

Whitehorse, Yukon
Monday, November 19, 2007 -- 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 National Addictions Awareness Week

Hon. Mr. Cathers: I rise in the House today to pay tribute to National Addictions Awareness Week, which is November 18 to 24 this year. This yearly awareness campaign helps to focus attention on and support for people who are struggling with addictions and to celebrate those who are recovering from substance abuse and to acknowledge the work of those who helped them.

National Addictions Awareness Week was initiated in 1989 by Nechi Training, Research and Health Promotion Institute out of St. Albert in Alberta. Every year, they encourage those struggling with addictions to try one week of sobriety.

The theme this year is, "It takes a healthy community to raise a child." The point they're making is that future generations depend on a healthy community today. One week of sobriety is only a beginning, but it can lead to a healthier lifestyle and a lifetime of sobriety.

Substance abuse in all its forms is incredibly damaging to individuals as well as to their families, their friends and their communities.

I would like to particularly note the work that Health and Social Services staff do in helping people overcome their addictions through Alcohol and Drug Services, assisting them in prevention, detoxification, outpatient counselling, in-patient treatment, as well as outreach and youth services.

As well, I would like to thank the staff and volunteers at the many non-governmental organizations that do their part in trying to help people break free from addiction, as well as First Nation governments for their work in alcohol and drug prevention projects. I am very pleased to thank the staff of NGOs who deal with the after-effects of these addictions such as fetal alcohol spectrum disorder and to thank the NGOs which I include as examples -- FASSY, Many Rivers Counselling Services, Blood Ties Four Directions -- as well as many other NGOs and many other volunteers.

Every year Alcohol and Drug Services branch supports the work of the National Addiction Awareness Week campaign by funding some of their activities and, along with non-governmental and First Nations partners, works toward helping people to achieve healthier lifestyles that do not include alcohol or other drug addictions. While there is always more that can

be done, the work of these committed people improves the lives of Yukoners, and I thank them.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Mitchell: I rise today on behalf of the Official Opposition to pay tribute to National Addictions Awareness Week, from November 18 to 24. National Addictions Awareness Week is a great opportunity to start taking action to build stronger, healthier, more caring and supportive communities. The purpose of National Addictions Awareness Week is to provide information and materials and to promote activities that will serve to raise awareness of addictions that affect people across the country.

There are many forms of addiction, and addiction does not discriminate. It affects all races, gender, ages and cultures. Addictions are a devastating problem affecting many aspects of Canadian society. National Addictions Awareness Week is an avenue for effectively mobilizing communities to work together toward a common goal.

The more comfortable we feel communicating with each other and discussing addiction-related issues as a family, community and society, the better we will become at recognizing and addressing addiction-related problems. Although we are making progress, it is clear there is much work left to be done. It is important to note that beating an addiction isn't as simple as just stopping. Recognizing an addictions problem and really understanding what lies behind it is often the key to recovery. Breaking a long-term habit and lifestyle takes tremendous strength.

To the people who are suffering from an addiction, please know there are people who will help you. Be humble enough to accept the fact that you need help. That is the first step to recovery.

Helping rehabilitate someone with an addiction means supporting that person while they make the personal changes they need to make. We would like to thank the many front-line workers, volunteers, non-governmental organizations, First Nations, and counsellors who support in the recovery and rehabilitation of people with addictions and for giving them hope and helping them understand that each and every one of us is an important and valued member of society with a contribution to make. National Addictions Awareness Week is a time to celebrate the joy of freedom from addiction while focusing on celebrating the successes of recovery.

Mr. Edzerza: I rise on behalf of the NDP caucus to pay tribute to National Addictions Awareness Week, November 18 to 24. National Addictions Awareness Week was established to educate the public about addictions, but it is also to focus on activities that celebrate overcoming addictions and the joy of addiction-free living. Across Canada there are hundreds of events taking place this week recognizing the courage and commitment of individuals who have chosen the path of sobriety and are living a healthy lifestyle without their addiction.

Addictions include substances such as nicotine, alcohol and drugs. These addictions are all terribly demanding on the addicted person, their families, friends and communities. An-

other addiction that is not recognized as readily as substance abuse is gambling. In some cases gambling is substituted when other addictions have been overcome. It has been proven that gambling has the same reaction in the brain as substance abuse.

Gambling addiction is a loss of control over the need for the excitement or rush brought about by several methods of gambling, such as video terminals, betting on sports or races, bingo or playing cards. It is a progressive disease characterized by a need to gamble more frequently, a tendency to bet larger and larger amounts of money, and unhappiness and anxiety if there is withdrawal. Gambling addiction is linked to a wide range of serious personal and social problems, such as depression, suicide, bankruptcy, family breakup, domestic abuse, assault, fraud, theft and homelessness.

Recognizing the dangers in gambling, the Canada Safety Council has made problem gambling its target for November's national community safety and crime prevention campaign.

This year the theme of NAAW is, "It takes a healthy community to raise a child." It also takes a healthy community to support people struggling with the compulsion of their addiction, whether the addiction is with the substances or gambling. It is important for everyone, especially those of us in decision-making positions, to constantly be aware that assisting addictions in any way to continue does not help the person or the community. Sometimes that takes courage.

I can personally testify as to how difficult it is to overcome addictions. I suffered from alcohol and tobacco addictions for many years. It takes courage, it takes discipline, and it takes practically a miracle. All I can say is that I ask the Creator to be with those who are trying to overcome addictions.

Speaker: Are there any further tributes?
Are there any introductions of visitors?
Are there any returns or documents for tabling?

TABLING RETURNS AND DOCUMENTS

Mr. Inverarity: Mr. Speaker, I have for tabling a letter related to the Public Accounts Committee.

Mr. Edzerza: Mr. Speaker, I have for tabling a letter dated November 16, 2007, to the chair of the Public Accounts Committee.

Speaker: Are there any further documents for tabling?
Are there any reports of committees?
Are there any petitions?
Are there any bills to be introduced?
Are there any notices of motion?

NOTICES OF MOTION

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

THAT this House urges the Yukon government to continue implementing its strategy for supporting childcare and early learning by increasing the budget for childcare by \$1 million annually over a period of five years, beginning in the 2007-08 fiscal year and ending in the 2011-12 fiscal year when

annual funding for childcare totals \$10.3 million to address the following priorities:

- (1) increasing the support provided to low-income families by increasing the childcare subsidy rate by 25 percent on December 1, 2007;
- (2) raising the maximum family income eligibility level for childcare subsidy to ensure that more Yukon families can benefit, effective December 1, 2007;
- (3) further supporting wages for childcare workers with the goal of reducing rates parents pay for childcare;
- (4) facilitating increased training and education for childcare workers;
- (5) enhancing support for children with disabilities;
- (6) collaborating with First Nations, community groups, non-governmental organizations and childcare operators to provide an integrated system that better serves the education and cultural needs of parents and their children in all Yukon communities;
- (7) creating more available spaces for children of all ages, especially for those younger than 18 months; and
- (8) facilitating the development of healthy families through increased support to at-risk families.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to offer assistance to Bangladesh for humanitarian relief for the thousands of victims of the recent cyclone suffered by that country.

NOTICES OF MOTION FOR THE PRODUCTION OF PAPERS

Mr. Mitchell: I also give notice of the following motion for the production of papers:

THAT this House do issue an order for the return of
(1) the Government of Yukon's investment policy, particularly any section that deals with what percentage of investment can be put into any one category or individual investment.

NOTICES OF MOTION

Mr. Edzerza: Mr. Speaker, I give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Minister of Health and Social Services to honour the commitment he made on August 24, 2006, to reopen the Thomson Centre, which he referred to at that time as a pressing need, and to stop blaming previous governments for the delay in re-opening this facility, which has been in limbo for five years under this government.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Yukon government to act immediately on the need for supportive housing for mental patients, in-patient services for individuals with acute mental illness, and increased mental health services to rural Yukon, as identified in the Goldner report in March 2006, and in accordance with announcements made by the Minister of Health and Social Services on August 30, 2006.

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

THAT this House urges the Minister of Community Services to fast-track the development of a high-tech Yukon driver's licence that meets international security standards and can be used in lieu of a passport for Yukon residents crossing the border between Canada and the United States.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to impose a moratorium on any uranium exploration or development activities, including the development of roads or other infrastructure to facilitate exploration, until Yukon people have been fully informed about the environmental, social and health impacts of uranium mining and have been properly consulted about whether or not uranium mining should be permitted in the territory.

I give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to end its practice of turning prisoners captured by Canadian military personnel over to Afghan authorities until there are effective safeguards in place to ensure that these prisoners will not be mistreated in Afghani custody.

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

This then brings us to Question Period.

QUESTION PERIOD

Question re: Homeless youth

Mr. Mitchell: I have a question for the Minister of Health and Social Services. This past weekend, the Yukon Medical Association met and top of their list of concerns was a shelter for homeless or at-risk youth. The minister keeps speaking and speaking of it but has not announced any concrete plans on going forward and building or funding a centre.

We urge the minister to recognize the immediate need for a shelter and have it completed sooner rather than later. Could the minister please inform us of when this shelter project will be announced, what the planned capacity is and when it will be operational?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: I would think the answer would be clear to the Leader of the Official Opposition. As I indicated, we're working right now with the NGOs that we have a long-standing service relationship with. We're working on finalizing the details, but the member ought to be aware that the single most challenging detail is the issue of where. That is an issue that is being worked on right now. We are working on concluding the details. Once we're able to do so, I look forward to making an announcement.

Mr. Mitchell: I don't believe the minister answered. We know it is challenging; we're asking for the details.

We'll try another issue on the to-do list from the YMA -- the recruitment of a second psychiatric nurse. Now the minister has been talking and talking and talking about how great the health human resources strategy is. If this strategy is such a

good one and is working so well, why are we now down to one psychiatric nurse at the hospital?

Mental health was touted as one of this government's priorities in August 2006 when announcing improvements to mental health services. There was money announced last year for identifying housing options and developing an in-patient psychiatric program. The fact that we are down to one nurse is a huge step backward. The Yukon Medical Association is demanding the Whitehorse Hospital hire another psychiatric nurse because there is now only one working in Yukon. What is being done to hire a new psychiatric nurse?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Mr. Speaker, it really would do this House and the public a greater service if the Leader of the Official Opposition would reflect the facts more accurately when he stands up in this Assembly. The member is well aware that recruitment of staff at the Whitehorse General Hospital is the responsibility of the hospital.

What this government has done is far beyond what any previous government has done with the health human resources strategy, including programs for attracting family physicians, for nurse mentoring and for assisting physicians, nurses and other health professionals in attending school -- or rather I should say assisting Yukon students in achieving training in those areas.

We've stepped forward and -- as the member should be aware -- at the Yukon Medical Association meeting on Friday I noted to the physicians that we would welcome their input both on how well things were working and on where we can enhance and build on the health human resources strategy. We will continue to do so.

I have to again reiterate to members that in the area of mental health -- as they've noted -- we have significantly stepped forward. We've provided a rural clinician based out of Dawson City, hired a youth clinician based out of Whitehorse and, effective January 1, we will have a second psychiatrist providing services in the Yukon. We are addressing this area, and we will continue to do so.

Mr. Mitchell: Let's review the facts. Now, last August the minister said his department was working with Whitehorse General Hospital to plan for dedicated mental health in-patient beds. Now, the minister states that it's at arm's-length, that mental health services are not under his control. The minister cannot have it both ways. He can't pick and choose which issues he will work with them on and which he will not. The incentive funding for hiring a new nurse would be directly from his own health human resources strategy. This fund was brought in so the government could entice more health care workers to come north. Now, we know that the minister has a very good working relationship with the chair of the hospital board. Will he now get to work with this chosen chair and ensure that this position is filled quickly?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: It is unfortunate the Leader of the Official Opposition is taking shots at individuals here.

Yes, we do have a very good working relationship with the board of Yukon Hospital Corporation and they do good work there. We work with them very positively. As I've noted here in the House previously -- and the member is well aware of this,

as I've indicated this during this session -- we've offered the hospital money for renovations. We've offered them approximately \$200,000 to do renovations and they're finalizing the details of that. The objective of that money is to improve the mental health beds within Whitehorse General Hospital. That's an active item right now. They're finalizing the details and it would be a little more helpful if the member would reflect that in debate.

To summarize, this is the government that has stepped forward to address issues such as youth homelessness and ensure that we have a second safety net in place. We're finalizing the details now.

This government has already stepped forward in enhancing mental health services through hiring a rural clinician based out of Dawson City, through hiring a clinician for youth services specifically based out of Whitehorse, and through contracting a second psychiatrist who begins serving patients on January 1. We will continue to work on these areas with the Yukon Hospital Corporation and others and we're very pleased to do so.

Question re: United Nations climate change conference

Mr. Elias: I have some questions for the Acting Minister of Environment. This government has made a lot of noise about climate change being a priority. It has been backed up by very little action. We were the last jurisdiction in Canada to develop a climate change strategy, and there is still no action plan to implement it. Next month, world leaders are meeting for the United Nations Framework Conference on Climate Change. The main item for discussion is a new deal to replace the Kyoto Protocol when it expires in 2012. The conference brings together representatives from over 180 countries. The last conference of this type was held in 2005 in Montreal, and the Premier did attend that meeting.

Will the Premier be attending this meeting in December?

Hon. Mr. Kenyon: For the member opposite, representatives from the Department of Environment will be making preparations as we speak to attend the conference from December 1 to 14. The conference will include official meetings regarding the implementation of the Kyoto Protocol and negotiations on agreement past the Kyoto Protocol commitment period, as well as information side events.

I'm pleased to inform the member opposite that we're well ahead on this, and we will be well represented there.

