrastructure and building projects we looked at, such as bridge rehabilitation, highway reconstruction, airport runway resurfacing, construction of airport terminal buildings, community centres and school replacements and expansion, went over their original targets for total spending. Most of the projects were not completed on schedule.

In some cases the problems were beyond the department's control. However, the department did not adequately manage the risk of such occurrences, nor did it conduct the required review of completed projects to evaluate whether it had followed appropriate procedures, observed economy and efficiency and met the objectives for the project.

So, Mr. Speaker, the cycle can continue if there is no assessment or reviewing of what we've learned — any lessons learned — from each of these projects or, when there are difficulties that occur, ministerial responsibility and accountability is to make sure that doesn't reoccur. We keep doing it over and over again in this government.

The 2013 audit of the Yukon Hospital Corporation and the building of major capital projects — the Auditor General said,

and I quote: "The Corporation did not conduct a full assessment of the communities' health care needs in planning and designing the hospitals. It also did not determine the incremental operating costs for the hospitals until construction was well under way."

Mr. Speaker, we're now told by the Auditor General we're going to see a tripling of the O&M costs — a tripling. That wasn't thought through or planned. The Auditor General said "The Corporation cannot demonstrate that the hospitals, as designed, are the most cost-effective option for meeting the communities' health care needs" — the communities' health care needs.

These three audits paint a picture of a government that is not fiscally responsible. They paint a picture of a tired, lazy government that sneers at due diligence, that does not have long-range strategic plans and does not conduct needs assessments that should be conducted prior to committing millions of dollars.

A year ago — 364 days ago on March 26, 2012 — the Premier said this: "As I have stated, we are committed to F.H. Collins. Like all projects now, we want to ensure that the diligence is done. We make sure that when we make an investment, when we are using taxpayers' dollars, we ensure that this is done wisely and that our diligence is done to ensure the investments meet scrutiny and we meet expectations of taxpayers and that we're spending their money wisely."

This government's management of the F.H. Collins replacement doesn't look like fiscal responsibility, nor does it look like due diligence has been followed. This project has been an ongoing saga of broken promises, delays, flip-flops, confusion and decisions that leave students, parents and taxpayers scratching their collective heads. No one will soon forget that on the eve of the election this Premier posed for photos with shovel in hand and announced the project would be open for business in August 2013. That is not very far away, Mr. Speaker — August 2013.

After the election, the project hit some major bumps with geothermal proposals in, out, in — I'm not sure where they are now; plans for demolition of the gym in, on; temporary facilities; tender delays, et cetera. Finally the project went out for tender after millions had been spent on the design plan and other preparatory work, after community members, students and parents spent hundreds of hours being involved, they thought, in the active planning for this new school.

The government now says the bids are too high and announces it's going with a new campus-style design. This is not due diligence; this is unilateral action. After lengthy consultation with the school committee on the design, I don't believe the public will buy the Yukon Party's approach on this file as being fiscally responsible.

It is ad hoc crisis management to suit short-term political objectives rather than to perform sound project management and deliver vital infrastructure that Yukoners want and need. It leverages millions and has the potential to leverage millions of capital dollars for maximum effect in the local economy. That's what we've seen: there's a major negative impact on the local

economy from these delays or changed plans. There's a negative impact on the local economy — local jobs for local people.

It appears the government did not look at the implications for the local economy of a major change at this stage of this project. How many Yukoners who expected to be employed on the project in skilled trades will be looking for work elsewhere this year?

In his Budget Address, the Premier said, "Yukon's growing population will require the construction of more schools as well as an expansion of the Whitehorse General Hospital." In light of the serious rebukes from the Auditor General and the confusion surrounding F.H. Collins, the public has very little confidence in this government's ability to manage yet again another large, complex infrastructure project. We believe, and I introduced a motion to this effect today, more oversight by Members of the Legislative Assembly and others, more participation by the public in the discussion of capital spending and assessment of needs, must come first.

You will remember the shell game with the Watson Lake multi-level care facility. It began as a renovation project at the beginning of this long, long period of Yukon Party rule. It morphed into a boondoggle and the only way to avoid scrutiny of how bad things were was to announce a new hospital would be erected in its place. Responsibility was transferred to the Hospital Corporation and instruction given that the corporation would take a loan to finance the project, thus avoiding scrutiny of this House. With debt financing as opposed to seeking legislative authority for appropriation, the government could avoid scrutiny.

Now it's back on the books. \$27 million of Yukon's budget is earmarked to pay off the debts of the corporation. Due diligence? I think not, Mr. Speaker. If the Budget Address is anything to go by, Yukoners can expect more of the same from this government.

Another aspect of the Budget Address last week that was somewhat ironic was the unwillingness of this government to stand up for Yukoners' interests when it comes to dealing with the federal government. Last year in this Legislative Assembly we raised, on numerous occasions, the question of the impact of federal cuts to federal departments and agencies in this territory. We could not get an answer from the Minister of Tourism nor the minister responsible for the finances of this territory, with respect to what, if anything, they were doing. So now we have in the Budget Address the Premier thanking Yukon's Member of Parliament, the Senator and the tourism association for all the hard work in seeing that two of the Yukon's major attractions — the *SS Klondike* and the *Dredge No. 4* — will have guided tours coming this summer.

The question that has been raised with me by various tourism operators is what exactly did the Yukon government do here? Are they putting any money into this? It doesn't look so from the budget. Did they raise the issue? Or, as has become quite apparent, was this just another example of this government being willing to bend over backward so as not to offend its leaders in Ottawa?

Whether it has been the attack on pensions, employment insurance, cuts to the federal environmental assessments, the

Fisheries Act and the federal plan to privatize parks and cut public sector jobs, this government has not stood up for Yukoners. The cuts to federal departments are real jobs for real Yukon citizens with families contributing to this economy. They no longer have those jobs. So when the federal government, as I said, announced cuts to Parks Canada that would have impacts on this territory, this government was silent.

So where is this government when it comes to activity and work with respect to the successor to the Building Canada fund? Where is this government with respect to health funding? There was some acknowledgment of restraint in the health funding — or declining incomes to be received by this territory, but there was not a peep of protest when the Finance minister announced that he was tying health dollars to economic growth.

They chose to bury their heads in the sand when it came to the impacts of the *Budget Implementation Act* and the impacts on the environment and the closure of the Canada Revenue Agency office.

The Budget Address contains quite a number of ironic statements. On one hand, the Premier speaks about welcoming people to a major conference on museums and heritage, and this government has stood silently by and let the major heritage functions of Parks Canada — the curatorial functions that would keep our historic sites alive and the living centres that they are — and let those jobs be cut. It will be interesting to see what the national associations and national groups have to reflect on when they're here. We also see a shelving of the announced plans last year for significant investment in cold storage facilities for the archives. It was in the budget last year, not now.

There are repeated efforts to defer these projects that reflect — they're not very flashy projects, Mr. Speaker, but they are important to the integrity and the ongoing vitality of our history. When we ignore history, we start to repeat some very bad and very sad events.

There was very little in this Budget Address with respect to talking about the real issues of creating more Yukon jobs for Yukoners, particularly in the Yukon.

My colleagues and I have met with Yukoners since the election in 2011 and have taken every opportunity possible to travel about the Yukon to meet with ordinary Yukoners — citizens, First Nation governments, mayors and councils and others — to listen to the issues that are important to them. In every community, there is this repeated refrain, since 2002 — a massive sucking in to Whitehorse of jobs, the centralization focus of this government, unwillingness to look at creating opportunities for those kinds of sustainable and sustained activities that flow from the kinds of work that many people in Whitehorse take for granted.

Two or three full-time government positions in a community have a significant ripple effect in terms of the economy of that community.

We heard over and over again, whether it was about maintenance yards in certain communities, or even the simple example of how we have gone from having our superintendents of schools placed in the regions they are responsible for in

terms of supervising various schools, to having all the superintendents centralized into Whitehorse. This creates greater opportunity for miscommunication and disconnect with the communities.

There are many examples that we have heard over the course of the conversations that we've had with Yukoners about the need to look creatively at ensuring that the kinds of work that is most effectively done in the local community is actually carried out by the people living there, as opposed to being done at a distance from Whitehorse.

That happens, as well, when it comes to looking at how we create the environment where it's possible for people to be employed in communities. One of the big challenges that people in communities face is housing — affordable housing and affordable rental housing. Not everybody is interested in, nor can afford to build a house or to buy a house, and many people who are coming, particularly in the resource extraction industry, do not get the opportunity to be here for many years at a time. They are looking for affordable rental accommodation. The Premier seems to have acknowledged that this is an issue because the impact — in July 2012 he said that getting fly-in/fly-out workers to settle down in the territory is his first priority. He said this in an article in the *Wall Street Journal*: “They come to Yukon and they work here and then they take their money and their taxes elsewhere.” Well, we've been saying that for a very long time. It doesn't matter how many jobs are created at a mine if they are not paying their taxes here. What benefit will we get from that, Mr. Speaker?

As we've said repeatedly in this House and as we hear on a daily basis — because we experience that through the citizens who come to our door — the housing crisis continues to spiral out of control. We have a shortage of doctors and a government that refuses to make the fundamental changes to the health care system that will put patients first. Our environment is threatened by policies that promote development at any cost. This government appears to be a government that puts friends and insiders first while shutting out the average Yukoner from the benefits of the territory's economy.

The Premier's words on how much the ordinary person is going to benefit from the boom economy ring hollow. If the Premier had a plan to provide affordable housing solutions, to fix the health care system and ensure Yukoners get their fair share of our natural resource wealth, then maybe more fly-in/fly-out workers would consider staying in our fine territory.

Despite the fact that the unemployment rates have moderated, they are still very high and persistent in rural Yukon, but we haven't seen yet a comprehensive jobs and training strategy that would see more Yukoners employed in the mining and related industries. We have little bits and pieces — slices of strategies — but nothing that is comprehensive and links them.

Last week, in the Budget Address, the Premier launched an unprecedented provocative attack on two environmental non-governmental organizations and the thousands of Yukoners, First Nation governments, and visitors who have travelled to and love the wild Yukon, to the tourism industry whose voice has been marginalized, despite being an economic mainstay of our economy. The Budget Address says the value of mineral

production is estimated to be \$450 million in 2012, but what is the return to Yukon? We continue to earn more from camp-ground fees than we receive in royalties for our natural resource wealth. This situation will not change under this government.

In dismissing Yukoners who support the final recommended plan for the Peel, the Premier claims balance and the economic importance of assessing the Crest iron ore deposit that “could sustain the territory for generations to come.” The Premier claims a fraction of the deposit is worth \$139.7 billion and that it would be irresponsible for any Yukon government to declare that this resource potential is off-limits.

During the course of doing the research when I made a submission to the Peel plan several years ago, I did go back and look at the claims that were made and all the variety of reports that were done in the early 2000s to the mid-2000s on the mineral potential in the Peel region. A number of them were done by Promithian interests and a report was done in 2002 that painted quite a graphic picture of what this project could involve.

In broad terms, the Hatch report on the Crest iron deposit — this was a report that was done in about 2002, I think, and I can send the citation to those who are interested, because it's on my iPad.; I don't have it here — would permit a 1.5 million tonne-per-year iron ore mine with on-site tailing storage and substantial water export, permitting of a one-million-tonne-per-year coal mine, permitting a slurry pipeline from the Crest site to the Elliott Creek site, permitting a power line and access road; permitting a facility having characteristics equivalent to a power station consuming one million tonnes per year of coal with respect to air emissions and ash storage; permitting a facility having characteristics equivalent to a 1.2 million tonnes per year electric-furnace steel mill with respect to air emissions, water emissions and on-site slag, dust and waste storage; permitting an all-weather, high-capacity, high-quality road some 165 kilometres to the vicinity of Elsa to handle upward of 140-tonne-capacity tractor-trailer units per day on a 360 day-per-year basis; permitting residential amenities for upward of 1,200 people between the two sites; potential permitting of a product marshalling and shipping facility at Skagway and permitting of airstrips and helipads at both operating sites.

When the various assessments have been done over the years on the Crest ore deposit, not only are the costs associated with this considered to be, at minimum, astronomical, but it raises some significant issues with respect to the ability of this territory to absorb that kind of a shock.

The Premier may want to spin it that following the final plan is reckless and irresponsible, but given all the work necessary to access and exploit the Crest iron deposit, developing the deposit is unlikely. The Premier is trying to trump Yukoners and Yukon First Nations and thinks he will win an argument about this based on economic cost. The reality is, Mr. Speaker, that after many, many years of exploration in the Peel that has taken place, there have been no real efforts, no concrete moves, by any mining company ever to develop a producing mine.

I've heard, several times, quite dismissive comments made by the Member for Lake Laberge about not listening to the

voices of those who live in Düsseldorf or Pasadena or anyplace else with respect to their views on the tourism and the tourism potential of the Peel or anyplace else in this territory. At the same time, this Budget Address identifies the tourism industry as a significant contributor to our economy, over \$200 million a year. So I'm supposing that what this government is really saying is that we are only going to focus on one pillar of the economy — mining only — and your tourism views be damned; we are not interested in hearing what you have to say about why you value this territory, why you would want to come and spend your dollars in our territory as a tourist.

I would suggest to the Minister of Tourism and Culture that his job has just gotten easier. He can cancel all his marketing because it will not be acceptable to have people's interests being rejected out of hand by a government that has essentially turned its back on tourism. That message gets out and it gets out rapidly.

The Premier has also indicated that he is bullish about the Apache Corporation's shale gas deposit. He went on at great length about the potential for shale gas. The Yukon public has spoken very loudly and forcefully against fracking and has caused this government already once to halt its plans to permit development in the Whitehorse Trough. The public demanded full public consultation before fracking would be permitted. Today the Yukon Conservation Society reiterated its call for this government to honour the commitment it made last winter that there be public discussion on hydraulic fracturing.

To date, there has been no commencement of that. We're already hearing the Premier, the Minister of Environment/Economic Development, and the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources touting the potential benefits of an industry that Yukoners have said they are very leery of and have said they are not prepared to have occur in this territory until a full and informed public consultation has occurred.

So what has been the government's reaction? Well, it amended the oil and gas regulations despite opposition from Yukon First Nations. As I said, it has not begun the public consultation it finally agreed to last winter with respect to fracking and oil and gas development in this territory.

