

Yukon Legislative Assembly
Whitehorse, Yukon
Monday, November 18, 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.

TRIBUTES

In recognition of the Yukon Geoscience Forum

Hon. Mr. Kent: Today I rise to pay tribute to the 41st annual Yukon Geoscience Forum. From November 16 to 20, miners, geologists, entrepreneurs and the Yukon public will come together to showcase the latest scientific, geological and other discoveries and industry developments.

This type of event is very important. Even though activity across the global mining sector has declined, there still remains a significant interest in Yukon. This industry thrives on having a dependable regulatory environment, a promising resource base and an opportunity to share information and make connections.

The Yukon Chamber of Mines does an excellent job of organizing the forum and I'd like to acknowledge the hard work they do each year to make it happen. The Yukon government also plays a number of roles in the forum. Government geologists from the Yukon Geological Survey are delivering talks, displaying posters of their latest research and, along with regulators, are participating in conversations with the public and industry members.

The YGS provides baseline information on Yukon's geology and mineral potential to support exploration efforts and land and resource management decisions. We support mineral industry associations like the Yukon Chamber of Mines and the Klondike Placer Miners Association. We give them assistance and work on joint initiatives to increase public awareness of the benefits of the mining industry. We have made significant investments in infrastructure development and incentives to assist the mining industry over the past number of years.

All of these government initiatives are discussed at the Geoscience Forum. The knowledge-sharing that occurs over these four days assists us collectively in moving the industry forward in a sustainable and knowledge-based manner.

A number of ancillary events also occur at the forum. On Saturday afternoon, the Minister of Economic Development and Environment and I were able to participate in the Yukon Gold Mining Alliance investor forum. I know that yesterday, the Klondike Placer Miners Association worked to put on an all-day placer mining forum discussing all issues that are important to that industry. This evening is the banquet where the Leckie Awards will be presented.

I would also like to take the opportunity to recognize at this time and thank the mining companies and their service providers for all of the investments they make in the Yukon community, from the MRI and CT scanner at the hospital, to assisting with student attendance initiatives, to sponsoring minor sports teams — those who rely on this industry to make their living help to make our community very much a better place. To them a thank you, and I encourage all Yukoners who can to take in any of the public events that are being offered at the Geoscience Forum over the next number of days.

Mr. Tredger: Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute on behalf of the Yukon New Democrats to the Yukon Geoscience Forum currently being held at the High Country Convention Centre.

The Yukon Geoscience Forum is a showcase of achievements, challenges, hopes and dreams of our minerals economy. I was fortunate to attend Saturday's investor forum presented by Yukon Gold Mining Alliance in partnership with the Yukon Chamber of Mines. I found it very informative to hear from a cross-section of junior mining companies of their concerns, their hopes and their potential projects.

It was heartening to hear their visions and, perhaps most importantly, their enthusiasm and belief in their projects and the mining industry in the Yukon.

I also had the opportunity on Sunday, Family Day, to visit a series of educational displays and activities for kids and families. It was a real treat to see the enthusiasm and energy from presenters as well as kids as they explored their environment. The enthusiasm and knowledge of all the presenters was inspirational and infectious. Their stories and obvious love of what they were doing was inspiring. The hands-on, interactive booths perked the interest of many of the younger generation. Thank you to the staff from the departments of Environment and Energy, Mines and Resources for their time, for their knowledge, and most of all, for their teaching.

I was only able to drop in to the Yukon Placer Forum for a short time this year, but did get to renew my acquaintance with several placer miners and those involved in the exploration aspect of the industry. I admire them and their commitments to Yukon and Yukon communities. The contributions of the placer mining industry to Yukon and Yukon people are many and they continue to be a reliable cornerstone of our economy.

I also got to see many of the booths and displays at the trade show proper. I was especially pleased to see many of the booths and companies represented promoting job and career opportunities for Yukon men and women. During my visit to the forum, I was reminded that now is the time we must take advantage of the current lull in activities to fully prepare for emerging opportunities. Leadership from industry, from First Nations and from the Yukon government is critical.

Now is the time for land use planning and the ensuing certainty. Now is the time to make sure our regulatory regime provides a timely, profitable and responsible mining industry.

I heard again the mining incentive program, designed to encourage exploration in the Yukon, continues to provide instrumental seed monies for exploration.

The program was developed by an NDP government for just such times as we are now experiencing and I am pleased to learn this valuable program will be continued and indeed expanded.

During my career in the Yukon, I have been fortunate to work with and alongside many placer miners, as well as with members of the quartz mining industry and their families. I have met them in Mayo, in Dawson, in Carmacks and in Keno, along our rivers and along our creek beds. I have taught their children in our schools. I have worked with them on school councils and coached teams with them. I salute their contributions to our communities. I have met them in local welding shops, in tire shops and mechanic shops. I have worked with them during presentations to children in our schools. I know and appreciate the many ways the mining industry and those working in the industry contribute to our Yukon community and to our economy.

I take this opportunity to congratulate and thank members of the mining community for their commitment to responsible mining in the Yukon. Throughout the events, lectures and displays that I witnessed on the weekend I was inspired and am fortunate to hear from so many people who so obviously love their work and are committed to the Yukon.

The Yukon Geoscience Forum and week is an opportunity to meet with people enthusiastic about the mining industry, to hear their concerns, their hopes and their potential projects, their visions and perhaps, most importantly, their commitment and belief in their projects and the mining industry in the Yukon.

The annual Geoscience Forum is an important forum for the placer and quartz mining industry. It's an important venue to communicate new ideas, share successes and display the success of our mining industry. It continues through the week, and I encourage everyone to drop by and take advantage of the work on display, walk through the show, enjoy the displays, visit with the people engaged in the industry and help celebrate the successes.

Mr. Silver: I rise today on behalf of the Liberal caucus to also pay tribute to the 41st annual Geoscience Forum and tradeshow. Mining has come a long way from the Klondike Gold Rush. Mining has been the lifeblood of Yukon for over 100 years and is still with us today. Local companies have spearheaded a recent exploration boom, which is considered to be the largest geochemistry experiment in North American history, mostly due to local crews such as GroundTruth Exploration in Klondike. After exploration these prospectors have reached out to junior companies to use their expertise on the ground floor in different capacities — new technologies like GPS and mapping software and drones, for example. With these new techniques, mining and exploration have continued to adapt and to develop.

I think it's worth mentioning that we owe a lot to the efforts of Shawn Ryan, and I'd like to thank him for his

entrepreneurial spirit in this industry and for keeping the initiatives local. Isaac Fage's GroundTruth and Tao Henderson's Talus Exploration are just two examples of local companies that would not be in existence without his vision. They are local, they buy local and that's the way that this industry prospers.

The Geoscience Forum and Trades Show is a great time for the mining industry to gather, showcase their developments in mining and exploration and come forward with their counterparts and companies to share knowledge and new technologies. It is also a time for the industry to come forward and talk about concerns from an investment perspective. For mining companies to continue to invest in the Yukon, we must be able to offer regulatory certainty, road accessibility and significant power. We must also offer skilled labour within the territory so Yukon benefits from job creation in the mining industry.

I would like to congratulate and thank members of the mining community for responsible mining and exploration. I would also like to congratulate the Yukon Chamber of Mines for all of their hard work and commitment. On a final note, I'd just like to see my colleagues join me tonight with the mining community at the Yukon Women in Mining reception in the Kwanlin Dun Cultural Centre.

In recognition of the Governor General's Academic Medal recipients

Hon. Ms. Taylor: I rise today of behalf of the Legislative Assembly to recognize persistence and excellence in academic achievement among Yukoners.

The Governor General's Academic Medal was first established in 1873 by Lord Dufferin, Canada's third Governor General. For more than 125 years, the Governor General's Academic Medals have recognized the outstanding scholastic achievements of students in Canada. They are awarded to the student graduating with the highest average from a high school, approved college or university program. Pierre Trudeau, Tommy Douglas, Kim Campbell, Robert Bourassa, Robert Stanfield and Gabrielle Roy are just some of the people who have received the Governor General's Academic Medal at the start of a life of accomplishment.

Today the medals are awarded at four distinct levels: bronze at the secondary school level, college bronze at the post-secondary diploma level, silver at the undergraduate level, and gold at the graduate level.

To date, 155 Yukon high school students have received the bronze medal in recognition of top marks among their graduating classes. In 2012, Jesse Vigliotti became the first Yukon College grad to receive the Governor General's Academic Medal in the college bronze category upon graduating from a renewable resources management program. This year, Diane Larkin was awarded the college bronze medal after achieving top marks among all Yukon College grads when she completed the early childhood development program.

Earlier this month, the name of another Yukon resident was added to the prestigious list of Governor General's

Academic Award winners. Catherine Jones has been a labour market development officer with the Department of Education since this past September. She was in Toronto earlier this month to reunite with classmates and to receive her PhD after six years of economic, labour and religious studies at the University of Toronto.

As I understand, Catherine initially declined her invitation to the graduation ceremony, but when Catherine's professors at the University of Toronto learned she wasn't planning on attending the convocation, they called her up and shared with her something that was supposed to be a surprise on graduation day. Catherine's marks were the highest of all graduate students at the University of Toronto. She had won the Governor General's Academic Gold Medal, the most prestigious award that a student in a Canadian school can receive. Needless to say, Catherine's professors convinced her to make a whirlwind trip to Toronto to receive the award.

So, after six intense years of studies, Catherine ought to be very proud of this very important accomplishment. Just completing the PhD program is difficult. Many people start down the path and they never finish. Catherine said herself that had she known at the beginning just how difficult and long the process was going to be, she probably would have walked away from the program. But she didn't and that's the case in point. One day she found herself at the halfway point and just kept going. That persistence paid off. Catherine credits her family, her friends and colleagues for inspiring her to continue with her studies when the going got tough. She says she is humbled by the recognition this award brings.

This accomplishment is indeed outstanding. We are all very pleased to offer our most sincere congratulations to Catherine and to all other Yukoners who have been awarded the Governor General's Academic Medal.

Joining us here today in the gallery is Catherine Jones herself. Anton Solomon, who works alongside Catherine with labour market programs and services in the Department of Education, and her friend, Eric Moreau as well. I would ask all members to join with us in a warm welcome to Catherine and congratulations.

Applause

Speaker: Introduction of visitors.
Are there any returns or documents for tabling?

TABLING RETURNS AND DOCUMENTS

Hon. Mr. Dixon: I have for tabling a news article from *Mineweb* entitled, "Mining issues dominate upcoming Yukon elections", dated September 23, 2011, which outlines the three political parties' platforms around mining.

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

- Are there any reports of committees?
- Are there any petitions for presentation?
- Are there any bills to be introduced?
- Are there any notices of motion?

NOTICES OF MOTIONS

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to recognize the importance to the mining industry of accessing global markets by working with the State of Alaska to ensure that Yukon companies maintain commercial access to the ports of Skagway and Haines.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon, pursuant to section 2 of the *Public Inquiries Act*, to cause a public inquiry to be made into the death by mixed drug toxicity of Teresa Ann Scheunert at the Watson Lake hospital, as a matter of public concern.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to incorporate into its housing action plan a Housing First approach that includes the following principles:

- (1) no housing readiness requirements;
- (2) choice for clients;
- (3) individualized support services;
- (4) harm reduction; and
- (5) social and community integration.

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

QUESTION PERIOD

Question re: Coroner's report re death at Watson Lake hospital

Ms. Stick: Mr. Speaker, last week the family of Teresa Scheunert travelled to Whitehorse to ensure that the death of their mother and sister by mixed drug toxicity at the Watson Lake Hospital, is properly and publicly investigated so that a similar tragedy never happens again. They left empty-handed, Mr. Speaker. They did not receive any indication from this government that all aspects of the system failure that resulted in Teresa's death have been examined, let alone repaired.

The system let down Ms. Scheunert and nothing can change that fact. But we can do right by her family by ensuring all parts of the system are investigated and fixed. Now that the minister has met with the family and heard the whole story, will the Government of Yukon call for a public inquiry into the death of Teresa Ann Scheunert in order to examine all aspects of the system that failed?

Hon. Mr. Graham: Mr. Speaker, as the member opposite indicated, I did meet with the family of Ms. Scheunert. Interestingly enough, during that meeting the family never indicated at any time that they were looking for a public inquiry.

As the member opposite should know full well, because I sent her information in a letter of September 3, the Yukon

Hospital Corporation is in the process of doing a patient safety review. That patient safety review — part of the process — includes disclosure to the patient and/or the family that an incident occurred, that the facts about what happened and what is being done to address it will be transmitted to the family. I am sure that once the patient safety review has been completed by the Hospital Corporation, what can be shared with the family as a result will be shared with them.

Throughout the whole questioning about this incident, I have felt that it puts the family in an extremely difficult position because, until Friday, I was unable to ascertain exactly what it was the family was looking for. Now that we've made that determination, we'll proceed and work with the family in the best way possible.

Ms. Stick: The patient safety review is a good thing but that's only one piece of the system failure. There were many pieces and many recommendations that came.

One of the more troubling aspects of this tragedy is the issuing of two different coroner's reports into the same death. We asked what happened in the few hours between the issuing of that and the coroner's request for the family to wait for a second one.

After claiming the independence of the coroner's office, the minister said last Friday, and I quote: "I'm speaking hypothetically, but I think that when the report was issued, those errors in fact were discovered by one of the groups that she gave the report to." The minister is telling Yukoners he thinks or speculates that either Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board or the Yukon Hospital Corporation called the independent coroner's office and got them to issue a second report.

Isn't this a good enough reason to call for a public inquiry?

Hon. Mr. Graham: The way the member opposite asked the question, it's as if the Yukon Hospital Corporation or the Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board had the ability to order the coroner to make changes in her report. Obviously that is not what happened.

Had the member opposite read either one of the information documents put out by the Yukon coroner, she would understand that the coroner found facts that were different from what were in her original report. She took steps, as is consistent with her authority, to correct the facts and issue a new report. It's as simple as that.

I speculated that she was advised of errors by one of the parties that received the initial report. It's as simple as that. If the coroner became aware of mistakes in her report or errors in fact, she had a responsibility to change them and she did, to her credit.

Ms. Stick: If the coroner was aware of mistakes, the appropriate action would have been to put an addendum to the original report with the changes and the reasons why those changes were there or to ask for a court order that the first be withdrawn.

Yukoners want to be confident that when mistakes happen, they are immediately and completely investigated so

that policies, procedures and practices can be repaired so no other tragedies occur.

Public safety is not arm's length; it's a matter of public concern. This government did not answer important questions about what triggers an autopsy, patients' rights or about the issuing of the two substantially different reports. The patient was let down and died in a publicly funded hospital.

For the sake of public safety and responsibility, will the government call for a public inquiry into the death of Teresa Ann Scheunert of mixed-drug toxicity at the Watson Lake Hospital?

Hon. Mr. Graham: Mr. Speaker, I have attempted over the last few days to answer in as open and transparent a manner as I possibly could all of the questions from the members opposite, in spite of the erroneous and sometimes difficult precludes leading up to the question.

