

**Yukon Legislative Assembly
Whitehorse, Yukon
Monday, April 6, 2009 — 1:00 p.m.**

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

Prayers

DAILY ROUTINE

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

Tributes.

Introduction of visitors.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Mr. Speaker, I would ask all members of the Legislature to join with me and extend warm welcome to a long-time friend of mine and certainly of our caucus, Ms. Carol Pettigrew.

Applause

Speaker: Are there any returns or documents for tabling?

TABLING RETURNS AND DOCUMENTS

Hon. Mr. Hart: I have for tabling, pursuant to Motion No. 542, the consultation report, prepared by the Yukon Employment Standards Board and the Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board.

Speaker: Thank you. That report was prepared pursuant to Motion No. 542, adopted by the House on November 12, 2008.

Are there further returns or documents for tabling?

Reports of committees.

Are there any petitions?

Are there any bills to be introduced?

Are there any notices of motion?

NOTICES OF MOTION

Mr. McRobb: I give notice of the following motion: THAT this House urges the Yukon government to:

(1) follow the mandate of the Standing Committee on Appointments to Major Government Boards and Committees, as outlined in Standing Order 45(3.2)(a); and

(2) ensure this process is not circumvented for any special appointment.

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

THAT this House urges the Yukon government to support the protection of the natural environment of McIntyre Creek and its wetlands for future generations by working with the City of Whitehorse to establish a park:

(1) that includes recognition of the environmental and economic value of McIntyre Creek as one of the most important areas for wildlife habitat within the city limits of Whitehorse;

(2) that includes the recognition that residents from all over the Yukon, as well as visiting tourists use this area for recreation, peaceful enjoyment and ecotourism activities such as hiking, fishing, orienteering, skiing and bird-watching;

(3) that includes the participation of the Ta'an Kwäch'än Council and the Kwanlin Dun First Nation in the process of establishing a park within their overlapping traditional territory;

(4) that includes the participation of stakeholders such as commercial and private landowners as well as existing mineral claim holders that may be affected by the development of the park;

(5) that includes the participation of partners such as the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, the Yukon Chamber of Mines, the Whitehorse Chamber of Commerce, the Tourism Industry Association and the Friends of McIntyre Creek that may have some responsibility or interest in the development of the park; and

(6) that includes consideration of the municipal government's responsibilities and cost of maintaining a park within the boundaries of the City of Whitehorse.

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

THAT this House urges the Yukon government to immediately appoint a public commission, representative of Yukon's demographic makeup, to hold public hearings and recommend options for the reform of Yukon's electoral system to enable Yukon electors, if necessary, to participate in a referendum on electoral reform in time for the next territorial general election.

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

THAT this House mourns the passing of the Yukon Council on the Economy and the Environment, whose last member's appointment expired yesterday without reappointment, and is of the opinion that the cause of the demise of this once vibrant and vitally important council was extreme negligence on the part of the Yukon government.

I give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Yukon government to restore funding to the Environment department's songbird surveys through to 2007-08 level of \$15,000, as songbirds are an important indicator species in monitoring and tracking the impacts of climate change locally, regionally, nationally and internationally.

Speaker: Are there any further notices of motion?

Hearing none, is there a statement by a minister?

This then brings us to Question Period.

QUESTION PERIOD

Question re: Certificate of recognition

Mr. Mitchell: This year the Government of Yukon introduced the certificate of recognition program, or COR, as a requirement on contracts for construction. If you want to bid, you must be COR-certified. Last week the government was

running ads promoting the COR requirement being in effect as of April 6 — today.

COR is an occupational health and safety certification program for all Yukon employers. The program is designed to assist companies in the development and maintenance of a company-wide safety program. It makes our workplaces safer.

Last week the government said the requirement would not be in place on the new residence at the hospital. Why not?

Hon. Mr. Hart: We are endeavouring to ensure that COR takes place in all our contracts throughout the Yukon. There are, however, some difficulties with some companies obtaining the COR certification. That process is underway. We will be assisting, however, some companies to ensure that COR is being obtained by them to ensure they can follow that in upcoming contracts.

Mr. Mitchell: I don't think I heard the answer to the question I asked. The tender document for the new residence was issued in February 2009. It was changed last Thursday. The requirement for companies to be COR-certified was dropped. The COR program is a partnership between the Northern Safety Network Yukon and the Yukon Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board. Upon completion of the program requirements, a certificate of recognition is issued jointly by the Northern Safety Network Yukon and the WCB. The WCB is obviously a big supporter of this project. The chair of WCB is also the chair of the Hospital Corporation. On the one hand he is promoting safety; on the other, he is saying it is not important if companies have this certification for work at the Whitehorse General Hospital.

Why was the COR requirement removed at the last minute, and why is the government willing to accept lower safety standards at the Hospital Corporation?

Hon. Mr. Hart: We are looking after the safety of all workers in Yukon. Under Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board, that is one of our highest priorities — the safety of all workers, basically from 14 on up. That is the area that we are working at. This particular contract, Mr. Speaker, is being handled by the Whitehorse Hospital Corporation through their process, and they are a corporation. In essence, they have looked at the contract, and in an effort to get the contract through, they have indicated that the COR is not necessary for them to work with. They are working with us to ensure the safest work conditions are going to take place there in the construction of that building.

Mr. Mitchell: Well, let's get to the core of this matter, Mr. Speaker. The government says it is concerned about workplace injuries; the minister says he's concerned for all workers 14 and up, and we should be. We've set records in recent years in terms of workplace injuries. The government should be doing everything it can to reduce the number of injuries. Instead, at the last minute, government lowers the bar for safety standards on the new residence at the hospital.

The minister can say it's the Hospital Corporation all he wants, but the change was made by his department. I'll file these documents right now.

The government has appointed the same person as chair of the WCB and the Hospital Corporation. With one hand he is

raising the safety bar; with the other, he is lowering it. The minister has a choice to make: he can choose higher safety standards or lower ones.

Will the minister ensure that contractors must be COR-certified in order to bid on the new hospital residence contract — yes or no?

Hon. Mr. Hart: We are working with the Yukon Hospital Corporation and providing them with every bit of assistance required for the construction of this facility to ensure it is built in as safe a manner as possible.

Question re: *Child and Youth Advocate Act*

Mr. Mitchell: We're debating a new child advocate act this spring. The government has chosen to give the new child advocate very limited authority. In several other jurisdictions, the advocate has the ability to actually investigate complaints that they receive. This is not the case in the bill we are debating. Quote: "One of the big problems that I see with the legislation as it is currently drafted is that the child advocate really is only allowed to support, inform and advise children who are receiving services." There are really no teeth in this role, according to a First Nation lawyer, who commented on this legislation.

Why did the government choose to limit the powers of the child advocate in this way?

Hon. Mr. Hart: The requirement for the tabling of the child advocate act is contained with the *Child and Family Services Act* and this government is committed to getting the child advocate through in this session. I will state, though, that we have been in consultation with First Nations for almost five years, in collaboration on the child families act, and the child and youth advocate was part of that process.

Mr. Mitchell: The question I asked had to do with whether there are any teeth in this position or not. There are several jurisdictions across Canada where the child advocate has the ability to investigate complaints. This is the case in B.C., Saskatchewan and Manitoba, for example.

The Government of Yukon chose not to go this route; we want to know why. First Nations wanted the government to ensure the child advocate has the ability to investigate complaints. The Liberal caucus supports that same approach. The government chose instead to limit the authority of the advocate. Why did the government do it this way? Why limit the authority of the advocate to investigate complaints?

Hon. Mr. Hart: A substantial amount of work was done on this legislation. We looked at several jurisdictions; we contacted many of the jurisdictions the member opposite discussed here in the House in his question, but the emphasis that we want to place on the child advocate is that it has to be for mitigating issues on behalf of the child. The emphasis has to be on the child. Mr. Speaker, we believe that the act provides that process with the emphasis being on mitigation for the child.

Mr. Mitchell: If the advocate is going to be able to stand up for the child, they need the powers to do that effectively. The new law says the child advocate cannot investigate complaints. This was a political decision made at the Cabinet level. It goes against the wishes of First Nations who had a news conference last week to protest the way the government

has handled this bill. Consultation on this bill was rushed and limited in scope, despite what the minister has said on this bill. First Nations have gone public with their displeasure and have also written to the Minister of Indian Affairs to protest this government's my-way-or-the-highway approach.

The letter says, "In our opinion, the Yukon government has failed Yukon First Nations in the development of the child welfare legislation." Very strong language, Mr. Speaker.

If the minister feels he has done such a good job on this bill, why are letters like this being written? Why not put teeth in this act?

Hon. Mr. Hart: For the member opposite, that discussion paper was released last fall with regard to this act and extensions were provided on a couple of occasions to assist the First Nations with additional time to review and provide comments. We did receive comments from some First Nations and in many cases we utilized the information that was provided by those First Nations to assist in enhancing the legislation and providing us with — all of those issues provided the youth and child advocate position with the better authority to mitigate matters on behalf of the child and youth. That is the focus behind the legislation. We are there to ensure that the rights of the child are being looked after and this is legislation that will do that. We are providing additional information and there are actual items under the ATIPP act that enable the youth and child advocate to receive information from the departments. This is also not the case in other jurisdictions, for the member opposite.

This is an item we felt that was necessary to ensure that the youth and child advocate would have at their disposal tools to work with on behalf of the child, and the ATIPP was there for that.

Question re: Housing survey

Mr. Cardiff: Under section 4 of the *Housing Corporation Act*, the Yukon Housing Corporation may carry out any duties and functions related to any program of housing or urban development, as directed by the Cabinet. The minister responsible for Yukon Housing Corporation has a very broad mandate in the provision, development, maintenance and management of housing for families, individuals, seniors and people receiving social assistance.

Recently, the Anti-Poverty Coalition conducted a housing survey, which sheds some light on the deplorable lack of adequate housing for many people. The survey found that over half the people who completed the survey said they did not have a place they could call their own; half said they did not feel their housing situation was stable; one-quarter said they did not feel safe where they were sleeping.

What is the minister responsible for Yukon Housing Corporation going to do about the chronic lack of safe and affordable housing in Whitehorse and the Yukon and the issues that are raised in the Anti-Poverty Coalition survey?

Hon. Mr. Kenyon: The study that the member opposite refers to — it was a very interesting one done by the Yukon Anti-Poverty Coalition and other NGOs working on social services, and they do make a difference.

I would bring the member's attention to the fact that the first social housing that was built by any government under any political stripe in the recent past was done by the Yukon Party — by our government — in what was affectionately known as the "athletes village".

We are currently under construction — finishing off the final touches, actually, not under construction — of the building in Haines Junction. We have the plans set to go on a further building in Watson Lake, and we are currently setting out the schedule of what we will be doing with the \$50 million over two years that has come from the federal government. So we are working on all those projects and a wide variety of different types of solutions

Mr. Cardiff: The minister didn't really answer the question.

The housing survey also found that one-quarter of the respondents said that they did not have a place to cook. Forty percent said they couldn't afford their current accommodation. Seventy-one people said they couch-surf — stay with friends, live in a hotel, live in vehicles or tents and rely on shelter. This is about housing that's not affordable, housing that is substandard.

Now, the survey was done between January 26 and February 1, which is a terrible time to be homeless in the Yukon. Eighteen different agencies helped with this housing survey — agencies that work with youth, women, seniors, students and Yukoners with disabilities.

Will the minister commit to sit down with the Anti-Poverty Coalition and these agencies to develop a comprehensive housing strategy so that funding — including funding from the federal government — goes to housing projects that are going to address the acute needs of Yukoners.

Hon. Mr. Kenyon: That questionnaire was distributed by a number of non-governmental organizations that asked them to provide input. The survey — or so-called "survey" — was done by agencies that were already working with many of these clients. I do bring to the member's attention, however, when he says "that people who can afford" — the program that is run under the Yukon Housing Corporation provides housing at 25 percent of the income of the individual as opposed to 30 percent for the rest of Canada. We are the best in the country on that.

It is not a question of affording rent — it is a red herring completely to put out what rental amounts are, because the rent is 25 percent of the Yukon's income. I also draw attention to the member opposite that a number of articles have appeared in the past outlining individual cases; on investigation, in fact, these people never bothered to apply to us. If they had, they would find that 25 percent of their income would get them housing within the Yukon Housing Corporation. The programs are there and they are improving quite dramatically with the federal program and, with the largest budget in the history of the Yukon, we will be doing much more in these areas.

Mr. Cardiff: Maybe the reason they don't apply is because there isn't any housing available. There's a waiting list. Now more people are unemployed this year than there were last year; more people are forced to rely on social assistance and

employment insurance — which is an oxymoron in itself. The median rent in Whitehorse is up and it's up in all communities. Progressive governments the world over are using government spending to make social investments in their communities that improve the health and welfare of those communities. We know that housing is one of the most powerful tools to address these social issues. We have serious needs in the Yukon: the lack of affordable and safe housing for families, the lack of a youth shelter and the lack of supportive housing for people with FASD or those suffering from mental illness.

When is the government going to finally wake up to the fact that we have a serious housing problem here in the territory and use Yukon Housing Corporation and its mandate to address that problem?

Hon. Mr. Kenyon: For the member opposite, the red herring resurfaces. The median rent in Whitehorse or any other community has nothing to do with this debate. The individual pays 25 percent of their income, or the family income, for housing. It doesn't matter what the rent is, we pay the rest and we pay the heat.

I do bring to the member's attention that, in late March, members of the ad hoc working group he refers to — which includes Kaushee's Place, Yukon Status of Women Council, Yukon Human Rights Commission, Whitehorse Chamber of Commerce, Victoria Faulkner Women's Centre, PSAC women's committee and the Yukon Anti-Poverty Coalition — met with the Yukon Housing Corporation Board of Directors. At that meeting they put forward a number of proposals that were being looked at on both sides and presented findings. These include portable rent supplements, rent-to-own home ownership, debt repayment, rent ceilings, tenant support groups and a wide variety, but the individuals pay 25 percent of their income — the lowest in Canada. To discuss and talk about rents going up in Whitehorse, again, is a complete red herring.

Question re: Certificate of registration

Mr. Hardy: I'm also very concerned about the — I'm trying to find the right word to not get ruled out of order — words of the minister who oversees the Hospital Corporation, as well as the same minister who oversees Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board and what seems to be indicated by this allowance for a major construction project to go ahead without the proper certification — the COR certification which is to lessen injury, prevent death, set a higher standard that is being demanded on other construction projects — to go ahead is, to me, a complete inconsistency in messaging and what he stands for.

Will the minister put on his Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board hat and talk about the necessities of having COR on this project and make sure it happens on the project at the hospital?

Hon. Mr. Hart: As I said, this project is being led by the Yukon Hospital Corporation — through its process — and they are taking action with regard to the bid.

As the member opposite indicated, we know that the Hospital Corporation will also be ensuring that the work is being done, but also that safety will be uppermost in their process, when it comes to the actual construction of the facility.

Mr. Hardy: This is being run through other departments, not just the Hospital Corporation, and there are no assurances the minister has given on this floor that the standards will be met on that job. COR was a standard. It's being implemented, it's being required for construction projects.