Mr. Elias: Poor answer, Mr. Speaker; it's not good enough. A minister should go. In my opinion, it's very important for northern political leaders to explain to those who will listen about our rapidly changing north. There is no better place to express our dismay at the shameful lack of political will within the industrialized nations on how climate change affects our Yukon and what we're doing about it.

I think it's important that international negotiators know territorial governments in Canada are mobilizing around climate change. This is an opportunity to have Yukoners' message heard on the world stage. This is an event the Premier should be attending. If this is a priority, let's show it. Will the Premier be attending this important climate change conference?

Hon. Mr. Kenyon: The officials will be attending the conference and are really focusing on three main areas: to learn about key adaptation responses from across the world, during participation in the side events; to establish contacts and garner information to prepare for the climate leaders summit in COP 14, in 2008, to report on progress achieved through the declaration of the federated states and regional governments on climate change, to which the Yukon is a signatory; and also to network, obviously, and to make important connections with Denmark and other Arctic Council member states in preparation for COP -- Conference of the Parties --, COP 15 in 2009, which will have a significant focus on the Arctic.

For the member opposite, as well, we were well represented at the Northern Forum, a subnational regional group consisting of 20 Arctic regions. We had four members go to that to talk about related issues.

Mr. Elias: Well, Mr. Speaker, the Yukon did have political representation at the Kyoto Protocol talks in the late 1990s. Why not continue that effort? Sweeping action is required worldwide, and it's going to include pulling the rug out from under the most powerful industry in the world, and that's big oil. Political leadership is required for that. Mr. Speaker, just before the last territorial election, the Premier thought it was important to attend the United Nations meeting on climate change in Montreal. Now, two years later, the government appears to have lost interest. We got a lot of rhetoric and no action. The Premier is now the president of the Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment. He should be attending this meeting to demonstrate Canada's commitment to this process and show some northern leadership. Will the environment minister be there or not?

Hon. Mr. Kenyon: For the member opposite, who may not have a calendar in front of him, the meetings are from December 1 to 14, in Bali, Indonesia. Unfortunately, at the moment, as the member opposite is well aware, the Premier is not likely able to travel. But I do agree with the member opposite that we should have representation, so I challenge the member opposite to pair with me from December 1 to the end of the sitting, and I would be happy to attend that conference.

Question re: Government investments

Mr. Hardy: On Thursday, the Acting Minister of Finance tabled a document, entitled *Government of Yukon Investment Portfolio Report* as at November 15, 2007. Mr. Speaker, after reading this one-page document, I was reminded of a well-known song by the great Peggy Lee called *Is That All There Is?* In 24 lines of type, we're supposed to see how the Yukon government invested \$177 million. The problem is it doesn't provide any detail about what the government is actually supporting with these investments. And this is not a new question. Hopefully, the minister will give me a new answer, though.

Will the acting minister go back to her officials and ask them to provide a more informative breakdown of how the Yukon government is investing taxpayers' dollars?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: As I articulated to members opposite throughout last week and the week before, our government

has the utmost faith and confidence in our respective officials housed in the Department of Finance. That is, in fact, their job.

The vast majority of Yukon government's dollars is invested with financial institutions. I certainly have taken the liberty of making known that list of institutions by way of tabling a document last week. One can see that the investments we currently hold are with highly reputable financial institutions that most of us deal with on a daily basis. The list includes the Royal Bank, the TD Bank, Scotiabank and other financial institutions.

Mr. Hardy: The question is where is the money going and why won't they tell us on the opposition side here?

There are circumstances where people such as politicians put their investments into a blind trust. Someone else makes investment decisions for them without them knowing the details, though I believe they should have some guidelines around that. Apparently, though, the Acting Minister of Finance thinks Yukoners have given her a mandate to administer their tax dollars as a blind trust. Why else would she be resisting our efforts to get a detailed breakdown of exactly what is in the government's investment portfolio?

That's not hard to get, Mr. Speaker. Why is the acting minister taking the position that the Yukon people don't have a right to know how their government invests surplus funds on their behalf?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: For the members opposite, I will be very clear. The government's approach to money market investments is very appropriate indeed. In fact, the Yukon government's investments are fairly strictly short-term in nature -- that is 30 to 90 days.

I will just refer to the Canada Pension Plan Investment Board, for example, which has a policy on responsible investing. Their policy states that environmental, social and governance factors are to be considered only in the medium- to long-term horizon, not the short-term horizon.

I just said for the member opposite that the Yukon government's investments are strictly short-term in nature. Furthermore, our investment approach is very much the same as is practised by every other jurisdiction in this country. Specifically, Saskatchewan and Ontario have policies almost identical to ours.

Again, from the list of investments tabled recently, one can see that the investments are with highly reputable financial institutions -- TD Bank, Scotiabank, and so forth.

Mr. Hardy: Where is that \$36.5 million invested?

This government does not hesitate when they find perceived wrongdoing among their own employees. No minister should be above or exempt from accountability. That principle is important enough that we've asked the Finance minister to step down if these recent investments and asset-backed commercial papers turn sour.

Yukoners also have the right to know that their money is being invested ethically, that it's not helping to finance the arms trade or tobacco manufacturing or gambling casinos, or activities that endanger human rights or destroy our environment. The senior Finance departmental official said on the radio this

morning that any direction on socially responsible investment would basically be a political decision.

Is the acting minister prepared to give any direction of this kind to her department or is the financial bottom line this government's only concern?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: The Deputy Minister of the Department of Finance also said that we are investing in short-term money market investments, which are through the financial institutions. As I mentioned before, we certainly have the utmost faith and confidence in our department officials in the Department of Finance. We are certainly not practising anything different from what other jurisdictions in this country practise.

We continue to adhere to the letter of the law, the *Financial Administration Act*; we continue to make known our investment policies and procedures, as well as the recent investments the member opposite made reference to with the Auditor General of Canada.

I would just point out again that we continue to invest in highly reputable financial institutions, not unlike other institutions, and I would suggest there's nothing unethical or socially irresponsible with these institutions.

Question re: Government vehicles

Mr. Cardiff: The annual report of the Fleet Vehicle Agency showed a 32-percent increase in commercial vehicle rentals. The report said it would be more economical for the Fleet Vehicle Agency to own these vehicles. It also shows a steady increase in vehicle demand by government departments. The agency wants approval to increase what it can spend on new vehicles next year. Surely, there must be more responsible options for the Yukon government than simply buying or renting more vehicles.

Has the minister given any directions to the Fleet Vehicle Agency to explore ways to reduce government dependence on vehicles, whether they are owned by the government or rented from private suppliers?

Hon. Mr. Lang: We certainly look at it on a yearly basis and take all those things into consideration. We are modernizing our fleet -- the fleet that we have now -- making it more environmentally friendly in terms of fuel consumption. We look at the expanding fleet and the balance between what the government rents over a year and, of course, what we have in our own fleet. They definitely are things we take into consideration on a yearly basis.

Mr. Cardiff: The government needs to spend its tax dollars wisely. It just isn't sound fiscal management to be renting vehicles when you could own them. I agree -- we need to green the fleet up. There are serious environmental implications to being wasteful. The most serious issue facing our world right now is climate change. We all need to heed those warnings. For example, the government recently deployed three or four Jeep four-by-fours for the Premier's grand tour of rural Yukon. If this mini fleet of vehicles went to all the communities, it could have burned as much as 1,700 litres of fuel and sent five tonnes of carbon emissions into the atmosphere.

What steps is this government taking across all departments and agencies to make sure that the vehicles are not being used wastefully or frivolously?

Hon. Mr. Lang: To correct the member opposite, those Jeep products are one of the greening parts of our fleet decisions. Those vehicles are small, compact vehicles and they are made by Jeep and, as far as the environment is concerned -- we're concerned about that. We have to get from point A to point B and the Yukon has 5,000 kilometres of road, Mr. Speaker. So as far as getting around, the Premier has to ride in a vehicle -- the alternative is chartering an airplane. We think it is money better spent if we use one of our green vehicles -- which happens to be a Jeep -- within our inventory.

Mr. Cardiff: The minister's idea of green vehicles is a little -- maybe they were painted green. The UN's top climate official has warned that it would be nothing less than criminally irresponsible for world leaders not to map out a path to curb global warming. This government has promised a climate change action plan by next spring. I hope we'll see it.

Vehicle emissions are a leading source of greenhouse gases and I'm pleased to note that the Fleet Vehicle Agency has increased its purchase of smaller, more fuel-efficient vehicles, but I don't know that the Jeeps are in that category. There are more commonsense actions that could be undertaken more immediately, Mr. Speaker.

Will the government instruct all departments and agencies to set clear and measurable targets for reducing emissions through practical measures, such as carpooling, teleconferencing and eliminating non-essential travel?

Hon. Mr. Lang: To correct the member opposite, Chrysler Motors does produce a green vehicle and it happens to be a Jeep Compass, which the government purchased a half-dozen of this year, and it is working out very well for the government.

As far as the management of the environment and the management of the inventory of the vehicles at hand, we do our job. We try to minimize the impact and try to minimize travel wherever people go in the government. It is only when an individual has to go somewhere. We don't use these vehicles for recreation. These vehicles are used by government and government employees to do their job and that job encompasses the whole Yukon. So we are greening the fleet. We are conscious of the energy that these vehicles use and we're trying to manage that.

Question re: Government investments

Mr. Mitchell: Mr. Speaker, last week, I asked the acting Finance minister to table a copy of the so-called bank guarantee for the risk investments in ABCPs that this Yukon Party government made in July and August of 2007. The minister was unwilling or unable to do so.

Mr. Speaker, I can table hundreds of articles from respected financial managers who describe these particular investments and others like them as risky, poor quality and not bank guaranteed. The minister and acting minister have so far refused to acknowledge their ministerial responsibility in putting Yukon taxpayers' money at risk and can table no evidence

to support their claims that these investments were fully guaranteed by a bank.

Will the minister stop evading the question, accept responsibility and publicly admit that Yukon's investments are not supported by a direct bank guarantee, or table the guarantee if she has one?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Well, Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to respond to the member opposite's question. Again, in response to his question, the asset-backed commercial paper is backed by the banks. It is also backed by assets, unlike any other commercial paper. The arrangement for the backing by the banks is between the banks and the trusts, Mr. Speaker.

I'll just remind the member opposite that when we talk about all the supporting assets, the commercial paper held by the Government of Yukon is rated AAA, the highest rating possible by the primary rating agency in this country. As I have articulated on a number of occasions, I certainly want to reassure members opposite that we do have investments. Nothing has been lost. The investment is being restructured, as the member knows full well, and this restructuring is expected to be complete by the middle of December.

Mr. Mitchell: Well, Mr. Speaker, the minister is again avoiding answering the question.

Now, the minister has previously claimed that these risky investments were also made by former governments. But the facts show differently, Mr. Speaker. Yes, previous governments invested in commercial paper. That proves nothing. It's like saying we invested in stocks. There are good stocks and bad stocks, Mr. Speaker; and there are sound commercial paper investments and poor ones.

The former Liberal government invested in funds directly supported by real assets. They made millions of dollars in investment income on behalf of Yukoners and did not lose one thin dime of our money in doing so. They did not have their investments frozen, unlike this Yukon Party government.

In contrast, this government invested in third party funds that the banks refused to guarantee. That's a risky investment, and Yukon taxpayers are rightfully outraged. Will the minister prove to Yukoners which bank has provided our guarantee or acknowledge on the floor of this House that she has put Yukon taxpayers' money at risk?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Unlike the previous Liberal administration, this administration has received unqualified audits for five consecutive years in Yukon's history. Unlike the previous Liberal administration, we've received five consecutive years of accumulated surpluses.

Our government has been very articulate and very hard-working, in terms of garnering healthy net financial resources, to be able to invest in matters of critical importance, whether that be accessible and affordable childcare, or improvements to social assistance, or in terms of improvements to our hospital administration, or in terms of improvements to the general public service.

As I mentioned earlier, these investments are backed by the banks and also backed by assets, unlike other commercial papers. Again, these are assets that have been rated as the most

highly rated investments in the country by the primary rating agency in the country.

These are not high-risk, high-return investments. They are in fact low-risk investments and ones we continue to keep the Auditor General apprised of.

Mr. Mitchell: Let's simplify this for the acting minister so she won't have to refer to so many stories and briefing notes about everything but the question at hand.

First of all, I've asked the minister repeatedly which bank she refers to in "backed by the banks"; through which banks are our investments, and can she show us the guarantee this bank has provided? I'm not referring to a third party guarantee on behalf of a trust. In my book, when an investment comes due, if you have a guarantee, you're supposed to be able to get your investment back. Ours are frozen.

Which bank? Where's the guarantee?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Unlike the member opposite, we have great pride in and utter respect for our Department of Finance officials. Unlike the member opposite, I don't day trade with Yukon government investments on a day-to-day basis. In fact, that's what we entrust our officials to do.

The member opposite takes great pride in interfering on many different matters, including finance, public service matters, and so forth.

The asset-backed commercial paper is backed by the banks. It is also backed by assets that are highly rated by Canada's primary rating agency. The arrangement for the backing by the banks is between the banks and the trusts, not with the Government of Yukon.

Question re: Taser use

Mr. Inverarity: There have been a number of questions that have been raised recently about the use of tasers with respect to law enforcement. Certainly, this is not only a national issue; it's a territorial issue as well.

Questions on the use of this device and taser-related deaths are matters of increasing public concern. Will the minister confirm that tasers are in fact being used by the Justice department staff at the Whitehorse Correctional Centre?

