

Yukon Legislative Assembly
Whitehorse, Yukon
Tuesday, April 14, 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.

Introductions of visitors.

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. Fairclough: I give notice of the following motion:
 THAT this House urges the Yukon government to publicly release the application process for requesting funds under the Building Canada fund.

Speaker: Are there any further notices of motion?

Is there a statement by a minister?

This then brings us to Question Period.

QUESTION PERIOD

Question re: Dawson City hospital

Mr. Mitchell: In a press release issued last week, the government announced its decision to build a new hospital in Dawson City. The press release also mentioned that the next step is to do a functional assessment of the community's needs. This is looking like a repeat performance of what happened in Watson Lake: the government decides to build a hospital and then goes out afterwards and checks to see if it's a good idea.

This current budget has money set aside for a health centre in Dawson City — a health centre, not a hospital. When was the decision made to change the scope of this project?

Hon. Mr. Hart: Health care for Yukoners is a priority for this government. One only has to look at our budget with regard to how much money is being spent on health care and how much is being devoted for the health and benefit of all Yukoners. We have announced, basically, to start the process for the new facility in Dawson City, and part of that process is a letter of intent signed with the Yukon Hospital Corporation to oversee the construction of that facility and to assume responsibility for designing the footprint for that facility.

I think it's a very good process because the Hospital Corporation would end up operating and managing this facility, and I think it's very important that they would have some input and indication on what the footprint is going to look like and what services are going to take place there.

Mr. Mitchell: Well, Mr. Speaker, the minister just basically read his news release, but he didn't answer the question of when.

The announcement of a hospital in Dawson City is just another example of the knee-jerk decision-making for which this government is well known. The Watson Lake hospital is a prime example of this. The facility started out as a seniors complex. Then it was going to become a health centre. Now it's supposed to be a hospital, and the government has no idea of the final cost.

In Watson Lake the plan keeps changing, and costs keep going up. This project has cost taxpayers something close to \$5 million by now, and a shell is all we have. In Dawson, a health centre has been in the works since 2004, but suddenly it's now going to be a hospital. Can the minister tell us how much this hospital is going to cost, and how much money has been spent already on this constantly changing project in Dawson?

Hon. Mr. Hart: The government is continually working to serve Yukoners and provide health care in our communities. This is one of the areas we continue to work on.

The process to build a hospital or something similar to that in Dawson will include steps to complete a functional assessment of the community needs and it will also include the city of Dawson City hosting the community and meetings to get input on what that footprint is going to look like in Dawson City. This meeting will include the centre staff, health professionals, the First Nation and the community as a whole to assist in what the footprint is going to look like for Dawson City and what is going to take place within that facility.

Mr. Mitchell: Mr. Speaker, on Thursday the minister announced a hospital and now it's a hospital "or something similar to that". We can't tell if this government is simply failing to plan or planning to fail because it keeps making the same mistakes. The Watson Lake hospital project is a mess. The project was started five years ago, and then it was changed and changed again. It still isn't open and has not yet served the health care needs of a single Yukoner. Lots of time, lots of money, little progress and the result: a shell of a building that was never designed to be a hospital.

This government is doing it again. The government is currently taking the pulse of Yukoners. They are consulting with Yukoners about health care needs and making major decisions about health care facilities before they get the results.

Why did this government make such a major health care decision before completing the health care consultations?

Hon. Mr. Hart: For the member opposite, just to help him with the situation in Watson Lake, Watson Lake has had a hospital since 1979. That was when it was built; that is what it was built for.

The first step in the process will be, as I said, the completion of the functional and spatial assessment for the needs of Dawson City, and we're going to work on that. The Hospital Corporation will be hiring the same firm that they're utilizing in Watson Lake right now. Because that firm is already going to be up here, we're going to take advantage of that firm being here to ensure the efficiencies of the process and, basically, gather on their experience to give us an assessment of what's

going to be needed for Dawson City. Once that is complete, Mr. Speaker, then we will sit down and work with the community on its actual needs.

Question re: Dawson City sewage project

Mr. Elias: I'd like to address a question to the minister responsible for the construction of the Dawson City sewage project. It is my understanding that there was a pre-qualification process that companies interested in bidding on the sewage project had to go through. They had to pass the test before actually submitting a tender. Two companies reportedly qualified. These two companies would presumably prepare a tender and submit it for consideration. Somewhere along the way, one of the two companies was dropped without any satisfactory explanation being given.

Will the minister confirm that one of the two companies was dropped and inform the House as to why it was dropped?

Hon. Mr. Lang: The waste-water contract or plans that went forward are certainly in the process. No decision has been made. We are in partnership with the City of Dawson. We are looking forward to an announcement being made in the near future. No contracts have been signed. Decisions haven't been made, and when they are made they will be made known to the public.

Mr. Elias: Mr. Speaker, the minister didn't even come close to answering the question. This project has not even commenced and already it is being shrouded in secrecy. I want to focus on openness and transparency of this process. Two companies pre-qualified. One was dropped with no satisfactory explanation. The one remaining company's bid is reported to be \$8.5 million higher. Now for that kind of money we need an explanation. The public has a right to know why. The minister has a duty to inform Yukoners. Will the minister confirm there is only one bidder left and that they were \$8.5 million over the other bid?

Hon. Mr. Lang: I will be very clear. No contract has been let. The process is in the process. It's a partnership between the territorial government and the City of Dawson, so it will be a joint decision. When those decisions are made, it'll be made public. No contract has been let; it's in the process of being done. Once those decisions are made, they'll be public.

Mr. Elias: Yukon companies spend thousands of dollars preparing their bids for government contracts. This is an important issue. Dawson City residents have been dealing with this issue for a very long time, not to mention the health of the Yukon River below Dawson City — it's an important issue. I'm asking these questions of the minister so they don't bungle this project at the eleventh hour.

There are millions of dollars in the Community Services capital budget, and we can't get any answers. We want to know why one company was disqualified; we want to know if only one bidder is left and that they're \$8.5 million higher than the other company. Finally, we want to know how the bid was evaluated. Will the minister explain to the House how the evaluation of this tendering project was performed and who actually did the evaluation?

Hon. Mr. Lang: Again I remind the member opposite that this is a partnership between the City of Dawson and

the territorial government. There will be decisions made; there's a process in place at the moment. Once those decisions are made there will be an announcement, but it will be an announcement from the City of Dawson and the territorial government, as it should be.

Question re: Dawson City sewage project

Mr. Cardiff: Well, I'm inclined to weigh in on this again, like I did last week.

Last fall, five companies submitted their qualifications to bid on the Dawson City sewage project. They had to demonstrate their experience, their capability, the capacity to design and build the mechanical waste-water treatment facility on time, on budget, and have the vision and project understanding to meet the project objectives.

Two companies passed that hurdle, and they were allowed to submit proposals in the request-for-proposals process. Just a few days ago, one of those companies, a Yukon construction company, was disqualified. They were told they did not meet the minimum technical evaluation on the request for proposals. That's it. There was no explanation.

Can the minister provide this House, and that company, with an explanation as to how they were qualified to bid through the request for qualifications, and yet disqualified when it came to the request for proposals?

Hon. Mr. Lang: The answer isn't going to change. There is a process. It is a partnership between our territorial government and the City of Dawson. The process is ongoing.

There has been no contract signed with any individual corporation, and when it is, it will be made known to the public. Again, it is a partnership between the City of Dawson and us as the territorial government.

Mr. Cardiff: Well, the request for proposals is a public document and so is the criteria and so should the evaluation be. According to contract directive 52(2), the contracting authority will, upon request, provide to rejected bidders or proponents a full explanation of why their bid or proposal has been rejected. Companies that are rejected have a right to a full explanation.

Many Yukoners' livelihoods depend on securing contracts from this government, whether they're for short-term jobs or big construction projects. Yukoners want to see, and I want to see, a fair, open and transparent process. The minister talks about a process, and we're not seeing it around a \$25-million Dawson City sewage project.

Will the minister make public all paperwork surrounding the contract for the Dawson City sewage project, including the criteria used to reject the Yukon company?

Hon. Mr. Lang: Yes, we will. In due course, we will make public exactly what the member opposite has been asking for. Once these decisions are made, with our partner, Dawson City, and once the contract has been let, it will be all public information.

Mr. Cardiff: I don't know what the minister is afraid of. He can't hide from this problem.

Let's look at this from a little different angle. Two companies put in a proposal for a project that could cost as much as \$25 million. One is disqualified without an explanation. The

only one left standing will probably get the job. That is not a competitive bidding process, Mr. Speaker. It could be one method of sole-sourcing a contract. We have seen this before in Yukon. Under the Liberal watch, Yukon Energy used a process that was similar and they ended up with one proponent for the Mayo-Dawson line and look what happened: the costs skyrocketed and there were major cost overruns and the project is still in trouble.

What does this minister intend to do to prevent this from becoming a \$25-million sole-source contract?

Hon. Mr. Lang: For the member opposite, this is exactly what we are speaking about. This is a partnership between us — the territorial government — and the City of Dawson. The process is ongoing. A decision will come out of that process and at that point all the information will be made public. Until that happens, the process will take its time. We not only have the City of Dawson as a partner but we have court orders to do exactly that. We will be doing it. As soon as there is a contract or decisions made with our partners, we will be making it public.

Question re: McIntyre Creek wetlands

Mr. Edzerza: I thank the Friends of McIntyre Creek and others for their dedication to protect the natural environment corridors of McIntyre Creek. Please continue on with this issue. Once development takes over this natural habitat, which is home to many species of birds, animals and fish, it will be gone forever and they now need to be supported, not destroyed. Animals cannot speak for themselves. On April 2, 2009, the Environment minister made reference to the *Municipal Act*.

Is she familiar with any other document which makes reference to the development of parks?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: For the record, I will completely concur with the member opposite's sentiments regarding McIntyre Creek. Also, as the member opposite articulated, this matter is before the City of Whitehorse; it's before the official community planning process which undertakes and encourages individuals — each of us, the entire citizenry of the City of Whitehorse — to contribute to that planning process.

I have made reference to the *Municipal Act*. The *Municipal Act* is responsible for land use designations within the city parameters.

We respect the work the City of Whitehorse is undertaking and we respect the work that Friends of McIntyre Creek is undertaking, and we look forward to the outcome of the official community planning process.

Mr. Edzerza: I have a suggestion and a possible solution for the minister. Chapter 10 of the *Kwanlin Dun First Nation Final Agreement* refers to special management areas. It states in 10.1.1: the objective of this chapter is to maintain features of the Yukon's natural environment for the benefit of Yukon residents and all Canadians, while respecting the rights of Yukon Indian people.

My question is to the minister. Is the minister familiar with this chapter of Kwanlin Dun First Nation's final land claims agreement?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: Yes, this particular area falls within my purview. The government is very familiar with that obliga-

tion in the treaties. In fact, we have gone through numerous processes now over the last number of years since being in office and dealing with special management areas, habitat protection areas, but I have to remind the Member for McIntyre-Takhini that this House went through a long process where there was unanimous agreement to go out into the public with this very issue: McIntyre Creek and that immediate area.

That process resulted in a lot of public input — First Nations, citizens and others. It has all been provided to the City of Whitehorse. We have another obligation, and that is our protocol to the City of Whitehorse, and our adherence to an official city plan. The area in question is within municipal boundaries, and we look forward to the city presenting their official city plan. Should it include a park in this area, the government of course will work closely with the city to make that so.

Mr. Edzerza: I believe the Premier is just sort of bypassing this issue.

Mr. Speaker, the *Kwanlin Dun First Nation Final Agreement* does supersede the *Municipal Act*. The Kwanlin Dun First Nation Elders Council passed a resolution unanimously to protect McIntyre Creek corridors. An SMA agreement under chapter 10 can be requested by the Yukon government or Kwanlin Dun First Nation at any time. What's needed is the simple political will to have this take place and to transpire into what numerous citizens in this city want.

Will the minister immediately notify Kwanlin Dun First Nation of a request to negotiate an SMA to protect McIntyre Creek? Will she do that?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: Mr. Speaker, I remind the member of the extensive work already done on this very issue, and the government is not deviating from a committed due process. That's exactly why we have conducted ourselves as we have. We're not going to intervene in the official city planning process. If the First Nation should request that we enter into a negotiation on the development of a special management area, that's a matter between this government — the public government of Yukon — and the Government of Kwanlin Dun First Nation. That's an entirely different process.

At this time, the best course of action here in Whitehorse is to make presentations to the city on the official city plan, and that's what we are awaiting. That is what our protocol with the city requires us to do — to work with the city on its plan, but we're also obligated to First Nations on matters such as these and would, of course, entertain any discussions with Kwanlin Dun or any First Nation in the development of special management areas. I must also mention that those processes are agreed-to processes.

Question re: Medevac services contract

Mr. McRobb: Some questions still remain unanswered about this government's rather secretive approach to extending the sole-sourced \$11-million-plus medevac contract. This matter earned the special secret status because there wasn't a peep from this government until well after the fact and only after we raised it in Question Period. Last Thursday, the minister even admitted it was kept a secret. Let's recap: there was no announcement of this development, no statement from the minister, no news release from the government. In fact, it is

still not even listed on the government contract registry. We still don't even know the cost to taxpayers of this extension. Given the plunge in fuel costs, one would expect the costs to have dropped. Can the minister now reveal the missing details including the cost of this sole-source extension?

Hon. Mr. Hart: As the member stated previously in the House, some other firms had some concerns — other than one of his constituents — with regard to this particular contract. Information was given to us that additional time was required. Mr. Speaker, we did provide the additional time. We extended the contract for one year to allow us to complete the terms of reference so that we could evaluate the contract, prepare all the information that is necessary in order to meet one of the conditions that was in the health care plan review as well as other issues with regard to the Auditor General's report with regard to the medevac contract.

Mr. McRobb: The minister's response certainly doesn't relate to the question of what the cost of this extension was. The significant cost of this contract was pinpointed by the Health Care Review Steering Committee as a contract that should be put out for public tender, instead of sole sourcing. Its report was released last September. In October, officials in Contract Services met with at least one proponent who was interested in placing a competitive bid. He was told to expect the tender last November, and the contract would be settled in plenty of time before it expired, but something happened to delay the process — something we're not yet aware of, because the minister has kept it secret. It remains a mystery.

Can he reveal for us now what caused this contract to not go to tender last November, as planned?

Hon. Mr. Hart: As I've stated in the House many times, we brought forth the issue; we're extending the contract for a year to enable us to complete the terms of reference to ensure that all the aspects with regard to the medevac are taken into consideration.

That includes a transition period, the appropriate planes being available, appropriate housing for those planes being available and appropriate services that are provided — pilot-wise — as well as services to the local hospital and their outlying areas with regard to medevacs to and from Whitehorse into our rural communities. Those are the big issues that have to be taken into consideration, and that is to ensure we provide excellent health care to all Yukoners.

Mr. McRobb: Well, two questions; zero answers. No cost revealed and nothing to indicate what tripped it up from being tendered last November. Now there are still lingering questions about the cloudy timeline. The minister refuses to acknowledge that contract registry officials were ready for tender in November, but something or somebody delayed the process in favour of extending the status quo sole-source contract.