Why won't this minister responsible for the Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board — as well as the Hospital Corporation — say that this is unacceptable and COR will apply to this? You, the chair of the Yukon Hospital Corporation and Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board — the same chair — get your act in order and stand up for the workers of this territory and ensure that COR is on that project. Why won't he do that?

Hon. Mr. Hart: For the member opposite, as I stated, we will be working with the Yukon Hospital Corporation on this facility. They are the lead process. Occupational Health and Safety will be there to ensure that the appropriate construction environment is in place on this facility to ensure the safety of the workers.

Mr. Hardy: Mr. Speaker, I am sick and tired of this kind of answer. Sick and tired of it. That is the Minister of Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board and the Hospital Corporation. To add insult to the workers and the construction businesses bidding — that bid under COR — to add insult, the chair of Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board is also the chair of the Hospital Corporation. When he is in his chair at Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board he is demanding higher standards for protection of workers to lower the costs on WCB.

He walks across the river, sits in his chair in the Hospital Corporation and lowers the standards, and this minister is accepting that — he's accepting it. This is an insult. Yes, and I hope the Premier stands up and tries to take this one, because this is an insult.

Hon. Mr. Fentie: Mr. Speaker, in an attempt to keep the emotions of the Assembly at an appropriate level, I would remind the Leader of the Third Party that COR certification is a certification requirement, but there's nothing that says that standards — safety standards for the workers — are going to be compromised should all contractors in the Yukon at this time — all contractors — not be fully certified under COR.

The government is working very hard with the contractors to get them certified, but that does not in any way reduce the level or standard of safety in the workplace or on any contract. I would remind the Leader of the Third Party that this is, in many cases for small contractors, a difficult and challenging process, but the government is working with them to assist them, so that all contractors in the Yukon are, at the soonest possible date, going to be COR-certified.

Question re: High school exams

Mr. Inverarity: In British Columbia, aside from the five mandatory provincial exams required for graduation, all other provincial exams are optional. This policy has been in effect for the past three years in British Columbia. In Yukon, however, students are required to write all B.C. provincial examinations.

In addition, the Department of Education's policy and official documents are contradictory and confusing. On the reverse side of the Department of Education's transcript of grades, it states: Students are required to write a grade 12 examination in language arts 12. Students who choose not to write other optional grade 12 exams will receive the same mark for their final percent and school percent. This document, distributed to all graduating students and colleges and universities to which they apply, indicates the optional nature of these exams.

Will the minister explain why some students who therefore choose not to write these exams get an "incomplete" on their high school report card?

Hon. Mr. Rouble: I'll make this very clear for the member opposite: at present, all Yukon grade 12 students are required to write the B.C. provincial exams. That is the Yukon policy; it changed in British Columbia three years ago; the policy has not changed in Yukon. Writing the exams is a requirement.

Writing exams is an important mix in the tools for assessment that teachers and educators have. Writing an exam is a way of evaluating performance and comparing standards. The other member for the Liberal Party has often commented on the Auditor General's report, and commented that we need to have greater performance standards and measurement tools — an exam is one of those tools.

Writing exams keeps students' options open and also makes them eligible to receive the Yukon excellence awards.

Mr. Inverarity: The issue here is that it's confusing. Yukon students are competing for university acceptance and scholarships with students in other provinces and territories who are not required to take provincial exams and whose marks are not lowered by the standardized graduation test. Yukon students do not want to be forced into this situation — that will, nine times out of 10, give them a lower mark. It does not make sense to have the Yukon policy, which requires writing the B.C. provincial exams, when B.C. does not require B.C. students to even write them.

We do indeed follow the B.C. curriculum; let's follow it and institute the same provincial exams. Will the minister amend the policy so that Yukon students will be on the same footing as other students in Canada?

Hon. Mr. Rouble: Mr. Speaker, all Yukon grade 12 students are required to write the B.C. provincial exams. The member is correct. We have literally hundreds, if not thousands, of Yukon students attending post-secondary institutions across North America — all with different standards and different entrance requirements, many of which continue to require examination results. Now, this process is changing. Different jurisdictions, different universities are eliminating the need to have these examinations.

Mr. Speaker, when this issue was raised with me last fall by one of the school councils, I agreed with them. First I confirmed that all exams are mandatory but, based on their input, a review of the policy should be done. Mr. Speaker, I am not going to make this recommendation to change the policy in isolation. I am going to do that with the input of school councils, students, post-secondary institutions across North America

and we are looking at changing the policy if that is the recommendation — but the policy as it stands today, Mr. Speaker — and this is important for every grade 12 student and every parent — is that all Yukon grade 12 students are required to write the B.C. provincial exams.

Mr. Inverarity: Students are confused, parents are confused, and many within the education system just roll their eyes, looking at the heavens, asking how this can be explained. Career decisions are being made and lives are being shaped. This type of confusion will impact on some of them and most of them for the rest of their lives. It indeed needs to be addressed now.

We don't want another two-year study, followed by countless meetings. Will the minister fix the problem today and will Yukon graduates follow the same requirements as B.C. graduates?

Hon. Mr. Rouble: It's important to keep options open for Yukon students. They need to have the options open —

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Hon. Mr. Rouble: I'm sorry, Mr. Speaker, the member opposite is chanting something in the background. It's unfortunate that other members of the public aren't here to see the performance of the Liberal Party during Question Period.

Mr. Speaker, we are continuing to keep our options open. One of those is the option to receive the Yukon excellence awards and the option of attending different universities — for example, universities in Alberta.

All grade 12 students are required to write B.C. provincial exams. That is the policy. If that is changed in the future, based on the input of our partners and stakeholders, that will certainly be announced at the time, once the change is made. But to clear up the confusion of the member opposite, all grade 12 Yukon students are required to write the B.C. provincial exam.

Question re: Elk imported to Yukon

Mr. Fairclough: I have a question for the Minister of Environment. In March 2008, the government issued a permit that allowed a local game farmer to import eight elk from the Province of Alberta. That decision has sparked a great deal of concern, and rightly so. Despite the fact that the permit was issued in March 2008, it only came to light recently. The co-chair of the Lake Laberge Renewable Resources Council said he and his council knew nothing of the eight elk being imported into the Yukon until after the fact. He feels they should have been informed about the plans to import elk.

Why did the government keep this information under wraps?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Mr. Speaker, contrary to what the member opposite said, certainly the government has not done anything as such. The Government of Yukon conducts itself in an open, transparent manner and certainly has done as such.

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Mr. Speaker, I believe I have the floor.

I just wanted to reiterate also for the member opposite that certainly all animal imports are subject to regulation. They require veterinary inspection, health certification for every ani-

mal, quarantine and an observation period for animals upon their arrival in the Yukon.

Nothing has deterred us from these particular requirements. Nothing will continue to deter us from these requirements. The Government of Yukon, through the Department of Environment, is very much committed to preservation and protection of Yukon's natural environment. We are taking the steps, as I just outlined, including a new animal health program that will certainly provide additional oversight. Look at our regulations; look at our policies and legislation. That will certainly require improvement if need be.

Mr. Fairclough: The reason for the renewable resources council's concern is simple: chronic wasting disease.

Wild elk and deer in Alberta and in Saskatchewan have been decimated by this disease. It has been the bane of the wildlife population in our province, says the executive director of the Saskatchewan Wildlife Federation. Mule deer, whitetail deer and elk populations have all contracted chronic wasting disease. There are even moose that have contracted it. He also said that there is a risk of this deadly disease arriving in the Yukon when importing game farm elk, and there is no such thing as a no-risk transporting elk. The spokesman for the minister said that there have been inquiries about another permit to import more elk. With so many health questions, will the minister stop issuing these permits until more information is known about the disease?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: What this government will do is proceed with the new animal health program, as I just mentioned. In fact, in this budget — this year's budget that we are currently debating — housed in the Department of Environment, there is over \$320,000 toward the development of a new animal health program that will provide program oversight, advice and veterinary services to the government's various animal health and animal protection initiatives. It'll improve animal health surveillance, building links between animal and human health issues and, as I mentioned before, will assist with the development of policies, regulations and legislation regarding animal health and protection.

Mr. Speaker, we are very much committed to the health and well-being of Yukon's wildlife species. We are very much committed to performing these standards in an open and transparent manner, and we will continue to do so.

Mr. Fairclough: The Yukon Fish and Game Association is also concerned about these imports, and so is the Canadian Wildlife Federation. The only one who doesn't seem to have that concern is the minister herself.

I'm suggesting the minister not issue any more permits until we know how safe or how dangerous this is. The Province of Alberta has culled thousands of wild deer in the hopes of stopping the spread of this disease. This is a pretty dramatic step.

Will the minister take me up on my suggestion that we stop allowing the import of elk, or will this government let this practice continue?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: This government has not deviated from any such practice of any other previous government. I'll reiterate for the members opposite that, in fact, live animal import requests are subject to regulation. They receive careful

scrutiny from an animal health perspective. This includes documentation regarding the animal health history, the originating farm, a requirement for veterinarian inspection, health certification for individual animals and the establishment of a quarantine and observation period for animals upon their arrival in the Yukon.

As well, as I mentioned before, we are very much committed to the creation of a new animal health program in the Yukon, the first time any government has taken this particular step. This program will include a chief veterinary officer, technical office assistance, and so forth.

Speaker: The time for Question Period has now elapsed. We'll 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. 15, *First Appropriation Act, 2009-10*, Department of Economic Development, Vote 7, capital expenditures. We will proceed line by line, unless members wish to take a brief recess?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

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

Recess

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

Bill No. 15 — *First Appropriation Act, 2009-10* — continued

Chair: The matter before the Committee is Bill No. 15, Vote 7, Department of Economic Development, capital expenditures. We will now proceed with line by line.

Department of Economic Development — continued

Chair: Mr. Kenyon, you had the floor on Office Furniture, Equipment, Systems and Space.

On Corporate Services — continued

On Office Furniture, Equipment, Systems and Space — continued

Hon. Mr. Kenyon: To go back into the breakdown that the Member for Kluane asked — under Office Furniture, Equipments, Systems and Space — basically \$56,000; fund management system usability enhancements for \$20,000 and computer workstations, systems and printers for \$36,000.

I can get into more detail if the member wishes, but let's leave it at that.

Office Furniture, Equipment, Systems and Space in the amount of \$56,000 agreed to

**Corporate Services in the amount of \$56,000 agreed to
On Corporate Planning and Economic Policy**

On Economic Infrastructure Development

Mr. McRobb: Breakdown.

Hon. Mr. Kenyon: In the interest of time, Mr. Chair, I'll just simply point out there is no change from the 2008-09 forecast to the 2009-10 estimates.

Mr. McRobb: Can we have a breakdown on those costs, Mr. Chair? The minister must be aware that breakdown wasn't provided last year, so we're requesting one now.

Hon. Mr. Kenyon: Oh, no problem, Mr. Chair. Funding is for professional costs required to facilitate the continued research and planning for various potential major strategic projects and to develop policies, strategies, business models, programs, legislative instruments to support sustainable economic development.

The \$200,000 is required to facilitate the continued analysis and the implementation of planning elements for various infrastructure projects, as they come up. As I pointed out, there is no change from the 2008-09 forecast to the 2009-10 main estimates. The decrease from the 2007-08 actuals to the 2009-10 main estimates is mainly due to the revote of \$201,000 paid in 2007-08 for planning work on the joint Alaska rail link publication of rail study documents; a further \$8,000 for research required for transportation links, including the port access business case; \$84,000 for research involving connectivity and fibre optics for Yukon southwest.

Mr. McRobb: I'm just wondering if the minister could elaborate a bit further on the rail study. I noticed a story in today's *Vancouver Sun* newspaper. It mentioned an experiment that just took place in Russia, between Moscow and an origin point in eastern Europe. It showed that shipping time was only 25 percent, by rail, of what it normally takes by ocean. So that's quite a significant decrease.

We hear the minister from time to time mention the number of days saved shipping overseas from ports like Prince Rupert, as compared to Vancouver, and there are further savings the farther north you go along the North American coast. So today's story was a matter of interest and it brings to light the need to follow up somehow on the very expensive rail study that was paid for by Yukon taxpayers, rather than just see it sit on a shelf and collect dust.

Can the minister provide us with an update on what is happening to the study? Is there any increased awareness allocated to rail transportation, given the news such as I related from today's paper?

Chair's statement

Chair: Order please. Before the Committee continues on line by line with Economic Infrastructure Development, I do want to remind members that we are focusing on this line only under Corporate Planning and Economic Policy. I'd like to remind members on line-by-line debate it's on this line and this line only. We have cleared general debate.

Mr. Kenyon, on Economic Infrastructure Development, \$200,000.

Hon. Mr. Kenyon: I believe that's quite correct that a right-of-way within central Russia is not within the purview of this government.

But what is, is providing that rail study to provide the documentation to provide investors and mining companies — to remind the member opposite, the Government of Yukon and State of Alaska publicly released that rail link phase 1 feasibility study on June 19, 2007. Following that release the Alaska-Canada rail link office completed a preliminary tourism opportunity and impact appraisal. It also developed a Yukon analysis on a phased-in rail route or the so-called short track solutions. We presented that study to the federal government and the private sector for their consideration and at the present time it is under consideration with each investment that is being evaluated. The extensive research and data compilation and preliminary feasibility study analysis completed as part of that study included four main areas: market research, technical engineer research, a business cases assessment and a full and phased investment business case. Again, for the member opposite, this is completely evaluated in any kind of a business-case analysis for any major investors within the Yukon.

Chair: Any further discussions on Economic Infrastructure Development?

Economic Infrastructure Development in the amount of \$200,000 agreed to

Corporate Planning and Economic Policy in the amount of \$200,000 agreed to

On Business and Trade

On Business Incentive Program

Mr. McRobb: Can we get a breakdown of that, please?

Hon. Mr. Kenyon: The business incentive program of \$984,000 breaks down as follows: personnel costs, \$104,000 for 1.25 FTEs; support costs at \$4,000; materials, rebates for made-in-Yukon projects, \$75,000; and rebates payable under the business incentive program or BIP, \$801,000.

Business Incentive Program in the amount of \$984,000 agreed to

On Dana Naye Ventures Business Development Program

Dana Naye Ventures Business Development Program in the amount of \$51,000 agreed to

On Micro Loan Program

Micro Loan Program in the amount of \$73,000 agreed to

On Trade and Market Development

Trade and Market Development in the amount of \$400,000 agreed to

On Enterprise Trade Fund

Enterprise Trade Fund in the amount of \$400,000 agreed to

On Venture Loan Guarantee Program

Venture Loan Guarantee Program in the amount of one dollar agreed to

On Prior Years' Projects

Prior Years' Projects in the amount of nil cleared

Business and Trade in the amount of \$1,908,000 agreed to

On Regional Economic Development

On Regional Economic Development Fund

Regional Economic Development Fund in the amount of \$450,000 agreed to

On Community Development Fund

Community Development Fund in the amount of \$3,300,000 agreed to

On Northern Strategy — Selkirk First Nation — Towards Sufficiency

Northern Strategy — Selkirk First Nation — Towards Sufficiency in the amount of \$600,000 agreed to

Regional Economic Development in the amount of \$4,350,000 agreed to

On Strategic Industries Development

On Strategic Industries Development Fund

Strategic Industries Development Fund in the amount of \$1,000,000 agreed to

On Technology Partnerships

Technology Partnerships in the amount of \$217,000 agreed to

On Film and Sound Incentive Programs

Mr. McRobb: Can we get a breakdown of that item?