Hon. Ms. Horne: At the territorial level, our corrections officers at the Whitehorse Correctional Centre have also used tasers. Tasers are kept at the Whitehorse Correctional Centre and are to be used for the protection of life but not for compliance. Only certified staff is allowed to use the taser, and then only in specific situations.

I have confidence that the superintendent of WCC, who is responsible for the use of this tool, is ensuring that staff members are trained properly and they are used safely.

Mr. Inverarity: When the Minister of Justice was questioned last week on the use of tasers, she sidestepped the issue, claiming that it was only the RCMP who used it. It's nice to see that today she is acknowledging that they are used within the department.

In light of these growing concerns about the safe use of these high-energy weapons, the minister has a duty to inform all Yukoners about the corrections officers, and I am glad she has done that also.

Why did the Minister of Justice fail to do this last week when we first asked the questions? Why did the minister insist that the use of tasers was strictly an RCMP issue, when tasers have been used on inmates at the Whitehorse Correctional Centre?

Hon. Ms. Horne: I was not asked last week if we used the taser at the Whitehorse Correctional Centre. I correct the member opposite when he uses the words "used on inmates". I confirm that the taser was used on one occasion only and that was in June 2004. It was thoroughly investigated when it was used.

Mr. Inverarity: The use of tasers at the Whitehorse Correctional Centre should be a concern to the minister and to all Yukoners. We are not suggesting that tasers be banned. We are suggesting that the use of tasers should be reviewed carefully in light of the recent developments.

Will the minister do this?

Hon. Ms. Horne: There has been a lot of media coverage in the last little while because of the very tragic death of a Polish immigrant at the Vancouver International Airport. At the meeting of federal and provincial ministers last week in Winnipeg, the ministers recognized that while tasers do often save lives, there may be more to be learned about the effects they have on the human body, particularly those persons who are already in some sort of distress before the taser is used. The federal-provincial-territorial communiqué states that given there has recently been work done in policing sectors in a number of jurisdictions on the use of tasers, ministers requested officials to have this work brought together to share information on the best practices of using the taser.

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

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

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

Motion agreed to

Speaker leaves the Chair

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Chair: I will now call Committee of the Whole to order. Is it the wish of the members to take a brief recess?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

Chair: We will take a 15-minute break.

Recess

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

Bill No. 8 -- Second Appropriation Act, 2007-08 -- continued**Department of Justice**

Chair: The matter before the Committee is Bill No. 8, *Second Appropriation Act, 2007-08*, Department of Justice.

Hon. Ms. Horne: Mr. Chair, I am here today to present the 2007-08 fall supplementary budget for the Department of Justice. The Yukon Department of Justice operates to: enhance public confidence in and respect for the law and society; to promote an open and accessible system of justice that provides fair and equal service to all Yukon citizens; to ensure that the administration of justice operates for the benefit of all persons in the Yukon; to work toward an effective and responsive correctional system that manages offenders in ways that promote rehabilitation and ensure public safety; to ensure that the Government of Yukon receives high quality and cost-effective legal services; and to promote effective policing, crime prevention and community justice initiatives in our communities and encourage respect for individual and collective human rights.

Let me provide you with a brief summary of the 2007-08 supplementary budget. Total supplementary funding for operation and maintenance is \$1,474,000. Of this amount, \$250,000 is recoverable. This is a net operation and maintenance expenditure request of \$1,224,000. The following is a breakdown of these expenditures and recoveries: \$47,000 is required to coordinate and manage a research project that will explore the barriers that individuals with FASD face when they become involved with the Justice system; \$20,000 is required for leadership development and training for the corrections redevelopment project. Some of this training occurred in 2006-07, but due to other training and staffing issues, this training will need to be completed this fiscal year. \$18,000 is required for a jury debriefing project. This project will examine the impact on jurors of the experience of being involved in long and complex trials.

\$48,000 is required for the northern institute of justice project. This project has carried over from last fiscal year. An additional one-time funding of \$57,000 is required for the Human Rights Commission. This funding includes \$30,000 to eliminate the 2005-06 deficit, as well as \$27,000 in increased funding to the annual grant for personnel, administration and lease costs. \$134,000 is required by the public guardian and trustee's office for staffing and to improve the computer system. \$107,000 is required to cover Justice's contribution to the long-term public education campaign on the prevention of violence against women and children, a joint initiative with the Women's Directorate.

The department is requesting an increase of \$826,000 to reflect the increase in personnel costs due to the collective agreement increases and retroactive payments to employees, effective January 2007 and June 2007, as well as increases to managers' remuneration and increases for the job evaluation system.

As part of the Yukon substance abuse action plan, a total of \$96,000 is allocated to community justice projects to fund a second community justice position with related program support and to fund the development and production of a commu-

nity resource directory to inventory the programs and services related to substance abuse treatment available in each Yukon community.

The family violence prevention unit conducted awareness activities during the National Victims of Crime Awareness Week. A \$3,000 cost for printing, distribution and advertising was incurred. This cost is 100-percent recoverable from Justice Canada. The family violence prevention unit will be providing victim and witness services to Dawson City, Old Crow and Watson Lake with respect to domestic, spousal and sexual abuse matters. The \$8,000 for these expenses is 100-percent recoverable from Justice Canada.

Leasehold improvements made to the Prospector Building will allow for both the Community Wellness Court and the SCAN programs to operate from one location. This will create net savings in the departmental rental budget of \$43,000.

The Journey Far carver program has been transferred to the Department of Justice from the Department of Education. A total of \$103,000 is being transferred from the Department of Education to the Department of Justice to help fund this project.

The Human Rights Board of Adjudication is requesting an additional one-time budget increase of \$50,000 as a result of an increase in hearings for the 2007-08 fiscal year. The following is a list of recoveries highlighted in this supplementary budget: the \$47,000 I mentioned earlier is to coordinate and manage a research project that will explore the barriers faced by individuals with FASD when they become involved with the justice system and is 100-percent recoverable from Justice Canada.

The \$18,000 expenditure for the jury debriefing project is also 100-percent recoverable from Justice Canada. The \$48,000 for the northern institute of justice project is also 100-percent recoverable -- \$5,000 from the RCMP and \$40,000 from Justice Canada.

The family violence prevention unit conducted awareness activities during the National Victims of Crime Awareness Week. The \$3,000 cost for printing, distribution and advertising is 100-percent recoverable from Justice Canada. The family violence prevention unit will be providing victim and witnesses services to Dawson City, Old Crow and Watson Lake with respect to domestic, spousal and sexual abuse matters. The \$8,000 for these expenses is 100-percent recoverable from Justice Canada.

The access to justice agreements had a funding increase in 2003-04; however, delays in processing the agreement by Justice Canada resulted in additional funding of \$126,000 not being reported in the appropriate fiscal year. This funding has now been received. The total operation and maintenance recoveries for the year is \$250,000.

In summary, taking into account \$1,474,000 in expenditures and \$250,000 in recoveries, the net operation and maintenance budget is \$1,224,000.

Let me now review the supplementary capital budget for the 2007-08 fiscal year. The total supplementary funding for capital is \$686,000: \$10,000 for office furniture and equipment for the SCAN office, which has been deferred from 2006-07

until office renovations are completed; \$7,000 for office furniture and equipment for the Community Wellness Court, which has been deferred from 2006-07 until their office renovations are completed; \$148,000 for leasehold improvements for SCAN, Community Wellness Court and Justice programs that will be completed this fall; \$8,000 for the purchase of computer equipment, furniture and other equipment for the additional community justice position; \$53,000 for courtroom equipment, window shades and repairs to benches and tables; \$23,000 for equipment for the SCAN program, which will be purchased once the office renovations are completed.

\$437,000 is allocated for space planning and renovations at the Whitehorse Correctional Centre as an interim step toward the overall corrections infrastructure initiative.

This funding will provide better living conditions and programming opportunities for the inmates at the Correctional Centre, as well as providing more operational efficiencies for staff. All these expenditures will ensure that the Department of Justice continues to deliver programming and fulfill its mandate.

Gunilschish. Thank you.

Mr. Inverarity: I'd like to first of all thank the department officials for coming today. I appreciate you being in the House and I know you are very busy these days and I do appreciate the time that you are taking to come here today.

I'm not going to speak long in my preamble because we have a very busy agenda over the next 12 or 14 days. I think it is important that a lot of these issues are fairly self-explanatory and I'd like to thank the minister for going through some of detail on the actual budget line items. I think this will go a long way to solve our line-by-line issues as we get through this afternoon.

However, I think it would be appropriate for me to discuss a few things that seem to be missing and that I thought might be listed in the supplementary budget and to make a couple of comments about the budget to begin with.

First of all, I guess I'm a little concerned that in the springtime there was some discussion about revamping the human rights legislation. I believe it is the 20th anniversary since the actual *Human Rights Act* was enacted. I felt that we had a commitment from the minister in the springtime that this would be reviewed in the fall sitting. I see no money in the budget at all. I know that there was some mention about some old-year money to cover a deficit; however, there doesn't seem to be any actual increase in spending, no comments about a study being brought forward -- something that we can delay for another three or four years, and hopefully we might actually get a new human rights piece of legislation three or four years from now.

I did table a couple of amendments to the *Human Rights Act* in the springtime. In fact, we even had some debate on this particular issue. It was closed, as you will recall.

I think it's absolutely imperative that we reconsider my amendments to the act at some point in order to get those timely issues on the agenda so that they can be enacted so that people who are affected by human rights can go forward and get the justice they are looking for.

While we are talking about legislation, and before we move into the details, I would like to bring forward the issue of other legislation that should have come forward this fall -- particularly the WCB. I know the minister is going to say, "This isn't my department," but the fact of the matter is the legislative agenda is in fact under her jurisdiction and she sets the legislative agenda. She should be going to the particular departments and finding out what their agenda is and bring forth these types of acts.

The other ones I would like to mention are the *Children's Act*, changes to the *Liquor Act*, the *Education Act* reform that we keep hearing about and hearing about. I think it's important that they be brought forward. Forestry stewardship legislation, the *Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, not to mention that the justice act needs to be looked at too.

For the record, we are into this sitting and these do not appear to be coming forward. I have to express some dismay at this particular minister's task in getting these things before the agenda.

With regard to the human rights legislation that I mentioned earlier, the minister mentioned there was a \$30,000 deficit that is being added to this interim supplementary budget from 2006-07. I would have thought these amounts would have been in the first go-round, rather than in this particular one. It seems to me that is where they should have been, and they should have been put into place at that point.

That actually brings up the question of a number of items the minister listed in her preamble that strike me as old-year spending -- monies have been carried forward from the previous year, coming forward in this particular supplementary. They should have been included. If you knew you weren't going to spend them in the old year, they should have been brought forward in the spring, rather than later in the year. It strikes me that that's something she should be paying a little more attention to in regard to her department.

On a couple of other notes, it has been brought to my attention that we don't have -- and this is a suggestion that we look at in the near future -- any amber alert program within the department. I think that's something we should look at. I'm not sure how it would be implemented; we don't have highway signs with big fluorescent lights on them that can tell commuters about an amber alert, but there are other forms of communication that could be brought forward.

I've also brought forward in the past week or two some issues regarding the remand at the Correctional Centre. I think our statistics are appalling, quite frankly -- 74 percent of the number -- the ratio of inmates versus remand inmates. Those numbers could use a lot of improvement. If we get to that, this document we've been paying a lot of attention to this last year -- the strategic plan -- is an important part of that process.

I thought there might be an opportunity to open questions with regard to this strategic plan, because I don't feel we're getting through it in a timely fashion. We were supposed to be long on the way to having a correctional centre plan done at this point. You've made mention of the architectural drawings, contracts that should be let in the fall and still, as of this morning, I have not seen any tenders going out.

From a question point of view, I'd like to just ask about these things that you were committed to in the strategic plan. One of them was to implement an offender program model. I understand this model was supposed to have been developed by June 2007 and was to begin to be implemented in September 2007. Could you give us an update on specifically the implementation of the offender program model and how it's moving along?

Hon. Ms. Horne: I will respond, and I hope this is in the same order as the queries came.

First of all, on the human rights, as we mentioned earlier, this government is committed to practising good governance and includes reviewing legislation from time to time to ensure that the legislation is meeting the public interest.

The Department of Justice is in the process of the initial phase that may lead to review of the *Human Rights Act*. The department is exploring options on how to best ensure that Yukoners, members of the opposition, the Human Rights Commission, the Board of Adjudication and other stakeholders are part of the process. Our government will continue to do its due diligence in this initial phase of the legislation review by looking at other jurisdictions and their experiences with their legislative regimes, as well as updating our legal information to ensure, before we go out to the public, that we have a strong body of knowledge about the current legal picture in Canada with regard to human rights.

This practice of doing due diligence takes time, but we are not neglecting the commission in the meantime. Our government is working with the commission to make sure it has the resources it requires. As I mentioned in my speech, an additional one-time funding of \$57,000 is required for the Human Rights Commission. This funding includes \$30,000 to eliminate the 2005-06 deficit, as well as \$27,000 in increased funding to the annual grant for personnel, administration and lease costs.

The costs of the Human Rights Commission have continued to rise over time as the number who are accessing their services climbs and the complexity of the cases increases. Our government has raised the budgetary allotment of the commission many times since taking office, and we will continue to show our support for human rights through budgetary and legislative means in the years to come.

The Yukon Department of Justice is currently researching the feasibility of implementing the amber alert system in Yukon. Part of that research will include an analysis of the requirements for Yukon to participate in the proposed new national protocol to coordinate amber alerts across the country. I anticipate receiving a report from my officials by the spring of 2008.

Going on to the remand -- and I know it has been brought up in the House before -- the remand population in Canada has been steadily increasing for the past two decades. Currently the remand population is approximately one-half of the total incarcerated population in Canada. In the Yukon, it is 60 percent of the incarcerated population.