I reiterate what I have said all along: the goal of the coroner — and if the member opposite had read the legislation, it is quite simple — is to provide facts. The coroner has the authority, not only under the statute but under common law, to correct her report if new facts come to light. Given that the goal of the coroner's report is to provide facts, the coroner has an obligation and a duty to do that. It's interesting to hear from the member opposite and to understand that she has now become an expert in coroner's reports or at least in processes under which a coroner's report may be prepared.

The coroner is a quasi-judicial office; she's independent. We don't interfere with the operation of that office and we respect the office of the coroner, unlike the member opposite.

Question re: Klondike Valley fire hall

Mr. Barr: Two weeks ago, the Minister of Community Services assured this House, the public and the residents of the Klondike Valley that the water treatment centre that is attached to the Klondike Valley Fire Department's hall was completed. It has come to my attention this weekend that this may not be the case. It would appear that the heat tape, a very basic part of the design and construction, was not put on the line coming in from the well. The waterline is now frozen and the residents of Rock Creek, Henderson Corner and Bear Creek are again without a water supply.

Is the minister aware that the new Klondike Valley water treatment facility is not fully functional at this time?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: In answer to the member's question, first of all I'd point out that I don't go out and personally do inspections on projects after they are completed, nor did my predecessor as Minister of Community Services. That's not the way the system works. Our understanding was that work on the water treatment centre at the Klondike Valley Fire Hall was complete.

If there is an issue around a portion freezing, the member indicated it was due to incorrect installation of heat tape. I won't take the member's conclusion at face value; there may be other issues around the situation, if indeed the water is frozen. I have not received a report of water there being frozen

nor have I heard a department assessment of the reasons for it being frozen — if indeed that is the case.

Mr. Barr: Mr. Speaker, I'm sure the folks who are without water are very comforted by the minister's remarks. I know in my hauling of water and having to do such things, to get to someplace and find that it's not available at 40 below is quite a hardship.

When can the residents of Rock Creek, Henderson Corner and Bear Creek expect to have this problem fixed and again have access to clean drinking water?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Again, as I noted to the member, not only am I not a building inspector, I don't personally go out to every community and deal with thawing frozen water lines. That can be a factor in cold weather. It is one that those who are responsible for managing those facilities do take very seriously and take appropriate steps to thaw them as soon as they can.

I would also point out the member that if indeed his objective here was to actually address a problem, he could have alerted me to this situation as soon as he became aware of it rather than waiting for Question Period and I would have immediately raised it with department officials. I would also point out that residents of Rock Creek, if they've not already done so, can contact our capable department staff or contact me if they have issue such as that. I'd urge the member to reconsider his approach. This would have been a much more constructive action on his part if he had contacted me right away rather than waiting until Question Period.

Mr. Barr: My replies sometimes take seven months and I think that this is a ministerial responsibility. I just found out myself.

Mr. Speaker, the water treatment system at the Klondike Valley Fire Department's hall is designed to be monitored by a certified technician. Word from the community is that there is no certified technician at this time. To be certified a person requires at least a week of training that is held in Whitehorse. The certified technician would also have to be available year-round to conduct regular testing of the water quality and the system.

What is the government doing, not only to ensure that the new water treatment facility works, but that the water is properly monitored and tested to ensure the health and safety of residents of Rock Creek, Henderson Corner and Bear Creek?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: I hear the member saying he just became aware of this problem but apparently had the time to write three questions, not the time to pick up the phone, call my office, and let me know that he'd received a complaint from a citizen that the water was frozen at Rock Creek. Again, as I indicated in my previous response, if we had been made aware of that earlier, I would have certainly forwarded that information to the department — and the information of who to call in the department is something that should be in the hands of the people who use the Rock Creek water treatment centre. If they don't have it they can certainly call me or one of our Community Affairs staff to get the contact information for those who are responsible for that.

I do certainly appreciate the challenge that's caused by water freezing up in cold weather. Like many Yukoners, I have experienced it myself and recognize that in those situations all anyone can do, whether it's your personal system or whether you're responsible for a government facility, is act as quickly as you can to come up with a solution to thaw a frozen waterline. That is one of the realities of living in Yukon, especially early in the season before there's a lot of snow as an insulating cover.

As far as the operations for the water treatment centre, I remind the member that we put in the water treatment centre to ensure that Yukoners in those areas have good quality drinking water.

Question re: Mining legislation

Mr. Silver: As we begin Geoscience week, I'd like to raise some questions that I'm hearing from the mining industry. While some problems on the mining horizon are beyond Yukon's control, there are many things that we can manage right here at home, and that includes regulatory certainty. The government has brought forth changes to our mining legislation this fall that raise many questions about security of tender and regulatory uncertainty.

A prominent local prospector said that he felt a tightening of the noose around his neck as he read the proposed changes. Several people in the industry are questioning why these changes are coming forth at all. They believe that the changes really had nothing to do with the recent Ross River court case and that this decision could have been implemented without them.

Why did the government choose to make changes to the legislation that have nothing to do with the recent court decision?

Hon. Mr. Kent: The amendments to each of the acts that are before the House right now are designed to meet the declarations of the Yukon Court of Appeal. They're going to establish the authority to designate areas where notification requirements would be required for low-level class 1 exploration activities.

That's what those amendments are designed to do: to meet the one declaration that was brought forward by the Court of Appeal here in the territory. The second declaration is being met through government-to-government discussions with the Ross River Dena Council and Yukon government as far as identifying lands in the Ross River area that will no longer be available for staking. We are meeting those two declarations and we're working to a court-imposed timeline of December 27 to complete that.

Mr. Silver: Mr. Speaker, the changes this government is proposing go well beyond what is required to implement the Ross River court decision. The minister has heard this repeatedly from the mining industry. The changes are very significant, open-ended and will cause significant regulatory uncertainty. A high-profile mining executive recently said Yukon has lost its reputation as a solid place to invest, even when times are good, and it's because of decisions like this one.

It is my understanding that industry and First Nations were working out a way to avoid major legislative changes. In the middle of that process, the government dropped this package of amendments without talking to anyone beforehand.

Why did the minister go the route of amending the legislation instead of working with both sides to come up with a solution that didn't introduce more regulatory uncertainty?

Hon. Mr. Kent: Again, these amendments to the act are designed to meet one of the declarations of the Yukon Court of Appeal ruling.

We rely on the advice of our officials in Justice and legal people to let us know how we must accomplish meeting those amendments. The second amendment is with respect to the work that is going on, on a government-to-government basis right now. Members will know that we did appeal that to the Supreme Court of Canada. We were denied that, so we have been working at that government-to-government table very effectively here over the past number of weeks.

Again, with respect to these amendments, they are enabling amendments. There is significant consultation taking place right now by Energy, Mines and Resources with First Nations and industry organizations. In fact, I met this morning with the Klondike Placer Miners Association to discuss these amendments and what the effect will be for their industry.

We continue to have those discussions on the regulations as they're developed as we look to meet that December 27 court-ordered deadline.

Mr. Silver: The courts didn't tell the government that legislation had to be changed. The government has chosen to amend the legislation and I disagree with this approach. There are other ways of achieving the goals here. The changes will go well beyond the recommendations of the court and they will introduce a high degree of regulatory uncertainty into that permitting process. It did not have to be that way.

One miner I spoke to said that special operating conditions came out of the blue. The government didn't talk to industry or First Nations before simply imposing the so-called solution.

I won't be supporting this bill in this sitting. As I said, the industry and First Nations had already worked on solutions when government walked in and, without talking to anyone beforehand, brought forward its own answer. It included changes that go well beyond what is described in that court ruling.

Why did the government go beyond what was asked for in the courts?

Hon. Mr. Kent: As I mentioned, the court decision outlined Yukon's duty as it relates to any mining activities and what the Yukon government's role would be with respect to consulting on class 1 exploration activities. We've tabled a number of enabling amendments to the *Quartz Mining Act* and *Placer Mining Act* that will allow us to develop regulations and establish the authority to designate areas where notification requirements would be required for low-level class 1 exploration activities.

I think one of the most disappointing things that I hear from the member opposite is that he has already determined that he's not going to support this legislation before he has even heard from officials and received a briefing on the legislation. So he may want to rethink that after he has heard from officials as to why the amendments have been tabled and what they're designed to accomplish.

Question re: Peel watershed land use plan

Ms. White: On November 6 when asked about the Peel Regional Land Use Plan, the government told this House that, and I quote: "Yukon government is currently consulting First Nation governments on the final recommended plan for the Peel watershed. We will conclude our consultation with First Nations before making a final decision on the Peel plan."

Has the Yukon government concluded their consultation with First Nation governments?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: The quick answer to the member's question is no, we have not concluded government-to-government consultations with the four affected First Nations with regard to the Peel watershed land use plan. We hope to do so as soon as possible. We've had one meeting at least of the principals, which involved me, the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources and the Premier. We hope to continue to work through our senior liaison committee as well as on a government-to-government basis from the principals' perspective of ministers, Premier and chiefs.

Ms. White: The interim withdrawal of mineral staking in the Peel watershed will expire on December 31 of this year. The minister has said that it would be premature to speak about extending the withdrawal from the *Quartz Mining Act* and *Placer Mining Act* at this time. Mr. Speaker, December 31 is only six weeks away. I would submit that it is not premature to state that an extension would be offered if consultation is not complete. In order to continue that consultation process in good faith with an openness from all parties, would the Yukon government commit to an extension to a moratorium on mineral staking in the Peel watershed basin.

Hon. Mr. Kent: As I indicated earlier in this sitting with respect to the staking withdrawal in the Peel watershed region, at this time it would be premature for me to state that we are going to extend it. The Minister of Environment mentioned that we're engaged in the final round of government-to-government consultations and we're looking to conclude those as soon as possible. Again, we're working with our partners to conclude a Peel watershed planning exercise and that's what we're focused on right now. We certainly want to make sure that we come up with a plan that balances economic, environmental and traditional uses of the land, and that's what we're focused on doing right now — again, engaged in principals meetings with me, the Premier, the Minister of Environment as well as chiefs from those four northern First Nations. That's what we're working on right now and that's where our focus is.

Question re: Coroners Act

Ms. Moorcroft: I've been highlighting a number of serious concerns with Yukon's outdated *Coroners Act* for some time. While coroners acts, fatal inquiries acts and regulations have been modernized in jurisdictions across Canada, this has not happened in Yukon. In April 2012, the Minister of Justice said he would be willing to investigate options such as the medical examiner model for updating legislation dealing with fatalities, inquiries and inquests.

Again in April of this year, the Minister of Justice said the government would investigate those options in public consultations at some point in the future.

Mr. Speaker, will the Minister of Justice finally commit to holding public consultations on a replacement for the *Coroners Act* in 2014?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: As we move through this mandate, we have put forward a number of pieces of legislation. Some of this legislation is identified through the government as things that need or require modernization. Some of this legislation is with regard to meeting obligations that we put forward to Yukoners in our platform when we were elected. Some of this legislation occurs as a result of decisions that are made by the court as well. Sometimes there is legislation that moves forward as a result of tragedies, such as the tragic loss of a young life in Watson Lake with the soccer net or when we saw a family who lost their lives because of carbon monoxide. There are many different reasons why legislation moves forward.

In fact, within this fall session, we have a number — eight pieces of legislation — that we're moving forward. We continue to look at all of the pieces and prioritize to ensure that we can move through as much legislation as we can. There are many different priorities. There are many different pieces of legislation that are important. We will continue to work forward and listen to Yukoners to ensure that we can move forward pieces of legislation that are our priority.

Ms. Moorcroft: I believe that updating the legislative regime governing fatalities should be a priority. It doesn't seem as if the Premier does.

Yukoners are concerned that the *Coroners Act* does not provide for mandatory inquests where it is in the public interest. It does not provide for mandatory inquests where it is unknown how or why or under what circumstances the deceased died or where there is a concern for public safety. In the Yukon, currently inquests are only mandatory for deaths of persons in custody. A family member should be able to request an inquest and should have legal standing at an inquest. The courts have ruled on this.

Does the Minister of Justice think it's fair that the Yukon *Coroners Act* does not provide families the right to legal standing or to be represented by a lawyer at an inquest into the unexpected death of a family member?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: At this time a coroner model of death investigation is the most cost-effective method of delivering this service. As we know, other models, such as the medical examiner model, are potentially too costly and really

not realistic to carry out death investigations in a territory with small, widely dispersed communities.

The coroner model does allow for the engaging of expertise such as toxicology work, autopsies and forensic investigations as required to carry out death investigations. Expertise in these types of professions is not a requirement for holding this position. In designing any program, the government must be cognizant of the cost as well as the best method for service delivery given the rural reality of Yukon. Our government certainly takes these into consideration when considering this program delivery.

Ms. Moorcroft: Mr. Speaker, the fact remains that the Yukon *Coroners Act* is out of step with current practice in other Canadian jurisdictions. Last week when I asked the minister if he was willing to commit to public consultations on a modern-day replacement for the *Coroners Act*, the Minister of Health and Social Services said that the coroner's office was — and I quote — “working fairly well at the present” and that the government will continue with that.

Mr. Speaker, we can set the bar higher than “fairly well”. It is clearly in the public interest that the *Coroners Act* be modernized. Again I ask: does the minister have the political will, and will the Minister of Justice commit today to a full review and public consultations on a replacement of the *Coroners Act* in 2014?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: Mr. Speaker, it is my understanding that the member opposite was indeed the Minister of Justice at one point in time for approximately four years. I don't know why the member opposite didn't look at this at that time.

As the Minister of Health and Social Services clearly indicated, the goal of the coroner's report is to provide facts. The coroner has the authority to correct a report, and this is based on the act and on common law. Given the goal of a coroner's report is to provide facts, the coroner has a duty to correct the record in light of any new information that is brought forward.

The coroner is a quasi-judicial office and is independent. We do not interfere with the workings of that office or intend to. We respect the office of the coroner and we would like to sincerely express our sympathy to the family.

Question re: Liquefied natural gas

Mr. Tredger: In August, Yukon Energy announced that it hoped to begin construction of its new liquefied natural gas generating plant and storage facility near the Whitehorse Rapids dam next May. Yukon Energy then submitted its application to the Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Board in August. Yukon Energy said it was confident it could meet its May 2014 deadline despite the short time for assessment and regulatory authorizations of the project. Two weeks ago, the project description was put out for public review. Then, last week, YESAB was informed that Yukon Energy did not have a lease signed with White Pass. Why did Yukon Energy wait two months to inform YESAB that it did not, in fact, have a signed agreement to lease the site chosen for the new LNG plant?

Hon. Mr. Kent: As members of the Legislature know, the Yukon Energy Corporation is an arm's-length corporation of government, and although after finding out about this issue with respect to the LNG project, I did ask the president of the Yukon Energy Corporation — through the proper channels, of course — going through the chair of the Yukon Development Corporation is how I access individuals in the Energy Corporation for information — and he did come and provide me with a briefing. To that end, I actually found out about this last Wednesday. I sent an e-mail on Thursday morning to the chair of the Yukon Development Corporation letting her know that I intended to have representatives of the Yukon Development Corporation and Energy Corporation appear as witnesses before the House in this sitting. As soon as we find a mutually acceptable time for them to do so, I will inform members of the House when that is and they can ask these very same questions directly to representatives of the Yukon Energy Corporation.

