

**Whitehorse, Yukon****Thursday, May 8, 2008 — 1:00 p.m.**

**Speaker:** I will now call the House to order. At this time, we will proceed with prayers.

*Prayers***DAILY ROUTINE**

**Speaker:** We will proceed with the Order Paper. Are there any tributes?

**TRIBUTES****In recognition of Betty Irwin**

**Hon. Ms. Taylor:** Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to rise today to pay tribute to Betty Irwin, a tireless advocate for women in the trades, who retired earlier this spring as the program coordinator for Yukon Women in Trades and Technology.

The Women's Directorate, the Department of Education, Yukon College, Skills Canada, industry and numerous others who have had the opportunity to work with Betty over the years on a number of initiatives in support of Yukon tradeswomen have been continually impressed with the dedication and energy she brings to her work.

Among her many achievements, and perhaps the greatest accomplishment of Betty's, has been that of her instrumental role in the formation of Yukon Women in Trades and Technology in 2000 and its continued work to increase women's participation in trades and technology employment.

Mr. Speaker, as members are aware, Yukon Women in Trades and Technology is an education and advocacy organization dedicated to promoting and assisting in the recruitment, training and retention of women in technology, operations and trades work.

Since its very inception, YWITT — as it is otherwise known — has worked toward making women of all ages aware of the importance of the trades to the social and economic well-being of the Yukon, the financial benefits of skilled trades and that it is indeed possible to earn while you learn.

YWITT's belief is that gender should not be a barrier to pursuing opportunities in areas of employment that need highly skilled and technologically sophisticated employees. Rather, YWITT's mandate is to work toward increasing the participation of women in well-paying and in-demand technology jobs through ongoing projects designed by women for women.

Examples of such projects include the home make-over initiative for the Victoria Faulkner Women's Centre and more recently, YWITT has also offered to join forces with Habitat for Humanity, which is currently working on the construction of its second home in the Copper Ridge neighbourhood.

Thanks to Betty's vision, and that of YWITT, more women are engaging in the trades, whether it may be home-repair clinics or training as an apprentice in a registered trade.

Mr. Speaker, it is very noteworthy that back in 1984, Betty earned a red seal ticket as a radio and television repair techni-

cian, becoming the first woman ever in Canada to be certified in that discipline.

Since then, Betty has been a partner in two electronics repair facilities. From 1998 to March 2004, she was co-owner and operator of Holodeck — an Internet and computer gaming centre.

In 1987, Betty also became a member of the first Yukon Advisory Council on Women's Issues and served as its chairperson from 1989 to 1991.

In 2006, Betty Irwin was awarded the Commissioner's award for public service.

Earlier this year, Betty stepped aside as YWITT's program coordinator and is now the program development officer for JarWin Enterprises Ltd., a company which she co-owns with her husband.

Though retired as YWITT's program coordinator, Betty plans to continue her activities promoting the trades to women in her new position as well as her work as program coordinator for the trades, exploration and preparation for women at Yukon College.

Ironically, she was also — as I just learned earlier today — elected to the board of directors to YWITT. Continuing her dedication to enhancing young women's exposure to a variety of trades, Betty continues to be a cornerstone organizer of the annual Young Women Exploring Trades Conference, which brings together grade 8 girls from across the territory for a fun introduction to the trades.

Betty's work has indeed enhanced opportunities for Yukon women in non-traditional careers, which in turn has contributed to women's economic security.

The Women's Directorate, and certainly the Government of Yukon, would like to express its support for Yukon Women in Trades and Technology and the organization's work to support Yukon tradeswomen and increasing women's participation in trades and technology employment.

On behalf of the Government of Yukon, please accept our sincere thanks for all your hard work and dedication, Betty Irwin, and our very best wishes for your next and many adventures ahead to be sure.

Thank you.

*Applause*

**Mr. Cardiff:** I would like to also pay tribute to Betty on behalf of all of us on this side of the House. It's a little more personal for me, I guess. Betty is a constituent of mine. She's tireless in her pursuit of what she believes in.

As a tradesperson who has worked in construction for almost 30 years — when I was working in construction at the beginning of my career, there weren't a lot of women, although there is one sitting in the gallery with us today, who I do remember working on construction sites. Betty's work over the last 15 or 20 years involving women in skilled trades has been tireless. I would commend her for it.

I would also like to personally thank her for involving me in some of her work and asking me to participate in the Young Women Exploring Trades workshops. I might not have done it without her encouragement. I took it up as a challenge and

found it very rewarding to teach those grade 8 young women how to weld. What really brought it home to me at the end of the day was when I was in the welding booth with those young women and they were challenging themselves. It's a frightening experience to actually strike that arc. When I flipped the helmet up and looked in their eyes and said, "What did you think of that?" I could see the look of satisfaction in their eyes that they did something they were afraid of and felt challenged to do.

It's a challenge for men and women to take up a trade, but I think it's especially challenging for women, because it's typically a non-traditional occupation. I don't think it was all the time. If you go back to the Second World War, there were probably more women working in trades than men during the war effort. I'm glad to see women returning to the workforce in trades and construction. It makes a much more humane place to work.

I would just like to congratulate Betty on her retirement and thank her on behalf of myself and all of us on this side of the House.

**Speaker:** Are there any further tributes?  
Are there any introductions of visitors?

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Hon. Ms. Taylor:** I would ask all members of the Assembly to join with me in extending a warm welcome to His Excellency Walter Deplazes, Consul General of Switzerland. I would also like to extend a warm welcome to Betty Irwin and her partner, Craig Jarvis, who has also joined us, alongside some of her former colleagues and members of the Women's Directorate. Welcome.

*Applause*

**Speaker:** Are there any further introductions of visitors?

Returns or documents for tabling.

Are there any reports of committees?

Are there any petitions?

Are there any bills to be introduced?

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

### Bill No. 52: French text

**Hon. Mr. Cathers:** I'm tabling a bill and amendments that contain what I believe to be a true translation of the English text into French of Bill No. 52, *Workers' Compensation Act*, and amendments to the act agreed to in Committee of the Whole on April 8, 2008.

**Speaker:** Are there any other bills to be introduced?

## NOTICES OF MOTION

**Hon. Mr. Fentie:** I give notice of the following motion:

THAT, pursuant to section 18 of the *Conflict of Interest (Members and Ministers) Act*, the Legislative Assembly do

reappoint David Phillip Jones as a member of the Conflict of Interest Commission for a three-year period.

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

THAT this House urges the Yukon government to undertake a two-year pilot project in conjunction with the City of Whitehorse to offer free public bus transportation to all residents of the city with upgraded and more frequent routes so that residents can:

(1) reduce the harmful carbon emissions and thus make a very significant reduction in global warming,

(2) reduce their dependence on high-priced gasoline and diesel fuel, and

(3) assist their families with their transportation needs by possibly reducing their dependence on having to have a second vehicle.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Yukon government to undertake a review of ways of preventing the controversial drink, "Blow", which is sold as a white powder, is packaged with a mirror and a credit card, contains 240 milligrams of caffeine, uses the street slang for cocaine, and has packaging which resembles drug paraphernalia, from being sold in Yukon.

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

THAT it is the opinion of this House that:

(1) one of the cornerstones of democracy is the people's access to government information, and

(2) the federal government has recently scrapped the coordination of access to information request system, known as "CAIRS", and

(3) CAIRS has been a vital public resource allowing the media, the public, political parties and other interested groups to navigate through the millions of previously released government documents, and

THAT this House urges the Premier to write to the Treasury Board president and ask him to reinstate the coordination of access to information request system and to update the laws and institutions that ensure that people have reasonable access to government information in the interests of strengthening our democracy.

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

THAT the current sitting of the Legislative Assembly be extended until at least May 22, to give members more opportunity to attend to important public business, including completing their review of the 2008-09 main estimates and other outstanding matters, such as the proposed amendments to the *Liquor Act*, as well as conducting detailed scrutiny of the government's long-awaited climate change action plan.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Chair of the Public Accounts Committee to schedule a meeting of the committee before the end of the current legislative sitting for the purpose of determining areas of government spending and financial manage-

ment that should be subject to scrutiny by the committee over the next year, including such subjects as the delays and cost overruns associated with the Watson Lake health facility, the follow-up by the Department of Highways and Public Works to the Auditor General's report on the operations of that department and the long-term implications of the Yukon government's recent investment practices.

**Speaker:** Any there further notices of motion?

Is there a statement by a minister?

Hearing none, Leader of the Official Opposition, please.

## MOTION OF URGENT AND PRESSING NECESSITY (NO.1)

(Standing Order No. 28)

### Aid for Myanmar cyclone victims

**Mr. Mitchell:** Mr. Speaker, I rise pursuant to Standing Order No. 28 of the Standing Orders of the Yukon Legislative Assembly on a matter of urgent and pressing necessity. I would ask for the unanimous consent of the House to call Motion No. 449 which states:

THAT this House urges the Yukon government to send aid through the Canadian International Development Agency to help rebuild Myanmar (formerly known as Burma) from the devastating effects of the May 2008 cyclone.

Mr. Speaker, disaster has once again hit Central Asia, this time, the result of a deadly and massive storm. Myanmar, more commonly known as Burma, was devastated by Cyclone Nargis, approximately five days ago.

Vital aid is only just beginning to trickle in, as aircraft loaded with much-needed supplies await clearance from the government to enter the country.

On Wednesday, Shari Villarosa, the most senior U.S. diplomat in Yangon, said the number of dead could eventually exceed 100,000 because safe food and water is scarce, and unsanitary conditions are widespread.

Relief teams and aid material are waiting to be brought in from Thailand, Singapore, Italy, France, Sweden, Britain, South Korea, Australia, Israel, the United States, Poland and Japan, according to minutes from a UN relief meeting in Geneva obtained by the Associated Press. Of course, Canada has also pledged relief.

The Member for Whitehorse Centre gave notice of motion yesterday in which he said that there may be other agencies, such as organizations of monks that are on the ground and may also be able to facilitate providing relief funds. There is also International Red Cross, Doctors Without Borders and many other organizations that Yukon could use as vehicles to get relief rapidly to those on the ground who most need it.

The issue is not how we send relief; rather, that we do so, and do so quickly. There is, of course, a precedent: we did so several years ago in 2005 when Yukon supported Red Cross Katrina relief with a contribution at that time of \$25,000.

As I have said, the Canadian government has committed \$2.1 million, which no doubt is far less than the funds that will be needed. The people of Yukon would like to be part of this humanitarian effort. Yukon has the capacity to make a substan-

tial donation, but it must be done now. Every day that we wait, thousands will die. We must act decisively and we must act now. I would ask all members to support me in having this debated this afternoon, rather than simply another notice that will simply die on the Order Paper.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** Is there unanimous consent?

**All Hon. Members:** Agreed.

**Speaker:** Unanimous consent has been granted.

It has been moved by the Leader of the Official Opposition THAT this House urges the Yukon government to send aid through the Canadian International Development Agency to help rebuild Myanmar (formerly known as Burma) from the devastating effects of the May 2008 cyclone.

**Mr. Mitchell:** I don't have a lot more that I'm going to put into the record on this. I think all members here are aware of the facts.

We've heard that more than 100,000 people may have perished. The initial figures were 2,500, then it went to 10,000, then 22,000 to 25,000. I think we've seen when we look at past disasters such as the tsunami that hit, that because of the poor communications from these areas of the world — and what communications there were having been wiped out in the disaster — that the numbers inevitably rise. The ultimate disaster is more far-reaching than we ever think at first.

We are, by all accounts, very fortunate to live in Yukon. We are well off, although we have people who live below the poverty line in Yukon — and we've addressed that many times in this Assembly. I think all Yukoners' hearts, regardless of their own personal situation, go out to the people in Myanmar and would want to be a part of this.

We know that the government has surplus funds available to it. From this side of the House we cannot amend the budget and propose putting particular amounts of funds into the budget, so I will look forward to hearing from the government side the contribution that they feel we can make and how they want to do so. This isn't a matter for partisan dispute based on political philosophies, but it's rather an opportunity for us to get together and do this. I'm very pleased that we had unanimous consent to debate this today. I don't think that we need to have endless speakers on this but rather hear from each side and make sure that humanitarian aid goes forward in a timely fashion with Yukon's participation.

Ninety-five percent of the buildings were destroyed in the Irrawaddy delta. Food and water are in short supply. There is a very real risk of disease outbreaks as long as this continues. Relief workers have warned that time is of the essence for bringing in vital supplies, including food and water purification tablets, if a worse humanitarian crisis and higher death toll is to be avoided.

Richard Horsey, Bangkok-based spokesman for the United Nations Office for the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Aid, said, "If we don't get enough aid to the people who need it, there is a significant risk of a second wave to this disaster in the form of water-borne diseases, and they could take a terrible toll."

Access to the worst hit areas remains a major problem for aid workers, who can only reach many of the flooded areas by boat or helicopter, which are in short supply. Much of the Irrawaddy delta remains submerged. "It's a huge, huge problem just to get these goods out. [This is] a major, major disaster we're dealing with." said Horsey.

There are other humanitarian coalitions working on this. CARE Canada, Oxfam Canada, Oxfam-Québec and Save the Children are working across the affected areas to help and support families and communities. Any of those organizations might be a vehicle we could use. The Humanitarian Coalition I just described — of those organizations — is appealing to the generosity of all Canadians to help in this time of crisis.

We know there have been many demonstrations in recent months across the world in support of the Burmese people. We know about the political difficulties that are occurring in Myanmar and we all have our opinions on that, but this is simply a time for us to gather together as people who care and provide help.

I urge all members of this House, and particularly the government to act on our behalf quickly, and on behalf of all Yukoners, to help these people in their time of need.

**Hon. Mr. Fentie:** Mr. Speaker, the government side certainly recognizes that the Leader of the Official Opposition and indeed the members on the opposition benches, as all of us, are shocked and saddened by the devastation and suffering being endured by the people of Burma, given the recent cyclone.

We on behalf of the government extend our deepest sympathies to the citizens of Myanmar in their time of human tragedy and desperate need.

I am astounded — to say the least — at the gravity of the situation, the loss of life and the suffering that is being endured by so many today. As the Leader of the Official Opposition has just stated, reports are coming in now that up to 100,000 people could be dead and more in the days ahead, given the many challenges: access to food, safe drinking water, shelter and other severe impacts due to the cyclone that has hit Myanmar.

I must say, however, to all members of the House — and indeed to the public — that the government has acted quickly in this regard, as we have in the past with such global catastrophic events as the tsunami in Southeast Asia. The government has quickly made a contribution through the Canadian Red Cross. I have contacted Ms. Becky Rowe, the representative of the Canadian Red Cross for northern B.C. and Yukon, to inform her of that contribution. It is at this time on its way.

As we have in the past — and staying consistent with Yukon doing its part as a member of the global community — we are making our contribution. However, that does not in any way preclude Yukoners who may also want to step forward as we did during the time of need after the tsunami in Southeast Asia, for example, to even do more. As part of the global community, we encourage all — all nations, all regions, provinces, territories, whomever it may be — to step forward.

Our choice to use the Red Cross as that vehicle for our contribution is consistent with the view that the Red Cross has a long history in addressing these types of human tragedies.

The Red Cross is one of the first agencies always on the ground and we have continued to support the Canadian Red Cross in their efforts and endeavours, and should future tragedies take place, the same will apply.

*Amendment proposed*

**Hon. Mr. Fentie:** In that regard, and I am sure others may want to add their voice to this debate, regarding what we have already done as a government I have a friendly amendment for the motion, Mr. Speaker:

I move

THAT Motion of Urgent and Pressing Necessity (No. 1) be amended by replacing the words "Canadian International Development Agency" with the words "Red Cross".

**Speaker:** The amendment is in order.

It has been moved by the Hon. Premier

THAT Motion of Urgent and Pressing Necessity (No. 1) be amended by replacing the words "Canadian International Development Agency" with the words "Red Cross".