The issues surrounding the increases in the remanded population are complex and not easily understandable. The

increase is likely due to a combination and accumulation of factors, including increased numbers of police, policies that support charging, delays in court, increasingly complicated cases, particularly with violent crimes, changes in legislation and credit for time served as a remanded offender.

This increase in remand, while slightly variable across Canada, is being experienced in all jurisdictions. Accused offenders are staying on remand for longer periods of time, greatly impacting the average daily count, including that at the Whitehorse Correctional Centre. Remand and sentenced inmates are mixed together at the Whitehorse Correctional Centre so that programming is available to both populations.

Our government has been working with our federal, provincial and territorial counterparts to study this issue and we are carefully considering this trend as part of the implementation of the strategic plan. In addition, we are taking part in a Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics project that is designed to determine the causes of the increases in the remanded population, linking courts and correctional data in order to produce an effective analysis.

The correctional redevelopment strategic plan was approved in December 2006 by the Yukon Forum, based on extensive community consultations and the associated report approved earlier by the Yukon Forum. The strategic plan outlines initiatives and actions to help achieve two major goals: to substantially improve the quality of correctional programs, and fundamentally change the operation of the correctional system.

Substantial work is being done on these initiatives. The strategic plan states that it is a living document with some flexibility in implementation, including timelines. This government is redeveloping its correction service to reflect Yukon's social environment, the needs of its clients, and modern-day correctional practices. These changes will provide offender rehabilitation and healing, help offenders rebuild identity and renew relationships with family and community. They will also provide hope for a better future.

This government has committed to ensure safer communities and to increase the quality of life for all Yukoners. We have also committed to meet the correctional needs of offenders, victims and communities. A significant amount of work has already been undertaken to fulfill these commitments by making the necessary changes to Yukon's correctional system. Let me provide you with a brief history of correctional redevelopment measures already undertaken by this government.

As you are well aware, in 2005, the Government of Yukon and Council of Yukon First Nations co-chaired a 15-month Yukon-wide public consultation on corrections. The focus of the consultation was correctional reform. Yukoners were asked about the challenges facing victims, offenders, families and communities. They were asked to meet those challenges. Out of this consultation an action plan was created to guide the delivery of programs and services in a correctional centre and in communities. Consultation participants told us that while there are many challenges that needed to be addressed, there is hope that offenders can be motivated to rehabilitate and to heal. Through our help, they can rebuild identity and connect with their family, community and their culture. It is with this hope

and belief that our government has proceeded. On April 3, 2006, the corrections action plan was endorsed at the Yukon Forum by government and First Nation chiefs. At that time, the Yukon Forum endorsed a framework to move forward with change. In the following months, this government's correctional redevelopment strategic plan was developed and approved by the Yukon Forum on December 8, 2006.

Let me briefly review the goals of this strategic plan. It provides the direction for achieving correctional reform in a manner consistent with the spirit and intent of the corrections action plan. The correctional redevelopment strategic plan was released to the public in February 2007. The plan has two goals. The first goal is to implement the recommendations of the corrections action plan in order to substantially improve the quality of correctional programs offered to victims, offenders and community members. This will be accomplished by implementing a client-focused correctional program delivery model, as well as developing a correctional centre that reflects the needs of offenders and supports the professionals who work there.

The second goal is to fundamentally change the operation of the correctional system so that the Department of Justice, First Nations and other service providers are better able to deliver high quality correctional programs. This will be done by developing vision, mission, and value statements that provide the foundation for the new correctional system, by providing support and development opportunities to employees, volunteers and community members who deliver correctional programming, and by developing a regulatory environment and organizational framework that supports the delivery of high quality correctional programs to Yukoners.

Much of this work is already underway. This includes the building of a new correctional facility. This government is committed to building a new correctional centre that reflects the needs of clients we serve, that provides opportunities for them to heal and take responsibility and move forward with their lives. This is not a project that can be completed overnight.

Our government is working closely with the Council of Yukon First Nations and the Kwanlin Dun First Nation, among others, on the building advisory committee. This building advisory committee is planning a correctional centre that will best suit the needs of its clients. With this in mind, this government has budgeted \$3.2 million this fiscal year toward a new facility. This funding will be spent effectively to ensure a modern correctional facility is designed properly before it is built.

The money will be used to advance the design-related work for the new correctional centre, including the completion of a needs analysis, functional and spatial programming, and options evaluations, followed by a conceptual and final design, quantity surveying, cost estimating, value engineering, and initial site development operations.

The new correctional centre will reflect Yukon First Nation cultures in design and operation. It will provide a safe and secure facility for staff, offenders and the public.

It will be important for this new correctional centre to be client-focused and part of a continuum of correctional services.

The new facility must be planned and built in coordination with community partnerships that support flexible programs and services.

However, a new facility alone does not complete the picture of correctional redevelopment. The programs and services offered to offenders and victims are also being reviewed so that we can provide programming to these individuals in the time frame and manner that meets their needs. We will be implementing a client-focused correctional program delivery model. This model will reflect the values and mission of the Department of Justice, will focus on clients and will reflect First Nation cultures. The model will also address how programs are delivered in terms of: identifying who should deliver them; identifying the role of First Nations, volunteers and others in the community; identifying the type of training required to deliver programming; and identifying the values and approaches that are required to support the delivery of effective correctional programming. The programs will target the specific needs of Yukon offenders, whether they are delivered at the correctional centre, in transition facilities, in the community, delivered by department employees, Yukon First Nations, non-government organizations or volunteers. The programs will consider offenders who are of First Nation ancestry, who are female, and who are afflicted with addictions, mental health disorders and FASD. This government must ensure that the particular characteristics of the Yukon offender population, the risk-need profile of inmates, and the department's capacity to deliver programs are considered to ensure that resources are directed where they are needed most.

As mentioned, we must continue to work in collaboration with First Nations, other government departments and non-government agencies to achieve our goals. We will deliver high-quality correctional programs.

This process has already begun. Departmental officials and some of our corrections officers have participated in job fairs to promote corrections as a worthwhile career choice. We will develop our staff by supporting leadership training and skills-based competency training. We all know how generous and committed Yukon volunteers are to their communities. Volunteers are an integral part of our strategy. It is not possible to make the changes to corrections that I have outlined without ensuring the regulatory environment framework of the department is aligned with its vision, mission and values.

The correctional redevelopment process is this government's commitment to doing just that.

Mr. Inverarity: I would like to thank the minister for that second preamble. I did notice one small mistake in the preamble. She mentioned that the corrections infrastructure was \$3.2 million. In fact, one of the purposes we're here for today is to reduce that amount to \$3.087 million. The minister might want to correct her notes on that particular point.

The questions I asked were regarding the implementation of the offender program model. This model was supposed to be developed in June 2007 and it was supposed to begin implementation in September 2007. While we're on that, there was also supposed to be an implementation of an integrated case

management model that was supposed to be developed by June 2007, with implementation to begin in September 2007.

As the minister didn't ask those questions, I was wondering if she could give us an update on their status at the present moment. When will the models be developed, and when will implementation begin?

Hon. Ms. Horne: Mr. Chair, the offender program model is well underway and work is in progress and indeed, we held a very successful conference in September of this year to discuss this very matter. We hope that this model will be completed by January 2008.

Mr. Inverarity: So that is an F for failure on meeting the target deadlines there. I guess the second one we didn't even discuss so let's move on to another one. Implement a comprehensive risk/needs assessment tool -- again, this was supposed to have been developed by June 2007 and implementation was supposed to begin in September. I'd like to know what the status of it is.

While we're along those lines, the implementation of a victim services program model was supposed to have been developed again in June. It was supposed to start implementation in September. It including things like long-term goals, victim community needs and programming gaps. I'd like to know if that is delayed -- like the offender program model.

For good measure, I'll just throw in, "Work with communities to prepare capacity-building plans" -- a plan for working with communities to develop their capacity-building plans. It should have been developed by June and the process for developing the individual community plans was supposed to begin in September 2007. If the minister could comment on how those are coming along, I would appreciate it.

Hon. Ms. Horne: As opposed to what the member opposite said, I would not take these as omissions or neglect. We are not proceeding on a band-aid process. We want to make sure and ensure that when these programs are delivered, they are effective.

As I discussed earlier, the strategic plan was always intended to be a fluid document, a living document. The dates are target dates. Indeed, we are working on these programs and delivery dates. All project charters for these initiatives have been developed and we are now working diligently toward the full implementation.

This government recognizes the needs of victims of crimes and we also have programs underway there. We're working on a model for victims of crimes in the Yukon. We plan a conference this spring and we will be making announcements shortly.

Right now for victims and families in the Yukon, the Department of Justice offers many services to individual victims, families and communities throughout the Yukon. One of these services is the VictimLINK crisis line. It's a valuable service offered to Yukoners who may be experiencing crises in their lives. The crisis line is available 24 hours a day. It is hosted by British Columbia as part of an agreement that Yukon has with the B.C. government in exchange for Yukon providing victim services to Atlin and Lower Post. The VictimLINK crisis line is a toll-free service provided by professional staff trained to provide victims of crime with access to Yukon support and

referral services. They also provide crisis support to victims of family and sexual violence.

The Domestic Violence Treatment Option Court is offered in Whitehorse and Watson Lake. DVTO recognizes that family violence is a serious criminal act, but provides a more innovative response to the issues of domestic violence by combining court proceedings with the proven benefits of treatment for the offender.

The spousal abuse program counsellor responsible for Watson Lake has partnered with the Whitehorse General Hospital for the telehealth service. Clients can now attend scheduled meetings with their counsellors via the telehealth service.

Children who witness domestic violence have a program funded through the federal victims of crime initiative and is a five-year agreement that commenced operation in June 2006. The children's program has been developed to offer support to children who have witnessed violence and whose parents are or have been involved with the Domestic Violence Treatment Option Court.

The victim services and family violence prevention unit also offers support services and professional assistance to victims of crime and abuse as well as treatment programs such as the spousal abuse program and the sexual offender risk management program. Every Yukon community has counsellors assigned to work directly with both the victims and the offenders. There are seven employees who provide services to victims, both in Whitehorse and in their assigned communities. In addition, there is a half-time victim services worker located in Dawson City and a full-time worker in Watson Lake.

The victims program offers short-term services to victims of domestic violence and sexual assault. The women's program offers longer term individual and group counselling services to women who have experienced or are experiencing violence in intimate relationships. Training has been provided for front-line staff in government, other organizations and communities. Formal training sessions have been provided in a variety of communities to shelter workers, JPs and the RCMP on such topics as how to use the *Family Violence Prevention Act*, sexual abuse prevention, how to work with victims of domestic violence and coping with vicarious trauma. The unit has also provided peer support training to individuals who are working with individuals who have FASD.

The unit, in collaboration with the RCMP, is doing community training on the *Family Violence Prevention Act* and the Domestic Violence Treatment Option Court to RCMP officers in each detachment in the Yukon. They will also receive training in trauma and victimology. An interactive CD-ROM training package has been developed by the Department of Justice that is being used by the RCMP officers who are new to the Yukon and have not been able to attend a regular training session. This is a credited course with M Division training. The unit also provides an annual three-day training session for about 40 community members on skill development for community members interested in facilitating a workgroup as it relates to family violence.

The Protect Yourself/Protect Your Drink campaign, also known as the coaster campaign, was launched in the late sum-

mer of 2004. This is a public awareness campaign that highlights the dangers of date-rape drugs that can be placed into victims' drinks. This campaign was undertaken with the cooperation of the local drinking establishments that allow Justice staff and members of the women's community to distribute the materials to patrons.

In addition to these services provided by the victim services and family violence unit, the Department of Justice court services branch operates the maintenance enforcement program, which helps to collect child and spousal support for Yukon families.

The Department of Justice also funds a number of programs specifically targeted at helping families during difficult times. The support variation assistance program provides assistance to persons who need to have their support orders varied. Legal Aid Society provides lawyers for parents who are unable to afford to hire a private lawyer and are involved in child protection matters and permanent custody applications. The Law Line takes over 2,000 calls per year, of which more than one-third are family law questions.

The Law Line is staffed by persons trained in the law. It is intended to provide legal information that will assist the caller in resolving any legal issue confronting them. The Department of Justice also organizes an annual meeting of family service providers. Finally, for the Sake of the Children parenting workshops are offered. These are workshops for parents experiencing separation or divorce and are designed to provide the type of information parents need.

We must not forget the *Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods Act*. This act is a ready tool for families who feel there is unsafe, illicit behaviour occurring in their neighbourhood that puts their safety at risk.

The strategic plan focuses not only on the needs of the offender but also on those of the victim and families, so communities as a whole can begin the healing process.

Some of the items that will be considered in implementing the model will be the long-term goals, victim and community needs, program gaps and priorities, evidence-based research and Yukon First Nation traditions and practices, program objectives and desired outcomes, options and requirements for delivering programs, such as human and financial resources and partnerships, and short- and long-term initiatives that can be realized.

Over the coming months as the correctional redevelopment strategic plan goals are addressed, we will be developing the victim services program model. The Government of Yukon takes its commitment to victims, families and each community very seriously. We understand that until we address the needs of offenders, victims and families, we will not be able to ensure safe communities and an increase in the quality of life for all Yukoners.

With respect to the integrated case management model, the initiative has been renamed as the integrated offender management model to better reflect the spirit of the consultations and the plan. Research is being undertaken on models used in other jurisdictions. Staffing arrangements have been concluded to ensure a team will begin work on this by mid-October.

