

Yukon Legislative Assembly
Whitehorse, Yukon
Tuesday, November 10, 2009 — 1:00 p.m.

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

Prayers

In recognition of Remembrance Day

Speaker: Before the House proceeds to the Daily Routine, I would ask members to remain standing while we take a few moments to honour those who have served, and continue to serve, in Canada's Armed Forces.

Wednesday, November 11, is Remembrance Day. Remembrance Day marks the end of Veterans Week, and it is a time for Yukoners and other Canadians to honour the men and women who have defended Canada during times of war, and have brought peace to troubled parts of the world. The freedoms we cherish — and that are all too often taken for granted — exist largely because of the sacrifices made by these brave individuals.

2009 marks the 90th anniversary of the first observance of Remembrance Day. It also marks the 70th anniversary of the outbreak of World War II, as well as the 65th anniversary of the D-Day invasion and the Battle of Normandy.

At this time of the year we wear poppies; we pause for two minutes of silent tribute and attend ceremonies to honour their memory.

As this is the last sitting day before Remembrance Day, it is appropriate for members to observe a moment of silence. I would ask that everyone present reflect on the extraordinary sacrifices of those Canadians who have served, and continue to serve, in times of war and turmoil.

We will have a moment of silence, please.

Moment of silence observed

DAILY ROUTINE

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

Tributes.

Introduction of visitors.

Returns or documents for tabling.

TABLING RETURNS AND DOCUMENTS

Mr. Mitchell: Mr. Speaker, I have for tabling an e-mail message referencing the Peel Watershed Planning Commission from the Department of Environment.

Speaker: Any further returns or documents for tabling?

Any reports of committees?

Petitions.

PETITIONS

Petition No. 8 — response

Hon. Mr. Fentie: Mr. Speaker, as Yukon enters the winter season we are acutely aware of the importance of reliable electrical energy in our homes and in our businesses. As we clearly articulated in our energy strategy for Yukon, announced earlier this year, this government is committed to sustainable management of Yukon's energy resources and to ensure all Yukoners are able to access reliable and affordable energy.

Of course, affordability and reliability of energy is a key issue for us all. Through the Energy Solutions Centre, this government is providing direct assistance to homeowners, businesses and communities to help them reduce their energy costs and increase energy efficiency. The Yukon government is providing \$100 to \$500 for rebates for Yukoners upgrading to qualifying appliances, heating appliances and other appliances and equipment.

At the highest energy efficiency standards available, these items will immediately lower operating costs and, over the long term, will reduce the Yukon's greenhouse gas emissions. Reduction of greenhouse gases is very important, as we work to ensure that Yukon's energy resources are developed with a focus on renewable energy sources.

With the development of the net metering and independent power production policies this fall, this government is working to ensure that there will be increased opportunities for renewable energy in the Yukon, all of which would be subject to the regulatory authority of the Yukon Utilities Board. This initiative will offer both the Yukon Energy Corporation and the Yukon Electrical Company Ltd. increased options to meet future energy demands in the territory. A more diversified mix of power producers will serve to strengthen Yukon's energy security, keep electrical rates low, and make the electrical system more reliable and more efficient.

Lastly, I would like to reiterate this government's commitment to the publicly owned assets and operation of the Yukon Energy Corporation. This government fundamentally supports the principle that Yukon's public energy assets should remain publicly owned and operated. In fact, the key basis of the scoping-out discussions with ATCO was that existing public assets would remain publicly owned.

So by helping Yukoners reduce their energy costs, working to provide increased options for renewable energy and ensuring that Yukon's public energy assets remain publicly owned and operated, this government is providing important leadership to the energy issues and challenges we face here in the Yukon today and into the future.

Thank you.

Petition No. 9

Mr. Mitchell: Mr. Speaker, I have for presentation the following petition:

THAT formal grounds dedicated by Lord Minto in 1900 were created around the Territorial Administration Building and have been the only continuously used greenspace in Dawson City to this day;

THAT the Old Territorial Administration Building, which presently houses the museum is of significant architectural value, designed by Thomas Fuller II and should remain a stand-alone heritage building as was originally intended;

THAT there are discussions of possible construction of a large hospital in Minto Park;

THEREFORE the undersigned ask the Yukon Legislative Assembly to urge the Government of Yukon to ensure that Minto Park retains its historical integrity in perpetuity by not allowing any building development in Minto Park.

There are currently 268 signatures attached to this petition, with more coming in daily.

Speaker: Are there any further petitions?
Hearing none, are there any bills to be introduced?
Notices of motion.

NOTICES OF MOTION

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

THAT this House urges the Joint Task Force North of the Department of National Defence in Ottawa to continue funding the Rangers to enable them to maintain the trails for the Yukon Quest, a job they have successfully undertaken for the past 17 years.

Hon. Ms. Taylor: I give notice of the following motion:

THAT, notwithstanding any other Standing Order, the first item of business under Orders of the Day on November 18, 2009, shall be Motion No. 850, standing in the name of the Member for Mount Lorne.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Canada to honour its commitment to provide compensation to aboriginal veterans of the Second World War and the Korean War, equal to the compensation of post war benefits that were provided to non-native soldiers but not to their First Nation comrades.

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

THAT this House urges the Yukon government to uphold the promise it made this past spring by identifying a day during this current sitting for the chair and the CEO of the Yukon Hospital Corporation to appear as witnesses in the House and provide responses to questions from the House.

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

THAT it is the opinion of this House that we express our collective appreciation for all the hard work done over the many years by community and environmental activists NGOs, civil servants, consultants and members of this House — on both the government and opposition sides — that has culminated in the recently released *Yukon Solid Waste Action Plan*, which is another significant step in the process to modernize

and improve how we manage solid waste environmentally, responsibly and sustainably.

I give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Yukon government to ensure that any development of land-based treatment centres in the Yukon serve all Yukoners by:

(1) evaluating and learning from the experience of current and past Yukon government treatment and detoxification centres and programs;

(2) evaluating and learning from current and past Yukon First Nation land-based treatment centres and programs;

(3) researching land-based centres in Alaska, N.W.T. and Western Canada to learn best practices;

(4) financing them adequately on a long-term basis;

(5) taking into consideration representative regions of the Yukon when determining locations of the centres;

(6) accommodating First Nation cultural approaches to addictions treatment and detoxification while including non-First Nation cultural components;

(7) ensuring that an after-care component is an essential part of any centre;

(8) training personnel to meet national standards of treatment and current practices;

(9) maintaining an urban treatment and detoxification centre in Whitehorse; and

(10) monitoring and evaluating all Yukon treatment and detoxification centres annually.

Speaker: Are there any further notices of motion?
Hearing none, is there a statement by a minister?

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Canadian Reserve Force

Hon. Mr. Rouble: I rise today to make special mention of a new human resource policy that the Government of Yukon has put in place to underline our support for the men and women who represent our country in Canada's reserve force. The purpose of the reserve force is to provide support for the regular Armed Forces.

Since 2000, members of the reserve force have been deployed in Afghanistan, Bosnia, Croatia and Haiti, among other countries. In Canada, they have helped with search and rescue operations, provided aid to the homeless during extreme cold weather, provided flood relief, and assisted during forest fires.

As you are aware, this government amended the *Employment Standards Act* last May to make it easier for Yukon members of the reserve force to fulfill their duties. The change to the legislation provides reservists with job protection, allowing them to take leave while still having the security of their jobs at home. The Government of Canada and the 10 provinces have made similar changes to their legislation.

However, the *Employment Standards Act* does not apply to Yukon government employees, so we have put in place a policy called "Leave for Reservists," which provides the same job protection to reservists who work for the Yukon government. Under this policy, reservists are entitled to leave without pay

for up to 15 days for annual training and leave without pay to take part in operations designated by the Minister of National Defence are outlined under the *National Defence Act*. There is no time limit for this leave but most deployments are for about one year, including training and overseas assignments.

Under the policy, reservists are entitled to job protection during these leaves and to continue to accumulate service within the Yukon government during their absence.

Mr. Speaker, we do not expect this to affect any Yukon government employees. There are approximately six active reservists in the entire Yukon. However, members of the Canadian Rangers are considered part-time reservists. There are more than 200 Rangers across the Yukon. They would also be eligible for these job protections. It is not known how many Rangers are also Yukon government employees. The important thing to remember is that reservists play a critically important role for our country. Our Yukon members of the reserve force can now fulfill this role with peace of mind, knowing their job will be waiting for them when they come home.

I'm proud to say that Yukon is committed to standing with our provincial and federal counterparts by providing this policy support of Canada's reserve force.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Fairclough: On behalf of the Official Opposition, I rise in support of the changes being announced today. The changes recognize the contribution members of our reserve force and Canadian Rangers make. We all depend on them, and anything we can do to improve their ability to serve is worthy of our support.

The changes entitle reservists and Rangers to leave without pay for up to 15 days for annual training and leave without pay to take part in operations designated by the Minister of National Defence.

Again, we're in full support of this new initiative.

Mr. Cardiff: I rise today on behalf of the Third Party to give our support to this policy. It's interesting that we did debate changes to the *Employment Standards Act* last May, and it's good to see the government recognized the need to come forward with a policy that protects those who are reservists, as well as the Canadian Rangers. We heard a motion read into the record today urging the federal government to support them and as well to continue the work they do on the Yukon Quest trail.

I do have one other thing the minister could do — a couple of things, actually — in support of reservists, but probably more affected are the Canadian Rangers, and that would be to make representations to the federal government, to the Department of National Defence. As I understand it, we value the work the Rangers do here in the territory — the role they play in being the watchful eyes, participating in activities that make our communities safer — and allowing them to do this is a good thing. Unfortunately, it's my understanding that when they do participate in these operations it oftentimes takes months for them to be reimbursed by the federal government.

While they can take the leave without pay, it oftentimes takes months for them to be reimbursed.

Another thing I think would be good — it's my understanding — is for this government to urge the federal government to review the levels of remuneration for Rangers when they are participating in these operations and providing their own personal equipment, such as snow machines, ATVs or water craft. The levels of remuneration are based on something the federal government came up with probably 25 years ago, and it doesn't reflect the true costs of providing the use of that equipment or maintaining it. It doesn't adequately reflect the true cost to those who are doing it.

So while we support this initiative by the government, I would also urge them to show their support for the Canadian Rangers and make representation to the federal government on these other two issues.

Hon. Mr. Rouble: I would like to thank members of the Assembly for their positive comments regarding this policy change. I especially appreciate the member from beautiful Mount Lorne for providing constructive comments as to how to improve the system. We do have a significant debt to our reservists, and the Canadian Rangers do play a very important role in not only protecting our sovereignty but also providing assistance to Canadians.

I would like to thank all members of this Assembly for their support and their confidence in this government's initiative.

Speaker: This then brings us to Question Period.

QUESTION PERIOD

Question re: Peel watershed land use plan

Mr. Fairclough: I have a question for the Minister of Environment about her department's mission to the Peel land use planning commission. Yesterday the Member for Copperbelt asked the Minister of Environment about the Premier's irate call to her officials. The Premier's intervention resulted in her department cleansing the information that it gave to the commission. Unfortunately the Premier answered most of the questions yesterday, so Yukoners still haven't heard what the minister thinks about the Premier's interference and the neutered document the commission eventually received. Yesterday we heard what the Premier had to say about stepping into her department; today I hope Yukoners will get to hear from the Minister of Environment directly. So could the minister tell Yukoners what she thinks about the Premier's interference in her department? She can't be happy with it.

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Mr. Speaker, it is with great joy that I am able to respond to the member opposite's question. Mr. Speaker, I attempted to articulate in my response yesterday, but unfortunately it was not aired. If the member opposite is asking whether I, as the Minister of Environment, or the Premier or any of these Cabinet ministers on this side of the House support political interference in the land use planning process, the answer is no — unequivocally, no.