**Hon. Mr. Fentie:** I will close comments in regard to the motion and the amendment by stating that I think we owe a debt of gratitude not only to the Red Cross but all world organizations that, in times of need and tragedy such as this, act quickly to step in and provide that assistance.

We can only hope that the Government of Myanmar and others responsible in that country allow for expedient access so that the necessary supplies, medication, potable or safe drinking water, food and other forms of aid can quickly reach the people who are experiencing such great suffering.

**Mr. Mitchell:** I want to thank the Premier for his remarks and I will thank him for the friendly amendment. I do see it as such. I did mention the Red Cross in my opening remarks.

As I said, it is not a question of which agency we choose but rather that we ensure that the relief gets to the people who most need it, and gets there quickly.

I do have a question for the Premier. If he or another member from this side is to speak before the final vote, I would ask how much money the government is sending on behalf of Yukoners. I know, on the previous occasion that I referred to, the amount was \$25,000; that was several years ago. Our surplus is larger today than it was then and perhaps our opportunity is to be even more helpful today. I will not question the Premier on the amount other than to say that we would like to know the amount. I thank the Premier for acting expeditiously on behalf of Yukon and I appreciate the spirit of the amendment. Thank you.

**Hon. Mr. Cathers:** It's a pleasure to rise here and note again in support of the amendment that the Canadian Red Cross and International Red Cross and Red Crescent have a long record of service to the world of always being one of the first agencies that is there in times of need to assist those who have faced a disaster — whether it be a natural disaster such as this or issues such as drought and problems with starvation, et cet-

era. They have a long record and the long past practice in the Yukon has been that when we have provided aid to international crises, the Red Cross, due to their strong record and their demonstrated ability, is the organization we have assisted and, therefore, I would encourage members to support the amendment.

**Speaker:** Are you prepared for the question on the amendment?

*Amendment to Motion of Urgent and Pressing Necessity (No. 1) agreed to*

**Speaker:** Is there further debate on the main motion as amended?

**Mr. Hardy:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Of course, my colleagues and I support this motion. It's very similar to the one that we also brought in, as the mover of this motion has mentioned. Our motion is very similar to the Official Opposition's motion. Our only concern is to not restrict it to one agency, and that has already been identified in here.

There are many, many agencies over there right now on the ground, working. We have to remember, though, that there are many agencies in Burma — I call it Burma. There are many agencies that have been in Burma for a hundred years, working on the ground. It's not just people coming in now to help Burma. There are people who have given their whole life's work, far beyond what we can ever give in a few dollars, who are there now trying to help the people of Burma. This tragedy that has happened is horrendous, but we must not forget the struggles that exist in Burma and the many hundreds of thousands of people who have been killed there through the junta, the military dictatorship that exists there.

Much of the disaster that has happened over the last few days could have been prevented if there had been a democracy and recognition of the elected people in Burma. That has not been allowed to happen. Much of the finger pointing is now saying that this military dictatorship that exists there knew about this cyclone coming 48 hours in advance and did nothing to warn the people.

We must not forget the struggles of the people there. We must act now and act as fast as possible to assist with what has happened, but let us not forget that this struggle — whether it is a natural disaster or a manmade disaster — has been going on for many, many years. It has been what the people of Burma have lived with and have fought against.

Many people in this natural disaster are now dead. They are predicting over 100,000, but there are more still missing. We do not know the numbers and they keep coming in. When you add the people who are injured, we're not talking about 100,000 that are impacted. We're talking about millions who are impacted here.

It's going to take years to recover. We must not just send money. We must keep those people in our hearts and in our minds, and do what we can, both as the caring society that we call Canada, the caring territory that we call the Yukon and

each and every one of us as humans who care for the rest of the people around this world.

Saying that, what are we doing personally? That is another challenge that hasn't hit the floor yet. I have already made my pledges to various organizations. Some of them have been mentioned: World Vision, the Humanitarian Coalition — which is made up of Oxfam, Free the Children and two other organizations; I don't have the full list in front of me. There are Red Cross and the International Burmese Monks Organization, which has been on the ground, working for these people. They are the ones who challenged the military dictatorship that has suppressed and starved so many of these people. They are on the ground. They are working there right now. We are only reaching out and trying to assist through monetary means. What is going to make a change are the people there, helping each other. We can only assist to a certain degree but, individually, we can all assist.

I put a challenge out to this Legislative Assembly on an individual basis, not just as a government, but as individuals, to send money. We are a rich nation. We are rich people in the world view. I have made my pledges. I challenge each and every member here to go back to their offices; I can supply people with the Web sites that list a bunch of the agencies. They can contact them right now, either through the Web or on the phone. They are listed. Members can make a pledge using their credit cards.

That's the challenge to us as individuals. Never mind just the Legislative Assembly sending government money there, but each and every one must do what we can.

We also have to stand up when we see dictatorships that suppress and kill people. We have to challenge that as well. Natural disasters we must and should respond to as human beings, but we also have to protect people or use what means we have to respond in ways that we can influence how dictatorships suppress their people. Let's not forget all the other disasters out there; let us not forget Rwanda, or the battles in Tibet that are just happening regarding the freedom of that country; it just goes on and on. I won't go down that path right now. I am saying that this is a good motion and is recognized by every member in here. I applaud each and every member in here, and I am glad we can work together on this, but we also have to do it as individuals. We can't just do this and think we have done our share; this is a vigilance that we must keep in our hearts for all around the world.

**Hon. Ms. Taylor:** Mr. Speaker, I am also very pleased to rise in support of this motion, and I would like to thank the Member for Copperbelt for bringing it forward in such an expeditious manner.

I very much appreciate the comments made by all Members of the Legislative Assembly thus far. I think that, as our Premier pointed out, unfortunately, sometimes it is international events such as this that really serve as a reminder of the struggles abroad such as the people of Burma are experiencing, and certainly the Leader of the Third Party has just articulated that very passionately and very eloquently.

I concur with the Leader of the Third Party. It's not just as a public government we are inclined to respond, but as citizens of the territory. Yukoners have risen to the occasion when required, for outside catastrophes such as this, as well as disasters within the Yukon. Yukoners continue to show their commitment to promoting peace, order and good government in other parts of the world, as well as rising to the occasion when aid is required.

I agree we all need to make our personal pledges, continuing to provide assistance where required. This is no exception.

Much has been said here. I'm not going to go on too much longer about this. However, the numbers are absolutely shocking. They figure there are well over a million who are missing. Those are just the folks who are homeless, those missing. Those who are deceased — we're probably looking at the population of the City of Whitehorse who are deceased as a result of this catastrophe.

Aid is required and requested from all corners of our nation. We are pleased as the Government of Yukon to rise in support and send aid for this particular event that has struck the Burmese individuals.

I know assistance was very much needed, whether food, water or even mosquito nets, purification units — you name it. Any assistance is very much appreciated by all.

When one looks at the level of catastrophe that has occurred, I can only imagine it to be a logistical nightmare in terms of looking at the roads, sanitation, et cetera.

I very much appreciate the motion coming forward and urge all members to make their personal pledge to join in support of this motion as well as to continue to make support available each and every day.

**Hon. Mr. Rouble:** I rise, too, in support of this motion as amended. I appreciate the motion coming forward from the opposition party and their calling it today and accepting the friendly amendment to it to allow the aid to get from the Yukon to the affected area as expeditiously as possible.

We know that natural disasters such as this are a far too frequent occurrence on our planet. We are seeing an increase in these types of events; we are seeing an increase of these types of events here in the territory. One only has to look to last year's high water levels that affected many of the communities throughout Yukon, including Carcross, Tagish and Marsh Lake. We all have to recognize that we do need to be prepared to face these types of situations.

I believe it is Emergency Preparedness Week right now, and we did hear a reminder that we need to take action in our own homes to become prepared for these types of situations, should they occur. It also reinforces the importance of having access to safe, potable water, of having access to transportation routes, the importance of that kind of infrastructure and the importance of our communications infrastructure in getting information around.

I am very happy to support this motion and urge not only the Government of Yukon to provide assistance but indeed all Yukoners individually and collectively, and indeed all people

around this planet, to come to the support of our fellow citizens in their time of need.

**Hon. Mr. Cathers:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and it's a pleasure to rise on the motion as amended — pleasure is the wrong word, of course. I am pleased that we have the opportunity to stand together and to be supportive of action, but this is certainly a very tragic and awful occurrence, and I am sure that the heart of each member in the Assembly goes out to those who have been affected by this situation.

We are very fortunate in Canada that we do not face many of the challenges that these people do on a daily basis. Living under a military junta is something that fortunately we cannot even imagine what they face, and the fact struck me in the news coverage of this situation that one of the challenges being faced by international agencies and governments in trying to provide aid in a timely manner to the people who have been hit by the cyclone is that the military junta in Burma, or Myanmar, is not allowing them to access these people. They are blocking steps, such as the most expeditious delivery of some of the cargo, which would be through a C-130 Hercules landing — or a series of them, rather — and providing that aid directly to areas because of the ability of that plane to land on short airstrips and rough-hewn airstrips. However, as of this morning, the military junta in Myanmar was preventing that from occurring, presumably due to concerns of having international governments and other militaries involved in their area. But this is of course only adding to the crisis, to the tragedy and the deaths being faced by the citizens of that country, who are clearly not being well served by the government of their nation.

However, on those matters, those complications and those logistics, we are confident that the Canadian government and other international governments and agencies are doing their very best to ensure that aid arrives in as timely a manner as possible and to work with the government of that nation in getting them to remove the barriers that are in place to providing this aid.

Providing aid is something Yukoners, as other Canadians, have supported in the past when we need to assist our fellow citizens worldwide when they are facing such horrific occurrences. They have been supportive, not only through government, but also individually, in making contributions to efforts. I am confident that Yukoners wish us to do the same in this situation as has occurred already through a contribution to the Red Cross.

The loss of life from the cyclone is certainly significant and, as other members have noted, the tally is not even in, but is already very high. Also, the risk of secondary effects of starvation, disease and death from contaminated water, lack of food and contaminated food are a significant risk to the people of that country. That is one reason why it is important to have the aid arrive in as timely a manner as possible and that it be sufficient to address the needs of the country.

With that, I commend this motion to the House and look forward to comments from other members.

**Mr. Cardiff:** I will be brief on this.

We have already stated our position regarding our support for this motion; I would just like to make a few comments about some of the other comments that have been made.

I think that there is a lot to be said. The Member for Southern Lakes mentioned the fact that we are witnessing these events more and more all the time. I think that in itself should be a wake-up call, not just for us, but for people all around the world — the fact that there are more severe weather events. The fact that we are talking about those severe weather events and providing assistance was mentioned. There is a precedent for what we are doing today in that we have provided that support before for victims of Hurricane Katrina in 2005 and, again, we provided financial assistance in Indonesia after the tsunami.

I think that we need to take note of the fact that climate change is real, and it is affecting the weather. If there's something we can do to turn that around — I know it's a big boat and it's going to take a long time to turn it around — but we should be thinking about that as well.

I also think that there are — as was said earlier — a lot of other areas of the world that require assistance — maybe we can't do that as a Legislative Assembly — but I think as individuals we can make a difference as far as famines in Africa, people who are starving and people who are oppressed politically.

In closing, I think it is really shocking that this disaster has occurred, that the number of people in Burma who have been displaced, who are out of their homes, who don't have a home to go to — is in the millions. The number of possible dead is said to be 100,000. The fact is that it is going to be logistically hard to get all of this assistance delivered on the ground.

I'm not suggesting this is a friendly amendment. What I would suggest is that maybe the Premier in his capacity could make a phone call. What has happened previously in some of these situations is that Canada has responded — not just with financial assistance — but they have actually responded with people on the ground. I believe it's called the Disaster Assistance Response Team, better known as DART. If they're available, this would seem like an opportune time to ask our federal government to step up to the plate and send our people.

*Amendment proposed*

**Mr. Cardiff:** I've been asked to make another friendly amendment:

THAT Motion of Urgent and Pressing Necessity (No. 1), as amended, be further amended by adding after the word "cyclone" the following: "and that all Yukon MLAs show leadership in this regard by making a personal financial contribution to the relief effort."

**Speaker:** It has been moved

THAT Motion of Urgent and Pressing Necessity (No. 1), as amended, be further amended by adding after the word "cyclone" the following: "and that all Yukon MLAs show leadership in this regard by making a personal financial contribution to the relief effort."

**Mr. Cardiff:** I will be brief. I think that my colleague, the Member for Whitehorse Centre, made it fairly clear that, as

leaders in our community, we can do this here in the Legislature. We can direct government funds, but our situation in life — everyone who lives in the Yukon, no matter what their situation, their hearts go out to the people in Burma who are suffering. The motion is urging all Members of the Legislative Assembly to make a personal contribution as well, and I know the Member for Whitehorse Centre has done that. The Member for Vuntut Gwitchin has indicated that he has, and possibly there are others here today who have done that as well. I will make a commitment here that I will do the same. I haven't done that to this point, but I make that commitment here today that I will make a contribution. I hope that all other members will as well.

**Mr. Mitchell:** On the subamendment, and then we will speak to the amendment; I can thank the Member for Mount Lorne for the subamendment. I don't disagree with our making a contribution.

I don't want this to be politicized, because the important thing is that we do the right thing. I know most of the members of this Assembly personally. I know that before I was elected, I worked with many members. I worked with the Deputy Premier for many years in one volunteer capacity — the food for learning program. We didn't necessarily publicize it; we just did it.

Other members here each, in their own way, contribute. I expect most members here already have or will. I have spoken to my colleagues and they have contributed to this particular disaster relief, as we do many others. I think that it is important for us, as members, to show leadership, not just by voting public money, but by our own actions, whether by donating funds, protesting injustice or doing volunteer work. That is the important point. That is the spirit with which I make this motion.

I want to be careful in that I think one of the benefits of personal contribution — I make a number of them and I think we all do. I don't publicize all the organizations and the amounts. Different causes touch each of us personally — cancer for many; maybe all of us. Polio is another; multiple sclerosis is another — there are many. One of the benefits of making personal contributions is that we each may focus on a different area, so more worthy causes may be helped, as opposed to all of us always doing the same thing.

In this case, I am fine with all of us doing it. I believe all of us will. I don't have a problem with the amendment, but I just want to be clear that sometimes people make donations or do volunteer work that they choose not to make public for whatever personal reasons. It doesn't devalue the work if politicians do things and it's only known to those with whom we work.

That said I, do appreciate the spirit of the amendment.

**Speaker:** The Hon. Premier, on the amendment to the motion as amended.

**Hon. Mr. Fentie:** Mr. Speaker, first, I must say that I recognize clearly the spirit and the intent with which this amendment was brought forward, but I have to say categorically that I don't need this Assembly or anyone to dictate to me my level of compassion when it comes to human suffering.

I think the spirit of the amendment is such that there are those in the House today who want to contribute in this process to try to demonstrate that we are extremely concerned, shocked and saddened, as said previously about the level of suffering and devastation being incurred by the people of Myanmar.

However, I think it's incumbent upon this House to recognize that this institution has done its job with the motion that was brought forward by the Leader of the Official Opposition and, given the fact that the government has already quickly moved to contribute support to the Canadian Red Cross who will obviously be extending strenuous efforts to try to help the people of Burma — or Myanmar, as it is called today — that we have to move on.

I understand what the Member for Mount Lorne is demonstrating, but I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, my contributions and my level of compassion is mine. They are my personal decisions to make. It is my personal decision about what agencies or groups I make contributions to. I think we all in this House do it on a regular basis, regardless of what the contribution is for — whether it is the Cancer Society or contributions to Maryhouse, the list goes on. But I have to say that that is not something this institution has to direct me to do.