Yukon Energy has pursued a plan to use liquefied natural gas generation of power, despite the viability and public support for renewables like wind and hydro. Yukon Energy pursues this based on the current cheap and reliable pricing of natural gas. What guarantees does this Yukon Party government have when it promotes liquefied natural gas? The current domestic pricing for LNG will continue. They're basing their assumptions on very low prices — domestic pricing now.

What guarantees will be in place? What guarantees have they worked out with their federal counterparts to ensure that the current domestic pricing for LNG will continue once the proposed facilities are built at Kitimat, where the focus will be on exporting that shale gas as fast as they can get it out to Asia, where the prices are, at a minimum, four times higher than they are here?

So, Mr. Speaker, the Yukon Party has taken a lot of risks with the public's money, without so much as asking or listening to the public's views on those risks. This begs the question:

Prosperity for whom? Last week, we heard the Premier say "economic growth, not redistribution." The sign of an enlightened society is how we care for our sick, our elderly and our most marginalized. This government has shown it's reactive, ad hoc and not prepared to lead on the big social policy issues. The Premier's approach to poverty continues to be: "Simple — get a job." That doesn't work for everybody, Mr. Speaker. There are people within our community and within our families who are unemployable and cannot work. Does that mean that they cannot share in the prosperity of this territory? The Premier touts the modest surplus of \$73 million as a sign of fiscal responsibility, but his government has failed to direct surpluses toward some critical areas.

Affordable housing, as I've said before, continues to be perhaps the pre-eminent challenge facing communities and citizens in this territory.

Social inclusion — what happened to the social inclusion strategy? Where is it? The Falvo report, entitled *Poverty Amongst Plenty*, waiting for the Yukon government to adopt a poverty-reduction strategy, said that surplus budgets are the time to address poverty — not in leaner times when money is declining. The Yukon Party, as I said, we think created a social inclusion office, released a social inclusion strategy, but we see no budgetary commitments to make this a reality. On a major social issue facing many people in this territory, this government's actions are more about words than actions. Why has this government not dealt with, or prioritized, implementing the landmark Beaton-Allen report. Aspects of it have been picked and chosen.

They completely misread and misinterpreted the recommendation from the Beaton-Allen report with respect to how we treat acutely intoxicated persons at risk, and we have continued to criminalize them — putting them into jail for assessment, as opposed to following the best practices that the Beaton-Allen report recommended and treating those people with respect and not criminalizing them. We haven't finished building — this government is spending approximately \$6 million for a new addition to the jail. It's now called an "assessment centre". Where is the land-based treatment plan announced with such fanfare during the election? We have heard nothing — and this is the Premier's own riding.

Where is this government with respect to commitment to renewable energy?

It's no longer breaking news that the lack of housing is at a critical state. In the Budget Address, the Premier boasts about the low unemployment rate and the influx of people to Yukon. The downside to this for individuals and employers alike is that there is no housing — just ask the many small and medium local employers who face daily challenges locating qualified people who are wanting to move to Yukon, only to turn down the job because there is no housing available.

Ask the mine CEO who spends \$1 million a year flying workers in and out of Yukon because there is not sufficient housing in Mayo. The lack of or inability to develop a strategic view on housing in Yukon is costing us all. As I said earlier, workers who fly in and out of Yukon do not pay income tax here. Why is the government so reluctant to do the work neces-

sary to think through the needs of our communities? This government still sits on over \$13 million in affordable housing money from the federal government. Yes, there are strings attached to it, because it is intended to provide affordable housing. It's not intended for somebody's pet project. The intention is to build affordable housing. If it has taken six years for this government — seven years now, because it was 2006 when it was announced — to come up with a plan, it is still not too late, because you know what? The demand — the absolute necessity for affordable housing — has not disappeared.

People continue to ask, "How can this be? How can this government be so oblivious to the priorities and realities of the Yukon people?" Nowhere in the budget — except for that dismissive remark about redistribution — does the Finance minister address the growing gap between the rich and poor in this territory.

When the government of the day — the Yukon Party government — announced the social inclusion initiative, we supported it. It was an initiative that the NDP had championed, and we continue to support it. We were pleased to support it, because we know that all the studies and the evidence-based research show that when we begin to address inequality in a real way, we begin to build a socially and economically inclusive society.

There are other priorities that get little or no mention in the Budget Address. Climate change is one of the most profound issues we face in the north and throughout the world. It seems to have dropped off the government's radar, with the exception of repeating in this Budget Address the commercialization efforts with respect to the Yukon Cold Climate Innovation Centre, but that, like three or four other references, were actually verbatim from last year's Budget Address. That doesn't seem to be a high priority.

Similarly, with respect to climate change, where is the investment in public transit? As fuel prices get higher and higher, one of the things that we hear when we talk to people in the communities is that this is not just an energy conservation issue, but like many good policy initiatives, a public transit policy addresses the real need of people who cannot afford to travel to Whitehorse for medical or other appointments — seniors who live in small communities who can no longer drive the distances to get to Whitehorse to do their shopping. Yukoners in several rural communities have great ideas for simple, modest but effective public transport options. We encourage this government to listen to them, to implement those ideas.

There is a quote by Mark Twain. The question was what did Mark Twain say about statistics? At the risk of offending my colleagues across the way, this is not me, this is Mark Twain, the answer was that statistics can be used to bolster weaker arguments. One could use "lies, damned lies and statistics", but you know what, what we have seen is that the Yukon Party picks and chooses statistical measures to sell their story. The reality is that those transfers from Ottawa to the Yukon have grown, doubled in the past 10 years. There has been little change to dependence on the federal government and little diversification — real diversification — of the economy.

There has been little progress on addressing the growing gap and there has been very little growth in own-source revenues relative to total revenues.

In fulfilling our role of holding government to account, the Official Opposition also seeks to identify those areas in the government's planned spending on expenditures in the budget that are good and that respond to the expressed needs we have heard articulated by Yukon citizens. We seek to identify those areas where we can offer constructive suggestions to assist the government in responding more effectively to the real issues affecting Yukon and our citizens.

The NDP Official Opposition caucus makes a concerted effort to listen to the citizens of the territory. Through our conversations with Yukoners from Dawson to Watson Lake, Haines Junction to Ross River, and places in between, we have heard how much Yukon citizens are yearning for a government that understands that democracy is a day-by-day process built on partnership, integrity and trust. As New Democrats we know that "partnership" means working with people to set common goals, not dividing to conquer. Integrity means dealing honestly and openly, and most importantly that trust is built upon mutual respect and must be earned.

As I mentioned, the Official Opposition continues the practice of travelling throughout the Yukon, talking with citizens about their communities, their issues and their priorities. It is fascinating to actually listen to the ideas, dreams and realities of fellow citizens. It is also challenging at times. It is from the many one-on-one or group conversations that my caucus colleagues and I have engaged in over the past months that I realize how deep the divide is between this Yukon Party government and its citizens.

Time and time again we heard that this government is not listening and worse, when they do ask for input from the public on an issue, it is dismissed or spun in a way that reflects the government's agenda, not the views of citizens. As New Democrats, we are committed to engaging in a participatory approach to budget making, involving First Nation governments, non-government organizations and community organizations and citizens to help identify community programs and priorities.

As the Official Opposition, our community conversations reflect that commitment. I would encourage the government to try actually spending time listening to Yukoners about their priorities. We believe that Yukon can have a prosperous economy and a protected environment — an economy and environment where everyone benefits. We believe that the first return on our investment — on our resources — should be to Yukoners, now and into the future. We believe that our number-one asset is our people and that their talents and insights should be harnessed to create a more just and fair economy without wrecking our environment.

As an economic vision, the budget that we heard unveiled last week is a failure. It is heavily skewed toward extractive industries without the means to derive more of a return to Yukoners through royalties, through real jobs for Yukoners, through spinoffs. It charts no course for lessening dependence

upon federal transfers. In fact, federal transfers have overwhelmingly increased.

Yukon New Democrats have a proud history of supporting responsible mining in Yukon, and we will continue to do so because we believe all Yukoners deserve to benefit from the resource riches that lie within our territory. I also believe that Yukoners — and I've heard this time and again from Yukoners — expect to see a real and lasting return on the access granted to resource-extraction industries.

When the Premier tells us, as he did last week, that the mineral production value is estimated to be approximately \$450 million this year, we rightly look to the revenue section of the budget to see how much of that will be retained in the Yukon for use by Yukon to further improve the socio-economic fabric of our community. Despite the significant investments by Yukon taxpayers for everything from new roads infrastructure to grid extensions, the current royalty regime under the *Quartz Mining Act* works against the likelihood of a real return to Yukon in the near future.

This budget also contains an additional \$8.5 million for the Campbell Highway, the link to the Wolverine Mine. Millions of dollars have been spent on this highway, while the stretch of road between Ross River and Faro continues to be deplorable — and that's an understatement. It's not a radical proposal to say citizens deserve and should get lasting economic benefits from the finite non-renewable resources within their jurisdictions. Yukon deserves leadership of no lesser quality on this important matter.

I have said before in this Legislature — and I believe this — that we need to assert that we, Yukoners, are masters in our own home, that we need to decide how we as a community modernize the non-renewable resource sectors in Yukon to ensure that the return on our non-renewable resources is significant and lasting.

Despite the actions of this government over the last 10-plus years, we need to continually remind ourselves that the 11 First Nation final and self-government agreements that have been negotiated, that have been talked often about in this Legislative Assembly, that are being celebrated in anniversaries this year, are not optional accessories or window dressing.

I've mentioned this before because it is so important in terms of the context of the growth of the territory and the economy of this territory. As Yukoners we have a right to be proud of what we have achieved through these agreements — the potential to do things differently, to make our government systems work more effectively for all Yukoners. At the same time, we unfortunately are right to be dismayed by the lack of political will demonstrated by this government to truly breathe life into the negotiated agreements.

Though we know that — as there always are contained in any budget — there are some fine things, the Official Opposition will not be providing its support for this budget. The Official Opposition cannot support a budget that is based on the premise of divide and conquer; that is based on the premise that the government will dictate who are the winners and losers. The Yukon government was elected to serve the interests of all Yukoners, not a select few. It was elected to steward our re-

sources with an eye to future generations, and a responsive and effective government must reflect the priorities of its citizens, not solely the interest of the demands and directions from outside Yukon.

We believe, as the Official Opposition, that Yukoners deserve better than a government that continues to employ divide-and-conquer tactics, that is not listening to all views and has abandoned trying to find common ground, and that appears to be more interested in dancing to the tune called by the federal government and Outside multinationals than Yukoners and Yukon businesses. It makes reactive and ad hoc decisions and has shown little leadership on big social policy issues.

Mr. Speaker, there is another way and there is another option. The public has woken up and is seeing through the spin. The Yukon public is writing and, as I said earlier, making their voices heard. They are not prepared to give this government a blank cheque to run roughshod over the past and over the agreements. This government can count on the public and it can count on the Official Opposition to be watching them very carefully. As I said, we will be watching them like the ravens. We will be watching them and we will remember. The public will be watching and they will remember.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Disturbance in the gallery

Speaker: I'd like to remind the member in the gallery

Hon. Mr. Nixon: I'd like to extend my sincere appreciation and thank my constituents, my friends in Porter Creek South for providing me with this unique opportunity to represent them in this Assembly, but first and foremost, I'd like to thank my incredible family and friends for their patience, for their understanding, and for their continued support. Each of us sitting in this Assembly today ran for office because we want to make our communities a better place. In addition to that, I also ran for other reasons — in fact, some very personal reasons. In my case, I believe that it was important to give back to the people, the Yukon Party, who stepped up to the plate not only to help my son Jack, but who helped many other families who are affected not only by autism, but by other varying disabilities as well.

Yukoners are very smart people. Yukoners know that without a functioning, stable economy to support it, a social safety net isn't going to help anyone. Yukoners also know that time and time again the Yukon Party government has provided just that: a strong and stable economy.

The spring 2013 budget is a big piece of a larger package, and over the next few minutes, I'd like to talk about the broader context.

Prior to the Yukon Party taking office in late 2002, Yukon was in the throes of a terrible economic recession, so let me just take a moment to recall that situation. Our unemployment rate was far too high. Our population was declining. The housing crisis in 2002 was trying to find a buyer. The NDP and Liberals did their best to euthanize mining in the territory and the

Yukon's private sector economy was in terrible shape. These were the challenges before us when Yukoners elected the Yukon Party government in 2002 and re-elected it in 2006. I know that the NDP and Liberals would prefer not to be reminded of their past, but it's important for Yukoners to remember exactly what their choices are.

Our vision for moving forward together maintains our path to support our commitments to all Yukoners. We will continue to improve upon achieving a better quality of life, building a prosperous, diversified Yukon economy, managing and protecting Yukon's environment and wildlife and practising good government.

Yukoners selected us to lead the territory because the Yukon Party team has the vision, has the energy and has the experience to meet these challenges head-on. On October 11, 2011, Yukoners made a choice — a smart choice — to continue to prosper and grow under the stewardship of a re-elected Yukon Party government. As I have stated earlier, Yukoners are smart people.

The members opposite like to tell folks that if they ran the Yukon, then life would be so much better. I am very doubtful about better, but it would certainly be different.

Let's lay the rhetoric aside for awhile and look at some hard numbers. I decided to compare population and economic indicators. So let's look at the population to start. I went back and had a look at the net migration for the last time the NDP formed government. Between 1996 and the year 2000 — that would be during the NDP's time in power — 2,855 more people moved out of Yukon than moved in.

Let me summarize what those numbers mean. They mean that the track record of the NDP and the Liberals is one of economic collapse and the resulting decline in population, as Yukoners are forced to move to find work.

Mr. Speaker, according to the Yukon's statistical overview, our population was 35,862 as of June 2012. That's an increase of about 6,000 people, or 20 percent. We reversed the flow of Yukoners out of the territory and rebuilt what the NDP and Liberals destroyed.

A look at the other economic indicators, workforce numbers, unemployment rate and GDP all show that the Yukon Party has succeeded where the members opposite failed. A key part of the success is due to using our budgets to make very thoughtful and strategic investments. The budget before us today is one more in that chain.

Under the Yukon Party, the recent unemployment rate was a very low 5.5 percent, and the Whitehorse inflation rate was 1.8 percent. One of the reports I read indicated that retail sales were up 6.4 percent over the previous year.

I want to point out one other statistic. In the year 2000, when the members opposite ran the show, the total value of real estate transactions for all of Yukon was just over \$99 million — that's for the year.