Now let's get to the central issue of how this contract will be tendered next fall. Competitive contractors are concerned this contract will be tailored specific to the status quo company, which would make it nearly impossible for them to compete. Other bidders need to know the requirements in advance so

they can arrange undertakings for the equipment, buildings and staff to meet the contract specifics.

What will the minister do to ensure these other bidders get all the information needed reasonably in advance of the tender?

Hon. Mr. Hart: As I have stated many times on this particular question, we have extended the contract for one year. This will enable us to complete the terms of reference for putting this contract out to tender. We are bringing in the services of a professional to assist us in allocating all the information that is going to be required to ensure that there is a seamless process — regardless of who gets the tender. We need to ensure that, above all, medical services are provided to the Yukon. We cannot have any break in service.

As I mentioned earlier, we have to do an assessment of what the requirements are for this contract. They have to be worked out. They will be made available, and we also have to take into consideration our internal trade agreement. They have to be made; they have to be open and transparent and they will be, Mr. Speaker. We will have that available this fall.

Question re: Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board investment fund

Mr. Fairclough: When he appeared before the House last year, the chair of the Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board said that the corporation was on its way to one of the worst years ever in terms of investing. In early December, the corporation lost approximately \$20 million in its investment portfolio. Now that's a big loss — a really big loss. He also didn't expect things to get any better in 2009.

I know the minister has the final numbers in his hands, so can the minister confirm for the public record that the \$20 million was lost in 2008, and can he tell the House if there have been further losses in 2009?

Hon. Mr. Hart: As was stated previously with regard to this question and also during our debate in the House with the chair of the Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board, his comments were provided with regard to the loss of the \$20 million which was basically there. The Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board investments are conservative in the long term. Overall, the investment portfolio shows a reduction of approximately 11.7 percent as of December 31 of last year. By comparison, average pension plan value reduction at the same time was approximately 16 percent. Investment value reduction has not affected the rates paid by employers, and the 2009 rates will be remaining the same as 2009.

Mr. Fairclough: Well, one of the reasons for major losses is a new investment policy, and it was approved by Cabinet in June of 2007. Now, that new policy allowed the board to make more risky investments. The rules were relaxed. Shortly after the new rules were in place, the funds lost some \$20 million.

By law, Mr. Speaker — by law — any amendments to the compensation fund investments policy should be made public within 10 days of approval. They should not be kept a secret. Why were these changes not made available to all members of this House and to the public within 10 days, as required by law?

Hon. Mr. Hart: For the member opposite, I would also like to assist him with regard to this question. When we had the discussion with the chair in the House last fall, members of the opposite side commended — commended — the Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board for their investment process. They commended them on taking the safe, conservative approach to their investments with regard to ensuring the value for all workers out there.

Mr. Fairclough: Well, Mr. Speaker, the minister avoided the question again. Why weren't people notified of this change? Why weren't we notified here in the House? Why can't the minister answer that question?

Now, according to the Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board Web page, the last time any changes were made was in 2000, yet we know the policy was changed in 2007, and again in 2009, by the Yukon Party government, but they didn't bother to tell anyone. The government signed off on substantial changes to how funds are to be invested on behalf of workers. Those changes followed more risky investments and the result has not been good. In 2008, again, some \$20 million was gone.

Now, the *Workers' Compensation Act* requires the minister to make those changes public within 10 days of being signed off. It is the law, Mr. Speaker. Why weren't people told about these changes, as required by law?

Hon. Mr. Hart: The changes provided with regard to the Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board are done through an OIC, which is in a public process.

Speaker: The time for Question Period has now elapsed.

Notice of government private members' business

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Pursuant to Standing Order 14.2(7), I'd like to identify the item standing in the name of the government private member to be called for debate on Wednesday, April 15, 2009. It is Motion No. 729, standing in the name of the Member for Klondike.

In the interest of expediting debate on the budget, we will not be calling a second motion for debate tomorrow.

Speaker: We'll now 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 Community Services. Do members wish 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

Department of Community Services — *continued*

Chair: The matter before the Committee is Bill No. 15, *First Appropriation Act, 2009-10*, Department of Community Services. Mr. Fairclough, you have about 15 minutes left.

Mr. Fairclough: I have to say that I was quite frustrated with the minister's answer to our questions when we left off the debate last Thursday. It is frustrating to bring forward the public's question to the minister and he won't answer the question.

For those who might not have heard the debate that was in the late afternoon on Thursday, the question was asked about a line item of \$3 million in Community Services on the Dawson City sewage treatment. This line item is in Community Services and this question was asked of the Minister of Community Services. The minister said: Ask the Minister of Highways and Public Works because it was transferred to the Minister of Highways and Public Works.

When we check the book, the very one they tabled in this House, and we look at the Department of Highways and Public Works, there are no monies there that are transferred from Community Services.

I'm sure the minister has more answers today. He has had four days of working on this issue. The answer we got was: Ask the Minister of Highways and Public Works. Well, the Minister of Community Services is also the Minister of Highways and Public Works and he didn't know. That was the frustrating part. We asked the minister to bring in his Highways and Public Works officials to answer this question so it doesn't get lost when we come to the Department of Highways and Public Works and we ask this question about the \$3 million. At that time, we don't want the minister to pop up and say, "That's in Community Services," and avoid the whole thing altogether.

Now the frustrating part — and I don't believe I've ever seen this in this Legislature — is that this is a dollar amount. The minister is asking the House to approve this amount of money — \$3 million — in Community Services for the Dawson City sewage treatment. He's asking us for debate, questions on it and so on.

He fought for it to be in Community Services, where these projects happen. Yet we could not get an answer out of the minister — not a clear answer, not one at all. I'm hoping that, as the Minister of Community Services and Minister of Highways and Public Works, he would go back and discuss this with his officials, so that we could have answers during debate in Highways and Public Works on this line item. It should not be swept away, unanswered.

The minister knows that. It's frustrating for us on this side of the House to ask these questions and all we get is a hush-hush from the ministers. It's not right, I believe, because it's not a small amount of money. It's \$3 million. When we talked about questions in Question Period today, or in previous days in this House, this is a big issue, particularly when it comes to contracts and which companies had basically been disqualified from putting a bid in.

The minister was unable to give good answers, other than to say: Ask the Minister of Highways and Public Works — who is the same minister.

We also left off with a number of questions that I had of the minister. As I read through the Blues from last Thursday, I read with some amusement throughout the whole debate.

The minister did make some commitments. I raised a few issues that were important, particularly to my community. I raised the issue of the sewage system in the community of Carmacks, and the fact that the system has a price tag of \$5.5 million. The minister said it will be completed this year, and further talks will be generated with the community and government about the expansion of the sewage system. I think the government understands that it only serves about 40 percent of the community, and others have been talking for quite some time about ensuring that this project is expanded.

I also brought up the issue of the community recreation centre in Carmacks. Years ago when this was built, there were two phases to this recreation centre. Much time has gone by since the first phase of the recreation centre was built and it's time that government addressed the issue of the community in completion of that recreation centre.

Too much time has gone by. I've asked this question over and over, year after year, of the minister and the minister said that he'll take it up with the community. I've also been directed, by the minister — indirectly, the minister is saying to the community that what must happen now is to take these issues, these big projects, to the meeting that is scheduled to be in Carmacks on the 16th of this month and voice yourself there for the Building Canada fund.

Really, what the minister is doing — and he's giving that direction to all members of this side of the House — is raising the expectations that in fact projects like this would be and could be funded under the Building Canada fund, which ultimately in the end will be a decision made by the Yukon government.

I talked to a few people over the weekend and much of the public would like to attend this meeting. I have brought it to people's attention that this should be talked about with government. Hopefully, the government will address these issues. There are a few big ones. There is the recreation centre, there is water and sewer. The other issue was talking about safe drinking water in the community of Carmacks. They have been dealing with this issue for years and years and years. This government seems to have ignored them. They had to go down south to the Canadian Auto Workers union for help to address their situation in the short term. This problem needs to be solved for the long term. I am hoping this government takes that seriously. Take a look at these projects in a serious way. I think as far as

planning goes and getting these projects ready that it won't take all that long.

If the government wants to look at projects that could be shovel-ready and on their way in this year, these are projects that could actually happen.

I'm hoping the minister hears what the community has to say. It's their issue that has been brought through me to the minister.

Also, to make clear, of all the federal funding that is coming down to the Yukon — I spoke on a number of them. I think the public would be interested to even know that MRIF, for example, has \$5 million remaining; there are projects on the go, but this will soon die and whatever projects are being funded now will no longer be and, more than likely, will be redirected to other pots of federal money, like the Building Canada fund.

The Building Canada fund, the infrastructure stimulus fund, which is \$4 billion annually, is a 50:50 split. According to the minister, the Yukon is getting some \$4 million out of that. I'm sure Yukoners would be interested in putting projects together for that too.

Also, the sports fund, which is \$500 million — the minister didn't know too much about this particular fund and others, like who it is that is splitting 50:50, and what's available, and who is the decision body?

When it comes to the Building Canada fund, what we're getting is it's ultimately the Yukon government that makes these decisions. The funds flow from Ottawa to the Yukon government, and projects are identified and approved or rejected by the Yukon government.

We constantly get referred to processes, applications, and none of these are available to the public to see, but we have to go on the minister's word on that and, hopefully, when officials do come to the communities throughout the territory, they will bring them that information — what projects fit into what funding criteria we have before us.

There is a lot for communities to consider. There's a lot for the minister to consider. I think this process should be open and transparent for the communities to address their issues openly and to be treated in a fair manner. I can't help but bring up the whole issue of water in the community of Carmacks. They feel that governments — the federal government and the territorial government — should have been able to address the issues that were raised and at least commit to resolving this problem in the community.

That hasn't happened yet. The issue was raised in this House. The Canadian Auto Workers were brought in to help the community, and they're coming back to Carmacks again to help solve at least the contamination of the wells. But in all that time, the Yukon Party government made very little effort — next to none — to even sit down and talk with the community on this matter, or the First Nation, to address these issues. When I bring these issues up, the minister says, "Well, they can apply through the gas tax."

You know, it was avoidance of trying to even work with the community on a government-to-government basis. That is what should have happened, and that's where the minister should have said that he was going or could go.

I'm going to look forward to the results of the community meeting. I have talked to community people for years and years on these issues I have raised with the minister. I said I would raise it in the House, and I would bring it forward to the minister's attention. I hope that it's heard, that the issues are taken seriously and this minister just doesn't let it slip away.

When projects like this don't get funded, there are always questions raised by community people. "Is the government broke?" Or, "We don't have the money; we just don't have the surplus." What is the problem? Why isn't the government hearing these concerns raised by community people? That's what they're asking.

When the whole issue of monies that are invested and tied up — like the \$36.5 million that's tied up — and we can't access it — maybe we could have, if we didn't get into that mess. Maybe some of these projects could have been funded, but they can't because we don't have access to these funds. We'll have to wait years down the road before some of it becomes available again to the Yukon government.

I think the minister can understand the frustration the communities have gone through over and over again. I think the ministers need to take their portfolios very seriously. I know this minister will get up and say he does, and if he does, he should have answered the question of the \$3 million. That one should have been answered, instead of just saying, "Clear."

I'm going to throw it back to the minister and see if we have anything new on this \$3 million, or are we just going to say "clear", or will we actually have a debate on this line item in Highways and Public Works.

Hon. Mr. Lang: I look forward to the Building Canada consultation that's going on at the moment.

I recommend all communities participate, whether they are individuals, municipalities, First Nations. At the end of this consultation, a business plan is put forward to work on this investment that Yukoners are going to see over the next five years. It is actually a seven-year program but we are in to the second year.

The Member for Mayo-Tatchun made comments about Carmacks and the needs they have in the community and certainly in the other communities in his riding. I would like to remind the members opposite of that constituency, that we certainly support them, but the member opposite has never voted in any of the improvements that we've brought forward to those communities. He voted against the community club in Mayo — a large investment in Mayo itself. This government did that. He voted against the school in Carmacks — he was quite vocal against that. Of course, any other improvements we have made in those communities — whether it is highway work or any other investment has been —

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Point of order

Chair: Mr. Fairclough, on a point of order.

Mr. Fairclough: Mr. Chair, I believe the minister is in violation of our Standing Order 19(g). I know you are going to say this is a dispute between members but in no way have I ever said that I do not support these —

Chair's ruling

Chair: Order please. Order please. Order please.

When members rise on a point of order, the Chair expects members to state the point of order and give an explanation of why there is a point of order. In this case, it definitely is just a dispute among members.

Hon. Mr. Lang: I'm just reminding Yukon that people go out and work on elections and ask for people's votes. And when they needed the vote of the member, he never voted for those projects.

Moving forward and off that, what is this government doing? This government is doing a lot in the territory. All we have to do is look at the budget, whether it's \$122 million — I think I've got all of this information here. Yes, it's a \$122.8-million budget in Community Services. I understand why the member opposite or the opposition has stayed away from discussing the budget figures. These are huge amounts of money being invested on the ground in Yukon communities throughout the whole territory. This doesn't just touch Carmacks, Mayo, Old Crow, and Watson Lake. It touches every community.

It's a huge investment, and it's an investment that this government is making for this fiscal year. The member opposite is debating the fact that there's \$3 million available in Community Services for the proposed sewage treatment facility in the City of Dawson. That money has been budgeted. That's a commitment this government has made to the City of Dawson, if this proposal goes forward — that this money will be available. I reminded the member opposite that it's going to be managed by Property Management. They're more equipped to manage it on the ground.

So the \$3 million is in Community Services. It'll sit there until such a time, over this next period of time, that a decision comes out of the consultation that's going on at the moment. We're not hiding \$3 million. We're investing \$3 million into Dawson City. That's what this government is doing. The member opposite will vote against that.

If you were to look down the breakdown of the \$122.8 million — which the member opposite will vote against too — \$87.8 million is for communities and community infrastructure. Almost \$90 million — \$87.8 million invested on the ground in the Yukon.

There is \$24.5 million for Protective Services and integration of emergency management services. This enhances that part of the department — investing on the ground in Yukon communities — and \$4.6 million in Consumer Services, Corporate Affairs, Building Safety, Labour Services and Motor Vehicles. This is all good news for the territory. If you wanted to break down the \$87.8 million, which I've gone through extensively over the last six days — and I realize that we only have 19 more business days to get through Community Services — I certainly appreciate the opportunity to do the work we need to do in the debate. I understand that the members opposite, over the last six days, have used a shot-gun approach to the budget of Community Services. We have to get more focused on the department itself. We certainly have picked the

department apart — where the \$3 million is and all that. \$122.8 million, Mr. Chair, and we haven't gone line by line in this department. We've only got 19 more business days. I think if you were to work it out, we've only got 14 more business days.

We are looking at a \$1.3-billion budget in the territory — all good, solid news for Yukoners. Our job in this House is to stand up and answer questions from the opposition, and that's what we're doing here with this budget. Six days on one department — Community Services. I understand the fact that it touches all the communities or all Yukoners, but I remind the member opposite, as we go through this this afternoon, we will look at a breakdown of what this money will do.