Just for the member opposite, I want to articulate the government's position. At no time did the Premier certainly provide any comment on the specific details of the proposed draft document that the member opposite refers to. At no time did the Premier direct the department to change its comments. At no time did the Premier or I as Minister of Environment — or anyone on this side of the Legislature, I might add — and I can only account for those on this side of the Legislature — in terms of providing direction as to what was to be included or excluded in the land use planning process.

So again, Mr. Speaker, we do not endorse political interference in the land use planning process. In fact, we support, the land use planning process.

Mr. Fairclough: While interference was happening, the minister stood by idly. Why didn't she do something at the time? The Department of Environment houses Yukon experts in wildlife, conservation and environmental research. It possesses the technical information that Peel Watershed Planning Commission asked for so it could use that to make recommendations on how to manage the Peel for all Yukoners.

Yukoners expect that it is the Minister of Environment who is responsible for the department — the minister and not the Premier, Mr. Speaker. After the Premier called the officials, they cut down the information they sent to the commission by 80 percent. Even though they had asked for it, the commission never got to hear what Yukon experts on the environment had to say about the Peel watershed.

Does the minister agree that the commission should be denied 80 percent of the information her department had prepared for it?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Mr. Speaker, I'm absolutely appalled with the member opposite. The Liberal caucus is now asking me to politically interfere in the land use planning process — something I would never condone and something that this government would never condone. I will articulate again for all members' consideration that I, as Minister of Environment, have never, ever and will not politically interfere in the land use planning process. There is a land use planning process and it is called chapter 11 in the *Umbrella Final Agreement*.

Mr. Speaker, what the Premier has done is ensure that all departments certainly live up to their obligations as defined in chapter 11, called land use planning under the *Umbrella Final Agreement*. Again, as I articulated yesterday in Question Period, for five years plus, the Department of Environment, Department of Tourism and Culture and many other departments have contributed to the land use planning process. We're very proud of their work. We support their work. We support the integrity of the independence of the land use planning process.

Mr. Fairclough: That's what the minister says, but the Premier did interfere in that process. There was interference, and this is a government that promised to be open and accountable. Well, it's time to live up to those promises. Not only do Yukoners deserve to know what their government is up to, they deserve the answers from the people who are responsible.

On the Premier's demand, her department gave the Peel land use planning commission a watered-down version of their recommendations. That's their political interference, Mr.

Speaker. Does this minister — the Minister of Environment — agree that the commission should not get 80 percent of the information her department experts wanted to give?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: You know, Mr. Speaker, perhaps if the member opposite would read less from the script and actually listen to the answers that are being provided by me, as Minister of Environment, the member opposite would certainly recognize that we do not support any political interference in the land use planning process.

The Peel Watershed Planning Commission is undertaking their work right now. As articulated in a recent news release — I believe on September 23 of this year — they indicated they will be releasing their recommended plan prior to the end of the year.

We look forward to receiving that recommended plan and doing our due diligence on that particular work. Until that time, we respect the independence and integrity of that process. I will reiterate that for five years plus, the Department of Environment has been providing lots of information.

Question re: Peel watershed land use plan

Mr. Mitchell: We have more questions for the Minister of Environment. Last winter the minister's department put in a great deal of work responding to a request for information from the Peel land use planning commission. The Premier blocked that review from reaching the commission and the minister was either out of the loop entirely or endorsed the Premier's point of view. Either way, the Environment minister has done a disservice to the employees in her department by allowing the Premier to stifle their good work.

Let's go to the document itself, the one the Premier tried to bury. What was in these documents that made him so irate that he called up an official and yelled at him? The document is a technical review that looks at fish and wildlife, water and ecology. Why did the Environment minister support the Premier's decision to suppress this technical information?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: For the member opposite, unfortunately I am not sure if the member opposite or the Leader of the Official Opposition heard my responses. Again for the member opposite, at no time did the Premier comment on the specific details of the proposed document that the member opposite is referring to. At no time did he direct the department to change the document. At no time did the Premier ask that this particular document, or any document for that matter, be included or excluded from the land use planning process.

Mr. Speaker, I have the utmost respect — the utmost respect — for the Department of Environment officials who work very hard and do a great job at what they do.

Our government is very supportive of planning for protected areas and our record as such is unbelievable. We have a number of planning processes, including special management areas, proposed territorial parks, habitat protection areas — of which there are several underway.

We are very pleased to be able to sign off a number of management plans pertaining to protected areas over the years. We will continue to support independent processes as defined under chapter 11.

Mr. Mitchell: You know, Mr. Speaker, this has become the theatre of the absurd. The minister should read the document that was tabled. When she says that this has become unbelievable, what has become unbelievable are the answers we're getting.

This Premier said, "Jump," Mr. Speaker, and the minister asked, "How high?" It's the Minister of Environment's duty to ensure people are aware of environmental issues before decisions are made. It's not the Environment minister's job or any minister's job — and certainly not the Premier's job — to block the release of that information.

Let's go back to the document that so offended the Premier — the document that led to his irate phone call. The document talks about new access to the Peel watershed and what potential impacts this might have on water, fish and wildlife. It says, "New access will make effective regulation and management of these resources a new and significant challenge."

This is exactly the kind of information the commission needs in order to build a land use plan. Why did the Environment minister give in to the Premier's bullying and allow this type of information to be blocked? Why didn't she stand up for the environment?

Unparliamentary language

Speaker: Order please. I reminded honourable members last week that strong words were going to beget strong words. There are going to be some strong reactions to terms like "bullying." It will happen and then the Chair will have to step in again.

Hon. Minister of Environment, you have the floor.

Hon. Ms. Taylor: I will again reiterate for the members opposite in a very respectful manner — unlike what I've gotten from the member opposite thus far. Again, at no time did the Premier — or I, as Minister of Environment, or anyone on this side of the Legislature — comment on the specific proposed document that the member opposite referred to. At no time did the Premier or I, as Minister of Environment, or any other member on this side of the Legislature, give direction as to what should be included or not included in the land use planning process.

I have the utmost respect for the integrity of the land use planning process. The commission is doing their work; they're doing it in a very good manner and all members will be provided with that recommended plan by the end of the year.

Again, Mr. Speaker, I will conclude by saying that I do respect the work of the Department of Environment and all the respective departments who contribute by providing advice on and technical analysis of those important issues pertaining to land use planning.

Mr. Mitchell: If the Environment minister wants respectful debate she should start by respecting the environment and the good work done by her department in order to protect the environment. Now how can Yukoners trust the minister to stand up for the environment when she won't stand up to the Premier? Yukoners have lost faith in this government. They no longer trust this government.

Department officials were trying to do their job; the Premier placed an irate phone call and said, "This is what the report will say and this is what you should leave out," and the Environment minister did nothing to stop it.

Let's go back again to the document. It examined issues of access, protected areas, land use planning, the overall process in subregional planning — just the kind of material the department should be providing. Instead, the department submitted a watered-down four-page submission, after being directed to do so in a phone call from the Premier.

What was so offensive about the information originally in the document that the Environment minister went along with having it deep-sixed?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: I will reiterate for the members opposite — and I'll continue to reiterate until the cows come home — that the Premier and I, as Minister of Environment, and no other member on this side of the Legislature, provided specific comment on any proposed detailed document going before the land use planning commission. We have not asked for any document to be included or excluded.

In fact, I'm not just pulling this out of the air. I will table for the members opposite a letter to the editor that was produced and provided by the deputy minister responsible for Environment, as well as the Deputy Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, in which I quote: "At no time did the Premier comment on the specific details contained in the draft 22-page memo, nor did he direct the department to change its comments. The Premier's direction was intended to remind departments that Yukon's responses to the draft land use plan needed to respect the Peel watershed planning process, as provided in the *Umbrella Final Agreement*."

These are not my words. These are the words of the deputy ministers responsible for Environment and Energy, Mines and Resources. I applaud the work that is conducted each day by the departments, and we'll certainly continue to conduct business as usual.

Question re: Infrastructure spending

Mr. Cardiff: I have a question for the Premier. A new staff residence across the river — price tag up to \$17 million; a new hospital in Dawson — price tag \$25 million; a new hospital in Watson Lake — price tag unknown; Mayo B hydroelectric project — price tag \$71 million after the federal government pays their share. Total costs — somewhere in the region of \$110 million to \$130 million. So, to the Premier: what do these projects have in common?

Hon. Mr. Hart: I will address the issues with regard to Health and Social Services and health care in the Yukon.

The Whitehorse General Hospital and its board have the mandate under the act to perform and deal with these buildings — the residence across the way as well as the hospital in Watson Lake and Dawson City — which they are currently doing. Their board has submitted funding requests to the banks to obtain funding for the construction of these facilities, and they are going through that process.

Mr. Cardiff: It is unfortunate the Premier doesn't know the answer to that question. What they have in common is this: they are all major government initiatives in which the

government has shifted the financial responsibility on to the backs of our Crown corporations, particularly Yukon Development Corporation, Yukon Energy Corporation and the Hospital Corporation. These Crown corporations are being forced to borrow a lot of money. We know the Premier has gone this route to avoid having a deficit on the books and be in violation of the *Taxpayer Protection Act*, which would force an election call.

The problem is this: the public and future generations will still have to pay whether it is on the Yukon government's books or on the Crown corporations' books, through interest payments, through the sale of assets, through clawbacks on social programs, privatizations, or through public/private partnerships.

Why did the government not give any consideration to Yukon's financial future as it made announcement after announcement of big-ticket projects?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: First, the member of the Third Party hopefully recognizes these are investments in not only health care, meeting the needs of Yukoners today and into the future, but also in energy, meeting the needs of Yukoners today and into the future.

The future was mortgaged a long time ago by not addressing these issues. Instead, past history has taught us that subsidies in energy were a mistake. We should have been investing in infrastructure back then. The challenges in our health care system — it's this government that recognized that some years ago, in ensuring that Canada was investing in the territories so Yukon citizens and northerners have access to health care services comparable to all other Canadians. It's a fundamental principle: comparable access based on comparable levels of taxation.

I want to speak specifically on the energy point. If the investment is not made today, we will be mortgaging the future in millions of dollars in increased diesel costs for this territory in meeting supply challenges that face us now and within the next two years.

Mr. Cardiff: The Yukon is more dependent than ever on grants from the federal government. The amount we receive from the federal government is dependent on a few factors: one is our population; another factor is that if spending goes up in the provinces, our grant from Canada increases. Provincial governments are running deficits to stimulate job creation and to cope with the financial meltdown. So too is the federal government. But this is not going to go on forever and at some point the spending will stop and it will be time for belt tightening. Even the Premier has acknowledged that. We know that those belts wrenched up the tightest are on working families, the poor, and average Yukoners.

Now the Premier himself said that we need to be cautious, given the global financial situation, so when the bills come due, the Crown corporations are saddled with debts and our surplus is spent, to whom will the Premier turn to pay the bills?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: Mr. Speaker, pure speculation. In fact, the member has hit the point. These expenditures and investments are needed today so that future generations will not be encumbered or saddled with the challenges of the gaps that

we have in our infrastructure, the gaps that we have in our health care system; we are meeting the needs today. Furthermore, Mr. Speaker, these corporations are working within their mandate. These mandates were created years and years ago. We as a government are ensuring that all departments and our Crown corporations are working to the maximum of their obligations and responsibilities within their mandates.

Does the member understand that by the year 2012, there will be an increased demand for electricity of some 25 percent? Does the member understand that without the Mayo B investment, we would have to then offset that supply and demand by approximately \$27 million a year in diesel costs? This is an investment today to ensure we don't mortgage the future and waste millions of dollars on a fuel that will also increase our carbon footprint in this territory. Mr. Speaker, this government is investing today to ensure Yukon's future.

Question re: Lake Laberge road improvements

Mr. Cathers: I'd like to ask the Minister of Highways and Public Works about the status of planned road improvements in my riding. This summer Highways and Public Works released the functional plan for upgrading the Hot Springs Road. The recommended option would keep the current lane width, but significantly widen the total paved surface of the road to accommodate its increasing use by cyclists. The plan also recommends improving the trail on the north side of the road for multiple user groups and developing a trail on the south side of the road for non-motorized users, including joggers and horse riders. This recommended option addresses the main concerns my constituents have with the Hot Springs Road.