Hon. Mr. Kenyon: The six film and sound incentive programs are designed to position the Yukon to compete in the international marketplace for film location activity, to train people to work in the industry, to provide Yukoners with incentives to develop commercially viable productions and promote incentives for sound recording.

Of the 2009-10 budget, \$560,000 is allocated toward the production in Yukon of the second series of *Anash and the Legacy of the Sun-Rock*, scheduled for production in the summer of 2009.

Some of the other projects that have been involved in that are film development fund, \$50,000; film location incentive, \$140,000; sound recording fund, \$50,000; Yukon filmmakers and film training initiative funds, \$90,000; and marketing initiatives, \$90,000.

I hope that gives the member opposite a bit of an idea of the breakdown.

Film and Sound Incentive Programs in the amount of \$1,360,000 agreed to

On Prior Years' Projects

Prior Years' Projects in the amount of nil cleared

Strategic Industries Development in the amount of \$2,577,000 agreed to

On Revenues

Revenues cleared

On Transfer Payments

Transfer Payments cleared

Total Capital Expenditures in the amount of \$9,091,000 agreed to

Department of Economic Development agreed to

Chair: Committee of the Whole will now proceed with the Department of Community Services. Is five minutes enough for officials?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

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

Recess

Chair: Order please. Committee of the Whole will now come to order. The matter before the Committee is Bill No. 15, Department of Community Services. We will now proceed with general debate. Mr. Lang?

Department of Community Services

Hon. Mr. Lang: The Department of Community Services budget for the year 2009-10, includes significant investment in community infrastructure and in programs designed to serve Yukon citizens and their communities. The Department of Community Services budget highlights include the following: capital investments in the Whitehorse and Carcross waterfronts; investment in safe drinking water for Yukon communities, including upgrades to bring water supplies in line with new Canada drinking water standards that will come into effect in the year 2011; investment in waste-water treatment; investment in sports and recreation; the extension of Hamilton Boulevard; land development projects in Grizzly Valley, Arkell and Porter Creek; increased investment in the FireSmart program; investments in emergency vehicles including ambulances and protective service emergency response vehicles; and continued commitment to Yukon municipalities through an increase in the comprehensive municipal grants for Yukon municipalities for the second year in a row.

I am pleased to introduce the 2009-10 budget for the Department of Community Services. Infrastructure and investments — the Department of Community Services investment in the infrastructure design is to create immediate stimulus, long-term economic growth and improved services to all Yukoners. Yukon is investing in infrastructure that builds sustainable communities and is making investments in services including sewer and water systems, recreational facilities and reliable emergency response services. The budget provides for a sustainable development that is fairly distributed to meet the needs of Yukoners that improves health and safety and meets increasingly stringent regulatory standards for water and environmental safety.

Drinking water is the Yukon government's priority to ensure that Yukoners have access to safe and sustainable drinking water resources for the future. The Yukon government has committed to provide safe drinking water to Yukon communities and we are delivering on this promise through a number of potable water projects outlined in the budget.

Arsenic treatment upgrade to 2011 regulatory requirements for CAFN, CTFN, Haines Junction, Teslin — a total of \$750,000.

Yukon will be upgrading public water supplies in the municipality of Haines Junction and Teslin and the First Nations

of Carcross, Tagish, and Champagne and Aishihik to ensure they are in line with the new regulatory requirements coming in 2011.

The Yukon government is working this year in planning, design and construction of the necessary upgrades to address arsenic treatment issues. Marsh Lake's intake and commercial fill system — a \$2.4-million investment. This year, with Building Canada funding, Community Services is constructing a water treatment system at Army Beach that will improve access and lower the current cost of hauling drinking water. The system will utilize directional drilling to draw water from Marsh Lake, treat it and provide a filling system for personal and commercial use. The new facility would lower water cost by reducing transportation costs for the commercial hauler and residential users.

Water well in Old Crow — a \$250,000 investment. In Old Crow this year, the Yukon government will move forward on a water quality assessment in Old Crow to determine whether operational upgrades are needed to meet regulatory requirements and improve the system.

Carcross water system treatment upgrade, \$400,000. Yukon is improving water quality and supply through planned investment in potable water supplies and a system in the Carcross and Ross River area. Yukon will upgrade the Carcross water treatment system to ensure it meets new regulations for treating surface water for use as drinking water.

Ross River water treatment — a \$750,000 investment. Following a water treatment pilot project last year in Ross River, Community Services will build a full-scale water treatment system in Ross River. The new treatment process is required in Ross River to remove arsenic and upgrade operations to meet the incoming drinking water regulation for the year 2011.

Additional funding of \$1.5 million has been identified through the Building Canada fund for the construction of a new building to house the treatment system. It is anticipated that the project planning will be underway over the next two years to plan, design, obtain regulatory approval and construct the new water treatment plant.

Water operational training — in addition to improving physical infrastructure and developing treatment processes to improve water quality, the Department of Community Services working with all municipal and First Nation governments and community partners to address the human, health and environmental safety issues involved in water handling. Funding is being provided to train and certify Yukon water-handling operators, and an educational and training program is being developed to certify water handlers and operators in the communities through Yukon College.

Waste-water treatment — construction of the Carmacks waste-water treatment plant is underway with the completion expected this year. In Carcross, \$250,000 is allocated for design and construction of a sludge dry bed at the sewage treatment facility. Yukon is also investing in waste-water infrastructure by undertaking upgrades and repairs in Ross River, Burwash Landing, Destruction Bay, Teslin and Watson Lake.

Yukon solid-waste strategy implementation, \$500,000. Community Services is developing a Yukon solid-waste strat-

egy for environmentally sustainable solid-waste management practices by conducting a full review and option study for the solid-waste facilities, Yukon operators and unincorporated communities. From March 31 to May 8, 2009, Yukon will meet with every Yukon municipality, unincorporated community, First Nation and other stakeholders to hear about solid-waste management issues specific to each community. The solid-waste management review will result in the following deliverables: a comprehensive study on the environmental footprint, including air dispersion modeling; a public consultation document; a development of the Yukon solid-waste strategy and an update to the existing solid-waste procedures and guidelines. The review is ongoing and the results are scheduled to be released to the public in early summer 2009.

In the short term, however, Yukon will release portions of the preliminary work as they are finalized. Together the engineering review and the results of the consultation will form the basis for the Yukon-wide solid-waste strategy.

Infrastructure funding — Community Services continues to manage infrastructure funding programs and makes infrastructure investments that enhance the quality of life in Yukon communities. By working with federal, First Nation and municipal governments on funding and project management, Community Services is ensuring that Yukoners and Yukon communities receive the maximum benefit from the multi-government funding programs, including municipal rural infrastructure fund, Canadian strategic infrastructure fund, gas tax and Building Canada fund.

Over the past three years, under the municipal rural infrastructure program, Canada and Yukon have contributed a total of \$26 million for 18 Yukon community infrastructure projects. The Canada-Yukon gas tax agreement contributes to healthy Yukon communities by supporting long-term planning and sustainable infrastructure. To date, 25 gas tax projects have been approved for the City of Whitehorse, Village of Teslin, Carcross-Tagish First Nation, Town of Faro, Town of Watson Lake, Liard First Nation, Na Cho Nyäk Dun, Ross River Dena Council and Selkirk First Nation.

Yukon is preparing to sign an extension for the gas tax fund from 2010 to 2014, and the 2008 federal budget announced that this fund will become permanent. This means an additional \$60 million over four years to support infrastructure that leads to cleaner air and water and reduced greenhouse gas emissions.

Northern strategy funding is working to provide engineering work in Old Crow related to road and drainage upgrades to buildings.

Waterfront development investment — investment in Whitehorse and Carcross waterfronts under the CSIF agreement continues, creating employment and making a contribution to Yukon tourism, retail and supply sectors.

In Carcross, the foot bridge and viewing platforms are complete and the carving facility will be ready to allow tourists to see artists at work this summer. This year, the Yukon government will be advancing the public dock and boat launching welcome signs and road and drainage work. This will total \$750,000.

Whitehorse waterfront improvements, for a total of \$3.4 million. In Whitehorse, the waterfront is really taking shape. More than half the construction work for the first-priority projects under the Whitehorse waterfront development agreement is complete or underway. Planning, regulatory approvals and detailed design is beginning on the Whitehorse waterfront wharf project, including the landscaping from Main Street to Strickland and now on a new parking lot at Rotary Park.

The Yukon government continues to work cooperatively with the Kwanlin Dun First Nation government and other levels of government on KDFN's proposed cultural centre and a new Whitehorse Public Library on the Whitehorse waterfront.

Ongoing projects being completed in 2009 are these: soil remediation at the former Motorways site; landscaping at Shipyards Park; and interior work on the roundhouse, train shed and on the Shipyards Park heritage buildings.

Hamilton Boulevard extension, an MRIF project — also in Whitehorse here, by late summer, motorists will be able to begin using the new Hamilton Boulevard extension, which will be fully paved. In addition to being an alternative access to several Whitehorse neighbourhoods, it will provide two routes into the subdivision for improved public safety and emergency access.

Takhini North upgrades — Yukon and Canada have approved MRIF funding for water, sewer and road upgrades in Takhini North. The City of Whitehorse is also contributing funds toward this project.

Comprehensive municipal grant increase — \$14.154 million. This is the second year of the Yukon government's five-year commitment to increase the comprehensive municipal grant funding. The increased funding level helps to boost the fiscal capacity of communities and their ability to meet the demands of operating and maintaining new and aging infrastructure.

By 2012-13, the comprehensive municipal grant will have increased to more than \$16 million. Yukon is also providing additional municipal-type service funding for unincorporated communities.

Sports and Recreation — the 2010 Winter Olympic Games initiative. Yukon has taken the opportunity presented by the 2010 Vancouver Olympic Games to undertake a large marketing initiative to participate in the Olympic and Paralympic Games and market Yukon to a worldwide audience. As a partner in this venture, Community Services is leading the pan-territory youth ambassador program, traditional sports — Innu and Dene games — and sports technical official program for VANOC 2010.

Work is underway to organize Yukon's participation in the 2009 Canada Summer Games beginning this year. Additional annual funding is aimed at increasing Yukon's participation in the Canada 55+ Games, formerly called the Canadian Senior Games, and the Special Olympics National Games. Sports and Recreation is also assisting the Arctic Winter Games 2012 and supporting the formation of the host society for the 2012 Arctic Winter Games in Whitehorse.

Canada 55+ Games — beginning this year, annual funding for Team Yukon participating in the Canada 55+ Games has an increase of \$5,000. Special Olympics Yukon — beginning this

year, annual funding for Special Olympics Yukon is increased by \$10,000 to increase Yukon's participation in national games. Dawson's recreational centre — Yukon continues to support the City of Dawson in providing a safe and functional recreation centre for its residents. Yukon is providing funding assistance to the City of Dawson to work on the recreational centre over the next four years. In total, \$4 million over five years will be provided.

The recreational centre continues to be well-used by the residents of Dawson City, and the funds will enable the community to upgrade the facility to ensure its long-term sustainability.

Animal protection program — I'm very pleased to announce a new program within community operations: the animal protection program. Last fall, Yukon improved the *Animal Protection Act*. This spring, Community Services has hired an animal welfare officer to develop and deliver education, awareness and enforcement initiatives to help prevent animal abuse. Yukoners now have a point of contact for animal welfare services in unincorporated Yukon. These services will enhance the already great work of the humane societies and municipal bylaw officers.

Electronic library collection services — last year, public libraries enhanced access to library resources through a subscription reference database. This year, public libraries are adding pilot projects in downloadable, audio and video products and wireless internet access at the Whitehorse Public Library.

Land development investment — Yukon will be able to provide more developed land to Yukoners this year. In partnership with the City of Whitehorse, under land development protocol, Yukon is developing the Ingram-Arkell subdivision, which means that about 132 mobile home residential lots should be added to affordable housing options for Yukoners later this year.

Planning and off-site development of utilities is underway this year for the new Whistle Bend subdivision in Porter Creek. Construction of eight commercial-zoned lots is underway on Burns Road and it is anticipated that lots will be available in 2009.

The detailed engineering design for Grizzly Valley subdivision is currently underway and it is anticipated that project will start this year.

In Haines Junction, construction starts this summer to add country residential lots in Willow Acres and to provide full-service urban residential infill lots.

In Dawson, this year, construction is underway to expand the number of Dome subdivision lots and add industrial lots in Callison.

Investment and protective services — Yukon is also working to create safer communities. Community Services continues to work on improved protective services to provide integrated, high-quality, dependable emergency services to communities throughout Yukon.

FireSmart funding — increased to \$1.5 million. I am very pleased to announce that FireSmart funding has been increased this year from \$1 million to \$1.5 million — both to reduce the threat of wildfire in and near Yukon communities and to

strengthen local economies by creating winter employment opportunities.

Emergency response training — Old Crow in 2009-10 is year 3 of a three-year project with an investment of \$235,000. Emergency Medical Services and the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation are working cooperatively to provide basic emergency medical responder training to members of the First Nation government and Old Crow community so they are better equipped to deal with emergency situations.

Protective services integrated service — Yukon Protective Services is undertaking projects regarding integration of services, including a new integrated emergency response facility in Watson Lake. That will be completed this spring to support emergency services, including emergency measures, wildland fire management, emergency medical service staff and volunteers.

Additionally, in Whitehorse, Yukon has co-located the senior management office of wildland fire, fire marshal's office and emergency medical services, or EMS, which allows them to work together on a daily basis. We also recognize the important role of our emergency response volunteers and will continue to provide them with the support and equipment they need to provide and enhance these essential services, including emergency medical services, volunteer fire services, and volunteer search and rescue services throughout Yukon.

Emergency response vehicle — an investment of \$775,000. Yukon is investing in protective services with the purchase of an emergency response vehicle to enhance emergency response throughout the Yukon. Purchases for 2009-10 include a new pumper truck that will be purchased for the Ross River Fire Department. The Ross River fire truck is reaching its 20-year life expectancy, and the new fire truck will allow Ross River to continue to provide volunteer fire service. A new multi-purpose fire management vehicle will provide initial response to wildland fires and other emergencies.

Wildland Fire Management is also purchasing a specialized multi-purpose fire management vehicle for Mayo. During the high fire hazard season, the vehicle can be outfitted with a water tank, initial attack gear and can also be used to support other emergency response activities.

Two new ambulances will be purchased to maintain a reliable EMS ambulance fleet. Dawson search and rescue riverboat — \$40,000. The department is purchasing a new river rescue boat for use by the Dawson search and rescue association; wildland firefighting equipment — investment of \$150,000 through Wildland Fire Management Yukon, which is also replacing operational equipment, including pumps, hoses, chainsaws, sprinkler kits, radios and protective clothing to assist firefighters in safety, protecting people, communities and infrastructure from wildland fires.

Fire hall — in addition to investing in equipment and emergency management, Yukon is constructing a new fire hall in Golden Horn that is expected to be completed this spring in 2009.

Mr. Elias: I'd like to begin by thanking the Department of Community Services and all the officials for their

dedication and hard work in helping to prepare the minister for his opening remarks in general debate on the 2009-10 budget.