A full-time team of two Whitehorse Correctional Centre and adult probation unit staff will be preparing a Yukon model based on the research and Yukon needs. It will provide a coordinated, collaborative, timely response in managing offenders sentenced to Whitehorse Correctional Centre or being supervised in the community. The model will be developed on-site using leading practices and applying the completion of research of all 12 assessment tools currently used by the community and correctional services in working with offenders.

Risk-need assessment tools are being reviewed to determine its reliability and validity for use with First Nation offenders. Research has been completed on several of the 12 tools currently used. Different studies have concluded different things about the strength of the reliability and validity. Most conclude that while they are valid and reliable, additional research needs to be done.

Four instruments have been selected for use by all offenders and are being piloted through Community Wellness Court. Work is underway to assess the tool. The other instruments are being reviewed to determine if they can be used on a broader basis for all offenders. There is staff training for the broader application of the assessment tools currently used with offenders participating in the Community Wellness Court, as well as specific training in one instrument for use in the court.

Monitoring of assessment tools for reliability and validity for First Nation offenders -- indeed, this has been a huge project. And to say that we are neglectful of time and dates -- we want to ensure that this is done right the first time.

Mr. Inverarity: If I understand the minister correctly in regard to the risk needs model, we've renamed it and pushed the date back for the development of the model to October. The model was supposed to be completed in October, and it's now November. It strikes me that we're still a little bit late getting this particular model done. As there were no comments on any other models that I had asked about, it's clear that they're all behind schedule.

The minister made a comment regarding the document being a fluid document. I can appreciate the minister's comments in that regard. I didn't pick the timelines with regard to the strategic plan. These plans were developed by the minister's department, I am assuming in consultation with the minister. If these timelines were not realistic, I think that that falls to the minister in not preparing the correct timelines for these particular initiatives to be implemented. It certainly isn't a reflection on the good work of the staff within their department. I know a number of them, and I know they work very, very hard. I think it was unrealistic to try to get all of these targets done in the timeframes that they have, but I think that the minister needs to take responsibility for her department and for the timelines that the minister has set out in trying to achieve these goals. They actually could have started this five years ago, when they took over government, but no, we're going to start it sometime soon, I hear.

I'm going to just mention a few other ones, and I'd like to get updates on those. There were development options for a multi-level security healing centre. The options on this one were to be identified by last November, and this document did-

n't come out until -- I think the minister mentioned February. The conceptual designs for this multi-level security healing centre were supposed to have been delivered by January 2007. I would dearly love to have a copy of those conceptual designs as it's now 11 or 12 months later. I think I'd like some comments from the minister regarding the implementation of a recruitment and retention strategy. I'd like a copy of this strategy as it was supposed to have been developed in January and certainly implemented by February of this year. It would be well worthwhile if we could see that strategy again.

There was also a volunteer recruitment and orientation strategy. This was to be developed by March 2007 and implementation was to begin in April. I have spent a lot of time working in volunteer organizations. I think that some sort of recruitment and orientation strategy would be very important. In fact, just last week, I was talking to a constituent about the possibilities of volunteering in not only the justice system, but also in places like Copper Ridge or the hospital or a number of other places. I'm keenly interested in getting a copy of this volunteer recruitment and orientation strategy.

The big one that I would like to discuss is the modernization of the Yukon *Corrections Act* and regulations. There was supposed to be workplan produced in January 2007. Consultations were to begin in September. I haven't seen any advertisements in the paper regarding the modernization of the act. This goes to an earlier discussion that I had where any acts or reforms don't seem to get done. I mentioned the *Human Rights Act* earlier. This is just another example of delays, and I'd like to see an update on how the department is going with regard to the modernization of the *Corrections Act*.

I don't feel that the minister should be making excuses regarding timelines. These timelines are not set by us, they are set by the minister. I think to fall back on that particular one, two things should have been done. First of all, there should have been notification that these delays were happening; I would be more than happy to offer my services. I know she made mention in one of her preambles of one issue that I was supposed to be asked to sit on. I have not received a request to do that. I think it is important that updates or notification of delays are brought before the House and we are made aware of those and that there is a reasonable reason for doing that.

If I were working in the private sector, as I have done in the past, failure to deliver on time related to a request from my employer, for example, would be met with basically two questions: why were these deadlines not met and what are you going to do about it? It's as simple as that.

I would like to see the minister take responsibility for these delays. If there is going to continue to be delays for another five years, let us know up front and then we can deal with it.

Hon. Ms. Horne: I am not making and will not make excuses for the so-called delays, according to the opposition. The work is well underway. I reiterate that the correctional redevelopment strategic plan is a living document. It will not be finished for some time. We will always be making changes to improve it. We are working diligently with our partners, with CYFN, First Nation chiefs and communities. The work is well underway. All of the work and the so-called delays -- there are

none. The work is underway. When it is completed, it is being implemented.

As to the corrections consultation, the *Corrections Act* consultation has begun and will result in a new regulatory framework that will be the foundation for the best correctional system for the next decade. We want to make sure things are done right in the first place, which was never done before by any government prior to us.

Our *Corrections Act* consultation team and our First Nation partners are working together to carry out this important consultation. The consultation is part of the regulatory review that was outlined in the correctional redevelopment strategic plan presented to the Yukon Forum in December 2006.

I am also pleased to say that a package for victims is being developed simultaneously with the new *Corrections Act* that will assist victims in the healing process. Delays? No.

Mr. Cardiff: I have a couple of questions for the minister in this area. I will try a different approach. I will ask a couple of questions and, hopefully, the minister can provide a brief answer.

In the spring sitting, the minister said there would be a review of restorative justice programming. I'm wondering if the minister could tell us if that review on restorative justice programs has been started and when it's due to be completed.

On a similar note, there was a bit of a crisis for communities in the spring around funding for restorative justice, for community justice committees. Some of that funding came from the federal government. I believe the minister stepped in and provided some funding. I'm wondering what the status of that funding is for communities and community justice committees.

Hon. Ms. Horne: Mr. Chair, I believe what you're referring to is the aboriginal justice strategy. I know there were some delays this spring, but we were pleased that the Government of Yukon was able to step in and confirm funding this spring.

The Government of Yukon is committed to working with communities in partnership with the aboriginal justice strategy to provide the ongoing work of their projects. We are pleased that the federal government is committed to providing matched funding to nine community projects for the next two years so that we can continue to partner with communities in supporting a community-based approach to justice. We believe that community justice projects are an important part of assisting communities in developing local capacity to address community justice issues in ways that promote healing.

We have a community justice review that is in progress. The Department of Justice conducted the review because we needed to have a better understanding of the work of community justice committees, and we thank the community justice committees, coordinators and other justice partners for their participation in this work and the review. The Department of Justice is currently working on an action plan to respond to the review, including the creation of tracking and evaluation systems to ensure that we are obtaining results in supporting offenders, victims and their communities. It will take time to

complete this plan in collaboration with their partners and, as I say, this review is in progress.

In 2007-08, the Government of Yukon expects to provide just over \$433,000 of in-kind and financial support to nine community justice projects. With the funding for the aboriginal justice strategy, it is estimated that approximately \$870,000 will go toward supporting the community justice projects. The community justice project is a very important part of assisting communities in developing local capacity to address community issues in ways that promote healing. The Department of Justice has supported community justice projects since 1993.

Mr. Cardiff: Does the minister have any information she could send over about the review of community justice programs and when the action plan will be complete? I'd appreciate receiving any of that information that she could make available. I'd appreciate that.

We need more resources in that area. I believe that part of the concern in smaller communities is that there is a lot of pressure on communities and community members to participate in many of these projects, and you end up with what is commonly known as a volunteer burnout factor, and we've seen other examples of that this summer as well. These people need to know that they are supported by the Department of Justice and through in-kind and financial resources. I appreciate the minister's work in that area.

I'd like to ask the minister a couple quick questions about the Community Wellness Court, the problem-solving court that has recently been instituted. I am just wondering if there are any statistics with regard to the problem-solving court and how many wellness plans have been completed. Is this mainly being used by clients from Whitehorse or does it include clients from the communities as well? Have there been any additional counsellors who have been used to work on these wellness plans? How many NGOs are also assisting with the counselling services and the after-care in the Community Wellness Court?

Hon. Ms. Horne: I appreciate your comments on the burnout of volunteers and community workers. Indeed, people should realize how much personal effort is put in to make these programs work and be more effective.

The review is just being completed. I would be happy to provide you with a copy of that review when it is complete.

On the Community Wellness Court, the Department of Justice, with the assistance of the Department of Health and Social Services, has established a special therapeutic court, which, as you know, is called the Community Wellness Court. This is one of the initiatives that came out of the substance abuse action plan and is a treatment action item. The Community Wellness Court is designed to make a concerted effort to break the cycle of substance abuse and criminal recidivism by providing a court-managed, therapeutic alternative to the regular court system.

The court is up and running in dealing with offenders who have drug and alcohol abuse problems and are affected by FASD or are diagnosed with other mental health issues.

These are the different types of offenders for whom mere incarceration is not an effective response. While there are six courts across Canada that deal with offenders who have drug

addictions, this is the first court that recognizes that offenders may have multiple problems that bring them into conflict with the law and prevent them from being productive members of society.

This court process will build upon Yukon's unique and innovative practice of interdisciplinary collaboration for the purpose of addressing serious social issues. It will provide one more avenue within the Yukon criminal justice system to address the most significant factors we have found to be associated with crime here in the north. These factors include the relationship between alcohol and/or drug addiction and crime, the growth in the number of offenders who have mental health issues, and the inability of the current justice system to respond adequately to individuals with FASD.

To date, 25 clients have applied to enter the court. Of those, 13 have opted out due to a variety of reasons: they decided to plead not guilty; decided to return to court in their community outside Whitehorse; not interested; pled guilty and were sentenced. Of the remaining 12, four were found to not be eligible due to legal issues. That leaves eight out of 25, nearly one-third of participants who want to heal. This is in the stage of initial screening for suitability for the court. Six are at the stage of developing a wellness plan and one has a wellness plan and is in a stage of working on the plan.

These are eight people who would not have found help through the court system before April 30.

I want to wish them all the very best in their quest to find health and bring wellness to their communities.

Let me turn back to the rationale behind the Community Wellness Court. The factors addressed by this court are not exclusive to the criminal justice system. They affect the health and safety of all Yukoners. Management of these issues has had a great financial and social impact on the community in general in areas such as education, health, social services, employment, housing and community services. The purpose of the Community Wellness Court is to attempt to address the factors underlying some criminal acts. The hope is to eliminate the revolving door that results in the same offenders repeatedly returning to the criminal justice system.

This court is a partnership among the judiciary, Crown and defence counsel, the police, service providers from the Department of Justice and the Department of Health and Social Services, First Nations and non-government organizations. A considerable amount of work has been undertaken to get this initiative up and running. A court coordinator, a probation officer, an addictions counsellor and a mental health clinician have been hired to act as the assessment and treatment plan development team. A steering committee has been set up and four working groups have been established with representatives from the federal and territorial governments, non-government agencies, First Nations and the judiciary. The working groups include a legal subcommittee, which develops the legal process that must be in place to conduct the court. It also includes a client services subcommittee, whose objectives are to provide targeted client services to reduce the risk of reoffending and to measure the success of this strategy. Its responsibilities include client identification, service provision, contracts with non-

government organizations for support services and the measurement of the success of participants, relative to non-participants. Procedures for client identification and statistical measurements have all been developed. It also includes a community development subcommittee, which is responsible for making contact and developing partnerships with service providers for housing, employment and recreational elements of individual treatment plans.

This committee also has developed a comprehensive inventory of available resources and an administrative subcommittee that is responsible for planning and evaluation framework and contract arrangements with the court coordinator as well as production of documents and forms such as policy and procedures, protocols, communication documents and educational materials or publications. Offenders who meet designated criteria, such as those with FASD or drug or alcohol abuse programs and who plead guilty to the offence they have been charged with, will be eligible to participate in the community wellness process. This process will begin with an assessment by a team of professionals trained in treatment intake. These court-managed treatment plans may include drug and alcohol treatment, Alcoholics Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous, outpatient treatment, residential treatment, mental health treatment or support, medical care, employment counselling, educational skills such as reading and writing, housing assistance, FASD support resources, childcare assistance or parenting skill training.

The role of the court is to monitor behaviour through frequent court check-ins to ensure compliance and accountability. The court oversees a system of rewards for compliance and accountability for non-compliance, which will be based on each individual's wellness plan. When offenders abide by their treatment plan, they may receive positive reinforcement from the judge, reduction in frequency of required appearances or drug and alcohol testing, reduction in stringency of conditions like curfew, level of treatment services, et cetera. Rewards include such things as necessary clothing, guest passes, gift certificates or visits with family. When offenders do not abide by their treatment plan and accountability, they may receive an increase in frequency of Community Wellness Court appearances or drug testing, community service work and formal breach of conditions resulting in a criminal charge.

It is anticipated that offenders will be involved with programming or treatment through the Community Wellness Court for 12 to 24 months. Upon successful completion, some participants may have their charges withdrawn by the Crown. Others may appear before the Community Wellness Court for sentencing, which may include a period of probation with conditions to support ongoing healing. In order to ensure that this specialized court has the necessary resources to function effectively, approximately \$609,000 has been allocated in this 2007-08 budget to the Department of Justice and the Department of Health and Social Services for the operation and maintenance of this specialized therapeutic court.

While the Community Wellness Court operations will be located in Whitehorse at this time, it is our hope that, as we walk the path in order to learn the path, we will be able to offer

similar Community Wellness Court services in communities such as Dawson and Watson Lake.

The evaluation framework is also being completed and a full evaluation will be conducted in the first two years of operation to look at whether the court program was implemented as planned, how effective it is in achieving its objectives, and whether the results that were achieved by the program represent value for money. The evaluation will also document the Community Wellness Court model so that it can be replicated elsewhere -- both within our own territory and across Canada.