**Mr. Hardy:** Mr. Speaker, the amendment that was brought forward just a few minutes ago by the Member for Mount Lorne is an amendment not specifically from the Member for Mount Lorne but from our personal belief. It's an amendment about urging people to do this.

I don't know who donates to what. We're only accountable to ourselves ultimately on where we donate and what our priorities are. I don't know who has already donated to Burma. That's not the point. I have two points about this. One, if we're spending public money as a donation, we should also be willing to spend our own — a little bit, even if it's \$20 or \$200, whatever — out of our own pocket. It's a different story when we as legislative members are voting to spend public money or send public money. Sometimes that individual leadership is extremely important as an indication to the rest of the people in the Yukon that this is what we do as individuals, this is what we believe in as individuals, but it's also what we do, and what we believe in — collectively.

If in good faith some members find this — and it seems that both the other two leaders are a little uncomfortable with it — a little uncomfortable, in order to not put people to a vote on it, I would suggest that we can withdraw it. I'm not sure if I can withdraw it, because I'm not the mover of it. The Member for Mount Lorne needs to withdraw it. If the members here would allow the Member for Mount Lorne to stand up again, I think we will withdraw it if people are uncomfortable with it.

It wasn't as some people have taken it. It was meant to show on an individual basis that we also contribute to this disaster, and it has nothing to do with all of the other donations that people have mentioned, all of a sudden. I am not talking about that and the mover of the motion wasn't either. But this is a massive catastrophe. That's all. We thought it was just another indication to the people of the Yukon but it is also an indication to all legislative assemblies in Canada to step up and

do it as well. Can you imagine how much money could be raised on an individual basis if you start adding all the MLAs across Canada, all the MPs across Canada, and they start making a contribution and made it public so the rest of Canada can see that type of leadership on an individual basis, not just on a government level? Do you know how many lives that could save and how much impact it could have? All we wanted was that. If it makes some people uncomfortable, I am sure that my colleague will withdraw it right now so no one feels they have been put on the spot.

**Speaker:** Order please. If there is an opportunity, the mover of the motion can withdraw the amendment to the motion, as amended, by requesting unanimous consent. That is the option we have on the floor.

The Minister of Health and Social Services had the floor.

**Hon. Mr. Cathers:** The one thing I want to express with regard to the amendment as I think the Leader of the Third Party and his colleague, the Member for Mount Lorne, have proposed it — I accept their assertion that it was made with good intention. I have to concur with the Premier in this regard. I think in fact the approach that it takes cheapens any personal donation that any MLA might wish to make.

My personal opinion is that it for any one of us to contribute to a charitable cause such as this one, to a laudable cause that we believe needs to be supported, as most if not all of us do — good for us. It's good for any citizen who does the same. But if we are doing it for public recognition of our personal individual contribution and political credit, it cheapens that contribution, it cheapens the support that we have made and it cheapens the personal contribution of every citizen of this territory and indeed this country who makes a personal contribution because they believe in that cause, not because they wish to be recognized for having made a contribution to the cause.

For that purpose, I would encourage the Member for Mount Lorne to follow the suggestion made by the Leader of the Third Party: withdraw the amendment and allow members to personally make their contributions, not for personal credit, not for political gain, but because of a personal belief in the importance of this cause.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

#### Point of order

**Mr. Cardiff:** If it really makes people feel that uncomfortable, especially the Government House Leader, I will request the unanimous consent of the Assembly to withdraw my amendment.

#### Unanimous consent re withdrawal of amendment

**Speaker:** Is there the unanimous consent of the Assembly to withdraw the amendment to the motion as amended?

**All Hon. Members:** Agreed.

**Speaker:** Unanimous consent has been granted.

*Amendment to Motion of Urgent and Pressing Necessity (No. 1) withdrawn*



**Speaker:** Is there any further debate on the motion as amended?

**Hon. Mr. Kenyon:** I appreciate the chance to rise on the motion as originally amended. I appreciate that amendment because certainly by putting this into the purview of the Red Cross, we have a higher probability, I think, of getting the aid to where it goes.

The Leader of the Third Party mentioned there are many agencies on the ground there. I am suspicious under the current junta that there are actually a lot fewer than there should be, and that's a difficulty. The problem right now, of course, is not as much in raising funds but getting the funds or the efforts onto the ground there. That is going to be a huge challenge.

People listening to the debate today and certainly reading articles in the paper have seen statistics all over the place. Again, this is a problem, because we don't have the people on the ground. We don't have people trying to verify the statistics. The figure of 22,000 is now up to 23,000, I think, but that's coming from the military leadership, not from anything that is verifiable. A more accurate number is probably 100,000, but that's coming from people outside of the country who really don't know concretely what is happening there. Could it be even higher than that? Yes, it certainly could.

Given the debate of the last few moments, something I had debated long and hard for and for which I have been approached by people, I think it's probably a good thing. I believe we have done it in the past. The Yukon Liquor Corporation is willing to put donation boxes into liquor stores and territorial agent offices. All those proceeds will be turned over to the Red Cross as well, so that people don't necessarily have to use credit cards on-line. Of course, there is anything from a 1.5-percent or 1.6-percent cost, depending on how they're juggling it with the credit card agency; that is, unless the credit card agency give a break on that.

This will allow people to make direct cash or cheque donations to the Canadian Red Cross without commission. The one hole in that proposal, of course, is that there is one community that has no such facility. I would ask my colleague from Vuntut Gwitchin to possibly set up a contact point in Old Crow that could also collect donations and turn them over to the Red Cross. That's simply setting things up.

With that, I certainly support the motion. Hopefully, with this opportunity we can raise even more money for the Canadian Red Cross, and hopefully the international community will find a way to get that aid on the ground. I have been in a variety of parts of Asia and the population density is difficult for westerners to conceive and even more difficult to conceive up here in the Yukon, of course. It is a huge, huge disaster.

With those comments, I will let others finish.

**Hon. Mr. Hart:** I would like to stand up and briefly discuss this motion.

In the wake of this recent tragedy we can take the time to reflect how the events of such a tragedy affect people, whether those people are half a world away or right next door.

I am saddened to see the outcome of this tragedy. This is an urgent matter, as the member opposite has stated. In this case, the victims in Myanmar, unfortunately due to the many years of their particular political and social systems, have suffered great devastation. As recent reports have demonstrated, there is a lack of readiness for this type of event in Myanmar. A disaster of this magnitude requires a response of equal magnitude. This is a disaster of international scale and requires an international response.

As members here have already stated, getting a response into Myanmar has been very difficult because of the current political situation with regard to the government. To date, as far as I am aware, only Thailand and India have been able to send items into Burma, while others are waiting to get in and waiting to get permission to land. Already we see the strength of the response from countries around the world, including Bangladesh, Italy, Korea, United Arab Emirates, United States, and of course our own federal government has already pledged some \$2 million plus. I feel it is essential to provide aid money and I am proud that we are contributing to the Red Cross for this effort. I sincerely hope this money along with all the other aid money will go quickly to provide relief to those suffering in Myanmar.

I think many of us have seen the devastation on the news and just how widespread it is through the whole area. I think it is going to be very important, and as the Member for Copperbelt indicated, time is of the essence in order to get this relief there. It will be important for us to get permission to land in Burma so we can get our relief to the people who really need it.

To close, Mr. Speaker, I would like to say that I support the quick response by this Yukon government to provide financial aid to the Red Cross international aid organization. I sincerely hope this money goes to providing relief to the victims of this tragedy in Myanmar.

**Hon. Mr. Lang:** I rise here in support of the amended motion.

It's very important for us as Canadians and as Yukoners that we accept some responsibility when it comes to our fellow citizens on the Earth. As we look at the television news channels and see the situation Burma is in, we can't look at any other issue. As the Leader of the Official Opposition said, the human factor is devastating. I don't think we as Canadians or as Yukoners can understand the devastation that's going on in Burma. You can't get that vision from what we see on television, which is bad enough. But if you could actually see what's on the ground there, it would be very shocking.

We support this motion and the fact this government is moving ahead with a contribution to the Red Cross. The Red Cross is an accepted organization that works around the world. It works very successfully in situations that have arisen all over the world.

As an individual, I certainly agree with the third party that all Canadians have a responsibility to donate and work in whatever level we can. Any amount of donations is certainly something the Burmese people are going to need.

We understand that not only are we in the middle of a disaster in the nation itself, but we're looking at an ongoing disaster when you think of the rice fields that have been devastated — which, by the way, has affected the rice centre for all of Burma. We all know the importance of rice in Asia.

There will be an ongoing rebuilding of a nation. Certainly the human factor is huge. One-, two-, or three-percent of the population is either disrupted in one way or another. That is hundreds of thousands of people.

We would like to compliment the government and Yukoners for any donation they can make. I certainly support this amended motion and look forward to Burma getting back on its feet and correcting some of the issues that this typhoon has created.

These kinds of disasters have arisen, whether Katrina in New Orleans, or in other parts of Asia. These are devastating things and very expensive things monetary-wise to get over, but the human factor is huge. I certainly would like to impress on the Burmese government how important it is for them and for their citizens to get this access to Burma as quickly as possible to bring in the aid that's needed to jump-start this thing and get this thing moving in the right direction.

I certainly stand here in support of this and I look forward to the improvement that this could bring over the days and months and the years to come for all the individuals who live in Burma.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Nordick:** I am also deeply saddened by what has happened in Myanmar and is continuing to happen. With up to 100,000 dead and one million people homeless, the paranoid military regime continues to stall worldwide efforts to come to the aid of the victims of the cyclone.

One United Nations aid flight arrived from Italy to Yangon, formerly Rangoon, and two others were expected, all carrying food, water, tents and medical supplies for a population that has gone a full week without shelter, fresh water and electricity.

But the supplies arrived without the experienced workers trained to assess the situation and distribute the aid. International disaster relief experts are still cooling their heels, mostly in Bangkok, waiting for visas to enter the country. So instead of a systematic distribution plan, state TV showed smiling members of the military, which has ruled the former Burma for nearly half a century, handing out boxes of supplies to waiting citizens. It quoted one general telling them the situation in the country was returning to normal.

Mr. Speaker, that comment is heartbreaking.

There is increased concern that the Myanmar generals intend to keep foreigners out of the country until at least after this weekend's referendum on a new constitution. They contend the vote is a step forward to democracy, but it is being widely condemned as a sham and there is intense criticism that it is even going to go ahead in many parts of the country despite the cyclone disaster.

According to eyewitness reports from the journalists who have managed to get inside Myanmar, the relief supplies that

are trickling into the country are not getting to the people that most need it. They say that in the worst hit Irrawaddy delta area where the cyclone touched down directly, people have still not received any help.

According to the BBC, there is widespread flooding and bloated bodies, both human and animal, floating in the salt water. These kinds of conditions make Myanmar ripe for the spread of disease and further delays in aid supplies, which will only aggravate the situation. Cholera is now a major concern as is malaria. Some officials are warning privately that disease may end up killing as many as the cyclone itself did.

Mr. Speaker, I support this motion as amended and I believe in these times the global community needs to band together to support those in need.

**Hon. Ms. Horne:** I would like to speak to and commend this motion as originally amended. I begin by expressing my heartfelt condolences to the people of Myanmar. No matter who we are or where we live, when a disaster like this befalls people, I think we all want to show our support and assistance to those affected.

The scope and magnitude of this disaster seems to grow with each passing day as more and more information becomes available. Just a couple of days ago some of the news stories I read and saw estimated some 22,000 casualties. I see media reports now indicate that U.S. officials think the cyclone may claim over 100,000 lives. According to one report from Australia, over one million people could be missing.

These numbers are staggering. A disaster of such magnitude would challenge the most sophisticated and resourced emergency response system.

Mr. Speaker, in my estimation, we are very blessed to be living in the Yukon and in Canada. We live in the greatest territory of the greatest country in the world. We have stepped up to the plate before to help our neighbours who have been affected by disasters. We donated money to help people recover from the Boxing Day tsunami. We donated money to help our friends in the United States recover from Hurricane Katrina. Clearly, we want to do something to help.

As I just mentioned, we all want to show our support and assistance for the people of Myanmar. This is true not only of us in this Assembly, but also throughout Yukon, across Canada and around the world. I see that aid is already arriving from different countries, as the world unites to address their suffering. What strength we depict when we act in concert.

In addition to what is already being done, however, there is still much more we need to do. As the member opposite noted, in addition to the initial disaster, a second one is looming. Those who survived the cyclone need aid and they need it now. He noted that getting aid from the ports to those in need remains a challenge. As the Premier noted in his comments, the Red Cross is, and has historically been, a leader in responding quickly to these disasters.

I totally support the Yukon, through the Red Cross, making a donation to help the people of Myanmar. The people of Myanmar are in my thoughts and prayers. Thank you.

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

**Mr. Mitchell:** I want to thank each and every member of the Assembly today for the thoughts in their hearts that each of them have put on the record. This includes the Member for Mount Lorne for his amendment, even though he later withdrew it.

I believe that everyone who spoke today spoke with the belief that we need to do as much as we can.

I said at the beginning I thought it was important that we not politicize or get into partisan debate. We're speaking as colleagues in a humanitarian effort on behalf of the Yukoners we represent. I take that as the spirit in which people came forward today.

I know the Leader of the Third Party made some very passionate comments about the role of democracy in Burma and how these natural disasters become more than natural disasters when they're exacerbated by political intervention. We've seen this in Africa with famines that are created by wars.

As the member knows, I agree with his views on that. I heard other members on the government side who expressed their views about the terrible government situation in Burma today, but that's a debate we may have another day, because the important thing today is that we stand united to provide aid.

My colleagues in the Liberal caucus have asked me to speak on their behalf so we don't use any more time here today, but actually get to a vote and get to whatever aid Yukon is sending, and that's what I'm going to do.

Last year, if we didn't know it before, we found with the flooding in the Southern Lakes that little barriers or borders of subdivisions don't make much difference. Yukoners came together to help the people who were flooded in the Southern Lakes region.

We also know, from climate change that was mentioned here today, that borders are pretty irrelevant when you can look at the world as one globe from space today, as Canadian, American and other astronauts have done. We're one world; we're all people first; we're Yukoners or Canadians second; we're members of political parties far down the line.

I think it's important, on behalf of Yukoners — because this is the Assembly that speaks for Yukoners — that we vote to send relief. I agree we will all do what we can on a personal level, as well, and I know the members of this Assembly and I know each and every one of them does that.

With that, I just want to thank everyone for their support of the motion today, as amended by the Hon. Premier. I would ask that we vote on it and make sure that relief is on its way. Thank you.

**Speaker:** Are you prepared for the question on the motion as amended?

**Some Hon. Members:** Division.

#### Division

**Speaker:** Division has been called.

#### Bells

**Speaker:** Mr. Clerk, please poll the House.

**Hon. Mr. Fentie:** Agree.

**Hon. Mr. Cathers:** Agree.

**Hon. Ms. Taylor:** Agree.

**Hon. Mr. Kenyon:** Agree.

**Hon. Mr. Rouble:** Agree.

**Hon. Mr. Lang:** Agree.

**Hon. Ms. Horne:** Agree.

**Hon. Mr. Hart:** Agree.

**Mr. Nordick:** Agree.

**Mr. Mitchell:** Agree.

**Mr. McRobb:** Agree.

**Mr. Elias:** Agree.

**Mr. Fairclough:** Agree.

**Mr. Hardy:** Agree.

**Mr. Cardiff:** Agree.

**Clerk:** Mr. Speaker, the results are 15 yeas, nil nays.

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

*Motion of Urgent and Pressing Necessity (No. 1) agreed to as amended*

**Speaker:** This then brings us to Question Period.

#### QUESTION PERIOD

##### Question re: Hamilton Boulevard extension

**Mr. Mitchell:** Mr. Speaker, yesterday evening, I had the opportunity to meet with residents from Lobird and discuss the blasting incident that occurred Tuesday evening that showered their homes with large rocks. Yesterday, the Minister of Community Services announced that the government would cease all further demolition work until an independent review was done.