Mr. Tredger: This is clearly a rushed project. This is another example of this Yukon Party government's fiscal mismanagement of a major capital project. Yukon Energy's board is appointed by the government. Its strategic direction comes from the government and the government guarantees its debts. We are being assured that this new plant will cost only \$34 million. This project is already pushing the envelope for timing.

Why should anyone in this territory believe that this project will be completed on time and on budget?

Hon. Mr. Kent: I did receive assurance that this project would be completed on time and on budget from the president of Yukon Energy Corporation when I met with him on Friday. Again, I'll reiterate for members of the House that I intend to call the chair and the president and CEO of the Yukon Development Corporation, as well as the chair and the president and CEO of the Yukon Energy Corporation, to appear before this House as witnesses in this fall sitting so that these questions can be asked of those individuals. Clearly they are an arm's-length corporation to government. We do appoint the board of directors, but those are the individuals these questions are best posed to as they're in the best position to answer the questions, not only from the Member for Mayo-Tatchun, but any other member of this Legislative Assembly who would like to ask about the LNG project or any of the other initiatives that Yukon Energy Corporation is undertaking.

Mr. Tredger: Once again, I'll remind the minister that the Yukon Energy Corporation board's strategic direction comes from the government and the government guarantees its debts.

For a decade this government has failed to plan for renewable energy. The previous Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources said that LNG is a replacement fuel, not a transition strategy.

We are sinking at least \$34 million into a new system that will tie this territory to fossil fuels for decades to come. Mr. Speaker, why is this government investing in fossil fuels

instead of renewable energy solutions that will reduce our dependency on fossil fuels and help curb climate change?

Hon. Mr. Kent: I think the very simple answer to that question posed by the member opposite is that when it's dark and it's 40 below and there's no wind and the water reservoirs are down, if we have a power outage we need a reliable backup system. Everyone recognizes that fossil fuels will provide that reliable backup system. That's what we're replacing.

The Premier and I toured the Yukon Energy Corporation's Whitehorse Rapids power system and saw the 45-year-old diesels that these new LNG units are going to replace.

Again, with respect to the other questions asked by the member opposite, I will remind him that I have committed to bring forward representatives of the Development Corporation and the Energy Corporation in this sitting to answer specific questions about this project, questions that many members of the Legislature may have and indeed that many Yukoners are asking. Of course, they're in the best position to answer these questions, but with respect to this project, while we are moving on a clean power agenda for Yukon, we still need reliable backup for those 40-below nights in the middle of winter when the power goes out. Yukoners need something to keep the lights on.

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

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

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

Motion agreed to

Speaker leaves the Chair

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Chair (Ms. McLeod): Order. Committee of the Whole will now come to order. The matter before the Committee is Vote 54, Department of Tourism and Culture, in Bill No. 11, *Second Appropriation Act, 2013-14*.

Do members wish to take a brief recess?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

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

Recess

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

Bill No. 11: *Second Appropriation Act, 2013-14* — continued

Chair: The matter before the Committee is Vote 54, Department of Tourism and Culture, in Bill No. 11, *Second Appropriation Act, 2013-14*.

Department of Tourism and Culture

Hon. Mr. Nixon: As Minister of Tourism and Culture, it's my pleasure to introduce the *Supplementary Estimates No. 1* for the 2013-14 fiscal year. Before I begin, I'd like to say a few words about the Department of Tourism and Culture.

As members are aware, the department's responsibilities include working with other governments, Yukon First Nations, not-for-profits and the private sector to strengthen and grow the tourism industry and the arts, culture and heritage sectors.

More than four percent of Yukon's GDP is directly attributable to tourism and each year tourism generates \$200 million in revenue for Yukon businesses. Over one-quarter of all Yukon businesses generate some portion of their revenue from tourism.

In 2012, Yukon hosted over 320,000 visitors from around the world, including nearly 34,000 overseas visitors. Of those visitors, German-speaking Europe and the United Kingdom are two of our largest overseas markets, with very strong growth potential. Last summer, visitors from these markets spent over \$11 million here in Yukon.

Germany continues to be Yukon's largest overseas market, representing approximately 26 percent of overseas visitors. Each summer, Yukon hosts more than 4,000 visitors who arrive on the direct Frankfurt-to-Whitehorse Condor seasonal flight.

The other key target markets in Europe are France and the Netherlands, and our key markets in the Asia-Pacific region are Australia, Japan, South Korea and China. Overseas markets collectively represent about seven percent of Yukon visitors and more than 12 percent of spending. Visitation from overseas target markets increased by approximately 85 percent between 2004 and 2012.

Year-to-date border crossing statistics from January to August show a nine-percent increase, more than 290,000 visitors to Yukon, over the same period last year. This includes increases in U.S. visitation, up by eight percent, and overseas visitors up by seven percent, but the largest increase comes from Canadians, up by 16 percent, which shows that the collective effort by our government, industry and the private sector to promote Yukon across Canada is indeed working.

Madam Chair, visits by air are also vitally important to the success of our industry, with Erik Nielsen Whitehorse International Airport recording more than 200,000 passengers arriving and departing during the January-to-August period. We are proud that Yukon is out-performing the Canadian average for growth in tourism visitation, a result of the strategic and effective approach the department and our tourism industry operators, not-for-profits and private sector

businesses have taken with regard to marketing and investment decisions.

Clearly tourism has the potential to continue to provide significant economic opportunities for many Yukoners. As a department, as an industry and as a territory, I believe we can continue to build on the work done to date to make Yukon a must-see year-round destination for visitors around the globe.

With this supplementary estimate, the Department of Tourism and Culture is requesting an increase of \$1.5 million, which includes \$1.05 million in operating and maintenance that includes revotes of \$596,000 and a further \$455,000 in other requests and \$498,000 in capital.

I would now like to highlight a few of the key changes reflected in this budget. For Cultural Services branch, there is a total of \$570,000 in O&M.

This branch carries out the department's responsibilities for preserving, promoting and interpreting Yukon historic resources as visual, literary and performing arts. Cultural Services is home to the Historic Sites unit, which operates the interpretive signage program. They have installed over 180 sites on scenic routes and points of interest throughout Yukon, introducing travellers and residents alike to our fascinating history and natural wonders.

In September, the Watson Lake Sign Post Forest received official Yukon historic site designation under the territory's *Historic Resources Act*. Also, as members are aware, the *A.J. Goddard* shipwreck was commemorated as a Yukon historic site in a plaque unveiling and ceremony at Lake Laberge in August. Back to Watson Lake, I look forward to welcoming everyone to Watson Lake this spring for a community celebration to mark the very special occasion of the Sign Post's historic site designation.

Cultural Services is also home to our heritage resources program which, in collaboration with Klondike placer miners, collected over 3,000 new fossils this summer. This program focused on collecting Pleistocene fossils from the Klondike gold fields. Some exciting finds this season were a camel toe, lion mandible, mammoth skull fragments and numerous prehistoric moose antlers.

Also in Cultural Services is the Arts unit, which continues to play a leadership role in strengthening and promoting Yukon culture — with regard to the arts fund, we have a \$170,000 revote for projects approved last fiscal year but not completed by the funding recipients before year-end.

Since April of this year, the department has supported 13 advanced artists projects that contributed to artistic and community development and a further 17 Yukon artists to tour creative works nationally and internationally. In addition, the department has supported 56 not-for-profit organizations and collectives, which has enabled visitors and Yukoners to enjoy and participate in artistic and cultural activities in 12 Yukon communities and locations.

For Tourism branch revised O&M estimates, we have a total of \$398,000, which includes a \$181,000-revote for the tourism cooperative marketing fund agreements initiated in 2012 and 2013 but not completed by recipients before year-end.

Madam Chair, we are also providing an additional \$50,000 in one-time new funding to the Sourdough Rendezvous Society for their 50th anniversary celebrations. We are very pleased to be able to support this important cultural institution that year-in and year-out brings Yukoners together, attracts winter visitors and gives us all a mid-winter boost. There is \$50,000 in new funding for the Canadian Council of Tourism Ministers meeting held in September. Yukon and Canada co-hosted this meeting in Whitehorse.

Madam Chair, together with the Hon. Maxime Bernier, Minister of State (Small Business and Tourism), the ministers responsible for tourism were able to discuss agenda items that included visitor access, authentic visitor experiences, the development and marketing of tourism attractions, and opportunities to grow tourism across all regions of the country. This meeting was a tremendous success, and hosting this meeting for the first time north of 60 was a great source of pride for the entire department and the territory.

Moving on to capital, there is a \$498,000 increase to the department's anticipated capital expenditures. Capital for the Tourism branch includes \$150,000 for projects at information centres. Tourism is a complex and competitive industry and it is important that the face of tourism as presented through the visitor information centres is given the best tools and resources to assist travellers when they are here on the ground. To that end, Wi-Fi is now offered at the Whitehorse Visitor Information Centre with more upgrades and changes to come, not only for the Whitehorse centre but for the other five seasonal VICs as well.

Recently the department entered into a two-year lease with Carcross Tagish Management Corporation on behalf of the Carcross Tagish Limited Partnership and Northern Vision Development Limited Partnership to provide visitor services in Carcross. With the investments this government has made from a number of different departments and working close with a number of stakeholders, this little community has grown leaps and bounds over the last years and, as the gateway to the Southern Lakes region, it is highly popular with visitors and residents alike.

As members are aware, our visitor tracking program is now in its second year. This program is helping us to better understand our visitors. What we have learned so far is that since 2004 we have had a 45-percent increase in visitors travelling by air and highway travel has increased by 21 percent. As well, visitor expenditures are up by 30 percent since 2004, and these expenditures are spread over a wider range of activities than was previously believed.

The information provided through the visitor tracking program will help to identify strategic areas the department can address working with industry and the private sector so visitor experiences meet visitor expectations.

For Cultural Services branch, we have \$166,000 in capital for maintenance and improvements to museums and to historic sites. Yukon's cultural treasures and historical legacies are shining examples of our northern pioneer spirit. The work done to share Yukon's history through the artifacts, memorabilia and stories surrounding the people who shaped

Yukon often become the authentic experiences that visitors enjoy today.

Owned and operated by the Yukon government, the Yukon Beringia Interpretive Centre first opened its doors in 1997. Since that time, the centre has offered programming focused on the last ice age when Yukon and Alaska formed a subcontinent known as Beringia. The work the centre does supports ongoing efforts to ensure long-term sustainability of Yukon's valuable heritage resources and infrastructure.

I would like to conclude with a few words about the staff at the Department of Tourism and Culture and highlight some of the recent successes. In October, the Tourism branch held its second open house, once again opening its door to businesses, tourism operators, cultural organizations and front-line staff. The event attracted 50 tourism industry participants and included information sessions on funding opportunities, new trends in marketing and one-on-one meetings with Tourism branch staff.

Recently the branch also hosted a networking event called Food, Farms and Festivals: A Culinary Tourism Forum to discuss opportunities to develop culinary tourism here in the territory. The event was an unqualified success with 65 people registering to take part.

As most will be aware, Premier Pasloski led the first-ever Premier tourism trade mission to Europe in August. The Tourism branch assisted the Premier, me and 16 Yukon tourism industry representatives as we travelled to Germany and England. This trip provided Yukon with an opportunity to show leadership in two strategic overseas tourism markets, reflecting the territory's growing role in the global tourism context.

In addition to tourism, the staff at the department also work across a wide variety of professional and technical areas that include culture. The archaeology program, led by an archaeological site inventory and predictive modelling two-year project supported by CanNor, in partnership with local First Nations, will assist the placer mining industry in meeting regulatory and YESAA requirements.

The paleontology program worked with Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation heritage department to publish *Ice Age Old Crow: Yukon's ancient history from north of the Arctic Circle*, which is a booklet documenting the paleontological research in the Old Crow region.

Recently the Yukon Archives hosted the opening of the YT in 3D exhibit at Arts Underground, an opportunity to see rare 3D images that reflect many aspects of Yukon history. I would urge each and every one here to go if you haven't already been. The show is at Arts Underground until January 25, 2014.

On behalf of Yukoners, eight new works were added to the Yukon permanent art collection. Madam Chair, I attended the exhibit launch called "New Works" in September, which was very well attended. These new works are welcome additions to the close to 300 pieces of art in the permanent collection, which comprises one of Yukon's most beloved cultural treasures. The launch was held in conjunction with Culture Days and Doors Open, celebrated across the city and

organized by Yukon Arts Centre, the Yukon Historical and Museum Association and community partners. More than 40 Yukon businesses and community organizations took part in Culture Days.

It is these kinds of activities, events and experiences that can spur visitors to seek out Yukon as a destination. Once they have arrived, there are opportunities to experience its rich culture, arts, heritage, and natural attractions and visitors return home with stories rooted through their travels to community museums, visitor centres, the Yukon Archives, Yukon historic sites and attractions, cultural events or activities.

Over the last several months, many new staff have joined the department. They bring a fresh new perspective with new ideas and new skillsets. Along with the seasoned leadership of the more experienced members of the department, there is a dynamic team dedicated to tourism and culture here in our territory. Through their work, they help strengthen both our economy and our communities.

Madam Chair, I am extremely proud to have the opportunity to work with each and every one of them. Thank you.

Chair's statement

Chair: Just before we continue, I would like to remind members to avoid the use of names of other members. Thank you.

Mr. Barr: It is my privilege to represent Yukoners in this Legislature today and speak to the supplementary budget. I would also like to acknowledge the good work of the people across the spectrum of the tourism industry. I thank the officials for the briefing on the supplementary budget. It was very well expressed and I found it very valuable.

I will speak today of some of the concerns of small businesses in the Southern Lakes area, including tourism operators. I have also been reading more about the department's good work. In the *Yukon Larger than Life 2012-15 Tourism Marketing Strategy*, there is a description of the Yukon as a tourism product. It says what we all know and love, and I quote: "...breathtaking scenery, natural phenomena, abundant wildlife and rich cultural experiences." Later it adds, "Yukon offers a unique opportunity to experience true wilderness and nature while remaining close to urban comforts" — although I do know that there are many who travel here who love to experience a well-decorated outhouse.

If you've never been to some of those good ones, it's fantastic — the ornaments that are in there, the double-seaters — I mean, we have postcards of the fantastic outhouses around the Yukon and I can't say enough about them. We even race them in Dawson. So urban comforts to some are different from urban comforts to us here in the Yukon. I plan to attend the next outhouse race in Dawson City. Our whole caucus will have its outhouse there and we'll be having fun. I haven't spoken to them about that yet; they're just hearing about it now for the first time.