Will the minister assure me the government remains committed to making the recommended improvements to the Hot Springs Road, and will he commit to beginning the work this coming summer?

Hon. Mr. Lang: We work with the community and have worked with the residents on the Hot Springs Road over the last eight years. We have done the review and are looking forward to doing the work. I can't commit myself here today because of budget restraints, but hopefully we're looking at the first phase unfolding next summer and looking over the next couple of years to get the job done.

Mr. Cathers: I'd like to thank the minister for that response and I look forward to a clearer commitment in the future. I appreciate his willingness to include that in the request for next year's budget.

Many of my constituents are concerned about safety at the intersection of the Alaska Highway and the Mayo Road — or north Klondike Highway, as it's officially known. There have been a number of accidents and close calls at this increasingly busy intersection. I've raised the issue with the minister before and Highways and Public Works has responded by coming up with a plan to make safety improvements, including lengthening the turning lane off the Alaska Highway northbound lane.

Will the minister update me on when work to improve safety at the intersection of the Mayo Road and the Alaska Highway is scheduled to occur?

Hon. Mr. Lang: The engineering review has been done. It is a safety issue, and all the work that has been recommended will be done next summer.

Mr. Cathers: I'd like to thank the minister for that clear response and commitment. I appreciate his attention to this issue.

Another issue of concern to my constituents is the old Alaska Highway. It's another road experiencing more traffic due to an increased local population and small businesses in the area. This road has been partially chipsealed, but the remainder of the road is gravel. Will the Minister of Highways and Public Works commit to completing the chipsealing of the old Alaska Highway? And can he tell me when Highways and Public Works plans to have that project completed?

Hon. Mr. Lang: Again, on the Old Alaska Highway, we certainly have done some BST work, and that BST work is done with excess BST material that we have on other projects. Because of the traffic, we'll continue that, and hopefully, over the next couple of years, it will be completely BST'd.

Question re: Yukon Energy Corporation/ATCO

Mr. McRobb: This past summer, we asked for information about the Premier's involvement in his negotiations with ATCO. We filed access to information requests through the ATIPP office for contract information, terms of reference for those contracts, and correspondence. But those applications were all denied. Why were they denied?

ATIPP officials gave us the reason in writing: because the government was involved in negotiations. So we wrote the Premier recently and again requested the information. He wrote back, "It is our intent to continue tabling information in the Legislature."

Mr. Speaker, this flow of information stopped a week ago. So to the Premier: when might we expect him to resume his tablings?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: Actually, Mr. Speaker, there was more documentation tabled today. The government is tabling information not on one specific matter but on many.

I want to correct the member opposite and ensure that the public record is correct. The response to the members opposite on ATIPP: first off, it has nothing to do with elected individuals, elected officials. We do not involve ourselves in that process. But also, the member opposite is incorrect in his statement to date. As I understand, all the officials responded with was referencing areas of the act. At no time did the officials cite anything other than those particular provisions within the act.

Furthermore, Mr. Speaker, these officials took the time out Friday to help the members opposite with their confusion and to make sure that they understood exactly what took place.

They were quite clear with the members opposite. In fact, they said that they did not have a mandate to negotiate at all, which is pretty standard practice considering the government receives a litany of proposals throughout the course of its work and conducts a standard practice in receipt of those proposals. This is nothing different from that very process.

Mr. McRobb: Mr. Speaker, I would submit it is the Premier who is confused about which officials we're talking

about, about which documents we're talking about and about what was actually tabled earlier today in this House.

EMR officials told us during Friday's briefing that they want to release this information and we believe them. So much for the Premier's assurances that his government is open and accountable. Instead of simply releasing this information and letting Yukoners decide for themselves, the Premier wants us to take his word for everything, but we'd rather see the evidence.

Will the Premier now undertake to release the information that officials have been ordered to not release?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: Mr. Speaker, the government will release all information on any related matter pertinent to those matters, and of course where it's obligated to release such information.

I think there was a great deal of information released on Friday by officials, who the members now appear to be questioning. They explained in great detail the process, the exploratory discussions that were taking place. We'll do our best, but obviously releasing information to the members opposite does not always resolve their issues of confusion. They continue, in an erroneous manner, to present to this House their view of the facts.

Question re: Yukon Energy Corporation/ATCO

Mr. McRobb: I'd like to follow up with the Premier on a question about his involvement in this privatization scandal. Yesterday he used certain terms to describe our briefing with departmental officials on Friday. He called it a detailed briefing and said it was a very clear accounting by officials on what transpired.

The chronological log provided some information on this whole matter, but it failed to identify any involvement by the Premier in the absence of officials. For example, we know the Premier met with ATCO's president and CEO and had phone conversations with her. We're most curious about his direct involvement with representatives from ATCO. Why was this information excluded from the chronology?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: We've had conversations with ATCO in this territory as far back as probably the century. Yukon Electrical, as a corporate citizen, has been involved in producing electricity in the Yukon all that time. Recent information that the members opposite conveniently have ignored clearly demonstrates that discussions have been going on with Yukon Electrical and ATCO for years. This is not new.

We've tabled a letter — as far as, you know, keeping with the spirit of tabling information — from the former chair, which clearly is representing the fact that discussions were happening about restructuring their ownership of assets here in the Yukon Territory — again, evidence that these discussions aren't new. But what the members did receive — and this is one of the items of detail — is the officials provided them what direction the department received in the exploratory discussions. We would not consider selling assets or privatizing, Mr. Speaker. That is information that is in the hands of the members opposite, yet they continue to refuse to accept the facts.

Mr. McRobb: Obviously this chronology is not all that the Premier has cracked it up to be. It didn't include the most critical information. It didn't record the Premier's own

discussions. Officials made it clear at Friday's briefing they would be unaware of the Premier's solo excursions. They apologized for exclusions in the chronology of any developments within the Premier's own parallel process.

We all know the Premier was the driving force behind this whole privatization effort. He was personally involved in discussions with ATCO representatives. He personally knows the ATCO president and CEO and had discussions with her. Can he tell this House how many discussions he did have with Nancy Southern on these matters?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: Mr. Speaker, receipt of a proposal — of course — and it was immediately tabled with caucus and brought before the Yukon Energy Corporation itself by way of example. But again, the Member for Kluane has stood on the floor of the Legislature and made this statement that there were negotiations to privatize the Yukon's energy infrastructure and so on and so forth. I don't know how else we can explain to the Member for Kluane. The officials have done it. We have done it. Others have done it.

I would hope that the member opposite is not questioning the information that those officials provided, because in doing so he's actually questioning whether those officials were being factual with the members opposite. All we've done here, in good faith, is to try to provide information to the members opposite so they understand the difference between partnership and privatization, and so they understand that exploratory discussions are needed before any government or any department could advance to a decision-making point. All of these are important matters, and I think the officials explained that for the members in full and great detail on Friday.

Mr. McRobb: The Premier avoided the question, and is now hiding behind officials. We also know the Premier had discussions with his caucus, Cabinet and staff on his secret privatization scheme, but there is no mention of them in the chronology. Why not? Isn't that where the higher level discussions took place? After all, the departmental officials were only following his orders. The officials were very clear at the briefing to qualify the chronology, as including only those discussions that involved them.

Now, we know the Premier would like us to believe that his total involvement was recorded within the chronology provided to us by departmental officials, but they were very clear to inform us they would have been completely unaware of the Premier's own excursions. The Premier needs to fill in the blanks instead of drawing blanks.

Will he agree to provide us with a complete chronology log of his own involvement in this matter?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: Well, we have. The log provided is an accounting of the discussions that took place. Furthermore, Mr. Speaker, the presentation made by officials who were involved in those discussions and had briefed the government on a couple of occasions — and by the way, this much-vaunted document that the members opposite keep referring to was never even presented to the government; it was just a working document; they were preparing to at some point come back to government with their representations. They also went on to point out to the members that there was a three-step process

envisioned here: develop an MOU; scoping-out discussions, exploratory discussions necessary — any sort of partnership agreement may flow from that; approve and implement any such process. However, all of that is necessary through Cabinet sanction.

A mandate must be provided and that's where the members really have a problem. The department was clear: there was no mandate to negotiate, and the officials even explained through an example of how the process works.

There is confusion, and that is that the members don't understand partnership versus privatization.

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

Hon. Ms. Taylor: 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. 17, *Second Appropriation Act, 2009-10*.

Do members wish a brief recess?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

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

Recess

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

Bill No. 17 — *Second Appropriation Act, 2009-10* — continued

Chair: The matter before the Committee is Bill No. 17, *Second Appropriation Act, 2009-10*. We will now continue with general debate. Mr. Fentie, you have the floor.

Hon. Mr. Fentie: Mr. Chair, we adjourned debate yesterday in a conversation with the Leader of the Official Opposition that really reflected nothing in the budget. It was what I would call the *Seinfeld* debate — a discussion about the *Seinfeld* privatization scheme. We all know that the show *Seinfeld* was a show about nothing. I would like to turn our attention back to what is a substantial investment, once again, through the supplementary estimates, Bill No. 17, in the territory — contributing to quality of life, stimulus, infrastructure and the list goes on.

When the government is faced with expenditure decisions and the matter of how we strategically invest the financial re-

sources of the territory in the public interest, we have to reflect on where these strategic investments are taking place.

When you consider the fact that on the O&M side, Community Services is getting a \$1.4-million increase, the Department of Community Services, headed up by the minister, touches virtually every Yukoner in their daily lives. The Community Services department is very much involved in the infrastructure planning process for the Yukon on waste management, on emergency response services — a new integrated modernized approach to emergency response services. These are an example of why, strategically, the government would invest in the Department of Community Services.

Furthermore, the Department of Education receiving a \$4.8-million investment in this supplementary budget, as headed up by the Minister of Education, is another example of strategic investment in ensuring that Yukoners have access to an education system that to the extent possible is meeting their needs. We all can agree that education is fundamental and of extreme importance to the Yukon and indeed any jurisdiction.

The Department of Environment is receiving an increase on the O&M side. I think that's valuable, in terms of why we as a government, strategically, through investment, clearly demonstrate a balanced approach.

Health and Social Services, one of the most challenging areas for every jurisdiction in the country, including our national government — \$7.6 million is being allocated strategically to the Health and Social Services department. This is about quality of life. This is about access to comparable services for Yukoners.

Highways and Public Works — more infrastructure issues there in that department. The increase on the O&M side would include things like maintenance of Yukon's infrastructure, contributing strategically to the territory in many ways.

Department of Justice — this is important, Mr. Chair. This government has undertaken correctional reform and in many ways, strategically, our investments in the Department of Justice reflect that process.

Tourism and Culture — the mainstay, of course — is headed up by our Minister of Tourism and Culture. We are working hard not only to attract the traveller, the visitor to Yukon, but to strengthen the fabric of our culture and our history through the minister's leadership.

Going back to Justice — I know that the Minister of Justice was recently visiting a new and innovative approach to housing inmates — the transitional women's unit is soon to be opened. This is another major step in the process of how we deal with corrections and justice in the territory. There's much more to come under this minister's leadership.

On the capital side, Community Services once again is receiving an increase. Again, I repeat that this department touches the daily lives of all Yukoners.

Economic Development has been one of our primary focuses. I think if you look at the statistics, the Yukon is doing quite well. We're one of the jurisdictions with the lowest unemployment rate. We also have a GDP factor far in excess of the national average — I think recent information is over 4 percent in growth.

This is what Economic Development headed up by our minister intends to do — continue that trend of growth, especially when it comes to bringing in investment. The hard work by the minister is producing great results.

The capital side on Education once again is to enhance and improve our ability to provide education.