The Community Wellness Court is but one tool that will be used to help address the damage caused by substance abuse and crime in our communities. It will be an invaluable part of helping the Yukon address the impacts of crime in innovative ways. The Community Wellness Court will be an integral part of Yukon having one of the most progressive and most effective correctional systems in Canada.

Mr. Cardiff: I thank the minister for the answer. It was pretty detailed. At the same time, there are some questions that come out of it. However, in the interest of time, I will probably forward those in a letter to the minister either during this sitting or following this sitting.

Given the length of the minister's answers, I am going to try to shorten up my questions. The minister mentioned that in the family violence prevention unit there was a half-time position in Dawson and a full-time position in Watson Lake. For other small communities like Teslin, Ross River and Faro, if there is a need for victim services workers on-site, is that handled as an outreach from the main office here in Whitehorse, or do the other communities do outreach as well? I am just wondering if there is any expansion of the family violence prevention unit contemplated for other communities.

Hon. Ms. Horne: Right now, where a victim services worker is absent from a community, we provide services on an as-needed basis. There is a victim services worker who travels with the circuit court presently, on an as-needed basis.

When we begin to develop our report in the spring of 2008, we will be addressing the needs of each community on an individual basis to make sure we are delivering the services with the most effective method possible.

Mr. Cardiff: I thank the minister for the brief answer and look forward to seeing that report in the spring.

I'd like to ask the minister a couple of questions about policing. I'm hoping the minister has had a bit of time to review the *Policing in the Yukon* report. It has been out for about 18 months, I believe, and is about a 40- to 45-page document.

We haven't heard anything from the government in response to that report. It raises a number of issues about bootlegging and drug trafficking. Not to be critical of the work that is done, but when you look at the statistics that were released in 2007, there are currently a total of 119 police officers in the Yukon. On a per capita basis that's quite a bit more than most other jurisdictions. It's about the service that's provided in small communities. We've seen the result of what has happened in some of the smaller communities, and I believe part of it is because there just aren't enough resources and the RCMP members who are working in those small communities are

overtaxed. In a lot of ways, I think, they go above and beyond. They put a lot of their own time into those communities.

There are concerns that are raised in there. I'm just going to go over one of those regarding communications and accessibility with response times. It's about a lack of personnel, the ability to respond. There's a lot of paperwork involved in policing work, but the real policing work is being out there in the community.

We need more visibility in the communities. That was one of the other issues, especially around -- and it has been mentioned to me as well -- establishments that sell liquor, the bars. We need to see more police on the street. I recognize that you can't have them out doing foot patrols at minus-40 degrees, but they do have a more visible presence here in Whitehorse in the summertime, on bikes or on the street. Again, it's in smaller communities and part of that is a capacity problem.

So, some of the other issues that were raised were more training -- cross-cultural training, training to deal with fetal alcohol spectrum disorder and more training in areas of domestic violence.

The report raised a number of issues and I'm just wondering whether the minister is intending to respond publicly to that report. I'll just roll one other question in to that and that is: are there any plans to establish a police commission here in the Yukon?

Hon. Ms. Horne: Mr. Chair, yes, we are well aware of the report, and I have read that report. It was of great interest to me. We are actively addressing the issues on an issue-by-issue basis with the RCMP, as written in the report.

With respect to the drug trafficking and bootlegging, we have worked with the RCMP to develop the street crime reduction team. We have provided \$1.5 million in funding to the RCMP for the next three years for the establishment of a street crime reduction team, and that team is dedicated to street-level drug- and alcohol-related crime enforcement and prevention. The team was operational as of April 1, 2007, and consists of six police officers, a criminal analyst and a communications strategist. We are updated in all areas of that on an ongoing basis. The street crime reduction team is part of a larger coordinated effort developed under the Yukon substance abuse action plan to help address the crime and social disorder often associated with substance abuse that diminishes the quality of life for all Yukoners.

The Department of Justice officials work with the RCMP M Division to continually assess staffing levels and any related issues. Police forces everywhere are addressing many considerations in deploying staff, including response to calls for service attendants at related activities and responding to personal needs. The RCMP is working on a national policy to address backup policies. The Government of Yukon is providing an additional \$1.5 million to the RCMP.

Police forces everywhere address many considerations in responding to calls for service, including the urgency of the call and a risk assessment of the situation based on individual circumstances. The RCMP have conducted rigorous risk-assessment in relation to backup policies as we've heard in the

news lately on their personal issues for safety. They face many risks for their life safety in responding to calls.

Mr. Cardiff: There have been a few questions -- and the minister quite rightly pointed out that it is in the media and it is a little more in the public right now -- about taser use, given the tragic circumstances in Vancouver recently. For the record, we've actually had at least one individual I know of die here in the Yukon and the use of a taser was involved in that death.

I met with the commanding officer a few years back on this issue of taser use and they provided the statistics. I'm just wondering if the minister could request an update? I was provided the statistics for four years, 2002 through to 2005. I'd be interested in seeing what those statistics are for 2006 and 2007.

The RCMP commissioned a review of the tasers by the National Research Council. They were going to conduct a study on the safety. That was actually in August 2004. I never got the results of that study. I'd be interested if the minister could get that information as well.

While we are at it, I do believe that it is within the purview of the minister. It is the Government of Yukon that pays about \$12 million a year for policing services here in the Yukon. I am sure the minister does have some influence. Given the recent events I believe there still is some uncertainty about the safe use of tasers and how they are deployed. Would she consider asking for a moratorium here in the Yukon. I know there is also an inquiry, I believe, at the federal level. Has the minister been in contact with the federal minister with regard to that?

Hon. Ms. Horne: The Yukon contracts with the RCMP to provide policing in our communities. The terms of the territorial policing services agreement support regular meetings between the Yukon and the RCMP to discuss policing priorities and concerns, but not operational issues. The Yukon is monitoring the many investigations and research initiatives into the use of tasers. Of course I am personally interested in the results of these.

As I stated earlier, our government is working with our national counterparts, as stated during last week's federal-provincial-territorial meeting for ministers responsible for justice and public safety to review the use of tasers and come up with recommendations. Of course we will take careful note of those recommendations. It is anticipated that the recommendations from this review will assist us in guiding the use of tasers used by police officers.

Mr. Cardiff: I asked the minister if she could provide some updated statistics on taser use in the Yukon. The totals I was given showed that they have been deployed 99 times as of 2005. What I'd like to know is what the statistics are for the last two years.

I also asked about the National Research Council study being conducted into the safe use of tasers and whether or not the department had that information available.

If the minister could provide that -- I have a couple of questions when we get into line-by-line but, other than that, if she could provide those answers and a commitment to provide that information, I'd be willing to go into the lines.

Hon. Ms. Horne: With respect to the 2004 NRC report, I would suggest the member contact the RCMP directly for this information.

For the information of this House, the use of the taser is only recommended when lower levels of force are ineffective or inappropriate. They are justified using force under certain circumstances and have protection from civil and criminal liability under those circumstances, pursuant to the Criminal Code.

The taser can only be used upon the authorization of the RCMP.

There are very stringent levels at which the taser can be used and, as far as I know, they are held to those regulations very strictly. But we are investigating those issues.

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

Recess

Chair: Order please. Committee of the Whole will now come to order. The matter before the Committee is Bill No. 8, *Second Appropriation Act, 2007-08*, Department of Justice. Is there any further general debate?

Seeing none, we'll proceed line by line.

On Operation and Maintenance Expenditures

On Management Services

Management Services in the amount of \$256,000 agreed to

On Court Services

Court Services in the amount of \$137,000 agreed to

On Legal Services

Legal Services in the amount of \$125,000 agreed to

On Regulatory Services

Mr. McRobb: Yes, I have a question on this. Can the Justice minister tell us if she has requested the Yukon Energy Corporation to file the general rate application, and if so, by what date?

Hon. Ms. Horne: At this point, I have to declare a conflict of interest. I would defer you to Minister Taylor to answer that question.

Mr. McRobb: Well, that has left us on this side of the House a little confused, Mr. Chair. The Member for Pelly-Nisutlin is the Justice minister, and she says she has a conflict of interest in divulging the date by which she may have ordered the Yukon Energy Corporation to file the general rate application for the expected upcoming hearing. I don't quite understand that. This is the first time we've heard about a conflict of interest by a Justice minister on a matter such as this.

Again, this raises the whole issue about reporting of conflicts of interest to members on this side of the House so they are advised in advance and are able to review the reasons for a conflict of interest. It is rather interesting that we have been blindsided with it on the fly here, Mr. Chair.

This hearing was promised by the minister responsible for the Yukon Energy Corporation in February. In order for the hearing to occur on schedule, the whole process should have been underway by now.

The Yukon Utilities Board recommended the order be given before the end of October. It is now getting on into November, and we still haven't heard about this. I see the Justice minister has now advised the Acting Premier -- maybe we can hear from her about whether this order has been given and if so, when is the filing date?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Mr. Chair, as the Minister of Justice has just articulated for members opposite, she has declared a conflict of interest in this regard and so as Acting Minister of Justice I am pleased to respond, albeit I don't have much to report at this time.

Regulatory Services in the amount of \$165,000 agreed to *On Community and Correctional Services*

Mr. Cardiff: Could the minister give us the detail on the \$434,000, please?

Hon. Ms. Horne: There is a one-time increase of \$107,000 required to cover Justice's contribution to the long-term public education campaign and the prevention of violence against women and children. The department is requesting an increase of \$826,000 to reflect the increase in personnel costs due to the collective agreement increases and retroactive payment to employees, effective January 2007 and June 2007. The total allocated to community and correctional services for this increase is \$322,000. The family violence prevention unit conducted awareness activities during the National Victims of Crime Awareness Week, and the \$3,000 cost for printing, distribution and advertising is 100-percent recoverable from Justice Canada. The family violence prevention unit will be providing victim and witness services to Dawson City, Old Crow and Watson Lake with respect to domestic violence, domestic spousal and sexual abuse matters.

The \$8,000 for these expenses are 100-percent recoverable from Justice Canada.

We go on to operation and maintenance expenditures. A credit of \$6,000 was transferred from the family violence prevention unit to the court services justice of the peace budget for honoraria, communications and non-consumable assets for justices of the peace who assist with victims of domestic violence. That is the total of \$434,000.

Community and Correctional Services in the amount of \$434,000 agreed to

On Crime Prevention and Policing

Crime Prevention and Policing in the amount of \$250,000 agreed to

On Human Rights

Human Rights in the amount of \$107,000 agreed to

Total Operation and Maintenance Expenditures in the amount of \$1,474,000 agreed to

On Capital Expenditures

On Management Services

On Office Furniture, Equipment, Systems and Space

Office Furniture, Equipment, Systems and Space in the amount of \$256,000 agreed to

On Court Services

On Community JP/Court Support Offices

Mr. Inverarity: Mr. Chair, I wouldn't mind a breakdown, as that appears to be an almost 100-percent increase. It could be more than 100 percent.

Hon. Ms. Horne: This is a revote, which is required for courtroom equipment, window shades and repairs to benches and tables due to delays caused by the security audit program and purchases not completed at year-end.

Community JP/Court Support Offices in the amount of \$53,000 agreed to

On Community and Correctional Services

On Corrections Infrastructure

Mr. Cardiff: Could the minister give us the rationale for the decrease?

Hon. Ms. Horne: That has to be corrected. That is not a decrease. It's an increase.

Mr. Cardiff: Well, what it says, Mr. Chair, is that we voted \$3.24 million, and we're reducing it by \$153,000 and that the revised vote is \$3,087,000. That's a decrease. Unless they want to do the math some other way that I don't know about, it is a decrease.

Chair: Order please.

Corrections Infrastructure, a decrease of \$153,000 under Community and Correctional Services. Is there any further debate?

Mr. Inverarity: Just on this topic, the minister stood up here and said this is incorrect and that it is an actual increase of \$153,000. Could we have a final clarification -- is it an increase or a decrease?

Hon. Ms. Horne: There is a credit amount, a decrease of \$153,000 -- a \$507,000 increase, for a total debit of \$354,000. The \$153,000 combines with the \$507,000 debit.

Mr. Inverarity: We are in line-by-line debate. The specific line item that we are looking at is Corrections Infrastructure. It shows \$3.24 million, with a decrease of \$153,000, for a new total of \$3,087,000. This is the specific line that we're looking at. Does it read correctly?

Hon. Ms. Horne: I will read the total page, which I believe I read earlier. For corrections infrastructure, a \$437,000 debit is required for space planning and renovations at the Whitehorse Correctional Centre as an interim step toward the overall corrections infrastructure initiative. There is a \$437,000 debit. A total of \$507,000 was transferred from corrections infrastructure to cover costs of renovation projects at the Whitehorse Correctional Centre identified in the corrections interim space plan renovations credit of \$507,000.

Next, an \$83,000 credit was transferred from the corrections infrastructure budget to the management services building maintenance and renovations budget to cover additional costs associated with the renovations for the Community Wellness Court and the safer communities and neighbourhoods office space. So we have a \$437,000 debit, \$507,000 credit, \$83,000 credit, for a net of \$153,000 credit. Then we have the interim space plan a total of \$507,000 was --

Chair: Order please. Is there any further debate on Corrections Infrastructure, a decrease of \$153,000?

Corrections Infrastructure underexpenditure in the amount of \$153,000 cleared

On Interim Space Plan Renovations

Mr. Cardiff: I'll ask the question about the \$507,000. It is hard to believe. I'd like to thank the minister for providing me with the tour that I went on in late September -- I think it was on September 27. It did raise a number of questions, which I communicated to the minister by letter and she responded to. Maybe I missed it, but I haven't seen a tender for those renovations. Has there been a tender issued for those renovations, or is this going to be a sole-source project?