While Lobird residents were pleased to learn that they will not have to fear feeling the ground tremble beneath them, I am wondering if they should run for cover. They are still afraid and concerned about what will happen when blasting does resume.

Can the minister inform us of whether the previous blasting plan was approved by government officials and were government officials supervising the blasting procedures?

**Hon. Mr. Hart:** For the member opposite, I am glad to see that he was out in the Lobird Trailer Park, as were my officials, discussing with those who were directly affected. In addition, the contractor was also out in the area of those specific units that were damaged and repairs were underway in almost all of those units. I have since been advised that all of the units have been repaired or they are just waiting for supplies — some metal sheeting for the roof and/or siding to come along so that these items could be repaired.

In general, many of those residents have indicated that they are happy with the speed in which the contractor has been dealing with the situation. It is coming along. We are addressing the concerns of the residents. With regard to the blasting, as I indicated yesterday, we are having an independent third party assess the situation prior to any future blasting.

**Mr. Mitchell:** I appreciate the update on repairs but the minister didn't answer the question asked. Many residents told me that they cannot hear from within their homes the warning sirens that are supposed to precede each blast. They were very upset over the safety of the many children who ride their bikes and play outdoors in the evenings. One resident I spoke to had been working outdoors, heard the blast and looked up to see a shower of rocks heading directly at her in her own yard. She had to dive for cover as rocks landed all around her. She and other residents told me it was a miracle that no one was killed Tuesday.

Lobird residents would like the contractor to drive through the subdivision and signal with a siren blast or use a loudspeaker to ensure residents know there will be a blast in time for their families to take shelter indoors. Will the minister commit to making these changes to ensure that Lobird residents have proper notice of blasts occurring close to their neighbourhood?

**Hon. Mr. Hart:** Our government is also very concerned about the situation that happened in Lobird Trailer Park — as much as the member opposite. This is a situation that should not have happened. We will be working with Occupational Health and Safety on dealing with how we can provide a warning system for the Lobird residents in the future.

I will state that we have located an independent party from Vancouver who should be up here early next week to do an assessment of this contract, and we will follow up on the recommendations brought forward.

**Mr. Mitchell:** This boulevard extension is a government construction project done by the private sector. Residents need to be assured their safety is at the forefront of such projects. They need to know the government takes their needs seriously and will ensure their safety.

As I stated yesterday, this was not the first time rocks from the blast had made their way close to Lobird homes or actually hit homes. This raises the question of who is really liable for the incidents. If the government is not liable, then how can it guarantee the residents' safety going forward and promise this won't happen again? The government needs to take responsibility for the safety of all residents.

Will the minister please inform us who is liable for ensuring that blasting on this government contract will be conducted in the safest possible manner?

**Hon. Mr. Hart:** I will repeat what I provided for the member opposite. We will be working with Occupational Health and Safety. We will be working with an independent expert in blasting. That individual will come from Vancouver. He is someone who has the expertise in dealing with this process and he will provide recommendations about it.

In addition, we will be in consultation with Occupational Health and Safety to deal with the issue of Lobird Trailer Park. When we can announce how we can better inform the residents of that area of the blasting when it comes in the future. We'll also provide a public meeting for the Lobird Trailer Park when the review is complete from the expert to inform the residents of Lobird Trailer Park. At that time, we will also have Occupa-

tional Health and Safety there to assist in ensuring the safety of those residents.

#### **Question re: SCAN legislation**

**Mr. McRobb:** It's been more than six months since we questioned the Minister of Justice about the effectiveness of the SCAN legislation.

Here's what she said in reply to our question November 1, 2008: "We are discouraging the activity in one neighbourhood. They may move to another neighbourhood and then maybe move to another. It ceases. This activity does stop. We are very pleased that this act has provided a way to respond to concerns of Yukoners and neighbourhoods. This act is working."

Mr. Speaker, it has turned out this act isn't working as well as we were promised. The SCAN legislation has been in effect for two years now. One of the most notorious residences has been at 810 Wheeler Street. Area residents are again distressed because it appears to be business as usual at this particular residence.

What is the Justice minister going to do to satisfy the neighbours of this residence and uphold the intent of the law?

**Hon. Ms. Horne:** I will not comment on any individual case. I thank the member opposite for bringing up our SCAN legislation. SCAN legislation is one of the enforcement tools we are using to deliver on our commitment to Yukoners to achieve a better quality of life in the Yukon. Our SCAN officials are continuing to address the problems throughout the Yukon.

We also have a partnership with the RCMP and we have an excellent working partnership in this case. We also have the street crime reduction team. I can assure this Assembly and the member opposite that SCAN is effective and it is working.

**Mr. McRobb:** Wrong briefing note, Mr. Speaker.

This government has campaigned on zero tolerance for drug dealers and it touted SCAN as the remedy for such social maladies, but it is not working as well as it should. It has turned out that dealers who are evicted simply set up shop in another residence. Furthermore, this government has no idea of who is going where, because it doesn't track the evictees.

It appears that we have come full circle. The first drug house shut down by the SCAN program is back in business. The SCAN program was supposed to stop this type of illegal activity, not just suspend it on a temporary basis. How will the Justice minister be fixing this obvious flaw in SCAN?

**Hon. Ms. Horne:** I would remind the member opposite that this legislation was brought into effect with the unanimous consent of this House. As I mentioned earlier, I will not comment on specific situations.

Yukoners feel safe and happier in their homes and communities because of SCAN. They have told me personally that they feel safer.

When we brought this legislation into effect, our goal was to shut down the activities that cause social disorder. We are doing that. SCAN legislation is doing just that. The number of complaints received by the SCAN office indicates that Yukoners are confident about SCAN.

**Mr. McRobb:** This minister was quick to respond to the pink notice that was put on 810 Wheeler Street, but now

says she can't comment on this matter — imagine that. This minister has ballyhooed the effectiveness of SCAN legislation on several occasions. To be deserving of such high acclaim, the SCAN legislation first needs to become as effective as possible and work successfully in situations such as at 810 Wheeler Street.

Neighbours are upset about this particular residence being back in business. We need to know what the particular weakness is with the SCAN legislation so we can attempt to fix it. If we need to amend the legislation, the minister has to act very quickly; otherwise, the next opportunity won't be until next fall.

How can the minister explain that SCAN can be fixed so it can be effective in applying its intended purpose on the street?

**Hon. Ms. Horne:** I reiterate that SCAN program is effective; it is working. The office first opened November 29, 2006 and from then until February 29, the office received 160 separate complaints about activities in 92 locations. Investigations of these incidents resulted in 17 evictions, one under the warning act.

Residents have voluntarily ceased their illegal activities in 20 locations. If these activities move and we receive complaints, our SCAN officials will investigate the complaints at the new location. We do not follow people; we respond to complaints and locations. We are very pleased that the SCAN program has provided a way to respond to the illegal activities in our communities. This legislation is working. It was designed to work and it is successful.

#### **Question re: *Liquor Act* amendments**

**Mr. Hardy:** I want to follow up with the minister responsible for the Liquor Corporation about his plans to liberalize drinking laws in the Yukon, which already has one of Canada's highest rates of booze consumption. I really hope we get some clear answers today from him because, quite frankly, many of his statements in defence of his proposed amendments to the *Liquor Act* have left me quite confused.

Can the minister explain in simple English the precise difference between a "food primary licence" and a "liquor primary licence"?

**Hon. Mr. Kenyon:** I am very sorry that the member opposite is confused. I do have to correct one statement that is simply not true. Statistically, things have gotten produced — for instance a member who is now with his caucus, on April 24, claimed a graph from Statistics Canada compared per capita alcohol consumption. In fact the graph that that member at that time referred to was produced by the *Globe and Mail*, not Statistics Canada, and the *Globe and Mail* erroneously used Statistics Canada information on sales but titled the graph "consumption".

The Yukon is a small jurisdiction, and consequently the large numbers of tourists who come through have a direct influence on that. If we look at the freight going up to the Dawson liquor store, for instance in November, as an average month, it is roughly 59,159 pounds. In December, at Christmastime when people are perhaps buying things for Christmas, it goes from 59,000 to 71,388 pounds. In July, when we have tourists, it is 266,686 pounds. That is a massive increase, which

reflects the tourists. In reality, the studies that have been done looking at consumption put us right on par with the rest of Canada; there is no higher consumption in Yukon.

**Mr. Hardy:** I beg to differ, and so do many people in the Yukon. The minister has had plenty of time to learn about this act and the amendments, especially since we've been trying to debate this act in Question Period, because it is not being called on to the floor of the Legislative Assembly at this time.

Here is a little quiz for the minister. Under the minister's new drinking rules, one type of licence requires "that adequate facilities be provided for providing food to customers." Another type of licence and again, I quote "entitles the licensee to sell liquor for consumption on the licensed premise with or without providing a meal at the same time to the person to whom the liquor is sold."

Can the minister tell the House which of these descriptions refer to the "food primary licence" and which one is the "liquor primary licence"?

#### **Speaker's statement**

**Speaker:** Before the honourable member answers the question, I would just like to refer the Leader of the Third Party back to discussions the Chair has had with the members with regard to personalizing debate. I think the terminology the member used was under the minister's new drinking rules. They are the government's drinking rules, not the minister's. It is legislation that is being debated on behalf of the government, so please keep that in mind.

The minister responsible for the Liquor Corporation has the floor.

**Hon. Mr. Kenyon:** For the member opposite, and even now and going back into the 1970s and all through the former NDP government and the very short-term Liberal government, it is good social responsibility to provide food of some sort. It could be beer nuts, because of the fat content; it could be chips. Ironically the definition of the word "meal" is where it comes into effect.

I think Yukoners, if they haven't come to this realization, would be surprised to know that if a member of this Assembly or a friend and I wanted to go and have some mushroom caps and a glass of wine to discuss something, that is currently illegal in the Yukon, because the definition of "meal" is such a wide-ranging thing. By taking out the word "meal" it does not in any way mean that food is not available; it just means that you do not have to go in and have a full meal. You can go in and have wings and a beer while you watch a hockey game — something that is currently illegal in the Yukon.

**Mr. Hardy:** On Tuesday, the minister said that someone under 19, working in the kitchen, could deliver a drink to a table. His actual words were, "They may not serve it; they may not pour it; they may not mix it; they may not open the bottle, but they can at least deliver it within those circumstances." But, in fact, Bill No. 46 gives the government the authority to pass regulations. Again, I quote, "... (g) authorizing persons under the age of 19 years employed by the holder of a food primary licence to serve liquor in the licensed premise." Anyone who works in a restaurant or bar knows that servers don't just de-

liver open bottles to a table. They also take orders, handle cash and deal with drunken and belligerent behaviour. They often have to make quick judgement calls on whether or not someone should be cut off for being intoxicated or refused service for being underage.

Can the minister explain the obvious contradiction between what he said here on Tuesday and what the proposed law actually says about persons under 19 serving alcohol?

**Hon. Mr. Kenyon:** The member opposite is confusing his licences here. In a food primary — in other words, a restaurant, to make it simple for people to understand — a server can go back to the bar to the adult who is completely in charge — that is still required — to pick up and deliver the drink to the table. That is not permitted in a liquor primary. In that case, the only time that a minor could enter would be someone under the age of 19 — both of these are with written parental consent. If people say that they don't want their kid to be doing that, then don't give parental consent. That's the way they can do that.

In a bar, someone under the age of 19 could bring, for instance, an order of wings out and put it on the table. In a bar, or liquor primary, they may not touch alcohol bottles — serve, pour, open a bottle or do anything else. All they can do is drop that off. This also covers the apprentice who is working for the plumber who has to come in during working hours and work on a bar. That apprentice, with written consent, et cetera, can come in and do their work during their workdays. Again, they cannot drink; they cannot consume; they cannot be intoxicated — any of that.

**Question re: Whitehorse Correctional Centre budget/Liquor Act amendments**

**Mr. Hardy:** My question is to a different minister. The tender documents for the new correctional facility set the base price at something over \$32 million. When you factor in a cost of preparing a site, furnishing the new facility and tearing down the old one, it isn't hard to predict the final cost will probably be closer to \$50 million.

Can the Minister of Justice give us a ballpark figure of what the annual operation and maintenance costs of the new Correctional Centre will be?

**Hon. Ms. Horne:** I do not have these figures at my fingertips. I can check into that. It would be rather difficult to get those actual costs at this time because the interim design is still in progress. But I will get those figures to you, if I can.

**Mr. Hardy:** I thank the minister for that answer. My concern goes back to places like the multiplex. The predicted O&M did not come anywhere near what they're actually paying. There was a massive amount of overrun in the O&M and I wouldn't like to see that happen with this facility.

Yesterday I read an excerpt from the overview of major issues in the corrections consultation final report, and I think it bears repeating. What it says is that, overall, the issues that received the most attention and were most intensely discussed were alcohol and drug abuse and after-care follow-up and support. In light of the Yukon's excessive rate of alcohol consumption, not to mention our staggering rate of crime related to alcohol and drug abuse, on and on, does the minister support the efforts of her colleague from Porter Creek North to make

alcohol more readily available to Yukoners and to expose impressionable young people to more alcohol consumption in commercial establishments?

**Hon. Mr. Kenyon:** If we get back to the consumption thing, what I'd like to bring the members back to is the part of the act that has a re-jigging, so to speak, of fines and penalties, which make it much more difficult for offenders to offend, hopefully. It also allows the RCMP to hold someone who's intoxicated for 24 hours, rather than 12. We are the last jurisdiction in Canada to do this. Someone who is a chronic abuser of alcohol, at the end of 12 hours, may still be highly intoxicated but the law, as it's written now and was written through the entire NDP government regime, was that the RCMP had to release those people and often literally wait outside and re-arrest them for the second 12 hours.

We're looking at everything from consumption in a motor vehicle to underage consumption. Many — if not most — of these infractions and proposed penalties are in effect doubled and some of them substantially more than doubled — in one case, a 100-percent increase.

So, all of these things put together will add to our substance abuse action plan and the SCAN legislation to get more responsible drinking overall.

**Mr. Hardy:** There are amendments that are being brought forward I will put on record that I do support and some are those he just mentioned. But there are others that I do not.

Every year we spend millions and millions of tax dollars dealing with the consequences of alcohol and drug addictions, on law enforcement, on medical care, and on fixing broken families. Every year this government makes huge profits from the sale of alcohol and the minister responsible for the Liquor Corporation wants to sell even more. But when it comes to preventing substance abuse, or helping people break their addictions, we don't spend anywhere near that.

Where is the money for land-based treatment? Where is the money for follow-up care? Where is the money to help young people with addiction problems? Will the minister go back to the drawing board with her colleagues, revise the substance abuse action plan to address the major issues that are still being ignored and provide the proper funding and human resources to tackle the Yukon's alcohol and drug problem in a very significant way?

**Hon. Ms. Horne:** The substance abuse action plan is a major initiative based on four strategic directions: harm reduction, prevention and education, treatment and enforcement. For example, the initiatives led by the Department of Justice that are now in place include new SCAN legislation and implementation, new RCMP street crime reduction, a new program for children who witness violence, Community Wellness Court, and substance abuse management programs that are offered at the Whitehorse Correctional Centre with over 15 certified staff.

Work is underway to develop a new community resource directory. A position to support the development of capacity building plans in communities has been recruited. Each action from the November 2005 action plan document has been assigned to a lead department. Most of the actions in the sub-

stance abuse action plan are included in the government's priorities at this time.

**Question re: Government advertising in *What's Up Yukon***

**Mr. Elias:** I have a question for the Deputy Premier. About two weeks ago the minister made a big show of supporting a local businesswoman in this Legislature. She did a long tribute to the founder of the local magazine, *What's Up Yukon*. The government couldn't say enough about how much it supported this local business. Behind the scenes, the story is quite different.