Energy, Mines and Resources — a department that is involved in agriculture, energy, mining, oil and gas — all relative to the strategic plan for the Yukon and its future.

Highways and Public Works infrastructure is one of the most important areas for stimulus now — but ensuring that we provide infrastructure that will contribute to the long term for economic growth, quality of life and closing the deficit gaps on infrastructure in the territory.

Mr. Chair, the Yukon Development Corporation is another example, and the Yukon Housing Corporation is another example. Hopefully, the Leader of the Official Opposition will recognize that the *Seinfeld* debate — the debate about nothing — is not as important as it is to reflect on what we need to do in this territory now and into the future.

I couldn't be more clear on that note. Also, I think the members opposite have addressed the fact that, to some degree, they take issue with lapses. Lapses are a standard historical process. This government's lapse factor is consistent with past historical lapses. In fact, I would submit that, given the dramatic increase of fiscal capacity for this territory, some \$400 million a few years ago to \$1 billion plus with this budget — I believe it's \$1,071,000,000 — to have a lapse factor as we have, compared to the amount of investment that we're accomplishing, we're certainly heading in the right direction.

So the *Second Appropriation Act, 2009-10*, Bill No. 17, is in keeping with practising good government, is in keeping with building a better and improved quality of life for Yukoners, is in keeping with educational reform, is in keeping with correctional reform, is in keeping with our need for infrastructure throughout the territory, and addressing communities' challenges. Of course, many of those will also be addressed through our infrastructure plan, the Building Canada plan.

There is much ahead of us, and the budget before us is just but another stepping stone into this Yukon Party government's overall plan and vision for the Yukon — a plan and vision that has been unfolding for over seven years now and the evidence of progress being made is all around us — the low unemployment rate, growing population, quality of life improving — all facets of that life, by the way. There are challenges that we are facing today that must be addressed, and some of that is certainly part of the step we're taking with this — once again — very strategic investment of the public purse.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Mitchell: You know, Mr. Chair, I really think the Premier does better when he comes up with his own quips and retorts in his efforts not to answer questions in here, rather than relying on the spin doctors in the corner office. As far as his metaphor is concerned, at least the television show, *Seinfeld*, was a humorous show. No one in the Yukon is finding the Premier's denials of his secret negotiations toward privatizing their Energy Corporation funny. It's not a laughing matter to

Yukoners, Mr. Chair, so we don't know why the Premier thinks he could dismiss it with that kind of reference.

Now we haven't been getting specific answers to specific questions. In fact, the Premier really didn't answer any of the questions that I asked in my last series of questions, so perhaps we'll try to make it shorter for the Premier's short attention span. Before we get started, we'll just point out to the Premier that general debate, as the Premier well knows, is just that — it's general debate. We may never even see the departments called that the Premier's responsible for. We may not see the Development Corporation or the Energy Corporation, for which the Premier has now officially assumed responsibility, called for debate. For that matter, we don't know when or if Energy, Mines and Resources will be called in Committee, so we will take advantage of our opportunities in general debate to ask general questions about any matter in the budget.

Now, Mr. Chair, getting back to some of the questions that the Premier is methodically not answering — we'd like to know more about some of his telephone calls to officials from the corner office. The compendium of dates and meetings that were provided by officials last Friday in the briefing — which only give four- and five-word summaries of the events — very specifically dealt with those events to which they had personal knowledge due to their participation.

The officials were very careful to tell us that there might well be phone calls that the Premier made to ATCO senior officials that they were not privy to, but these were basically summaries of meetings. We would like to know more about what we understand to be somewhat frequent phone calls from not only the Premier but his chief of staff to deputy ministers and other senior officials in the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources, as well as the Premier's own phone calls to the ATCO president and CEO, Nancy Southern. Can the Premier tell us, during that eight-month period, about how often he spoke with the chair of ATCO and what was the nature of those conversations?

Chair's statement

Chair: Order please. Before proceeding any further in this debate, the Chair would like to remind members that in order to have a constructive debate, it is better not to personalize it. Some comments being made will lead to discord and will lead to further personalization of the debate. I would like members not to make personal comments.

Thank you.

Hon. Mr. Lang: As Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, listening to the member opposite day in and day out, I'd like to remind members here about the *Energy Strategy for Yukon*. It's very important that questions like that are asked in the House — working hand in hand with the climate action plan, which was put forward last year.

This *Energy Strategy for Yukon* is a forward-looking document and it's how we, as government and as Yukoners, perceive our energy management into the future. We're looking at affordable and dependable power. We look at that very seriously because, as we in the House all know, without depend-

able power and affordable power or energy, Yukoners will have an issue.

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Point of order

Chair: On a point of order.

Mr. Mitchell: On a point of order, I would like to ask the Chair to consider that I've asked a very specific question of the Premier and, according to 19(b), when a member speaks to matters other than the question under discussion, they should be called to order. I don't believe the honourable minister is speaking to the question I asked the Premier about the Premier's telephone conversations.

Chair's ruling

Chair: There is no point of order. When we're debating a bill in general debate, it's general debate.

Hon. Mr. Lang: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I certainly understand why the member opposite wouldn't want to deal with the *Energy Strategy for Yukon*, not when we're talking about facts here in the House. The *Energy Strategy for Yukon* was built by Yukoners, consultation and a go-forward plan. Again as I said to the member opposite — affordable, dependable sources of energy. The member opposite hasn't come to the floor with any alternative energy plans, has he, Mr. Chair?

As we move forward into the future, this will become a very, very important document. The energy strategy covers many things. It's a strategy for the Yukon — a strategy focused on four pillars. Of course when we go forward in this, we only have to look at the extension to Carmacks and Pelly. That was a partnership between the Energy Corporation, governments, First Nations and, of course, industry. You only have to look at the corporation to understand that the only way we're going to expand our power source reliability and our infrastructure is to form partnerships.

We're looking at Mayo B. The member opposite is very negative on Mayo B. Mayo B is a very important part of the puzzle on how this government and Yukoners will look forward in the next two or three years to building up their power sources. So that again will be a partnership.

Of course, we have to look at renewable energy, and the renewable energy is very, very important, because that's why this government has brought forward into the House the independent power producers and the net metering concept. We're going out to talk to Yukoners about the concept of how we'll manage those kinds of options into the future. If we don't do that, and if we were to sit and take our leadership from the Leader of the Official Opposition, I'm not quite sure where this territory would be. I mean, it's based on very little knowledge, rumours and other interesting concepts of facts. We've been talking for days on the privatization question of Yukon energy in the territory.

This government has produced the back-up to say to the members opposite that that isn't in the cards, Mr. Chair. We are not privatizing anything. We are looking at partnerships. We have looked at rationalization for 40 years. I was the Minister

of Energy, Mines and Resources for six years, and in those six years we had constant conversations with Yukon Electrical, incorporated with Yukon Energy Corporation, on how we could better serve the Yukon public by rationalizing what we did. That has been going on since NCPC days.

Now were we successful in the rationalization? Well, we have had discussions and certainly look forward to more discussions, because if we don't get our energy reliability and affordability in place, we as a territory will not be competitive and, of course, the affordability will not be affordable.

Mayo B alone — well, if we don't do that project, the diesel we'll burn will cost us roughly over \$20 million a year. So that would be very bad planning not to go forward with this. We have a partnership with the federal government on this — the corporation — and certainly look forward to the project getting up and running, and of course being involved in producing energy for all of the Yukon.

Along with that, Mr. Chair, we certainly look forward to tying the grid in between Pelly and Stewart Crossing, which the Energy Corporation — I have been told — is in the process of doing right as we speak, and that should be a three- or four-month project. It certainly will benefit that part of the Yukon. The local individuals and all the investment that goes on on the ground in that area will certainly affect the economy of that area.

Of course as we go through the energy strategy for the territory — and certainly, Mr. Chair, obviously the members opposite haven't read this and obviously they don't take it seriously — I would say to the Member of Klwane especially that he should take a look at the energy strategy. The energy strategy is one part of this puzzle, but the climate change action plan is another part with Environment. These two strategies certainly go hand in hand in how the Yukon will manage not only its energy, but the climate change action plan, which is another part of this government's commitment.

As we move forward, we have the *Energy Strategy for Yukon*. The strategy focuses on four priorities for energy in Yukon: conservation, increase the supply, meet our current and future electricity needs, and manage responsible oil and gas development. Those four pillars are exactly what this strategy is about — how do we conserve energy and use it more efficiently? Those are the things that in-house departments like the Energy Solutions Centre are addressing as we move forward on this very important part of the strategy.

Modernizing our facility at Aishihik, putting the third wheel in place — that's very important and is being done as we speak. That will give us the excess power we need during peak hours here in the City of Whitehorse so we can minimize the use of the diesels we have placed here in the city. That again shrinks our carbon footprint down in the territory.

I find it amazing that the members opposite haven't read the *Energy Strategy for Yukon* and haven't asked any questions on it. It must be a fairly good document and a fairly good direction if, in fact, the opposition hasn't spent any time critiquing it and asking the pertinent questions they should be.

But the sitting goes on for another four or five weeks, and I look forward to some questions on the strategy, on how this

government and Yukon see themselves moving forward in managing the energy and the potential energy in the territory. Certainly, the government has been proactive, and certainly proactive in the sense that we did the hard work it took to get the strategy done.

I'd like to thank Yukoners out there in the territory who were involved in the consultation and, of course, industry and all others who participated in putting this document together, so that we could see where the Yukon could best go when we're managing our energy. It's very important for jurisdictions to have a strategy because energy, as we all know, has become a very expensive part of any jurisdiction.

Of course, we go back to the question about affordability and dependability. How do we make our power more dependable and how do we make sure that Yukoners can afford the service? Without this kind of management and foresight, and becoming more and more dependent on petroleum, this will become more and more expensive. Certainly, we don't want to do anything that would make the affordability any more onerous on the ratepayers than it is today.

So as we move forward with this, Mr. Chair, and as we look forward to the debate here in the House and the questions on the energy strategy and the climate change action plan — both of these are the very documents that were tabled last sitting and certainly the opposition has had time to critique them and has chosen not to ask any questions on the strategy or the climate change action plan — but I look forward to those kinds of questions as we move forward in the debates here in the next four or five weeks.

As we went through the strategy and looked at critiquing the whole thing, we see they did a thorough job, Mr. Chair. It's not a huge document; it's not a complicated read. In fact, if you were to spend time on it, I don't think it would take more than an hour or two to get your head around the strategy and what direction we are taking or recommendations on all of these — whether it is the oil and gas, electricity — what would we do in the electricity policy? Demand management — all of these questions here can be asked. Electricity is a big part of it.

Mr. Chair, we do have an inventory of hydro in the territory, which has been built over the last 50 years — whether it is the Whitehorse hydro or the Mayo or Aishihik. Of course, Yukon Electrical owns the McIntyre Creek hydro site and certainly sells power through Yukon Electrical and feeds power into the grid. Certainly, it is one of the smaller producing hydro, but again, that is another hydro facility that might be able to be looked at for modernization, to produce better and more efficient power.

We in the corporation have been certainly looking at how could we modernize and make our hydro projects more efficient. Certainly, there is some work to be done in that vein in the Whitehorse hydro operation.

The Aishihik project — again, the third wheel is going into place. It doesn't affect the water licence in Aishihik because the water that is used by the third wheel is just a continuation of the water from the other wheels. Its installation was designed when Aishihik was first engineered and it's just a finalization of those plans. That will boost our production in Aishi-

hik to try to alleviate some of the diesel consumption here in the City of Whitehorse.

It's very important that we look at the management of the whole energy package, and that is the investment this government made in tying in the grids. Tying in the grids was an extensive, very expensive investment. That again is a partnership, and one of our first partnerships in energy was how would we partner with industry? Because we had a mine that was interested in participating in the resource and we were very anxious to have that customer base — or the corporation was.

We could also see, in the future, tying in all of our grid to be able to manage our grid from Mayo down into the Whitehorse area. Certainly that would complement the management tools the Yukon Energy Corporation has in place today.