\$87.8 million: we are investing in communities and community infrastructure to include initiatives that will encourage, strengthen, enable and support local governments in the Yukon — certainly that's what we're going to do. This is the first government in many, many, many years that has resourced the municipal grants to the point over the next period of time to give more resources to our municipalities so they can manage their day-to-day operations. This government did that.

Serve to promote health and safety in unincorporated communities throughout the Yukon through community infrastructure. This is demonstrated through the \$14.1-million allocation that is going directly to Yukon municipalities, again through the comprehensive municipal grant funding — \$14.1 million into the municipalities.

This also demonstrates our key investments in potable water, infrastructure and treatment system upgrades in our Yukon communities. These include Carcross, Teslin, Ross River, Marsh Lake, Haines Junction, and with Carcross-Tagish First Nation and Champagne and Aishihik First Nations. That is all being invested here in the territory. The budget provides for key investments in sewage treatment and disposal projects including construction of the Carmacks waste-water treatment facility — exactly what the member opposite was talking about earlier this afternoon.

Community Services' budget also provides for investment in Yukon's solid-waste management by providing investment in the territory-wide Yukon solid-waste strategy that we talked about over the last six or seven days. That is currently under development. It is a work in progress. This government is showing leadership in the development of the future best practices for solid waste in the territory. We're the first government in approximately 20 years that has taken this task on, and we're doing that today.

Mr. Chair, the Department of Community Services is also continuing to provide significant investment in the Carcross and Whitehorse waterfronts, a large investment to enhance Carcross and of course, the City of Whitehorse.

We are investing in the infrastructure upgrades and the extension of Hamilton Boulevard. It should make the Leader of the Official Opposition very happy. This was an investment brought forward by the Minister of Tourism and Culture and Environment. She was very concerned about this. This is an investment this government is going to make to enhance that area of town — not only for the convenience of the general

population that lives up there but also to enhance it from a safety point of view.

This budget will also establish partnerships with Yukon communities and the volunteer sector — a very important part of our communities. They are going to provide taxing authorities with current, accurate and equitable property assessments. We do that. We feed that into the municipalities and establish general property tax rates for all areas outside a municipality. It is another job that we do on a yearly basis. We provide continued investment in the domestic well program — another initiative started by this government. Rural electrification and telephone program — in other words, making sure that Yukoners have access to potable water and the resources to do just that. We will provide continued investment in sport and recreation and in our community libraries — another large responsibility that this department has.

The department budget also enables communities and people to protect themselves from the threat of wildfire, structural fire and other emergencies or disasters through provisions of integrated emergency medical services. We see that every day. We see ambulances on the road; we see fire equipment and fire volunteers out in our communities. There is also the FireSmart program, and the wildland fire segment of the government, all being ready and prepared to do what they have to do in case of an emergency.

\$24.5 million is budgeted for the fire suppression emergency measures fire management, including FireSmart — again, I talked about that — emergency medical services and structural fire protection through the fire marshal's office, another large investment in the infrastructure in the territory.

This funding will support communities and volunteers who provide emergency medical, ambulance and medevac services throughout the territory. It will promote and foster emergency preparedness and emergency measures organizational services. It will support health, safety and protection through fire prevention and protection and protect communities, families, individuals, property and other community values from wildland fire. It covers the gamut of fire protection, medevac and ambulance services throughout the territory.

\$4.6 million is being invested in initiatives that serve to protect and enhance the public interest in professional and commercial activities. These are initiatives that ensure compliance with minimum standards of employment for wages and working conditions in order to establish a fair and equitable work environment for the Yukon labour force. The budget will help the department to protect public safety through driver and vehicle programs; it will provide community education opportunities through our public library programs and bilingual inquiry services to the public and the Yukon government departments.

The budget supports health, safety and protection of the public through programs such as application of minimum building, electrical and mechanical codes. That again is a service we supply out there on the ground in the territory. We supply a wide range of services to Yukon, and this budget maximizes the benefit for all Yukon citizens and our communities. This budget shows the government commitment to modern

infrastructure, clean drinking water, waste-water treatment, land development, sport and recreation, integrated emergency services and municipal unincorporated communities.

As we go through this, and I make these introductory remarks, I'd like to go back to a couple of things we have to talk about this afternoon and see, again, a further breakdown of this budget that's going to be expended throughout the territory.

Again, I remind the members opposite, it's \$122.8 million. It's a \$1.3-billion budget, but this department will be investing \$122.8 million.

In Carcross alone, we'll be looking at \$735,000 to enhance the public dock and boat launch, welcome signs, and roads and drainage works. In other words, extending our investment that we've been doing over the last two or three years to enhance Carcross.

Whitehorse waterfront improvements — a commitment of \$3.4 million. Of course, we all know the waterfront in Whitehorse has been an issue for a very, very long time. We're working with the city to look at a docking facility, Kwanlin Dun and their investments on the waterfront, and all other stakeholders, and we certainly look forward to finally getting an enhanced waterfront for the city and the taxpayers, not only in Whitehorse but the Yukon.

Again, I talked about Hamilton Boulevard, and I'd like to thank the Minister of Environment for her great support in this investment.

Of course, as I said, it was an enhancement, not only for the convenience of the people up in those subdivisions, but also from a safety point of view, it was very important that we make sure we can get in and out of there in a very well-organized way.

There is certainly the comprehensive municipal grant increase to \$14.154 million. This is the second year of the Yukon government's five-year commitment — five years, Mr. Chair — to increase the comprehensive municipal grant funding. This funding is available for municipalities to invest in the communities, in their municipalities and it gives them the flexibility to invest where they feel comfortable with those investments. The increased funding levels help to boost the fiscal capacity of communities — very important. By 2012-13, the comprehensive municipal grant will have increased to more than \$16 million.

As we move through this, I appreciate the timelines I'm under, Mr. Chair, but this is a large department. It has a large commitment of resources this year. Certainly, I look forward to the remarks from the members opposite; we can move through this over the next couple of days and get it behind us.

Mr. Elias: Early last week in general debate in Community Services, the minister committed to sending me over some documents with regard to the Old Crow water-well breakdown and the Old Crow roadway work that is scheduled to be done. Both budget items were budgeted for \$250,000. I have yet to receive those documents with regard to those breakdowns. Can the minister let me know when I can receive those documents with regard to the Old Crow water-well breakdowns and the Old Crow roadway — with actually what

is going to happen? He committed to sending those documents over to me last week and I have yet to receive them.

Hon. Mr. Lang: In answering the member opposite, the \$250,000 invested in this year's budget is invested in Old Crow for operational upgrades that are required to improve the service and meet regulatory requirements. That is very clear, Mr. Chair. That is what this government is going to invest in the community of Old Crow to do exactly that.

Mr. Elias: I would like to ask the Minister of Community Services to discuss the Old Crow waste-management facility here for a bit.

This issue, too, has been discussed year after year and there have been community meetings about the Old Crow waste-management facility, about its management. The dump in Old Crow needs some investment. The long-term goal, as recommended by Environment Canada, the Vuntut Gwitchin government, the North Yukon Renewable Resources Council, from the Yukon Minister of Environment — they all recommend that this facility be moved to a properly engineered area as a long-term solution.

Short-term solutions that have come from the community are to ensure that, especially during the springtime, the runoff from the snow melt does not flow through the facility and directly into the Porcupine River unimpeded. Things the minister could consider immediately are to divert that water drainage through the waste-management facility right through the dump into the Porcupine River. The waste-management facility is less than 50 metres from the Porcupine River.

The doors to the incinerator are damaged. The solar panel that helps energize the electric fence is damaged. That has to be replaced every year. A fence could be erected at the entrance of the waste-management facility. A contract could go out to hire a manager to actually look after the hazardous waste and to ensure that things are properly managed, that the incinerator is lit at certain times, especially when the wind doesn't blow over the community of Old Crow, emitting noxious fumes and smoke over the community. Better management needs to be the priority — soon, for the short term, for the Old Crow waste-management facility.

Something else that could be done as well is partnering with the community, with the Old Crow youth, so that the recycling program that the youth run could be supported with some infrastructure. Waste reduction programs could be implemented in the community. Proper signage around the waste-management facility, with regard to hazardous wastes and things that can be reused and recycled — and for the minister's information, if he doesn't know already, there's planning in process for a winter road, or a cat train, to go to Old Crow next winter.

Hopefully, the minister can ensure that hazardous waste and metal can be transported out of the community and properly disposed of. Those kinds of planning initiatives can be done now by the minister so that we can get that waste out of Old Crow on the winter road. You know, those are the possibilities.

I just wanted to ask the Minister of Community Services: is he willing to implement these short-term solutions to this

problem of the management of the Old Crow waste-management facility, which falls directly under his ministry?

Hon. Mr. Lang: Old Crow has issues with its solid waste, like all communities in the territory. There are lists and lists of solid waste situations that have shortcomings and certainly, that is what this overview — this consultation we're doing at the moment — is for, so that we can put a plan together for every community in the territory and plan on what we're going to do with solid waste, not only in Old Crow. What happens in Deep Creek? What happens in Beaver Creek? All of these solid-waste operations are archaic and have to be addressed.

We will be addressing all of them after we get this review done, which will be done in the first couple of weeks in June. Then we can put a plan together as government on how we are going to move forward and invest in solid-waste management for the whole territory. That answer couldn't be any clearer than it is today.

This government takes seriously all of the communities and how we manage our solid waste. We realize, in the first government for many years, that we have an issue with solid waste. Old Crow is one of them. We certainly work with the First Nation on their capital investment, of course, and our capital investment to work with each other to make sure that we maximize the dollars that both governments spend. I am sure that the solid waste is as big an issue with the First Nation as it is with us in the community of Old Crow. We look forward to the dialogue we're going to have but also look forward to the master plan and how we as government are going to step forward to manage solid waste throughout the territory.

Mr. Elias: The minister says he takes this issue seriously. The minister knows full well that this issue with regard to the Old Crow waste-management facility has been going on for years. The community has come up with some short-term and long-term solutions that have been sent to the minister's attention over the years. What I heard from the minister is that he is going to wait for this plan and study, yet he knows full well the potential for problems — serious problems that come from the Old Crow waste-management facility, including the pollution of the Porcupine River — and the list goes on.

From the minister's comments, when the snow melts in the next few weeks in Old Crow, he's not even going to attempt to divert the water that flows directly through the Old Crow waste-management facility into the Porcupine River. That water is almost guaranteed to have nasty pollutants in it. So he can't get on his feet and present some solution. After he goes through his study, all of the solutions I've suggested on the floor of the House are going to be communicated to the ministry yet again.

It's too bad and it's frustrating because some of the solutions that are presented to the minister from the community don't seem to be that difficult to achieve. Again, will the minister implement some of these solutions to the problem in the Old Crow waste-management facility immediately? It is melting in Old Crow; the Porcupine River is in danger of being polluted again. No diversion of water, even the snow removal; the fixing of the incinerator — those kinds of simple things — hiring a

manager. Contract it out; it has been discussed before; I've attended those meetings. I've attended meetings where people got up and presented solutions, yet very little is done.

What is the minister prepared to do in the few short weeks to help alleviate the pollution of the Porcupine River and the management of the Old Crow waste facility?

Hon. Mr. Lang: I'd remind the member opposite that the Yukon government operates 20 solid-waste management areas. We've got Beaver Creek, Braeburn, Canyon, Carcross, Champagne, Destruction Bay, Horse Camp Hill, Johnson Crossing, Keno City, Old Crow, Pelly Crossing, Ross River, Silver City, Stewart Crossing, Tagish, Upper Liard, Burwash Landing, Marsh Lake, Mount Lorne and Deep Creek.

Highways and Public Works operate three solid-waste areas which are at Drury Creek, Eagle Plains and Swift River.

We have municipal solid-waste management at Whitehorse — which is the bigger one — Haines Junction, Dawson City, Teslin, Watson Lake, Mayo, Faro, Carmacks and the Selkirk First Nation. These all have issues and we'll treat them all as equal. We'll invest in them when we have the solid-waste plan in front of us, coming up in the next two or three months. We will react to that in a very positive way. We've gone to work, we've done the footprint — the draft is out now — that will be released in April, the end of this month.

We have gone one step further. First of all, when we started the review, we taxed the individuals who were doing the review and we discovered halfway through it that we couldn't do the review without involving the municipalities. It wasn't practical to leave out the municipalities, so we went back to the review and said now that we have to add the communities. We added Whitehorse, Haines Junction, Dawson City, Teslin, Watson Lake, Mayo, Faro, Carmacks and the Selkirk First Nation. We added that on to get a thorough review of the solid-waste management. Then we also said that we want to get emission tests from these different sites. Beaver Creek has a burning vessel. Braeburn has a burning vessel. Canyon has a burning vessel. Champagne has a burning vessel. Destruction Bay has a burning vessel. Horse Camp has a burning vessel. Johnson Crossing has a burning vessel. Keno City has a burning vessel. Old Crow has a burning vessel. Pelly Crossing has a burning vessel. Ross River has a burning vessel. Silver City has a burning vessel. Stewart Crossing has a burning vessel. Tagish has a burning vessel. Upper Liard has a burning vessel.

As you see, Mr. Chair, all of these different areas and different communities have problems. They are all, like the member opposite is talking about — they have to be addressed.

But what we're doing is working in Old Crow with the Vuntut Gwitchin, the local First Nation government, and ourselves. We're working with the issues throughout the territory to make sure that we have the three components of what we want at the end of the day.

We want to know what the footprint is. That will come out at the end of this month.

We want to know the emissions of these different areas that we're burning in. I have different reports that come in front of me; I want a concrete report on what the emissions are out of

these burning vessels. There is also the open burning — Drury Creek, Eagle Plains, Swift River — open burning.

The communities, Mr. Chair — we've got open burning in Teslin, Watson Lake, Mayo, Faro, Carmacks, and Selkirk First Nation. All of those have open burning. There is open burning in Carcross. All of those things are affecting the neighbourhood. I want the statistics so we can make the proper decision.

We're also going to go out and talk about these decisions and these reports with the people they're going to affect — the general public in these communities. That will all be done, and then we'll put a business plan together and invest in how we're going to go forward managing solid waste throughout the territory.

That's how this government will do it. We're going to do it; we are going to work on this. Instead of one-offing it, we are going to work at an overall view of the future in managing solid waste in the territory, including the municipal operations, including Highways and Public Works — the responsibility they have in their camps and in these smaller communities.

I look forward to this, Mr. Chair. I don't know how much clearer I can be. We've resourced it. In fact, we started out at a figure. I think it's almost double because of the municipal component that we put on it, plus the independent emission study, so that we can get figures that work, that are realistic and that we can know are as close to factual as you can get. From there, the public meetings will unfold and we will be making decisions, not only in Old Crow. The Carcross issue is a huge issue to people in the Carcross community — in the surrounding Carcross community.

A lot of this solid-waste infrastructure is used by many people. How do we manage that because of the nature of solid-waste areas?

Deep Creek is a transfer station, but they also burn there, Mr. Chair. How do we control that?

Those questions are going to come out of this study, and I look forward to reacting to the study when it comes forward. I'm not going to stand up in the House and make any commitments here today for any community in the territory, except the whole Yukon. That's what we're working with today, and that's where we're at now, and it's down the road, Mr. Chair. We've got one part of it done, and we're looking at the second part of it. The public meetings are going to unfold. It is an urgent thing for all Yukoners.