This morning, a representative of the company was voicing concerns about a lack of support from this government when it comes to advertising in this local magazine. This government spends millions a year on advertising, yet this local business gets a pretty small piece of the pie.

I would like the minister to spend a little more time on working with this business. Will she do that?

**Hon. Mr. Fentie:** Mr. Speaker, we are very cognizant of the fact that there are a number of media out there where advertising is possible. However, I have to go over some of the facts of how a government must conduct itself when it comes to advertising. In many cases, we have to advertise in publications whose readership best fits the particular initiative or issue being promoted by any related department.

There are also timing issues: whether these are daily, weekly or biweekly publications. But I can assure the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin that we feel very strongly about *What's Up Yukon* as a publication, and we will continue to work with them and others in the medium of publications and advertisements whereby we can, in a balanced approach, at least distribute the investment dollars toward advertising across the territory in a manner that best reflects the needs of each department on a case-by-case basis.

**Question re: Tank farm property**

**Mr. McRobb:** It has been nearly a year since I asked the minister in charge of land development about the tank-farm property. This sizable property sits between Hillcrest and Valleyview and between the Alaska Highway and Hamilton Boulevard. The owner has been trying to develop the land into approximately 350 large fully serviced residential lots.

As the minister knows, for more than 10 years the National Energy Board has been dealing with issues related to this site, including remediation of the environmental concerns resulting from its past use as a fuel storage tank farm. But it turns out that there is only one intervener that has been holding up the process for a number of years: the Yukon government.

For the record, can the minister indicate exactly what his concerns are for holding up the process for so long?

**Hon. Mr. Fentie:** Mr. Speaker, to suggest that any department responsible for protecting the Yukon taxpayers' interests and indeed Yukon citizens' interests when it comes to environmental contamination is somewhat irresponsible — however, I think we have to get to the facts of the matter.

There is a large environmental contaminant associated with these properties; it goes back a long way into history, and

if the National Energy Board at this time is satisfied with the mitigating measures brought forward from the proponent, then we, as a government, see no reason why the National Energy Board can't make the decision to allow the proposed project to proceed, indemnify the Yukon from any further liability, given the extensive environmental contaminants in this whole area — responsible, by the way, from another proponent, Russell Metals in this case — and indeed indemnify the proponent — if the National Energy Board is satisfied with the mitigating measures brought forward by said proponent.

**Mr. McRobb:** Mr. Speaker, a year ago, the minister responsible for land said he has been working with the NEB to see what he could do to fast-track that property, and he promised to work with the NEB and the landowners to resolve the issue to get the land on the market. I have reviewed several documents related to this matter and one thing is very clear: the Yukon government is the problem, not the solution. It is the only registered intervenor in the process. Without this government's intervention, the process would have concluded long ago. What is worse, this government was invited to take part in a mediation process to resolve any outstanding matters but has refused the offer.

Why did the minister responsible for lands promise to work with the owners, but in fact is really working against them?

**Hon. Mr. Fentie:** I will be kind in my response. The Member for Kluane is simply mistaken. We are not the holdup. If the National Energy Board, which is responsible for the environmental contamination on this site and all sites interconnected with this site here in Whitehorse, wants to make the decision, we encourage them to do so. We want to ensure, however, that the National Energy Board remains liable and responsible for any future issues that may arise from the extensive contamination that is not only at the tank farm in Whitehorse, but is in the community of Carcross and all along the pipeline route that used to run to Skagway.

This is a serious issue. This government will not allow Yukoners to accept that kind of liability. It is the federal government's issue. It is the issue of the owner of the properties, in this case Russell Metals, and it is a decision that the National Energy Board should and must make. We want to ensure that not only is the proponent protected if the National Energy Board accepts the mitigating measures brought forward, but to ensure that Yukoners today and in the future are not going to be held liable for rising environmental concerns, given the contamination.

**Mr. McRobb:** The liability concerns are valid; however, I have been assured that all the remediation work has been done. The fact is that this government has refused to participate in a mediated solution process. One has to wonder what the real reason is for the roadblocks put up behind the scenes by the government. We know that there has been a dire shortage of fully serviced residential lots within the city limits for a few years now. This won't change until at least next year. This minister failed to keep his promise to provide a continuous supply of such lots. Now it has turned out that he didn't keep

his promise to work with the landowners to resolve the issue to get this land on the market.

The developer knows that these lots will be superior to the lots developed by this government in terms of location, price and size. Exactly why did the minister responsible for land refuse to take part in the mediated resolution process?

**Hon. Mr. Fentie:** Once again, the Member for Kluane is on a fishing expedition and has come up with a red herring. This issue is entirely within the purview of the National Energy Board. If the National Energy Board feels that the mitigating measures brought forward by the proponent are sufficient to address the environmental contamination, then the National Energy Board should make the decision. It's their decision to make.

We want to ensure here in Yukon that any future environmental issues and/or liabilities are not going to be accepted by Yukon citizens, nor should they be dumped on the proponent who is proposing this particular development. It is up to the National Energy Board to make the decision. If they feel the mitigating measures are sufficient, then they will make that decision, but they should indemnify not only Yukon, but the proponent as well and continue to be liable and obligated for any future liabilities that may result from environmental contamination on this site and the other sites connected to this tank farm.

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

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

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

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

*Motion agreed to*

*Speaker leaves the Chair*

## COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

**Chair (Mr. Nordick):** Order please. Committee of the Whole will now come to order. The matter before the Committee is Bill No. 11, *First Appropriation Act, 2008-09*, Department of Finance.

Do members wish to take a brief recess?

**Some Hon. Members:** Agreed.

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

*Recess*

**Chair:** Order please. Committee of the Whole will now come to order. The matter before the Committee is Bill No. 11, *First Appropriation Act, 2008-09*, Department of Finance.

## Bill No. 11 — *First Appropriation Act, 2008-09* — continued

### Department of Finance — *continued*

**Hon. Mr. Fentie:** Mr. Chair, when we adjourned yesterday, we were in a debate with respect to — I think it stemmed from the cost of energy or fuel and the impacts. The discussion was centred around the fact that this government has already taken steps in reducing our dependency on diesel fuel, such as diesel fuel required for producing electricity. We have proceeded with significant investments in increasing our hydro capacity here in the territory to do exactly that: reduce our dependence on diesel fuel.

With that reduction of dependence on diesel fuel, we also reduce our emissions. I can assure the House there will be thousands of tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> that will no longer be emitted in the air because of that investment in hydro.

What was somewhat befuddling for the government side is the opposition — especially the Official Opposition — on these types of investments and the criticism received when we announced such measures as the third wheel in Aishihik to increase hydro capacity and reduce that dependence on diesel and those emission factors. We were criticized roundly and soundly by the Official Opposition.

It brought us to the point yesterday in the debate where I think we are trying to get some clarity from the Official Opposition on why they would oppose investment in increasing hydro capacity; an investment that will reduce dependence on diesel; an investment that will reduce carbon emission into Yukon's atmosphere; an investment that will put a mine, a large customer, on the grid; and an investment that will take a community like Pelly off diesel and provide it with hydro electricity. One can only wonder why the criticism and the opposition to such an initiative.

I go on because then it brings to question the position that the Official Opposition is taking with respect to this issue of fuel price and the impacts. We've gone over another long list of tax measures, putting millions — I believe it is about \$5.4 million annually — back into the pockets of Yukoners. We have gone through a litany of programs by Yukon Housing Corporation and the Energy Solutions Centre that are targeted for efficiencies and structural assessments for more efficiencies, better and more efficient use of fuels, looking at alternative fuels, and the list goes on and on.

Assistance for seniors, the pioneer utility grant, assistance for others out there, who are struggling — it's all in place; however, Yukon is not in control of the level of access to sweet crude that dictates the price of a barrel of oil, which results in the price at the pumps that we all pay.

I think we talked yesterday briefly about the fact that, yes, the price is high here in Yukon, but there are other regions in the world where the price is dramatically higher. We all have to cope, and we all have to do our part, but we question the Official Opposition is doing its part by opposing measures such as increasing our hydro capacity in the Yukon.

I'll leave it at that, and I am sure the members have some comments to make.



**Mr. Mitchell:** I can agree with a couple of things that the minister has said. One is that he goes on and on, because he has; I don't see that it has that much relationship to the last question I asked yesterday, because I believe I prefaced my final question by saying, "I must agree with the Premier that the price of fuel is set globally and it is beyond his control in every area and aspect, other than that portion of gas tax that we put on here in Yukon."

I have not specifically asked him to reduce or rescind the fuel tax, because I recognize, as he has pointed out, that that may not translate into the anticipated savings at the pump, but rather it may disappear elsewhere.

The Premier has not said whether or not he will be reducing the tax or removing it for any period of time. He has just suggested that if he were to do so, that it would not necessarily be seen on the final number, so perhaps he should clarify, when he is next on his feet, whether he has any plans to do so in the coming months, as the only aspect of this where he can directly, through a taxation measure, try to adjust the price of fuel in Yukon.

I recognize that those go into general revenue and are used for many other worthwhile purposes. I will understand if he's not going to do that.

He has other measures that he could bring in. I know that in the fall of 2006 — it might have been 2007 — we had a one-time tax measure. The official can certainly remind the Premier of this; he could even hold up fingers and I would know if it was 2006 or 2007.

Thank you, it was 2006 that we voted on a measure that was a tax bill that we did support on this side of the House. Although it was a tax bill that, in effect, reduced the price of home heating fuel oil by a particular amount per family, there was an income cap on that, I believe. I don't recall what the cap was, but if someone was making \$150,000 a year, they didn't get the rebate. It was intended to go to the people who needed it the most.

There are measures that he could bring in. As we have said, although he said it is not a very green measure to, as he puts it, subsidize electrical use, we have said that he could continue the rate stabilization fund rebate that appears on bills, because people are paying higher electrical bills as well as higher home heating fuel bills and higher gasoline bills, until such a time as there is a general rate application come forward and if, as the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources has promised us, that will more than offset the amount that bills have gone up due to removing the RSF, and it will cancel itself at that time. We just said to not put the cart before the horse, get the GRA through, then they can adjust the RSF.

I am still hoping that the Premier will consider doing that, because a lot of people in Yukon are hurting.

I also recognize that removing or reducing the gas tax would have a big impact on the revenue that we do get from those people who are passing through — tourists and others — and that also adds to the coffers. I understand the Premier's thinking on this.

The Premier indicated that he has not been asked specifically by the City of Whitehorse, and doesn't interfere with the

City of Whitehorse, he said. They want to come up with different routes and schemes for public transit, and we encourage them to do so. He talks about how much money we are already providing. We are suggesting that he might actually be proactive, sit down with the city and see if there is a way we can work together that will reduce transportation costs for Yukoners, at least in Whitehorse, will reduce emissions — we all agree that public transit can help reduce emissions — and will actually help to change the driving habits of Yukoners. I have seen Yukoners get in their vehicles to drive one block to park in front of yet another store. We all need to be looking at this in a different way.

I do have other questions for this minister. When I look at page 10-10 in the Department of Finance, I see under "Other Revenue", "Banking and Investment". It is estimated in 2008-09 to be down some 25 percent from the 2007-08 forecasts, from \$4.493 million to \$3.392 million. Number one: is this simply looking at the current interest rates that are available on Government of Canada investments, treasury bills and other such investments, banker acceptance, or is it because the government is no longer able to pursue potentially higher yields, as in the past, in asset-backed commercial paper? Perhaps it is the result of the new policy that the Premier applied to himself.

How is the government currently estimating the interest which is supposed to be accruing, but obviously has not been paid out, on the \$36.5 million of frozen asset-backed commercial paper which, as we all know, is going through this restructuring process?

Is the government simply accepting the intended interest rate and giving full value to that rate? I'm not talking about the principal here. I'm asking how in this estimate they are treating the interest that should be accruing on those investments. Until the restructuring is done, we're not certain when and how that will be paid out.

I think that's enough for the minister; I've given him a smorgasbord. He can answer the first questions, he can focus on the ABCP investments — he can pick and choose.

**Hon. Mr. Fentie:** As the member opened with, a lot has been said by the member. When all is said and done, as usual, there has been more said than done.

This member, the Leader of the Official Opposition, has just stated that a new policy brought forward by the government with respect to investing is being applied by me. I'm really struggling to figure out how he comes up with that. Maybe the member thinks I show up here at 7:00 in the morning, climb the stairs to the Department of Finance offices, turn on a computer, dial up whatever Internet function is there for investing and I begin investing in certain bonds, certificates and notes. I'm sure that's what the member must think.

I would really be interested to know how he comes up with these kinds of ideas. They are certainly far-fetched, to say the least.

However, the policy is in place because there was an issue. When you consider going back to 1990, these investments were being made. In good faith, officials were making these investments; of course they were. Even the federal regulator, OSFI, allowed for conditional guarantees in this particular area of

investment. Of course officials, the department and the government all along were investing in an area they all thought was allowable.

Even when the member talks about ratings, there are times when Canada savings bonds are only rated by one agency.

So there was an issue that we recognized and we moved quickly to deal with that by implementing a new policy so nobody who has this responsibility is encumbered with not really knowing exactly what is allowable. We've certainly addressed that.

The member is talking about interest earnings. In our budgets we project interest earnings and then, of course, at each and every year-end, we will realize what the actuals are. I think overall it's fair to say our earnings are doing well but, in many cases, interest paid, who sets that interest and all these matters are dealt with on an ongoing basis through each and every fiscal year. That's just the way it works.

As far as the interest accruing, this is the member who stood on the floor and said we hadn't earned interest and we've lost money. The list goes on and on and on about the wrongdoing of this side of the House — in particular, this minister — in regard to investing.

But I want to go over the facts again — and I know it's being repetitive, but maybe at some point I'll get it through the member opposite's ongoing conversation that we haven't lost money. There is interest accruing. There is a process in place to deal with this particular area of investment. There was a guarantee in place. The list goes on and on and on.

Frankly, we're very pleased with the work the Department of Finance has done over time in investing our available resources. By the way, it's fortunate that we are in a position in this territory today to have the fiscal resources to invest, because it was not long ago when we didn't have that luxury. In fact, we were paying overdraft charges just simply to pay the bills. That was at a time when things weren't all that good in the Yukon. That has dramatically changed today, Mr. Chair.

We'll allow the process to continue and conclude as it should. We know the process to date resulted in a significant majority voting in favour of proceeding with the new arrangement. Of course, there has yet to be a court decision on this new arrangement and we expect that shortly. From that point on, we will then take the next steps that are available and dictated by that court decision.

Overall, the member opposite can continue to make wild accusations and come up with all kinds of speculative possibilities, but the government side — true to form and consistently — will stick to the facts and continue to work on the process, as we do on every matter that we are obligated to work on, and do what we can do in the best interest of the Yukon public.

I think it's fair to say that that approach and work ethic have certainly produced results. The Yukon today is a much better place to be. The Yukon today has a very low unemployment rate, unlike past governments — especially the former Liberal government. The Yukon has a growing private sector economy, the Yukon has a significant increase in its fiscal capacity, the Yukon has gone from nothing in the cupboard — cash-wise — to over \$100 million cash available. The Yukon

has gone from a very limited net financial position when this government took office to a net financial position of over a \$100 million.

The Yukon is doing quite well fiscally, the Yukon is doing quite well environmentally, the Yukon is doing quite well in health care, the Yukon is doing quite well in education, the Yukon is doing quite well in economic development, and the Yukon is doing quite well in our investment and infrastructure — whether it be highways and other matters, hydro, in communities. The Yukon is doing quite well in tourism and culture, the Yukon is doing quite well in reaching out to those in need and providing assistance, the Yukon is doing quite well in progressing and ensuring that there is gender balance and we are addressing the needs of women, children and single parents in this territory, and we are progressing.