I also thank the minister because he did answer a number of questions I did have with regard to ambulances and emergency response and some wildfire management issues, so I won't be asking those today.

I'd like to begin by discussing the issue of water in the territory and the role I believe the minister and the department could take with regard to a comprehensive territorial water strategy, framework or policy — or whatever you want to name it. I think this is going to be important in the years to come. I don't believe that, in the territory — with all our federal, territorial and various agencies — dealing with each water-related issue in isolation is doing the territory any good, basically. I'm wondering if the government or the minister have any plans to develop a comprehensive territorial water strategy. Does the government or the minister see this as a demonstrated need?

I bring this up because, again, I believe this is going to be a major issue within the territory, right from dealing with the monitoring of our melting glaciers and the importance of the glacial melt to our salmon spawning grounds, to ground water, to providing safe drinking water, to that being a right of every Yukoner. Yukoners have come to me talking about the large exports of our territorial fresh water to the south. I'm talking about a large comprehensive territorial water strategy here. I would just like to begin the discussion with the minister with regard to that. Does he have any plans to do that? Does he view this as a demonstrated need? I will begin with that question.

Hon. Mr. Lang: This is a very high government priority. Drinking water in all our communities would be one of the higher things on our priority list. We've gone out on consultation. We're working with the communities and looking at prioritizing the needs out in the community. Of course, today, we've made commitments, in conjunction with the federal government, on how we're going to move forward with some of the money that is going to be invested in the very near future in our potable water system.

I have to remind the member opposite that we have a date that we have to work with too, Mr. Chair, and that date is 2011. We are committed to that date and we will do everything in our power to address these issues as we move forward to that date.

We have to understand that 2011 sounds like a long way away, but it's not. We all understand that things take time, but this government is willing, and we're going to invest with our communities to address exactly the issue the member opposite has brought up.

Mr. Elias: I'll go into greater depth. What the minister is talking about is something specific that would be in a territorial water management strategy. Again, I view this in the future as becoming a big issue. I'm talking about things like the territorial water strategy with regard to monitoring our glaciers, monitoring the water quality and rate of flow with the rest of the agencies — the federal agency, Department of Fisheries and Oceans — monitoring our groundwater supply, ensuring infrastructure around the territory is there for the long term, including sanitation and treatment, as the minister mentioned earlier, as well as protecting the source of water — again, ban-

ning all exports of water from the territory and research and monitoring.

I'm not suggesting that this will be a strategy that won't be done quickly or cheaply, but I think the Department of Community Services could be the department that could take the lead and possibly even suggest the creation of a secretariat just to get the discussion going and developing this with Yukoners.

Enough of that; I'll move on now to something more specific that was in a news release today with regard to some of the funding announcements from the minister.

In the news release, there was a lot of mention of the word "arsenic" and removing arsenic or upgrading the operations of many of the community water wells in the villages of Haines Junction and Teslin, Carcross-Tagish First Nation, Champagne and Aishihik First Nations. I guess the question is this: are there any other communities identified that are not in this year's budget that require the treatment of arsenic in those communities? He also mentioned the community of Ross River.

The question is whether Yukon communities need to get the arsenic filtered out of their drinking water supply to meet the Canadian drinking water standards.

Hon. Mr. Lang: Yes, Mr. Chair, the standards for arsenic in our water will change in 2011, so that is an issue. That's one of the issues that we as a government will be addressing as we move forward with the rural Yukon drinking water infrastructure strategy. That's all part and parcel of it. That is one of the many things that have to be addressed out in the field. We certainly have to work with the communities again — of course the First Nation governments and municipalities — and we have the added responsibility of the unincorporated communities. All of those issues have to be addressed, and we're committed to go to work and invest on the ground to do exactly that — address the arsenic and the potability of the water.

A lot of the other issues that are going to change with these new regulations are how we handle water. There are going to be questions about potable water; there are going to be questions about how we manage the trucks that haul the water and the equipment that's needed. All of those things are going to unfold as we move forward with these changes in the regulations coming in 2011. So we'll work with the communities in partnership with the governments. We hopefully will have these addressed over the next 24 to 36 months, but we are serious about this. I would like to thank the federal government for coming up with the resources to do a lot of this work. Without a partnership with the federal government, I'm not quite sure we could do this, but now it's timely to put our house in order, go to work and address these issues on a local level.

Mr. Elias: I asked this question of the minister: what other communities besides the ones that he identified today in his press release and in his opening comments in general debate are identified to either lower the arsenic level in their drinking water or filter out any other indicator organisms? Are there any other communities over and above the ones he mentioned today?

Hon. Mr. Lang: Certainly the ones listed in our news release — the ones in this year's budget — are the work that's going to unfold.

Of course, we do monitor the communities and unincorporated communities, and First Nations monitor their water on a regular basis. In other words, there is a process in place to make sure that these waters are assessed on a yearly or whatever the basis is, to make sure that we meet our standard. But this investment on the ground that we're doing now will address the arsenic and other issues to bring it up to the higher standard that is going to be demanded of us in 2011.

Mr. Elias: In the Community Services briefing that I attended last week, I believe there was \$250,000 identified for the Old Crow water well. It was communicated to me at that time that the well in Old Crow, as the minister is very well informed — I have brought this up in the Legislature before with regard to arsenic treatment of the Old Crow water well. I have been advised that there is no arsenic treatment for the community water well in Old Crow and today in the minister's remarks he mentioned — and this is new to me — that the money allocated for the Old Crow drinking water well — our only source of drinking water — was for a water quality assessment.

When I went to the briefing, I was advised that there was actually going to be physical work done with regard to piping the water from the well to the Yukon government building, where the fire truck and water truck are stored, as well as a filtration system.

I guess a couple of questions are as follows: can he clarify what that \$250,000 will actually do in my community of Old Crow with regard to the water well? Can the minister provide the water-testing results that show there is no arsenic treatment required in Old Crow? That's one — and, two, can he explain exactly what the \$250,000 will do this year in Old Crow for the water well?

Hon. Mr. Lang: In a bit of a correction on the monitoring of the quality of the water, that is done through Health and Social Services. I'm told it's done monthly, or more, whatever the need is, but it is done by a different department. But we'll go to work and get the information the member asked for in front of him as soon as we can. We'll request it from Health and Social Services and see where we can go with that.

Mr. Elias: I also asked the minister to clear up a bit of a situation with regard to the well in the budget. There's \$250,000 allocated, and he mentioned in his speech just a few minutes ago, he used the words that the money will be used for a water quality assessment. In the briefing, I was informed there will actually be physical work done on the well.

Can the minister please let me know which it is, or is it both?

Hon. Mr. Lang: Why don't I commit to go to work and send it over to him on a breakdown of how the \$250,000 will be invested and what that investment will entail, whether it's work on the ground or it's just an assessment, or whatever? I will get that information to him in black and white.

Mr. Elias: I thank the minister for that information. I will look at it and, if I have any questions, I will get back to him.

Another question that I have with regard to the briefing is, where it was mentioned that there was going to be some sort of new filtration system on the Old Crow water well. This is important because many of my constituents have been concerned for many years with regard to our water system. To me, when you put a filtration system on a drinking water well, questions arise from my constituents with regard to what we are filtering out and why. Is there a public health concern with regard to what you are filtering out? Are you filtering heavy metals? Are you filtering out what little arsenic there may well be? Are you filtering out manganese that makes our holding tanks quite dark in colour? I would like to know, if there is going to be a new filtration system on the Old Crow drinking water well, what exactly is that filtration system going to be filtering out and why?

Hon. Mr. Lang: In addressing the member opposite, I guess this is why we're doing the assessment, to answer some of those questions that the member opposite put on the floor.

Certainly, the information that I'm going to present to the member opposite would address those questions. This money is to resource the overview that the government is looking at regarding what needs are there in Old Crow. There are questions about the closeness of the road. There are questions about minerals. There are questions about arsenic. These things that the member opposite is talking about are exactly what we're resourcing with this \$250,000. Again, hopefully the information that I give to the member opposite will address those questions.

Mr. Elias: Okay. I will exercise some patience for now. I will wait to see what the minister sends over to me and I'll have a look at it and then decide from there whether there is further discussion required.

Again, another specific situation — that is why I asked about what other communities are going to be dealt with in this year's budget now and into the future — was with regard to the Mendenhall source of water. Does the minister have any plans to develop a new and safe source of potable water for the residents of the Mendenhall community?

As the minister knows, this has been an issue with regard to high uranium levels that were present in the water at the community well. Uranium is a very volatile element — what is it? Is it an element or is it a substance? I want to know if there is any money going to be allocated to fix the water supply in Mendenhall. Is the minister going to address this issue?

Hon. Mr. Lang: This well was dug and is maintained by the Mendenhall community. We are working with the community to address these issues. Hopefully, we're looking at the Building Canada fund to repair the well and bring the well up to an acceptable standard to the 2011 obligations.

Mr. Elias: I've got another specific question with regard to my riding, and it's in regard to the \$250,000 allocated for the upgrade of the roads. There has been money allocated for this road upgrade in Old Crow over the last couple of years and the employees in Old Crow have been doing a very good job of removing the standing water that happens, especially in the springtime, around the community. I'll just give the minister an idea of what happens. I did send some pictures to his

office, I believe, last year with regard to what happens when it begins to melt in the springtime.

Very large pools of water are all over the community; they have nowhere to drain; the culverts don't work; the ditches that were dug some decade or so ago are very deep, well over six feet deep, and this is with small children and kids running around the community. It's standing water, which is also a breeding ground for mosquitoes in the community. It has been an issue.

I'd like to know there will be physical work that will happen on the ground this year to resurface the roads, fix the drainage problem of the standing water that lasts well over a month and a half. Can the minister go into some detail with regard to how the physical work will happen in the community of Old Crow to deal with the surface of the roads, the potholes, the standing water, and just the general shape the roads, ditches and drainage in Old Crow are in? Can the minister elaborate on that, please?

Hon. Mr. Lang: There's an expenditure of \$250,000 this year. Next year there's a \$1,250,000 commitment in 2010-11, for a total of \$1.5 million over the next two years to resolve the drainage and road issues in Old Crow, according to these figures.

By the way, Mr. Chair, this is another Building Canada project.

Mr. Elias: Again, I thank the minister because I did not know that commitment was made. I did not see those commitments announced anywhere in the budget or from the minister's office with regard to press releases or anything like that. It's good to hear there will be a substantial amount of money to deal with this issue in Old Crow.

I thank the department and I thank the minister for that commitment. I'm going to be communicating that to my constituents this weekend in Old Crow when I travel back for the Easter carnival, get into snowshoe races, have some fun with the community and say good-bye to winter hopefully.

I have another question with regard to these pots of money that are coming to the Yukon and that seem to be administered by the Department of Community Services with regard to sports and recreation infrastructure. The infrastructure stimulus funding arrangements — it's difficult for me to try to keep track of these pots of monies that are here and that are yet to come. I understand that the Department of Community Services is going to be managing these pots of funds with the accountability framework. For example, like the MRIF — the accountability framework around that — how people apply, how communities can apply, how unincorporated communities, First Nations, et cetera, can apply.

Can the minister give a bit of detail with regard to how many pots of money are coming that his department is going to be administering and what the accountability framework looks like to date?

Hon. Mr. Lang: Going back to the first question about the resources for the infrastructure of roads and ditches in Old Crow, this is all agreed to between ourselves and the First Nation. This is not something we're doing on our own. Building Canada is a partnership and, of course, it's the community

itself that brings up the list of priorities. This was one of the ones they brought forward, so we're just working with them to get this question answered and, in the next two years, get the investment on the ground for the community.

In answer to the question from the member opposite about different funds that are available and different partnerships we have with the federal government, MRIF and CSIF are twilighted — they're time expired. Some of the projects are still being worked on but they are in their twilight years, as an investment for the territory. The new funds are Building Canada and the infrastructure stimulus package. MRIF and CSIF are time expired; they're twilighted.

Mr. Elias: Will the minister's Department of Community Services be administering these funds, this infrastructure fund and sports and recreation fund? I understand there's \$500 million nationally. Will his department be administering these funds that are coming to the territory and, if so, does the accountability framework come with those funds or will he be developing them in partnership with First Nations and the federal government?

I'd like to get some more detail on how many funds there are, when they're going to come and how they'll be administered, and what the accountability framework is.

Hon. Mr. Lang: The recreational component to this is just coming out of Ottawa, so I can't stand here and say to the member opposite what the guidelines will be, because it's new and is just coming out of Ottawa. We have not been brought up to date exactly at the end for how the federal government sees this being invested.

Mr. Elias: There has been an incredible amount of snow this year. I guess the question is this: we are about to embark on the spring freshet season and depending on how quickly or slowly this snow melts, we could be in a situation where there is a massive amount of water that goes into the southern Yukon. I am just basically talking about flood readiness. Are they getting prepared for this emergency situation? Yukoners want to know if you're ready if there is another flood.

In 1991, the Blue Fish River froze to the bottom and there were massive amounts of snow. When the Porcupine River started to flow, it stopped at the Blue Fish because there was a massive amount of ice. The ice backed up to Old Crow and caused a flood. This is of concern to my constituents and the amount of snow is of concern to Yukoners, and they want to know if the department is ready and what you're doing to monitor that situation before disaster strikes. Can the minister give Yukoners some assurance about what his department is doing in preparation for possible flooding? That's the question.

Hon. Mr. Lang: We in Community Services are working with Environment on that issue. We're expecting a briefing or a report coming from Environment on April 9 or 10. Environment monitors 55 locations throughout the Yukon for snow load. I think I could stand corrected — they were read on the first of the month and the report comes out on the 10th. At that point we're going to have a technical briefing with the media to tell them. At that point we'll know more about where we stand with the snow load, and we're going to have a technical

briefing with the department and Environment and Highways and Public Works to tell Yukoners where we are at and where we're going to go with flood preparedness in Yukon.

Old Crow is one of the communities that we monitor and that we are concerned about. Old Crow has flooded in the past and it could flood in the future.

We are doing what we can, as mere humans, to make sure that we mitigate or at least have enough foresight to know roughly what will happen in the future.

We are monitoring our communities. There is Teslin, Upper Liard is an issue and, of course, Marsh Lake is an issue, Deep Creek/Lake Laberge can be an issue, Dawson City can be an issue, Old Crow can be an issue, Mayo has had some flooding in the past. They have a ditch, and Dawson City has a dike around their communities which, of course, certainly helps the situation, but we are concerned about it and, as we work with Environment, we'll be having more public meetings to bring people up to the mark if, in fact, the flood threat gets any worse.

Mr. Elias: In the minister's opening comments, he mentioned the 2012 Arctic Winter Games, and the city has estimated the budget for those games to be about \$6 million.

I didn't see anything in the budget. The games are only a couple of years away and I was concerned about money being allocated for the preparation of the 2012 Arctic Winter Games. I guess the question is, is there money going to be allocated for these games? How much is it going to be? Are you going to be working with the city to ensure that the 2012 Arctic Winter Games hosted in Whitehorse are going to be a success? What is the minister's plan for that, because I didn't see anything in the budget.