Chair: Is there any further general debate?

Seeing none, we'll proceed line by line in Vote 51, Department of Community Services.

On Operation and Maintenance Expenditures

On Corporate Services

On Deputy Minister's Office

Deputy Minister's Office in the amount of \$437,000 agreed to

On Human Resources

Mr. Elias: May I have a breakdown?

Hon. Mr. Lang: Okay — \$979,000 consists of \$935,000 for personnel and \$44,000 for Other.

Human Resources in the amount of \$979,000 agreed to
On Finance, Systems and Administration

Mr. Elias: Breakdown, please.

Hon. Mr. Lang: The O&M budget for \$2.687 million consists of \$2,385,000 for personnel and \$300,000 for Other.

Finance, Systems and Administration in the amount of \$2,687,000 agreed to

On Corporate Policy and Communications

Mr. Elias: Breakdown, please.

Hon. Mr. Lang: The 2009-10 operation and maintenance budget for \$1,058,000 consists of \$973,000 for personnel and \$85,000 for Other.

Corporate Policy and Communications in the amount of \$1,058,000 agreed to

Corporate Services in the amount of \$5,161,000 agreed to
On Protective Services

On Emergency Measures

Mr. Elias: Can I get a breakdown?

Hon. Mr. Lang: That's \$258,000 in the breakdown. The O&M budget for \$403,000 consists of \$258,000 for personnel, \$111,000 for Other, and \$5,000 for transfer payments.

Emergency Measures in the amount of \$403,000 agreed to
On Fire Marshal

Mr. Elias: Can I get a breakdown, please?

Hon. Mr. Lang: The O&M budget for \$719,000 consists of the following: \$294,000 for personnel and \$425,000 for Other.

Mr. Elias: Can I get a further breakdown for the Other section?

Hon. Mr. Lang: \$425,000 for Other. There's \$32,000 for travel; \$102,000 for honoraria for volunteer firefighters; \$24,000 for rental expenses; \$15,000 for petroleum; \$8,000 for program materials; \$30,000 for repairs and maintenance; \$80,000 for electricity; \$75,000 for heating fuel; \$30,000 for communications; \$10,000 for training and \$19,000 for various other requirements of the program.

Chair: Is there any further debate?

Fire Marshal in the amount of \$719,000 agreed to
On Fire Management

Mr. Elias: Can I have a breakdown, please?

Hon. Mr. Lang: Okay. \$6,240,000 for personnel; \$7,416,000 for Other. That consists of \$90,000 for travel; \$1,175,000 for contract services; \$240,000 for rental expenses; \$45,000 for advertising; \$30,000 for supplies; \$56,000 for program materials; \$18,000 for repairs and maintenance; \$41,000 for petroleum; \$140,000 for communications; \$38,000 for training; \$5,455,000 for suppression activities and \$88,000 for various other requirements of this program.

Fire Management in the amount of \$13,656,000 agreed to
On Emergency Medical Services

Mr. Elias: Breakdown, please.

Hon. Mr. Lang: This is emergency medical services. The budget of \$6,092,000 consists of \$3.830 million for personnel, \$2.076 million for Other. That consists of \$46,000 for travel; \$1.321 million for honoraria for volunteer EMS personnel; \$122,000 for rental expenses; \$35,000 for contract services, \$35,000 for petroleum; \$167,000 for program materials; \$41,000 for repairs and maintenance; \$19,000 for electricity; \$14,000 for heating fuel; \$125,000 for communications;

\$95,000 for training; \$13,000 for insurance and \$43,000 for various other requirements of the program.

Thank you.

Emergency Medical Services in the amount of \$6,092,000 agreed to

Protective Services in the amount of \$20,870,000 agreed to

On Community Development

On Program Administration

Mr. Elias: Breakdown.

Hon. Mr. Lang: In O&M, \$692,000 consists of the following: \$575,000 for personnel; \$117,000 for Other, which consists of \$16,000 for travel, \$7,000 for contract services, \$15,000 for supplies, \$61,000 for communications, \$6,000 for rental expenses, \$4,000 for training, and \$8,000 for other program requirements.

Program Administration in the amount of \$692,000 agreed to

On Sport and Recreation

Mr. Elias: Can I get a breakdown from the minister, please?

Hon. Mr. Lang: Sports and recreation highlights for O&M budget of \$3,808,000 consist of the following: \$559,000 for personnel; \$228,000 for Other, which is \$34,000 for travel, \$5,000 for honoraria, \$40,000 for contract services, \$47,000 for insurance, \$5,000 for rental expenses, \$6,000 for supplies, \$8,000 for program materials, \$9,000 for communications, \$17,000 for training, \$54,000 for membership, and \$3,000 for other program requirements.

\$3,021,000 for transfer payments for contributions to sports and recreation groups, which include the following: the volunteer bureau for \$67,000; Yukon recreational group, \$166,000; contribution to local authorities, \$418,000; Yukon sports governing body, \$459,000; Sport Yukon core funding, \$130,000; Special Olympics, \$24,000; Canadian Senior Games, \$10,000; National Aboriginal Indigenous Games, \$15,000; elite athletes coaching, an official grant of \$47,000; aboriginal sports and recreation circle, \$55,000; Sports For Life, \$789,000; Arctic Winter Games, \$355,000; 2010 Winter Olympic Games, \$411,000; and \$75,000 for various other smaller contributions.

Mr. Elias: Can the minister elaborate on the elite athletes line item, please?

Chair: Is there any further debate? Shall that line clear?

Sport and Recreation in the amount of \$3,808,000 agreed to

On Property Assessment and Taxation

Mr. Elias: Could I have a breakdown, please?

Hon. Mr. Lang: The property assessment and taxation O&M budget for 2009-10 of \$3,987,000 consists of the following: \$722,000 for personnel; \$95,000 for Other, which consists of \$31,000 for travel, \$5,000 for contract services, \$5,000 for advertising, \$4,000 for program materials, \$20,000 for computer system software and \$30,000 for other program needs; and \$3,170,000 for transfer payments. This amount is for homeowner grant payments.

Property Assessment and Taxation in the amount of \$3,987,000 agreed to

On Community Affairs

Mr. Elias: Could I have a breakdown please?

Hon. Mr. Lang: Community Affairs highlights: 2009-10 O&M budget of \$20,026,000 consists of the following: \$574,000 for personnel; \$50,000 for Other, which consists of \$13,000 for travel, \$5,000 for contract services, \$5,000 for rental expenses, \$4,000 for honoraria, \$19,000 for program materials and \$4,000 for various other programs. \$19,402,000 is for transfer payments; \$4,983,000 for grant-in-lieu of property taxes; \$14,154,000 for comprehensive municipal grant; \$70,000 for community local advisory area operation and maintenance grants; \$75,000 for the Mae Bachur Humane Society; \$20,000 for the Dawson City Humane Society; and \$100,000 for Association of Yukon Communities.

Community Affairs in the amount of \$20,026,000 agreed to

On Community Infrastructure

Mr. Elias: Breakdown.

Hon. Mr. Lang: Highlights of the public library investment, 2009-10 operating budget: \$1,737,000 — sorry, Mr. Chair, it's behind this one.

This is a very important line. Community infrastructure highlights in the 2009-10 budget for \$1,810,000 consists of the following: \$680,000 for personnel; \$1,122,000 for Other, which includes \$25,000 for travel; \$307,000 in contract services — mainly for water delivery and dump maintenance; \$514,000 for various repairs and maintenance; \$114,000 for vehicle rental charges; \$39,000 for program materials, \$51,000 for heating oil; \$55,000 for electricity; \$77,000 for fuel or water and sewer trucks; \$9,000 in internal charges; and the balance of \$17,000 is for various other program needs.

Community Infrastructure in the amount of \$1,810,000 agreed to

On Public Libraries

Mr. Elias: Would the honourable minister please provide a breakdown of that line item.

Hon. Mr. Lang: I certainly will, Mr. Chair, now that I've found it.

Highlights of the public library: in the 2009-10 budget, \$1,737,000 consists of the following investment in our communities: \$1,167,000 for personnel, including salaries and benefits for a director and staff of 16.16 FTEs.

Another \$236,000 for Other — that consists of \$19,000 for travel, \$4,000 for honoraria, \$7,000 for contract services, \$11,000 for supplies, \$131,000 for program materials, \$25,000 for communications, \$25,000 for computer systems, and \$5,000 for various other requirements of the program. There is another \$334,000 for transfers to provide funding for community libraries.

Public Libraries in the amount of \$1,737,000 agreed to

Community Development in the amount of \$32,060,000 agreed to

On Consumer and Safety Services

On Program Administration

Mr. Elias: Breakdown.

Hon. Mr. Lang: Consumer and Safety Service — another investment. Program administration highlights of the 2009-10 budget: \$627,000, with \$543,000 of that for personnel; \$84,000 for Other — which includes \$18,000 for travel out of Yukon, \$7,000 for contract services, \$6,000 for repairs and maintenance, \$15,000 for supplies, \$26,000 for communications, and \$12,000 for various other program requirements.

Program Administration in the amount of \$627,000 agreed to

On Board and Council

Mr. Elias: I would appreciate a breakdown of this line item.

Hon. Mr. Lang: Board and Council highlights in the O&M budget of 2009-10, \$105,000, consists of the following: \$48,000 for personnel, \$57,000 for Other — travel expenses of \$5,000, \$35,000 for honoraria, \$29,000 for contract services, and \$5,000 for various other program requirements, partially offset by a \$17,000 recovery from YLC, the Yukon Liquor Corporation.

*Board and Council in the amount of \$105,000 agreed to
On Consumer Services*

Mr. Elias: Breakdown, please.

Hon. Mr. Lang: Consumer Services — highlights of that investment for this budget, 2009-10 — the total of \$647,000 consists of the following: \$621,000 for personnel; \$26,000 for Other, which consists of \$11,000 for travel, \$11,000 for contract services, and \$4,000 for various other program requirements.

*Consumer Services in the amount of \$647,000 agreed to
On Corporate Affairs*

Mr. Elias: Breakdown, please.

Hon. Mr. Lang: Again, Corporate Affairs highlights for this 2009-10 fiscal year, the operating and maintenance budget of \$406,000, consist of the following: \$367,000 for personnel; \$39,000 for other, which consists of a \$10,000 commitment for travel; \$7,000 for contract services; \$6,000 for program materials; \$12,000 for computer services, hardware and software; and a \$4,000 commitment for other program requirements.

*Corporate Affairs in the amount of \$406,000 agreed to
On Building Safety*

Mr. Elias: Can I get a breakdown of this line item?

Hon. Mr. Lang: Building Safety — the highlights for this year's budget, 2009-10, a total of \$1,120,000 consists of the following: investment of \$992,000 for personnel; \$128,000 for Other, which consists of a travel budget of \$41,000; \$70,000 for rental expenses; \$5,000 for program materials; \$10,000 for internal charges and \$2,000 for various other program needs.

*Building Safety in the amount of \$1,120,000 agreed to
On Labour Services*

*Labour Services in the amount of \$406,000 agreed to
On Motor Vehicles*

Mr. Elias: Can I have a breakdown, please?

Hon. Mr. Lang: Motor Vehicles, highlights for the year 2009-10 — O&M budget of \$1,316,000 consists of the following: a personnel investment of \$1,027,000; \$289,000 for

Other and that covers \$11,000 for travel; \$79,000 for contract services; \$13,000 for vehicle rental expenses; \$63,000 for supplies; \$72,000 for program materials; \$24,000 for communications; \$12,000 for printing and \$15,000 for various other program needs.

*Motor Vehicles in the amount of \$1,316,000 agreed to
Consumer and Safety Services in the amount of \$4,627,000 agreed to*

On Revenues

Revenues cleared

On Transfer Payments

Transfer Payments cleared

Total Operation and Maintenance Expenditures in the amount of \$62,718,000 agreed to

On Capital Expenditures

On Corporate Services

On Office Furniture, Equipment, Systems and Space

Office Furniture, Equipment, Systems and Space in the amount of \$631,000 agreed to

Corporate Services in the amount of \$631,000 agreed to

On Protective Services

On Fire Suppression

On FireSmart

Mr. Elias: Can I have a breakdown, please?

Hon. Mr. Lang: Highlights of the fire suppression, the FireSmart funding of \$1.5 million is for long-term programs implementing fire reduction safety projects to reduce the risk of forest fires damaging local communities. This is a \$1.5-million investment in our FireSmart program.

FireSmart in the amount of \$1,500,000 agreed to

On Emergency Measures

Emergency Measures in the amount of \$280,000 agreed to

On Fire Marshal

On Major Facility Maintenance

Major Facility Maintenance in the amount of \$142,000 agreed to

On Fire Protection

Fire Protection in the amount of \$603,000 agreed to

On Prior Years' Projects

Prior Years' Projects in the amount of nil cleared

On Fire Management

Fire Management in the amount of \$640,000 agreed to

On Emergency Medical Services

Emergency Medical Services in the amount of \$538,000 agreed to

On Prior Years' Projects

Prior Years' Projects in the amount of nil cleared

Protective Services in the amount of \$3,703,000 agreed to

On Community Development

On Sport and Recreation

On Recreation/Community Centres – Various

Mr. Elias: Breakdown for that line item, please.

Hon. Mr. Lang: Sport and recreation highlights: recreation/community centres — various, \$201,000, consists of two projects: \$193,000 is for the repair and upgrade existing recreational facilities and small capital projects in 12 unincorporated communities and the \$8,000 is to explore alternative heating

for pools. Dawson City recreational centre is funded \$1 million to address operational structure deficiencies to ensure a functioning arena is obtained.

Recreation/Community Centres – Various in the amount of \$201,000 agreed to

On Dawson City Recreation Centre

Mr. Elias: Can I have a breakdown?

Hon. Mr. Lang: Could you have the member opposite readdress that question?

Chair: Is there any further debate on the Dawson City recreation centre for \$1 million?

Mr. Elias: I would like a breakdown of the line item.

Hon. Mr. Lang: In addressing that, it is a contribution agreement with the City of Dawson. It is a \$4-million agreement over the next four years. This is the first installment of that \$4 million.

Dawson City Recreation Centre in the amount of \$1,000,000 agreed to

On Prior Years' Projects

Prior Years' Projects in the amount of nil cleared

On Property Assessment and Taxation

On Rural Electrification and Telephone Program

Mr. Elias: A breakdown of that, please.

Hon. Mr. Lang: That's a loan funding program that this government has put together for individuals, so it's just that: it's to assist rural property owners with the installation of power and telephone service, which is fully recoverable.

Rural Electrification and Telephone Program in the amount of \$600,000 agreed to

On Domestic Well Program

Mr. Elias: Could I please have a breakdown of this line item?

Hon. Mr. Lang: Another program initiative by this government. The domestic well program was put in place — there's \$600,000 in place — to assist rural property owners with the drilling of domestic water wells and, again, it's fully recoverable.

Domestic Well Program in the amount of \$600,000 agreed to

On Community Infrastructure

On Planning and Pre-Engineering

Planning and Pre-Engineering in the amount of \$90,000 agreed to

On Assessment of Unincorporated Infrastructure

Assessment of Unincorporated Infrastructure in the amount of \$120,000 agreed to

On Project Management

Mr. Elias: A breakdown.