As I have stated before in this House, in a nutshell, it is the pristine wilderness that underlies so much of what attracts tourists of all stripes here. It is unique; it is invaluable. It's really kind of beyond monetary value. The nature and the pristine wilderness are what attract many of the people who come here. I've said before, on my first drive up here I was beyond words — the beauty as I was coming into Whitehorse and getting into the Yukon from the southern end of it, the other side of Watson Lake. I just kept going wow, wow, wow. We all remember how pumped up we felt. I've heard many of those stories from people, especially the drive, coming here for the first time — including the members opposite. I'll restate this because it might sound a little disconnected.

We all remember how pumped up we felt, including the members opposite, when *Lonely Planet* listed Yukon as the fourth in the top 10 regions to visit around the world. What was less often quoted was the warning that followed this rating, that change was coming fast to the Yukon. Between the extractive-industry rush and the ravages of climate change, *Lonely Planet* was advising tourists to get up to Yukon soon while we still have vast and pristine wilderness. Madam Chair, it is not about fear-mongering; it is about acknowledging the value of our wilderness for a sustainable local economy.

The 2012-15 tourism marketing strategy identifies that it is the high-yield traveller who will be critical to building a sustainable tourism sector in the Yukon. This is an approach that echoes federal initiatives. Certainly the competition around the world for the high-yield traveller is fierce. I was pleased to see the Premier's interest now in tourism and taking those on the junket to Germany.

As we know, through the government's own release, it shows us that Germany is already an established tourism market, and I quote: "German-speaking Europe is Yukon's largest overseas market with over 11,000 visitors annually and the UK is a strong secondary market with approximately 3,300 visitors to Yukon in the summer of 2012. Both markets have a high potential for significant growth."

In speaking with some in the tourism industry, there is much more work to do in Europe. However, we also know that the aurora lights for Asian countries are really bolstering our tourism dollars throughout the winter season. I would hope that they also include less-familiar destinations to create a greater diversity of tourism markets for Yukon.

I believe in the value of a research-based tourism marketing strategy so the members opposite should not get the wrong idea about that.

I would also like to point out, with previous comments about our pristine wilderness, that interestingly, even at the Hannover Zoo in Germany, the Premier encountered people deeply concerned about the protection of the Peel River watershed. One protester had travelled the Snake River with the Gwitchin youth council as part of a cultural exchange in 2008.

We feel that the government seems to keep trying to ignore and discount the international concern for our pristine wild places. It's a position that puts us at odds with our

tourism brand. The New Yukon Democratic caucus believes in a diversified approach to our economy and we all know that this government has not had a diversified approach. “So goes mining, so goes Yukon,” said the Premier showing the Yukon Party’s single-minded approach. Now that mining appears to be going, the Yukon Party has become a relatively new fan of tourism and culture.

All these high-level studies of high-yield tourists are important in their own right, but they shouldn’t distract the government from Yukoners who are working hard at their tourism businesses today. Local operators are on the front lines of tourism in the Yukon, and they target consumer groups as defined by their marketing strategy — scenic outdoor travellers, cultural explorers and adventure challengers. Many of these travellers are independent and still coming up to the Yukon by road. We might note at this time that this has increased by nine percent this year over last year — the number of visitors coming to the Yukon by road — as highway-based tourist operators benefit when the government listens and partners with these local-based businesses that serve tourists on our roads.

On behalf of some of those local tourist destinations and business operators in the Southern Lakes loop, I have written ministers about practical devices those small businesses need, like highway signage, which lets folks know on bicycles, on motorbikes and in their RVs that things are not necessarily on the map.

I also am aware that some of those folks in the businesses have spoken to some of the ministers across the way about the signage. With the LACs, some of the difficulties that seem to go around in circles are that although local businesses have put their own signs at the loop — but it’s getting to Tagish, for example, as you’re coming up the Alaska Highway or leaving Whitehorse. There are many comments, and they are saying, “I wouldn’t have known that you guys were down here. There is no sign to tell us this.”

There has been much correspondence to increase the signage and put Tagish on the map. We used to have a lot of work on exploring the Southern Lakes loop. There are many new businesses. I know that Ibex, Marsh Lake and Mount Lorne, for example, did not even go on the website to include their uniqueness. I understand that is being rectified now. However, there are a lot of businesses on that loop that get left out when people don’t know to make it their destination or to see, and then when they’re driving by, they don’t even see where to turn off.

It has also been explained that the Tagish LAC, for example, when it came down to it, is required to do the proofs of the signs and to budget the signs. In no way is there a budget for LACs to be able to do this. I really encourage the minister opposite to work with his colleagues to make this happen. Businesses have done their part, and we believe that it’s up to the government to work with those LACs in the rural parts of the Yukon to increase their signage so that we all can benefit. As we know, small actions can make a difference.

I have mentioned that Mount Lorne is now listed as a Yukon community, as are Ibex and Marsh Lake. There is a lot

to be said for paying attention to the details close to home, and it cannot be overlooked. I recall hearing about a number of the lodges on the highways, as the travellers are coming up the highway, being closed. People who are running out of gas think that in the next 100 kilometres, they will be able to get there and they won’t get gas here, and then they find out too late that where they planned to gas up is no longer open.

It’s quite an issue for somebody who is driving — whether it’s a motorcycle, RV or car or whatever — that we keep these signs up to date and inform the public — that some mechanism be built in for those travelling, so that they know that they can get gas along this highway. It also supports the ones that have stayed open — they’re going to get that business and it is just less headache for everybody.

If tourists bother to write a letter to the editor, they must have had some experiences that were very meaningful to them. The tourism marketing strategy refers to the experience that tourists collect. Travellers’ stories do much to promote Yukon tourism. I want to read one such letter from this last summer that is the voice of the kind of traveller who has always come to the Yukon, who has proven to be the sustainable form of tourism Yukon that has experienced — and that is the road traveller. This aspect of tourism really experiences the full range of Yukon culture as they drive and travel through most regions, meeting locals all along the way.

I have it here, entitled “This couple are true Yukon ambassadors.” It says, “My wife, Trudy, our friend Lee and I recently took a motorcycle trip from Alaska to Texas that covered almost 5,000 miles.

“During a relatively early part of the trip, we passed through an area that is covered by your newspaper. We had two experiences there, and I want to share them with you.

“We had travelled quite a distance when we saw the Discovery Yukon Lodgings. The sign said, ‘Motorcyclists Welcome’.

“We stopped, went inside and asked if we could use the restroom.

“The lady said, ‘No, the restrooms are only for paying guests.’

“I understand that it costs money to maintain restrooms and I can accept the need to charge or require purchase for use of the restroom.

“It did strike me as a bit strange because the lady did not represent the exceptional hospitality we had grown accustomed to over the last 15 years of travel in Canada.

“We put our gear back on and headed down the road.

“The next business was Cook’s Mile 1164 Koidern River Lodge.

“From the outside, the place looked a bit weather-worn. We went inside and asked if we could use the restroom.

“We were received in the warm and friendly Canadian fashion.

“After using the facilities, we began a conversation with Jim and Dorothy Cook. I think they said they had been there for about 44 years.

“What a remarkable couple!

“Dorothy instructed Jim to make up a song and for him to sing it to us — which he promptly did.

“These are remarkable people who represent the best of ‘Canadian hospitality’.

“Jim also makes art out of old railroad spikes and welds things on them, like motorcycles.

“By the time we left, we had spent about 45 minutes and over \$100, and had a great time doing it.

“I think the people in your area should know, if they do not already know, that Jim and Dorothy are hidden treasure.

“I will recommend the Cooks’ lodge to all my motorcycle friends.

“We have had as many as 32 motorcycles make the trip.

“We will be stopping at Jim’s and Dorothy’s place on any future trips.

“*Canada rocks!*”

This was from Bill and Trudy Duke of Austin, Texas, and Lee Burson of Montgomery, Texas.

It’s those stories that travel up and down the highway — why people keep coming back to go, wow, we don’t get that other places. The point of a lot of this is to know that our road traffic is very important.

One of the things I would like to start with — although I know my time is almost up — is how is the government assisting local First Nations to develop their full tourism potential?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: I’d like to put on the record that our year-to-date travel has increased by 23,274 visitors, which is up nine percent compared to the same period last year. An increase is noted in private vehicle traffic of 14,359 visitors. That’s up 10 percent. There’s also an increase in motorcoach traffic of 8,915 visitors, which is an increase of eight percent.

By origin, increases were present for U.S. citizens, Canadians and foreigners, recording an increase of 14,489 visitors, which is an increase of eight percent; 3,875 visitors, up 16 percent; and 1,934 visitors, up seven percent respectively.

2013 has been truly an incredible year for tourism in Yukon with visitation well outperforming our national average. According to Statistics Canada, national border crossings counted between January 2013 and August 2013 grew one percent while border crossing counts to Yukon grew nine percent during that same period.

Yukon continues to gain market share and has outperformed the national average in visitation from the U.S., which is up eight percent. Overseas markets are up seven percent and resident Canadians, up 12 percent. During that same period, visitation to Canada from the U.S. was actually down 1.2 percent. Visitation from overseas markets was up 2.9 percent and the resident Canadian visitation was up only 1.6 percent.

I’d like to talk for a few moments about the Premier’s European trade mission. He was, as we know, the first Premier in Canada to lead a trade mission like this to Europe. Tourism is a strategic industry that we know contributes \$200 million annually to the Yukon economy, with significant promise for future growth.

German-speaking Europe and the United Kingdom are two of our largest overseas markets with really strong growth potential. Last summer, visitors from these markets, as I mentioned earlier, spent over \$11 million here in our territory. The Premier’s mission to Europe was an opportunity — I think that’s the key word — to show leadership in two strategic overseas tourism markets and to reflect Yukon’s growing role in the global tourism context. This mission shows our level of commitment to work with our local and overseas industry partners to promote Yukon as a year-around tourism destination.

The Premier’s participation in the European trade mission helped to strengthen existing strategic alliances and create new opportunities to increase awareness of Yukon as a tourism destination and in fact grow tourism revenues. We went to Europe to demonstrate a high level of commitment to these markets to build relationships for the future and generate local media awareness. On these measures, Madam Chair, it was an extremely successful trip. We are very serious about growing tourism and we are going to put the work and the effort into making the most out of the opportunity that international tourism represents.

In total, the Government of Yukon signed 12 cooperative marketing agreements with Germany and U.K. The total Yukon government investment is approximately \$209,500. This investment is contributing to marketing initiatives totalling \$592,500 reaching approximately 3.74 million prospective visitors in Germany and in U.K.

In addition to the cooperative marketing agreements, the Premier signed a cooperation accord with Condor Airlines and Air North, Yukon’s Airline, and an extension of the existing memorandum of understanding with Goodyear Dunlop and Fulda tires.

The cooperative accord signed with Condor Airlines and Air North, Yukon’s Airline, was designed to achieve a number of things. It was designed to increase the number of travellers from Europe to Yukon, to maximize the sale of seats on Condor direct flights to Yukon, to maximize opportunities to provide incremental access to Yukon, achieved through an agreement between Air North, Yukon’s Airline, and Condor, and to increase the awareness and sale of seats on Condor Airlines and flights that connect with Air North, Yukon’s Airline, through tour operators and other travel trade partners in Europe.

Madam Chair, I think it’s important and I will talk more about the stakeholders that were involved in this trip, but part of a quote from Joe Sparling, president of Air North, Yukon’s Airline, was that both were greatly facilitated and perhaps even made possible through the efforts of the Premier and the Minister of Tourism, as well as their support staff. That speaks for itself Madam Chair — the value of this contribution and the investment by a Yukon company, Air North, needs to be noted by all members in this Legislative Assembly.

Madam Chair, the MOU with Goodyear Dunlop tires extends the Fulda Yukon Challenge partnership to June 30 of 2016.

Since 2006, the Fulda Extreme Arctic Challenge has generated over 32-million euros in equivalent advertising for Yukon through print, television and on-line media. Based on media research conducted by an independent research group in Germany, the PR advertising value in Germany in 2013, as a result of the Fulda Challenge 2013, was estimated at seven million euros. This equates to a return on investment of approximately \$64 for every dollar that Yukon government invests.

As I mentioned, there were some very significant investments made by Yukon stakeholders for the Premier-led European trade mission: CanaDream RV rentals, Harper Street Publishing, Holland America Line, Northern Tales, Northern Vision Development, Outside the Cube, SKKY Hotel, Tourism Industry Association of Yukon, Yukon First Nations Tourism Association, Yukon Historical and Museums Association, Klondike Visitors Association, Yukon Outfitters Association, Yukon Quest, Yukon Wildlife Preserve and, yes, Air North, Yukon's airline. I don't believe that those stakeholders would view their significant investment to the German and UK markets as a junket.

Pertaining to signage that the member opposite had spoken about, we have heard from the LAC and also directly from a number of business owners in that area. Tourism and Culture officials are in discussion with officials from Highways and Public Works about those signs. At this time we're optimistic that we will be able to report progress in time for the next summer season.

Just in closing, I think it's important for me as Minister of Tourism and Culture, because as you have heard me speak about a number of the stakeholders, I have met many, many stakeholders over the last couple of years and continue to be impressed by the level of dedication and the level of service that they provide to their visitors. I was pleased to put out a release just a number of days ago about three Yukon businesses that have been named finalists for a 2013 Canadian tourism award that will be presented by the Tourism Industry Association of Canada.

Those three businesses include: Carcross-Tagish Management Corporation of Carcross, which is one of five finalists nominated for the Innovator of the Year Award. This award recognizes a tourism business or organization that develops the most innovative new tourism product, service or process that positively impacts the tourism industry. Also, Ceaser Lake Outfitters of Watson Lake, is one of eight finalists nominated for the Sustainable Tourism Award. This award identifies the outstanding contribution to the practice and promotion of sustainable tourism in Canada.

The third recipient, the Canadian River Expeditions of Whitehorse, is one of eight finalists nominated for the Traveller Experience of the Year Award. This award acknowledges a tourism business that has created the most exceptional tourism experience centred on the principle of hospitality and customer service.

The Canadian tourism awards have become standards of excellence for businesses and organizations in the travel industry, showcasing the nation's best tourism products,

services and experiences. These awards will take place on December 3, in Ottawa.

Some Hon. Member: (inaudible)

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Mr. Kent: Thank you, Madam Chair, and I'm sorry for interrupting debate on Tourism and Culture, but I'd like to introduce at this time Mr. Blaine Joseph, who is the operations manager for EFLO. EFLO is the company that owns the Kotaneelee gas field in the southeast Yukon. Welcome to our Legislature.

Applause

Mr. Barr: I thank the minister for his comments, and it is great that we have such accomplished presenters of outfitting — and the innovation of the new Caribou Commons in Carcross — and that these awards recognize them for those with expertise in their field in the Yukon. It is just a great thing that we can celebrate this.

I would also like to just acknowledge that when we're trying to work together to be able to facilitate a means to an end of whatever issue it might be — and in this case, the signage. I was very happy to hear that here in the House. However, I have not received a formal written response on this from earlier this spring. I mean, it is good news right now.

I was speaking to one of the business owners who actually closed up at the end of September who was saying to me then and just a few weeks ago, "I guess we're not going to get our signs now". I guess there has been some miscommunication, and when people are looking for answers, it can be frustrating not to receive responses in a written manner to help facilitate the communication back and forth. I certainly would have let them know that at the time.