When we did the tour, there seemed to be some urgency to getting this work done. The gentleman who took us on the tour indicated that it was important that this work be completed before the fiscal year-end. We're rapidly getting to the point where we're down to about four months to complete that project and there is a lot of work there. There is removal of concrete block walls. There is a lot of construction involved in these space renovations -- the way that it was explained to me.

The other concern I had was about the capacity of the building. We have to shuffle the clients at the correctional facility around because they can't be in those areas where these interim space renovations will be taking place. I don't believe you can even move them out for the day while the work goes on, and you can't have them living in a construction zone, so there needs to be a management of the caseload, the number of clients in the facility, and where they can actually physically be.

There was also the issue of some renovations to the unit housing women inmates. While that work is ongoing, they will also need to be housed somewhere in that facility. One of the questions I asked the minister was if there would be some form of temporary accommodation on-site or off-site to accommodate that. It looked crowded enough as it was when we were there in September and, unless something has changed, I just want to be assured that all of that is being looked after.

I haven't even seen a tender for design work or the work itself. I'd like to know when this project is due to start, whether it will be publicly tendered or sole-sourced, as well as the concerns I raised about the accommodation of the inmates during the construction phase.

Hon. Ms. Horne: Mr. Chair, I thank you for those questions. We are well aware of the capacity problems and, of course, most important is the safety of the clients and the workers of Whitehorse Correctional Centre. The plans are still underway. This is a priority for us and it has taken time to get the plans together and we're just finalizing the contracting process. It will be issued very shortly.

The interim space plan has been an action item in the correctional redevelopment strategic plan and it is very important to us. The interim space plan is the summary of renovations to the Whitehorse Correctional Centre and takes steps toward creating a safer, more secure and healthy environment for staff and inmates until the new correctional centre is completed. Given the age of the Whitehorse Correctional Centre, ongoing maintenance and plan changes such as these are necessary to improve opportunities for programming and supervision at Whitehorse Correctional Centre.

The interim space plan will begin to transition staff and offenders from an old facility -- and outdated supervision styles -- to the new facility style and modern correctional practices. The renovations will allow for the start of direct inmate supervision, improved sightlines and improved security. They will allow for more frequent and varied inmate activities, reducing boredom and promoting motivation for change. They will allow for increased space for women offenders, with more washroom facilities, improved supervision and easier access to programming and outdoor recreational opportunities. The changes will also allow the introduction of improvements to living units and offer new programming and recreational opportunities for all offenders.

Appropriate space will be made available for First Nation programming needs, such as the elders program. This programming space will include a spirituality centre. The dining hall will be phased out and the population will start to receive their meals in their own living unit.

This change is a step toward modernizing how the facility operates and lessens the opportunity for confrontations between offenders. The dining hall space will be used for programming and staff offices. The living units will receive some upgrades, such as new beds that will allow for more privacy than currently exists. Offenders will be putting these new beds together and will have other chances to contribute to the renovations. Changes to the living units will make them more functional and incorporate better use of space. All unnecessary walls will be removed to improve sightlines and to open the living space. This also creates additional space for meals in the unit.

Offenders have asked for more recreation opportunities. The weight room will be reopened with modern, self-contained weight and exercise equipment.

A mental health area will be created outside the nursing station. Maintenance issues, such as door seals, will also be improved to reduce heat loss in the winter. A small yard will be added outside a dorm as a secure escape to improve fire and evacuation alternatives. Washrooms will have a new finish laid over existing tile to improve hygiene and maintenance. A number of existing devices on interior doors are to be removed and replaced with high-security-grade closers. Some existing exterior windows are to be replaced. Paint and minor repairs will be done wherever possible. Ventilation will be improved in the areas where renovations are planned and wherever possible. Unnecessary walls will be removed to increase space, visibility and security.

It is necessary to implement this interim space plan as part of a transition to a new correctional centre, but also to improve conditions at the facility for those who live and work there. Work will begin in November and be concluded by the end of March 2008.

Mr. Cardiff: The minister just about slipped up and said that work will begin in early November, but it's now November 19, and the minister said we aren't even ready to tender it yet. So, work can't begin until the work is tendered. Is it going to be sole sourced? Is it going to be tendered? How soon will that happen?

I thank the minister for giving me a tour of the facility again. It brought back memories of going through and seeing all of that. It refreshed my memory about how important it is to the health and safety of the people who work and live there day in and day out, 365 days a year. This is important work and we need to get it done.

Hon. Ms. Horne: We are reviewing the contracting options and I will get back to you on those options.

Chair: Is there any further debate?

Interim Space Plan Renovations in the amount of \$507,000 agreed to

On Crime Prevention and Policing

On General Program Equipment

General Program Equipment in the amount of \$23,000 agreed to

On Total of Other Capital Expenditures

Total of Other Capital Expenditures in the amount of nil cleared

Total Capital Expenditures in the amount of \$686,000 agreed to

Chair: Are there any questions under revenues?

On Revenues

Mr. Cardiff: I just have one quick question. I was just wondering if the minister could tell us a little bit -- or send over the information, which would be a little bit faster -- about the feasibility study for the northern institute of justice.

Hon. Ms. Horne: When the feasibility study is made public, we would be happy to provide you with a copy, but I can tell you the Government of Yukon is taking the lead in identifying ways to address a chronic shortage across the north of qualified people to work in the justice system and related fields.

As part of our commitment to increase the safety and security of Yukoners and to diversify the economy and provide training and education for Yukoners, the Department of Justice, along with its partners, has been working on the creation of a northern institute of justice.

We have also had discussions about this project with a number of other Yukon First Nation governments and plan to further involve them as the project proceeds. Planned next steps include undertaking a comprehensive market analysis and developing a business case based on the needs of Yukon employers and prospective learners.

Revenues cleared

Department of Justice agreed to

Chair: Committee of the Whole will now proceed with general debate on Community Services. Do members wish to take a brief five-minute recess for officials?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

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

Recess

Chair: The matter before the Committee is Bill No. 8, *Second Appropriation Act, 2007-08*, Department of Community Services. We will now continue with general debate.

Department of Community Services -- continued

Mr. Cardiff: When we left off, Mr. Chair -- I believe it was last Thursday -- I had asked the minister a question about emergency medical services. I'm not going to go there again because we ended up with the Minister of Health and Social Services reading his press release from October.

Where I was going with that question, Mr. Chair, was -- and the minister did confirm this and I thank the minister for confirming it -- that in the process of updating and modernizing -- the review that the consultant from Alberta is doing -- it is going to include wildland fire and volunteer fire departments.

We know that compensation was an issue with volunteer ambulance attendants, with emergency medical services. I'm just wondering whether or not there would be any review in this of compensation paid to volunteer firefighters who are on call. I know that they are paid during the summer for being on call during times when the fire risk is high; they are paid to be on standby for wildland fire -- or I believe they are actually paid to man the volunteer fire department so that they can respond in the event of a wildland fire. I'm wondering whether or not there is anything within this review that would look at the compensation paid to other volunteers, whether they be volunteer firefighters or any of the other volunteers that fall with EMS, EMO, wildland fire and volunteer fire departments?

Hon. Mr. Hart: I'd like to just quickly go over a couple of the questions that the member opposite brought up the last time he was up. I'll try to keep it reasonably brief with regard to EMS. The Member for Mount Lorne asked about the transfer of EMS to protective services branch. I'm happy to inform all members that the transition team has been formed to manage the transition from Health and Social Services to Community Services. Meetings are planned with local government representatives, members, agencies themselves. These meetings will be getting underway very soon.

The goal is a simple one. It is to build the best emergency response system possible. There are some very talented and experienced individuals who have been doing this for some time in our communities and it makes sense to speak to these people, to hear their suggestions on how we can improve not just the emergency medical services, but all the emergency response capacities.

One of the key goals of bringing EMS to protective services branch is to take a big picture approach to emergency response. We have a collection of well-trained, dedicated individuals who are prepared to do their jobs when the alarm bells ring, and they do a good job -- no questions asked.

We want to find additional improvements that will maintain a highly professional level of service to the public while ensuring the continued safety and well-being of the responders. Training is an obvious opportunity to find new benefits. In some cases, multi-agencies will respond to an incident. It makes sense to train in the same multi-agency setting. It is a

team response effort, so training as a team should produce new values.

We want to meet with the municipal governments, which have a vital role in administrating these services in the municipalities. We want to meet with the fire chiefs, dispatchers, nursing station staff to hear their views.

Part of the EMS transfer and the overall modernization initiative will include an assessment of the existing facilities and equipment. Responders rely on their tools and equipment to stay safe while looking to keep others from harm. They will have the tools they need.

We are also looking into the opportunity to improve the tools for the public and our visitors by making the 9-1-1 telephone system available to more communities in the Yukon. The consultants are now examining the opportunity to expand the current 9-1-1 system to every community. The challenge we gave them was to make the 9-1-1 service available everywhere there is a dial tone.

The Yukon emergency response capability has developed and improved over the years, and the modernization of our emergency response initiative will go further to ensure the protection of all Yukoners in all communities and the well-being and safety of the responders who come to our aid during crisis situations.

Volunteer fire departments are different from wildland fire management. Volunteer fire departments -- when there is a critical, high hazard of fire in the summer, we ask the volunteer fire departments to stay on during the weekend, and we pay them. When they are asked to stay on alert during a high alert session, we pay them. So that's provided, depending upon where the state of alert is handled -- whether it's in Whitehorse or Dawson. We cover that cost of the volunteer fire departments.

And the member is absolutely correct -- we are looking at Yukon's entire emergency response process in our review.

Also, the member opposite asked a question regarding a climate change strategy. I would like to say that I'd like to bring this up. The Yukon government's climate change strategy is a key starting point for the Yukon government policy and the action in the area of climate change response and initiatives to promote green technology.

The Yukon government is in the process of developing both a climate change action plan and energy strategy -- two documents that will provide the framework for the development of a variety of clean technology policy and programming.

The departments of Environment and Energy, Mines and Resources are collaborating on these two separate initiatives to ensure they remain coordinated. The Department of Environment is coordinating a multi-departmental climate change action plan that is expected to be released in draft for public consultation early in 2008.

The action plan will identify specific actions that departments will need to do to deal with issues around energy consumption, emissions and developing green technology.

During the development of the energy strategy and the climate change action plan, the Yukon government is moving forward on several fronts. In Community Services, energy sav-

ings considerations are included in the infrastructure projects we administer and are encouraged by including them as eligible criteria in our funding programs to the communities.

Also, the Energy Solutions Centre and Yukon Housing Corporation continue to offer programming focused on the adoption of greater use of clean, green technology. The Energy Solutions Centre encourages Yukoners to increase the energy efficiency of their homes and businesses and to adopt the use of renewable energy. Current programs provide financial incentives to consumers to encourage a market transformation toward more energy-efficient household appliances and heating technologies. The corporation is also committed to building new housing projects that meet its green home standard, at a minimum.

I would also like to mention the Yukon government is committed to building new government buildings to an LEED standard, which is the leadership in energy and environmental design rating system. That focuses on very high energy efficiency and significant reductions in environmental impact.

I have a quote that I would like to put on the record for the member opposite related to his specific question. It comes from our strategy and it is handwritten. I will be providing the member opposite with a legislative return on this later.

Establishment of the energy performance standards for Yukon government new building construction and renovations will meet or exceed R-2000 standards for residential construction and LEED certified standards for commercial and institutional construction.

Mr. Cardiff: I thank the minister for that. I'm glad they managed to get all that information together over the weekend because he certainly didn't have that last week.

The minister didn't actually answer the other question I asked, and I hope I don't have to wait until next Monday to get the answer to this question. Is there a plan to review the compensation package for volunteer fire departments and, if there is, when can we expect that to take place? Is it part of the review or not?

Hon. Mr. Hart: We did increase the rates last year, but everything is open in the discussion with the volunteers. We'll be bringing that up with them when we do our visits to the stakeholders.

Mr. Cardiff: I managed to attend both AGMs and barbecues and demonstrations of both the volunteer fire departments in my riding. As well, I have managed to talk to other volunteers in other fire departments around the Yukon. One of the concerns is the amount of work that goes into this. There are the hours on call; there's a lot of training that goes into maintaining a certification to be a volunteer firefighter to be able to respond to a house fire, and that certification is expected. As a matter of fact, you can't expect them to go out there and can't expect anybody to send them out there if they're not certified and not trained.

There's maintenance work that has to be done on all the equipment; the vehicles need to be kept clean and they need to be maintained. There's paperwork -- I mentioned this earlier. There's a ton of paperwork and record-keeping and the expecta-

tion is out there. There are questions about liability, as well, which is why you can't send them out if they're not trained.

Now, financial compensation that we just talked about is one way for on-call time. It is one way to support these people who are volunteering and taking time out of their lives to keep us safe in our communities. I believe there is more that could be done to address the issue of burnout before it becomes a serious problem. One of the things that has been talked about is the idea of a regional support system or position that is located in the community. Maybe we'll talk about this concept a little bit more as well when we get on to another topic.

South of Whitehorse there are five volunteer fire departments. There is Golden Horn, there is the one at Robinson in Mount Lorne, there is Carcross, Tagish and Marsh Lake. They all have volunteer fire chiefs. They all have volunteer firefighters. If we could create some sort of support mechanism -- whether it is through the fire marshal's office or out there in the community -- we could have more jobs in the community -- which would be great as well -- to support these volunteer fire departments.