Hon. Mr. Lang: Project management — \$970,000 is to cover salaries and benefits of staff engaged in management, administration and technical support of community infrastructure projects.

Project Management in the amount of \$976,000 agreed to

On Water Supply, Treatment and Storage — Ross River Water Treatment

Mr. Elias: Breakdown, please.

Hon. Mr. Lang: There are two projects: \$1 million consists of two projects — \$750,000 for improvements to the Ross River water treatment and an investment in Old Crow of \$250,000 for a water well.

Chair's statement

Chair: Before we continue any further, the Chair would like to remind members just to hold off on asking their questions until they're recognized so everybody knows who is asking what.

Mr. Elias: Could the minister go into detail with the two line items he just mentioned — exactly what's going to happen, where is the money exactly going to be spent and for what?

Chair's statement

Chair: Also before we proceed, we'll have to remember that we are going line by line, and we'll have to deal with one line and fully clear that before we proceed to the next one.

Hon. Mr. Lang: Another investment in the Ross River water treatment. It will consist of a new treatment process that's required to address arsenic removal and operational requirements to meet new drinking water regulations. Additional funding, \$1.5 million — okay, so that addresses the \$750,000. This is part and parcel of a two-year plan. Additional funding of \$1.5 million has been identified through BCP to fund the construction of a new building to house the treatment system. So this is a small part of the bigger picture.

Water Supply, Treatment and Storage — Ross River Water Treatment in the amount of \$750,000 agreed to

Water Supply, Treatment and Storage — Old Crow Water Well

Mr. Elias: Could I get a breakdown, please?

Hon. Mr. Lang: The Old Crow \$250,000 investment is an assessment and some upgrade of the operation of the existing well they have there now, but it is an assessment on how we're going to move forward with the management of that facility in the future.

Mr. Elias: Can the minister elaborate on what exactly is being assessed, and is there going to be any physical work on the ground this year with this money? Or is it going to be an engineering contract? What exactly is the \$250,000 being spent on?

Hon. Mr. Lang: The operational thing — the assessment will dictate how many people are on the ground. But first of all we have to move out with the operational assessment to plan on how we're going to move forward.

Water Supply, Treatment and Storage — Old Crow Water Well in the amount of \$250,000 agreed to

Water Supply, Treatment and Storage — On Prior Years' Projects

Water Supply, Treatment and Storage — Prior Years' Projects in the amount of nil cleared

On Water and Sewer Mains

Water and Sewer Mains in the amount of \$150,000 agreed to

On Sewage Treatment and Disposal — Ross River Sewage Disposal Pit

On Sewage Treatment and Disposal — Ross River Sewage Disposal Pit in the amount of \$75,000 agreed to

On Sewage Treatment and Disposal — Carcross Sewage Treatment and Disposal

On Sewage Treatment and Disposal — Carcross Sewage Treatment and Disposal in the amount of \$250,000 agreed to

On Sewage Treatment and Disposal — On Prior Years' Projects

On Sewage Treatment and Disposal — Prior Years' Projects in the amount of nil cleared

On Solid Waste

Mr. Elias: Can I get a breakdown of this line item, please?

Hon. Mr. Lang: This \$670,000 is a commitment by the government on three projects: to improve for regulatory compliance, at \$150,000, will include electric fencing, signage, trenching and site operation expansion at territorial solid-waste facilities; facility land tenure at \$20,000 to complete an inventory of land tenure for all community development branch facilities and apply for land transfer for those sites on federal land reserves, and perform legal surveys as required; and \$500,000 for solid-waste strategy implementation — another investment in the communities of the territory.

Solid Waste in the amount of \$670,000 agreed to

On Flood/Erosion Control

Mr. Cardiff: This line item is relatively small and light, compared to what we found out last week. Given the situation in Upper Liard and the fact that there will probably be the need for some flood control, how does the minister plan to deal with that?

Hon. Mr. Lang: Certainly, as these reports unfold, we will act responsibly and resource it as needed.

This flood erosion control is a small amount of money. It is \$5,000 for one project for flood mitigation territory-wide, so it is a small amount of money. As we've done in the past, we'll address the issue as it unfolds, and we will do exactly that as we move into the spring.

Mr. Cardiff: I guess from my perspective, when you look at — and I know the minister's going to say, "You've got to compare mains to mains" — okay, but next year we'll be able to compare actuals to forecasts, and all that, but the reality is that in 2007-08, they actually spent almost \$500,000. They're forecasting that, by the end of March, they would have spent \$521,000, and yet we only have \$5,000.

I can wait, and the Premier can finish giving the minister a briefing, and then we'll ask the question.

What I'd like to know — the Premier thinks it's funny. It's his riding. It looks like this is becoming a habit and something that is happening on a more frequent basis. We're being faced with flooding. I'm just wondering why it is that at this juncture, we only have \$5,000 in capital to deal with flood and erosion control when we know that due to — this is one of the Premier's favourite lines, actually, when it comes to climate change — to mitigate and adapt.

Well, it would seem to me that if we were adapting, we'd have an appropriate amount of money in our budget to deal with flood and erosion control.

I don't know if the minister has got the answer to the question now. He says we've got \$5,000 for one project and we'll just deal with it. We're going to take it out of the piggy bank if we have a flood. Is that what the minister is saying?

Flood/Erosion Control in the amount of \$5,000 agreed to

On Equipment Purchase

Equipment Purchase in the amount of \$98,000 agreed to

On Road/Streets Upgrade

Road/Streets Upgrade in the amount of \$100,000 agreed to

On Canada Strategic Infrastructure Fund Projects — Carcross Waterfront

Mr. Fairclough: We had some discussion on this and I was wondering if the minister can give us some more details?

Hon. Mr. Lang: In response to Carcross, there is an investment going on. This investment by this government has been going on for the last couple of years and the \$735,000 will be used for enhancing the waterfront in Carcross. It has community support. There is some investment in drainage, water control, parking and also in the enhancement of the public dock and the boat launch — both very important for the Town of Carcross. There is a lot of signage going on. In other words, this project is going forward — I am led to believe this is probably one of the final investments in enhancing the downtown core of Carcross in the dock facility and in the tourist area that we visualize Carcross having at the end of this season.

I remind the member opposite that it is drainage work, roadwork, public dock work, boat launching, and of course signage and all of the things that go along with that investment.

Canada Strategic Infrastructure Fund Projects — Carcross Waterfront in the amount of \$735,000 agreed to

On Canada Strategic Infrastructure Fund Projects — Whitehorse Waterfront

Mr. Elias: Could the minister elaborate on this line item, please?

Hon. Mr. Lang: Much like Carcross, just a larger amount of money. This project includes a new parking lot for Rotary Park — a large investment; a riverfront wharf project which is moving forward.

Ongoing projects being completed in 2009 are soil remediation at the former Motorways site, Shipyards Park landscaping project and the interior work on the roundhouse, train shed, and Shipyards Park heritage building — a large investment in the waterfront in Whitehorse.

Canada Strategic Infrastructure Fund Projects — Whitehorse Waterfront in the amount of \$3,400,000 agreed to

On Canada Strategic Infrastructure Fund Projects — Prior Years' Projects

Canada Strategic Infrastructure Fund Projects — Prior Years' Projects in the amount of nil cleared

On Municipal Rural Infrastructure Fund Projects — Takhini North Infrastructure Replacement

Mr. Edzerza: Could I have a breakdown on that?

Hon. Mr. Lang: The municipal rural infrastructure fund projects — a total of \$9,370,000 is invested in this coming

year for three projects: \$2,533,000 for the Takhini North project in the City of Whitehorse; \$1,750,000 for completion of the Hamilton Boulevard extension in Whitehorse and —

Chair: Order please. I just want to remind members that when we're doing the line-by-line, we have to focus just on the line we're currently on, and we're on Takhini North Infrastructure Replacement for \$2,533,000. Is there any further debate?

Municipal Rural Infrastructure Fund Projects — Takhini North Infrastructure Replacement in the amount of \$2,533,000 agreed to

On Municipal Rural Infrastructure Fund Projects — Hamilton Boulevard Extension

Mr. Cardiff: Is this the completion of this project this year? I guess the other question is — a lot of concern was expressed about traffic patterns and traffic safety at the intersection with the Alaska Highway. When do we expect to see the traffic lights installed there to end the confusion?

Hon. Mr. Lang: We expect to be done in this building season. This is the final installation on our commitment on Hamilton Boulevard, so this should be finished this year.

Municipal Rural Infrastructure Fund Projects — Hamilton Boulevard Extension in the amount of \$1,750,000 agreed to

On Municipal Rural Infrastructure Fund Projects — Unallocated/Administration

Mr. Fairclough: I would ask for a breakdown.

Hon. Mr. Lang: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I thank my learned friend. That's the amount of money that is left from MRIF that hasn't been allotted to projects.

Mr. Elias: Is that program going to be continued again or are you going to be receiving applications? Are there applications that have not been reviewed yet? What is going on with that money?

Hon. Mr. Lang: MRIF is being sunsetted and this fund will look at previous applications that have been brought forward, but MRIF is being sunsetted.

Mr. Fairclough: I realize that these funds have a lot of applications; a lot of projects have been listed. Is the minister suggesting that these projects be redirected to other funds that are available?

Hon. Mr. Lang: I recommend the member opposite read the Blues. That question was asked and answered at that point.

Mr. Fairclough: Can the minister tell us which projects are being redirected?

Chair: Is there any further debate?

Hon. Mr. Lang: Clear.

Mr. Cardiff: This is the height of uncooperativeness here this afternoon.

Can the minister tell us whether or not the \$5 million will be spent? It's in the budget; there are projects. It's my understanding from the discussions that we've had in the Legislature previously that there are some projects that are already being considered for this money. But are we spending the money or are we sending it back to Ottawa?

Hon. Mr. Lang: In addressing the member opposite, I'm not part of that process. There is a form of how applica-

tions are handled. This is a federal government program and we certainly work with them, but I'm not able to make an announcement in the House today on which projects will be funded. We're looking forward to investing the \$5 million. We certainly see the benefit in it, but there is a process and they're following the process.

Mr. Cardiff: The minister doesn't really have it right here. He's talking about the fact that it's a federal process. Well, it's more than a federal process. The territorial government plays a role in this.

They sit on the committee that approves or rejects proposals. What I'm asking is whether or not the money is going to be expended or whether it's the government's intention — because he has talked about redirecting proponents of projects to other funds, whether it's CSIF or the Building Canada fund or the gas tax fund — he went on at length about it. Too much length.

The simple question is: is it the government's intention to expend the \$5 million or are they going to lapse it and send the federal portion back to Ottawa?

Hon. Mr. Lang: We're planning on investing it here in the territory.

Mr. Cardiff: Thank you.

Municipal Rural Infrastructure Fund Projects — Unallocated/Administration in the amount of \$5,087,000 agreed to

On Municipal Rural Infrastructure Fund Projects — Prior Years' Projects

Municipal Rural Infrastructure Fund Projects — Prior Years' Projects in the amount of nil cleared

On Building Canada Fund — Dawson City Sewage Treatment

Mr. Elias: Could I have a breakdown of that line please?

Hon. Mr. Lang: That question has been asked in the House. That money has been put aside by Community Services if and when the solution to the sewer issue in Dawson City is resolved. That project will be handled by Property Management, so that money will flow when the decisions are made.

Mr. Cardiff: The minister has identified \$3 million for this project in this year. Can the minister tell us, as he did previously in the Ross River water treatment line — he stated it's a two-year project; there's \$1.5 million for next year — how much they've identified for future years on this project?

Hon. Mr. Lang: The \$3 million has been put aside by Community Services in this year's budget, and that would be to address the Dawson City waste-water program once the decision is made. We have no plans, because there has been no decision on the program itself, so the \$3 million is money that will be allotted if and when the decision is made by the City of Dawson and us on how we'll move forward with this project.

Mr. Cardiff: Does the minister have any plans or contingencies, if this project moves ahead, to request more funds so that the project, if it does move forward, doesn't stall? If \$3 million isn't enough, is it his intention to request more money in the fall supplementary?

Hon. Mr. Lang: Again, Mr. Chair, Community Services has \$3 million in reserve to react, if in fact the City of

Dawson and the territorial government put a master plan together on how they're going to move forward. It would be premature of me to say what the amount of money is when the plan hasn't even been finalized.

Mr. Cardiff: The minister doesn't have to identify a figure. I mean, it would be nice if he did; he must have some sort of an idea. Usually you don't enter into a project like this without having some idea of what the cost is going to be. If you look at the audit of contracts, and the Auditor General's report on Highways and Public Works and the government's contract practices, I thought we had moved on from that. I thought that there was now a better process where we were planning a little bit in advance, as opposed to putting \$3 million in the budget for a project we don't know the cost of.

I can see that the Premier is exasperated, but what I would like to know is whether or not the government has identified further funds. We all know that \$3 million isn't going to be enough to complete this project. We've talked about it in the Legislature before. Where is the minister going to get those funds? Is it his intention — listen carefully to the question; I would encourage the minister to listen to the question, Mr. Chair, as opposed to listening to the briefing he's getting from the Government House Leader. Is it his intention, should this project go ahead this year, to request more funds in the fall supplementary, if they are needed?

Chair: Is there any further debate?

Mr. Fairclough: Mr. Chair, this government and all the ministers rise in this House during general debate, and say, "Let's get into lines. We can provide you with more details when we get into line items." This debate took place on Thursday. The minister was unable to answer the question, and we are asking for more details on this line item. Surely, the minister would have information on this. We would like to know what is going on here. When the budget was developed, it was written with Community Services taking on this project and it has now moved over. I'd like to ask the minister then, when was the decision made to have this project move over to Highways and Public Works?

Chair: Is there any further debate?

Mr. Fairclough: Well, Mr. Chair, let the record show that the minister is unable to answer this question. Over and over we have asked for details on this line item. I know it's going into Highways and Public Works. It is the same minister who is going to get up and say that it's in Community Services and hide from the public. We need an open and accountable government. This minister is not providing that. Shame on him.

Chair: Is there any further debate?

Building Canada Fund — Dawson City Sewage Treatment in the amount of \$3,000,000 agreed to

On Building Canada Fund — Marsh Lake Intake and Fill System

Mr. Fairclough: Let's hear a breakdown; let's get the minister up.

Hon. Mr. Lang: This is quite a large investment in Marsh Lake for the project. This is a \$2.4-million investment in the community of Marsh Lake, an intake for their water issues at the north end of Army Beach. It is construction and design of

an upgraded water treatment plant capable of treating surface water and to meet current and future regulations. A physical filter media membrane technology will be looked at for addressing the need to reduce turbidity levels in the drinking water. The facility will have residential and commercial fill points. The facility will increase the level of service to the residents and will reduce costs to access safe drinking water in the community.

On Building Canada Fund — Marsh Lake Intake and Fill System in the amount of \$2,400,000 agreed to

On Building Canada Fund — Arsenic Treatment Upgrades

Mr. Elias: Could I have a breakdown of that line item, please?