My response about six weeks ago was that we won't give up and we'll keep working for the signs. Again, I can say that it's great to get this news now. I hope we can do better with getting some timely responses.

I have another question. I didn't get an answer to what the minister is doing to enhance work with First Nations in their tourism endeavours.

Also, I know at the beginning of December we're hoping to hear the result of the peer review on the Ross River suspension bridge. We are hoping that, once we deal with the safety issues, we're going to be able to say that we can repair the suspension bridge.

I know it's quite the topic of discussion around Faro and Ross River and others. I actually received a call this morning from Whitehorse folks who are just realizing that this historic site may end. Barring that this unfortunate news does come, this is an iconic site for Ross River. Has the minister given any thought if it doesn't? What are the plans to enhance tourism opportunities in Ross River? This is on the passport; this is huge for the people of Ross River. If it's not there, what kinds of things is the minister looking at to replace such an iconic bridge? This is not only to us but to those who have come to walk on it and those who plan to come and walk on it still. I'll just leave him with those questions.

Hon. Mr. Nixon: The member opposite asked about how the Department of Tourism and Culture collaborates with First Nations. I do have quite a lot of information that I'd like to put on the record because there is very good work being done in partnership with the Department of Tourism and Culture.

First, the museums contribution program provides partial funding support for the annual management and operation of Yukon First Nation cultural heritage centres, including Big Jonathan House, Da Kų, Champagne and Aishihik First Nations, Dānojà Zho Cultural Centre, John Tizya Centre, Kwanlin Dun, Tagé Cho Hudān Interpretive Centre, and the Teslin Tlingit Heritage Centre.

Tourism and Culture entered into a 10-year lease in 2012 with the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations to house Yukon government's visitor information centre in the Da Kų Cultural Centre in Haines Junction. The Yukon archaeology program also provided staff and technical support to the Yukon College heritage and culture field school at Canyon City. The field school is funded through the northern strategy fund, administered by the Yukon government with the Yukon First Nations Heritage Group and Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation partners.

Tourism and culture arts fund awarded \$35,000 to the Adāka Cultural Festival and Society for the 2013 Adāka Festival and I need to make a side note on how impressed I continue to be each time I see Adāka rolling out. They are certainly setting the bar very high for themselves and should be congratulated on the work they've done to date. This is fascinating.

Madam Chair, we're working with the Yukon First Nation Tourism Association on its efforts, in partnership with the Adāka Cultural Festival, to restructure the organization in support of the development of both First Nation cultural and tourism sectors. The First Nation heritage training coordinator also continues to work with various First Nations and the Yukon Historical and Museums Association to develop and deliver training opportunities for First Nation cultural centres and museums.

Yukon Archives is providing an 18-month training internship for a member of the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations to become an archives records officer. The position is funded through the Yukon government's First Nation Training Corps, which has assisted with educational and training opportunities in a number of disciplines. Following the 18-month internship, the person will be employed at the Dā Ku and be responsible for their archival materials.

Yukon archaeology program is working with Kwanlin Dun First Nation to publish a popular booklet on the results of the two-year long KDFN archaeological site inventory project in the M'Clintock River basin.

The Yukon paleontology program worked with the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation heritage department staff to publish *Ice Age Old Crow: Yukon's ancient history from north of the Arctic Circle*, which documents the paleontological research in the Old Crow region and the VGFN residents' involvement.

The Tr'ondėk Hwėch'in and First Nation of Na Cho Nyāk Dun are assisting in the CanNor-funded Yukon archaeology program project to inventory, map and model the archaeological sites in the Dawson and Mayo mining districts. The project will support Yukon government heritage resource management and assist the mineral industry with project planning.

A contribution agreement is in place with the Yukon First Nation Tourism Association for \$60,000 in order to promote the development of First Nation tourism.

There is a transfer payment agreement for \$21,000 with the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation for identification and research of heritage trails and the Van Tat Gwich'in Navigation Systems Project, a transfer payment agreement with the Tr'ondėk Hwėch'in for \$15,000 for identification and research of heritage trails in their traditional territory, and a member of an intergovernmental working group for KDFN waterfront heritage working group to oversee the drafting and plan for a written and pictorial history of Kwanlin Dun in relation to the Whitehorse waterfront.

There's a contract with Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation for hiking trail research at Rampart House in the amount of \$7,875. There's an annual transfer payment for \$44,000 with the Tr'ondėk Hwėch'in for restoration work on historic Forty Mile buildings, which is ongoing.

There is also collaboration with the Tr'ondėk Hwėch'in on inventory and documentation of historic resources in the Klondike gold fields. There is a funding agreement in place for \$40,000 with the Tr'ondėk Hwėch'in to help refurbish the exterior of the Dānojà Zho Cultural Centre. The department entered into a lease with Carcross-Tagish Development Corporation to operate the Yukon information centre out of the Carcross Commons for the 2013 season.

Tourism and Culture is also providing \$345,000 to Northern Cultural Expressions Society for its carving program. The arts fund awarded Selkirk First Nation \$9,000 for their summer live art program.

The arts fund awarded Teslin Tlingit Council \$20,000 for the 2013 Hā Kus Teyea Celebration, "Part of the Land, Part of the Water". I do apologize if I have mispronounced the name.

There was \$9,100 awarded to the Dakhká Khwáan Dancers to help them attend the 2013 Coastal First Nations Dance Festival.

On another note pertaining to the Dakhká Khwáan Dancers, over the last two years as the Minister of Tourism and Culture, I've had the opportunity to see this group perform at a number of different receptions and festivals, and I have to take my hat off to them. When I first saw them you could perhaps see some inexperience, but when I saw them dance just last week — that was the last time — and even over the last six months, the level of collaboration within, the professionalism, the quality of dance and instruction with this group is truly second to none.

There is an annual contract with Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation for \$49,950 for restoration at Rampart House. There is an annual transfer payment agreement at Fort Selkirk historic site for \$115,000. There is an annual transfer payment

agreement with Selkirk First Nation for interpretation for \$10,000 and an artifact backlog project with Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nation for \$20,000.

As you see, there are a number of projects on which the department is pleased to partner with First Nations and we will continue on with that good work.

The member opposite was asking about the Ross River suspension bridge. Before I comment from a Tourism and Culture perspective, I really do need to thank the Minister of Community Services and his department for the exceptional work that they've done on-site at this area. Thank you to the minister.

In June of this year, the Department of Community Services announced a \$1.1-million project for repairs on the Ross River suspension bridge due to potential damage from the ice jam and flooding in the spring of 2013. However, an additional assessment of the bridge was conducted in September, and Community Services was then informed by David Nairne & Associates, which was retained to undertake repairs on the bridge, that the Ross River bridge is at the point of failure and can collapse at any time without warning.

Our focus has been and remains on public safety, as we cannot guarantee the safety of that bridge. The ferry is shut down for the season and we have a safety perimeter established around both towers of the bridge to ensure that the bridge cannot be accessed. It's important that decisions regarding the Ross River suspension bridge can be safely and practically implemented. Therefore, another engineering review is underway to review the conclusions made by David Nairne & Associates before the department will make a decision on the future of that bridge. We do continue to communicate with the residents, including the chief and council, to keep them up to date and to ensure that people stay away from the bridge and the water around the bridge.

It is also important to keep in mind that worker safety is paramount, and any action that is taken and part of the analysis that is ongoing with respect to the next steps for the bridge — we understand the community's attachment to the bridge, as it has been part of the community for 70 years.

Of course, all structures have a practical life cycle and serious concerns must be addressed with regard to the future of the bridge. The bridge is a great historical asset. We would love to save it if we could. But ultimately, nothing lasts forever. If the bridge has reached the end of its life, it will be a great loss to the community, but we will commemorate the structure in the best way that we can through the Department of Tourism and Culture.

Ideally, the bridge still has some life left in it. We are in the process of working with the Department of Community Services to find that out.

Ms. Hanson: I want to go back to some issues that the member for Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes raised, as well as the minister touched on, with respect to marketing.

It's really, really important that as we look forward in the area of tourism it's really clear to Yukoners and to the Official Opposition that there is a proven return on investment for tourism marketing and we've seen that currently with the

unprecedented booming winter tourism season. There are a couple aspects that I'd like to touch on with the minister and ask a couple questions here.

Before I do, though, I just wanted to reflect on the fact that the backdrop for our investment in tourism and tourism marketing in the Yukon is how it works in conjunction with the national marketing strategies and how we work with the Tourism Industry Association of Canada.

I had the opportunity in June to attend the tourism town hall with the Tourism Industry Association of Canada and the Tourism Industry Association of Yukon. A couple of points were made there that I think bear very much on the conversation we're having this afternoon. We need to get a sense of where we as a territory, and the Department of Tourism and its minister see opportunities — and perhaps some challenges — which I'd like to ask him to speak to.

As we know, the federal government has made cuts to the marketing investment fund. I believe it has gone from \$72 million in 2011 to \$58 million, which really sends the wrong message in many ways with respect to the priority that the federal government places on tourism and tourism potential for business in this country. That is made more real when we look at the statistics, where from 2001 to 2011 we're actually seeing a travel deficit that has risen from \$2.1 billion to \$16.3 billion, which means that the amount of money that Canadians spend overseas exceeds that of what they're spending domestically by that amount. That's a significant challenge for us and it's a significant opportunity for us in terms of our marketing strategy.

I have some questions with respect to how this minister looks at identifying and convincing his Cabinet colleagues that increased resources spent on marketing, both domestically and internationally, will lead to increased visitation — and something we do know that I will be coming back to at a later point, that it leads to an increased spending in our local economy and our Yukon economy, which leads to increased Yukon jobs for people living in the Yukon, building the Yukon economy based on an aspect of our economy, that being tourism, as a significant and sustainable growth opportunity. I think that's something that we all want to see happening.

In terms of marketing, one specific aspect I would like to come back to the minister on is with respect to his references earlier to the trip led by the Premier this fall to Europe. I agree with the minister that Europe is an important market and it is good to see the Premier make those contacts as well. At the same time, as I alluded to at the beginning, we have seen the federal government reducing its investment in tourism. It's my understanding that the tourism industry here has had access from the federal government through CanNor of about approximately \$500,000 a year. It's my understanding, Madam Chair, that the federal government has not provided any indication whether that funding will be ongoing. This is an important element of the marketing for European marketing for the tourism industry.

So what we saw over the last couple years, Madam Chair, was the federal government withdrawing, cutting federal

funding for significant tourism attractions in the Yukon through Parks Canada. It's not just the voids that were left by the *SS Klondike* and Dredge No. 4, but I'll come back to perhaps other aspects of the cuts from Parks Canada and will be wanting to ask the minister a couple about that.

I guess my first question for the minister, in terms of marketing, is this: what efforts is he as the Minister of Tourism doing to encourage the federal minister responsible for regional economic development to support the tourism industry's funding requests and, if the federal government again leaves an empty pocket, will the territorial government be committing to cover this if the feds won't cover it?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: Where to start? I guess I can start by tipping my hat to the department for the good work that they do at marketing the territory across the entire globe and, more specifically, to some very strategic areas like Germany, UK, Japan and Australia.

There is some exceptional work being done, and when you look at the trends nationally, I think we're seeing the fruits of our labour for sure here in the territory.

Building on the success of last year's open house, as I mentioned, we again opened our doors to businesses, tourism operators, cultural organizations and front-line staff. That event included information sessions on funding opportunities, new trends in marketing, and one-on-one meetings with Tourism branch staff. Also in October, Tourism Yukon hosted a network event called Food, Farms and Festivals, as I have already spoken to. It was a successful event with 65 people registering on the first year of that event. I hope to see more come from events like those.

I have also indicated that just in September I hosted the Tourism ministers' meeting. The meeting was focused on Canadian tourism competitiveness, and we discussed improving visitor access, marketing and tourism attraction development across the country, not just here in Yukon.

I was also very proud to be a part of the Premier-led tourism trade mission with 16 other Yukon tourism industry representatives who invested their time and their money to travel to Germany and the UK in the first-ever Canadian Premier-led tourism trade delegation from a Canadian province or territory. My hat is off to the Premier for being so bold and showing his leadership on this initiative.

The Government of Yukon and the City of Whitehorse signed a first formal collaboration on tourism marketing, promotion and visitor services MOU. This MOU outlines a range of partnership initiatives including joint work on familiarization tours, sharing of tourism inquiries, and joint management of the visitor parking passes.

There was also a celebration of the grand opening of the Da Kų Cultural Centre that took place in Haines Junction in June 2013 with representatives from the Governments of Canada, Yukon and Champagne and Aishihik First Nations in attendance. The Department of Tourism and Culture contributed \$1.4 million through long-term lease agreements on that project.

The Department of Tourism and Culture launched a new on-line tourism marketing initiative with a refreshed

www.travel yukon.com website in the spring. The changes enable the department to better engage with travellers around the world and help them choose Yukon as their vacation destination.

A new second passenger bridge was opened to accommodate the increased number of passengers arriving and departing the Erik Nielsen Whitehorse International Airport. The bridge improved security, safety and passenger comfort. In 2012, approximately 294,000 passengers used that facility.

The Yukon government entered into a two-year lease with the Carcross Management Corporation that I have already spoken to. The Government of Yukon partnered with the Yukon Tourism Education Council, YTEC, to offer customer service training to Yukon businesses.

The departments of Tourism and Culture and Economic Development jointly provided YTEC with \$60,000 for the Welcome Yukon training program. The customer service training was offered to 300 participants.

The Department of Tourism and Culture contributed \$150,000 to Fulda, as I have spoken to. The Government of Yukon and the State of Alaska renewed an agreement to market both regions as a tourism destination. The joint Yukon-Alaska cooperative marketing partnership began in 1989, delivering Canadian and American advertising campaigns to increase highway travel and promote summer adventure experiences in Alaska and Yukon.

I find this interesting. Yukon was designated by *Lonely Planet* as top 10, must-visit travel destination for 2013, yet we had the Member for Klondike writing to *Lonely Planet*, basically asking them to reconsider that designation. I don't understand that for the life of me. But subsequent global media coverage generated a tremendous amount of exposure for Yukon and expanded awareness of Yukon as a premier outdoor travel destination.

In October 2012, the department entered into a three-year marketing project with Holland America Line for \$50,000 a year to support joint efforts to promote cruise tour product that provides significant revenues and benefits to Yukon's tourism industry.

I have said it before, and I'll say it again, that the work that the department is doing to promote our territory is truly, very interesting to watch.

We know that tourism is a strategic industry that contributes over \$200 million annually to the Yukon economy with significant promise for future growth.

German-speaking Europe and the United Kingdom are two of our largest overseas markets with extremely strong growth potential.

Last summer, visitors from these markets spent over \$11 million in our territory. The Premier-led mission was an opportunity to show leadership in two strategic overseas tourism markets and it reflects Yukon's growing role in the global tourism context. The mission showed our level of commitment to work with our local and overseas industry partners to promote Yukon as a year-round tourism destination.