The value of real estate transactions in Yukon in the second quarter of 2012 — that would be the three months of April, May and June of last year — was \$94.7 million. Historically, the third quarter is usually the busiest of all four quarters. Think about that — \$100 million for the year when the NDP

run things versus \$95 million for one quarter when the Yukon Party is at the helm.

My point here is to show that under the Yukon Party, our territory and our economy are continuing to grow. My point is to show that both the parties opposite have demonstrated that their policy choices are bad for the economy and result in population decreases. The Yukon Party has demonstrated that we can deliver growth and prosperity.

The members opposite have told Yukoners that the reason for our success is because world mineral prices went up and that, consequently, Yukon would have benefited, regardless of who was in power. So let's think about that for a minute. The thing about world ore prices is that they apply to all jurisdictions around the world equally. So if one jurisdiction isn't doing well relative to others, we can be sure that the reason is something other than price. The thing about world commodity prices is if they go up in Yukon, they go up in B.C., they go up in Alaska, Northwest Territories, Nunavut. For that fact, they go up in all places all over the globe.

My point is Yukon's ranking is going up relative to other jurisdictions, so it must be for reasons other than world mineral prices. Yukon was not an attractive place to do business while the members opposite were in power. The proof is found in the flight of people and investment from Yukon.

To understand why Yukon is doing well, let's have a look at what mining companies were saying in 2012. The Fraser Institute *Survey of Mining Companies: 2011/2012* is based on the opinions of mining executives representing 802 mineral exploration and development companies on the investment climate of 93 jurisdictions around the world. The companies participating in the survey reported exploration spending of \$6.3 billion U.S. dollars in 2011, and \$4.5 billion U.S. dollars in 2010. Worldwide the top 10 jurisdictions are New Brunswick, Finland, Alberta, Wyoming, Quebec, Saskatchewan, Sweden, Nevada, Ireland and our very own Yukon. Yukon was one of the newcomers to that list. My point is that we are doing something in Yukon that is making us more attractive to business than other jurisdictions. For comparison's sake, British Columbia placed 31st, Nunavut 36th and Northwest Territories placed 48th.

Let's just cast our mind back to 2001-02, when our Yukon score had diminished to 35th of 45 jurisdictions and in 2002-03 when Yukon placed 27th of 47 jurisdictions. In 2012, Yukon placed 10th out of 93 jurisdictions around the world. Yukon moved from the bottom half of the pack to being in the top 10. That change must be because of something other than global mineral prices. So, let me repeat that: The change in Yukon is because of something much more than rising world mineral prices.

I read the Fraser Institute's report, *Survey of Mining Companies: 2011/2012*, and the section on what miners are saying about the territory. Let me share three quotes that I think are important. The first quote reads, "The Yukon has one socio-economic assessment process for projects, eliminating the duplicate federal process that other Canadian jurisdictions have. Creates more certainty around the process, expectations, and timelines. Coupled with settled land claims, this makes for a

very favorable jurisdiction.” That was from the president of a consulting company.

Another quote is, “The current structure of the Yukon Regulatory and Permitting requirements are exemplary. The system is pro-exploration and although it looks out for conservation and aboriginal interests, does not mire exploration companies in an endless stream of forms and applications.” That was from an exploration company manager.

The third quote — and I think, although the shortest, is the most profound: “In the Yukon, mining is in the culture.” That too was from the president of a consulting company.

Mr. Speaker, I share these comments because I want to make the point that the Yukon Party made decisions to replace the failed policies of the NDP and the Liberals with ones that work and work well.

I’d like to use this opportunity to spend a few minutes updating Yukoners on what it is that we’ve accomplished. We have used our budgets to accomplish our platform commitments to Yukoners — a platform that Yukoners chose as the best to move Yukon forward. So let me share with you some of the commitments that we made to Yukoners that fall within my area of responsibility.

We committed in partnership with Yukon First Nations and Yukon College to establish a law enforcement career orientation program at the Northern Institute of Social Justice to prepare First Nations and women for careers in law enforcement or in the justice system. In response, we conducted a pilot project for a law enforcement career orientation program at the Northern Institute of Social Justice, which went ahead in the summer of 2012.

In June 2005, in response to the ongoing challenge of substance abuse, the Yukon Party government held a series of meetings with community organizations and officials, which resulted in the development of the *Yukon Substance Abuse Action Plan*. Our government has committed to continue to implement the *Yukon Substance Abuse Action Plan* that focuses on education, prevention, harm reduction, enforcement and treatment.

Within the enforcement pillar, the Department of Justice established the SCAN unit which continues to enforce the SCAN act and has seen an increased number of complaints to the branch over the last year. I would note that SCAN is implementing a new three-year strategic plan.

We’ve ensured that the arrest processing unit includes access to medical resources for individuals requiring them. Nursing is available at WCC 16 hours a day, seven days a week. EMS checks in at WCC twice nightly when nurses are not on staff. We’ve supported an Alcohol and Drug Services addiction counsellor for the Community Wellness Court. We’ve ensured that the Correctional Services staff in contracted services is ongoing to support the Community Wellness Court. We’ve committed to support the Community Wellness Court to address specific social problems in the north such as substance abuse and FASD by emphasizing individualized court orders and supervised treatment.

Funding for the Community Wellness Court has been extended until the fiscal year 2014-15. The court and Justice

Wellness Centre continue to experience increased numbers of referral and programming continues to develop. Data is being collected to facilitate an evaluation for this program.

We recognize that these court-supervised programs are expensive to run and I want to share that in my discussions with those in the legal community, the anecdotal feedback I’m getting is that these programs are effective. We committed to make the justice system better suited to individuals with FASD by addressing the recommendations of The Path to Justice: Access to Justice for Individuals with FASD Conference. These recommendations include improving education and awareness, identification, forming, sharing and establishing linkages, and developing specialized programming and initiatives that provide a circle of support.

The research methodology to study the prevalence of FASD and identify mental health and substance abuse issues of Yukon’s adult corrections population has been drafted. A number of meetings with the partners and stakeholders have been held. The proposed methodology reflects the collection of information learned at the meetings assessing the Yukon’s correctional and clinical landscapes. This approach represents a careful balance between achieving clinically useful diagnostic information that will benefit individual participants, the Yukon Department of Justice, and broader research interests at the national level, while executing an operationally sound, efficient and feasible research design.

In Justice, we have also implemented a new philosophy of corrections that emphasizes the protection of the public, holds offenders accountable and provides appropriate opportunities for rehabilitation. A report of the accomplishments of correctional redevelopment and implementation of the new legislation is now being completed.

Since April 2012, WCC has offered programming on substance abuse management, cognitive skills, violence prevention and anger management, spousal assault and sexual offence management to 152 offenders. We have also implemented the *Victims of Crime Strategy* and the *Victims of Crime Act*. The plan for supporting victims in all Yukon communities has been developed and is being implemented.

I can report that staffing is near completion for the new RCMP specialized response unit that will better respond to sexualized assault and domestic violence. A performance framework has been established for this initiative.

The *Victims of Crime Act* that passed in the spring of 2010 has been supported with a number of public education initiatives outlining information on how victims of crime have rights.

A victims of crime emergency fund, including emergency cell phones, has been implemented to address some of the emergency aspects of being victimized. We’ve invested in corrections infrastructure that supports the principles of public safety and offender accountability, such as the replacement facility for the Whitehorse Correctional Centre.

You are aware that the new Whitehorse Correctional Centre opened in March 2012. As I just mentioned, through Justice, Whitehorse Correctional Centre represents a new philosophy of corrections that emphasizes the protection of the public, holds

offenders accountable, and provides appropriate opportunities for rehabilitation. In other work, we have implemented the recommendations of the Internet Safety Advisory Committee to ensure Yukoners are protected from cyber crime and Internet predators.

Over the last year, I have had two opportunities to go to Winnipeg: first, when I was at the heritage ministers meeting and, second, for the National Aboriginal Women's Summit. During both visits I spent time with the staff and management at the Canadian Centre for Child Protection. The work this team does nationally is incredible.

Following those visits, I spoke with constituents and friends about child protection, education and awareness about the on-line world. A very good friend of mine has two children — Chance, who is eight, and Lorelei, who is six. These two incredible kids, like many others, including my own children, play sports, ride horses, go for hikes and ride bikes. But they also spend time using a computer. So kids like Chance, Lorelei and my boys Jack and Kyle — like many other kids — face new challenges that we as children did not.

Under the Department of Justice, we've just entered into a three-year agreement with the Canadian Centre for Child Protection to build awareness of the www.cybertips.ca website. On this website, people can report cyber bullying, on-line exploitation and luring of children, and learn more about Internet safety.

Also within Justice, Mr. Speaker, we've engaged First Nations and the public in the oversight of the police force by creating the Yukon Police Council. The Yukon Police Council was created in February 2012, when I appointed six members to that council.

The creation of the council was a recommendation of the 2010 *Sharing Common Ground* report. I've met with the council a number of times following their appointment. I can report that we have a solid group of dedicated individuals working on this council and I'm very pleased with their work thus far.

A new process for developing policing priorities has been established. This fall, the Yukon Police Council sought public input into their recommendations on policing priorities via targeted letters, newspapers, Alcohol and Drug Services and website information. In addition, the council hosted a session where First Nations, stakeholders and service providers were invited to provide their insights and recommendations on policing priorities in Yukon. Recommendations from the Yukon Police Council were submitted to me last December.

We have also utilized an independent civilian agency to investigate serious incidents involving the RCMP. The Yukon Party government signed an agreement with the Alberta Serious Incident Response Team, who will act as an independent civilian agency to investigate serious incidents involving the RCMP members in M Division. This was a recommendation of the 2010 *Sharing Common Ground* report.

Something that is a priority to me as a minister, with the support of my colleagues, is continuing to explore options to create safer communities. The first year of funding was provided for a four-member RCMP specialized response unit, or SRU, to provide an effective response to domestic violence and

sexualized assault. The SRU is close to being fully staffed and the performance framework has been developed to measure the results of that unit.

I'm also very proud to mention that a new community safety award was created in July 2012 to recognize citizens who make significant contributions to community safety in the territory. I'd like to extend my most sincere appreciation and again congratulate the 11 winners that were announced in September 2012. The creation of the award was also a recommendation of the 2010 *Sharing Common Ground* report.

SCAN has collaborated with partners such as the Yukon Liquor Corporation and RCMP on efforts to address illegal activity and associated harms. Following a comprehensive investigation, the department was successful in its first application to the Yukon Supreme Court for a community safety order to stop illegal activity on private property in Whitehorse. SCAN is working with an ambitious three-year strategic plan, is fully operational, and continues to carry out its mandate with over 50 actions taken to address illegal activity on property in Yukon.

Mr. Speaker, this is the first year of implementation of the Yukon prolific offender management team, in partnership with the RCMP, the federal prosecutor's office, Kwanlin Dun and the Council of Yukon First Nations Health and Social Services that ensures strict supervision and timely interventions for high-risk frequent offenders. A three-year evaluation will continue through 2012-13, and a preliminary analysis report will be prepared reflecting the first year's results.

I am very proud that Yukon is working with the governments of Northwest Territories, Nunavut and Canada to respond to the unique challenges of policing in the north.

Yukon has negotiated a new 20-year territorial police service agreement, signed March 2012, which reflects the unique nature of policing in the north and includes provisions for cost mitigation and harmonization of RCMP standards with best practices or new Yukon legislation.

We were honoured to host the national Symposium on Policing in Northern and Remote Canada to share current research and innovative community safety models, which will help inform and shape the response to the unique challenges of policing in the north.

The Department of Justice is continuing to respond to justice-related needs of children who witness domestic violence and other forms of victimization. Federal funding for the former Our Way of Living Safely program, or the OWLS initiative, ran out and new funding and information related to national best practices has resulted in a new program to assist children called Lynx.

The Department of Justice is conducting a review of the coroner service including a review of the *Coroners Act*. Various options are being considered that will best meet the needs of Yukoners.

The Department of Justice is also working on legislation that would institute a service for the automatic recalculation of child support payments following changes in the income of the parent paying the support. The service is available in eight other jurisdictions. As we announced in 2012, we are working

on modernizing the legislation relating to the land titles process to utilize technology and to improve the timeliness of transferring land titles. Immediate fixes to improve efficiency have been completed; an inspector was appointed under the act to review the processes in the Land Titles Office, and many of the recommendations from her report have been implemented.

Discreet changes have been made to the legislation, and improvements have been made to the supporting computer platform. A full-scale modernization of the land titles regime in Yukon is now underway. This will be a three-phase project, which includes a scoping phase that began in March 2012 and includes retaining legal and technical expert advice, the preparation of discussion papers, stakeholder consultation and option identification.

The development phase, including new legislation, selection of a new computer system and a review of business processes by a business and functional analyst is due to start in 2013 and to be completed by March 2014.

Implementation, which entails implementing new legislation and installing a new computer platform and the business processes in the office, should be complete by the fall of 2015.

I have also been very busy in Tourism and Culture as well. We've established Culture Quest as a permanent fund. We've maintained the arts fund and the arts operating fund, which support groups such as Yukon Art Society and the Yukon Film Society. We have developed a public arts policy to incorporate Yukon art for new public buildings.

There has been a renewal of the three-year lease agreements with the Whitehorse Chamber of Commerce and the Yukon Arts Centre for the Old Fire Hall.

The Department of Tourism and Culture continues to support programs, such as the touring artist program and the advanced artist award, to provide assistance to visual and performing artists to enable them to conduct tours and compete in southern markets.

As minister, I recognize the important role that arts and culture play in contributing to the social and economic life of Yukon. The department will continue to provide assistance to the arts and cultural organizations and Yukon artisans. We will also continue to promote exhibits, concerts, festivals, and multicultural events and programs.

The Department of Tourism and Culture has worked with the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations to develop the new Champagne and Aishihik cultural centre in Haines Junction. For anyone who has yet to visit the cultural centre, it's an incredible venue for that town.

An important responsibility that I have as minister and the Department of Tourism and Culture promotes is our desire to work with industry, communities and First Nations to promote the Yukon tourism brand that markets Yukon as an attractive year-round destination. We've enhanced the marketing of Yukon as a quality travel destination through general awareness campaigns, especially in relation to Yukon's traditional markets in the United States, Canada and Europe. In doing so we can promote affordable, domestic and international air access to the Yukon Territory.