It seems to me that, in years past, money has been allocated at least two to three years in advance of any major games coming to our capital city. It is of concern. I'm just wondering what the minister is waiting for. We need to start planning for these — you know, a \$6-million budget for the games. With a billion-dollar budget, let's start preparing for these games.

Hon. Mr. Lang: Of course, the city is the lead on the Arctic Winter Games — the City of Whitehorse — we certainly resource them where we can.

This is an investment in the year 2012, and we look forward to participating with the city on the investment. I would remind the member opposite that it would be a new government in place at that time, so those kinds of decisions would be made at that time within 12 months of the games.

We are working with the city in any way we can help them. In the future, the investment will be larger and we would certainly recommend the new government, or the government of the day, to invest in the Arctic Winter Games. I think they're very beneficial to the whole community.

Mr. Elias: Well, it wasn't the answer I was looking for but, again, we'll move on.

About a year ago in June, the Yukon and Saskatchewan had the highest physical activity levels in Canada. That's something we should be proud of here in the Yukon. With regard to physical activity in the Yukon, does the minister have a plan? What's the minister's plan to ensure that Yukoners aged five to

19 continue to have the highest physical activity levels in Canada? We're talking about active living here and it will take some ministerial support.

I'm just wondering: what are the minister's plans to ensure that these kinds of community initiatives and programs could be funded by Community Services?

Hon. Mr. Lang: This summer, we're looking at working with our partners across Canada responsible for sports, recreation and physical activity. We will meet to approve a national action plan to achieve those targets and increase the physical activity level of all Canadian children. We're going to do this in unison with other jurisdictions and it will be out later on this summer. We will resource what we can, and we will certainly be looking at the federal government to work with us to make sure we can resource it properly. All Canadians will be working on that important issue, which is sport and recreation and, most of all, physical activity, and that is so important. All of this sports and recreation is based on physical activity, and we'll be having a plan to move forward and hopefully partner up with the federal government to make sure we can do it in a proper fashion.

Mr. Elias: Hopefully, the minister responsible for sport and physical activity can allocate some money to encourage all our youth in the Yukon to get out and be more active, whatever programs he decides to support.

One of the ideas, being a hockey parent and travelling around the country playing and coaching hockey — and I've been discussing this for a number of years with a number of parents — around the territory now we have a lot of sports and recreation facilities. Having seven and a half months of winter — and I'll use a situation in Victoria, British Columbia, where the game of hockey on ice, and dry-land training included, is incorporated into the school curriculum.

This is something that could be, initiated, whether it be a pilot project or whatever in the Yukon. A couple of benefits: it uses our facilities during the weekday, i.e., the multiplex and the other community hockey rinks. There are hockey programs that go throughout the week during various grades and various levels of schooling. That's something that could be looked into further.

The concept is that playing a team sport, having your other students rely on you to achieve a certain goal, being physically active for the majority of the week, usually in the morning — in Victoria, the testimony from a lot of the parents was that, when their students were enrolled in the program, their academics almost hit the roof. C students were getting As — the program really helped the students academically.

I'd just like to mention that on the floor of the House today, because it could be something that the minister could look at — as well as the Education minister — to include that as part of the curriculum because the parents who did participate in it — and I'll use Victoria, again — drop their kids off to a qualified coach at 8:00 and they are back in school at 9:30 and then they start their academics, but the day starts with hockey practice and on-ice and off-ice training. It is maybe a program that could be exercised here in Yukon. What does the minister think about that concept?

Hon. Mr. Lang: The Department of Community Services works with the Department of Education to do exactly what the member opposite is talking about. It is the active living strategy. We have that and we certainly work in partnership with the other departments.

Here is an interesting statistic from a Yukon perspective — children and youth in Yukon take more steps per day than the average Canadian child does: approximately 12,600 step days compared to the national average of 11,500 step days; however, this still falls short of the targeted 14,500. So those are the kinds of things that are important in a child's life. I agree with the member opposite — sports and good health lead to good academics.

A balance between academics and active living for everybody certainly improves the standard of education.

Mr. Elias: In the minister's opening comments, he mentioned the purchases of ambulances and emergency response vehicles. He mentioned Ross River specifically was going to get a new fire truck. I was wondering how many — if I'm correct — new ambulances are going to be purchased, and which communities are going to be benefiting from them?

Hon. Mr. Lang: In talking to my colleagues, there will be two new ambulances. The two new ambulances join the fleet, and then they are put into locations that need those improvements. I don't have the exact communities that they're going into; that's a decision that's made internally with managing the ambulance fleet.

Mr. Elias: I'll go to the FireSmart program as well. Has the money for the FireSmart program been allocated? Which communities will benefit from the FireSmart program in this year's budget?

Hon. Mr. Lang: I would remind the member opposite that we're adding another \$500,000 to the program. It's application-driven, so we look forward to the communities applying. There's a process for how these applications are addressed. They are application-driven.

Mr. Edzerza: I'd like to ask a few more questions around the waterfront flood control, because the answers I just listened to from the minister are like pie in the sky. There are some major concerns. I had a letter sent to me on February 3, 2009. Now, that's quite recent. At that point in time, there was a citizen in Upper Liard who was very concerned about his land.

Regarding the dike that was proposed, I guess there was some concern that while it may help citizens in one area on the river, it may, in fact, flood somebody else out. I said that I would bring this to the attention of the minister on the floor here, because he was apparently having some difficulty getting anything in writing to confirm some of his concerns.

I know I had some discussions with the minister around this. This gentleman is an elderly person, and I would like him to have some comfort that, in fact, he will not be flooded out. Apparently there was supposed to be a study done on flood prevention measures in Upper Liard, and all that came out of the study was that they are preliminary and that more studies need to be done. Could we maybe just have the minister provide some comfort to this elderly person that his property is not

going to be totally flooded if dikes are built in other areas of Upper Liard?

Hon. Mr. Lang: In addressing in the member opposite, staff was in Upper Liard for public meetings on February 23 — so there were people on the ground there to talk to residents about this issue. Certainly, we will, of course, promptly answer all the questions that were asked to make sure there is a comfort zone in there for the individuals.

As far as anybody standing up in this House, guaranteeing that something won't flood, that isn't a fact of life. These things happen; we try to mitigate them; we try to make sure that everybody is aware of where we're at as a government and also where they're at as a landowner in a flood situation.

Experts have gone to Upper Liard; these meetings are open. As I said to the other member, on the 10th, there will be more information on snow loads so we can bring that back to the communities. We're committed to doing more work with the residents to make sure that what we're doing and what they're doing is in unison to mitigate any of the issues if, in fact, a flood arises.

Mr. Edzerza: I thank the minister for that answer.

I would like to go on to give thanks to the minister and the department for working with Kwanlin Dun on the proposed cultural centre. I heard the minister say in his opening remarks something to the effect that there were discussions going on around the public library and the proposed cultural centre.

I'm wondering if the minister or YTG has come to a confirmed lease agreement with regard to that library.

Hon. Mr. Lang: To the member opposite, it's a work in progress. I can't make an announcement here today, but I'm very optimistic that we can come to some sort of working relationship to expand the Whitehorse library to the waterfront, in conjunction with the Kwanlin Dun cultural centre. But it's not done; it's still a work in progress.

Mr. Edzerza: I thank the minister for that answer. I would also like to raise the Takhini North infrastructure issue. Again, thanks are in order to the government for actively being involved financially there. I know at one time there were talks of the individual citizens in that area having humongous costs put right on top of their shoulders to the tune of many thousands of dollars. Does the minister have a ballpark figure on what it's going to cost those individual citizens now to be hooked up to the infrastructure that's being developed?

Hon. Mr. Lang: The city is the lead on that. I wouldn't want to answer a question for the city.

Mr. Edzerza: I have one other question I'd like to ask, and it has to do with the arena in Dawson City. I know it has been talked about over many years on the floor of the Legislature. Has the ice situation ever been corrected? I remember a comment saying that there would be two and a half feet of ice on one end and a foot on the other to get it level. Has that been corrected?

Hon. Mr. Lang: The investment that the territorial government put on the ground for the City of Dawson's recreational complex was led by the City of Dawson, and they have been doing the work on the ground there. I'm told by my colleague that, yes, they have corrected that issue.

It certainly is being managed by Dawson. It was a decision made by Dawson City and all we are doing is supporting that decision by resourcing it over the next three or four years with a \$4-million commitment.

Mr. Mitchell: I just have one question or one topic that I want to ask the minister about.

Under the municipal rural infrastructure projects, the Hamilton Boulevard extension, the minister has already outlined the \$1.75-million expenditure to complete the project, including paving, and he did indicate that would happen this summer. I understand from officials that there is still some blasting that yet remains to be done. Can the minister identify which sections of the road — which end or where along the right-of-way there needs to be additional blasting done?

Hon. Mr. Lang: I'd have to get back to the member on that. I don't have that information here in front of me in the House.

Mr. Mitchell: First of all, I do want to thank the minister and his officials for the work they did last year after the unfortunate incident in Lobird, working behind the scenes with me to address my constituents' concerns and to try to remedy the physical damage that was done to the homes in Lobird.

I just wanted to pass that on for the officials, for the minister, and the minister's executive assistant, that they were very helpful and it was appreciated.

Can the minister at least assure us he'll get back to us in the near future with what sections those are, rather than a legislative return four months into the future? Can the minister assure the residents who live anywhere near the Hamilton Boulevard extension that there will be very prominent notification before any more blasting is undertaken?

Hon. Mr. Lang: We're certainly concerned about any situation that arises where people's property or individuals are in harm's way when construction like this is being done. The investment that Community Services put into the community to remedy that was an investment well-spent and I have to thank the residents of Lobird for their patience and for the work they did in working with us to get this resolved and behind us.

Community Services is moving ahead with the Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board, and the contractors have jointly developed the necessary safeguards to prevent any repeated flying-rock incidents.

We have gone to work with the contractor. Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board is very important in this, and we as Community Services, to make sure this kind of situation doesn't happen again. There is no guarantee that it won't happen again. When you're dealing with this kind of situation, things can happen, but we're working with everybody to mitigate a situation like this in the future. This situation that arose certainly concerns us as a government and certainly affected the surrounding area and the investment the people had on the ground. Hopefully, with this partnership and with the work we've done, this will not happen again.

Mr. Mitchell: I would think when the minister checks *Hansard*, he will probably want to reassure us that there is a guarantee that rocks falling through people's roofs won't happen again, rather than saying that there is no guarantee it won't

happen again. I would think the residents of Lobird, Copper Ridge and Granger would want that guarantee.

Can the minister tell us — considering the size of this expenditure — but we don't know how many contracts will be issued within that \$1.75 million — will all the contractors be required to be COR-certified for this work?

Hon. Mr. Lang: You're looking at a contract that was let in the past. Any new contracts over \$500,000 would be expected to be COR-approved. I'm not quite sure how much of this contract is new and what is old. I'm led to believe that this contract was let a year ago, and this is just an extension to get Hamilton Boulevard finalized.

Mr. Fairclough: I do have a few questions for the minister also. I do have a pretty big riding, and there are a few communities that are in my riding. One of the issues brought up in the past — in different departments, with the Premier and so on — is about the quality of drinking water in the communities.

In the past, Yukon Housing Corporation in the community of Carmacks has posted public boil water advisory warnings and that has been an issue for quite some time. I know it is in regard to contaminated wells and so on. I brought this issue up about the First Nation wanting something done. Governments are responsible to take care of the people at large. The community of Carmacks sought whatever help they could get. The Canadian Auto Workers union came up with some dollars to help them with their water well.

Now this is a First Nation that has worked extensively and put a lot of time and effort into designing a community low-pressure water system like they have in Pelly Crossing. So far our government hasn't bid on this. I don't see it listed in the Premier's budget speech at all. I'm wondering if the department has any interest in working with the Little Salmon-Carmacks First Nation and providing them with the necessary dollars, I guess, to either put in a low-pressure water system or improve the water situation in the community.

Hon. Mr. Lang: In addressing the member opposite, we certainly have gone out into the communities with Building Canada to prioritize where communities and First Nations visualize the help they need. We will certainly work with them to invest those dollars. The First Nations also have access to the extended gas tax, which is quite a resource for First Nations, so there are resources out there. We will work with affected First Nations on these investments and do what we can, as a public government, to help resolve these issues.

As we said today in our news release, potable water is a very high priority for this government. We'll be working with the First Nations, the municipalities and the unincorporated communities to address these issues.

Mr. Fairclough: I can't believe the minister just said that the gas tax money should take care of that type of situation. Little Salmon-Carmacks First Nation is an unincorporated community. Believe it or not, this might be news to the minister, but they are. They are an unincorporated community. Did the minister know that? If he didn't, he should put it in his files so we can start working. Maybe there would be a different approach to the First Nation if it were seen in that light. Maybe I'll ask that question.

Does the minister realize that Little Salmon-Carmacks First Nation, where they're situated now, is an unincorporated community?

Hon. Mr. Lang: Gas tax — and the extension — flows to the municipalities, First Nations, and unincorporated communities. We as the public government have a responsibility to unincorporated communities, so gas tax is not to be ignored. It's a huge resource for all communities in the Yukon, whether it's First Nations, unincorporated communities or municipalities. It is all the resources that individual groups can use on the ground to put the investments they need in place to do exactly what the member opposite is talking about.

Also, Building Canada is a fund that can be utilized. As we go throughout the Yukon and prioritize communities and First Nations to see where that investment can go, that again is another pot of money that can be utilized. So we're doing the good work. We're working with our First Nation governments, our municipalities and the unincorporated communities to do exactly what the member opposite is talking about — getting these things into the ground, improving our access to water and the quality of water throughout the Yukon.

Mr. Fairclough: That's a really poor answer to that question. If the minister says this is a top priority and they're very interested in it, then why the heck didn't they do it last year and help out the First Nation? Why didn't they do that? The First Nation sought help through the Canadian Auto Workers union. Doesn't that embarrass the minister at all that they didn't even take care of the people they're responsible for?

I'd like to ask this question again — in his list of communities, is the Little Salmon-Carmacks First Nation listed as an unincorporated community?

Hon. Mr. Lang: They are a First Nation. They're a self-governing First Nation. They're not being treated as a community; they're a government within themselves.

As far as the Auto Workers of America investing in Canadian infrastructure, I think that's great. How can you turn your back on that? That's an investment that the auto workers put into a community. They do that across Canada; they invest, so that's not unusual for people to give back to their communities.

Little Salmon-Carmacks First Nation is just that; they're not an unincorporated community. They're a self-governing First Nation.

Mr. Fairclough: For the minister, it's the Canadian Auto Workers union. He should have paid attention to that and seen where these dollars are coming from and not make that mistake so easily here on the floor of the Legislature. I think the minister is embarrassed about this. He and his government keep saying that they're there for the greater public. Well, what about First Nations and their communities? I mean, are they written off, simply because the minister says they fall under a land claims agreement and they're self-governing? He still says that they are responsible for them, so why not provide this to them?

Let me ask the minister this then: does the minister consider them a community that should be dealt with fairly, like everybody else? I say this with some seriousness, because I cannot believe the answer that came from the minister. I

couldn't believe it — because the First Nation is not part of the municipality of Carmacks. They're not part of it at all. They don't vote in the elections; its bylaws do not apply; they're a separate community. They have worked with the municipality, but this is a pretty serious issue.