I don't know how it would work. Maybe there would be one full-time position that could support all five of those volunteer fire halls. It could be a pilot project. Maybe it would take one and a half positions to ensure that all the maintenance was done, or that the paperwork was being done. I just think that we need to show support for these volunteers in our community. I was wondering whether or not something like that would also be considered in the review.

It would free up the volunteers and the volunteer fire chiefs to do more training. I honestly believe these guys are putting in lots and lots of hours out there. It's incredible what actually happens over the course of a year in order for them to stay certified and be prepared to respond.

Would the minister give that some consideration or at least make that part of the review?

Hon. Mr. Hart: We have a fairly open mind with regard to the review. We believe there will be some synergies that we are organizing in such a way that the administrative burden can be addressed by the government. It's more of a central process than a regional one. This is what the implementation team will be going out to talk to all the stakeholders about. I appreciate the member's comments. His concerns expressed are very consistent with our understanding, and we wish to support the volunteers.

I have been with the fire chiefs on a regular basis with regard to this issue. Some fire chiefs are very outspoken as to what they want. Once we go out and discuss that issue with them, we will take that feedback and put it into something we can organize and try to address all the issues that are there.

We are quite certain that we can relieve some of the pressure with regard to the paperwork with the volunteer fire departments. That may be through the administration aspect.

Right now, I don't want to limit myself to that particular entity, because we may find out when we go and talk to them that it is something else they want. Until we find out what it is specifically, we are going to go out, consult with them, come back, and put the plan together so that we can accommodate the

volunteers and take the pressure off them, and hopefully maintain the volunteers we have for a longer period.

Mr. Cardiff: Could the minister tell me what the time frame is for this review? When do we expect to have it complete and, when the report is available, could he make it available to members on this side of the House as well, please?

Hon. Mr. Hart: As I stated, we're going out to visit with the stakeholders very shortly. We'll be developing that particular timeline. We expect to have feedback and information completed by the end of December and we will be looking at implementing a plan from the discussions we have with our stakeholders. There won't be a specific report at that time, but we anticipate having something before the fire season commences next year.

Mr. Cardiff: So the feedback will be complete by the end of this year, 2007, and then they're going to go straight to implementation without a plan -- that's the way I understood that. I'm not sure if that's the best way to do that.

There are a few other topics I'd like to bring up in Community Services. Could the minister tell us the total amount in all departments spent to deal with the flooding this year? Does he have a total figure on that?

Hon. Mr. Hart: Based on the receipts to date, what's in the supplementary is what we've expended as actual expenditures. There is more to that process -- \$1.117 million is an increase for the Southern Lakes flood assistance program. There is additional funding through the Yukon Housing Corporation to assist the victims of the flood, but that's under Yukon Housing Corporation.

Mr. Cardiff: Can the minister tell us how much of that money is going to be recoverable from the federal government?

Hon. Mr. Hart: There's a sliding scale with regard to the federal government recovery on the first portion of the funding thereafter, but we anticipate receiving approximately 90 percent of the funding related to the private residences of those who have been victims of the flood.

Mr. Cardiff: I believe there was supposed to be some analysis done about what the potential is for future flooding. I know that there is an analysis done every spring of the potential for flooding in any given watershed in the Yukon. I'm wondering if there's an analysis being done or a study being done about how the response went. I think it went quite well. I know when I first got involved in it, there were a lot of residents who were struggling, who were looking pretty ragged around the edges. They had been sandbagging for two weeks with very little assistance, other than the fact that there were bags and sand being provided. As the situation got more serious, the response got ramped up quite considerably. The more precarious it became, the higher the level of response.

Go out and see what actually happened after the fact. Temporary dikes and roads were built, and I think, given the circumstances, the government, the public and volunteers went out and assisted daily. The response was incredible.

I'm just wondering whether or not there is going to be any analysis of how that response unfolded and see if there are any lessons to be learned, so that if and when we have to respond in

a like manner in future years that those lessons that have been learned are there for those who will be responding again.

Hon. Mr. Hart: As a normal form of practice, EMO does a debrief of all major events that we're involved in. This has been completed on an internal basis. We have developed the pros and cons and what adjustments were needed. In addition, meetings were held in Upper Liard, Marsh Lake and Tagish with respect to getting some feedback from the general public.

We will follow up on some of the issues that we identified in our internal review. In addition, work will be completed over the winter months to develop options for the future to be prepared for this event, should it occur again. We have put out a request for proposal to review the situation. Once we have that in, we will hopefully have some options to deal with this situation and assist the residents of Marsh Lake and Tagish in future, should this problem occur again.

Mr. Cardiff: I have one more question in this area, Mr. Chair. There were some questions raised about some of the work that was done out there. It was an incredible response to a situation that required an incredible response, but there were some concerns about the work that was done out there. In normal circumstances it would have been subject to YESAA and some sort of an environmental screening. I'm just wondering whether the further work to mitigate this from happening -- the continuation of the work that has already happened -- is going to be looked at under YESAA before it proceeds any further?

Hon. Mr. Hart: During times of emergency the government is allowed to take extreme measures in order to do what is necessary in order to alleviate the difficulty, and no YESAA review is required. However, any of the options developed through the process will have to take the scrutiny of the YESA Board.

I'd really like at this time to thank all the volunteers, all the wildland fire management staff, all the people of EMO, Highways department, Health and Social Services, and specifically the volunteers -- many of us in this room helped to fill bags -- who assisted those in private residences or with recreational facilities who were definitely at risk. It was an incredible effort by all those involved. I think that especially the people at Marsh Lake down on the Army Beach side where the major effect was really pulled together and a great job was done by all. It was not perfect by any stretch of the imagination, but it couldn't have been any better.

Mr. Cardiff: I thank the minister for that answer. I have to concur that the response was incredible and it was an effort that was multi-departmental on the part of the government, and people from a lot of different communities showed up to lend a hand.

I'd like to ask the minister a couple of questions about the *Animal Protection Act*. I don't believe there is anything in the supplementary budget that is going to -- I didn't hear the minister in his opening remarks say anything about it -- but I know there was a review done. The reality is that animal protection legislation in the Yukon is pretty old, and it could be improved. It's about the priorities of the government.

The government has lots of time and resources to review the *Securities Act*, to review the *Business Corporation Act*, to make changes to the *Income Tax Act*, but they don't seem to have the political will to put resources into things like the *Animal Protection Act*. We can go on -- there are a whole bunch of other ones -- but I won't, because we are here talking about Community Services and this is one of the ones I believe the minister could make some changes to. We could talk about the other acts that were mentioned earlier in the Department of Justice.

The reality is the act lacks modern penalties. The penalties in other jurisdictions are much stiffer. To quote the author of the review, he said the missing parts of the supporting structure for the *Animal Protection Act* are enforcement programs, policies, staffing and funding.

So, we need the legislative changes and the appropriate resources.

The minister thinks it's funny; I don't think it's funny and a lot of my constituents don't find it very funny either. Dog mushers, pet owners and veterinarians take this very seriously. These are people who care for animals that have been mistreated. The minister should take it seriously too because, while the animals may not vote, the people who care for them do, and some of them are getting a little frustrated. This has been on the radar screen for awhile and I'd like the minister to respond and tell me in what ways he's going to improve the enforcement program, the policies, the staffing for the enforcement of the existing act and some funding.

Hon. Mr. Hart: I think the treatment of animals is important to all Yukoners. In reviewing this line in the supplementary, we didn't get the report from Mr. Kilpatrick until October, so it couldn't be in the supplementary.

The member sort of washed over this particular subject, but Mr. Kilpatrick did say that changing the legislation isn't any good if you don't have the other stuff to go with it.

We're working on the other stuff, on the operational aspect. We're considering where this will be housed, and the enforcement issues. We're dealing with the operational aspect now. We anticipate hiring one or two individuals, depending on what comes out of the process, in January of next year. We anticipate going out to consultation with changes to the legislation in the early spring and summer of next year, with changes to come back in the fall.

The member opposite talked about the fines. Part of the recommendation from Dr. Kilpatrick was that they could increase the fine with regard to the penalty, something similar to Alberta. Until we get the consultation back in the spring and summer, we won't just guess what that will be. We are going to move forward with that legislation and that will be ready in the fall of next year. In the meantime, we're going ahead with enforcement, hiring and the facility, and we hope to have that in place by January of next year.

Mr. Cardiff: I thank the minister for that. At least we're making progress. I can't believe we're actually making progress. My constituents -- the ones who came to me and asked me about this -- were disturbed at the minister's comments in October, when the report was released, because, basi-

cally, it sounded like the government wasn't going to do anything. The report said you don't need to -- that there's no point in changing the legislation unless you do the other stuff. There was no response from the government on that -- that my constituents saw -- and so this is great. I'll be able to call my constituents up or e-mail them and send them the information that there is progress being made, that the petition that they asked us to table in the Legislature did make a difference. That's good.

We're going to go back to the concept of regions and the fact that there's a solid waste facility in Mount Lorne, Carcross, Tagish and Marsh Lake. There have been concerns as well. I've heard concerns, not only from the south of Whitehorse, but also from the north of Whitehorse, about burning in these solid waste facilities. The problem is, it's not just the odour -- it's the toxins. It's toxins that are released into the air; it's toxins that are released into the water table.

I don't believe anything has been burned at the Mount Lorne landfill for years and years now. Admittedly, it's another case where volunteers play a big role in the management of these facilities, and it's because these people care about their communities.

The government owns the piece of property they're on, and the government is responsible for them, and the government normally contracts for somebody to come in and push the garbage around and bury it or burn it.

At both the Marsh Lake and Mile 9 dumps, there is a transfer station. I just think there is the opportunity to have a regular circuit, where we could have transfer stations at Mile 9, Carcross, Tagish, and Marsh Lake. They could just do a circuit and pick up the garbage on a regular basis.

I know there are concerns about burning garbage in Carcross, and I've heard concerns about the burning of garbage at Lake Laberge as well, and recently there was a concern at Marsh Lake. Part of it is about providing the adequate resources for somebody to actually be there and look after the facility.

Now, the Marsh Lake situation is compromised a little bit by the fact that the dump is also located where there is a quarry or gravel operation. The government has gravel stored at that location as well. In order to access the gravel, the gate gets opened, and somehow the dump catches on fire while the gate is open, I guess.

There needs to be more supervision. In order for there to be more supervision, there needs to be more resources. I'm just wondering whether the minister on two fronts -- and this could be part of their climate change strategy as well. It would improve the health of the communities. It would improve the health of wildlife that is in the general vicinity -- by not burning garbage and making all of those dumps transfer stations, and by providing the resources to man those facilities.

The other thing is that by having those people there, it diverts a lot of garbage from actually going to the waste facility at the transfer station stage. Instead of it going into the containers to be transferred, it ends up getting recycled. The landfill where it is being transferred to doesn't receive as much waste

and we end up doing a better job for our environment by diverting that material and recycling it.

So if the minister could respond to that -- I honestly believe that they should be willing to pay for full-time dump attendants, or maybe we can find some middle ground on that. The minister frowned -- maybe we can find some middle ground.

Hon. Mr. Hart: We have an RFP underway for a management plan for a strategy for regional operations to reduce burning and to look at our recycling and composting. We will be proceeding with this in 2008. We plan to do it for the entire Yukon, not just for the region the member opposite discussed. Once we fully understand the strategy we must undertake and what the options are provided to us under that process, we will allocate the necessary resources to make it happen.

A transfer station isn't going to be very feasible in a place where there is nowhere to transfer to. So, we are going to have to have a different kind of process throughout the Yukon and we will have to look at the options and means that are available, especially in our rural areas that are very small regarding that particular aspect.

We have an RFP underway and we anticipate that, in 2008, it will be underway. Once that strategy comes back to us, we will review that and put the appropriate resources where they are needed to make it happen.

Mr. Cardiff: Well, we are making progress. It's unfortunate that the day is coming to an end, because we are making progress and the minister is responding. I thank the minister for his answers. I would be most interested -- I hope he didn't get me wrong.

I'm not saying that's the only area I'm concerned about -- the Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes area. I see the potential for some pilot projects where we can make some headway.

I fully support the reduction or eradication of burning garbage in all communities, because I believe it's a bad practice. I think it's dangerous, both to the water table and to the air we and wildlife breathe. So I'm encouraged by the fact the minister has put out a request for proposals to deal with this important issue.

I guess the measure of whether or not this works will be what's actually in the strategy and how much financial resources they are prepared to put toward this. If they really believe it's important, they will put adequate resources there. There will be dump attendants and transfer stations where feasible; there will be state-of-the-art incinerators that produce no airborne emissions and maybe even district heating systems in some of those communities where transfer stations aren't feasible, and the heat generated from the incinerated waste can be used in some of the buildings.

I am encouraged by the minister's response to this question. Seeing the time, Mr. Chair, I move that we report progress.

Chair: Mr. Cardiff has moved that we report progress.
Motion agreed to

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

Chair: Mr. Cathers has moved that the Speaker now resume the Chair.

Motion agreed to

Speaker resumes the Chair

Speaker: I will now call the House to order.

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

Chair's report

Mr. Nordick: Mr. Speaker, Committee of the Whole has considered Bill No. 8, *Second Appropriation Act, 2007-08*, 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 5:29 p.m.

The following documents were filed November 19, 2007:

07-1-34

Public Accounts Committee to convene regarding investments: letter (dated November 15, 2007) to Mr. Mitchell, Chair, Public Accounts Committee from Mr. Inverarity, MLA Porter Creek South (Inverarity)

07-1-35

Public Accounts Committee to convene regarding investments: letter (dated November 16, 2007) to Mr. Mitchell, Chair, Public Accounts Committee from Mr. Edzerza, MLA McIntyre-Takhini and Public Accounts Committee Member (Edzerza)