We also work closely with the Yukon Convention Bureau, industry and Yukon communities to further promote the Yukon as a choice destination for hosting meetings, conventions and sports events. We are able to utilize the tourism cooperative marketing fund to build partnerships with industry that improves marketing efforts for both government and industry.

Under Tourism and Culture we have also created a product development program to assist Yukon tourism operators in developing and enhancing the quality of their product, and we continue our efforts to make Kluane National Park more accessible to Yukoners and visitors from around the globe.

These are very busy times in the Department of Tourism and Culture. I can report that the *Yukon Museums Strategy* has been implemented in collaboration with museums, First Nation heritage and cultural centres, and community interpretive centres. We also work with the City of Whitehorse and the Miles Canyon Historic Railway Society to promote the trolley and Yukon's railway history. We support Yukon museums to enable them to run their operations and retain and train experienced staff. We work to further promote Yukon's artists and musicians, including emerging artists, by supporting creative and entertaining venues for the benefit of visitors from all over the world and Yukoners alike.

Strategic initiatives continue to support Yukon's heritage resource sector. We're exploring options to promote Yukon's contribution to archeology and paleontology. We're analyzing investments in marketing partnerships, projects, campaigns and programs funded or delivered by Tourism Yukon. We're strengthening and leveraging strategic partnerships in the tourism industry.

The Department of Tourism and Culture in conjunction with Yukon stakeholders continues to deliver a consistent and compelling Yukon brand. We're creating ambassadors in our own stakeholders for the Yukon brand and unique Yukon experiences. We're consolidating and maximizing the efficiency of our marketing resources.

So, Mr. Speaker, Yukoners are smart people. Yukoners have elected the Yukon Party to govern this territory for three consecutive mandates. Yukoners know that the Yukon Party will deliver what the NDP and Liberals have proven they're unable to do. Yukoners are smart people.

Speaker: Due to technical difficulties with our microphones, the Members for Mayo-Tatchun and Takhini-Kopper King will be doing their presentations from different microphones.

Ms. White: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity to speak to this year's budget.

Before I begin I'd like to share some thoughts about my riding, the riding of Takhini-Kopper King. It stretches from the banks of the Yukon River to the banks of Fish Lake and runs along McIntyre Creek. I'd like to welcome all new residents to the area; you've chosen well. My riding includes three trailer parks, four condominium complexes, an apartment building, single-family homes, army-era duplexes, new duplexes, a seniors complex, college dorms and cabins that are off the grid.

We have Yukon College, which celebrates its 50th anniversary this year. We have the Yukon Arts Centre, an NDP legacy that has just celebrated its 20th anniversary. We are also home to the Whitehorse correctional facility, Softball Yukon, Takhini Elementary School, Yukon College and the Takhini Arena. We have thoughtful neighbourhoods and a diverse population. We have playgrounds, we have ice rinks and we have community gardens. We have paved roads, gravel roads and a portion of the highway. We have beautiful scenery with views from the bluffs overlooking the Yukon River, and a bird's-eye view of the City of Whitehorse with mountain ranges as a backdrop. We have trail systems that run right along McIntyre Creek, along the bluffs overlooking both the river and the city. We also have trails along Fish Lake Road. We even have part of the Mount McIntyre ski trails, and we can't forget the portions of the Trans Canada Trail. We have a creek, we have wetlands and we have lakes. My riding is diverse and it is beautiful.

I'd like to congratulate the Friends of McIntyre Creek for receiving the Council of the Federation Excellence in Water Stewardship Award last Friday. Congratulations. That's very exciting.

Mr. Speaker, I re-read my budget response from last year and many of the same concerns exist. I love the Yukon and I love the people who choose to live here. It is with people in mind that I respond to this budget.

Again, we see a budget that supports and encourages industry, but appears to have left most of the population behind — for example, people looking for affordable housing. Remember the much-touted affordable housing solution, the development of Lot 262? Remember the promise that this new partnership with industry would be used as an example for other government-held land? On November 7, 2011, the Yukon Party government issued a request for expressions of interest from the private sector for construction of affordable rental housing on Lot 262, stating, and I quote: "private sector expertise and creativity [will] help government design the best approach to move forward with timely private sector development of affordable housing."

At that time, the Premier said, and I quote: "There is currently no affordable private sector rental housing being constructed in Whitehorse and our government intends to address that."

On March 20, 2012, Minister Cathers told this Legislative Assembly that the Yukon Party government, and I quote: "made the commitment to develop Lot 262 through an innovative approach that we have committed to. We have placed conditions on that property, that it has to be developed for a certain amount of affordable rental units."

On March 27, 2012, Minister Cathers reaffirmed the Yukon Party government's commitment to affordable housing.

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Point of order

Deputy Speaker (Ms. McLeod): Mr. Cathers, on a point of order.

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

For the second time in the introduction of her speech, the Member for Takhini-Kopper King has referred to a member — in this case me — by name and I would encourage you to remind her that it's out of order to refer to any member by name no matter what the context is.

Deputy Speaker: The Member for Takhini-Kopper King, on the point of order.

Ms. White: I am also sorry. Thank you for the correction from the member opposite.

Deputy Speaker's ruling

Deputy Speaker: There is a point of order and the member is aware of it. She may continue.

Ms. White: I'd like to thank the minister.

On March 20, 2012, the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources told the Legislative Assembly that the Yukon Party government, "made the commitment to develop Lot 262 through an innovative approach that we have committed to. We have placed conditions on that property that it has to be developed for a certain amount of affordable rental units." Then again on March 27, 2012, the same minister reaffirmed the Yukon Party government's commitment to affordable housing on Lot 262. As he told this House, "A minimum number of affordable housing units developed as a result of that end development." We carry on into April of 2012.

On April 10, the minister again promised affordable housing on Lot 262 and told this House — and I quote: "We expect the development of this lot — hopefully by a year from now, perhaps even later in 2012." Then, sadly, on May 2, 2012, the *Yukon News* reported that the Lot 262 affordable housing scheme had failed to attract private bidders willing to provide affordable housing on the site with no government support.

Now we know that that isn't exactly true; we know that there weren't sufficient incentives for private industry to tackle the housing crisis on their own because of how few tenders were received, but we do know two tenders were received. We don't know why the two companies that bid were refused. One of those companies planned to build 100 affordable rental units that they would then manage and maintain for the next 15 years. They offered to pay \$100 to tackle the housing crisis head-on and they were rejected. Can you imagine what 100 affordable rental units would do to today's housing crisis? Imagine 100 homes for people to live in that were within the affordable guidelines. Then in February of this year, the lot formerly known as "Lot 262" resurfaced under the name of "Lot 1547" and guess what? The land was up for sale on an as-is basis with no requirement for affordable housing. The asking price: \$615,000. The deadline for applications was March 22 of this year and that process ended today at noon with an envelope opening. Gone is the commitment to develop Lot 262 with an affordable housing requirement.

With rental vacancies sitting at 1.5 percent, the Yukon Anti-Poverty Coalition, the City of Whitehorse, the Chamber of Commerce, the Chamber of Mines, First Nation governments and others continue to raise the lack of housing as a serious priority. Here we are still waiting for a housing strategy from this government, a housing strategy that has clear guidelines

and goals. Some good initiatives were announced in the 2012 Budget Address last year. They included land-based treatment and the Yukon Archives cold storage expansion project. I'm wondering what happened to them?

Regarding land-based treatment — drug and alcohol abuse continues to plague Yukon citizens. This year we heard of planning for the new Sarah Steele Building but no mention of the land-based treatment that was mentioned last year. Since last fiscal year, what has happened with the land-based treatment program? Is Jackson Lake, which sits in a residential neighbourhood not even on the bank of the lake, still being pushed by this government? Have they received feedback from all First Nation governments? Have current programs been investigated? Whatever happened with the planning and design work of the new cold storage vault up at Archives?

Last year the Premier spoke of Yukon's history and the importance of its protection. "This much needed work will ensure the long-term preservation of Yukon's precious archival heritage that captures not only the personal stories of Yukoners who have helped to shape this great territory, but also houses many legal records defining Yukon's economic and social growth." I wonder if Yukon's history has any less value or is any less vulnerable than last year. What's supposed to happen until it happens?

And about this year's budget, I'll start by talking about the gross domestic product numbers the government is proud of. The GDP numbers do not speak to the growing gap between rich and poor in the Yukon. The numbers this government will not be talking about are the numbers that matter most to many of my constituents — numbers like what they make in a week when they work for the service sector, or the way that the rents that they're supposed to pay are far, far above what is considered a median rent.

When I attended the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association conference in Sri Lanka last year, one of the presentations that I remember the best was from a representative of Jamaica, and his take on GDP was very interesting. He said, "I come from a Third World country, but we're happy in this country. I can travel around and I can stay at the smallest bed and breakfasts and I have access to wireless Internet. We have medal winners at every Olympics and we are happy." He thought he was going to write his speech when he got to the hotel in Sri Lanka. We were staying at big hotels, and he said he was surprised when he found out that, at a big hotel like that, you would have to pay for the Internet. So his point was that gross domestic product isn't everything, that sometimes the happiness of the people who live there has to be taken into account. I wonder right now how happy we are; I wonder how happy the people who struggle on a day-to-day basis are.

It turns out that the Minister of Environment is very happy.

Transfers from Ottawa have doubled in the past 10 years. There has been little change to our dependence on federal transfer dollars and little diversification of the economy. There has been little progress on addressing the growing gap.

In the last budget we heard about a social inclusion program, and in this budget we haven't. So where do we go for-

ward with that? How do we make sure that no Yukoner gets left behind?

There has been little growth in our own-source revenues relative to total revenues. The Conference Board of Canada points to the public service sector as the source of stability in the Yukon's economy. In this year's budget, one initiative we have been waiting for has been released — the draft water strategy. I am pleased to see the document being shared by the government. We know that comments are welcome on the draft strategy until the end of May.

We would like to know more about the government's expectations for their water strategy. At first glance, a couple of big issues are apparent to me in the water strategy. Industry is to be ensured access to water. "Ensured" — it's a big word. The strategy reads it will promote sustainable use. Promotion is a weak and vague action that demands nothing of industry. What demand will be made of industry in exchange for access to Yukon's water?

Industry is to apply best management practices in its use of water. Industry is by far and away the biggest potential user and polluter of water, with the greatest potential to impact watersheds. Best management practices in the past have been a moving target set by industry. Faro is an example of a mine that operated in compliance with the regulations of the day. Is it an example of best practices today? I hope not.

Responsible water management must include clear and enforceable standards set by science on a watershed per watershed basis. Given that water is critical to all life, we are all stakeholders. We look forward to an ongoing, open and transparent process with the Yukon's water strategy. Also of note in my first reading of the draft water strategy are the long-term goals that indicate petroleum as a new resource sector. This flies in the face of the Yukon Party government labelling LNG as a transitional fuel.

I'm thankful for Yukon's engaged citizens. Without them the wind studies could have been buried forever. Wind power is a viable part of a coordinated renewable energy strategy. I had the pleasure last week of attending the public meeting on wind.

It was fascinating to know that in two years' time, with concerted effort, we could have a full-blown wind farm. We could have a wind farm so viable that it could replace diesel generation during the low water flows of winter. To know that wind is an option to replace our dependence on fossil fuels in as soon as two years is astounding to me. I spoke with the Yukon Energy representative there and was told that they actually follow the policy directed by government in where they're going. I was asking about the LNG and I was told that they were going to replace one turbine out of seven with an LNG turbine. For that, we are going to have a storage system — we're going to have all these new things come to the territory for one turbine. I asked how soon that turbine would be on-line and he told me two years. Two years; it's the same as wind. Even if we had to go right now and have 12 months of data on wind — so we added one extra year — in one extra year, instead of transferring over to another fossil fuel, we could be on renewable energy; we could be on wind. Imagine a territory

that uses renewable energy more so than fossil fuels. Imagine a territory that doesn't use diesel generation in the winter. Imagine it using wind power.

Mr. Speaker, this government needs to get with the times. Climate change mitigation and adaptation requires us to get off fossil fuels sooner rather than later. I'd like to see us concentrate on wind as opposed to an LNG turbine that's going to be replaced. Yukon is rich in engaged citizens. That is the one growth area this government can take credit for. People are coming daily into the Legislature and they're out on the streets. They're protecting our democracy; they're living human rights; they're protecting our sacred wild places.

After nearly 11 consecutive years in power, Yukoners want to know when the Yukon Party government will address the lack of affordable housing. They want to know when they'll get a fair return on their non-renewable resources. They want to know when a plan to create jobs in rural Yukon and making inroads on the fly-in/fly-out status quo will change. They want the long-standing capital project mismanagement fixed with this government. They want the government to stop meddling in the land use planning process. They want to have trust in the system. They want to know when the repair is going to happen to the damaged relationship with First Nation governments. They want to know when the overuse of the courts to resolve conflicts will stop. They want to know when we'll move forward on social inclusion. They also want to know when we'll start placing the tourism dollar on par with an industrialization dollar.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: It's a pleasure for me to rise today to commend this budget to the House and to speak a little bit about what it holds in store both for my departments and my riding. I'd like to begin by discussing a little bit about my riding, Copperbelt North, and some of the people who live there and some of the things that are ongoing currently in our neighbourhood that I think bear repeating in discussion of this budget.

First of all, I'd like to thank the Copper Ridge Neighbourhood Association for their work so far in playing a role in the lives of Copper Ridge residents. Of course the association has been around for a number of years and it has existed basically on the efforts of a few select people. I'd obviously like to thank those people who have been involved throughout the years. I don't have a comprehensive list of all the members throughout the years, but I do know that the outgoing president — as she stepped aside last year — was Jessica Bryant. I'd like to thank her for her time as the president of the Copper Ridge Neighbourhood Association and I'd like to thank the newly elected board for taking the time to put their names forward and participate in their neighbourhood development.

Those folks are Josh Clark, president; Ryan Kinney, vice-president; Lila McConnell, secretary; Yesh Sharma, treasurer; Damien Burns as the FireSmart coordinator, and Phil Borgel is the past president, who is staying on. Phil has been the vice-president of the Copper Ridge Neighbourhood Association for 10 years now, I think, and he is finally stepping back from the

business of it. We certainly appreciate his efforts over the years as well.

They have a number of things planned over the coming year that are very exciting for our neighbourhood, and I'm very enthusiastic about the work they will be doing to advance some of these projects. Of course, one key thing that the Copper Ridge Neighbourhood Association does is to administer the FireSmart program for our neighbourhood, which is certainly very appreciated. I know folks in the neighbourhood who walk their dogs or go for walks in the woods certainly appreciate the FireSmart activities that have taken place.