My participation in the European trade mission, I believe, helped to strengthen existing strategic alliances and it created new opportunities to increase awareness of Yukon as a year-round tourism destination and to grow our tourism revenues.

In addition to our ongoing marketing initiatives, Tourism Yukon will focus on six key marketing initiatives in the coming year: complete the marketing program assessment; analyze the data to make informed decisions about Yukon's geomarket classifications and resource allocations; review instruments in marketing, partnerships, projects, campaigns and programs funded or delivered by Tourism Yukon; apply the principles and appropriate assessment approaches from the marketing program assessment to assess effectiveness and efficiency of marketing initiatives in all target markets; to continue to integrate Yukon brand guidelines across all marketing activities and, in particular, to integrate the six pillars foundation; to continue to implement the global media relation strategy and assess effectiveness; to implement the digital strategy and assess the effectiveness; to implement the explorer quotient in Canada and start implementation in other select target markets where direct-to-consumer marketing is occurring; to develop a strategy approach for China; and we want to conduct an assessment of the impact of the potential for expanded air access from overseas markets — direct service, interlined and code sharing.

The member opposite asked about the funding for overseas marketing. According to the federal government, CanNor focuses on strengthening the driver sectors of the territorial economies, economic diversification and encouraging northerners' participation in the economy. CanNor has yet to announce funding beyond the end of March 2014. The current program that we are in was a four-year program. We are in communication with Canada about the future of that program and what it might look like. I have personally sent correspondence to the minister responsible as well as had many conversations.

Yukon has benefited from the CanNor funding programs, specifically the strategic investment and northern economic development, or SINED, fund for tourism-related initiatives such as the expansion of our overseas marketing efforts, upgrades to the Erik Nielson Whitehorse International Airport and the Yukon visitor tracking program. Overseas visitors to Yukon generally stay longer and spend more than Canadian and U.S. visitors, which aligns with our strategy to attract high-yield customers to Yukon. The additional \$590,000 per year from CanNor has enabled Yukon to increase its market share compared to the rest of Canada and key European markets.

The budget for 2014-15 hasn't been set yet, so we are debating the supplementary right now for 2013-14.

Speaking to Parks Canada, the Yukon government is very pleased by the measures taken by the Government of Canada to ensure that Yukon continues to offer high-quality tourism experiences. The Department of Tourism and Culture will continue to work closely with Parks Canada officials as they move forward with their new RFP process to provide services at the *SS Klondike* and Dredge No. 4. The Government of

Canada has clearly recognized the value of Parks Canada sites and artifacts to Yukoners and visitors and has demonstrated a real willingness to collaborate on this issue.

In recent years, despite economic uncertainty — especially in the United States and Europe — Yukon's tourism industry has consistently out-performed the national average for visitation — experiencing solid growth, in fact.

Looking ahead, the Department of Tourism and Culture uses a number of territorially and nationally generated indicators, along with industry intelligence, to provide visitation forecasts. The one thing I will note is that, within the department and within this government, we have faith in our stakeholders in the territory and we believe that when there are private sector issues, the private sector can prevail.

In 2014, visitor numbers are expected to stay strong and are forecasted to grow another 1.5 to approximately three percent. Also, the Department of Tourism and Culture utilizes cooperative marketing initiatives as a strategic tool to significantly increase its global marketing research and its impact. These cooperative marketing initiatives focus on projects where partners match Tourism Yukon's budget. This approach doubles the marketing investment.

Through cooperative marketing, the Yukon government leverages approximately \$1.8 million each year from our marketing partners and stakeholders.

Also, the Department of Tourism and Culture's Industry Services unit completed the 2013-16 product development strategy just in April of this year.

Through this strategy, Industry Services will continue to provide tourism industries and entrepreneurs with quality education and quality training programs. This strategy will support industry in development in consultation with non-government organizations and industry stakeholders and ensure tourism interests are represented and communicated.

Mr. Silver: I would like to thank the representatives from the department here today. I'm going to ask as many questions as I can in my 20 minutes and sit down, and hopefully we'll get some answers to these questions from the minister responsible.

I would like to start with the Canadian Tourism Commission. According to numbers released by the CTC this summer, the number of international visitors in Yukon in recent years is, in fact, dropping. Overall we were down 1.3 percent for the 2012 review and in 2010 we were down 14.2 percent, which was the single worst performance in Canada. Now these are statistics from one particular commission, one particular organization, and it certainly does contradict the message that we're getting from our minister here, so if he could respond as to why these numbers don't add up and if we could get a clear indication as to where he's getting his numbers.

Moving into Parks Canada's season — in order to save money, Parks Canada decided to standardize the closing dates of its facilities across the country. The impact in Dawson of this early closure is a 10-percent reduction in our season. In my role as the MLA for the Klondike, I wrote to the federal minister responsible for Parks Canada.

I wanted to lend my voice and support to an issue that the minister was made aware of by letter from the Klondike Visitors Association earlier this summer — the early closing of Parks Canada's Klondike National Historic Sites, the KNHS, summer visiting programs and services in Dawson City. The early closures will cut an already short season, like I said, by 10 percent. I share the concerns expressed by KVA regarding the negative impact that this will have on our community and on our economy.

This decision, coupled with cuts at Dredge No. 4, has not been well-received in Dawson City and we do agree that there has been an increase in the private sector by being able to do these tours. The number of increased jobs — well, there isn't a number of increased jobs. With the new way of doing things, there is actually a decrease in jobs in Dawson when you take into consideration the cuts from Parks on a federal level as well. I'm just wondering: did the minister raise this issue with his federal colleagues, and what response did he receive? What efforts has the government made to ensure that Parks offices across the territory are open later next year?

As far as the dredge and the *SS Klondike* tours, I would like to ask: does the minister have the visitation numbers for Dredge No. 4 for this summer and for *SS Klondike*? Did the minister attend any meetings of the Friends of the Klondike Corridor this summer? That's a group formed in the wake of the Government of Canada's decision to no longer offer tours on the *SS Klondike* and the Dredge No. 4. If so, can he give an update on this NGO's successes, suggestions or a progress report as to the work done by the Friends of the Klondike Corridor? This is part of the initiative that was set up by a working group that involved me, the minister, different shareholders in the industry, and also the MP.

On that as well, did the minister attend any meetings of the Friends of Bear Creek Society this summer? This is a group that is trying to bring the Bear Creek site in Dawson back to life. If so, can he give us an update on this NGO's suggestions and/or a progress report as well?

Just in general, what work has the minister done this summer to help these groups achieve their goals? My last question would be on the CanNor tourism marketing funding. A big part of our existing marketing budget is currently being funded by the Government of Canada through CanNor. However, that funding, as we all know, runs out on March 13, 2014. There has been no word from this government on whether this funding will be renewed or how it will be replaced. If it isn't — this is half a million dollars a year coming from Ottawa. How does the government plan to replace this time-limited marketing money? I think I will leave it at that.

Hon. Mr. Nixon: I think I will start by talking about the stats where the member opposite is getting his figures. According to Statistics Canada, national border crossing counts — and that's from CBSA — between January 2013 and August 2013 actually grew one percent while border crossing counts to Yukon grew nine percent during that same period.

The Yukon continues to gain market share and has outperformed the national average in visitation from U.S., which was up eight percent, the overseas marketing, which was up seven percent, and the resident Canadian visitation, which was up 12 percent during that same time period. Visitation to Canada from the U.S. was down 1.2 percent. Visitation from overseas markets was up 2.9 percent.

Madam Chair, the numbers speak for themselves. We look at hosting well over 320,000 visitors from around the world. We look at generating well over \$200 million in revenue for Yukon businesses, Yukon stakeholders. A record of 294,000 passengers travelled through the international airport here just last year is the fourth straight year of growth in travelling to Yukon by air. More than 3,500 Japanese visitors visited Yukon this year to experience Yukon winter and northern lights. We continue to see that market grow. Germany continues to be the Yukon's largest overseas market.

I have put these numbers on the floor of this Legislature over and over and over, and yet the member opposite isn't grasping onto the good figures that we actually do have to report when you compare us to other jurisdictions and to Canada as a whole.

Border crossing statistics — same-day travel saw an increase of over 1,500 visitors, which was up three percent when compared to August 2012.

Private vehicle saw an increase of over 2,500 visitors, which was up 17 percent. Motorcoach traffic saw a decrease of just over 1,000 visitors, which was down by three percent. By origin, increases were present for Canadians and foreigners recording an increase of 147 visitors, up three percent, and 514 visitors, which was up 12 percent, respectively. There was a change in U.S. citizen visitation traffic. So, if we look at the numbers, they truly do speak for themselves.

Tourist visitation to Yukon is indeed growing. We have the numbers to prove that. While I cannot speak to the numbers that the MLA for Klondike is quoting, Yukon visitation statistics from the 2012 Yukon visitor tracking program indicate that, since 2004, visitation to Yukon has increased by over 25 percent, which equates to an annualized growth rate of three percent per year. It's clear that Yukon's tourism industry is growing and offers great growth potential for the future.

As minister, I am very proud that Yukon is indeed outperforming the Canadian average for growth in tourism visitation, which is the result of the strategic and the effective approach that the department and our tourism industry operators and NGOs have taken with regard to marketing and investment decisions.

Border-crossing statistics provided by the Canadian Border Services Agency are another measure of tourism visitation. These stats indicate that, for the period January to July 2013, border crossings to Yukon are up 10 percent compared to the same period in 2012, representing an increase of 19,571 more people entering the Yukon through Yukon's four border crossings.

Madam Chair, the member opposite had spoken about the CanNor funding. The Department of Tourism and Culture has delivered the overseas destination awareness marketing project for the last four years. It was a four-year project. We did this to maximize opportunities and generate new and increased revenues from Yukon's overseas target markets. We've been budgeting between \$1 million and \$1.4 million per year for overseas marketing, which has included support of \$590,000 per year from CanNor's strategic investments in northern economic development funding. The primary target market for the overseas marketing project are Germany and Switzerland, secondary are UK and Australia as well as Japan, while emerging markets are identified as France, Netherlands, South Korea and China.

The member opposite spoke about some other initiatives within the territory. One of those was the Friends of Bear Creek Society. The department continues to work with all stakeholders around the territory and that does include the Friends of Bear Creek Society. In fact, the Government of Yukon recognizes that the Bear Creek industrial complex is a valuable part of Yukon history, and it appreciates the interest of Dawson residents in seeking to raise that public awareness. The Friends of Bear Creek Society plays an important role in promoting awareness in the Klondike's history, including the history of the complex. The department will continue to work collaboratively with Parks Canada on the management of Yukon's important heritage resources.

I'm a bit surprised that the member opposite is so bold as to bring up the Parks Canada issues. We've discussed those a number of times in the Legislature and I think we've proven that we're able to roll up our sleeves, work with Parks Canada, work with our federal counterparts and get the job done when needed.

We're very pleased by the measures taken by the Government of Canada to ensure that the Yukon continues to offer these high-quality tourism experiences. The Department of Tourism and Culture will continue to work closely with Parks Canada officials as they move forward with their new RFP process to provide services at both the *SS Klondike* and Dredge No. 4. The Government of Canada has clearly recognized the value of Parks Canada sites and artifacts to Yukoners and visitors and has demonstrated a real willingness to collaborate on this issue.

Also, beginning on May 24, 2014, MacBride Museum, Nature Tours of Yukon and Yukon Culture Cruiser will offer guided tours of the *SS Klondike*, while Goldbottom Tours will offer guided tours of Dredge No. 4. That will start on May 17, 2014.

I just want to offer my sincere congratulations to those Yukon stakeholders who can showcase two fine examples of tourist attractions here in the territory.

The Government of Yukon is also pleased that the Government of Canada will ensure that the Parks Canada collection of the historic artifacts will remain in our territory. These significant heritage resources will continue to be managed locally by Parks Canada with assistance from specialized national collections and curatorial staff. Tourism

and Culture will continue to work with the Government of Canada to ensure that Parks Canada will properly maintain the artifacts for the benefit of Yukon residents and Yukon visitors.

Chair: Does any member wish to participate in the general debate? We are going to proceed to line-by-line debate.

On Operation and Maintenance Expenditures

On Corporate Services

Corporate Services in the amount of \$92,000 agreed to

On Cultural Services

Cultural Services in the amount of \$570,000 agreed to

On Tourism

Tourism in the amount of \$389,000 agreed to

Total Operation and Maintenance Expenditures in the amount of \$1,051,000 agreed to

On Capital Expenditures

On Corporate Services

On Information Technology Equipment and Systems

Information Technology Equipment and Systems in the amount of \$10,000 agreed to

On Building Maintenance, Renovations and Space

Mr. Barr: Can the minister let us know where this took place or where this is?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: For the \$192,000, this funding is identified for planning and potential upgrades at the Whitehorse Visitor Information Centre. There is a revote of \$34,000 and supplemental funding of \$81,000 for the Whitehorse tourism business centre fire alarm panel project.

Building Maintenance, Renovations and Space in the amount of \$192,000 agreed to

On Cultural Services

On Historic Sites — Fort Selkirk

Ms. Hanson: I would be interested if the minister could elaborate on what this is for. We noticed when we were at Fort Selkirk this summer that there's significant erosion that has gotten worse with time and I am wondering if this is part of that or if there are other measures being taken to address the impact of erosion on both buildings and when entering and leaving Fort Selkirk.

Hon. Mr. Nixon: I thank the member opposite for her question. Pertaining to the erosion issues that she speaks about, the Department of Tourism and Culture is in discussions with the Department of Community Services and the Department of Highways and Public Works to work at how best to move forward on those issues. However, getting back to this budget, the \$10,000 is a revote that was requested for the wilderness heritage interpretive training project.

Mr. Barr: Also regarding Fort Selkirk, when visiting there, there was new tin put on some of the buildings and it was noted it wasn't of the period — it's the shiny new tin. One of the long-time guys on the river there felt it was pretty out of place. Are there plans, or when the department looks at restoring these things, does it look at putting the period tin on there? Is that something that will be looked at in future times, to have something that's cosmetically the same as what would originally have been put on the roofs?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: Madam Chair, on projects like this it really is a pleasure to work with the Minister of Highways and Public Works and the Minister of Community Services, as well as his department officials, when looking at the scope of work that really is needed. To answer the member opposite's question of whether we look at period materials, the answer is yes.

Historic Sites — Fort Selkirk in the amount of \$10,000 agreed to

On Historic Sites — Historic Sites Planning

Historic Sites — Historic Sites Planning in the amount of \$8,000 agreed to

On Historic Sites — Forty Mile

Mr. Barr: Can the Minister let us know what that was for?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: Madam Chair, the \$37,000 is a revote requested to complete the pedestrian footbridge project started in 2012-13 that has yet to be completed.

Historic Sites — Forty Mile in the amount of \$37,000 agreed to

On Museums — Yukon Beringia Interpretive Centre

Mr. Barr: Just to be clear, what was this \$82,000 for?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: This is a revote that is requested to complete the building assessment. Also a revote is requested for equipment that was ordered but did not arrive before year-end. That's it.