There are lots of things to do and many challenges ahead. But with the situation we are in fiscally, with the government that we have in place today, with the dedication and commitment of the individuals on this side of the House, and our approach with the work ethic that we bring to the table, we feel we can meet those challenges on an ongoing basis.

Now, I know that the member will criticize the government, as always, but empty criticism produces nothing. The government just simply sits and listens to the criticism and moves on. The member opposite is certainly struggling to gain any traction on virtually any issue. I think the member opposite has to recognize that the job of the Official Opposition and, indeed, all opposition members in this House, is to be constructive and provide something of substance when it comes to their input, in the interest of the Yukon public. We have yet to see that.

The only loss I can see here — and it certainly isn't a loss in our fiscal position — is the member's position in the public eye.

**Mr. Mitchell:** Well, you know, Mr. Chair, it is interesting. We can always see how close we come to the minister's own insecurities about his job performance and his lack of oversight on this portfolio by how he feels the need to strike out with grandiose statements about empty questions and all the rest of it.

No, we don't think that the Finance minister shows up at 7:00 a.m., flips on his computer and starts day trading. Although some of the results might imply that he has, we don't think that that is what he is doing. We do know, having spoken to several of his predecessors that, generally speaking, ministers of finance are kept apprised of the investment portfolio, from time to time, of the Government of Yukon. They have to be, because when there are tough decisions to make about large capital programs and when there is a need to address ongoing operation and maintenance issues, the minister has to be apprised of where the investments are, which ones are coming due and which ones might therefore be available not to be rolled over, but instead be used for the coming expenditures.

While the minister talks about criticizing officials, I might point out that he has repeatedly in effect criticized past officials when he talks about borrowing money to pay bills. As he well knows, it was advice of officials that there would be, at one

point in time, a smaller cost to the government to pay interest charges rather than look at different decisions.

Neither the minister nor I were in government at that time; in fact, I wasn't in the House, so I don't know why we have to debate. As I said, the more embarrassed he gets about his own performance, the more often we hear the words, "former Liberal governments". I don't know any former Liberal governments that made a 30- or 35-day investment that is now in the process of being restructured for eight years. This minister has done so. If he's referring to how money was spent under former governments and saying it's not the officials, it was the government, then he should take responsibility for the mess he has created here. He's the one with signing authority.

The list tabled by the Deputy Premier last fall of the investment portfolio as of November 15, 2007 was not very long. I'm sure the minister would have looked at these, and he had an opportunity earlier to do something about them. He made the wrong decision.

I point out, in the interest of being factually correct, when the minister says that even sometimes you can't get two rating agencies to rate Canada savings bonds, I don't believe there was a requirement under the existing *Financial Administration Act* to have two rating agencies rate the Canada savings bonds. I don't think they needed one rating agency, because it says investments guaranteed by the Government of Canada or a province — it's a separate category.

The two rating agencies had to do with being able to invest in other instruments, such as asset-backed commercial paper.

The investments in instruments that are directly guaranteed by the Government of Canada didn't require that. I don't know why he would bring that up.

Let's see if we can try another tack, Mr. Chair, because we are never going to get answers from this minister. He is just going to say, "I didn't do it and you can't prove it until 2014 or 2016", and it doesn't get us anywhere.

The minister said, when the Auditor General first came out with her much less than laudatory report on the actions of the government, "That's her opinion; we have others." In other comments that he made in the public venue he has indicated that he has legal opinions and has sought legal opinions. He certainly didn't provide them, and we understand the principle that he is claiming when he refused to provide them, but would the minister be willing to table and make available the transmittal letter that he sent when he requested the legal opinion that would outline what the question was that was asked? He has certainly spoken frequently enough about having asked for legal opinions — after the fact, not before the fact — as to the status of those other investments. We've learned before that we cannot simply listen to the minister's melodious voice and feel that all is well; for example, when he asked a question that wasn't the question that anybody was asking in the alleged conflicts issue, he asked the question about the wrong minister.

Perhaps the Premier could send us that letter and save us the whole ATIPP and appeal process to try to get it. For the minister's knowledge, he can waive his privilege on that if he chooses to do so. He doesn't have to keep that letter confidential, and then we would all understand what it is he asked.

**Hon. Mr. Fentie:** Let me go back a bit, Mr. Chair.

The Leader of the Official Opposition has tried to defend Liberal governments from the past by suggesting that, by referring to those Liberal governments from the past, the government side is actually criticizing officials. Well, I have to get some clarity on that. Is the Leader of the Official Opposition suggesting that the fiscal fiasco in Dawson City and allowing Dawson to overextend its debt limit was a recommendation from officials? My goodness, is the member that disconnected from the facts? Is the member suggesting that the Mayo-Dawson hydro line and the \$40 million-plus cost overrun is not a reflection of the decisions made by government, and not recommendations by officials?

Once again, the member is demonstrating how quickly they will criticize and point the finger at government officials. I find that to be very irresponsible. Furthermore, why would I give the member a letter when we know the member will misrepresent the content of the letter, just like he did with the Ombudsman's letter?

**Some Hon. Member:** (Inaudible)

#### Chair's statement

**Chair:** The Chair was actually going to rule that there was a point of order before hearing from any members. I would ask the member not to use that tone, please.

**Hon. Mr. Fentie:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The government side would be concerned that the member might not understand the content of the letter, as we all witnessed here with the letter from the Ombudsman. There was great discussion about wrongdoing at the Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board; unfortunately, the member did not understand the full content of the letter. Furthermore, the member can choose to do whatever the member would like in accessing any correspondence of government, but I must remind the Leader of the Official Opposition that when it came to a legal opinion on the matter of the investments, we were told to get a legal opinion by the Auditor General. We will just leave it at that. Because the Auditor General told us to do so, we did so.

The member opposite has to recognize also that we were asked if we had another opinion and, rightly so, we fully disclosed the fact that we do have an opinion. I think the member is conveniently ignoring the fact that we've stated all along that we respect the Auditor General's opinion on the matter and we've moved on. That is working through the process as we should.

To make a long story short, the member can continue with this approach to investments that he thinks are in a certain situation that has nothing to do with the facts at all. We have no problem with that. We'll sit here and listen respectfully as we always do and we'll endeavour to answer questions that are factual, but we're not going to enter into speculative debate. That is not going to serve any purpose whatsoever.

Going back over this again: since 1990, significant investments have been made in this area. A total of over \$1 billion has been invested since 1990; multiple transactions have been

made. Each and every year-end, governments presented these investments to the Auditor General for their review.

That's exactly what transpired under this government's watch, as other governments. The total investment since 1990 has been \$1.7 billion. Each and every year-end these investments were fully disclosed.

When it became an issue in the summer of 2007, it is this government that fully disclosed the issue to the Auditor General. The Auditor General did the review and the Auditor General brought forward the findings. It's the Auditor General who directed or told us we should get a legal opinion, which we did. We continue to work on the process as other governments, other corporations and other investors are doing today.

It has been a constructive process — unlike the member opposite's approach to this, which has absolutely nothing to do with being constructive.

We can't invent something that is not actually happening, though I try very hard to respond to the member to help him with answers that can at least get the member pointed in the right direction, but that's very difficult to do.

So, all in all, we have relayed the facts, time and time again, and so far it has not registered. However, that's a choice the member can make, should the member choose to do so.

In the meantime, it essentially has very little to do with debating the budget here. It's a mission the member has been on since last fall, a mission that obviously has a motivation, and though we don't have to say it, this side of the House recognizes what the motivation is.

I think the member should recognize that this has not produced anything. In fact, what it has really produced is this: when it comes to the public's view of leadership in the Yukon, the third party has been chosen over the member opposite. That's what the member has managed to accomplish in his approach.

But, again, that is a decision the member makes on his own. However the member wants to present himself, whatever conduct he wants to display, that's the member's choice.

We on the government side will be as helpful as we can to demonstrate to the member the error of his ways and to try to get him refocused on being a constructive member of this Assembly, being a solid representative for the members of Copperbelt and being a staunch ambassador for Yukoners. That would mean taking a positive, constructive approach on matters, demonstrating that the member is an alternative to the leadership of the Yukon Party, demonstrating that the member has actually some plan and vision — whether it be fiscal, environmental, in economic development, education, health care, tourism, culture, taking care of those in need, whatever the case may be — demonstrate some plan and vision for the Yukon public. We have yet to see that.

Here is a challenge to the member. Let us try that exercise. Let us take the budget of the Department of Finance and let's have the member and I debate some alternatives. From the member's perspective, that would demonstrate a plan and a vision on how that relates to the Yukon Party government's plan and vision, which has been evolving and unfolding since 2002.

A plan and a vision that has taken double-digit unemployment to one of the lowest unemployment rates ever; a plan and a vision that now has a trend of population growth that, if it continues as it is, will hit historic highs in population in this territory; a plan and a vision that has re-established confidence from the investment community with millions and millions of dollars being invested from the private sector; a plan and a vision that was to increase fiscal capacity by Yukon and stimulate the Yukon economy as we have; a plan and a vision for infrastructure, like hydro and highways and schools and recreation centres and other infrastructure across this territory, building a better quality of life; a plan and a vision to ensure that our future is not being mortgaged by needless spending or investments of today by maintaining a strong and healthy net financial position for future Yukoners.

It is a plan and a vision that Yukoners elected us to deliver on, and they accepted the fact, from 2002 to 2006, that that plan and vision ensured that they had a better quality of life — and the Yukon Party government was re-elected once again in 2006 to carry out and deliver on that plan and vision for the Yukon Territory and its citizens.

The plan and vision also includes good governance, Mr. Chair, based on respect, understanding and partnerships, not fighting with our sister territories over pipelines or which pipeline should be built first or second; these aren't the things this Yukon Party government is about. It certainly is what the Liberals are about, because they demonstrated that in the past and haven't changed their approach whatsoever.

Back to my point: let's try an exercise of constructiveness and a positive approach to debate. Let's hear from the member what his fiscal management plan and vision for the Yukon is.

**Mr. Mitchell:** The Minister of Finance is certainly full of talk about what we ought to debate. He was certainly full of it and we recognize that. He was trying to talk his way out of the errors of his own failed supervision. Mr. Chair, he's pretty good at it. He gets up and huffs and puffs and talks about things; he's doing pretty good and he's on a roll, but he went over the top that time because he actually said he wanted to see a plan or vision so the future is not being mortgaged.

My goodness, Mr. Chair, what was he thinking when he mortgaged the future for eight years? He wanted a plan and a vision to see that the future wasn't being mortgaged. He had one; it's called the *Financial Administration Act*. If he had followed it, he wouldn't have to explain the latest restructuring scheme.

That was an amazing demonstration. It's a real faux pas for this Premier to talk about mortgaging the future, because he has mortgaged the future.

When we asked about the letter of transmittal, he said he didn't want to show it to us because who knew what we might see in it. He went on to say that he sought the legal opinion because he was asked by the Auditor General to do so. That would be the same Auditor General of whom he now says he respects her opinions; he previously said, "That's just her opinion, and we have others."

I think what he was saying is the Auditor General asked him to seek another legal opinion. He has one and he has been

using it to chastise the Auditor General by saying she has her opinion and we have others.

Again, we would like to see the letter of transmittal because we can't simply accept the facts as they have been represented here as being what has actually occurred. We don't know; we haven't seen the document.

The other reason we would like to see this document is because this restructuring scheme — which I believe the Minister of Finance originally said we would know about in November and then said we would know by December exactly what was going to happen — has continued to stumble along. It struggled, and then looked like it's getting somewhere. First we had to see all the smaller investors — some 14,000 investors, I believe — who had the investments of under \$1 million. I will have to check that. It may be 1,400; I don't have the number in front of me. They had to be bought out in order that they did not vote down this deal.

Now we have seen legal challenges come forward. Barrick, for one, brought one forward. In fact, this one was so nerve-racking for this deal that the Minister of Finance got involved in it and intervened, urging and pressuring the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce to settle up with Barrick Gold, because Barrick Gold is challenging this arrangement that would remove the right to sue. Indeed, there are other companies that have indicated that they may want to go there as well.

It is interesting. When the small investors took on the restructuring committee and said that they are going to vote the deal down unless they got 100 percent of their money back — and get it back in the near future — they got their way. It looks like Barrick is now trying to see if they can get their money back.

This Premier has made much ado about how he stood with his fellow premiers and stood up to the former Prime Minister of Canada regarding monies that should come to the territories for health care. He got a better deal and talked the tough talk and he walked the walk.

This minister has indicated that he has other legal opinions and he has said frequently that there was a guarantee but the problem was the banks didn't honour their liquidity agreements. If he is so certain of his legal opinions why is he giving up the right to sue? Why doesn't he also challenge this, as other companies have? Yukon is a smaller investor than some. Some of those other medium-sized investors have indicated they are looking at their legal options.

If the Premier is so convinced that we had a legal case and we were wronged, why is he not taking that case forward? He says he has the legal opinions but he can't show them to us; we might misrepresent them. He says he has other opinions but he doesn't want to make use of them. Why doesn't he bring them forward and make the case and get Yukon's money back now so he'll stop mortgaging our future and so the funds will be available for all the capital programs that are talked about at various times? For example, there is the new Correctional Centre, the single parent housing, upgrades to highways, future replacement for F.H. Collins Secondary School — if that is

what the study recommends. If the minister is that confident that Yukon was wronged, why hasn't he taken that to court?

**Hon. Mr. Fentie:** The member started out by saying the process in restructuring the investments stumbled along. Speaking of stumbling, would the member like some time to pick himself back up, because this is really good. The member has just put on the record that the small investors involved here have stood tall, fought the fight and they got all their money back.

A few short days ago the Leader of the Official Opposition stated they got 60 cents on the dollar. This is the point, Mr. Chair, of discussing matters with this member, and that is why it is fruitless to give the member any letter. The member wouldn't understand the content.

Therefore, I will repeat: yes, we have a legal opinion on the investments. The legal opinion was something that the Auditor General told us to get. The legal opinion, frankly, is fairly clear in its assessment of the issue, including a guarantee in place.

Now the member has mentioned mortgaging the future. No, this is not a mortgaging of the future; it's an investment in the future, especially in case — God forbid — the Liberals somehow get into office between now and the year 2014. At least they can't get their hands on this money and blow it like they did with the Dawson City fiasco in allowing Dawson City to overextend its debt limit, like they did with the Mayo-Dawson inter-tie hydro line and all other kinds of fiscal decisions made that resulted in the shortest lived majority government in the history of the Commonwealth of Nations.

Speaking of stumbling, would the member like some time to pick himself back up, given what he has put on the record here today and in the past? He says Barrick Gold is taking the Imperial Bank of Commerce to court. In all likelihood, the reason for that is Barrick Gold is involved in the subprime fiasco, a creation, I believe, of a gentleman by the name of Edward Greenspan — is that the individual? — the individual responsible for the subprime mess.

**Some Hon. Member:** (Inaudible)

#### Point of order

**Chair:** On a point of order, Mr. Mitchell.

**Mr. Mitchell:** I feel compelled to rise on a point of order because I feel terrible that the Premier —

**Chair:** Order please.

When a member rises on a point of order, please state the point of order. You don't argue the point of order before stating the point of order. If the member can't pick out which point of order there is, there will not be a point of order. Mr. Mitchell, please continue.

**Mr. Mitchell:** The Premier has incorrectly named a Canadian attorney who is not here to defend himself —

#### Chair's ruling

**Chair:** Order please. There is no point of order.

Mr. Fentie, you have the floor.

**Hon. Mr. Fentie:** I stand corrected on "Edward", but there was a Greenspan involved with the Fed in the United

States, who is the architect of the subprime fiasco. Barrick Gold is involved in the subprime fiasco, unlike the Yukon government, so maybe Barrick Gold has reason to sue.

However, it's another example of what this Leader of the Official Opposition is attempting to do.

The member can't recreate history. The member can't recreate the facts. In fact, the member spends all his time in this House and in the public trying to reconstruct the past, unlike the government side, which is building Yukon's future.