How is this department dealing with that community — which includes the First Nation, if the member opposite wants to put it that way but is excluded in a lot of ways when it comes to safe drinking water and water and sewer. How is the minister dealing with the plans that that community had regarding putting in a low-pressure water system?

Hon. Mr. Lang: I am well aware that Carmacks is a municipality. They have an elected mayor and council. The self-governing First Nation, Little Salmon-Carmacks, has a process of governing their membership. By the way, Mr. Chair, they are eligible for all these opportunities of investment. There is MRIF, CSIF, Building Canada, gas tax — that is all part and parcel of an application system that First Nations can take advantage of. It is not shutting anybody out of any resources, Mr. Chair. It is exactly that. The First Nation is a self-governing First Nation.

We've gone out and worked with the First Nation separately from what we do with Carmacks, the community, because they have different needs. As far as Building Canada is concerned, they can participate, as all communities do in the territory.

I'm not quite sure where the member wants to put the Carmacks-Little Salmon group, either as a self-governing First Nation or an unincorporated community, or whatever, but I think it's more important that we treat them as a self-governing First Nation and work with them on that level than to visualize them as an unincorporated community. I don't understand where the member's coming from.

Mr. Fairclough: Of course not, and we expect that, I guess, from the minister now. It's Little Salmon-Carmacks First Nation, first of all. The name should be proper. The minister does have a responsibility here. He may try to skirt away from it, but he does — in the Building Canada fund and in recognizing other communities that are in the same situation. They're in a tough battle here; they're in the middle of a municipality but excluded from it, where they cannot vote and the bylaws do not apply, and the services are not provided to them at all. If they want a service, they buy it, and that's how it has been with a municipality, which, you know, is proper.

I'll give the minister — if he's having trouble with that — an example: when it comes to using the local dump, they pay for that service. When it comes to fire protection, they pay for that service.

I cannot take that answer back to my community — to the First Nation — and say, "This is what the minister said." There has to be some interest on the government side to sit down and talk with him on this, because they raised this issue for years and years and years with the minister. Opportunity came about and there was silence on the minister's behalf. How can we make improvements with the minister not listening to the community? That's ridiculous and I think the minister knows that. He should be dealing with this matter and not simply say-

ing, "Oh, they're self-governing; they can go off and do their own."

I know he's getting extensive direction from his House leader; I'll just hold on for a second. It's difficult to ask a question of the minister when he's constantly being directed by the House leader, Mr. Chair. We hear it in the types of answers the minister gives us here. It is ridiculous.

The minister should note that and talk with the community and see what they want. They have designed this with the Yukon government and I haven't even heard anything from the minister opposite about whether they are interested in this project or not. Basically it is a slough-off to the fact that they are First Nations and they have access to these other funds. They know that. We know that. It doesn't have to be repeated. It is the decision of government. Do you know how frustrating it is for them to hear this type of answer from the minister? Very frustrating. How can anyone make progress in the Yukon with that type of answer? Here is a government that says they want to build healthy communities. It is pretty frustrating, Mr. Chair.

I guess I have to move on with this because I don't think I'm going to get a commitment from this minister. Maybe I will ask him for a commitment here. Would he commit to following through with Little Salmon-Carmacks First Nation on addressing their water needs? It could be something like the low-pressure water system. Would he commit to following through with the Little Salmon-Carmacks First Nation needs in addressing the sewage issue with them and trying to tap into the local community sewage treatment?

Hon. Mr. Lang: Mr. Chair, that was quite a long question by the member opposite. We'll certainly work with all the municipalities and First Nations on investment on the ground and we will put resources toward all the municipalities, and Little Salmon-Carmacks is just one of those communities we will be working with to address their issues.

I don't want to bring this up, Mr. Chair, but the member opposite will vote for whatever we invest in his riding at the end of the day anyway, so that must give him a problem, going back to the community, with them asking why would he vote against those investments? He voted against a school in his community; he voted against investments in highways; all of that was done by the member opposite.

We are committed to work with all First Nations, all municipalities, all unincorporated communities, to put the infrastructure on the ground. I don't expect the member opposite to vote for it.

Mr. Fairclough: If that was really what the ministers opposite believe, then maybe they would have won in the last election and the one before that, but they didn't. The message is clear from me: I do support these projects in the communities and I fight for them, right here on the floor of the Legislature. Today is proof of that. I can send him those quotes from the minister.

As recently as today in the paper, there are comments from the Little Salmon-Carmacks Chief Eddie Skookum. What it is basically saying is we need to be recognized here. YTG shouldn't always be the one where the money stops. It's a deci-

sion that's made, even though it's federal dollars, and it doesn't flow down to them. That's this concern here.

They want the issue addressed. I never heard again a commitment from the minister on this. Is he going to commit? All he said is he's going to sit down and talk with them.

He has been doing that for years — supposedly. How much more talking is needed to convince the minister that this is an issue? He just said and I heard him talk about it again — the community has raised an issue and they have concern with safe drinking water — they want what the minister has. Why not give it?

So, again, I'm going to ask the minister because this is an issue that is definitely heating up, Mr. Chair: would he commit to working with the First Nation to resolve that issue and ensure that they have dollars flowing and a project developed to correct the problem that they have with the water situation? Is he going to work with him to solve that problem or is he going to slough it off again to saying that yes, they have a right to this federal funding and they should be fighting on their behalf? The minister can fight on behalf of the Little Salmon-Carmacks First Nation, so why doesn't he do that?

Hon. Mr. Lang: In addressing the member opposite, we'll work with all First Nations on putting their priorities down on paper and going forward with the investment on the ground. We will work with them on their gas tax. We'll work with them on the Building Canada fund. All of those resources are available. Now what we have to do is go to work. We have to sit down with all of the affected governments and work out a plan on how that money will be invested.

Yes, I'll commit to the member opposite — I will work with all First Nations. I don't just represent Carmacks or the Little Salmon group; I represent all of the Yukon, as far as the investments in Community Services are concerned. We'll work as hard for all Yukoners to make sure we maximize the benefits on the ground from the money that's available. There's the gas tax, and there's the Building Canada fund. All of that money will be out and going to work for Yukoners.

I'm going to work for all Yukoners, whether First Nations, municipalities, or unincorporated communities. There are resources there. Let's go to work in partnership and solve the problems that the member opposite talks about.

Mr. Fairclough: Well, he says he's going to work for all of the communities. When? When is the minister going to do it? This is a problem that didn't come about a month ago, but years ago, and it was raised with the minister over and over again. It was raised with the Yukon Party government.

It's about priorities, the way I see it. So far, this minister has given the Little Salmon-Carmacks First Nation a pretty low priority. Otherwise, he would have fought harder to ensure they have safe drinking water as well.

There is nothing I can really take back to my community from the minister other than saying he is now going to work with them. We understand government has to work on behalf of all people in the territory. Would the minister move the priority up for this Little Salmon-Carmacks First Nation and give the chief a call? Government to government here — this is a

government-to-government relationship. Give the chief a call and say, "Let's sit down and work on this project."

Would he do that?

Hon. Mr. Lang: Mr. Chair, these are application-driven. The application is made. There is a process in place on how the applications are addressed. It's not done from the minister's office, or from the chief's office. This is done in a process that's acceptable to the federal government and it falls under the criteria of the actual program.

This is not done by me as minister or by the Chief of the Little Salmon-Carmacks First Nation. I recommend all communities, all First Nations, go to work and put their applications in and let's go to work and improve the infrastructure on the ground throughout the Yukon. There are resources available through Building Canada; the First Nations have their own gas tax program so they have some resources on that side of the ledger. I think if we can work in unison here and follow the rules that are laid down on how the money flows, we can maximize the benefits to all Yukoners.

Mr. Fairclough: You know, I am embarrassed by that answer from the minister, because he knows this First Nation knows the process. They have made applications. They have gone different routes and they have been directed around by the Yukon Party government to different departments and they have gotten nowhere. They have gone nowhere and the minister doesn't even know this issue and it is embarrassing. He was at the conference too — he has got this picture in the paper. So the minister didn't even answer the last question and I know why. It is because there is no commitment, at all, to work with the people properly.

I am going to ask another question — I'm going to move on from that one and on to another one. It is about fire protection.

The community of Ross River will get a new fire truck, and that's great, but their fire alarm system doesn't work. In several of the communities it has been like that. Equipment is either getting old or not being checked properly — what's the minister going to do to make the improvements there?

I raise this as a very serious issue. The community went through a terrible ordeal, partly because of this. I wouldn't say it was fully, but partly because of the fact that equipment failed. Will we perhaps see the department doing some equipment checks throughout the territory to ensure things like the fire alarm system are working properly?

Hon. Mr. Lang: The siren system in our communities is an older system. It is obsolete and we're going to be — I guess it would be discontinued because we have a better telephone system now.

We have radio pager systems, where the fire chief and fire people have that access. So what we're doing now is looking at those old systems and mothballing them and moving into the modern era of communication in our communities.

Mr. Fairclough: So when is this going to happen, that these old, outdated fire alarm systems are going to be done away with? When can we expect this to happen?

Hon. Mr. Lang: I would say we're going to discontinue that process as soon as possible because it is, in fact, faulty and it's obsolete.

Mr. Fairclough: They're "faulty and obsolete," the minister says, and "as soon as possible". You know, I'm not satisfied with that at all because every one of the ministers, when they answer — "in due course," they say. We don't even know what that means any more. A year could go by, an alarm system could be faulty, and somebody could die as a result of that. So I need some time frames.

When are we going to have this new system in place? And can the minister explain in detail what the system is going to look like and what we can expect? What can I take back to the communities?

Hon. Mr. Lang: I could describe a telephone to the member opposite, I'm sure he has seen a telephone. Of course, there is a radio pager process in possession of people on call — whether it is our ambulance or our volunteer fire group. That will be the new process, Mr. Speaker. That is available in all the communities as we speak. The obsolete system that the member opposite is talking about is something that we used in the past as a back-up process but it is obsolete and we're looking at discontinuing it.

Mr. Fairclough: You still didn't answer the question. I challenge the minister to explain what his view is on a telephone. He's probably going to say that it is black and it has got a rotary dial and is as old an explanation as the alarm systems in the communities. You know the minister's answer is bad. I mean, come on, let's be clear. You want to put something new in the communities. You say that they are archaic, out of date and faulty and everything else. What can you expect when the minister says, "telephones" and "pagers". I think communities are deserving of a better answer than that — a way better answer than that.

If the minister doesn't have that answer here — file it by legislative return for us.

It's getting ridiculous. We can't operate this way in this House. We can't operate that way. The minister knows that. Why give that kind of an answer, for crying out loud? Man, that doesn't make people in the communities very satisfied. They've been asking us to bring forward this issue to the Legislature here.

I would like to ask the minister about the funding that is going from Canada and flowing down. There are a number of them. The Building Canada fund is one of them, and it's a 25:75 split. It's a good way to leverage money into the territory. The sports fund is another one that has quite a lot of money in there. It's a 50:50 funding split. No doubt the minister has been hearing about how the communities could use improvements to the recreation facilities across the territory from Old Crow to the southern part of the Yukon. Carmacks is no different in need than other communities. They want to build things up and they need a recreation centre that is complete. They have one but it's incomplete. They built the first phase of it.

I would just like to know about the sports fund. It's \$500 million that's in the pot nationally and it's a 50:50 split. I

would like to know who is splitting the money right now. Is it on a project-driven basis by municipalities or is the Yukon government actually going to take this on and put some of their dollars they have into here — their billion dollars — and look at improving some of the sports facilities around, or is this a separate fund? It's a sports fund that could address this.

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

Recess

Chair: Order please. Committee of the Whole will now come to order. Committee of the Whole is considering Bill No. 15, the Department of Community Services. We will now continue with general debate.

Hon. Mr. Lang: Carrying on the debate this afternoon with the member opposite, I recommend that all Yukoners, whether they are in a municipality or First Nation or the unincorporated communities, go out to these meetings, put their master plans together and let's go to work putting this investment on the ground in all of our communities. There is room, and as the member opposite has brought up, there are many needs. Little Salmon-Carmacks First Nation has needs and certainly the municipality of Carmacks does. There has been input and dialogue in Mayo. There have been, of course, our issues in unincorporated communities like Marsh Lake, where they have needs for water. Let's work in unison to get this process and the Building Canada fund out and benefiting all Yukoners.

It is quite a substantial investment in Yukon. It is \$182.9 million — roughly \$26.13 million per year, Mr. Chair. This is a big investment that we can take advantage of over the next seven years. This government and Yukoners can look forward to that kind of investment in our communities as we move forward.

Mr. Fairclough: Yes, it is a lot of money, and the communities' voices need to be heard. I'm bringing this up with the minister to sit down and work with the First Nation to work out their issue with regard to safe water. That's what I'm asking the minister to do.

They have had a project in place for quite a number of years now. They've worked with the Yukon Party government, they've gone through the steps the government has asked of them and still nothing has happened. To me, it's a political decision, whether or not the government wants to do something with them. They've worked hard at it. They've made a design. Because of that, I think it would have been easy for government to take that forward.

I asked about the sports fund. There are a number of different funds, and I think maybe the minister can go over and explain some of them that we have here. You've got the CSIF, you've got the Building Canada fund, you've got MRIF, the sports fund and there are a lot of different projects that could fit under these.

The way I saw it before is there have been projects that have gone through this process and have been rejected. They just happen to be all First Nation projects that have been rejected.

Also, if the minister can explain about the infrastructure stimulus fund — the \$4 billion nationally — that amount of money that is a 50:50 split again. I did ask the minister about the sports fund, the \$500 million that's identified nationally — the 50:50 split. I asked who is splitting this money and what is the process? This is all information that the general public would like to have. I'm sure the minister has that information at his fingertips. What is really available to us here in the Yukon? The minister identified \$182.9 million that is coming to the Yukon as a result of some of these funds, but we would like to know what is available, and is this sports fund something that the Yukon government is looking at splitting 50:50? I would assume that the other 50 percent is the federal government, but who is splitting this? Is it down to the project, down to the communities, down to the municipalities to split these dollars? Will the minister, through his department here, be looking at how to maximize and leverage these dollars here to ensure that Yukon gets its fair share and whether or not the Yukon government will be taking part in this 50:50 split?

Hon. Mr. Lang: In addressing the member opposite, MRIF and CRIF are twilgited. They are no longer — any project that has been funded under them is ongoing. The Building Canada fund is a new fund — I said the amount just in the last question — and the infrastructure stimulus is a new fund. That was a \$4-billion commitment by Canada. That is a 50:50 share. We as Yukoners, per capita, realize \$4 million of the \$4 billion. The direct fund is a 50:50 split, according to what I have read. It is \$500 million nationally. We have not got a commitment by the federal government on how much or how that would be divided up north of 60. We are looking forward to that in the near future.

Mr. Fairclough: I thank the minister for that answer. When he gets that information, I'd ask the minister to pass it over to this side of the House.

What I asked was regarding this 50:50 split — who is splitting this money? It's federal money. Who is putting in the other 50 percent? Is it the Yukon government, or is it project-based, or is it the communities? Is the territorial government asking communities to come up with some of these dollars? It has been an issue that was raised nationally, and I just want to know what the thoughts of the minister are.