As I said before, Damien Burns is the FireSmart coordinator for the neighbourhood, and he does some fantastic work, selecting areas for contractors to do the FireSmart activities.

Another thing the association has done and has been very successful at over the years is the development of the Lazulite park, which actually falls into the Member for Whitehorse West's riding, but given the fact that it's right on the border, it's important to my constituents as well, so I did want to mention it. The work done by the previous board of the Copper Ridge Neighbourhood Association really focused on that park, and it's really come a long way over the years. There is still some work to be done, and I know that the board is interested in seeing some actions being finalized at that park.

Another very interesting one is the Winze field revitalization. It's an open field that belongs to the City of Whitehorse and is zoned in their official community plan as public recreation. There are a variety of views on that particular area. Some folks — a number of folks, actually — would like to see an outdoor hockey rink there, if possible, and others are interested in, basically, any sort of recreational usage that it may be able to provide. So I know that the association will be working on that in the year to come, and I look forward to providing whatever support I can to help that group along, both as the MLA for the riding and as the Minister of Economic Development. They have indicated to me that they may be interested in applying to the community development fund for funding for some of these projects, so I look forward to seeing them engage with the Department of Economic Development, and the CDF office, to advance some of those projects.

As I said, I think this is an excellent budget we have prepared and presented to the House. I'd like to commend it, of course, to the House, and I'd like to take a few minutes to discuss some key features in the budget that pertain specifically to the Department of Environment.

Although it's not a huge number, probably the most exciting piece of this budget for me is the creation of a new campground in the territory. I know that not only my constituents, but a number of other MLAs have expressed to me that their constituents have indicated support for creating a new campground in the territory. I think some of the statistics around our campground usage bear some discussion because of the fact that they are very well used, are very popular, and there is certainly a demand for the creation of a new campground.

The focus of the attention, when it comes to campgrounds, tends to be within the two-hour radius of Whitehorse — basically, a two-hour drive from Whitehorse.

With the population of our city growing and an increasing number of new Yukoners coming to the territory and moving to the community, we have seen an increase in demand for campgrounds. Obviously, campgrounds offer a very easy and convenient way for Yukoners to get out and experience their environment. We live in a pretty fantastic area, a pretty fantastic territory, and an area that is great to get out and explore. Campgrounds offer one way that Yukoners can do that.

The campgrounds that are most well-used are certainly those within the two-hour driving range of Whitehorse. While we considered the possibility of potentially expanding some of those ones, we realized that many of them simply aren't able to be expanded, given their surroundings or the terrain that is adjacent to them. For instance, Snafu, Tarfu, Fox Lake, Marsh Lake, Kusawa, Wolf Creek, Laberge and Pine Lake are all in that category of being within approximately a two-hour drive from Whitehorse or less. Some of them, as I said, we're simply not going to be able to expand.

Of course, earlier this year, I had the pleasure of announcing that we would be building a new campground and it would be on Atlin Lake. The site of the proposed campground is a 112-hectare reserve on the eastern shore of Atlin Lake at approximately kilometre 40 of the Atlin Road, which is just north of the British Columbia border.

It is an area that was originally identified in the negotiations of the final agreements for the Carcross-Tagish First Nation and it was set aside as an area of particular importance for recreation, specifically, in this case, the development of a campground. The Department of Environment is in the early stages of gathering information and developing preliminary designs for the campground, but it anticipates that it will feature approximately 45 campsites, a boat launch and a dock. The money that is in the budget this year is \$780,000, but there was a small amount as well in the supplementary budget from last fiscal year which went toward some of the planning initiatives — some of the early stage planning that would allow this project to advance in due course.

Some of the things we consider in the development of a new campground are the recreational opportunities that are going to be available to Yukoners. We are hoping to increase opportunities for visitors and residents to promote a healthy lifestyle and enhanced quality of life.

Public health and safety shall be considered and factored into all campground design, construction and operating decisions. A project risk assessment will be conducted and risk-management plans will be developed during the planning phase. In terms of life expectancy, we know that the Atlin Lake campground should have a service life expectancy of somewhere in the neighbourhood of 40 to 50 years. Most of Yukon's campgrounds, while well-maintained, are decades old. Regular campground maintenance and facility upgrades will be required to ensure a safe and enjoyable experience and to protect the government's capital investment.

The campground will serve the entire Yukon population, 80 percent of whom are located within two hours' drive of Whitehorse and will likely experience intensive use during the camping season of around four months in the summer. As with

all campgrounds, it will be a seasonal operation and will be closed during the off-season.

Reports completed in 2002, 2008, and more recently in 2012, have examined Yukon campground capacity, condition and use. In each report it was noted that campground use is increasing and that Yukon Parks campgrounds within two hours' driving distance from Whitehorse were often at capacity for much of the summer.

I think members would agree with me and I'm sure constituents have raised with them before as well that those campgrounds within the radius of Whitehorse are very well-used and it's often very challenging to get a spot on weekends, especially those busy camping weekends during the summer. Oftentimes people have to resort to driving out in the middle of the week and parking their camper in the spot to hold it. Of course, we encourage folks to only go to the campgrounds when they're actually camping there, but as a result of the popularity of the campgrounds and the significant level of usage, we do know that it is a challenge to get a spot. We're hoping that this new campground will facilitate the growth of that in that capacity and provide a new opportunity for Yukoners to get out and experience their environment.

Another important factor about the location of this new campground is the fact that it's in very close proximity to both Snafu and Tarfu. Both of those campgrounds are, as I said before, very well-used and unfortunately, they're almost too well-used. The design of those campgrounds is such that they respond kind of negatively to the significant use. It's a sensitive area within a territorial park — the Agay Mene park — and the impacts of boat use on a lake and of campers driving up and down the hill tend to degrade the area.

It's our hope that the new Atlin campground will provide some relief of pressure on those two campgrounds that are very popular. So hopefully we'll be able to take some of the pressure off those campgrounds — not only the infrastructure of the campgrounds, but the fishing resources in both Tarfu and Snafu lakes. As members may know, Atlin is a very big, very beautiful lake with tremendous fishing and we're hoping that Yukoners who go to that neighbourhood to fish will choose to fish in Atlin Lake rather than Snafu and Tarfu, as we've seen increased pressure on those two lakes.

There are a number of reasons why this location was picked. As I said, it will provide some relief to Snafu and Tarfu, which have seen increased usage. It's a big, beautiful lake with great fishing and it has an identified reserve of a significant size that will be sufficient to host a fairly large campground.

As I said, the planning process has begun and is in the process of beginning. We will seek input from First Nations in the area, from the public and from stakeholders. So I look forward, as that development process goes forward, to Yukoners having an opportunity to provide their input. We expect that the project will have to go through the YESAB process so that, of course, will afford an opportunity for Yukoners to provide comments publicly.

One additional consideration before I turn away from the Atlin Lake campground — and it was actually raised today in

the House in the form of a motion from the Member for Pelly-Nisutlin — and that was the need to develop a reciprocal fishing agreement with British Columbia for that lake. For most of the lakes in the southern part of the territory, we have a reciprocal agreement with the Government of British Columbia that recognizes both provincial and territorial fishing licences for those lakes that rest on the border or straddle the border. We have such agreements for most of the lakes in the southern Yukon, but not for Atlin, so pursuant to the motion from the Member for Pelly-Nisutlin, I will be writing my colleague in British Columbia — the Minister of Environment there — to pursue the process to develop a reciprocal fishing agreement with British Columbia for Atlin Lake.

I did want to mention as well, on the topic of reciprocal fishing licences, the importance of the continued relationship between the Yukon Territory and the State of Alaska with regard to reciprocal fishing licences.

I expect sometime, hopefully this week, we'll have a motion to present to the House supporting those agreements. We know that there has been some activity in Alaska prompting the State of Alaska to consider whether or not the reciprocal fishing licences with Yukon are of benefit to Alaskans. We of course feel that they are. We think that both Alaskans and Yukoners benefit from having those agreements in place and — perhaps through a motion or some other means — we will hopefully be able to express to the State of Alaska that we support those reciprocal fishing licences and would like to see them continue. I know that a lot of Yukoners enjoy going down, whether it be Haines or other places in Alaska, to go fishing. I know that some Alaskans enjoy coming to the territory — whether it be fly fishing or other kinds of fishing that they do in the Yukon. There are a number of Alaskans who enjoy coming to the territory to fish. So we will hopefully be able to encourage the State of Alaska, and specifically the Board of Fisheries, to continue those relationships and continue that agreement and reciprocal fishing licences between our territory and that state.

I would like to move on to another aspect in the budget I'm particularly excited about and was keen to see move forward and that is a new program in the Department of Environment we are referring to as the human-wildlife conflict program. The primary purpose of this program is to identify activities that manage and mitigate human-wildlife conflicts in the coming years. As we've seen, there is \$75,000 provided in this budget to support that program.

I think for a lot of Yukoners last summer was a bit of an eye-opener in terms of our awareness of the fact that we live in a wilderness area and that we do have a significant chance of encountering bears or other wildlife in our day-to-day lives. Last year we had a significant number of bears — certainly in Whitehorse. I know that other communities in the territory did as well. In part, this was due to the fact that we had a bad berry year and grizzly bears had to come down out of the hills to seek food and, in doing so, pushed black bears into non-traditional areas like Whitehorse and other communities.

That obviously lent itself to a much higher rate of human-wildlife conflict and unfortunately, as our last resort — always

a last resort — conservation officers in some cases had to kill or relocate a fairly significant number of bears.

This funding is aimed at trying to, as best we can, prevent some of those conflicts. It's broken down into three sections. I don't need to get into the details of the program here — I'm sure we will in debate of the Environment budget. Essentially, the funding is aimed at enhancing public education and awareness; improving public safety regarding human-wildlife conflicts; improving conservation officers' capacity to respond to a growing number of human-wildlife conflicts; reducing the number of human injuries and relocations or deaths of large carnivores, such as bears, from human encounters associated with wildlife-human conflict; augment conservation officer capacity to develop educational outreach programs for the prevention and mitigation of human-wildlife conflicts and to deliver those programs in collaboration with industry, community groups, First Nations and non-profit organizations, thus enhancing the sustainability of common cultural, socio-economic and environmental values related to responsible wildlife stewardship; and to promote and demonstrate the wise management and conservation of important species of Yukon wildlife, particularly bear species and other species that frequently come into conflict with humans, such as wolves.

So it's my hope that this funding will give us the ability within the department to have some capacity to engage with other groups and municipalities, such as Whitehorse, to coordinate our initiatives. Last year, given the significant increase in activity, our conservation officers were really run off their feet. There was a tremendous number of calls coming in and, as a result of that, they were providing services to Yukoners 24/7 throughout the summer, which obviously put strain on them, not only in their professional capacities, but I'm sure they were also getting calls at home. We hope part of this funding will provide some capacity within the CO branch to respond to some of these calls that are of a less serious nature, or don't demand a CO to go out to a home to visit someone without significant need.

As well, it will give us the capacity to engage with a new group in town — a new NGO — whose name escapes me, but I believe the short form is WildWise, which is an NGO that was formed of representatives from both Whitehorse and from Marsh Lake who wanted to take action. It was a grassroots organization that wanted to take action to see that Yukoners were really aware of some of their practices and encourage preventive actions to prevent human-wildlife conflict.

Another case where human-wildlife conflict is an issue — and it's one that we've actually discussed before in this House — is the work that government does in terms of preventing wildlife-vehicle collisions on the highway. I know that the Member for Copperbelt South has asked questions about this in the past and we have had some discussions about that, so I'm pleased to give some information about what we're doing this year with regard to that issue. The Department of Environment and the Department of Highways and Public Works have formed an internal working group with an aim to reduce wildlife collisions over time. They've done some work — obvi-

ously to date over the years but they are now doing it in a much more collaborative fashion by working together.

Some of the projects that they have looked at are changing the use of road salt by the Department of Highways and Public Works as it was felt that the salt was an attractant to caribou and led to an increased number of caribou being on the highway. This led to increased accidents so a pilot project was commenced to look at the possibility of substituting lithium chloride as a replacement for road salt. Unfortunately, I think there was some resistance from the First Nation in the area, the Liard First Nation, as they felt that the lithium chloride was going to harm the wildlife or something like that, so they weren't supportive of it. Biologists were quite certain that it would be harmless, but of course they respected the wishes of the First Nation in that case. Perhaps that is something we will revisit again, whether or not we can switch away from road salt on our highways and find an alternative that is less attractive for large animals like caribou.

With regard to inventory and monitoring plans this year in the Fish and Wildlife branch, there are a number of projects that are going to be underway in this budget. For the most part, they focus on inventory and monitoring. There will be 36 projects of that nature this year, which of course support our ongoing population monitoring and harvest management programs.

We publish as much of this work as we can on-line, and I encourage anybody with an interest in it to review some of that. The work we've done in the previous years all tends to be published on-line, and if folks are interested in the specifics, they can find the data on-line.

For this year, we have a number of projects planned relating to bison and caribou. The bison work relates to the Aishihik wood bison herd and the management plan we developed last year for that species. Moose, sheep and elk are all on the agenda as well. We're conducting surveys and monitoring programs throughout the territory for those species.

As I said, grizzly bears are always a concern of ours because of the fact that we've seen increased human-wildlife conflict. We're hoping that the funding that I mentioned earlier in combination with our monitoring programs in the Southern Lakes area will give us a better sense of the sustainability and the health of the grizzly bear population in the Southern Lakes area.

We are confident that the population remains fairly healthy in most other areas, but I think the area of concern that we've identified is the Southern Lakes area, given the fact that it's a well-used area and there is a significant amount of human activity in that area.

Moving on to a different animal health issue — that isn't necessarily related to wildlife as much as it is domestic animals — is some of the work we have been doing through the animal health unit of the Department of Environment. I should correct myself, actually — the animal health unit, of course, serves government corporately, but is housed in Environment. So it's not just ours — we do share it with the rest of the government departments. In particular, the Agriculture branch in Energy, Mines and Resources liaises with the animal health unit to provide services for the agriculture industry in the territory. When

we began developing the animal health unit a few years ago, it was certainly with a vision of increasing our ability to manage and handle domestic animal health issues and the ever-present possibility of disease outbreaks. The reality is that there is always a possibility of animals getting sick, and we wanted to ensure that we had the capacity and the tools to deal with those challenges.