Speaking of stumbling, would the member like some time to pick himself back up?

**Mr. Mitchell:** I think it's very clear what the minister is trying to do, in trying to see if he can get either the former chair of the Federal Reserve or perhaps he would like the current head of the Bank of Canada to bail him out on this one, but I doubt if either will. I would relish the day when the member opposite would have those debates head-to-head with either of those individuals. In fact, we don't know whether or not any of our investments through collateral debt obligations have been involved in subprime mortgages or not, so we won't go there.

I will point out how incorrect the minister was in some of the facts he just put on the record. I am going to be charitable and assume that these were accidental misrepresentations of facts.

The member opposite said that I recently said that these investors only got back 60 cents on the dollar. What I said is that when Canaccord and the other company sold investments in order to pay back 100 percent to those small investors, those companies received 60 cents on the dollar from a third party — a third party they did not name.

I clearly stated that it was a loss incurred by Canaccord selling investments at 60 cents on the dollar in order to repay all the money owed to the small investors, and that established that amount. The minister is over there chuckling; he seems to think he can prove otherwise. That is fine, Mr. Chair.

This member has now stated that this was actually an investment plan that he had — investing in an eight-year note in order to ensure that we couldn't make mistakes if we were to get into government. Well, that is just an incredible explanation for what he did. I see the minister is over there chuckling; he thinks he has a transcript of something that is going to prove otherwise. I am going to let him read it because, whether it be Blues and not the eventual *Hansard*, or something off the radio, let's listen to it and get it out, because that is the level to which he wants to stoop in this debate.

**Hon. Mr. Fentie:** Instead of stooping, the government side will continue to stand tall, but the government side will never back off in making sure the record is correct.

The Leader of the Official Opposition has just denied a statement that I presented on the floor of the House. Here is the statement as of April 28 on CHON FM: "The underlying assets are the same underlying assets that were recently sold by Canaccord and another company to pay off the smaller investors and they have received around 60 cents on the dollar." This is the comment the member made and this is a comment that he made April 28. Today, May 8, the member is still on the floor of this House saying that investors are receiving all their

money. That is the point we are making, Mr. Chair. So if we gave the member letters that we wrote to anyone, we are concerned that the member wouldn't understand or reflect the content in them.

The member has an issue about a legal opinion. There is a legal opinion — a legal opinion request that we got from the Auditor General. The legal opinion is fairly clear. It states that, in this case, a guarantee was in place. The guarantee was conditional and it was a guarantee allowed for by the federal regulator, in this case, OSFI. The member opposite has to start recognizing that he can't just talk for the sake of talking in this House. There has to be substance. There has to be substance involved, Mr. Chair. On the issue of investments by the government, the member has said a lot, all of it void of substance.

The investments made by government will be continued. The investments are earning Yukoners a substantial return. To date, it's in the millions — somewhere in the neighbourhood of \$20 million of revenue return to Yukon.

I know what the member is trying to do on this issue. The government has taken full responsibility. We have fully disclosed the matter, put in a new policy to ensure that this can't happen again and diligently worked with all other investors on a restructuring plan that will address the issue of the banks not living up to their guarantee of liquidity. The member can't change those facts; whether he asks for a letter from a lawyer, a legal opinion or any other suggestion that the member may make with regard to the issue, the member cannot change the facts. That is what has happened in this investment area. We will continue to work on the process until its inevitable conclusion.

Does the member want to get back to debating the Department of Finance and demonstrate that the Official Opposition, which is lagging behind the third party, has some sort of plan and vision for the Yukon? The third party has one. They articulate it to the public; that's why they are leaping ahead of the Leader of the Official Opposition and his party.

**Mr. Mitchell:** I can't believe what the Premier just did. The Premier just read from the transcript. If he couldn't understand that what I was saying on CHON FM was that the two companies sold underlying assets in order to fully repay the individual investors — which I've said numerous times, that they're going to be paid in full — and that the two companies received 60 cents on the dollar, then he's playing games with commas and words and he should know better. We're talking about \$36.5 million of Yukon money, and he is playing word games. A couple of weeks ago, I heard the member opposite on CHON FM and he was talking about cuts in the classrooms. He talked about how many EAs — and described them as executive assistants — they were sending into the classrooms. I'm not going to hold the member to that. I'm presuming he should know they are education assistants; I hope he doesn't think he's funding executive assistants in our classrooms.

But if that's the level of debate he wants to have, to worry about the CHON FM transcript and whether they put a comma in there or not — it's laughable.

This member has no defence for the fact that he was the overseer — he was the architect, he was the captain of the ship — to invest \$36.5 million in an investment that was supposed to be short term — for 30 days — but now, the best case scenario is eight years — we seem to be able to agree on that. We don't know what we're going to get back in eight years, but those are the terms being talked about. Now he's describing this as a careful plan, that he decided to specifically invest this money for eight years in these specific investments for the betterment of Yukon.

Really, I think it's absolutely ridiculous that he's doing that.

Like I said, for him to read this statement when we said, "You'll get your money back," and that these are the same underlying assets that were recently sold by Canaccord in another company to pay off the smaller investors — paying them off indicates they're getting their money back, Mr. Chair, something this Premier will never be able to accomplish in his term of office. They received around 60 cents on the dollar that they referred to Canaccord. So the assets have certainly proven not to be what they were represented as being.

The Member for Vuntut Gwitchin says, "Show me the money." The Premier can only show a restructuring deal. I'm done with this Premier and hopefully within a few years, so will all Yukoners. Some future Premier will be able to announce the status of the \$36.5 million. This Premier won't stick around long enough to do so.

**Hon. Mr. Fentie:** I believe the Leader of the Official Opposition is calling me a blah-blah, but I'll leave that alone.

We know exactly what we're getting back. On class A1 notes, we are getting back a total of \$14.765 million; on class A2 notes, we're getting back \$6.8 million and all the way through to the point where — there it is — \$36.5 million. Yet to be determined is the accrued interest to date and interest earned in the notes as we go forward with the restructuring.

The member says he's finished with this Premier. I think not, because we are still the government and unfortunately, the member opposite may not be around to see the next election as the Leader of the Official Opposition, all things considered.

I know that the member is quite sensitive about the comments he makes, because he makes a lot of comments and gets caught in them because they are contradictory. They are as contradictory as what came forward the other day with the Minister of Health and Social Services on a secret report that the member himself said was posted on a bulletin board. So, the contradictions are always there, Mr. Chair.

If the member is already finished, I have to ask the member opposite what productive or constructive contribution the Leader of the Official Opposition has made to the Department of Finance of the Yukon government? What constructive measure has the member brought forward? What constructive suggestion has the member brought forward? What has the member contributed to the debate? What has the member contributed to the Yukon overall in his tenure as Leader of the Official Opposition? That is all up in the air. I am not sure who is finished with whom, but what I think we have to reflect on is if

the Yukon public is finished with the Leader of the Official Opposition.

**Mr. Mitchell:** I guess what I would say is that the Premier's legacy is that he has left us holding the \$36.5-million bag. That is what he has done. That will be his legacy; the \$36.5-million bag. What I have done is try to hold this Premier accountable. He is pretty slippery, Mr. Chair. He doesn't like talking about it. He is now describing it as an investment. He has chosen to invest in these restructured investments. That is his new permanent fund.

As far as all the other issues that the Premier talks about, I won't debate him on polls. The polls that will matter will be the next election and that is what the people will decide. We will all face that poll. I won't worry about the ones in-between. Last November, the polls said Hillary Clinton was the Democratic nominee without a doubt and that John McCain should go home and quit wasting his time and money. So I don't worry about polls, except the ones on election day.

I am glad that the Premier is worrying about them; that's a good occupation. I would suggest that he spend more time looking after Yukoners' funds. If he had simply spent a bit more time doing that — not coming in at 7:00 in the morning and being a day trader — and simply asked some questions of his officials, we wouldn't be in this mess today. We would be discussing something else.

As for the Department of Finance, I have asked the minister other questions. He has given me some answers; others will apparently remain unanswered, such as the status of the legal opinion, why he chose to have one and claims it's a strong one, but not to stand up for Yukoners to try and use it to get their money back — not eight years or six years from now, but now. That is a question that will remain unanswered. It's a phantom opinion that only he can see, because he's worried about what it will say to others.

That's all I have to say, Mr. Chair.

**Chair:** Order please. Do members wish to take a brief recess?

**All Hon. Members:** Agreed.

**Chair:** Committee of the Whole will recess for 10 minutes.

#### Chair's statement

**Chair:** Before Committee of the Whole recesses, the Chair would like to request that members not personalize the debate, please. Hopefully then we can have a little bit better debate after the break.

#### *Recess*

**Chair:** Order please. Committee of the Whole will now come to order. The matter before the Committee is Bill No. 11, *First Appropriation Act, 2008-09*, Department of Finance.

**Mr. Hardy:** Sitting here and listening to the line of questioning and debate that has been ongoing for the last bit was like déjà vu all over again. We've been down that road, and we have talked enough about it. From my perspective, de-

cisions have been made. There is no use recycling the questions and inciting responses that have already been done — some people would say — ad nauseum.

But starting with the investments, I do have a couple of points to make — or questions — and I'm going to put them out there right away and see if we can move right on.

We do know it's going to be years for the investments to come due. Have the Finance officials been instructed to review their investment portfolio and look at revising their investment rules based on ethical standards? I'm not repeating a question. I'm saying ethical standards — if there is any emphasis in that area. I already know that the minister has directed the department to cease this type of investment. I know that.

So I'm just looking at — are they looking at other aspects and rules regarding ethical standards?

**Hon. Mr. Fentie:** Mr. Chair, it is very difficult for a response with respect to ethical investments but what we've done, because of the unfortunate circumstance that Yukon, along with many other jurisdictions, found themselves in, is we by policy — even though the *FAA* is in place and the scrutiny by the Auditor General, there were issues here if you consider the history of this type of investment. Therefore, by policy we have really narrowed down the area of investments that officials or the government can make. What we have intended to do with that is to ensure that this kind of confusion doesn't happen again, because I think in good faith people were making decisions based on historical patterns of investment. The money market right now that we would be involved in consists mainly of the Government of Canada, banks and provinces.

I think that may address the member's question to a point, although it is very difficult to respond to questions of ethical investment, considering these are the three main areas now that the Government of Yukon invests in.

**Mr. Hardy:** Very briefly, I'm just going to say something about that and move on to the next question.

When I was the administrator for pension plans many years ago, there was an allowance of money that was directed by the people I represented that would be put toward ethical investing. It was just a very small percentage that was allowed under the federal act that we of course have to abide by. It was a percentage amount. We sought out green investments — investments in a multitude of things — but what they classified as “ethical standards” was directed by the members I represented. That's the kind of the direction I'm coming from, that we did it at that level through pension-plan investments.

The next two questions are kind of tied together. I'm trying to get the right words for this. Will the investments that we now have through the agreement that has finally been reached regarding ABCP be reflected in the fall supplementary budget?

**Hon. Mr. Fentie:** I think what we have to do is wait until the process concludes. We will continue through the process and beyond and work with the Auditor General on how this is dealt with. I can say to the member opposite that it will be a year-end where all these disclosures will take place, as they always do, year in and year out.

**Mr. Hardy:** I thank the minister for the answer on that.

I know we have a very small tax on fuel — I think it's the lowest in Canada, or almost the lowest in Canada. Are there any other areas that the government has looked at in regard to the fuel for home heating regarding tax or tax rebates or anything like that to cushion the costs that are facing many people in the territory now?

**Hon. Mr. Fentie:** Mr. Chair, Yukon has the lowest road tax on fuels, both gas and diesel distillates. And we have some measures in place, like the pioneer utility grant, for example. But I think we have to reflect on something. On Wednesday in this House we unanimously passed a motion that focuses in on a tax that actually could result in benefit accruing back to Yukoners, because the GST is a tax that results in end-user pay. If we could establish some sort of an exemption on GST when it comes to fuels used for home heating and electrical production, and indeed transportation levies of GST for goods and materials coming into the Yukon, we could realize a benefit here in Yukon because the tax is applied to the point where end-user would pay. So if the tax is not levied at the point of origin on these areas, then ultimately Yukoners would realize that benefit by their purchase.

It is for us right now a point of focus, among many other things that are working toward conservation, energy efficiency, reducing consumption and all these types of measures. I think we have to look at this as a cumulative approach versus trying to pick and choose an area to assist. It's a global issue and I think we have to do our part cumulatively and come forward with as many measures as possible to address the issue.

**Mr. Hardy:** I am looking at the multitude of questions I have around taxation. I think I can actually roll it all into one. I am going to touch on a few of them and then ask a very simple question. The minister will actually remember this from years ago, when he was in another government under a different Premier, of course.

Basically, what I'm looking at here is that he is the Minister of Finance, but also the Minister of Environment. My understanding is that the climate change action plan will be unveiled fairly shortly. As well, I am thinking about British Columbia and the announcement regarding a carbon tax as a way to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. One of my questions is if that is going to be part of the climate change action plan or is the minister considering unveiling something in regard to a carbon tax to deal with emissions as an approach? Has this minister thought about green tax credits in this area or similar other tax measures that would, of course, encourage the purchase and development of alternative energy technology?

I think the minister understands where I am going. There is a whole different type of tax structure and different approaches that governments are trying to use in order to create incentives to reduce the impact on our environment.

I wrap all that up into a very simple thing. Years ago — I think it was the last time it was done — there was a round table on tax conducted by the NDP. I could stand corrected but it was probably about 1999 or somewhere around that time. Based upon what is happening in our economy today and the environment and incentives and ways of looking at the rising cost of fuel and the cost of food and the impact of those things,



would the minister consider having another round table to have a look at the whole tax structure and incentives and ways to have a positive impact and help people or give incentives to change some of the ways we now spend our money and the impact we have on the environment?

**Hon. Mr. Fentie:** I don't want to pre-empt or preclude what is coming with the release of a climate change action plan, which will be going out to the public, so I will leave that point there.

Yes, I recall the tax round table and it was certainly at a time where the Yukon was trying to find ways to stimulate. Throughout that time in history to where we are, beginning in 2002, this government took a little different view about how to stimulate. Yes, we did some changes in our tax regime overall, but it was after increased stimulus was injected into the Yukon's economy by government. We first had to increase our fiscal capacity. Once that happened, that stimulus started to generate a more positive investment climate in the Yukon and, once that investment climate started to take shape and gain in terms of the volume of private sector investment, we then went to work on some of the tax measures that we have brought forward to put more money back into the pockets of Yukoners to continue to fuel that stimulus.

That is calculated into approximately \$5.4 million of stimulus annually through tax measures put back into the pockets of Yukoners. Now, as far as green tax or carbon taxes — again, I don't want to preclude or pre-empt what the climate change action plan will present to the Yukon public, but at this time we haven't had any concerted emphasis or focus on carbon tax in the Yukon.

Frankly, we already pay — because we're at the far end of supply — a very high price for our fuel at this time, though we don't preclude other jurisdictions with a carbon tax, like Alberta — major emitters that are doing this. We see that as a positive step and would encourage all to continue on with measures to get people focused on reducing emissions.

We are approaching the reduction of emissions through investment at this time and, as I stated earlier, through conservation, reducing consumption and efficiencies. And that is the approach we're taking at this time and feel that there is still work to do in all those areas to continue on to generate what we believe will be the result, and that is further reduction of emissions overall, especially CO<sub>2</sub>.

So we'll continue down that road and, at this time, no measures are being dealt with as far as these types of green taxes, nor are we at this time convening another tax round table. We want to make sure that some of these measures get firmly entrenched in the system, and then we can take another observation and decide from there.

**Mr. Hardy:** I only have a couple more questions and they should be very short. They're short questions, so probably short answers.

Just looking at the bad debts — \$48,000 is written off as uncollectible debts. Is any of that \$48,000 among the debts that were turned over to Dana Naye Ventures for collection?