Museums — Yukon Beringia Interpretive Centre in the amount of \$82,000 agreed to

On Museums — Museums — Capital Maintenance

Museums — Museums — Capital Maintenance in the amount of \$25,000 agreed to

On Archives — Archives Building Maintenance

Ms. Hanson: I noticed this is zero, so there was nothing budgeted for this issue. Archives and the storage of our archival material has been the subject of significant debate in this Legislature. Last year, we saw the government putting the axe to work on the archives in terms of enhancing capacity, cold storage and others. Could the minister explain what this is for? Hopefully, it might indicate some renewed focus on our archives and the building of capacity for our historic archival material.

Hon. Mr. Nixon: Before I get into what this allocation is for, I just want to take a moment because I didn't express my sincere thanks to my department officials who are joining me here today on the floor of the Legislature. It's great to have the amount of support that I do have from them.

The \$4,000 specifically in the budget here is a revote that is requested to complete the security review of the building itself. The Yukon government is committed to ensuring that Yukon Archives is able to continue its very important role in preserving Yukon's documentary heritage. Yukon Archives' record storage is, as we know, nearing capacity and a variety of practical solutions and work processes have been implemented to help address the space challenges. Yukon government is conducting a functional space analysis to determine the feasibility of accommodating Yukon Archives'

heritage resources and/or art storage requirements within that one facility.

I do want to extend a thanks to the Minister of Highways and Public Works and his department officials for the work in collaboration with the Department of Tourism and Culture on this project up until now and as we move forward.

Archives — Archives Building Maintenance in the amount of \$4,000 agreed to

On Tourism

On Visitor Information Centres — Capital Maintenance and Upgrades

Mr. Barr: I'd just like to know what these upgrades were.

Hon. Mr. Nixon: There was a revote requested for lighting upgrades at the Haines Junction Visitor Information Centre. That was \$5,000; supplemental funding to furnish the Carcross Visitor Information Centre was \$115,000; and there was a furnace replacement at the Watson Lake Visitor Information Centre for \$30,000.

Visitor Information Centres — Capital Maintenance and Upgrades in the amount of \$150,000 agreed to

On Travel Equipment, Displays and Productions — Purchase and Maintenance of Displays

Travel Equipment, Displays and Productions — Purchase and Maintenance of Displays underexpenditure in the amount of \$20,000 cleared

On Total of Other Capital

Total of Other Capital in the amount of nil cleared

Total Capital Expenditures in the amount of \$498,000 agreed to

Total Expenditures in the amount of \$1,549,000 agreed to

Department of Tourism and Culture agreed to

Hon. Mr. Cathers: I move that we report progress on Bill No. 11, *Second Appropriation Act, 2013-14*.

Chair: It has been moved by Mr. Cathers that the Chair report progress on Bill No. 11, *Second Appropriation Act, 2013-14*.

Motion agreed to

Hon. Mr. Cathers: I move that the Speaker do now resume the Chair.

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

Motion agreed to

Speaker resumes the Chair

Speaker: I will now call the House to order.

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

Chair's report

Ms. McLeod: Mr. Speaker, Committee of the Whole has considered Bill No. 11, entitled *Second Appropriation Act, 2013-14*, and directed me to report progress.

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

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Speaker: I declare the report carried.

GOVERNMENT BILLS

Bill No. 59: *Act to Amend the Highways Act and the Dangerous Goods Transportation Act* — Second Reading

Clerk: Second reading, Bill No. 59, standing in the name of the Hon. Mr. Istchenko.

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: I move that Bill No. 59, entitled *Act to Amend the Highways Act and the Dangerous Goods Transportation Act*, be now read a second time.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Minister of Highways and Public Works that Bill No. 59, entitled *Act to Amend the Highways Act and the Dangerous Goods Transportation Act*, be now read a second time.

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: A tremendous amount of thought and work went into drafting the amendments and I thank all those who prepared this bill for the time, effort and attention to detail they provided — those within the Department of Highways and Public Works and those from the Department of Justice.

Bill 59 modernizes and improves two important pieces of transportation legislation. Both the *Highways Act* and the *Dangerous Goods Transportation Act* are out of date and will benefit from clarifications that help make the rules clearer.

In addition, some amendments address administrative gaps and constraints that have become evident over the years. The Department of Highways and Public Works is responsible for ensuring safe and efficient public highways, airstrips, buildings and information systems. Without first-class transportation infrastructure, life in the Yukon would be far different. Well-functioning highway networks and airports are essential to the continued flow of goods and services and the export of resources that our economy relies on. Our public highways also provide access to, and connections between, the areas where we live, work and enjoy recreational activities.

I'll speak a little bit about the *Highways Act* first. The amendments to the *Highways Act* improve management of Yukon highways and help the Department of Highways and Public Works focus on its fundamental job of looking after nearly 5,000 kilometres of maintained roads.

In particular, these amendments to the *Highways Act* introduce new, better or more modernized definitions of key terms — all of which will make the act easier to interpret and understand. It will clarify what is and what is not a highway for the purposes of the act. It will improve the description of the minister's responsibility and liability in relation to highway maintenance and stray livestock. It will improve the description of the activities that are not allowed on highways without a permit. It will provide for the appointment and powers of enforcement officers and round out the enforcement options available to highways' officers.

The purpose of the *Highways Act* is to establish, preserve and protect transportation corridors on public land on behalf of all members of the public. It is important for us to know which roads in the Yukon this mandate applies to. The act amendments help in this regard. While the act gives government jurisdiction over all public highways, it only requires government to maintain certain highways, those listed in the highways regulation. This is an important aspect of the act that I would like to emphasize so that the amendments clarifying government's responsibility and liability are properly understood.

The *Highways Act* holds government accountable to do a good job of looking after selected highways, but it does not require us to stretch our resources hopelessly thin in trying to maintain each and every kilometre of highway that exists. A few amendments to the act build on this point and make it clear that Highways and Public Works cannot be held liable for the condition of highways that it has no duty to maintain.

This certainty gives the department the green light to focus on — I spoke to those 5,000 kilometres — highways identified in the regulation and to do the very best job they can do with the available resources.

Another set of amendments deal with the need to keep highway lands free from interference and as free as possible from obstructions and motorist distractions. This need is addressed by providing a more detailed description of activities that are not allowed on the highways lands without a permit. The need is also addressed by ensuring that highways officers have adequate authority and procedures to halt harmful activity and to take action to keep rights-of-way clear of unauthorized items and material.

It is our government's job to make sure that highways are recognized and treated as public assets that we rely on. This means that individuals may not interfere with the highway corridors or create collision and other safety hazards. It is also meant that the land beside the highway must be kept as clear as possible to allow the installation of utilities, effective highway maintenance, safe use of roadside trails and future corridor development.

Now that I've touched on some highlights of the *Highways Act* amendments I would now like to discuss briefly the proposed changes to the *Dangerous Goods Transportation Act*. For the most part, these amendments are about making things clear and making things simple. There are a number of ministerial responsibilities under the act, but it is not clear which of these may be delegated to department officials. The responsibilities in question include issuing permits, designating inspectors and analysts, and issuing directions to the permit holder just to name a few. Amendments to the designated *Dangerous Goods Transportation Act* settle the matter by enabling the minister to delegate all tasks described in the act to the deputy minister or other appropriate officials.

Another set of amendments make things simple by removing the requirement for the content of certificates and forms to be spelled out in the regulations. This means that revisions to certificates and forms will no longer require Cabinet approval and can be made by the department. Giving

departments the ability to modify administrative forms is a good move. With new technology, it reduces red tape and it brings the administration in line with modern practice.

One of the reasons why it is really important that I bring Bill No. 59 forward is that I see increased attention being paid on the north. The good economy brings on mines and more proposed mines, and some of these amendments to the *Highways Act* and the *Dangerous Goods Transportation Act* come into play with some of the stuff we see in the north.

In our federal government's most recent Speech from the Throne, one thing that struck me was that he said, "We are a northern country. We are a northern people. Canada's greatest dreams are to be found in our highest latitudes. They are the dreams of a North confident and prosperous, the True North, strong and free."

I think it's important that we bring legislation up to the same standard as the rest of Canada and we work on this. Bill No. 59, with these amendments, is something that will do this.

I recently had the opportunity to work with our federal minister on looking at new proposed roads and looking at infrastructure, funding and partnerships, and having the discussions with some of the stranded resources that we have. It's very clear to me that we need a good set of rules and regulations for this.

Bill No. 59 is the result of a careful review of two transportation acts and it's ensuring that our legislation is up to date and clear and that it does the job we need it to do. It's just good practice. It is also an example of good governance and a pillar commitment of this administration.

I do want to thank the department again for the hard work that they did — and those from Justice — from my fellow colleague the Minister of Justice. They put a lot of hard work into looking at acts and looking at regulations. I know sometimes members opposite would like to see more legislation and more regulation, but there is a lot of work that needs to be put into this — translation and everything that goes with it — so I do really want to commend our departments for the hard work that they do and commend this government for bringing forward the legislation that means most to Yukoners.

Ms. Moorcroft: I rise for the Official Opposition to speak to Bill No. 59, *Act to Amend the Highways Act and the Dangerous Goods Transportation Act*. We will support these amendments.

It is refreshing to see that the government is starting to address some of the more out-of-date legislation that departments are charged with administering across Yukon. There is much to be done, including ensuring that our legislation is consistent with First Nation final agreements, which is an area Yukon government is obliged to act on.

I would also like to thank the officials who gave us a briefing this morning. It was thorough and provided a very clear understanding of the legislative amendments. I commend the good work that officials have done here. Again, I hope this modernization of the *Highways Act* and the *Dangerous Goods Transportation Act* is an example of the government being

interested in bringing our legislative regime up to date, particularly when it comes to matters of public safety and in the public interest.

The bulk of the amendments before us pertain to the *Highways Act*. As the officials discussed with us this morning and the minister has reiterated, the amendments in Bill No. 59 are largely administrative. While I understand the need to reduce liability issues for government, it is paramount that the law must also make sense to the public. The officials in this project appear to have found a good balance. Not only do the amendments provide greater clarity for those tasked with administering and enforcing the act and its regulations, they provide greater clarity and ease of understanding for the public.

The amendments address a range of issues. One of the amendments provides clear authority for highway officers and enforcement officers to halt damaging activities in the highway right-of-way and to remove, store and dispose of items left in the right-of-way. Officials will provide notice so that people can voluntarily comply with the law by removing items from the right-of-way. I think it's also very good to see clear statements in relation to livestock on the right-of-way.

The amendments to the *Dangerous Goods Transportation Act* are administrative, but they are important nonetheless. Clarity on the delegation of authority not only helps those who are charged with administering the act, but it also provides clarity and transparency to the Yukon public. Clearly Cabinet agendas should not be occupied with authorizing minor changes to the forms that officials use to do the public's work.

However, I would like to raise a significant concern about the *Dangerous Goods Transportation Act*. I believe we need a broader discussion about what it is that we transport on our highways, how it is transported and how prepared and trained Yukon emergency responders are to deal with any spills.

The *Dangerous Goods Transportation Act* needs a thorough review and a public discussion. Our roads connect our homes and our communities. Vehicles and dangerous goods operate over our roads every day. Many Yukon residents live by the routes that dangerous goods travel on. In many cases, it is community volunteers who are our first line of defence when things go awry.

In Yukon communities, people volunteer and put their hearts, time and energy into protecting lives, property and the environment. Hard-working volunteers serve on volunteer fire departments and as paramedics on our ambulances. We appreciate how hard and dangerous it can be to deal with any major chemical or hazardous spills.

Only a short portion of the Alaska Highway lies within the corridor around the City of Whitehorse. Most of the more than 5,000 kilometres of roads are in rural areas and are in areas where the first responders would be volunteer fire departments or paramedics, as well as the RCMP.

I would encourage this government to ensure that those men and women who are volunteers are not only fully and professionally trained, but they are also adequately equipped to do their job. We all want our highways and communities to be safe.

Speaker: If the member now speaks, he will close debate. Does any other member wish to be heard?

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: I would like to thank the member opposite for the encouraging words and I know the department does work very hard on this, so I will basically conclude with that and look forward to going into the Committee of the Whole.

Speaker: Are you prepared for the question?

Some Hon. Members: Division.

Division

Speaker: Division has been called.

Bells

Speaker: Mr. Clerk, please poll the House.

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Agree.

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Graham: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Kent: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Nixon: Agree.

Ms. McLeod: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Agree.

Mr. Hassard: Agree.

Mr. Elias: Agree.

Ms. Hanson: Agree.

Ms. Stick: Agree.

Ms. Moorcroft: Agree.

Ms. White: Agree.

Mr. Tredger: Agree.

Mr. Barr: Agree.

Mr. Silver: Agree.

Clerk: Mr. Speaker, the results are 18 yeas, nil nays.

Speaker: The yeas have it. I declare the motion carried.

Motion for second reading of Bill No. 59 agreed to

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

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

Motion agreed to

Speaker leaves the Chair

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Chair (Ms. McLeod): Order. Committee of the Whole will now come to order.

Bill No. 59: Act to Amend the Highways Act and the Dangerous Goods Transportation Act

Chair: The matter before the Committee is Bill No. 59, *Act to Amend the Highways Act and the Dangerous Goods Transportation Act*.

Do members wish to take a brief recess?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

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

Recess

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

The matter before the Committee is Bill No. 59, *Act to Amend the Highways Act and the Dangerous Goods Transportation Act*.

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: It is my pleasure to speak to this bill and explain the tabled amendments. Before I proceed, I would like to acknowledge and thank the staff. Chris Scherbarth is a policy analyst with Highways and Public Works and Anne King is our legislative counsel from Justice. Thank you for your hard work on this. These public servants and their colleagues have worked very hard on this, and I appreciate their efforts.

As I mentioned in second reading, Bill No. 59 revises and modernizes two important pieces of transportation legislation. The amendments clarify the intent of each act, address oversight and make them easier to administer. All of these outcomes contribute to good governance, a priority goal of this government. We want our maintained highways to be well-managed and safe. We also want to make sure that our officials who make this possible have clear rules to follow and adequate authority to do their jobs.

A reliable highway system doesn't happen by accident. It takes a lot of planning, hard work and a lot of money, especially in a region subject to extreme climate and uncertain effects of global warming. I'm not going to call today extreme climate; it's just regular climate.

That said, I would now like to turn my attention to the *Highways Act* definitions. The first amendments you see in Bill No. 59 are new or improved definitions.

Some of them are housekeeping matters such as updating of land claim terminology and making sure that ferries referred to in the act are government ferries and not those operated by a tourism business or mining company. The new definition of highway has been developed to make it clear what a public highway is or is not. Most people think of a highway as a paved road. That is the everyday meaning of the word. In legislation, a highway is a public road, period. It can be a dirt road, gravel road or a four-lane expressway.

Another thing to understand about a highway is that it is more than a surface you drive on. It is the land on either side of the roadway and all the earthworks and fixtures in the right-of-way, such as bridges and guardrails. In other words, a highway is a transportation corridor. A key feature is the

roadway that is used by cars and trucks, but that's not all there is to it.