As we move forward, we're looking at more partnerships. We've got other corporations that are interested in looking at — we've got Minto mine, outside of Carmacks, that will be looking at demand for power and how they could partner with us to get power to their investment.

Alexco, outside of Mayo, is pushing for moving forward on some development decisions, and they will consume power too. So how will they fit into the partnership?

So, again, it's managing the energy strategy file here and, of course, the report that we have in front of us is very important. But, again, I can't emphasize enough that partnerships in our energy are very, very important. That's where our net metering will come in and the private power producers that are going to be part of this.

Unless we can get our House in order and look at these partnerships and see how that can benefit not only Yukon Energy Corporation but Yukon Electrical — that this will benefit all Yukoners and certainly will improve our carbon footprint, which has shrunk by 24,000 tonnes in Minto alone a year. When you take these figures and you see us, now we've got 93 percent of the customer base in the Yukon on hydro and it is going to grow. This is the kind of thing we should be talking about in the House and this is the kind of thing we should be working on — an energy strategy, which we've done. We should be asking questions; we should be working on it because that's what Yukoners are interested in. They're very, very interested in affordable, dependable power. That's what Yukoners are interested in, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Mitchell: Well, you know, Mr. Chair, to return to the Premier's favourite metaphor — *Seinfeld* — what we've just listened to reminds me of Kramer because 20 minutes without hearing anything that made sense about anything at all, — that was Seinfeldian. I will try again, Mr. Chair.

We'll try again, Mr. Chair, and see if the Premier — maybe the Premier doesn't want to have to listen to the Member for Porter Creek Centre any more and so he would rather speak himself, and certainly we commiserate with officials who have to listen to this. Again, can the Premier tell us at what point in conversation with the CEO of ATCO he suggested that the term of office for a new company that would combine portions of the Yukon Energy Corporation with portions of the Yukon Electrical Company Ltd. — he suggested that the term

of office of the president should be longer than five years — perhaps seven?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: In keeping with this side of the House's commitment to be respectful, we will continue to do that. The presentation by the minister responsible for Energy, Mines and Resources was very succinct. It's certainly strategically focused on why we have an energy strategy. The minister touched on a number of areas that certainly should reflect for the members opposite exactly what is transpiring in the Yukon.

Yet the Official Opposition, in the face of information provided by officials — even their own documents, as tabled, clearly demonstrate a contradiction, given the position they're taking. They're taking a position of privatization. The minister responsible for Energy, Mines and Resources focused on the issue of partnerships. Partnerships are a requirement for this territory to meet the energy challenges, and we're building partnerships in many areas, not just in energy. Look at the partnerships to date in energy and the result.

The partnerships to date include an investment in infrastructure — much-needed infrastructure. An investment that should have taken place a long time ago is now happening. What has that done? It has increased our hydro capacity, it has reduced our carbon footprint, and it has allowed a more affordable source of energy to be provided to Yukoners. Now we're going on.

We've partnered with governments, we've partnered with First Nations and we've partnered with industry. The member seems to be fixated on phone calls. I can tell the Leader of the Official Opposition this government will continue to receive and make phone calls in the interest of the Yukon public.

When it comes to energy, we will make as many phone calls as we deem necessary to meet the objective of affordable, reliable energy being providing to Yukoners. We will not privatize. None of those conversations would include discussions of privatizations. We are not selling assets — even the member's evidence is clear on that point. So we will have those conversations; it is part of being in government. I know that would be foreign to the Leader of the Official Opposition — obviously, Mr. Chair, so I am trying to help the Leader of the Official Opposition. Phone calls take place; they have to happen. They are a part of doing business, Mr. Chair.

I think the member opposite has to be a little more respectful in his approach. Suggesting things as he did about the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources in that presentation reflects badly on this House — and we don't want that. I am sure all members are dedicated to improving the operations and functions of this Assembly. I am sure they all are. That is why they sit before us so attentively focusing on respectfulness, making this Assembly work better, debating with the government in the public interest, and focusing on the budget and the strategic investments that are so important to Yukoners. These investments aren't pulled out of the air. They come from a great deal of work, including phone calls, correspondence, meetings, community tours, and discussions with people who come forward with proposals and who have good ideas. All these things are incorporated into the government process, be-

cause this government takes an inclusive process. We even include the members opposite, and we'll continue to do that.

So, as the members opposite attentively engage in debate — all of them sitting before us — we are quite interested in hearing what their views and opinions are on energy, on the budget, on health care, on education, on infrastructure, on the future, on the global economic situation, on partnerships, and on First Nation relations. What are their views on those areas? And there are many, many more.

Going back to the budget — it's a sizable budget of some \$68 million — I'm just getting the exact number, because I don't want the member opposite to be confused — \$68.627 million — a huge investment for this point in the fiscal year, yet the member is fixated on a 10-cent phone call. It's hard to fathom that kind of approach, if there even was one.

This member has stated on the floor, clearly, that there was privatization — on numerous occasions, notwithstanding we could pull out *Hansard*, table all those quotes, which is the recorded spoken word, of the insinuations and accusations and statements about privatization. The member opposite, the Leader of the Official Opposition, and his colleague from Kluane, have clear evidence that that is not the case, yet the member persists. One can only wonder why. In the spirit of making this Assembly work better, one can only wonder why. In making a contribution to Yukoners and the Yukon future, one could only wonder why.

One could only wonder what the member, the Leader of the Official Opposition, hopes to gain. Obviously, the Leader of the Official Opposition must have some design or desire to lead this territory. On what basis, Mr. Chair?

Considering the debate to date in this House since it convened some days ago, the question is, on what basis is that desire attached? You know, I think what we need to do is maybe ask the member opposite to reflect on statements made. Is the member willing to correct the record about privatization? Is the member willing to correct the record on paraphrases that are now being attributed to people on this side of the House as direct quotes? Is the member willing to correct the record on those matters? Is the member willing to express to this House where they'd invest the fiscal resources of the public purse? How would they address education? That's a good starting point. In this budget, a sizable investment, an increased investment in education — what would the members do about that?

How would the members meet the challenges in the education system and in better preparing Yukoners for our future? Would it be in the manner that we are, in the investments we're making? When it comes to community services and infrastructure, what's the member's position on infrastructure? What's the member's position on Department of Community Services as it relates to the Building Canada infrastructure plan? What is the member's position? I think Yukoners deserve to know this. What is the member's position on an integrated modern approach to our emergency response services? What is the member's position when it comes to justice, to correctional reform, to multi-purpose correctional facilities, to addressing challenges for women in the correctional system? What is the member's position on that? Yukoners deserve to know that.

The members have been fixated on another issue and that's the environment. What is the member's position on chapter 11 in the *Umbrella Final Agreement*? What are the member's views and position on land use planning? How would the member direct the corporate structure of government in regard to land use planning?

What would the member do should there be instances where the obligation of the Premier's office is to ensure that the corporate direction and the obligations under the *Umbrella Final Agreement* are being followed? What would the member do in addressing those challenges and making sure there is clarity? How would the member respond to that?

What would the member do about health care? The Official Opposition is well aware of the health care review, the report tabled, and the gap we are facing as we go forward into the next decade. What would the member do about that? How would the member address those issues? Would the member build hospitals in communities like Watson Lake and Dawson City? What would the member do in that regard? How would the member address the challenges faced by the Whitehorse Hospital? Would the member be supportive of the Yukon Hospital Corporation and its board — those hard-working citizens who are committed, actually, to delivering health care — in the absence of any view or position from the Official Opposition on health care and what they would do to address the needs and the challenges for Yukoners?

What would the member do about tourism and culture? How would the member address the global situation and the challenges we face in making sure that the Yukon is a destination and attracting visitors to the territory?

Would the member support what the Minister of Tourism and Culture has been doing in travelling around the world to showcase the Yukon, to clearly demonstrate clearly why this is a good choice for a destination? How would the member address the cultural aspects? Is the member in agreement that the Yukon is rich in its cultural fabric, one of the strongest threads of our social fabric? Would the member invest in cultural centres? I think not. The members have opposed these initiatives.

In fact, the members may very well oppose this supplementary budget of some \$60 million plus, investing in Yukon's quality of life, investing in tourism and culture, investing in education, investing in health care, investing in justice, investing in community services, investing in highways and public works, investing in Yukon's future, building Yukon's future — what would the member do there?

We don't know those things; neither do Yukoners. Yukoners don't know what the member's position is. The member has been busy, totally overcome by a *Seinfeld* privatization of the Yukon Energy Corporation.

By the way, it was these members a short time ago who were vilifying the former chair, as they put it — and I don't have the exact quote before me — but I believe they made accusation of double dipping. This would be an outrage, Mr. Chair. How would the members address that? How would they explain to Yukoners they've gone from vilifying the former chair to lying supine at the feet of the former chair — looking upward in total fascination.

Mr. Chair, I think there's a lot that we need to discuss in this House — issues that are relevant to the Yukon and its future — getting a better understanding and making this Legislature a better place and making it work better on behalf of Yukoners. What is the position of the Official Opposition? At some point that has to be addressed. We'd like to discuss in debate — general or otherwise — real issues, understand better what the Official Opposition's position is.

We want to work with the Official Opposition. We've demonstrated, in other instances, our willingness. Let's look at how we're addressing the Member for Kluane's bill — even under the unwarranted accusations of shutting down debate. Mr. Chair, we've moved the bill into process — clearly a demonstration by the government side of the willingness to work with the Official Opposition. We're totally willing to work with the Official Opposition — advancing that bill, passing it on to the Yukon Development Corporation Board of Directors. I'm sure that was just a mistake by the Official Opposition — omitting to involve the Yukon Development Corporation Board of Directors on such a bill, but we take no issue with privatization and strengthening that possibility even though right now the Yukon Development Corporation Board of Directors must approve any sale of all or substantially all of the corporation's assets. We've allowed Justice to work on the bill to ensure that it conforms. Just yesterday we debated a bill — a long list of housekeeping items — that demonstrate clearly why we must go through that process.

Other bills are impacted from time to time — impacted, Mr. Chair, by legislation. We have to modernization our legislation. These are all simple, standard processes. This is not shutting down anything. This is in good faith and in the spirit of making this Assembly work better — advancing the Member for Kluane's bill. One would shudder to think how they came to the conclusion that we've shut it down. It speaks volumes of the position they've taken on discussions with ATCO, which were exploratory discussions. Mr. Chair, it clearly demonstrates many of the other examples of their position with, for example, the Public Accounts Committee and how the Leader of the Official Opposition moved a motion in regard to the remuneration of the MLAs and so on. But when challenged in the public, he changed that position and rapidly attempted a staunch defence that he fought hard, but he was overwhelmed by the forces of darkness and the resolution did pass at the Public Accounts Committee.

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Hon. Mr. Fentie: Well, I hear the member opposite, off-microphone, making mention of “complete fabrication”. Isn't that interesting, as we continue to deal with fabricated opinions of discussion with a corporation? By the way, that corporation or any other corporation that has good ideas on meeting the objective of affordable, reliable energy, we will have discussions with and continue to have discussions with. And we look for those discussions. We want to foster those partnerships. That's why the whole aspect and emphasis of partnership with governments, with industry and with First Nations are built into the energy strategy. That's how the Yukon will progress — not by dismantling and tearing down,

but by building partnerships, thereby strengthening our ability to build the future. This is a small place, and we've come a long way. We've doubled our fiscal capacity; we've increased our infrastructure on many fronts, but we have much more to do, and without partners, it will be very difficult for us to even meet the immediate needs of this territory.

So, Mr. Chair, once again, in the spirit of making this Assembly work better, I can assure the member opposite that at no time did the government entertain selling the Energy Corporation's assets, nor did we entertain privatization of those assets. We did, however, look for that partnership, and we know the member opposite is somewhat confused about privatization as it relates to partnerships. Partnerships do not mean privatization; partnerships mean the building of the future, at least from the government's perspective.