Hon. Mr. Lang: Again, I would remind the member opposite that these are brand new projects that have just been put through the Canadian budget. Certainly, we're looking forward to seeing exactly what the member opposite is talking about and being able to answer those questions.

Mr. Fairclough: I thought perhaps the minister would have been more up on this. But I await the information that's coming from Ottawa. Can the minister provide this information in a very public way to the rest of Yukon for them to be clear on how they can access this money and what process to follow? With a lot of these new monies, maybe he can break them down differently. The sports fund, the infrastructure stimulus fund and the Building Canada fund — who is the decision body? That would help people to start looking at projects in their communities, identifying them and bringing it forward through the minister's office.

Hon. Mr. Lang: Those are all questions that we'll be able to answer. Any decisions on this from the national level will be very public on how we share in the responsibility and what is the make-up of the decision bodies. So this is all a work in progress and we're working, trying to get this clarified as quickly as possible.

Mr. Fairclough: Well, it has been identified in the budget and the Premier identified it in his budget speech. It's raising some expectations. Communities want to access this money. Some of this money is to stimulate the economy — I think the minister understands that — and to be able to do this, projects need to get off the ground.

The general public needs to be armed with information — processes. I am a bit surprised. I know the minister's office and department is dealing quite closely with the federal government on this but we need to know who the decision bodies are and how this money is going to be split 50:50 — this \$4 billion split 50:50.

I guess I can't go on and on about this because information is not there and I asked the minister to pass on the information to this side of the House when he gets it so that I can be clear taking this information back to the communities. They have been asking about it. I was just up in Mayo on the weekend and people have been asking about it — if I had identified projects. I ask the minister this: when that information comes — I believe it will come very soon; we've got lots of time to debate in this House — to flow that information to us on this side of the House — would he do that?

Hon. Mr. Lang: I recommend the member opposite, when he is talking to his constituency, makes sure they get involved in the consultation that is going on now with the Building Canada fund — whether it is First Nation governments, municipalities or unincorporated communities. We have people out right now working with the affected governments to fast-track these decisions.

Mr. Fairclough: The minister said he does have people out there doing consultations — going from community to community. It's a group of people who are from this department? Or are they from other departments in government? Who is doing this consultation? What information are they taking to the communities to try to seek input with regard to projects?

Hon. Mr. Lang: The scheduling of how the meetings are unfolding is on the Web site. It's led by Community Services, but it has input from other departments. And, certainly, we have expertise on that committee to address issues that will be brought up at the meetings. So I recommend to the member opposite to get on the Web site and inform his constituents about when those meetings are being held in their communities.

Mr. Fairclough: Well, I'm going to be doing that, if the First Nations and municipalities are not already up to speed — if that communication has been sent to them.

How long ago was this schedule put together? When is the last date for this? Is there a timeline when communities have to identify their projects?

Hon. Mr. Lang: You can get all that information off the Web site: dates and where the meetings are and the final meetings. That's all available to the general public.

Mr. Fairclough: The minister doesn't have that information with him, in front of him? I'm sure he must have it; this is pretty important stuff. This, to me, is where the Premier talked about getting money from the federal government, stimulating the Yukon economy. It's in the paper.

The minister was just handed the newspaper, today's paper, and I believe perhaps some of that is in the paper.

I'm a bit surprised at the minister just saying to go to the Web site, go to the Web site. Really, why are we in the House if we have to do that? Why can't the minister just provide the information to us? I asked when this committee was put together, this consultation committee. What is the end date? I mean, you can schedule all the meetings you want in the communities; you have to gather that information, so what's the end date? Is there a time? Is it time-limited where you come in a week late and your project is just not recognized?

This is important information I would like to take back to the communities or send it throughout the territory.

Hon. Mr. Lang: I would like, here in the House, to thank the department for all the hard work they do. I would also like to remind the member opposite that everything Community Services does is important. I'd like to thank the individuals who do the work and not minimize the work they do by mentioning comments like the member opposite did about the department as a whole.

This is public information; in fact, it's in the newspaper tonight. I recommend the member read it. Also, it's on the Web site. It's very public. That's what this government is doing and that's where the information is. I think it's very important to get the information out to the general public so the public can participate in the meetings.

Again, I'd like to thank the department for all the hard work they do and the individuals who go around to the communities to do exactly this: get the information, work with the communities, the First Nations, compile all the information we need to move forward with this investment that this government and the federal government are going to put on the ground over the next period of time in the territory.

Mr. Fairclough: This was a big important announcement by the Yukon Party, so why isn't the information up to speed? Would he, himself, go on the Internet and read that schedule and perhaps put it on paper so we can have that information in front of him? He should be armed with that, not relying on today's paper that just came out and most people haven't read.

Do you know what? I believe the Department of Community Services is doing a lot of work. They have got a lot of responsibility here — a lot of responsibility. There is a lot of money that is flowing through here and these are flow-through dollars — some of them are flow-through dollars. It could take care of a lot of the big issues that have been raised in the community. So far, the minister doesn't know when the consultation group was put together. He doesn't know where they are going yet or what the schedules are — just look in the paper or the Internet in the department. He doesn't know an end date. He doesn't know all of this.

It is really important because we're talking about trying to stimulate the economy and get projects on the go and so on. This is information the minister should have available to him, in front of him every day. There is a lot of information that's just not there and the minister doesn't have. I urge him to get up to speed because we're going to be asking questions on this, perhaps even in Question Period. What kind of answers are we going to get there? Look on the Internet? That's not right. He is the minister; he gets paid the big bucks.

I'm going to wait for the information to come forward from the minister. He said he would provide it; we're still waiting.

Hon. Mr. Lang: What —

Mr. Fairclough: You're not going to provide the information? You said you would provide the information when it comes — what it will look like for the amount of dollars involved in the sports fund, because you don't know that yet. You just said you didn't know what that was.

The minister identified \$4 million in the infrastructure stimulus fund, but the 50:50 split is the information the minister doesn't have — or the decision body — and the processes to follow that. This is all information that the minister said he is going to talk about with the federal government and bring back. It is something that we on this side of the House are interested in too. I do thank him for wanting to provide that information to us.

The Building Canada fund was another one that was identified before. I think we're getting something like \$6.5 million, and it's a 75:25 split. I'm assuming that same type of information would be coming to the minister, and we look forward to that — \$6.5 million per year, I should say.

I'd like to ask a question about lot developments, and particularly one that has been listed — I've got to find it here. It's listed in the department. I don't have the Premier's speech here, but it's all listed down there, about which lots and where lots will be developed. There is one that has been identified, and that is the Grizzly Valley country residential.

Is this something that we can see happen over the summer or is the department or government involved in any court case when it comes to the Grizzly Valley country residential development?

Hon. Mr. Lang: To the member opposite, the process that is followed on getting information to Yukoners on infrastructure priorities and all of the things that we do — certainly, hopefully, the member opposite, when he mentioned \$6 million for the Building Canada fund, was, of course, mistaken. Mr. Chair, we spend hundreds of thousands of dollars, I think, a year to get some information for research for the opposition and they have a job to do just that: research. I am not sure by the questioning that the member opposite is asking this afternoon, that there has been any research put into it at all. That might be just a personal opinion as a minister but I find it lacking.

In Whitehorse, we have the Stan McCowan arena lands; Takhini North will be developed by the city, while Ingram and Whistle Bend will be developed by the Yukon government. Yukon also has four land development projects underway in

other Yukon communities — Dawson City and Haines Junction, for example. Yukon is working closely with municipalities and First Nations to identify and address land development demands in their communities. So we're doing just that, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Fairclough: It's our job to ask questions in this House and for the government to be armed and prepared to answer those questions. I asked a question about Grizzly Valley. Really, is the minister doing any research? Is there a court case pending here? Or are we going to see this land development happen this summer?

Hon. Mr. Lang: As far as the Grizzly Valley subdivision — the 30 lots there — there is going to be a detailed engineering design done this summer. Hopefully, there will be a start later on in the year. So there is engineering being done on the potential 30 lots in Grizzly Valley.

Mr. Fairclough: Is there a court case pending?

Hon. Mr. Lang: I can't answer that. I don't know if there is a legal issue. All we're doing internally is our good work and part of that is the commitment to do the engineering on the Grizzly Valley proposal.

Mr. Fairclough: Wow. You would think something this big the minister may know about, should it be happening. A lot of discussion took place with Ta'an on this whole matter and the minister knows that. I don't know why we're getting such an answer from the minister.

I would like to know about the serviced residential lots that would become available this year. From the briefing, about 183 new serviced lots were identified, but that's not for this year. What do we have for lots available to build on this year?

Hon. Mr. Lang: We're looking at completion of the Ingram subdivision in June 2009 and anticipating completion in the fall of 2009, spring of 2010. Some lots may be available in late fall of this year.

Mr. Fairclough: Thank you. Those lot developments, are they being named? They are no longer called Ingram? Is it Arkell? Is it a designer neighbourhood in the Arkell area?

Hon. Mr. Lang: Again, another question — this is led by the City of Whitehorse. It used to be called Arkell and for some reason it is now being called Ingram. But that was a city decision.

Mr. Fairclough: That is to be a designer neighbourhood? Is that the minister's understanding?

Hon. Mr. Lang: In addressing the member opposite, all the lots that we design are designed as communities. They are in conjunction with the city. We work with the city and they design and we work with them on that design.

Mr. Fairclough: That is not what I was getting at, Mr. Chair. Do houses have to look a certain way? Like, say, the building codes that they have in the community of Dawson City? I just want to know if the Arkell lots that are coming available they have to be designed a certain way. Not that anybody can just bring their own home design but certain colours and so on? A designer neighbourhood?

Hon. Mr. Lang: Mr. Chair, we work with the city on their official city plan. Those are decisions the city makes. I am not privy to that information.

Mr. Fairclough: The minister has people working for him. He has people who can do research. They've got a huge budget. Why doesn't he do that?

I know — I had to do that.

The FireSmart program has been going for quite some time now. It is very popular in the communities and accessed by the communities quite a bit. We have gone from having a clearing around the communities for a fire break to cleaning out — I guess hazardous material that might be — I shouldn't say "hazardous", but material that can burn and cause a forest fire that is close to home or thinning out trees and so on.

How long does the minister expect this program to be going? Does he see it ongoing and something similar to the community development fund, to have communities access FireSmart programs? It's a very, very good program. It's one that I do like to see communities access and I'm glad it is continuing.

Hon. Mr. Lang: I'm glad he brought up the FireSmart program because the Liberals slashed it when they were in power. I agree with him that it is a very important program and that's exactly why we added \$500,000 to it, Mr. Chair. We beefed it up because there is a need out there, and it is a very big need.

Yes, we put in another \$500,000. I can't see us moving away from the FireSmart program in the near future. But I remind Yukoners that the Liberal Party — the Liberal government — slashed it and decided they didn't need it. One of the first things that this government did was reinstate — well, we reinstated the Department of Economic Development, Tourism and Culture and the FireSmart program — and the list goes on, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Fairclough: The minister likes to live in the past. Must he forget the very first bill they introduced in the House? Does the minister know the very first bill the Yukon Party passed in this House? All I can see are blanks on the ministers' side over there. I'll tell them what it was — or would it do any good? It's about accountability. They killed the accountability act. Maybe the minister recognized that a lot of our questions, even in Question Period, are about accountability. As a matter of fact, when you have recommendations from the Auditor General, it's about accountability — about government spending in the territory.

If the minister wants to go and relive all of this stuff, we can go back and bring up all the Yukon Party's decisions, right back from the Ostashek days. I tell you, that minister is not going to be happy to hear those things and neither will the public. So quit living in the past. Let's focus on the future here.

This issue has been brought up by other ministers. I talked about this a little bit, and it's about emergency measures and communities getting ready — they're getting a little antsy right now that we're not getting the kind of thaw with the kind of weather that's out there. I've had reports from community people that it's a long time since they've seen ice on the river that thick, and they're talking about over six feet and so on, and so it is with lake ice. There is lots of snow and a lot of times the weight of the snow will push down enough to crack the ice a bit and have overflow. A lot of the lakes just don't have that,

and it's pretty solid right now. But there is a fear for those who live along the river right now.

I know government has addressed this, when it comes to protective services. We talk about protecting communities when it comes to fire and so on. But people in the community are feeling a bit of fear because of the possibility of flooding. I would like to know whether or not some thought has been put into perhaps being ready for something, should it happen, and whether or not the department is geared up to do any of that work. Or is somebody else responsible for it?

Hon. Mr. Lang: We are certainly addressing, again, the issue this afternoon about flood preparedness or how we are managing the snow load this spring.

As I said before, we are working in partnership with Environment. They are monitoring 55 points in Yukon. Of course, we are waiting anxiously for the report to come out on the 10th of this month. I have committed to putting technical people on the ground, so we can have a briefing and we'll know exactly what is on the ground as of now. There is a heavy snow load in our communities. We are committed to working with the communities to make sure everyone understands where we are at and how we move forward if, in fact, this flood watch becomes more serious. We will commit to working in the communities to minimize anything that happens on the ground. We understand that communities like Upper Liard and communities like Mayo — all of these communities have flood issues, and monitoring snow is one of the things we are doing. There will be a technical briefing and that will be done by Community Services, and Highways and Public Works, so that we can make it very clear what we're going to do on the ground to make sure that we're ready and able to help the communities if, in fact, a flood arises.

Mr. Cardiff: I am pleased to be here this afternoon and enter into the Community Services budget debate. I would like to thank the officials who came to the briefing and provided an overview of the budget and some of the projects that are within the budget. Community Services really is one of those departments that touches pretty much every citizen here in Yukon. It deals with volunteer fire departments; all fire departments, both volunteer and the wildland fire areas; emergency medical services; it deals with libraries, with water and sewer issues and with recreation. It is responsible for relations with municipalities. Solid-waste facilities — we will get to solid-waste facilities today or maybe we won't — maybe we'll have to wait until tomorrow to do that. It deals with street lights. It deals with labour standards. We had some information about labour standards delivered to our desks today dealing with flooding, as we've heard with emergency measures and with flood preparation. It deals with animal protection and a host of other things, as well as infrastructure. A lot of money flows through the Department of Community Services, so there are a lot of questions to be asked in Community Services.

What I fear is that in some respects we've missed an opportunity, on the part of this government, to invest in both social and human infrastructure. The government could have been a little more imaginative, shown a little bit more vision, not been so focused on some of the big, flashy projects that

they've got in their budget and looked more at things like creating jobs in rural Yukon. On some of the smaller projects, they could have looked at some greener, environmental technologies.

I think the government could have done a better job when crafting this budget.

I'd like to start today — we've already had some discussions about drinking water. I'd like to know — there are several projects in here for water treatment and there's a press release. The minister was with Canada's Minister of Health today, making announcements about water system upgrades in a variety of communities. I don't have a problem with that, but I'd like to know how the government prioritized the projects.

Can the minister tell us how they arrived at the decision that these were the projects that needed to be done this year?

Hon. Mr. Lang: The clearest way to address the member opposite: we've had the public review on these issues through earlier government initiatives and a lot of these things, because of the regulations change, have to be prioritized, and that is how we're going to move forward as we work with Building Canada and the gas tax and other investments on the ground. We'll be partnering with that.