Hon. Mr. Lang: With that investment on the ground, we're going to design and construct upgraded water treatment plants capable of treating surface water and to meet current and future regulations for arsenic. The affected communities are Champagne and Aishihik First Nations, Carcross-Tagish First Nation, Haines Junction and the community of Teslin.

Building Canada Fund — Arsenic Treatment Upgrades in the amount of \$750,000 agreed to

On Building Canada Fund — Ross River System Upgrades and Arsenic Treatment

Building Canada Fund — Ross River System Upgrades and Arsenic Treatment in the amount of \$400,000 agreed to

On Building Canada Fund — Carcross Water System Upgrade

Building Canada Fund — Carcross Water System Upgrade in the amount of \$400,000 agreed to

On Building Canada Fund — Old Crow Roadway

Mr. Elias: Can the minister provide a breakdown of this line item, please?

Hon. Mr. Lang: Okay, the \$250,000 invested in Old Crow will go this year to a crushing program that is required to produce the necessary gravel to complete an overlay on the roads. The existing ditches will have to be re-guarded in order to allow water to freely drain away from the core.

Building Canada Fund — Old Crow Roadway in the amount of \$250,000 agreed to

On Building Canada Fund — Planning and Administration

Building Canada Fund — Planning and Administration in the amount of \$389,000 agreed to

On Community Library Development Projects

Community Library Development Projects in the amount of \$90,000 agreed to

On Northern Strategy Project — Yukon Water and Wastewater System Operator Capacity Building

Northern Strategy Project — Yukon Water and Wastewater System Operator Capacity Building in the amount of \$25,000 agreed to

On Northern Strategy Project — On Prior Years' Projects

Northern Strategy Project — Prior Year's Projects in the amount of nil cleared

On Land Development

On Industrial

Industrial in the amount of \$1,000,000 agreed to

On Residential

Mr. Elias: Can I have a breakdown, please?

Hon. Mr. Lang: We are looking at the residential development of \$28,611,000, which consists of seven projects: Whitehorse periphery residential lots at \$4.7 million for development of 30 lots in Grizzly Valley; \$500,000 for planning and detail engineering of 20 to 25 lots at Mount Lorne; \$8,161,000 for developing 132 new single and multi-family lots in Arkell; and Whitehorse land development of \$10 million for planning a subdivision development in Porter Creek lower bench and the Porter Creek Pine Street extension; \$1 million for Haines Junction for 15 urban residential lots and \$1.75 million for Haines Junction, Willow Acres for 30 to 40 country residential lots as well as \$1 million for Dawson Dome country residential lots.

Mr. Cardiff: I would just like to ask the minister some questions about the proposed land development in Mount Lorne. I thought he said it was close to — and he can correct me if it is wrong, because I was trying to write down all the figures. It was in the neighbourhood of \$500,000, I believe, for planning.

Now I just want to ensure the planning process involves talking with the community. The other thing I believe — because I know they've come through a process where they wanted the regulations changed with regard to lot extensions. There were some concerns where the regulations had been interpreted differently and I believe that has happened. I thank the minister for that because I know the constituents who were having problems with getting their properties expanded to the minimum lot size, as per the regulations, look forward to doing that and constructing some new buildings.

There is also another process where this has been discussed at hamlet council meetings and at community meetings. I know the government received the blessing of the community to go forward and do some planning, but I want to ensure that the government brings the information back to the community before they go ahead with the actual development and make the plans for the development available to the community, so that they can see it before we go forward with any development.

I'm assuming that the area in question where the planning is taking place is the agricultural piece that was turned back to the government, known as the McGowan options.

Hon. Mr. Lang: I'd remind the member opposite that the planning and zoning now is under Energy, Mines and Resources. So when Energy, Mines and Resources is up, you can ask the member at that time about the question, about planning and zoning. So that will be under Energy, Mines and Resources, if and when we ever get to that department.

*Residential in the amount of \$27,111,000 agreed to
On Recreational*

Recreational in the amount of \$500,000 agreed to

Community Development in the amount of \$55,755,000 agreed to

On Revenues

Revenues cleared

On Transfer Payments

Transfer Payments cleared

Total Capital Expenditures in the amount of \$60,089,000 agreed to

Department of Community Services agreed to

Department of Environment

Chair: Committee of the Whole will now proceed with the Department of Environment. Do 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. The matter before the Committee is Bill No. 15, *First Appropriation Act, 2009-10*, Department of Environment, which is Vote 52.

We will now proceed with general debate.

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Mr. Chair, it is indeed my honour and privilege to rise today to report on the Department of Environment's achievements over the last year to maintain and enhance the quality of Yukon's environment for present and future generations.

I wish to commence my remarks with an extension of my heartfelt thanks to each of the officials in the Department of Environment for their very hard work, their efforts and stellar commitment to a healthy and sustainable environment. I have very much indeed learned a lot during my tenure as Minister of Environment over the last several months. There is much more to learn, and I very much appreciate the sound information brought to our respective offices and certainly appreciate their leadership and guidance in forging ahead toward challenges, but also in recognizing many opportunities ahead.

Our work in the last year, of course, has laid the foundation for meeting our commitment to a number of different areas. First and foremost, that includes climate change. In February, in fact, I was pleased to announce the release of the Yukon government's climate change action plan, which builds upon the four goals of the climate change strategy.

We are now moving with the establishment of a climate change secretariat to coordinate the many climate change actions and initiatives being delivered across this government.

During the past fiscal year, we were able to establish a site assessment and remediation unit to assess and remediate contaminated sites owned by the Yukon government.

We are also undertaking steps to establish a new animal health program that will be operated in partnership with other respective departments. We have collaborated — and continue to collaborate — with stakeholders with respect to dealing with human and wildlife conflicts. We are also working to address new challenges in the recycling sector by developing solutions to respond to global economic changes, including enhancing core funding to community recycling depots, developing a recycling program for schools, in collaboration with Education, and looking at ways to improve the way we transport recyclable materials.

The Department of Environment has also developed a new wildlife viewing strategy in collaboration with the Department

of Tourism and Culture, and in fact, we hosted a very successful conference in March that looked at ways of increasing wildlife viewing opportunities. We continued the five-year plan to increase our collection of wildlife and habitat information through surveys and inventory projects. We have developed and implemented a number of community fish and wildlife management plans to address a number of key emerging matters in our respective communities.

We have expanded our Celebrating Yukon Parks program by offering more interpretive programs, providing a youth-engagement initiative and distributing more information to the public through our visitor information centres.

We successfully hosted the national meeting of the Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment in February. As well, Environment Yukon continues its tradition of community outreach and public awareness of environmental issues by holding the second annual Environmental Forum last April, and plans are moving along for the third forum to be presented later this year.

This year's budget includes a number of significant new initiatives that will be evolving over the coming year, including the creation of the climate change secretariat, a new animal health program, enhanced support for Yukon's community-based recycling programs and additional resources for a new site assessment and mediation unit.

As I mentioned earlier in my remarks, for the last number of years the government has been undertaking or is in the midst of implementing a multitude of initiatives to address climate change in our territory. The climate change action plan includes 33 specific actions to advance the four goals set out in the climate change secretariat, those being to enhance our knowledge and understanding of climate change, improving our ability to adapt to climate change, reducing our greenhouse gas emissions and establishing Yukon as a northern leader for climate change research and innovation.

In essence, the action plan shows us how everything fits together. Implementation of the action plan will involve all departments, and a climate change secretariat will oversee the effective implementation of the action plan and will provide government-wide leadership and coordination on the government's response.

This year's budget also contains a new animal health program as is being proposed in this budget. It will ensure that we have the capacity to not only adapt to changes coming our way, but it will also enable us to better prepare for what further challenges may be ahead. Essentially, an effective animal health program will go a long way in ensuring healthy, viable wildlife and domestic animal populations.

This budget contains new funding to hire staff that will be tasked with setting up the new program. Another area where the government provides ongoing support for an asset that is really important to the community is the Yukon Wildlife Preserve. This year's budget provides \$600,000 for the society to manage the facility and an additional \$206,000 for capital improvements.

As I mentioned earlier, our government is also committed to growing and expanding our recycling efforts in our respective communities.

We very much recognize and value the work of all communities to maintain and enhance the quality of our environment, and we're pleased to acknowledge the support with additional monies in this year's budget.

We recognize that the world's changing economics have affected the ability of community-based recycling centres to operate, and we have responded by providing \$250,000 in new funding, which we announced late last year, to assist the centres across the territory. We're pleased to continue with that level of funding in this year's proposed budget.

We are also pleased to provide an additional \$200,000 in this year's budget for the site assessment remediation unit. These additional dollars will go toward site investigation, site assessment, plans, restoration and risk assessments. Certainly, over the next few months, we will be continuing to work with First Nations and renewable resource councils to address a number of community-based fish and wildlife management matters, including: working with the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations and other management partners to review the way we manage bison in respective areas of the Yukon; working with First Nations, renewable resource councils and communities on a human/bear conflict management program for the Kluane region; and, completing moose and caribou inventories in respective areas.

We are also continuing our work on the elk management plan and the winter tick risk management initiatives. We are also continuing to provide financial support to the Porcupine Caribou Management Board for the board's operation, as well as support for completion of a harvest strategy. We are pleased to continue to fund a number of different organizations, including the Yukon Fish and Game Association, Ducks Unlimited, the Yukon Trappers Association, the Fur Institute of Canada, and working with many others.

Of course, we are also pleased to provide ongoing support to our conservation officer services program, which continues to deliver programs from its community offices, which in turn provide conservation education and public awareness. The branch's major focus is to inform and help the public prevent wildlife/human conflicts in their community and their backyard. We will do this by developing more public education tools to help people understand how they can take steps to reduce potential conflicts between themselves and wildlife.

We are continuing with a number of new initiatives, new publications, *How to Stay Safe in Bear Country* booklet, which resulted in a second printing. We are also providing new information when it comes to how people learn not to attract foxes, coyotes and wolves to their backyards — working with the fish and wildlife branch. We are also, through the conservation officers section, working with the department's information technology to bring in field-tested tablet computers that can provide an office in the backpack, whether they are in their patrol vehicles, in a boat or out in the field.

We are also pleased to continue the park officer program to help our citizens enjoy a safe camping experience in our

campgrounds. As in previous years, we will continue the practice of making campground permits widely available through retail outlets that sell fishing licences, environment offices and through the self-registration system and on-site fee collection. We are also pleased to commence and continue with planning processes with several First Nations on moving forward with the government's land claims obligations and establishing natural environment parks for Kusawa, Agay Mene, as well as Asi Keyi in the Kluane region, as provided for under the terms of respective final agreements.

I've just touched on a few — a very few — of the many programs delivered to the public by the dedicated and talented staff at Environment Yukon. Their work touches every Yukoner, whether they're enforcing safe standards for air, water and soil; managing human impacts on wildlife and fish or actively implementing key provisions of final agreements.

Mr. Fairclough: I can't believe it. The minister was short in her response — her opening remarks. I can't believe it. Things look like they're improving a bit.

I have to say that I thank the minister for her remarks, and I believe that this is one department that Yukoners think about quite often and that, even for myself, I take a lot of interest in it. When you go knocking on doors and issues are brought up, particularly in rural Yukon, the issues that are brought up fall under this department. There are a lot of them, and a lot of these issues could be answered right away, just with the understanding of the department.

I'd like to thank the minister for her remarks. For myself, I can say that I go out and I use this land, the Yukon, particularly around my home town. It feeds me every year with fish, with wildlife, with plant life — berries. I use them all. I grow to appreciate what the land offers me year after year after year. I think I'm no different from most other Yukoners who live that lifestyle. But what people want to see is that we keep intact our backyards the best we possibly can. That shows in the responses that we get from communities when it comes to development for example, when it comes to mining and so on.

A prime example was in the Carmacks area with BYG and the fact that people didn't know exactly what the environmental impacts this development could have down the road.

I say that with the knowledge that people are still harvesting out in that area and, as recent as this past winter, I know someone who took a moose from there and this moose had sores on it and you could pull the hair out. Is it from that or is it from ticks? I don't know. I still need to talk to this person more on this matter. I am trying to get exactly whether or not any of this was kept for observation through the department.

I will be continuing to talk to people in regard to the kind of state that our animals are in throughout my own area. I go out quite often. I offered to take the ministers of Energy, Mines and Resources and Economic Development out with me just to observe and they refused to do that. It would have been a great trip — a great day trip.

If the Minister of Environment is interested, I can take her out to a few places in my riding and show her exactly what people have been talking about — the issues they've raised in concern over development.

Now, I say this in the interest of people in my riding — my constituents. People want to see development take place, but they want it to be with the least possible impact on the environment. That's where I believe the Environment minister needs to speak up when it comes to the community issues and concerns in and around those areas.

So if the minister would like it — if she's interested — I can take her to a few different places. I can tell the minister that I have a really big riding, and there is so much to see. It goes from approximately 20 miles this side of Carmacks, the south side, almost up to Old Crow, along the Northwest Territories border. Now, of course, I don't get out to see all of that. That's just impossible to do. But there is a lot to see right up to — and the minister is familiar with this area — the other side of Keno.

Every year I bring up this issue and it's going to be the first one that I bring up here. I know others are interested in it, but this is about Economic Development; it's about getting industry up and going again; it's about government finding ways to help this industry grow and get bigger. When I've been knocking on doors during the election, from one election to another, this issue has been raised and people say, "Please bring it up and see if we can get something going." That's in regard to our trapping industry. Some people are interested in what is taking place in the Northwest Territories with their marketing program and their support programs. The community of Teslin and the Teslin Tlingit Council have also investigated this to try to find ways to get their trappers out on the trapline and to be more active out there, and to be the eyes and ears for the community.

Is there an interest on the government's part to see a harvest support program for the trapping industry? Are we going to see any help at all from government to get this industry up and going? Is there interest there? And if there are future plans, would the minister let us know?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: I very much appreciate the member opposite's remarks regarding the importance of the environment to all Yukoners. I absolutely concur with the member opposite's remarks. Certainly, as a born-and-raised Yukoner, a life-long Yukoner, I have very much grown to appreciate and recognize the importance of sustaining and maintaining our quality natural environment that is so important to every Yukoner. Raising a little boy, as well, I'm out and about even more these days, explaining the very importance of the environment to him, and really, being able to share with him what makes us all very proud to call Yukon our home.

There are a number of exquisite places to visit in Yukon. As minister over the last several years I have had the opportunity to visit numerous communities many times. I have learned a lot more than what I had previously known in my previous life. I very much appreciate not only what we have here in our natural environment, but I really have a deep appreciation for those people working behind the scenes — whether it is those working in our fish and wildlife branch, working with our First Nation communities, working with communities' renewable resource councils. There is a whole host of stakeholders — whether it is parks officers ensuring that we have a safe and quality experience while we stay overnight in the parks in

Yukon. We have a lot of great parks in Yukon where wildlife viewing plays an enormous role in serving to grow and enhance our understanding of the importance of wildlife.

So I very much appreciate the member opposite extending his invitation. I very much enjoy getting out into all the communities and going into new and different areas. I can be sure that I could also extend the same invitation to the member opposite, showing him a number of great areas of importance as well to our respective areas.