I can only ask this question also: how does the member then explain the former chair's correspondence to the Yukon Electrical Company Ltd. about the restructuring of ownership of infrastructure? This government doesn't believe that's a bad thing, because it was intended to focus on effectiveness and efficiencies of our energy system in the Yukon. How can that be a bad thing?

Are the members not aware of the fact that these challenges have existed a long time, and there are many who have attempted in the past — and continue — to work on addressing those challenges?

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Mitchell: The Premier must have asked 40 or 50 questions while he was on his feet, maybe more. I can only conclude that the Premier is eagerly applying for a job in the Official Opposition or the Third Party where he will get to ask questions, because he's either unable or unwilling to answer any. That seems to be his approach now, as he wants to be over here asking questions. Perhaps he wants to cross the floor — we never know, Mr. Chair.

I will answer a question for the Premier since he asked 40 or 50 of them, and I don't have benefit of the officials taking notes. The Premier asked, “Does the member agree that Yukon is rich in its cultural fabric?” To answer the Premier, yes, this member does agree that Yukon is rich in its cultural fabric. So there. I've now answered more questions from the opposition side of the House than the Premier has in all of this debate from the government side. That's how willing we are to have meaningful debate that we answer the Premier's questions, because he has so many questions and so few answers.

Again, it's obvious that the Premier is not able or willing — we don't know which, but we must presume he's not able, because we would never want to impute a motive — to answer any questions regarding the Yukon Energy Corporation and his secret negotiations — other than that it's the Premier's opinion that the cost of a telephone call is more important than the subject matter within the call.

The one thing we do have now on the record is that he spent 10 cents to phone the chair of ATCO — chair and CEO of ATCO or president and CEO. He spent 10 cents in his efforts to privatize the Energy Corporation. That much we learned today and we thank the Premier for that full and thor-

ough revelation and explanation of his conversations. He neglected to answer which call it was and why he felt it was important that a new president of the corporation should have a seven-year term instead of a five-year term, but he did tell us that it cost him 10 cents to express his opinion — a 10-cent opinion, Mr. Chair.

Let's move to other areas because we now see that the Premier is not going to answer those questions. The Premier indicated recently in this Assembly how terrible it was that there was a rate stabilization fund in place, one that the Premier's government cancelled — despite the promises of the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources that once the line extension went through and the Minto mine was hooked up, rates would fall. They would fall a year ago, two years ago. That didn't happen, but the Premier nevertheless put the costs on to the back of Yukoners.

Finally the Premier and his Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources heard the cries of the Yukon public that they didn't appreciate the spiralling costs and so they put in a new subsidy. Now there is \$2.25 million in the Yukon Development Corporation budget for this current new subsidy on electrical rates. Can the minister responsible for the Development Corporation or the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources tell us how long a new electrical subsidy will last? Will it last past the term of this \$2.25 million and perhaps into next year, or will Yukoners be again asked to pay higher rates? Also, the funding for Mayo B, since we are talking about the energy future and the energy strategy — the \$71 million that is coming from the Government of Canada that requires matching funds from the Government of Yukon to pay for the Yukon government's portion of that \$140 million some project — projected project. We know this government rarely gets anything done for the projected costs but they might get lucky this time.

Can either the Premier or the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources tell us where the Yukon's component is of some projected \$71 million going to come from? Will that be in using up the balance of a surplus or will this be in borrowing funds under the expanded borrowing capacity of the Government of Yukon, which the Government of Canada has increased to \$300 million? Will it be on the backs of future Yukon taxpayers or current taxpayers? Where is that money coming from?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: Let me once again assist the Leader of the Official Opposition. If my attention span is as it should be, I believe the member just stated that the investment in the grid extension from Carmacks to Pelly, including hooking up the Capstone mine, created a spiralling cost to Yukoners, to the ratepayer. The member is incorrect. It did not create such a thing at all. In fact, it was rate neutral. Furthermore, it did address something. It addressed the issue of whether we use more diesel or increase our hydro capacity. So the spiralling cost did not take place.

The member also referred to a one-time energy rebate that this government has come forward with because this government — and we'll stand on this position anywhere, any time, any place — believes that subsidies were the incorrect approach to address the energy challenges of this territory. For a

long time, subsidies were the focus. The Energy Corporation was directed by governments to spend millions of dollars on subsidies, instead of millions of dollars on infrastructure, including maintenance infrastructure, so that we have a more reliable production of energy for Yukoners.

The government came forward with an interim energy rebate because we have ceased directing our corporation to expend millions of dollars on a subsidy and are working with our corporation to spend millions of dollars on infrastructure — a sizable investment, Mr. Chair, to the point the member opposite is asking what the Energy Corporation is doing in that regard. Of course, the Energy Corporation, within its mandate, has a number of options it can access or utilize, and it is doing exactly that.

We'll await the Energy Corporation to do its work and bring forward what its plan is to meet its contribution in the partnership — not privatization — but the partnership with the federal government on the Mayo B investment. I hope I'm not being repetitive, but I have to recite for the member opposite some very important information about Mayo B.

First, let me begin with the fact that the Energy Corporation, in doing its good work, had come forward to government with what I would call a very just concern. Due to the success of this government in creating growth and investment and developing an economy, the Energy Corporation was becoming more and more challenged because of supply requirements. The Energy Corporation brought forward a concern — as they should because they were very much on top of this situation — and pointed out that by the year 2012 the supply issue or demand was expected to increase by 25 percent. That's a sizable increase for such a small jurisdiction.

Without additional renewable power, we would have — by the year 2012 — a shortfall of green, less costly energy and we would have to resort to using diesel. Using diesel, Mr. Chair, would have increased total Yukon greenhouse gas emissions by at least 15 percent. That would equate into the possibility of emitting another 65,000 tonnes of CO₂ into the Yukon atmosphere. That is not in keeping with our climate change action plan. I'm sure the Official Opposition is aware of that.

As the member brought forward this issue of rate, in not meeting that shortfall of green, clean, more affordable energy, the Yukon Energy Corporation would also have to increase to \$27 million a year the purchase of diesel at today's rate. Mr. Chair, this fundamentally would have resulted in higher electricity bills for Yukoners.

Without subsidization, Yukoners would have had to pay more, but also our energy strategy commits us to making sure we do what we can do to address these issues and challenges. The first phase of these investments, in dealing with rates and keeping them as affordable as possible, is a third wheel at Aishihik — more hydro. Secondly, it's linking or connecting Yukon Whitehorse/Aishihik/Faro grid. Thirdly, it's the added turbine at the Mayo dam to increase our hydro electrical production.

Let's just delve into a few other details. If we did some comparisons, if we took stage 1 of the line from Carmacks to Pelly Crossing, we've reduced Yukon-wide total emissions by

six percent. That's a significant amount of reduction. Also we have to recognize that we've connected a mine, a producing mine, the first producing mine in the Yukon in some 10 years or more.

We have connected that mine, Mr. Chair, to hydro. In this whole concept of partnerships, the mine itself — the company, the corporation — invested in infrastructure, which by the way, didn't privatize our infrastructure at all. It is still public infrastructure — duly regulated by the Yukon Utilities Board.

Mr. Chair, we went on to address the issue of the second turbine. Now, it was clear that the Yukon Energy Corporation did not have the fiscal capacity to build this infrastructure and the government set about building a partnership. We approached the federal government and encouraged them to recognize the value and the merit of partnering with the Yukon, its Energy Corporation, and investing in green energy, infrastructure and creating infrastructure that would contribute to development and growth, lowering our emissions, meeting the challenges of today while building and putting in place infrastructure to complement the needed growth of tomorrow. So all in all, Mr. Chair, the member's point of spiralling rates is inconsistent once again with the facts — as inconsistent as the difference between partnership and privatization, as inconsistent as the difference and the confusion around concepts versus real entities, as inconsistent as the member's confusion around proposed model versus actual agreements, which includes all matters.

Once again, I refer to the fact that information provided the member should have, over the last while, clearly demonstrated to the member that spiralling rates were not happening. By the way, there is a cost of service analysis underway that will be going before the Yukon Utilities Board.

The member also touches on transparency and accountability. Well, we've tabled a significant piece of legislation called *Act to Amend the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act and the Health Act* that addresses many areas. I'm sure the members have read the bill's content thoroughly, and the explanatory note explains exactly what that's all about.

So, again, the government did bring forward a one-time energy rebate because of the cessation of the rate stabilization fund, which was a mistake of the past. We've moved beyond that. Past governments focused on subsidy; this government focuses on partnership and infrastructure to meet the objective of affordable, reliable energy for Yukoners. This is not about spiralling rates; this is about doing everything we can to ensure that there are not spiralling rates for the ratepayer. I would add that all investment to date, including the Mayo B project, will be infrastructure that is rate neutral to the ratepayer — unlike days gone by when such investments as Faro resulted in bills we're still paying today. At least this government has taken a more appropriate approach in protecting the ratepayer and the public's interest.

Mr. Mitchell: Well, interesting — the Premier, when he was on his feet, indicated that the funding in the budget is for a one-time electrical rate rebate. This was to take the place of the former rate stabilization fund — which was put in place

by previous governments, which he has frequently liked to refer to as “a subsidy”.

That's a terrible thing, he says. So I'm hoping when he's next on his feet, he can explain the fine philosophical difference between why a rate stabilization fund is a subsidy and an electrical rate rebate is not subsidizing people in terms of what it's costing them to pay for electricity. That's a fine point that I'm sure the Premier is eager to spend 10 or 15 minutes explaining.

One thing I will correct for the record — and I don't want to go into minutes of committee meetings but since the Premier keeps referring to it — I'm not aware of any motion by myself that the Premier refers to in terms of changing salary structure. I am aware of being in a committee meeting and either moving or seconding that the minutes of a previous meeting be adopted. The Premier continues to refer to this and I'm not certain exactly what he's referring to but perhaps he can explain that to me.

We haven't got specific answers to the question I asked about where Yukon's component of the Mayo B is going to come from. Again, we asked how Yukon was going to pay for its component. Maybe when the Premier is next on his feet, he will explain where our \$70 million odd is coming from. That was a straightforward question.

Will it be done through borrowing? Will it be done through dipping into the surplus? Is it some combination of the two? It's a straightforward question that should be answered.

Regarding the questions we've asked that have not been answered about the Premier's negotiations toward privatizing the Yukon Energy Corporation, which he conducted from the corner office, I'll just point out that the Premier characterizes them as our confusion and our misunderstanding. Well, these are questions that have come about because of the resignation of four former board members of the Development Corporation and the Energy Corporation, including the former chair, and the Premier's former Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. All five of these Yukoners, who were very much in the know during the course of last winter and spring, although apparently not in the loop at the beginning, but over the course of the time they spent in those positions of responsibility — a former Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, a former chair of the Development Corporation and Energy Corporation and three other former board members — all felt obliged to resign in protest over what they characterized as the Premier's secret negotiations toward privatization.

I believe the former chair of the Yukon Energy Corporation referred to it as de facto privatization by the increasing investment that the Premier envisioned for ATCO — giving an increasing ownership over time by that corporation of the energy generation and transmission infrastructure in Yukon. Perhaps the Premier could explain why all these former officials — former chair and former board members and his former Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources — all felt obliged to resign in principle saying that their integrity would not allow them to carry forward. I am sure the Premier would like to answer to Yukon's public that question. I am sure the Premier would like to explain why the four former board members and

his former minister were confused, I guess, is how he would describe it, because everybody who doesn't see things through the Premier's eyes is confused.

Again, funding for Mayo B — we would like a straightforward answer to that question and why this Premier can't seem to hang on to board members and Energy ministers.