As far as how we prioritize where the money is being spent, there was a public review and recommendations came from that.

Mr. Cardiff: Can the minister tell us when that review took place and who participated in it?

Hon. Mr. Lang: Through the Building Canada approval projects for 2007-08 and 2008-09 — as you know, Mr. Chair, this is a seven-year commitment on the investment — is that not true?

The investment was the new Marsh Lake intake and commercial fill system. That was prioritized. Ross River system upgrading and arsenic treatment was addressed. Carcross water system treatment upgrade; arsenic treatment upgrade to 2011 regulatory requirements at CAFN, and CTFN, Haines Junction and Teslin; and, of course, the Dawson sewage treatment, which is an ongoing discussion in the courts to bring Dawson City up to the waste-water infrastructure standard that the courts and the community expect.

Mr. Cardiff: I asked the minister; he said it was a public review. If there was a public review, I want to know which members of the public participated and when they participated in the review.

Hon. Mr. Lang: In addressing the member opposite, maybe I didn't make myself clear on that answer about the public review.

Some of these projects have been addressed under other programs. Of course, as these other programs were sunsetted, they moved into the new process. All of these processes — whether it is the Carmacks sewer treatment collection thing or the Carmacks-Stewart transmission line — all of those have been prioritized by the government and certainly with past programs. What we are doing is addressing them as we move forward into these new investments.

Mr. Cardiff: Mr. Chair, it is almost 5:00 and this is getting more confusing. I fear that by the time 5:30 comes

around, it is going to be total chaos. Now the minister is telling us about the Carmacks to Stewart transmission line and how it is prioritized when we were talking about — originally, when I started this line of questioning, we were talking about cleaner water and about clean water projects in Yukon — whether it is in Ross River or Old Crow, Haines Junction, Carcross, or Teslin.

What I asked the minister was how they were prioritized. I'm not sure, but it sounds like the government prioritized them, but I want to know how these projects came forward. Were they community-driven initiatives? Were they requests from communities? Were they requests from First Nations? Where did they come from and how did they end up in the system?

I'm asking this for a good reason. There are other communities that would like to receive funds as well, and we'll talk about that more, but first the minister needs to understand it, and I need to understand the process of how projects like this began, where they were initiated and how they moved through the government process.

Did somebody walk into the minister's office and say — how were they identified? There are some serious issues here. We're talking about arsenic treatment. There are other communities that have problems with arsenic and other contaminants in their drinking water systems.

There are other issues about water and about the affordability of water. We talked the other day about the fact that water should be a human right and yet we live in a society where people have to pay to get water. I understand you have to pay to get some services, that in order for municipalities to deliver services, people have to pay because they just don't happen for free. It would be nice if they did.

But I think it would be — in the minister's words — a timely time to come clean and explain how these projects came to be on the minister's desk, how they were prioritized and how it was decided this was a good time to move them forward. Some of them are Building Canada fund projects and some of them aren't.

So can the minister enlighten us as to where the projects originated, how they came through the system and how the government prioritized which ones needed to be done, in which order?

Hon. Mr. Lang: The Yukon infrastructure plan and implementation of Building Canada will be in five key areas. These were set by the federal government: drinking water, waste water, roads, solid waste management and green energy infrastructure. Those were the guidelines on where this money could be invested. Now we in partnership with them have agreed to that. There are 14 other eligible categories and they may be considered as a secondary focus as the Yukon infrastructure plan is developed and implemented. There is room for 14 other categories but the main categories — I remind the member opposite — are concentrating on drinking water, waste water, roads, solid waste management and green energy infrastructure. Those five have been prioritized by the federal government and our government to move forward on.

So as far as the guidelines, those would be the guidelines as to how we can invest the money on the ground here throughout the territory.

Mr. Cardiff: The minister just doesn't want to answer the question, does he? He really doesn't want to answer the question. I asked him where the projects originated. They didn't originate in the Building Canada fund. I know that and the minister knows that. Did the minister have a hat on his desk with a bunch of projects in it, and he just reached in and pulled them out and said, "Oh, these will fit the priorities that we've set for the Building Canada fund"?

The minister must know where the projects originated from. They didn't originate from the Building Canada fund. They're being funded through the Building Canada fund, but they didn't originate there. It's interesting — I mean, I support these projects. Don't get me wrong. We're here to ask questions about government policy and how things happen. I'm looking for an explanation of where the projects originated, how they ended up on the minister's desk to be approved for Building Canada fund funds and how the government prioritized it. If the minister can get that answer right this time, then maybe he can fill us in on what projects — or at least give us an idea of how many projects are in line for future Building Canada funds that deal with clean drinking water — what future projects there are that aren't identified in this budget?

Hon. Mr. Lang: I remind the member opposite that this is a seven-year program. These applications will come in; they will be application-driven and we will go to work on exactly what the member opposite is talking about. We have obligations in 2011 to meet these standards and that's what we're working toward. As we work toward that, we have these resources. Over the next five years — because we're already two years into the program — those issues will be addressed by the government.

Mr. Cardiff: Can the minister tell us if there are outstanding applications for projects for next year, how many are there and whether or not this is going to be a priority for the government next year as well?

Hon. Mr. Lang: I remind the member opposite we have Building Canada, but we also have — the communities and ourselves who have access to the gas tax, which is another investment. Today, the Minister of Health from the national government has made an announcement that adds another \$60 million on to that investment.

The resources are available. As we move forward and do our plan and the applications come in, we look forward to addressing all of the issues in the territory. We have an obligation; I remind the member opposite, Mr. Chair, that 2011 is an important date and it is only two years away. We have a lot of work to do. We look forward to working with the communities, First Nation governments and, of course, ourselves — the lead on unincorporated communities — to do just that.

There are a lot of communities that meet today's standard that won't meet 2011 standards. We have to invest in those communities to bring them up to the new standards. That is going to take resources and we commit here today to work with those communities to do just that.

Mr. Cardiff: I am glad the minister wants to work with all communities.

I would like to ask the minister about one specific project. There is \$2.4 million for the Marsh Lake intake and fill system. I know that the purpose of this is to meet the new regulations and that it's increasingly hard to meet the new standards. I know there is a fill station at the fire hall in Judas Creek, and I'm just wondering why we're spending \$2.4 million for another, basically, what amounts to a public fill station at Army Beach, which is only 15 or 20 minutes away.

So it seems like a large expenditure of money, and I'm just wondering whether it wouldn't have been more cost effective to have just upgraded the fill station at Judas Creek so that it could meet the standards.

Hon. Mr. Lang: In addressing the member opposite, the investment covers twofold: it covers a volume issue and also a distance issue. We have a distance issue for the fire protection in that area. It's 25 kilometres from Judas Creek. We also have a problem with water quality and access to water on Army Beach. For the residents who have to haul water, we'll shorten that up considerably. There is a fire issue as well. Because of the distance, it's very risky for the fire department. It would certainly conveniently place access to water for fighting fires at that end of the Marsh Lake community.

Mr. Cardiff: There was some mention of the possibility of a new fire hall at Army Beach. It just seems there's a fire hall at Golden Horn and there's a fire hall at Judas Creek. I was wondering if there would really be a need for a fire hall at Army Beach. Can the minister confirm whether or not there are plans for a fire hall at Army Beach?

Hon. Mr. Lang: There is no current plan to expand the fire capabilities at Marsh Lake, but this infrastructure would certainly make that decision easier if, in fact, somewhere down the road the government was to put in a new fire hall for the Marsh Lake residents.

Mr. Cardiff: There are two communities — probably more communities. The minister brought up the high cost of water delivery and I thank him for that, because that is a very good issue that I would like the minister to address. It is a long way to haul water from Judas Creek to Army Beach if you are on water delivery. You can go to Judas Creek and fill your water truck and haul it over to Army Beach. Residents who live in the Robinson subdivision have to have their water hauled from town.

The government missed a good opportunity to put another fill station in when they built the fire hall at Golden Horn subdivision. There are problems around — oh, the Government House Leader has an opinion on this, obviously. As the former Minister of Health and Social Services, he should know that there are problems with the water in that area with regard to things like arsenic, and the water isn't potable. It is expensive to drill wells. The government is spending \$2.4 million in Marsh Lake and millions more in other communities, but at the Golden Horn fire hall, where people would like the opportunity to either be able to haul their own water or to have their water provider — their private sector water delivery person/company — if the government is so hell-bent on helping out the private

sector at Army Beach with the high cost of water delivery, then I'm sure they could do something for residents in other communities as well.

It seems like a logical place to have a fill station. They do it at other fire halls around the Yukon. Would he consider a project at the Golden Horn fire hall as well?

Hon. Mr. Lang: I agree with the member opposite: this is an exciting time for the territory. We have resources to address some of the issues the member put on the floor. I look forward to the applications. There's \$100 million in gas tax; there's \$183 million flowing from Building Canada. We will be addressing those issues.

Any time we can put in the Marsh Lake investment and shorten up that haul time, it reflects on the price of water, so that's exactly what we're doing. Other issues will unfold as we go through this next seven years, but one of the five points of Building Canada is potable water. It's very important to our community.

I agree with the member opposite; there are opportunities out there and we're going to work with the communities to maximize the benefits. Water is the top of the list as far as Building Canada is concerned.

Mr. Cardiff: I am glad to hear it is at the top of the list. Could the minister tell me whether individuals can approach the minister about these projects? Does it require a community association? A local advisory council? A daycare society? What does it require? Who has to approach the minister about it? In some areas, there aren't local advisory councils and there aren't even community associations, necessarily. Would it be the fire hall itself that would approach the minister? There are other communities — I know out at Mendenhall there is an urgent need to address water quality issues. I know that even at the community centre in Mount Lorne, I think that people would welcome the idea of a community well and a source where they knew they could get good potable water. It would decrease the haul time for those water delivery trucks.

Just for the minister's information, one of the reasons I'm pursuing this is because, one, I believe that water is a human right. Two, I don't think people should be forced into a situation where a large, fairly substantial portion of their monthly budget goes to providing water for their families.

The City of Whitehorse recently raised the rates for water and sewer services — it's part of increasing their revenues for their tax base — to keep their water and sewer infrastructure viable. Basically, it's a cost-recovery type of system and I can understand that. At the same time, what ended up happening was it cost more for companies that haul water to fill up at the fill station at the top of Two Mile Hill at the No. 2 fire hall. That increased the cost of water delivery to people.

I'm sure it increased the cost of water delivery to some of the Member for Lake Laberge's constituents, as well as mine, who are on water delivery and who still don't qualify for a well-drilling program because they live inside the City of Whitehorse. In the City of Whitehorse, I believe, the sewer and water fees are in the neighbourhood of \$150 to \$160 every three months. I've got constituents who are paying \$120 a month for water, and then they still have to have their septic

systems serviced annually. That's a lot of money for water. If water is a basic human right, it doesn't seem fair that people are paying thousands of dollars a year in order to provide their families with water.

There are a couple of other projects out there. The question for the minister was, what organization needs to approach the minister with an application? Is it the fire hall? Is it a community association? Is it a local advisory council? It is any or all of the above? Can he answer that question?

Hon. Mr. Lang: An overview of the gas tax — municipalities participate, First Nations and Community Services. Community Services oversees the unincorporated communities. But with the territory-wide consultation on the infrastructure priorities, those are public and I recommend at these meetings that individuals — if they have needs or have ideas — go those meetings. It is a public meeting. I am saying to you, Mr. Chair, that I would recommend they go to the public meetings — the schedule is in the newspaper — and take advantage of it.

Mr. Cardiff: I don't have the schedule in front of me, but I will consult the schedule and ensure that the people who have been talking to me make it to one of those meetings. I know there is a meeting this Wednesday in Mount Lorne. I don't know if there will be a meeting for Golden Horn residents and I hope that residents in Mendenhall — I'm sure the Member for Kluane will be making his constituents aware of these meetings. I do believe this is an important subject.

I see there's money in the budget for sewage treatment in a number of communities; that's also very much welcomed. It seems to have taken a long time to address this issue in Dawson City. I see there's \$3 million there. That must mean that we're going to see something happen this year, because we're not going to spend \$3 million on studies or requests for proposals.

The requests for proposals have already gone out. It's my understanding those proposals have gone in.

It has been some time. Can the minister tell us when the government is going to make public its recommendations or make public what proposal was successful? There are people waiting to go to work out there and wanting to know whether or not they're going to be able to go to work on this project.

Hon. Mr. Lang: That's a Highways and Public Works question and, as minister, I look forward to answering that question when the department is up. But as far as the scheduling for the Yukon infrastructure, there is a meeting on Tuesday, April 7 at 7:00 p.m. at the Marsh Lake Community Centre. These are just a couple of them, as they unfold: Mount Lorne will be at the Mount Lorne Community Centre at 7:00 p.m. on April 8, which is coming up. Whitehorse north — it will be at the Hootalinqua fire hall. That's at 7:00 p.m. on April 9. Ibex Valley and Mendenhall — the member opposite talked about Mendenhall. That will be held at the Ibex Valley fire hall. That will be on Tuesday, April 14. All of these times are at 7:00 in the evening. Whitehorse Centre — at the Canada Games Centre, meeting room 2. That, again, is on April 15 at 7:00.

The member was talking about Carmacks. That is being held at Carmacks Recreational Centre on Thursday, April 16.

So that's a bit of a schedule on how this is unfolding as we move forward with consultation through the Yukon.

Mr. Cardiff: Mr. Chair, the money is in the minister's budget right here — \$3 million. The minister doesn't know how that money is going to be spent and what type of project it is going to be?

I was approached last week by people who are interested, who want to see this project move forward and who are concerned about the situation in their community around sewage treatment. They know there are a couple of projects out there; they want to see the work start, and the minister doesn't seem to know when the money is going to be spent.

I asked him about the project; it's in his budget. He has got a few waste-water projects. There is the Dawson City sewage treatment for \$3 million this year. Apparently, it is a \$20-million project — that's what we were told. It is going to be funded under the Building Canada fund over a number of years, I suspect. There is Carcross sewage treatment and disposal. There is the Ross River sewage disposal pit. These are important projects and the minister — I asked the minister some specifics about the project. He has \$3 million as a line item in his budget under capital expenditures and he's not able to answer the question, Mr. Chair. It seems a little ludicrous to me that he can't do that.

These are important projects. They are important to our environment because we are talking about outflow as well and about sewage effluent being discharged into the river in Dawson City just like it is in other communities as well.

There are other communities that have been the beneficiaries of projects. It's all about looking after our environment and ensuring that what's being discharged into the river is acceptable and isn't harming the environment. People have a vested interest in this. We as Yukoners have a vested interest in it. As government, we have a responsibility to ensure that the environment is looked after.

We're talking about a \$3-million expenditure here, and the minister doesn't seem to know the answer to the question.

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

Chair: It has been moved by Mr. Cardiff 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 will now call the House to order.

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

Chair's report

Mr. Nordick: Mr. Speaker, Committee of the Whole has considered Bill No. 15, *First Appropriation Act, 2009-10*, 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.

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

The House adjourned at 5:30 p.m.

The following Sessional Paper was tabled April 6, 2009:

09-1-110

Motion No. 542, Consultation Report (dated April 2009) prepared for the Yukon Legislative Assembly by Yukon Employment Standards Board and Yukon Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board (Hart)