So as we have developed the animal health program and have now hired, I believe, all the individuals we need to hire in terms of staffing that unit, it has now come to our attention that we were lacking some of the key tools in that department in terms of the legislative tools under the *Animal Health Act*. I'm giving members a little bit of a glimpse into something that we'll be announcing later this week, hopefully, but we plan on looking at the *Animal Health Act*. We have discussed this already with First Nations and some stakeholders in preliminary consultations, but we'll be asking the public for their view within the next few weeks. Essentially, what we intend to do there is provide some new tools for the animal health unit to respond to possible events. The consultation process, which will begin shortly — as I said, hopefully within the next few weeks — will focus on five key issues: expanding the scope of the act and the role of the chief veterinary officer; defining the role of the chief veterinary officer in a more comprehensive manner so that she — in this case it's a "she" — has a strong sense, and Yukoners have a good sense of what her role is and what kinds of services she provides; compensation for losses from an order under the act — something we'll be raising in the consultations; the right process to appeal decisions and, of course, penalties under the act as well.

So that's something I'm very optimistic about moving forward with. I think it's something we are certainly in need of in the territory as we continue to grow and realize that, as with anything, there is always risk, including risk with animals as well. We need to have the tools and the abilities to deal with the possibility of disease outbreaks and other events like that.

Speaking of that issue, another issue that I know is of importance to many Yukoners who hunt in the territory — and a number of Yukoners who have come from outside of our borders are fairly familiar with this issue — it's the chronic wasting disease. It's a disease that has become, unfortunately, fairly widespread in southern Canada and in the northern United States. It's a disease that affects ungulates and it is a progressive, fatal disease.

Infected animals show weight loss, listlessness, depression and weakness and eventually die. It affects deer, elk, moose and potentially caribou, which are part of the cervid family. I don't believe there are any actual cases of caribou having CWD in the country, but I think that based on the fact that they are a cervid, they believe that caribou may be susceptible to that. So we're considering proposing restrictions on the import or possession of specific cervid parts and the ban on the possession of hunting lures made with cervid parts. Those would include the brain, the spinal column, urine — some lures involve cervid urine to attract other animals.

This is an issue that has been raised by members of the Fish and Game Association and is something that we believe is

one tool that we can hopefully employ to help prevent the potential spread of CWD to the territory. Again, that is something that I hope to be developing in the next several weeks. I have had discussions with outfitters, with taxidermists, with hunters and with First Nations about that particular action and that particular regulation development, and I think we're on solid ground in terms of moving forward. Hopefully we will be in a position to make some announcements about that in the next couple of months or weeks, depending on the process.

I guess it's important to note, in that sense, we wouldn't be banning importing meat; it's simply the parts of the animal that carry the disease, such as the brain, the spinal column — the parts I mentioned earlier. Edible meat, most of the trophy portions, wouldn't be affected, nor animals harvested in northern British Columbia or the Northwest Territories. Because we feel that we have a very similar risk level as they do, it's important that we coordinate those efforts.

One of the important roles that the chief veterinary officer in the animal health unit has played is providing an excellent point of liaison with the Yukon Wildlife Preserve. I, of course, have spoken at length in this House about the Wildlife Preserve and our support for that institution. We continue that support, obviously, as the budget provides for the annual support that we provide to the Wildlife Preserve, so that's continuing.

My understanding is that the Wildlife Preserve continues to be very successful. They had some significant volume of visitors last year. It's a unique wildlife park featuring 10 species of northern Canadian mammals in their natural environment, encompassing over 750 acres with various natural habitats. The Yukon Wildlife Preserve offers unparalleled wildlife viewing and photo opportunities. The Yukon Wildlife Preserve Operating Society has been working with the department since 2004 in managing the facility. This year in the budget we will see \$633,000 to the society, which provides that stable operational funding that they require.

Last year we discussed in this House — and I believe there was a motion to the effect — that the society become a member of CAZA — Canadian Association of Zoos and Aquariums — which was an excellent step forward for them. They are now the only northern CAZA-accredited institution in Canada and now one of, I believe, 26 other facilities in the country — so certainly a very positive step forward for that organization and I would like to congratulate them again for that.

In terms of their plans for this year, I don't have a detailed understanding of what their vision is for this year, but I do know that they have continued to access the community development fund and I believe they received some money in the last cycle to develop a new snowshoe hare exhibit, so congratulations for that. I look forward to visiting the preserve again this year to see how the infrastructure development has been going.

The next topic I want to discuss is some of the actions this year and outlined in this budget for the Climate Change Secretariat. Of course, climate change remains a focus of ours and the Climate Change Secretariat has done a fantastic job over the years and has done some excellent work. We're very excited about the nine projects that are upcoming this year. They

include a wide range of different permafrost and other climate change adaptation projects. The total amount spent in terms of those projects is over \$500,000, so it's a very significant investment that is being made in terms of increasing our understanding of climate change adaptation in the north and, of course, it remains one of our priorities.

I don't believe I have time to get into the details of the other activities of the Climate Change Secretariat, but I will say that I'm very excited about what they've got planned and I look forward to hearing from them their vision for the coming years.

As was mentioned earlier, water is always an important issue for us. Last week we announced that we'll be going to public consultation on our draft water strategy for the territory. I'm very excited about that. That was a commitment we made in the election and it is something that has a significant degree of priority with this government. The investments that we've made to date are obviously significant and I'm sure the Minister of Community Services will give us an understanding of some of the infrastructure investments related to water, so I'll focus a little bit more on the policy side with regard to the water strategy. We're very excited about the opportunity for Yukoners to provide comments on the water strategy and we encourage them to provide their comments presently. The website is up and running and available for the public to access.

Finally, the other key piece I did want to mention in my short time here is the beginning of construction of the new conservation officer and wildlife technician building in Watson Lake. I know that it's something that the MLA for Watson Lake is keen to see go forward. The staff in that region has been operating in what can only be described as less than satisfactory accommodations up until this point, so I know that they're excited to have a new building and a new place to go every day from 8:00 to 5:00. It's our hope that that project will proceed without issue and we're excited about the opportunity to provide a new building to the department officials to do their work.

I see by your gestures that I am running out of time, so I will wrap up by saying that I am very excited about this budget. There are a lot of excellent aspects to it that promote our continued support of the environment and our continued commitment to responsible development, as well as a number of initiatives to be proactive in terms of gathering information — whether it be about fish and wildlife, climate change projects, or gathering information about water. We're trying to be as proactive as we can to ensure that we have all the information we need to make sound, responsible, science-based decisions with regard to anything that is going on in the territory.

Seeing the time, I will cede the floor and commend this budget to the House.

Hon. Mr. Graham: I didn't anticipate being up to speak this early in the debate, but it is always an opportunity that I enjoy, to inform other members and the general public about my departments here in the government and, in particular, my riding. My riding is Porter Creek North and I like to think of it as Porter Creek North and Crestview. It's the oldest section in the Porter Creek subdivision. In fact, when I moved

there in 1963, Centennial Street and Birch Street were both parts of the Alaska Highway. I've been living in the riding since 1963, I believe, with minor adjustments from year to year as the boundaries changed in the Porter Creek area, as you are well aware.

I'm very proud of the citizens who live in my riding because the Porter Creek North and Crestview riding has seen probably more development on a per capita basis than almost any other riding in the territory over the last few years. We've had a fairly recent development in the old Stan McCowan Arena site where a number of condominiums and homes were built — a beautiful new section that was planned and developed by the City of Whitehorse, which sold the lots to private developers — a very successful one. We also had the Crocus Ridge development, which is just now coming into being on Wann Road in Porter Creek. We also have the huge number of condominiums developed at the Porter Creek Mall site. There has also been a great deal of infill throughout Porter Creek North, as you are aware, as well as other Porter Creek ridings. There has also been a change at the MacKenzie Trailer Court. The trailer court was recently sold, and since that time we've seen a condo development as well as moderately priced homes being built in that area. I'm sure all of these developments will be a great addition to the Porter Creek North and Crestview riding.

Why I say I'm very proud of my residents, Mr. Speaker, is because all of these changes required zoning changes by the city and they required input from the residents of that riding before any of these developments could proceed. With one small exception, residents in the Porter Creek North and Crestview riding welcomed the development as part of an expanding city and as part of a change, too, in the city's policy to go from large country residential developments down to a more compact livable community. Porter Creek North and Crestview residents have realized that and they've welcomed these new developments.

I would also like to take the opportunity to address a few of the comments made by the Leader of the Official Opposition during her speech here today. Unfortunately, I haven't had a great deal of time to research all of the comments she made, but a couple stuck in my mind and I wrote them down. The first of which was when she talked about the social inclusion policy — where is the budget and where are we going with social inclusion in the territory? Part of the briefing that my department gave to opposition members included some information with respect to social inclusion, and was that the budget is increasing this year with the addition of some new staff time, but this project was never intended to be a huge expenditure of government funds.

What the social inclusion policy was — and we stated it during my comments when I first introduced it and in any other debate during Question Period or wherever with respect to social inclusion — this was an internal government project. It was an opportunity to ensure that the Government of Yukon itself, the individual departments, looked at all new projects through a socially inclusive lens, so that any new projects would be looked to determine how is this going to impact our

citizens and how is this going to impact the social inclusiveness of our Yukon society. So it was never intended to be a big expenditure of money. It wouldn't have got through had that been the case, because we have a number of other projects that have great budgets that address that issue.

The project team is currently working on a monitoring and evaluation framework for the strategy.

A great deal of interdepartmental work is taking place to evaluate existing social inclusion and poverty reduction initiatives and to propose new initiatives for the coming year and also well into the future. We're also doing additional work to develop a social inclusion and poverty reduction audit and assessment tool that will help to ensure inclusiveness of new YTG policies, programs and services. Now, I realize this audit and assessment will include statistics, and we now know what the Leader of the Official Opposition feels about statistics. Unfortunately, we will produce some of these lies, damn lies, or statistics on her behalf because I'm sure that if we don't produce those statistics on what is actually happening in this, we'll be berated severely for not producing them.

The second issue I noticed that the Leader of the Official Opposition had spoken about was the Beaton and Allen report and where we are going. We had this great direction, and I have to tell you, Mr. Speaker, progress has been made over the last few years and it continues to be made. In this budget alone, we have an additional \$740,000 for medical supervision for detoxification. That was never done before. It will now be done through the Sarah Steele Building. It has required us to hire a number of new staff members, and it's something that will be up and running in a more complete fashion once the new Sarah Steele Building is underway.

Also, in cooperation with the Northern Institute of Social Justice and Yukon College, we have been delivering training that focuses on gaining competency in the area of FASD and trauma-informed care. We have a number of protocols in place now with Whitehorse General Hospital. The clinical institute withdrawal assessment is now used by both the detox centre and the Whitehorse General Hospital, and protocols based on those scores indicate when clients should be transferred from detox to the hospital. The task force report also recommended the need for improved cross-cultural awareness training for ADS staff and staff in other areas. As I said before, this is one of the things that we tried to do through the collaborative training with the Northern Institute of Social Justice. Yukon College, and my friend from the Justice department, as well as a number of other departments, have been involved in that program.

Things have been happening in addition to this. In the spring of last year, Health and Social Services and the Salvation Army began discussions about the Salvation Army's expressed intention to consolidate the programs into one building in the city and to expand their emergency shelter to include a transitional housing program. We then proceeded to undertake those negotiations and, in August of last year, the Salvation Army produced a concept paper to Health and Social Services outlining their vision for the project. A project team made up of representatives from Health and Social Services, Yukon Hous-

ing Corporation and the Salvation Army signed off on an outline on the role and responsibilities of the various departments in supporting the project in the early stages. We are going ahead with that project. In fact, as recently as last week, the Premier and I met with senior members of the Salvation Army who came to the Yukon from Edmonton to further discuss the project. We are really excited about this project. This is something that has been missing from our continuum of housing.

We have the shelter currently offered by the Salvation Army. We see that expanded, but we also see a transitional housing part of that same project.

So things are happening. I don't want anyone to be left with the idea that the department isn't moving and continuing to move on the Beaton and Allen report recommendations. It may take years to implement all of them properly, but we continue to do it.

The Budget Address by the Premier has already touched on a number of initiatives — everything from replacing the Alexander McDonald Lodge in Dawson City to replacement of the Sarah Steele facility here in Whitehorse. He touched on enhancements to home care, increasing supports to people with disabilities and to families or parents with children with disabilities. He has also touched on achieving accreditation with exemplary standing for the Continuing Care division, which also includes home care. He also talked about increasing our efforts to recruit and train family physicians and increasing our support for international medical graduates. We're also very proud of the fact that we've substantially increased our support to non-government organizations, and we're continuing discussions with a number of NGOs to provide ongoing support in the future.

There are other highlights to which I would like to draw our attention. While this government continues its very significant investment in core programs and services, we're also committed to promoting wellness and doing what we can to encourage healthy choices and lifestyles that will increase our quality of life as we grow older. This budget includes financial commitments to continue with the wellness initiatives. Examples of activities undertaken to date include the pathways to wellness website, the free weekly e-tips, development of a framework for tracking family and child wellness outcomes — and again, Mr. Speaker, I apologize to the Leader of the Official Opposition, but it will include statistical information. We want to have the statistical information because we want to know if these things are actually working. The statistics that we provide will be thoroughly vetted by department officials and employees who have absolutely nothing to gain by fudging, shall we say, the statistics. I am sure they will be interesting to look at in the coming years.

I don't know if any of the members opposite, or members in the House have had the opportunity to look at the Yukoners in the "Yukon Passions" video series, but it's an absolutely wonderful series that I recommend if you get a chance to look at them.

We have developed guidelines on healthy eating for day-cares, we are promoting healthy food and beverages in recreation facilities, and we're training adults to be allies for youth

leaders. We see this investment in keeping with our children's, families' and communities' objectives of being healthy and one that will reap immediate and long-term benefits. When we do need support because of health challenges, we want to make sure that we are using the most appropriate services with the least intervention, the least cost, and the intervention that will keep Yukoners as independent as possible for as long as possible.

Our investments in home care do just that: they keep people out of hospital, they allow early discharge from expensive acute-care beds, they increase people's ability to self-manage their care, and it supports our approach to community-based care. This year alone we have included 429 additional dollars to home care in the territory — and this is all over the territory; it isn't only in the city or in the municipalities. It's all over the territory. It's in addition to a budget increase that we did last year and I'm sure this is something that we will look at in continuing years.