We would also like to know, regarding the Building Canada fund — we understand the bookkeeping changes that have been required by the Auditor General of Canada, which resulted in an \$11-million adjustment this year through the Department of Finance, and how the Building Canada fund would be represented on the books, in terms of transfers from Canada — that it would be the current year's portion that has to appear only, as opposed to the booking of all the revenue at once. What we would like to ask about is that previously there had been some indication from Canada that Canada might be willing to advance as much as \$175 million all at once in the Building Canada fund, as opposed to the \$25 million or \$26 million per year over seven years that was originally offered. Can the Premier confirm whether this money will continue to come in as \$25-point-something million per year? Or is it possible that it's going to come in much faster than that, to be used on some form of infrastructure?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: First off, I want to go back to the one-time energy rebate.

Considering the length of time — the many years the rate stabilization fund was in place — the government felt, in the best interest of the public, real or otherwise, rate shock would not be the way we wanted to proceed, so instead of directing the corporation to deal with subsidization, the government has chosen to provide an energy rebate, because of the cessation of the rate stabilization fund. At the same time, we invest in infrastructure to assist in ensuring the corporation can provide a more affordable generation of electricity, and of course, that is renewable, and in this case, in the Yukon, that is hydro. I also pointed out to the member that, in normal instances, investment in infrastructure by the Energy Corporation would result in an input into the return on equity formula. In this case, we are ensuring by the partnership we're creating with Canada that there is a rate neutrality to this investment of infrastructure, and yet the Energy Corporation will get the benefit of the lower cost of producing energy and the transmission and distribution to the customer.

Furthermore, Mr. Chair, the member touched on the portion of Yukon requirement for the green energy infrastructure fund of Canada, whereby Canada has committed \$71 million — this is a 50-cent requirement by Yukon — our commitment has to be as a partner, that contribution. The Energy Corporation is actually working on that right now. I can assure the member once they've done their work and brought it forward, we will present to the House and the public the fiscal package that the Energy Corporation has put together. The government will be supportive, of course, in ensuring that the Energy Corporation can undertake this obligation.

The last item is the issue of the Building Canada fund. In some jurisdictions there was a perception that if they accelerated the Building Canada fund that would be a contribution to

meeting the stimulus objectives of the national collaborative approach in addressing the global economic challenges. In our case in the Yukon, that was not a scenario that was a good fit for us. It may have been in other jurisdictions, but certainly not for us, so we stayed committed to the seven-year timelines.

The booking by the Auditor General is a change in the Auditor General's approach with the fund. The fiscal year previous, the Auditor General allowed for a booking of the total value of the fund up front. This year the Auditor General has changed her mind and required that we book it in a form that matches the expenditures.

We take no issue with either approach, and we follow the Auditor General's direction, but it certainly does affect the accounts for the Yukon, because it changes the net fiscal or financial position; however, that's part of what we must do in following direction from the Auditor General.

I hope that helps the member opposite. There are good reasons for these decisions as we go forward. The main item around energy is to ensure that we're not forced — at least everything we can do today to ensure we're not forced — into using more diesel to produce electricity. That is not only a concern for Yukon, it's a concern for the country and it's a concern globally. The energy challenge is a global concern, not just here.

The global community faces a significant challenge as it relates to energy production, what form of fuel or what form of energy production is being used, how that relates to affordability, how that relates to the world economy — to the economies of countries, to the economies of jurisdictions — and how that relates to climate change. This is a huge concern throughout the world — certainly a concern for the Yukon. The steps taken to date are to alleviate, to the extent possible, those concerns.

Mr. Mitchell: The Premier, the Minister of Finance, gave his response to several questions. I'm not sure they were answers, but they were at least responses to the questions, which is an improvement over what we were getting earlier this afternoon.

I do have a follow-up question about Mayo B for the Premier. He indicated — and I will paraphrase, because I obviously don't have the exact words in front of me — in terms of Yukon's portion of the financing of Mayo B — that the Energy Corporation was working through that process and when they had something concrete to tell us he would make that information known and, of course, the government was interested in working with the Energy Corporation constructively on that matter.

I am wondering, does that mean that the Premier has stood by, and after announcing that Canada was providing \$71 million, Mayo B was going forward? We know that there has been actual work started in the vicinity of Mayo B toward these changes. The government is embarked on a process where the project has started, and they are going to figure out the payment procedure later. That would seem to be, shall we say, less than conservative, Mr. Chair, as an approach. To sign on to a \$140 million some project without knowing exactly how half of it is going to be paid for — that being Yukon's half. I am wonder-

ing if the Premier would like to correct that for the record and indicate that, of course, there is a payment plan in place, and perhaps he can provide us with that explanation.

Hon. Mr. Fentie: Once again, I have to assist the member opposite. There is an agreement in place with Canada, which requires the Energy Corporation to meet its portion of the partnership. As I stated, the Energy Corporation is working on that now, as they are required and mandated to do. We'll allow the Energy Corporation to do its work.

I know the members opposite have made, in the past, erroneous insinuations of interference in the Energy Corporation. I would hope that the members are not now asking the government to interfere in the process the Energy Corporation is required to conduct.

Mr. Mitchell: No, we are simply asking about the financing. Surely the Premier would not authorize the expenditure of funds without knowing how Yukon is going to pay for its portion. Surely, he would not go down the path.

Again, for the Premier, since the Energy Corporation is wholly controlled by the Yukon Development Corporation and the Yukon Development Corporation has only one shareholder, which is the Yukon government, the Premier must recognize that ultimately government will be on the hook for this.

After all, it's government that is accepting the \$71 million from Canada. Again, can the Premier provide any clarification as to how Yukon is going to pay for their portion?

Hon. Mr. Lang: I just heard the member put something on the floor that is incorrect, like many things he puts on the floor. The incorrectness of that is the loan goes to the — or the contribution agreement between the federal government and the Energy Corporation. The Energy Corporation is receiving the resources from Canada to do this project. It's not the territorial government, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Mitchell: We can move these numbers around all we want, but surely neither the Energy, Mines and Resources minister, or the Premier — in their important positions of responsibility — would go down this path without knowing where the path leads. Again, surely the Premier and the Energy, Mines and Resources minister are not just sitting by curious to hear on the radio one day how the Energy Corporation is going to pay for our portion. What are the plans to pay for Yukon's portion? Show us the money, Mr. Chair.

Hon. Mr. Lang: Mr. Chair, the member opposite has to make his mind up. One minute we're dabbling in a corporation we have no business dabbling in. The next minute he wants us to take the reins of control from the board and the executive of the corporation. Again I remind the member opposite that it's an agreement is between the Energy Corporation and the federal government. They're doing their good work. We're awaiting the work that they've done but they're doing it and moving forward with Mayo B. Mayo B is a very important part of Yukon Energy's go-forward plan. The minister responsible for the Energy Corporation, the Premier, also commented on all the benefits of the go-forward plan. Whether it's bringing customers on-line or working with our climate action plan, all these things have to be addressed.

I remind the member opposite that the executive and the board of directors of the corporation are doing their work and coming back with a plan on how we are going to move forward with Mayo B.

The agreement, again, is not with the territorial government — it's between the Energy Corporation and the federal government. This project was recommended by the corporation. They brought the recommendation to us and said if, in fact, the Premier was successful in getting a partnership or talking to the federal government on behalf of the Energy Corporation, this would be the project they would recommend. This project was shovel-ready and ready to go, and that was the recommendation of the corporation.

We'll work with that corporation because, to this point, the corporation has been successful in expanding the grid from Carmacks to Pelly, bringing on a very large customer and working toward tying the grid between Pelly and Stewart. All of these investments are rate neutral. The money the federal government puts into this is a contribution agreement and this is the kind of partnership this government and the Energy Corporation is looking for.

The Minister of Finance, the Premier, has been very clear. Without these kinds of partnerships, we wouldn't have the flexibility in the corporation to do these projects, Mr. Chair. We are a very small jurisdiction with a very, very large piece of real estate to supply energy to. In the last eight years, the Energy Corporation has taken us to a position where over 90 percent of our customer base is on hydro. Now, that is a compliment to the corporation. But how are we going to eliminate the fact that in two years — if, in fact, the corporation's calculations are correct — we will be in a net loss of energy. That means that we will be looking at more diesel consumption by the Energy Corporation. The math doesn't work for that, Mr. Chair. That is going to put another burden on the consumer. The consumer in the territory is very adamant. They want affordable, dependable energy. That is an issue that we are addressing — the Energy Corporation is addressing now. But Mayo B is the go-forward plan. The Energy Corporation is doing their good work and they are going to come back and give a report on how they see themselves working for the extra resources that are needed to move Mayo B forward.

Again, the Energy Corporation recommended the Mayo B to us, if in fact the Minister of Finance was successful in getting the partnership that the minister went to get from the federal government. By the way, this was the first project the federal government announced — the first partnership that they announced in Canada for their infrastructure funds. In fact, the Prime Minister of Canada came here to consummate this partnership. Again, the Energy Corporation will do their work, and the project will move forward. There are timelines on these infrastructure investments, so we look forward to the recommendations coming forward as quickly as possible. Of course, those recommendations will be public. They will be in a public document available to all Yukoners.

I'm looking forward to that report. Yukon Energy Corporation is doing their good work and moving forward on the Mayo B project. We do need the Mayo B project if in fact

we're going to look at a realistic way of managing our power into the future.

Is this the end of what we need to do in the Energy Corporation? Is this the last partnership we need? No, this is just one of the many parts of a very busy puzzle we have to put together as Yukoners to try to mitigate the energy issues we have in the territory.

We have situations in the territory — Watson Lake is one, Swift River and Old Crow. How do we as a community, or how does the Energy Corporation, or how does Yukon Electrical handle the fact that we don't have the go-forward plan on those obsolete operations that are out there? Those are things we have to address, as the Energy Corporation and as a government.

Since we acquired management of the government, the population has grown. We have 33,000 or 34,000 people living in the territory. Since we've taken power, we have tied Dawson City into the grid and we've tied Pelly into the grid. We've also expanded Mayo. The demand there has slowly been expanding, so we have issues.

Mayo B is just one part of the puzzle. We have a partnership and certainly look forward to more partnerships in the future to solve some of these very, very important issues on energy. Energy is a worldwide question. There is not a jurisdiction in the world or in North America that isn't trying to address energy issues. Certainly, I look forward to the Energy Corporation moving forward on Mayo B and we as a government will support them when those decisions are made.

Mr. Mitchell: Again, I believe that the member opposite has misconstrued the question I was asking, so I'll try to ask it again for clarification. Ultimately, who bears responsibility for securing and putting in place the financing for the Mayo B project? Is it the Yukon Energy Corporation or the Government of Yukon? Who ultimately is responsible?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: By terms of the contribution agreement, the agreement is between the Energy Corporation and the federal government. The Yukon government will be supportive of its corporation through its Crown corporation, which is Yukon Development Corporation.

We've repeated a number of times that the Energy Corporation is doing its work right now, and preparing itself for meeting its obligations under the agreement with Canada. I think it's in the best interests of everybody that we let the Energy Corporation do its work. Then we'll all know exactly what it is that we must do. But the responsibility is vested in the terms and conditions of the agreement — I repeat: in the terms and conditions of the contribution agreement between Canada and the Energy Corporation.

The government sees no reason why we can't allow the Energy Corporation to conclude its work, which it is doing as we speak. Of course we will work through our Crown corporation — the Yukon Development Corporation — on any involvement of the government in this matter. The key issue is ensuring rate neutrality and getting this project done so we are not encumbered with a dramatic increase in diesel use. The Member of Klwane would understand that. There are millions of dollars in costs. We'll continue working on building and

fostering partnerships in many, many areas — in all areas required — to build Yukon's future. One thing we've done already is advance the \$25 million investment for the corporation to allow it to proceed with the project, given the timelines and the necessity, because 2012 is not that far away.

Also, \$27 million a year in diesel is a significant cost to the Energy Corporation, given its size and its overall revenue capacity, and we're doing our job to ensure that the Energy Corporation and the ratepayer are not encumbered with a dramatic increase in costs for electricity.