That said, the member opposite did raise the issue of trapping. Of course we know how very important trapping is, not only to the economy, but also to the traditional economy. I think there is often delineation of those two areas — that is, trapping contributing to the financial well-being of communities, but also trapping contributing to the social well-being of our communities in the traditional sense. I think those two go hand in hand.

In terms of our government's support over the years, the member opposite knows that we do provide an annual contribution to the Yukon Trappers Association for trapper training. I think they've done a very good job with those resources over the years, and it has included, of course, a number of opportunities for community members to have a role in the delivery of local workshops.

Of course, we are always looking at additional ways that we can support this industry. I think I've said on a number of occasions that I think there has been a movement afoot among respective stakeholders, and I have certainly indicated our government's intent and interest to work with them to advance the trapping industry, but I think we need to hear what the priorities are. In terms of what that may look like, I don't know. What I do know, however, is that there has been a lot of work done in the past. There continues to be work.

Working through the Yukon Trappers Association, recently they were approved with just over \$30,000 in funding through the community development fund, for example, to prepare a business plan and to take a look at what indeed are the priorities of the trapping industry throughout the Yukon. So they are certainly proceeding with that work, and we very much appreciate that.

Likewise, we know that the Fish and Wildlife Management Board has also recognized the need to look at the Yukon's trapping industry and they have also taken steps to coordinate what they have coined as a Yukon fur strategy, beginning with phase 1 as the first step toward this strategy. The purpose of that first phase was really to look at a snapshot of the current economic situation, to take a look at the issues that affect the industry as a whole, making recommendations for the next steps in developing a fur strategy.

I think, though, that we need to work with all partners, including our renewable resource councils and First Nation governments, who have a very important role as outlined in their final agreements, in category 1 and 2 traplines being issued — concessions, that is. It is, after all, their mandate to come forward with recommendations. But there are a number of matters that need to be addressed, and certainly the intent is there.

I recently had the opportunity to meet with the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board, and again just extended that invitation to work with them. We are following up in that regard — as we speak — to take a look at how we can actually advance the trapping industry. Again, in terms of moving it forward, there are a number of different matters, a number of different elements, that need to be addressed — including utilization of traplines, looking at productivity, setting targets and, from there, building the support around that and what form that would take — it could certainly occur.

I think that part of the work that transpired in phase 1 of this fur strategy — they did do some analysis of what other jurisdictions have been doing in supporting their trapping industry and it continues to evolve. It also includes, of course, the price and the value of furs harvested. It includes, of course, a variety of price models, evolving as we speak in the trapping world. We are very much — yes, committed and very much interested in moving forward the trapping industry and we are working to do just that.

Mr. Fairclough: I've been raising this issue to government for quite some time and so have other members in the Legislature. We're not any further than when we raised it last year or the year before, it appears. This issue keeps coming back. It is the people out there trapping who want something to happen. They want government support on this. They need to get more people out there on their lines, working their lines more.

I know the minister says we're waiting for the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board to make recommendations, but the department and the minister could make some of these recommendations as well. I know that in the past it has been brought to the department's attention about a trapper support program. The community of Teslin and the Teslin Tlingit Council are looking at this and really liking how the Northwest Territories set it up with their trappers. But it's going to take some money to do it — not a whole lot of money — but it's going to take some money to do it. I'm not exactly sure what the name of this program is — I've been trying to think of it.

I went to the community of Teslin and the renewable resource council met. I sat in that meeting with a lot of interest. The local trappers brought in their fur just to show how this program would be effective and perhaps get people more money for their fur and so on. It's about handling the fur. If it is done right at the beginning, we can get more for it. If they are even given a set amount at the beginning and no less if it gets sold for less, we get more because of its quality and how it was handled in the beginning. There is a lot of interest in there and I encourage the minister to, perhaps, start talking with some of the RRCs to get this thing going, because this is the time to do it. It is the spring and we've got the spring and summer to set this up and there is no reason why we can't have something in place by the fall to get this industry up and going. It is economic development. It is getting people out on the land. It is a lot more activity than we have right now.

There is a demand for that, and I'm just encouraging the minister to do that and perhaps take a lot of that information and move forward with it as a department, make some recom-

mendations to the Fish and Wildlife Management Board and make some recommendations to the renewable resource councils. Tell them that government is interested in doing this and they can make some suggestions.

What it's going to mean for the minister is to identify some dollars to be able to get this up and going. It's economic development and it's about getting people out on the land. We could probably save a lot of money, just in getting people out there. I'll give the minister an example of this. The First Nations are worried about fish getting to their spawning grounds. A lot of what is preventing them from getting there are beaver dams. They are actually hiring people to go out there and break up the dams, so there is passage for the fish.

The trappers normally go in there, and they don't clean out the beavers totally, because they want the numbers there for the following year, but they do take care of it. They do trap them, and it prevents a lot of this from taking place. The fish maintain their habitat and the ecosystem goes on. It's huge in the communities. People want to be able to get out there. For some of them, it's their only employment. It's becoming tougher and tougher every year just simply with the amount it costs to get out there. Gasoline is one of them. Most people go out by snowmobiles these days, and those aren't cheap either. So I ask the minister if she could take this issue forward, as a department, as a minister, meet with the renewable resource councils and the communities and the First Nations on this matter, and present a solution to it — see if we can't get something going for the fall. Would the minister be able to do that?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: As I was articulating before, I think it's really important to recognize that it's not just the Government of Yukon involved in advancing trapping in the territory.

I think that we do need to listen; we do need to act, but we do need to engage with our respective partners. I'll just refer to them again, including the renewable resource councils. I was very pleased to actually meet with all of them at their annual general meeting earlier last year. I had the opportunity to talk to them about a number of different matters of importance to them. It also includes discussions with the Fish and Wildlife Management Board, which I also had the opportunity to meet with earlier this year. I also had the opportunity to meet with the Yukon Trappers Association earlier last year.

With First Nation governments as well, there needs to be that level of engagement. As I mentioned, I don't think it's a matter of starting from scratch here, but there are a number of areas where we do need to move forward. Certainly the last thing I want the Government of Yukon to do is dictate that this is the way it's going to be or this is what support is what is required. I think there needs to be that level of exchange and understanding as to where we're at with the industry and where we need to be.

I recognize the important role that trapping does contribute to the economy but also to the social well-being of Yukon. I do know, however, how important these discussions are and how important it is to move forward with some of these issues. As I mentioned before and I think the member opposite may have alluded to issues surrounding access to market, productivity, diversifying products — there are a whole host of different

elements that should be considered in the proposed strategy. As I have mentioned on many occasions to respective partners, we are very much committed to doing just that. In fact, we will be moving toward that.

Mr. Fairclough: Mr. Chair, if the minister were to commit to that — like I hear her committing to working with the First Nations and RRCs and actually getting this industry up and going — I could say that it should be about five or six years ahead of the previous Minister of Environment on this matter. If she does that, I think it would help a lot of people out there and people will be quite happy.

I'd like to know if this industry is growing. Is it smaller than in previous years, or are we just seeing it remain the same?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Well, what we do know is that certainly the average trapper is aging as we speak. We do know that trapper utilization, as I mentioned earlier, is certainly an issue of concern, and that has been recognized through the final agreements, of course, in which First Nations have a very important role, as well as working with the Government of Yukon and others in administering trapping concessions and so forth.

But we do know that when one would look over the last number of years there are, in fact, fewer trappers out on the land. I'm not sure if that's a sign of the times, or if that is down with respect to other jurisdictions. I'm sure it's a combination of both.

Mr. Fairclough: I would like to just ask a couple more questions in regard to this. I thank the minister for her answers, and I would think that, along the same lines, the trappers are getting older and a lot of them are just not making it out there anymore. There are a lot of younger people who like that kind of lifestyle, but they are not going to do it if they can't even feed themselves by doing it. That's why I'm asking this department to look at helping this industry. I think it'd be very good for Yukon, should that take place.

In regard to the traplines themselves, I would like to know how many of them are not assigned to anyone, how many of them are in limbo because of the consultation process that needs to take place with First Nations, and when can we expect some resolution to this, because this has come to me over and over again.

There are people who are interested in it but they can't get a hold of one. My understanding of this 70-percent requirement with the First Nations — some of them have a lot of overlap issues to deal with. It is a very difficult one to resolve. I am just wondering from the minister's point of view what work is taking place to try to get more people assigned to these concessions.

Hon. Ms. Taylor: With respect to overlapping and non-overlapping traplines, I think that renewable resource councils, for example, have been doing a lot of work in this respect. In fact, one of the RRCs just brought forward for recommendation a number of guidelines for trapline issuance. I commend them for that work. I think that steps are being taken by respective RRCs.

Of course, when it comes to the matter of overlap, in terms of traplines, that's where First Nation governments certainly

work with the Government of Yukon on a number of different bases and case-by-case bases. I think that work is advancing. We do recognize though that there are challenges and there will continue to be challenges. This is not a new issue; it has been around for some time. But I do think that, as RRCs' roles evolve, they are certainly coming up with new and improved ways of looking at these matters; likewise, working with the respective First Nations in addressing some of these issues as well.

Mr. Fairclough: I hope that not too much time goes by in trying to get a resolution to this. I think the department could be working with the RRCs in regard to the trapline concessions and make things move forward.

I would like to ask a question about the moose harvest survey. What areas has the department been looking at as far as surveys. Which areas have they surveyed for moose, and which ones are they looking at to do surveys down the road?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Well, Mr. Chair, I'm very proud of the level of commitment that this government has shown toward meeting our commitment of developing and implementing management plans that support biological diversity and ensure conservation and sustainable use of our fish and wildlife habitat and water resources. In support of this objective, our government has very much committed by way of making resources available for inventories. In fact, when our government was elected to office, I think the inventory funding budget was sitting around \$300,000. Today it's sitting at well over \$1.8 million, so we have come a long way in just a matter of a few short years. That dollar amount has really enabled more areas and more species to be assessed, which includes distribution and behaviours.

Not only does it better inform our wildlife management decisions, but we can also monitor the impacts of climate change, for example, on our environment.

This funding — and I have spoken at great length in the previous sitting — has gone toward a number of key items. This year, there will be a number of inventories taking place in the Yukon. I believe there are about 40 being proposed. That, of course, is assessed by the Department of Environment, which is pending on a number of different factors.

But this year, we will be engaged on a number of different fronts. Of course, we will continue to work with First Nations and renewable resource councils to address community-based fish and wildlife management matters in areas such as Champagne and Aishihik, Vuntut Gwitchin, Teslin Tlingit, and Na Cho Nyäk Dun traditional territories, which are in fact being led by their completed workplans.

We continue to participate, for example, in Selkirk First Nation's traditional Dooli system for the fish and wildlife management May gatherings.

We are implementing a number of plans for wood bison and elk management and so forth. As I mentioned earlier, we are working with the Southern Lakes Wildlife Coordinating Committee, as we speak. That work includes many different partners including the B.C. government and many others, and looks at issues of concern and how we can move forward to manage species such as moose in that area. We are continuing,

as I mentioned earlier, our work with First Nations, renewable resource councils and communities to collaborate on the development and implementation of human/wildlife conflict management programs currently being developed in a number of different areas and regions. We are completing implementing management plans for a number of different habitat protection areas, which are also very important areas that we will be addressing for the current year.

In terms of key inventory management initiatives — it includes the completion of inventories of moose in the Nordenskiöld area — and I'll just grab the list. It includes a moose habitat suitability pilot project, in its second year of four years; as I mentioned, and a moose management unit in the Nordenskiöld area. We also have a North Canol moose early winter distribution survey. We are also doing ground-based moose monitoring in the Mayo, Selkirk and Carmacks areas, in the member's own riding, and of course we are also taking note of the work of the Southern Lakes Wildlife Coordinating Committee, and assessing what work will be required that comes out of the recommendations of that particular committee.

In addition to moose, we are also doing a number of different habitat inventories pertaining to sheep, other habitat, caribou, elk, freshwater fish, furbearers, carnivores and a number of other rare species. The list goes on and it is very impressive. I commend the work of the fish and wildlife branch for their work with all of their respective partners in making priorities and addressing the various species of value to Yukoners.

Mr. Fairclough: The minister said that when it comes to moose, they're doing some 40 different inventories this year. It might have been on other things as well. I would just like that clarified, and how does the department rate the inventory? Is it within 20 percent? I'm interested because the way I understand how this survey takes place, if you look at a map, it would be on a grid. They will draw a grid and this block will have a survey and then this one over here may not be next to it. They survey like this usually this time of year in January when they can fly over. For the people on the ground and using the area, sometimes it's not the right way to do the surveys. Rather than do it that way, do the whole block, but that's not what is taking place. So it's like a guesstimate.

You count on one block and there is — you know, whether it's 100 count on here and 20 over there, there is an average, I guess, that's put forward. I'm just wondering: is it within 20 percent? Or is it within 50 percent? I know the department does the most accurate work they possibly can, but they must also know they are not counting them all, and they could be missing a fair amount. I'm just wondering: what does the department feel it should be percentage-wise? Should it be quite a bit higher or is it sometimes actually lower because of the formula they use?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Well, certainly, accepting full well that I'm not a biologist — that is certainly not my profession, nor do I profess to be a biologist. I'm sure that's not what the member opposite was asking.

Of course, at the end of the day, I just wanted to make reference that we do have a five-year plan for inventories. Our government has increased the level of funding substantively for

wildlife inventories — as I mentioned, from \$300,000 to about \$1.8 million. It's quite substantive.

That has enabled us to do a myriad of different inventories. This year, I believe there are some 40 inventories, which include moose, caribou, freshwater fish, carnivores, caribou, elk — you name it.

In terms of measurements, obviously, as I would understand, those would vary, depending on what area you find yourself and what area or species you are doing the inventory on. What I do know is that it is very technical. They do their good work according to their specific knowledge and the resources that they bring to the positions, and they do work with the community. That is in implementing a number of community fish and wildlife management plans which are developed in partnership with communities. They do work. That is what helps define the priorities for wildlife inventories, and they carry it out as such. In terms of recovery rates or numbers and percentages, I am really a little hesitant to get into that, because I do not have them.

It varies from species to species and location to location. I'm sure the member opposite would appreciate that.

I do commend the officials within the branch for their good work and their level of engagement and expertise. I think Yukon is really privileged to have all this in-house expertise, which grows when we work with the communities and take into account traditional knowledge, for example, and community views and their perspectives.

That is the information I'm able to bring forward to the Legislature. We deem these inventories as being hugely important in being able to develop sufficient and effective management plans for our wildlife and our fish habitat. We were able to enhance the funding substantively, which was left neglected for many years, but we're now catching up.

Mr. Fairclough: I believe the renewable resource councils play a huge role in giving direction to government on this matter. Since First Nations have signed off their final agreements and were able to put the renewable resource councils together, the interest in having a proper count has been brought forward by government, and that's why I believe we're seeing the reaction of government the way it is today. I thank them for bringing this to the government's interest.

I have a lot of interest in the collaring program that government has with moose. I think it might even have surprised a lot of people in the department about how far moose travel. Some of the projects that have taken place near Quiet Lake and Big Salmon area are of interest to me. Perhaps down the road when we do our inventory we will have a better understanding of how moose move around and come back to the same spot in the winter or spring.