When higher level care is needed, though, we need to be there and with the increasing population and the increasingly aging population that we are experiencing here in the Yukon, we need to be responsible and plan for the long-term care beds that we will need in the future. That brings me to another comment made by the Leader of the Official Opposition and that was dealing with the expansion of the Whitehorse General Hospital and what a horrendous thing this concept plan was.

I just want to point out that the expansion plan or the proposal developed by Whitehorse General Hospital and the board was developed by a hospital board that is very representative of the Yukon population. That board is made up of First Nation representatives; it is made up of representatives recommended by municipalities in the territory; it is made up of a number of community representatives, as well as government employees and any number of other organizations. It's broadly representative of the Yukon population. These folks on the board took the time out of what I'm sure is a very busy schedule to work together with a consultant to develop a plan that they felt was something that would see the Yukon through in terms of acute medical care — not only for the next five years or 10 years, but they look 20 years and 25 years down the road.

As I said here in the House once before, it was a concept plan. The Leader of the Official Opposition seems to be of the opinion that this is a plan that we're going to run out and implement or the Hospital Corporation is going to run out and implement tomorrow, and that's simply not the case. If we didn't do this type of planning — if we didn't actually take into consideration community views through these representatives — we would be taken to task for that. So they do the job and then they're taken to task for doing exactly what we would have been taken to task for. I don't understand the thought process there, Mr. Speaker, but it was an excellent concept plan. It was done in a number of stages and we as a government, in cooperation with the Yukon Hospital Corporation, have the ability to implement part of that plan, many parts of that plan, all of the plan or none of the plan, and that decision will be made in the years to come.

One of the other things that this budget will see is major investment in replacing the McDonald Lodge in Dawson City. This is also part of the future planning that is critical when it comes to the care of our elders, seniors and disabled citizens.

We are undertaking a feasibility study that will determine our long-term needs for care beds and services. It will include a functional program for a new continuing care facility. That whole feasibility study is currently underway and it will provide some guidance or some information — dare I say it will provide some statistical information for us to utilize in future planning. The care that we provide throughout the whole spectrum of our continuing care services is the best in the country and that has been proven by the recent accreditation report that we received. The outstanding level of performance and organizational commitment by all staff in our organization was also recognized. Our home care and palliative care programs were also recognized when the accreditation with exemplary standing was approved.

My department is also committed to quality services and continuing improvement and the dedication of those staff in achieving this honour is a really good example of that commitment. Programs and services that we provide are not cheap, and they consume a healthy portion of our department's daily spending.

As a responsible government, we are looking at that issue very carefully on an ongoing basis. If we find that a program does not suit the needs of Yukoners, or if it's not meeting the requirements as set out by that program when it was initiated, we evaluate them and, if necessary, we make changes or eliminate them.

Part of that will be apparent when we look at per diem rates for people currently living in long-term care facilities here in the territory. The Yukon currently has the lowest per diem rates for long-term care in the country, except for Nunavut, where those services are free. Our per diems haven't changed in more than 20 years, and the economics of people's personal incomes and their ability to pay for their care have changed substantially. We are considering what is a fair and reasonable per diem rate for residents who make our long-term care facilities their home. As the Premier indicated, the new health facilities in Watson Lake and Dawson City are part of that review of long-term care here in the territory.

I'd like to speak just for a couple minutes about the Auditor General's report on the Yukon Hospital Corporation, as well as other circumstances that provide us with opportunity, as I said during a recent press conference, to really examine the efficiencies and the innovative approaches to community service delivery that we can achieve, not only in the Whitehorse General Hospital, but the Dawson City and Watson Lake health care facilities as well.

We are going to focus on a more integrated service in these areas, one that considers the community-based approach that's better grounded in an assessment of the community's needs. As part of the recent auditor's report response, I did say that we will be doing an assessment of the community needs, both in Watson Lake and in Dawson City, and we will use those as-

sessments to guide us in how we staff and operate the health care facilities in those two communities.

The government has also identified in this budget a \$27-million one-time lump-sum payment to the Yukon Hospital Corporation toward the cost of financing their four major capital projects. Those four major capital projects are the health care facilities in Dawson and in Watson Lake, the Crocus Ridge building that was recently completed and renovations to the Thomson Centre that allowed us to open a number of long-term care beds in that facility as well.

We see this \$27-million one-time lump-sum payment as an opportunity to reduce the total interest cost to the Hospital Corporation by approximately \$12 million over the full 15-year amortization of those loans. We see it as a win situation. The government had \$27 million that we could contribute and, as I think the Premier put it, it's much like a person who has a mortgage on their home who is allowed to make a one-time lump-sum payment once a year or once every term of their mortgage. We've taken the opportunity to provide this \$27 million to the Hospital Corporation. It will trim the O&M costs of both of those hospitals as well because they will not be required to service the larger debt.

We also are very proud of the fact that the department and the Hospital Corporation have increased their collaboration to ensure a sound debt-reduction plan for the corporation. We are also going to look at ways to reduce the overall cost curve of increasing health expenditures here in the territory. As we move toward greater community delivery and better integration between Health and Social Services, we must make sure that our health and human resources are in place to respond to our user needs.

Access to health care requires having the most appropriate health professionals in the right place at the right time, doing what they're best trained to do and working to their full scope. Having said that, we are also stepping up our efforts to recruit physicians to our communities and we're paying special attention to supporting international medical graduates — as I've said on a number of other opportunities — to achieve their full licensing goal. That's why we have recently concluded an agreement with the Alberta College of Physicians and Surgeons, and we're looking forward to working with that group in assessing international medical graduates. We're also talking about licensed practical nurses, registered nurses, expanded-scope nurses, pharmacists, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, lab and imaging technologists, social workers and any others — all who make essential contributions to our health care system. We must ensure that we are using their talents to the fullest possible order, in order to increase access to health services for all of our citizens.

To that end, we will be looking at the pharmacare program, we'll be looking at an implementation plan for introducing nurse practitioners in various areas around the territory, and we'll be increasing our collaborative care approach, which offers us a unique approach to using our health care providers in a real team to improve patient care and making best use of their training — as an example, and as part of our implementation plan, we now have a nurse practitioner working in continuing

care. Innovative approaches, more efficient service delivery and better use of our professional staff is not limited to health services only. Better integration between our health and social services is evident in implementing the changes from the Alcohol and Drug Services program review and the recommendations of the acutely intoxicated persons at risk report.

Funding in this budget, for example, will include further transition to a medically supported detox — as I've said, this includes implementation of a new staffing model and additional front-line RNs and LPNs to ensure safe and effective care for clients in withdrawal. It will include purchasing of new equipment, supplies and pharmaceuticals and include the implementation of pharmacological protocols for when and how medications can be administered by nursing staff. As I said, we'll implement the protocols to determine when clients must be sent to the Whitehorse General Hospital emergency room and it will also increase physician hours.

I would also like to make a quick comment about our referred care clinic, which in the past has only operated on a 12-hours-per-week basis. On a trial basis we found that the referred care clinic was an excellent opportunity to engage clients who wouldn't always go to the hospital or, in some cases, would go too often to the hospital for a number of reasons that couldn't be effectively dealt with in an emergency room. The referred care clinic will include a number of health professionals, including a doctor, nurse and a social worker. It will include a number of health professionals who will expand their hours to 40 hours a week. The exact hours are not determined yet. We will have a physician and these health care professionals there on an on-going basis and we will attempt to redirect patients with complex problems or a multiplicity of problems that can't be effectively dealt with in the emergency room. Those are the people we would like to see come to this referred care clinic. I think over the next year we will see the use of that clinic expanding greatly, and hopefully we'll have a corresponding reduction in the use of the emergency room at the Whitehorse General Hospital.

These are some of the specific highlights for the Department of Health and Social Services that I would like to share at this time. There are a number of other things happening, one of which I am very proud, and that is the addition of \$200,000 to the parents of children with disabilities. This is a group that provides supports for their children and often, because of the fact that their children require almost daily supervision and care, many times one spouse is not able to work because they spend their whole time looking after a child with a disability. Sometimes even both are unable to work. I am very happy to see this addition for these parents because I think the longer we keep these children in their homes with their parents, the better it is for the children and for society as a whole.

We are also working in concert with the Yukon Housing Corporation to further reduce the red tape and complexity of the process where you have to go to one department to work on capital improvements and you go to another for small equipment or for general maintenance. We're trying to combine all of these things so that these people whose lives are very busy right now don't need to be chasing around the government to

have services provided for them. We hope to be able to announce something in the very near future that something has been worked out between Yukon Housing Corporation and the department that will alleviate those problems.

I look forward to more discussion during debate of the budget in Committee of the Whole and hopefully I'll be able to explain or talk about many of the other things that we're doing in the Department of Health and Social Services.

Ms. Stick: Mr. Speaker, it's a privilege to rise today representing the constituents of Riverdale South and speak to the budget speech that the Premier, the Minister of Finance, presented last week.

As with the other members speaking before me, I would like to talk a bit about my riding of Riverdale South. It is primarily residential, with a wide variety of housing options. There are apartments and all levels of apartments there. There are homes, many with the original homeowners still living in them. There are many new families. I see them every day going by, pushing their strollers and out for walks. We have the single-parent family units on Nisutlin Drive that were created by Whitehorse Housing — a welcome addition to this riding, and the neighbourhood has tried to make them feel welcome also. There is an apartment that houses seniors, who are my neighbours. We have row housing that has been newly converted to condos, which, unfortunately, displaced some families and individuals from affordable housing they could manage. I also have five schools, and I expect we will hear a lot of questions in the coming days on a couple of those.

There are small businesses, restaurants, neighbourhood pubs, a dance studio with more than 600 registered students, a fitness centre and daycare centres.

There are larger businesses, including a grocery store. This is a busy riding, with many coming to it to attend school, after-school programs, to visit our businesses, to access the Millennium Trail, the skateboard park and to visit, in the summer, our fish ladder and Chadburn Lake, or the ski trails in winter. It is a busy riding and one I am proud to represent.

This is my second Yukon Party budget that I have had the privilege to scrutinize. I thank the Minister of Health and Social Services and apologize ahead of time if I miss a few things that he has presented today that I had not heard or seen in the budget documents.

After 11 years in power, the public is tired of hearing the same Yukon Party government employing the same approaches. This was clear in the Budget Address. It employs the tactics of divide-and-conquer and picks winners and losers, rather than listening to all views and trying to find common ground on which to move forward.

There is another way. There is another option, and the public has woken up. The Yukon public is writing letters, demonstrating, making their voices heard. They are not content to take the government's word on everything. They are not prepared to give the government a blank cheque.

This government can count on the public to be watching very carefully, and the public can count on the NDP to hold the government accountable, challenge them, and take these issues

that matter out to Yukoners and to listen to them and their opinions.

I decided to look at what I said last year. I read my response to the speech, and I must say that I could have stood here and just about re-read the same thing. I have the same concerns about the same issues in this 2013-14 budget. As the legendary ballplayer and manager Yogi Berra said, "It's déjà vu all over again."

I reviewed last year's budget speech, and I couldn't help but note that some of the same announcements were made, word for word.

If that's not proof of a tired government, I don't know what is.

Last year's budget highlights included resource sharing with First Nations — something discussed today during Question Period. It talked about planning for a major cold storage project for Archives and money to address deficiencies at Yukon aerodromes. Some of these budget speech announcements never saw the light of day; others are a repeat of last year. My colleague, the Member for Whitehorse Centre, has spoken of the Official Opposition's problems with this budget. It is a record amount of money and there are good expenditures within it — some of them I'm very pleased to hear. Unfortunately, we see no progress in addressing many of the issues that we heard when we listened to the citizens from around the Yukon on our recent community visits. This government has made little progress at all in creating affordable housing. We see no interest in tackling some of the major issues and challenges that will be difficult in leaner times, like poverty reduction, renewable energy projects, and action on affordable housing.

We are still waiting on a concrete housing strategy that will address the needs of the homeless in our territory. In the last year, there have been many announcements and some projects started, but we have not seen any new beds opened that address this ongoing problem. Instead, people continue to find shelter at the Salvation Army on mats and bunk beds in crowded conditions, or they couch-surf with friends or families, or live in hidden places in our communities. Yukoners have been asking for a strategy that addresses housing first. Public meetings in the last year and conferences and presentations that have occurred over this have shown concrete examples of how housing first works and how it could be applied to this territory. Today, and starting tomorrow, we have two conferences — one on tiny houses and the other is the Northern Housing Conference. These are good things. These are groups from across the Yukon coming together again to speak about housing and how we make it available to all Yukoners.

I don't see homelessness addressed in the budget. We have heard of planning for new Salvation Army facilities, but is that the best plan? Is that what we want? Is that what Yukoners are asking for? Where is a plan that has measurable targets and is evidenced-based? Other levels of government in the Yukon are making this a priority. NGOs are trying to address these concerns and provide support to Yukoners. The Official Opposition in our offices are constantly meeting with and hearing from individuals, groups and families who are struggling to

find affordable and appropriate housing. With record-high median rents and ongoing low vacancy numbers, people continue to experience difficulty finding appropriate housing. I hear from citizens and workers wanting to live here but returning to other provinces due to lack of affordable or, for that matter, any housing.

My colleague for Takhini-Kopper King spoke already about the great failure that was Lot 262, or now referred to as "Lot 1547". This was the innovative approach to providing affordable rental units. It was announced last year with great fanfare, but now, quietly sold off with no promise of affordable rentals. In the meantime, housing and condo sale prices remain at an all-time high and out of the reach of too many Yukoners.

For many Yukoners, paying the rent becomes the priority over putting food on the table. The Whitehorse Food Bank has seen a steady increase in its numbers to now over 1,200 individuals a month requesting food. When they receive food, they only receive food for three days, so who knows how long they're going without? This essential community service continues on the strength of volunteers and community donations. The same goes for church-run soup kitchens that serve families and individuals on weekends. In a prosperous economy, everyone should benefit. Individuals and families — hard-working people — should not have to depend on these services to put food on their tables in front of their children. These are the struggling Yukon families and individuals we hear from.

The Minister of Health and Social Services talked about increased funding for children and families with children with disabilities, and I'm glad to hear that because the number of children with disabilities receiving services through Family and Children's Services and Adult Services continues to rise. What is missing is the long-term planning, the birth-to-death planning and funding for residential services, for day programs, for professional training, group homes and approved homes. These numbers are not going down; they are only going up. There are plans somewhere on a shelf that identified what the government needed to do and to look at to meet those needs in both Family and Children's Services and Adult Services. Many of those children currently receiving services are going to require the same or more when they turn into adults.