**Hon. Mr. Fentie:** That's the standard amount booked each and every year in case we do some write-offs or have to

book bad debts. That's just a standard amount. We took what I would call a singular approach to the outstanding loans that we debated at great length. I think the member is referring to that. We took a singular approach to that and went about the collection of those outstanding loans.

**Mr. Hardy:** Could you explain the 25-percent reduction in banking and investment revenue, please?

**Hon. Mr. Fentie:** It's due directly to the drop in interest rates themselves. It pretty much corresponds — there's about a 25-percent drop in the interest rate, which results in about a 25-percent drop in interest earning.

**Mr. Hardy:** Yes, it's quite a drop actually, when you look at 2006-07 — \$8 million down to almost \$4.5 million in the 2007-08 forecast to \$3.3 million. So there definitely has been quite a slide in that area.

My last question very simply is about the tobacco tax. The increase is roughly estimated at \$4 million — once this is applied, is my understanding.

I guess my question around that is: is the department anticipating that amount to start to drop due to the *Smoke-free Places Act* and is any of that money directed specifically to prevention and aids to break the habit and education, or is it just going into general revenue?

**Hon. Mr. Fentie:** Traditionally, these types of taxes go into general revenue. However, we are proceeding with programs for education, prevention and other measures to help people quit smoking. The purpose of doing what we have done — as we debated here, when you couple all measures, including a disincentive by levies or the level of tax, cumulatively, the intention here is to stop people from starting to smoke, especially young people, and to the extent possible, have those who are smokers cease.

The estimated revenues are based on known figures of today but the expectation is those revenues from tobacco taxation will be ever-reducing. That is the intention of all that we are doing with not only smoke-free places but taxation, prevention and education and other measures to assist people to quit; that's what it's about.

**Chair:** Is there any further general debate?  
Seeing none, we'll proceed line by line.

**Mr. Hardy:** Mr. Chair, I request the unanimous consent of Committee of the Whole to deem all lines in Vote 12, Department of Finance, cleared or carried, as required.

#### **Unanimous consent re deeming all lines in Vote 12, Department of Finance, cleared or carried**

**Chair:** Mr. Hardy has requested the unanimous consent of Committee of the Whole to deem all lines in Vote 12, Department of Finance, cleared or carried, as required. Are you agreed?

**All Hon. Members:** Agreed.

**Chair:** Unanimous consent has been granted.

#### ***On Operation and Maintenance Expenditures***

***Total Operation and Maintenance Expenditures in the amount of \$6,719,000 agreed to***

#### ***On Capital Expenditures***

***Total Capital Expenditures in the amount of \$278,000 agreed to***

*Department of Finance agreed to*

**Loan Capital and Loan Amortization**

**Chair:** We will continue with Vote 20.

**Hon. Mr. Fentie:** Mr. Chair, it also is required that I present to the House the capital and loan amortization of Bill No. 11, *First Appropriation Act, 2008-09*.

I will make a very brief statement. This is our standard provision for authority to make loans to municipalities, should they wish to borrow from us during the year. The \$5 million is the traditional amount set aside, but is seldom required. This line has no impact on our surplus, since loans are carried as an asset on our balance sheet, so the loan amortization recovery line represents payment by the municipality to the Yukon government for outstanding loans in this area. I will close my comments.

*On Loan Capital*

*On Loans to Third Parties*

*Loans to Third Parties in the amount of \$5,000,000 agreed to*

*On Loan Amortization*

*On Interest*

*Interest in the amount of \$233,000 cleared*

*On Principal*

*Principal in the amount of \$527,000 cleared*

***Loan Capital and Loan Amortization agreed to***

**Chair:** Committee of the Whole will now proceed to the Department of Community Services.

We will break for five minutes.

*Recess*

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

**Department of Community Services**

**Chair:** The matter before the Committee is Bill No. 11, *First Appropriation Act, 2008-09*, Department of Community Services.

**Hon. Mr. Hart:** I am pleased to provide members of this House with the capital and operation and maintenance budget for the Department of Community Services for the year 2008-09.

As members are aware, our responsibilities to the Yukon and its people are multi-faceted. They include ensuring effective and efficient community infrastructure is in place and operating as it should; administering the Yukon's motor vehicle branch and driver's privileges; maintaining all protective services to provide community safety and ensuring its continued well-being; managing consumer protection activities; and working with community governments in a number of administrative capacities.

I would like to begin by providing an update on important work the department has undertaken in relation to improving animal protection in the territory. As we campaigned, this government is committed to improving animal protection in the

Yukon and we continue to support the important work of the Yukon Humane Society and the RCMP.

The Yukon government is committed to improving operational procedures and our legislation to address concerns around animal protection across the Yukon. The department is in the process of developing a program including the creation of a fast and effective process to respond to complaints and is moving forward with legislative amendments targeted for the fall of 2008.

The Yukon government commissioned Dr. Kilpatrick, a local vet and lawyer, to review the legislation in December of 2006. His report to the government in the spring of 2007 and recommendations in October of 2007 advised that some legislative amendments would improve an act that is well written and comprehensive.

We have conducted a review of the Yukon *Animal Protection Act*, developed proposals for the amendments and started public consultation this spring.

As recommended during the animal protection review, government will also work to balance penalties and enforcement with education and awareness initiatives to reduce animal abuse and encourage the humane treatment of animals. I look forward to providing members with additional updates as the project advances.

Over the past year, Community Services has grown in size and in responsibilities with the addition of emergency medical services, or EMS, to our protective services branch. So today we have EMS, EMO and the wildland fire management service all working together to ensure the continued protection of Yukoners, their communities, and our many visitors while they are here.

With the addition of EMS, we have taken the opportunity to step back and examine the bigger picture of our emergency response capacity. The integration of all our emergency response agencies has prompted us to seek ways to maximize the benefit for all of the agencies and ultimately for Yukoners as well.

We are in the process of updating the ambulance fleet and are undertaking an assessment of the equipment and facilities used by EMS, the volunteer fire departments, and our EMO unit.

We are also going to examine what is required and the feasibility of expanding the 9-1-1 emergency call service beyond Whitehorse to service our communities as well. The EMS transition has been smooth and educational for us, in that we get to better understand the nuances of the public safety discipline through close association with the people who deliver it.

We have put in place a standby honorarium for our EMS community volunteers in recognition of the fact that, while on required scheduled standby, these volunteers must carry radios, stay within the community's proximity to receive calls and respond at a moment's notice. Over the course of time, as new service enhancements are identified, they will be implemented where and when applicable.

Of course, there are some common elements among people who are in the crisis response industry. It is part of their personality to be there for others in need. They are compassionate,

caring, and sincerely want to help. I'm very pleased that we now have more of this kind of person working in Community Services, who are looking out for the well-being of Yukoners and the communities in which they live.

Mr. Chair, as the tabled main estimates show, the department plans to spend \$59.3 million in operation and maintenance and approximately \$57.7 million in capital expenditures. Out of the department's O&M budget, \$23.6 million is allocated for grants and contributions to municipalities, communities and non-governmental groups, or NGOs. Operation and maintenance and capital recoveries are estimated to be \$4.3 million and \$37.9 million respectively. Revenues from general property tax and services provided by the department are estimated at \$9 million.

Under the municipal rural infrastructure fund, the Department of Community Services 2008-09 budget includes nearly \$12.6 million, which is dedicated to Yukon community-based projects approved through the municipal rural infrastructure funding process.

The most noticeable of these projects right now is the construction work underway for the Hamilton Boulevard extension. This long-awaited roadway extension will improve access and egress for one of the city's most populated areas, will improve safety by reducing traffic congestion and ensure that emergency response vehicles have alternate access options.

Due to the unfortunate incident in Lobird Trailer Park earlier this week, the blasting is now on hold until we can determine what caused the problem so that the project can continue safely. We have engaged the services of an expert blasting investigator to review the situation and propose corrective actions and procedures that will be required for future blasting. We are communicating with the residents of Lobird Trailer Park and we will keep them informed about the results of the report. A total of \$7.4 million is budgeted for the 2008-09 term of the project, for which \$4.5 million is recoverable funds.

Takhini North is another important project within the MRIF portfolio. The Takhini North development is led by the City of Whitehorse. This development project has been in discussion for a couple of years as a component of the city's official community plan. This budget will flow \$1.7 million to the project in the budget term, with \$850,000 being recoverable.

Under the Canadian strategic infrastructure program, our two CSIF projects are advancing nicely.

As I noted a few days ago, the Carcross waterfront development project achieved a significant milestone last summer with the completion of the footbridge replacement. A note on this project — it was much more than a replacement in that the old bridge was not replaced with a similar wooden structure, but rather, the bridge was enhanced and improved, as its composition of steel and wooden decking will last much longer than the original one that it replaced. It is also much safer, in that the railings are designed to be stronger and safer than the original version. For many, it has become a daily walking path as the residents take in the sites of Bennett Lake and Nares Lake during their exercise routine. For others, it is a fishing platform beyond compare and when the ice is out, many local

residents can be found tempting the grayling and lake trout with their fishing poles.

This year's project activity in Carcross will be focusing on creating the beach access and restroom facilities. This work is consistent with the overall waterfront improvement project plan developed through the community-focused consultation process. The budget for this year's portion of the project is \$250,000 with 50 percent of that recoverable.

In Carmacks, \$2.02 million has been identified for the waste management treatment project. Just about all of the contracts with the construction phase have been awarded and a couple more are pending — some final detail work — and should be out for bid soon. Overall, the project is advancing on time, according to plan. Again, 50 percent of this is recoverable.

The Whitehorse waterfront development project this year is focused on design, planning and permitting for the wharf component of the overall improvement project. \$4 million has been budgeted for this work and half of that expense is recoverable, as well.

The Yukon water and wastewater operating training program is still in the improving infrastructure file — \$390,000 has been allocated toward this. The purpose behind this program is to ensure all persons involved with the handling of potable water and wastewater are trained to ensure the continued protection of themselves and the people in the communities they serve.

As one of our most precious natural resources, water plays a fundamental role in the lives of all living creatures. We want to ensure that the water Yukoners consume is safe in all stages of its use, including its collection, transportation and delivery. Equally important of course is employing the same care and attention to collecting, transporting and disposing of waste water in the communities.

Still with water, in this budget we have identified approximately \$1.3 million for the Army Beach water project, \$50,000 for the Ross River water treatment project, and \$150,000 for the Old Crow water well project. Also, \$50,000 has been identified for scheduled improvements to a number of waste water project systems in various locations around the territory.

A small project, but one that is important to complete, has been identified to improve the street services and associated water drainage in Old Crow. \$30,000 will see that project advance in the near term.

Under the Building Canada agreement and gas tax, members will recall a recent announcement of the Building Canada infrastructure agreement of nearly \$243 million, and the announcement included a reference to extending the gas tax funding program as well. Extending the gas tax fund is good news for Yukon communities. Today Yukon and Canada have extended our current gas tax agreement from 2010 through 2014. \$15 million a year will be available to Yukon communities for infrastructure that leads to cleaner air and cleaner water.

First Nation governments and municipalities all have a dedicated share of these funds. The Yukon government also has a share for our unincorporated communities. A number of First

Nation and municipal governments have completed integrated community sustainability plans that lay out their long-term vision and their priorities for green infrastructure.

In many communities, there has been extensive cooperation between governments and, in some cases, even joint sustainability plans. I think this is one of the real highlights of the funds to date.

With the plans in place, governments are able to move forward on projects. To date, 14 projects have been approved worth almost \$17 million, including nine projects with the City of Whitehorse.

Looking beyond 2014, the most recent federal budget made these funds permanent. This is a welcome announcement. This means that our communities can do long-term, sustainable planning for infrastructure with a guaranteed source of funding. This is a really important announcement for all orders of government in the Yukon. I am pleased that these much needed funds will continue and I look forward to working with all the governments involved over the coming years.

As I announced last November, we have developed a new infrastructure funding program to assist rural communities in dealing with municipal responsibilities such as potable water, waste water, solid waste and emergency management and response projects. The fund was established to respond to specific immediate needs raised during the Premier's 2007 community tour.

In the community of Faro, two priority projects are related to improving some of the community's aged water infrastructure. Two sections of wooden water mains will be replaced and some sewage main system components will be updated, as well. A little over \$229,000 has been earmarked for these projects in Faro.

In Haines Junction, \$130,000 has been allocated for five small yet important projects in Haines Junction that the community put forward to address their concerns. They are: a new concrete floor for the recycling centre; new fencing for the landfill; wellhead sites; a new fire pump at the pumphouse; and a new truck fuel station that provides for some backup redundancy to ensure that there is sufficient water supply for fire-fighting.

Teslin will receive \$100,000 toward the purchase and installation of a backup emergency generator for the recreation centre, which will double as an emergency shelter in times of community crisis.

In Watson Lake — three projects suggested by the Town of Watson Lake are being funded. They are: a new camera system valued at \$58,000 for monitoring the safe operation of the community sewer system, and a project increasing the size of water capacity, with a new filtration system for it, amounting to approximately \$400,000 has been approved.

The Tagish LAC will receive \$5,000 for an emergency backup power generator and \$20,000 for the development of an emergency plan to help guide the community through its time of crisis.

The Mount Lorne LAC — new lighting for around the fire hall and surrounding training area has been approved for Mount Lorne, so that fire hall use can be extended past daylight

hours. The same will apply to the community centre, where new lighting will be installed or upgraded for greater usability and improved safety. And the containers at the dump will be fitted with new lids to prevent the scattering of garbage by wind and ravens.

The water system in Ross River will benefit from a \$100,000 investment to improve supply volume and efficiency of the well system. We will also be investing an additional \$100,000 in the unincorporated communities to enhance solid waste programs in all of those locations.

As I stated earlier, these are not large-scale projects, but are nonetheless very important to enhance the operation and safety of our communities, as identified by the communities themselves.

These projects will also benefit local employment. The majority of these projects should make a positive difference in creating some new contract work in rural Yukon.

In sport and recreation, as members know, I have a very keen interest in promoting sport and recreation for Yukoners of all ages. I must be candid about my pride in the Arctic Winter Games athletes, their coaches, our cultural delegation and all the mission staff. Every one on Team Yukon gave an outstanding performance at all levels and I congratulate them all.

The Yukon finished with a total of 81 ulus: 26 gold; 25 silver; and 30 bronze. The real story is the performance of our young athletes. Ryan Berlingame captured three gold ulus in the biathlon competitions; Dahria Anne Beatty also earned three gold ulus for her performance in cross-country skiing and Troy Donald Henry brought four gold ulus back to the Yukon for his speed skating prowess.

I could go on for a long time acknowledging the remarkable performances of Team Yukon in individual competitions, but I will resist and sum up by saying that all members of Team Yukon gave their very best. We are very proud of each and every one of them for their efforts in Yellowknife. That goes for the cultural performers, mission staff, coaches and, of course, the unfailing support from their families and friends. All contributed to the success of Team Yukon 2008. I must say that it was an effort very well done, especially by those parents who attended.

Seeing the time, Mr. Chair, I move that you report progress.

**Chair:** It has been moved by Mr. Hart that Committee of the Whole report progress.

*Motion agreed to*

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

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

*Motion agreed to*

*Speaker resumes the Chair*

**Speaker:** I 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:** Committee of the Whole has considered Bill No. 11, entitled *First Appropriation Act, 2008-09*, and directed me to report progress on it.

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

**Some Hon. Members:** Agreed.

**Speaker:** I declare the report carried.

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

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

*Motion agreed to*

**Speaker:** This House now stands adjourned until 1:00 p.m. next Monday.

*The House adjourned at 5:29 p.m.*

**The following Sessional Paper was tabled May 8, 2008:**

08-1-75

*Workers' Compensation Act* (Bill No. 52) and amendments to: French version (Cathers)