There's a lot of interest on the First Nation side. It may have even taken some of them by surprise, because they don't really — no one will track a moose that far in a whole year.

The amount of distance pregnant cows travel in a year is incredible — to come back to its same spot. I know they use a satellite tracking system and you can basically see where they are on any given day.

I know the moose inventory is of particular interest to the First Nations. It is an animal of choice — a meat of choice for most of them — maybe not so much for Old Crow. But for most people, that is their meat of choice for wild meat. They are concerned that they have to go further and further out in the communities to get what they normally got 10 or 15 years ago.

The other issue that has been coming to the forefront more, particularly in my riding, is in regard to bison and elk. Some people say, well, they're not fighting for food.

We know that, but some people say that, basically, moose do not like being around elk. They move away. They tend to move away, and it changes the way they do things year after year. There's a noticeable difference in the number of moose that is taken, say, where the elk are recently, from what it was 20 years ago. It's brought to my attention all the time. I'm just wondering what the minister's reaction is to that, and is there a reassurance that, really, it's not making a difference?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Well, Mr. Chair, I could go on at great length about elk and bison. I've learned a great deal about these two species over the last while, but what I do know is that under an adaptive framework of management — that is, the style of management that the Government of Yukon has adopted in conjunction with a number of key stakeholders. What it really means is that when it comes to an adaptive management framework, it gives increased flexibility to make decisions annually with respect to season dates, permit numbers, open zones for hunting bison and so forth. The key element here is that those decisions would be made in consultation with a number of key stakeholders. These include First Nations and renewable resource councils, as well as the Fish and Wildlife Management Board — which is really what we would call the Yukon wood bison technical team and it is comprised of representatives of those different stakeholders.

In fact, the Fish and Wildlife Management Board recommended that the adapted management be carried out on a five-year trial basis. This approach has been adopted into regulation.

Last year's season was the first to use it, so we do have a number of years left in there. But we do know that a number of steps have been taken, which were used for this last season in 2008-09, as the member opposite knows. There were a number of changes that came into being to address the growing population of the bison in the particular area.

I don't really want to go through all the different items, as they are spelled out in the hunting regulations, but what is really key is that we have made significant strides to address bison and, of course, this year's season did produce some good results. It reached, I believe, 150 animals, which was really the highest ever reported. The previous high was the previous year, which was 99 animals. So, it is a substantive increase of bison that were harvested, and that's despite the cooler temperatures that we endured earlier this year and in spite of the record snowpack that we also endured and continue to endure in the Yukon. I think that even though we didn't hit the target — we looked at a harvest target of 200 — I think 150 animals was certainly a very good target.

Looking at this previous year that just wrapped up, the technical team will be reviewing the results of the harvest that

took place from that and they'll be looking at considering additional recommendations for next season that will further assist in increasing the harvest — which, as I referenced, may include season dates. It may include a number of permits and so forth. I think that again the key element here is working with the stakeholders through this adaptive management framework and I think it has made a difference. I think we're getting at it, but I do know there is a lot more work to do to address the growing population of bison in the Yukon.

The member opposite made reference to elk. Earlier last year the Government of Yukon adopted the elk management plan, and the management plan was, again, adopted and designed in collaboration with a number of key stakeholders. It really incorporates advice given by First Nations, biologists, renewable resource councils, and the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board. From that, we are working to implement many of those provisions as identified in the plan that was adopted last summer, and again working toward a harvest of elk to be introduced for this hunting season coming up. But again, in keeping with the way that we manage bison, likewise we will continue to work with a number of key stakeholders on how we can administer the way we manage elk, just like we manage bison in the territory.

Mr. Fairclough: Well, I would like to ask the minister questions in regard to bison and elk, but I'll get down to it. I did ask the minister whether or not both the presence of bison and elk is affecting the population of, say, moose. I didn't hear anything from the minister at all. Maybe I will just ask her to answer that question and then I will move on.

Hon. Ms. Taylor: I can say that there is no hard evidence that is transpiring — but all the more reason that we continue to work with our stakeholders — Champagne and Aishihik First Nations, for example — on the bison front. We are working very closely with them through the adapted management framework and also on a socio-economic impact analysis with them. That is just one example of how we are working with respective stakeholders in becoming more familiar with some of the challenges and working to address them from there.

Mr. Fairclough: If the minister can also see whether or not the harvesting of bison, for example, could have an effect on the population of moose. I would think that if you take 150 animals or 200 animals, that is about the number of moose not taken. They're big animals and it takes a long time to eat a bison. It takes a long time to eat a moose, but it'll take you longer to eat a bison.

I'd like to ask the minister about the inventory she mentioned. Has there been any inventory taken on deer in the territory? How accurate would that inventory be?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: To date, I don't believe there has been any inventory of deer taken. That's not to say that there will not be any inventory, but as I mentioned earlier, priorities are identified based on local, community-based wildlife management plan recommendations, input from First Nation governments, renewable resource councils, regulatory interests that require supporting information, status of existing data and the capacity to undertake respective surveys.

That is how we define the priorities, and we are undertaking some 40 inventories this year.

Mr. Fairclough: Is the department issuing any permits for deer?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Yes.

Mr. Fairclough: That surprises me a bit that the department would do that without knowing the numbers. I don't think the department even knows what numbers the First Nations are taking, and I believe those numbers are not even recorded properly within First Nations.

I have a bit of concern with that because, at one time, we saw an increase in the number of deer in the territory just because of their presence on the highway and roadways and so on. Then a couple of years later, there was a big decline in the number you saw on the road, simply because people were starting to hunt them again. The numbers are were enough that people were able to hunt them.

Now we have permits for hunting deer. It just surprises me a bit. I would like to ask the minister — because of this increase in the number of deer, is the department somehow looking at trying to do some sort of count in the different areas. I have seen them pretty well everywhere in my riding. You can see them up near Quiet Lake and the Big Salmon area — the same place that cougars, for example, have been spotted. I am just wondering whether work is going to be done to try to get the general public to know more about the number of deer we have in the territory.

Hon. Ms. Taylor: I would just like to bring to the member opposite's attention that currently there are only 10 permits issued for deer in Yukon. It is a relatively conservative number. This was really based on recommendations flowing from the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board, which went through the consultation process associated with making regulation changes.

Another thing I wanted to again bring to the attention of members opposite is that the level of inventory work has grown substantially as a result of a substantive increase in wildlife inventory funding. We can never take that for granted, because that has enabled us to take into account many different inventories. I touched upon a few earlier, but we have approximately 40 different inventories, I believe, that we are proposing to do this year alone. Again, it will enable us to look at more areas and more species to be assessed. Deer will not be addressed in this year's inventory, but that's not to say that they won't be in the future. As I mentioned earlier, we are certainly taking steps to address inventories.

I think that we've got a very busy crew of individuals in our Fish and Wildlife branch working with the communities to implement recommendations from the respective community-based wildlife management plan recommendations, and, again, working with RRCs and working with First Nation governments in determining their priorities and areas that are of utmost importance, as well. So we take all of that into consideration and the department then makes those decisions. I certainly do not make those decisions, but what we do is provide the level of funding for them to go and do their work.

They have been very effective in the work that has been undertaken. In fact, one only has to take a look at previous years and the products that have come out as a result of wildlife inventories. It's very important work. It helps us make more informed decisions based on the information that comes to our attention. Again, we are very proud of the work that is being undertaken in the department, but there is more work to be done.

We all know that it is evolving, particularly with the effects and impacts of climate change in our territory. But we are taking steps to address some of these areas of utmost importance.

Mr. Fairclough: The minister said that they're providing the money to do these inventories. Is that in all cases, or is this cost-shared with First Nations?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: These are inventories that are directly funded by the Government of Yukon. But, as I mentioned before, we recognize and look for opportunities to work with First Nation governments. I just alluded to some of them from the community-based wildlife management plan recommendations, of which a number of plans have been completed. I think I referenced them before: Champagne and Aishihik, Vuntut Gwitchin, Teslin Tlingit and Na Cho Nyäk Dun traditional territories. They're all guided by plans.

So those are certainly areas of priority that the department takes a look at and works with the First Nation to implement.

Mr. Fairclough: I thank the minister for that. I look forward to the results of those inventories too. The minister also said that they are looking at a number of different habitats, and sheep habitat was one of them. I would like, perhaps, the minister to give us a little more explanation on what she means by that and where we are looking, and also if the department is thinking at all about reintroducing sheep to areas that once were in abundance. I know the one area that they've looked at in the past was Prospector Mountain. It had record sheep in there in the past and now there is none. The department did look at that area of reintroducing sheep there. There are a number of different questions in that question.

Hon. Ms. Taylor: It is not the practice of the Department of Environment to relocate species in other areas without receiving direction from the renewable resource councils or the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board, for example, but it's not a priority for the Department of Environment. In the meantime, we'll continue to conduct inventories in a number of key areas.

Mr. Fairclough: Okay, is that the completion of the minister's explanation about sheep habitat and where they are looking at this and what is really involved in taking a look at sheep habitat?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: This year we will be conducting a survey in the game management zone of the Whitehorse Southern Lakes, as well as adjacent accessible populations.

Mr. Fairclough: I thank the minister for that answer. I think everybody wants to know where a person can go to get the biggest sheep around the territory. In fact, "Where is the largest concentration of moose?" is always a question that has been asked of us when we go back to our ridings. "You must

have information" is what they keep saying to us. I'll just leave that one for now.

I would like to talk about the elk for a minute. It's on people's minds right now that we are continuing to import elk into the territory. Before I get into that, though, I'll try to go through some of the history of how elk was introduced into the territory. They were introduced to the territory; they weren't reintroduced to the territory. They're not a native animal here. I would like to know how it came to be here. I know from the information I gathered that it goes way back to the 1940s. The Fish and Game Association has been mentioned throughout the introduction of elk into the territory. But I want to know whether or not they were brought here — whether there's any truth to this — as farm animals and then released, and that's how we ended up getting elk in the territory. If the minister doesn't have that answer, she can research it and bring that to me.

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Well, Mr. Chair, I don't know that intricate history.

But what we are working on is an elk management plan and implementing the provisions of that management plan, which I think was adopted last June of 2008. It recommends a number of different items, which we are working to implement, including winter tick management of the elk themselves. To date, I think this appears to be succeeding and appears to be working. We're very optimistic about further results in this regard.

We're also working with the respective stakeholders on an elk harvest, now that we have steps underway to address the winter tick issue pertaining to elk in the territory. Of course, we know that — as identified in the management plan itself — harvested elk will certainly serve a number of different objectives, and we're working again with the stakeholders to do just that.

Of course, we are also working on a number of different fronts in terms of animal health. I believe I alluded to a new animal health program earlier in Question Period, if I'm not mistaken. It will provide continuity. It will provide consistency. It will provide some program oversight, additional advice, and veterinary services to the government's various animal health and animal protection initiatives. It will improve the animal health surveillance, again building links between animal and human health issues. It will also assist with the development of policies, if need be — regulations and legislation regarding animal health and animal protection.

I think that the minister responsible for Energy, Mines and Resources, which includes agriculture, will help ensure the quality and safety of animal food sources — whether domestic or wild — as he said on occasion. We are taking steps on a number of different fronts. Elk are here. They have been here for some time.

I think Yukoners recognize that they are valued and, as such, we are taking steps to address pending issues pertinent to elk species, which include a limited harvest of elk, which we hope to bring to fruition later on this year.

Mr. Fairclough: I hope the minister looks into the matter that I raised because it's of interest to many people and

it was brought to my attention. We would like to know whether or not the elk was actually introduced into the Yukon accidentally — if you want to put it that way — and for the minister to look into that matter. I think it would perhaps make a difference in the management plan of elk.

The minister said there are monies going into a new person in animal health. I was wondering whether office space has been found for that new position or whether the department is still looking for office space.

Hon. Ms. Taylor: If the member opposite is asking if I've picked the colour of the walls, I have not as of yet. Furthermore, it's not really something that I undertake as Minister of Environment.

What I can tell you, though, is that we have introduced — I believe it's about \$320,000 toward this new program. As I mentioned earlier, it will provide a number of different functions. We first have to establish, though, some individuals to be housed within the office, wherever that may be. The program will establish a chief veterinary officer for the territory, along with some technical support staff. These will be full-time animal health professionals. They will provide us with further information on oversight, advice, and services to the government's various animal health-related initiatives, and it'll provide us with the capacity required to address some of the pending issues, such as ticks, that have arrived, and that we are working to address. It will also help us address, in a comprehensive, integrated, articulate manner, some of these other issues that may arrive in the Yukon, but have not as of yet. That's not to say that they will not.

So as for office space, I don't believe office space has been found. I would imagine, though, that the priority would be to identify and go out to hire, once a job description has been prepared between the department and the Public Service Commission. Once the respective positions have been classified through the Public Service Commission and are advertised publicly, I would assume that finding office space, of course, will be one of those other tasks associated with the office.

Mr. Fairclough: I don't want the minister to pick out the colour of paint — I don't think it's her job — but finding office space is important, definitely important. People want to be able to take their issues somewhere, and if there is nowhere to house this person, then we need to find office space and quickly. We need to be able to do that.

It's not a small issue, and we can't carry on for months and months and not find space for them. They need the appropriate space to work from. I think the minister should take that a little more seriously. We have been told that there isn't the space for them right now. Although, obviously Yukoners are going to be asking questions that will require answers from that particular office.

When it comes to elk, this is an issue that is talked about so much lately because people are not happy with it. First Nations have voiced themselves quite clearly to the department, to Fish and Wildlife Management Board, through the renewable resource councils about what to do with them. It really puts the minister and the department in a difficult position. What do we do with the elk? What is it costing taxpayers a year to manage

elk that for most people have very little value, an animal that could perhaps have devastating effects on our wildlife — it could have that.

As I drive back to my riding on weekends — pretty much every weekend — I often see the elk — the Braeburn herd — on the side of the road feeding and just hanging about.

During the briefing with the officials, I asked a question again because this was unsuccessful last year. They couldn't put the elk in a corral and keep them contained. They couldn't do that with the Braeburn herd. This year it appears the same thing is happening. We're only getting 12 or 20 elk — it's not enough. They are so spread out; you can see them right to the community of Carmacks. How can the department do any accurate studies — or say they can contain the ticks for example — with only a small portion of animals?

What took place between now and the briefing might be that there are more Braeburn herd animals corralled. That could be. The minister will be giving us that information, and perhaps even the reassurance to the public that the number of ticks they have is down.

I don't know what that means. I don't know whether or not this is a lesser threat to our moose, or whether or not the spread of ticks is just dead; it's gone and not an issue any more. I would like the minister to answer that question if she can, and to give Yukoners reassurance that we're not going to see this happen to our native wildlife here in the territory. That is a big concern out there; it's still there, and there's no firm direction or reassurance from the department that this will not happen, so if the minister can do that and bring some of the answers forward to us tomorrow, perhaps, or Thursday when we get back into debating the departments. I would have more questions to ask of the minister.

The time is pretty close to 5:30 p.m. so, Mr. Chair, I move that you report progress.

Chair: It has been moved by Mr. Fairclough 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: 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 5:32 p.m.