How are we going to meet these ever-increasing numbers and needs? Where is our vision? Where is this government's long-term planning and strategy for these families and for these individuals?

We want to see this government develop a strategy with measurable goals, clear objectives and outcomes. I've said this before: you can't manage what you don't measure. To me, this means clear goals with outcomes, things that we can look at and say, "Yes, we achieved this." "Yes, we created that." "Six more people are able to attend a day program." These are important. These individuals, families and caregivers are the Yukoners we're listening to.

With respect to health care, a growing number of individuals and families are not receiving the patient-centered care and the wellness support they deserve. We see in this budget funding for a doctor-recruitment project to the tune of \$8.5 million. We don't even know the outcomes of the last \$12 million spent

on this initiative. Did we get more doctors? Did they stay? Have they moved to the communities?

Einstein defined insanity as doing the same thing over and over and expecting different results. Where are our outcomes? Where are the goals? A lot of money is being thrown at this problem, but without the strategic lens — without the measured outcomes. As of last week, it is our understanding that the Yukon Medical Council board has resigned. Every board member has resigned. This is the board that licenses doctors to come here. They're the ones who oversee the physicians. What is the government going to do about that? When will we have the discussion about collaborative care and different, economical and effective patient-centred care that can be provided across the territory? I'm pleased to hear about the clinic hours going to 40 hours a week. I am sure the staff who work there will feel relieved that they have a more permanent position with more hours they can be working. They were a dedicated group, but it was difficult to keep staff.

We have seen hospitals built without the appropriate planning, without the thorough needs assessment, and paid for by borrowing funds that now have to be assumed by the government with a \$27-million payment. These hospitals are over-budget and well past their opening date. What doctors are going to be recruited for these and what staff? The Office of the Auditor General believes that the O&M will triple in cost on these hospitals. Is this really the best use for Yukoners?

People are concerned about not having doctors or health care providers who can help them with their chronic conditions. The NDP want to talk about a different way of providing health care — a way that is patient- and family-centred and not a hospital emergency room approach. There are Yukon orphaned patients and Yukoners with chronic conditions we are listening to.

I would be remiss if I did not bring up the issue in my riding of the replacement of F.H. Collins Secondary School. Despite their input and planning, in meetings, students, teachers, council, administrators and parents have been confused by the always-changing plans to build a new school.

The school construction was announced prior to the election in 2011 and it was supposed to be ready to receive students this fall. Now, who knows? The government announces their decision to scrap the design; we've already spent \$5.5 million on planning and infrastructure work. Now they want to move to a campus-style building and proclaim this as being fiscally responsible. To call the cancellation of the tender for construction of a new school "good fiscal management" is a stretch. Are we looking at new infrastructure? Are we going to see the digging up again of Lewes Boulevard in front of the school for new water and sewer because the school will be placed somewhere different? There are a lot of questions surrounding the government's actions on F.H. Collins and this government has a lot of explaining to do. The Yukon public can count on the NDP Official Opposition to use our opportunities in this sitting of the Legislative Assembly to hold the government accountable on this file. I personally intend to continue to go to council meetings and listen to the concerns of administration, teachers, parents and school councils.

As I said earlier, there is a lot in this budget that is commendable and I would support, but from what I have just gone through, there is too much missing. There are too many Yukoners missing from this budget — young families, the homeless, families and individuals with disabilities, caregivers. I don't see in the budget where those needs are being addressed. As I said, with a government that proclaims economic excellence and the fact that there is so much money — I would have hoped to have seen more in the budget to address these needs of the Yukoners who live here, who participate, who pay taxes and still struggle.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Mr. Speaker, it gives me pleasure to rise this afternoon to speak to the budget for 2013-14 — or I should say, more technically correct in my verbiage, "the 2013-14 main estimates". In speaking in support of it, I'd like to talk about a number of things, some relevant to my Department of Energy, Mines and Resources — although I will save some of that for my speech in Committee of the Whole. I'd also like to talk about some projects in my riding.

To begin with, what I would like to point out to all members of this Assembly in context — and I know that members — in particular, we've heard from the Official Opposition — and it should hardly come as a surprise that the Official Opposition doesn't like what the government's presenting. It's hardly unique to the Yukon, and I suspect that, regardless of what we had in the budget, we would hear a very similar narrative because I suspect they write the narrative before they even see the budget.

What I do want to point out though is that in looking at the situation Yukon is in, for starters, we should not lose sight of the fact that the Yukon is not isolated in the world or as part of the world economy. There was news this morning of the situation in Cyprus — the situation with the banks and with freezing people's bank accounts. As I understand from news reports, they had frozen the ability for people to take out money at all and then allowed them to take out a mere \$100 in cash, which, for those of us who are used to dealing with a Canadian context, fortunately, that is unfathomable, and fortunately there is no prospect in the Yukon or Canada of being in a similar situation. With Cyprus on the verge of defaulting on their debts, this is just the latest story in the European crisis of country after country that has faced the prospect of sovereign default and the country being potentially forced to leave the European Union. Greece, of course, has been a notable example.

Spain and Italy have also had issues, and there are many European countries that are facing high unemployment — in excess of 25 percent unemployment is quite common in parts of Europe from the latest I have read. In some cases, in the Spanish context, if memory serves, an article from a few months ago, I believe, cited youth unemployment at 50 percent. I apologize to members that I don't recall the age at which they drew the line on youth, but I believe they were defining them as young adults in their 20s.

So the Yukon's economic success is something that should not be taken for granted. It is much better, in my opinion, to have the challenges associated with a strong economy than the

very severe, devastating problems that attach to any jurisdiction that has a weak or collapsing economy. We have taken a number of steps to increase the management of activities where economic activities are taking place that can potentially have an impact on others. We have taken steps to increase the management to improve our baseline data collection, and we will continue to do what is necessary in those areas.

The members, particularly the Official Opposition, I think, should not get so fixated on their ideology and their rhetoric and their assumption that there are only two ways to manage the territory — either develop it all or protect it all from development. That is what we see — I think it's fair to say — as often being the narrative that they set up both in this House and in debate publicly. We have taken an approach that, if I may quote from the budget speech: "We believe environmental protection starts with effective regulation that sets high standards while allowing responsible use. This balanced approach is the best way to manage most areas of Yukon." That being said, we have taken steps to create large protected areas and parks and we intend to create more.

We have taken an approach, including in the much-debated Peel region, of the starting point being to look at how you manage activities and protect the values in the area, how responsible use can be allowed while providing greater protection for existing users.

I would point out — because the facts have often gotten lost in some of the rhetoric — that the proposed creation of restricted-use wilderness areas in the Peel region allows for potential economic activity while capping the maximum footprint of all activity at significantly less than one percent of each and every land management unit to which that would be applied.

Doing this would ensure that 99.8 percent of the areas remain pristine wilderness while allowing for the potential of responsible uses that provide significant economic benefit to Yukoners and preserving both pristine wilderness and economic opportunities for future generations. Also, although it has often been forgotten by some members of this Assembly, all of the potential modifications government proposed and went out for public comments on protect river corridors by not allowing any new staking or surface dispositions of a permanent nature within all of the landscape visible from the rivers.

It's important to also note that the economic values in that area, as mentioned in the budget speech, an assessment done by government staff of the estimated volume of iron ore in a conceptual pit that was done by the owner years ago, estimated just 15 percent of the total estimate of the deposit. Based on the five-year average price of iron for this fraction of the deposit — 1.68 billion tonnes — the market value of that is \$139.7 billion and that is just 15 percent of the largest deposit in that area.

So again, Mr. Speaker, I will not take too much more time to debate this matter; I'm sure we'll have further opportunity during this session. What I want to emphasize again is that, as a starting point, we believe that environmental protection is about good regulations that set appropriately high standards in most areas of the territory and that within some areas of the

territory, we do recognize there are high enough environmental values or sensitivity in those areas to warrant creating large protected areas and parks. In fact, our record of creating protected areas and habitat protection areas stands up very well against any government of any stripe in Yukon's history.

In closing that comment, I would just like to again emphasize that while recognizing there are challenges associated with a strong economy that do need to be dealt with, when looking at the rest of the world, it is very important to recognize that, with the Yukon compared to the rest of Canada and Canada compared to the rest of the world, the Yukon is not an island — we are not isolated from the world's problems, but we have been successful and managed during a period of worldwide economic downturn that has caused real hardship in many developed countries around the world.

We have had a period of actual economic growth. We should not take that for granted. We should not slam the door to that activity occurring in the future. We should take responsible, prudent, balanced measures to ensure that while economic activity occurs, we are also protecting the pristine wilderness that is so very important to all of us and that, for many of us, is really the reason we live here.

In terms of fiscal management, looking at the problems also that have caught up with a number of other jurisdictions, I am very pleased about the \$27 million allotted to paying down the loans that had been accrued by the Yukon Hospital Corporation. This increases government's fiscal capacity to respond to future needs and future challenges and it will reduce the debt servicing charges by a total of \$39 million in the long term, so I believe this is a very prudent fiscal investment.

I would also note, in terms of the financial accountability of this government, that this year is the second year — the second fiscal year in a row — that we have included in the budget a summary of the consolidated information for the Yukon government, which includes not only departments but also corporations, including the Hospital Corporation, Yukon College, Yukon Development Corporation, Yukon Housing Corporation and the Yukon Liquor Corporation.

There are a few things I would like to touch on, as well. There are investments made within this budget in continuing investment and increased annual investment in fire protection. I'd like to thank the Minister of Community Services for her work in that area. I welcome the increased budget for the Fire Marshal's Office and I'm pleased that this year there's \$610,000 to purchase a new pumper tanker and a new tanker for the Yukon territorial fire service. I'm also very pleased that this will result in a new tanker for the Hootalinqua fire hall, following the purchase last year of one for the Ibx Valley fire hall.

I know that has been very appreciated by volunteers and is a very important tool in helping the volunteers of these two very large volunteer fire protection areas to respond better to emergency situations when they occur.

Other investments, as noted in the budget for volunteer fire department gear and equipment upgrades, total another \$387,000 and, in addition to the capital, the \$1.7 million in the Fire Marshal's Office to increase deputy fire marshal training

for volunteer firefighters and continue public awareness campaigns are very important. I thank the Minister of Community Services and all in the department and the Fire Marshal's Office who have worked on this for their efforts in this area.

I am also pleased to see the continued investment in the Hot Springs Road. I would like to thank the Minister of Highways and Public Works for his work on that file, include thanking him for the additional public consultation that was agreed to and committed to — to allow property owners who had expressed a concern about the impact of planned trail development to have additional opportunity, along with all other residents of the area, to be involved in public consultation on whether trails should be developed or not and, if they should be, what they should look like.

I know that I'm trying, and I know the Minister of Highways and Public Works is also trying, to ensure that the end outcome is one that reflects as best possible the needs and interests of the community and my constituents in the area. I am pleased that \$2 million is allocated in this budget for the second year of the project to reconstruct, resurface and widen the Hot Springs Road. Of course, that is fulfilling another election commitment made by the Yukon Party in our platform and made by me to constituents during the 2011 election campaign.

I am also very pleased to see the continued work on that community well project for the Deep Creek area that the Minister of Community Services and her staff have been working on. I am pleased to see the addition of an additional investment in monitoring wells to make sure that the area is appropriate for development and I appreciate those efforts. I would also like to commend the Minister of Health and Social Services for the additional investment to support families of children with disabilities and the continued work on improving our access to physicians.

I am pleased to welcome the investments made by the Minister of Environment for the creation of a new campground on Atlin Lake. I am pleased to see \$780,000 allocated for this. I know that this is an area that was identified years ago and it will provide a significant opportunity for Yukoners to enhance their recreational opportunities in an additional area with an additional campground. I am pleased as well with the work that has been done by staff of the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources for continuing to make the Gunnar Nilsson and Mickey Lammers Research Forest more accessible and more usable by the public, particularly by my constituents in the area, by further enhancing the family-friendly focus of this area by adding a forestry-themed playground early this year.

I would like to note, of course, that this follows the work that has been ongoing since 2008 when we first began the work to open up the forest for public use and make a number of trail improvements that have occurred. That of course has involved work, not only effort by the Forest Management branch but it has also been supported by Department of Environment and the Y2C2 program as well — for which I believe the acronym is Yukon Youth Conservation Corps — but I hope I've got the acronym correctly.

Mr. Speaker, additional areas within this budget where I am pleased to see the continued investment are in improving

our alcohol and drug treatment services — the \$900,000 allocated for the Sarah Steele Building replacement. Beginning the planning for that is of course a step toward fulfilling a significant platform commitment that we made in the 2011 election campaign. This is an important part of ensuring that Alcohol and Drug Services meet the needs of Yukon citizens.

I am pleased to see the investment in the Betty's Haven second-stage housing project with an additional \$1.2 million as part of the total of \$4.5 million allocated for this work.

I would also like to thank the Minister of Justice for the work that has been done on the land titles modernization project and thank his staff for the work they've done. That area is also very important to ensuring that the Yukon's economy functions and ensuring that land transactions are done and recorded in a timely manner and do not hold up the opportunity for housing activities. To that end, I'm also pleased to note, as you may have heard, that Lot 1547 — formerly known as Lot 262 — has indeed sold for more than the appraised value of the site. We did try an innovative approach for that site based on what we had heard in the expression for interest stage for that area. We also heard in the follow up with those who had expressed interest at that stage that some of the site conditions, including the power line, did not make it attractive for an affordable housing or mixed market approach as had been originally envisioned. So, to that end, we determined that, while that approach might work for another site, it would not be the best approach to try and restructure for that area.

So we put the lot out. That is the reality when you try innovative approaches — they sometimes need adjustment — but we're not going to be afraid to continue to take good steps to look at where we can improve how we do things.

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

Debate on motion for second reading of Bill No. 10 accordingly adjourned

The House adjourned at 5:30 p.m.

The following Sessional Papers were tabled March 25, 2013:

33-1-71
Ombudsman 2012 Annual Report (Speaker Laxton)

33-1-72
Information and Privacy Commissioner 2012 Annual Report (Speaker Laxton)

33-1-73
Yukon College Annual Report 2011-12 and Summary Financial Results (Unaudited) for the year ended June 30, 2012 (Kent)