The revised definition of a highway in Bill No. 59 is an improvement on the current definition, which says a highway is a land used or surveyed as highways. A common criticism of the current definition — and I've heard this a lot of times from my deputy minister — is that a highway could be the south end of a north-bound bulldozer from the start of the Yukon. We thought we could do a better job than that, so we have.

There are also new provisions in Bill No. 59 that list types of Yukon roads that are highways and the types that are not. This makes things clearer for everyone. There is a new definition of animal that updates the list of livestock we want people to keep fenced and out of the path of motorists. The old definition used outdated terms such as meat, cattle and jacks and left out some big animals, such as llamas, that people have brought to the territory in recent years.

There's a new kind of officer — an enforcement officer. This was introduced on the advice of our legislative counsel to provide greater certainty about who is authorized to issue tickets and stop orders and move vehicles if necessary. The later section of the act indicates that enforcement officers are to be appointed by ministerial order. The appointment can refer to an individual public servant, such as a director of transportation maintenance, or a group of persons, such as road superintendents or RCMP officers.

Liability in relation to highway maintenance — the next set of amendments address a key oversight in the current act. In section 18, the act clearly lays out the minister's duty to maintain designated highways in a reasonable state of repair. It goes on to say the government could be held liable for damages beyond normal wear and tear if it is found to be in default of its duties.

The oversight in section 18 is the omission of the flip-side statement that the government is not liable for the state of repair of other highways — the ones that it has no duty to maintain. Making this statement closes the loop and gives the Department of Highways and Public Works the green light to focus on its core duties to maintain designated highways.

Ontario does this by exempting the Crown from liability for tertiary or third-order roads. Prince Edward Island does this by stating no one may sue for damages sustained on a seasonal road during the off-season or on a non-essential road at any time of the year. Saskatchewan provides other examples. Its act says no one can sue the minister or Crown for damages incurred on a highway that is not a provincial highway. There is a specific definition of a provincial highway and all obligation to maintain just that highway type.

I provide these examples to ensure the members opposite and the public that we are not proposing anything out of the ordinary. Our objectives are to clarify the situation for all concerned and to enable the Department of Highways and Public Works to focus its efforts and resources on its maintained priorities.

In a similar vein, we are clarifying what specifically is to be maintained in the right-of-way of designated highways.

The answer is the principal roadway or the travelled surface. With few exceptions, roadside trails are informal, beaten paths created by area residents. We are making it clear that the highway maintenance does not extend to these trails, nor to the driveway or footage roads that adjoin maintained highways.

Better maintenance of highway interference — the next step of the amendments of Bill No. 59 deal with the description and response to highway interference. Highway interference can take many forms, but in short it means any activity that disrupts traffic, harms or alters any part of the highway or encroaches on the right-of-way. As I said before, highways are a transportation corridor that need to be managed in the best interest of the public.

To the greatest extent possible, highways land needs to be kept clear from collision hazards, obstacles, distractions and things that compliance maintenance work for future development.

The amendments we propose are the result of a careful review of the rules on highway interference. The result is a clear and detailed description of the things one should not do on the highway land without authorization. This is achieved in part by bringing together the "no person shall" statements of the two separate sections of the act, section 21 and section 32.

Consolidating these sections make the rules more clear and it enables the remedies available to the highways officers to be consistent. Currently it is unclear if highways officers can respond in the same manner to unauthorized structure as they can to the deposited material.

Related amendments provide for legal parking on the highway to be better to find in regulations and allow the same remedies for illegal parking and vehicle abandonment that exist under the *Motor Vehicles Act* to apply under the *Highways Act*. This will create efficiencies and consistent outcomes by empowering the same officials to respond to similar offences in each act.

The review of highway interference issues also identified a need for guidelines and procedures on the handling of items removed from the highways land. This has been addressed through the inclusion of a new power to make regulations on this subject.

Highways officers will, of course, use education and encouragement as a first step to keep a right-of-way clear, but when all else fails, they may need to take action. The current act and regulations are silent on how officers ought to proceed in these cases. We are creating the framework to clarify how this will work and plan to consult Yukoners as part of this process.

We are also providing highways officers with an additional tool to assist their work in protecting Yukon highways from damage. That tool is a stop order. What it means is that an officer can formally instruct someone to stop what they are doing right now. This protects the highway from further harm and may be all that is necessary to address a situation. Given a choice between receiving a stop order or a ticket, I would much rather receive the order.

Another tool we are proposing is a time-limited opportunity for Yukoners currently using highways lands without permission to apply for a no-cost permit to authorize their activity. This opportunity is described in part three of Bill No. 59. This is something I've heard a lot over the years.

We look forward to working with our Yukon residents to resolve cases of non-compliance. We expect the solution to range from outright approval and approval with conditions to an understanding by all concerned of why the unauthorized use cannot continue.

When it comes to the liability in relation to stray livestock, I mentioned earlier that we have updated the definition of an animal in the act. This definition supports provisions in section 30 that prohibit anyone from allowing their livestock to roam at large on specified highways. Section 30 also gives the minister the authority to designate officers to capture stray livestock that are someone's personal property, and we believe it is important to clarify that having this opportunity means that needs to be stated clearly is that the minister's right to seize someone's personal property is not to be considered a duty to do so. The responsibility to keep livestock off roads rests with the animals' owners and caretakers. That is why the rule against stray livestock holds the person in charge of an animal accountable. I can tell you that because I have run into a horse before. I know what it's like.

The *Highways Act* conclusion here — there are a number of other *Highways Act* amendments that are more administrative in nature. Rather than take up more of the House's time just now, I offer instead to address anything that would come up in debate.

To conclude, I would like to reiterate the purpose of the *Highways Act* so that the relevance of amendments is understood in its context. The act's intent is to establish, preserve and protect transportation corridors on public land on behalf of all members of the public. To that end, we need to make sure the rules are clear and in tune with the real life challenges that play out on our highways. We also need to give our public servants the tools and protections they need to carry out their duties. That is why these amendments, and these solutions to the problems — uncertainty — have been tabled.

A short thing on the *Dangerous Goods and Transportation Act* — I would like to turn and talk to this for a short moment.

As I explained in second reading of Bill No. 59, the amendments are about making things clear and making things simple. The need for clarity concerns ministerial responsibilities by stating the minister may delegate the issuing of permits but remain silent about the delegation of other administrative tasks, and the act creates uncertainty as to which routine tasks may be delegated. This uncertainty opens the door for legal challenges of decisions made by other departmental officials. Clarifying that the minister can delegate all administrative functions under this act fixes that problem.

The second set of amendments simplifies the process of revising certificates and forms by removing the requirement for their content to be spelled out in the regulation. The requirement for Cabinet approval of certificates and forms is an outdated practice. This makes the process of revising these documents so slow and ineffective. It is better to use everyone's time to let the department decide on the content and format of administrative forms. It is also a move that reduces the red tape and brings the administration in line with other legislation.

I would like to thank the House for allowing me the time to summarize the intent and highlights of Bill No. 59. The bill does address a number of shortcomings of our existing legislation that is, I think, 20 years old or so, and it implements solutions that will serve us for years to come. I'd also like to thank the staff from Highways and Public Works and the Department of Justice for the care they have taken to propose worthwhile improvements to the Yukon's transportation legislation, ensuring that our legislation is up to date and clear and that it does the job that we need to do, which is good practice. I hope all present will join in endorsing the adoption of Bill No. 59.

Ms. Moorcroft: I'd like to thank the minister for his comments in general debate, which expanded slightly on his second reading speech. I would also like to say thank you to the officials. We had a very good briefing this morning, which the Liberal caucus also attended. It was very helpful to have the policy branch as well as the legislative counsel present in order to respond to our questions. The officials also provided an overview of Bill No. 59 this morning, and I spoke with the Leader of the Third Party, who is in agreement with my motion to move for unanimous consent.

Madam Chair, therefore, pursuant to Standing Order 14.3, I request the unanimous consent of Committee of the Whole to deem all clauses and the title —

Chair: Prior to requesting unanimous consent we will have to conclude general debate.

Ms. Moorcroft: I've completed my remarks in general debate.

Chair: Is there any further general debate?

Ms. Moorcroft: Madam Chair, pursuant to Standing Order 14.3, I request the unanimous consent of Committee of the Whole to deem all clauses and the title of Bill No. 59, entitled *Act to amend the Highways Act and the Dangerous Goods Transportation Act*, read and agreed to.

Unanimous consent re deeming all clauses and the title of Bill No. 59 read and agreed to

Chair: Ms. Moorcroft has, pursuant to Standing Order 14.3, requested the unanimous consent of the Committee of the Whole to deem all clauses and the title of Bill No. 59, entitled *Act to Amend the Highways Act and the Dangerous Goods Transportation Act*, read and agreed to.

Is there unanimous consent?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

Chair: Unanimous consent has been granted.
Clauses 1 to 25 are deemed read and agreed to

On Title

Title agreed to

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: I move that Bill No. 59, entitled *Act to Amend the Highways Act and the Dangerous Goods Transportation Act*, be reported without amendment.

Chair: It has been moved by Mr. Istchenko that Bill No. 59, entitled *Act to Amend the Highways Act and the Dangerous Goods Transportation Act*, be reported without amendment.

Motion agreed to

Hon. Mr. Cathers: I move that the Speaker do now resume the Chair.

Chair: It has been moved by Mr. Cathers that the Speaker do now resume the Chair.

Motion agreed to

Speaker resumes the Chair

Speaker: I will now call the House to order.

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

Chair's report

Ms. McLeod: Mr. Speaker, Committee of the Whole has considered Bill No. 59, entitled *Act to Amend the Highways Act and the Dangerous Goods Transportation Act*, and directed me to report the bill without amendment.

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

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Speaker: I declare the report carried.

GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

Motion No. 518

Clerk: Motion No. 518, standing in the name of the Hon. Mr. Cathers.

Speaker: It is moved by the Government House Leader:

THAT the membership of the Select Committee Regarding the Risks and Benefits of Hydraulic Fracturing, as established by Motion No. 433 of the First Session of the 33rd Legislative Assembly, be amended by:

(1) rescinding the appointment of Stacey Hassard to the Committee; and

(2) appointing Lois Moorcroft to the Committee.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: I will not spend a tremendous amount of time introducing this. This is a housekeeping motion giving procedural effect to what has actually been happening at the committee through a delegation to ensure that the membership of the committee continues to operate with an equal number of government members and opposition members.

I would just note again that the committee is doing its work and this select committee is yet another example of our efforts to involve members of the opposition in committees

that actually address real issues of substance and builds on the successful record of committees, including the all-party Select Committee on Anti-smoking Legislation, the all-party Select Committee on Human Rights, the all-party Select Committee on the Safe Operation and Use of Off-road Vehicles, and the all-party Select Committee on Whistle-blower Protection. I think I'm missing one as well. But again, this is another example of the —

Some Hon. Member: (inaudible)

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Thank you. I knew I was missing one. The other committee, of course, would be the Select Committee on the *Landlord and Tenant Act*.

Good work has been done. We hope members of this committee will be successful in coming up with cooperative ways to provide the Legislative Assembly with a report and recommendations regarding whether hydraulic fracturing should be allowed in the territory and, if so, what regulations and measures need to be in place to ensure that it can be done safely.

With that, I will commend this motion to the House.

Ms. Stick: Thank you for this opportunity. I just rise on behalf of the Official Opposition to say that we support this motion.

Mr. Silver: I just want to rise and say that on behalf of the Third Party that I also support this motion.

Speaker: If the member now speaks he will close debate. Does any other member wish to be heard?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: I thank members for their indication that they will support the motion.

Motion No. 518 agreed to

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

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

Motion agreed to

Speaker leaves the Chair

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Chair (Ms. McLeod): Order. Committee of the Whole will now come to order.

Bill No. 11: *Second Appropriation Act, 2013-14* — continued

Chair: The matter before the Committee is Vote 12, Department of Finance, in Bill No. 11, *Second Appropriation Act, 2013-14*. Do you require five minutes for your officials?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

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

Recess

Chair: Committee of the Whole will now come to order. The matter before the Committee is Vote No. 12, Department of Finance, in Bill No. 11, *Second Appropriation Act, 2013-14*.

Department of Finance

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: I'm pleased to take this opportunity to provide the Committee with a few introductory remarks on the Department of Finance supplementary budget.

Finance has a supplementary budget for operation and maintenance expenditures. My comments will be brief, as this supplementary budget is very small and is entirely related to employee costs.

As you know, collective agreement and manager market adjustments comprise a major part of the supplementary for many of the departments. In Finance, this is definitely the case, as personnel costs account for more than 75 percent of the department's overall budget. This \$323,000 requested increase is entirely related to personnel costs. The Department of Finance is a very small department and, as a result, the request is relatively small and largely non-discretionary.

That concludes my remarks. The request is small and straightforward and so are my remarks.

Ms. Hanson: It is refreshing to actually have a departmental minister stand and speak briefly and to the point. The briefing by the officials was clear. I understand that there are 57.5 FTEs in the Department of Finance. I understand that the \$323,000 is with respect to financing the provisions of the collective agreement for managers' increases and relocation costs. That being said, I'm prepared that we move to line-by-line debate.

Chair: Is there any further general debate?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: I just want to take this opportunity, because I thought I would do this with my first response, to acknowledge my deputy minister who is here and acknowledge him and all the great people within the Department of Finance and the wonderful job that they do every day.

Chair: We're going to proceed with line-by-line debate.

On Operation and Maintenance

On Treasury

Ms. Hanson: I'd just like a breakdown for the amount for relocation costs and the amounts for managers' increases there.

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: The relocation costs amount is \$20,000; collective agreement cost is \$84,000; managers cost is \$219,000.

Treasury in the amount of \$323,000 agreed to

On Total of Other Operation and Maintenance

Total of Other Operation and Maintenance in the amount of nil cleared

Total Operation and Maintenance Expenditures in the amount of \$323,000 agreed to

On Total Capital Expenditures

Total Capital Expenditures in the amount of nil cleared
Total Expenditures in the amount of \$323,000 agreed to
Department of Finance agreed to

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Madam Chair, I move that you report progress on Bill No. 11, *Second Appropriation Act, 2013-14*.

Chair: It has been moved by Mr. Cathers that the Chair report progress on Bill No. 11, *Second Appropriation Act, 2013-14*.

Motion agreed to

Hon. Mr. Cathers: I move that the Speaker do now resume the Chair.

Chair: It has been moved by Mr. Cathers that the Speaker do now resume the Chair.

Motion agreed to

Speaker resumes the Chair

Speaker: I will now call the House to order.

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

Chair's report

Ms. McLeod: Mr. Speaker, Committee of the Whole has considered Bill No. 11, entitled *Second Appropriation Act, 2013-14*, and directed me to report progress.

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

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Speaker: I declare the report carried.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: I move that the House do now adjourn.

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

Motion agreed to

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

The House adjourned at 5:14 p.m.