Mr. Mitchell: Well, I think it's important that we ask these questions, because Yukoners know well that whether it be as ratepayers or as taxpayers, ultimately they'll be on the hook if this isn't done properly by this government. Yukoners want to know where this money is coming from.

Now, the minister referred to the \$25-million advance. Can the Finance minister explain or detail the terms of that money that has been advanced? Was that advanced as a loan? Exactly in what way has the \$25 million been transferred to the Development Corporation from the Government of Yukon?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: These are terms that are being worked out right now. This is an advance — it is short term in nature, although we don't expect anything more than a year.

By the way, I think we have to express to the members opposite something else. If you look at what has transpired with the first phase of this overall project in linking Pelly to Carmacks and the mine site to the main grid and do the calculation on the cost of using diesel, because Pelly as a community was burning diesel each and every day, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year — it doesn't take long when you do the arithmetic to recognize that the repayment on infrastructure is really quite rapid in terms of the costs if we have to use other sources of energy production. So the \$25 million is in advance. The terms are being worked out. Short term is the objective and the expectation is somewhere in the timeline of a year.

Mr. Mitchell: Just a quick follow-up question before we may have a break, Mr. Chair.

Can the Premier or the Energy, Mines and Resources minister provide us with a copy of just which documents he's referring to when they make reference to the energy forecast and its projected growth so we know we are referring to the same documents and that we're on the same page?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: There are a number of things: the 20-year resource plan, the energy strategy, briefing material — which is atypical but we can provide the member with information. By the way, members will have an opportunity to discuss these matters with the corporation itself. All these things are being made available for the members opposite. I'm sure they now recognize how helpful the government side is being, and that's a good thing.

We appreciate how the members have accepted this thoughtful, helpful approach by the government side to assist them. We appreciate how they've accepted that in the spirit of good faith and constructive debate. We appreciate their input. Now we're starting to get there, but we haven't yet gotten their position or views on matters, but I think we're starting to break

the log-jam and advance. That can only be good for the Assembly and for the Yukon.

So we want to thank the members opposite for this valiant attempt at being productive and constructive.

Chair: Order please. Committee 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. 17, *Second Appropriation Act, 2009-10*. We will now continue with general debate.

Mr. Mitchell: Moving to some other areas of the Premier's responsibility in terms of finance in general, we see the Yukon Hospital Corporation involved in projects in three communities: Watson Lake, where the five-year effort of the Government of Yukon seems to have spiralled into a failure of colossal proportions as after five years of redesigning and designing and building there still isn't any form of health centre that has opened its doors to any member of the public; Dawson City, where after years of design work there is no new health care centre present; and, here in Whitehorse, where there is actually a building going up for a nurses residence.

In putting these responsibilities in the hands of the Hospital Corporation, they may be involved in as much as \$65 million, \$66 million or \$67 million, depending on which set of answers on which date we use of potential expenditures.

These projects, while they will show up in consolidated statements in the public accounts, don't show up in the statements of the Government of Yukon in terms of its budgets and financial updates and its surplus or deficit position in any way, because they are not now being expended by the Government of Yukon.

Can the Premier explain what is being done in terms of the Government of Yukon's portion of responsibility toward the financing of these three projects? We've heard an explanation from the Health minister in Question Period regarding lease arrangements for the new nurses residence, but we haven't heard anything explaining the financing for the two hospitals.

Hon. Mr. Fentie: Mr. Chair, first off, the Hospital Corporation is working well within its mandate. This is something that they can and should be doing. It's all about delivering health care to Yukoners. I know the member might take issue with the dollar values here, but the Yukon government of the day — the Yukon Party government — will certainly invest all that we possibly can into the health care system to ensure Yukoners have comparable services.

What has transpired to date is the minister — and this is something the members opposite can take up with the Minister of Health and Social Services. First off, the Minister of Health and Social Services can explain exactly the role and involvement of the minister in the department. Secondly, once the transfer of these services in the two communities is completed, the minister is on record stating that he will bring before the House the Hospital Corporation CEO and chair of the board.

So far, the minister's commitment to the Hospital Corporation is that we will support and assist the Hospital Corporation in meeting its requirement and delivering on its mandate of providing good, solid, modern health care to the Yukon public, not just in Whitehorse, but out there in rural Yukon, which is a real demonstration of balanced government and recognition that, beyond Whitehorse, other communities are in need, and we are addressing those needs.

The member stated something about failure. Well, as we speak, in the community of Watson Lake, a sizable structure, meeting the needs of seniors, is well under construction. The Hospital Corporation has let a contract for the design of the hospital in Watson Lake.

I'm sure it includes Dawson City. That's hardly failure — great progress, Mr. Chair. Again, this is something that the Minister of Health would be quite anxious to debate with the members opposite.

Mr. Mitchell: Well, Mr. Chair, we're asking these questions of the Premier in his capacity as the Minister of Finance — he has Finance officials with him who can help him to answer these questions — not of the Minister of Health and Social Services. There's a reason for that, because in his response to the last question, the Premier indicated that once the transfer has been completed of responsibility to the Yukon Hospital Corporation for the two community hospitals — Watson Lake and Dawson — then the minister will fulfill his pledge to bring officials before this Assembly.

Well, we're in that limbo land — that grey area — because I'm sensing from the way in which the Premier answered that — the transfer has not been completed, although there was an announcement that the Hospital Corporation had made the decision that they would be accepting the responsibility after their preliminary investigations for Watson Lake and Dawson — and indeed, it's the Hospital Corporation chair who I think even today is in Dawson City telling the people of Dawson about the done deal to build the hospital at Minto Park.

What we have is the chair of the Hospital Corporation acting as the person who is responsible for these matters, but what we don't have is any way of asking those questions until this day in the future, which may not be in this sitting, when the chair and the CEO of the Hospital Corporation appears. I might point out that when boards appear, they appear once annually for an afternoon, usually coming in at around 3:00, or 3:30 on an afternoon, so we get some two or two and a half hours to ask all these questions. A lot goes on in a year, Mr. Chair. Yukoners have a lot of questions. We don't want to wait until two and a half hours once a year to try to get answers to all questions, and then wait 365 days for our next opportunity.

Secondly, Mr. Chair, the Premier in his response said that contrary to any failure in Watson Lake, as we speak, there's a new facility going up for seniors in Watson Lake. That's not the facility we asked about. We asked about the shell of which some \$5 million has been spent, that has not yet provided any health care to Watson Lakers or anyone else, and has never become functional in any capacity as a multi-level health care facility, as it was first announced. As a health care centre, as a

community hospital or in any other capacity — it has never served any purpose to date.

Finally, we'd point out that all the expenditures made up until recently on that Watson Lake facility were made by the Department of Health and Social Services or the Department of Highways and Public Works, because it moved back and forth, within the budgets of the Government of Yukon. Now it's being transferred to the Yukon Hospital Corporation. We can't yet ask questions of them, so we're forced to ask questions of the Finance minister about how this works.

Again, for the Finance minister — because ultimately he will be responsible for whatever the Yukon government's contribution is to financing these facilities, through lease arrangements or any other capacity or transfers. How does the government envision these arrangements, which are leading to as much as \$67 million in capital expenditures, but aren't going to show up on the books of this government? How is the government maintaining their fiscal responsibility in those relationships?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: We've listened for days now that all matters are being conducted in the corner office, and when we once again present clear evidence that ministers are doing their job — as in this case the Health minister is — the Leader of the Official Opposition takes issue with that.

Go figure, Mr. Chair. What is it to be? Is it the case that all decisions are excluding the minister or ministers? Or is it the case where ministers bring forward the good work that they do, which in this case is about delivering health care to Yukoners?

Mr. Chair, the process with the Hospital Corporation is a significant move in improving and enhancing our ability to deliver health care. I would remind the Leader of the Official Opposition to look at the mandate for the Hospital Corporation. For far too long the Hospital Corporation has not been working to the full extent of its mandate. We are going to support the Hospital Corporation in its effort to deliver on its mandate and to deliver health care to Yukoners. By the way, the member asked how much we are investing — well, let me point out that with this supplementary, our investment in health care, to date, will be \$236,909,000.

Mr. Chair, that's significant, and for the Hospital Corporation to invest in facilities that deliver health care in communities and in Whitehorse. We will be very supportive of the Hospital Corporation continuing to do its good work and to ensure that it can improve upon the delivery of health care services here in the Yukon. Good for the Hospital Corporation; good for the chair and the board; good for the CEO; good for the Minister of Health and Social Services; bravo to them all — the Yukon once again is in receipt of good policy, good governance and indeed, addressing the needs of Yukoners when it comes to health care. Bravo to them all.

Mr. Mitchell: You know, Mr. Chair, it's quite interesting because when the Premier stood up in 2003 or 2004 and announced these new projects — \$5.2 million I think it was for a health centre in Watson Lake and \$5.2 million for a health centre in Dawson — he didn't say a health centre to be planned, constructed and paid for by the Yukon Hospital Corporation; he said this government. So this Premier thought it

was a pretty good idea for his government to move forward on those projects and he kept thinking so for the ensuing four years or so, while we saw budget after budget put more money toward these projects, without the projects ever getting completed or, in one case, ever rising from the ground, in the case of Dawson.

I recall that a year ago or so, the Health and Social Services minister stood in this House and, in answer to a question about it — as he had become the Health and Social Services minister and this is a project he had thrown his hands up over when he was the Minister of Highways and Public Works. That came out clearly in the hearings that were held into the Auditor General's report on Highways and Public Works, that the minister had declined any further responsibility for it. The Health and Social Services minister stood in this House and said, "You know, Mr. Chair, as often as I try and get away from this project, it just keeps bouncing back to me."

So perhaps the Health and Social Services minister would like to stand up now, as the Energy minister stood up an hour ago to answer this question, if the Premier can't answer it. What we're asking is: how is it going to be financed? What is the revenue stream for the Hospital Corporation? How will it relate to all of the other debts and obligations of the Government of Yukon? Because we know that hospitals are not a profit centre, there must be transfers or revenue that will flow from the Government of Yukon — we're asking how this is going to occur.

We can't ask it of the Hospital Corporation chair or CEO, Mr. Chair, because they're not here, and we don't know if they're going to be here during the fall sitting. Although, if the Health minister or the Premier wants to make that commitment today, then we'll know there will be at least one afternoon in which we can. Perhaps what the Premier should do is say, "On such-and-such a date in November or December, we will bring those officials in and you can ask all your questions then about the Hospital Corporation."

We don't have that commitment yet; it's a commitment to some time in the future. So we will ask those questions of this Premier and this Health minister and they can choose who will answer. Again, how will these projects be financed?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: Well, let's see. At risk of being inconsistent with making this a better place, I have to chastise somewhat the Leader of the Official Opposition for not recognizing that we've answered that. We've answered that, Mr. Chair. So I don't know how else we can put it. I've also said that the Minister of Health — when the Department of Health comes up for debate — is going to be quite anxious to debate with the members opposite the health care issues in the territory and the tremendous work that we are doing, led by the minister in the department and in conjunction, or consort, with the Hospital Corporation in meeting the health care needs of Yukoners. It's a big challenge.

We haven't heard from the members opposite how they're going to address the challenges, what their plan would be, how they're going to meet millions of dollars of infrastructure requirement so Yukoners have comparable levels of service and access to a health care system they deserve.

The member opposite is just going to have to exercise some patience and, when the Department of Health and Social Services comes up for debate, more information will be provided. By the way, I think it's the minister's job to provide that information. I'm sure the minister is more than willing to do exactly that. I'm sure the member understands the Premier would never interfere in the good works the ministers undertake.

I see the Leader of the Official Opposition has suddenly struck on something quite humorous. That could be his thought process about all the statements being made and, once again, a demonstration with clear evidence that the member is wrong and confused, and needs help and assistance in clearing up the record for the Leader of the Official Opposition.

So, Mr. Chair, we've answered the question. The minister will provide more detail, as the minister is more than anxious to do. The Hospital Corporation will continue to do its work, and by the way, we're quite pleased with the fact that we're the first government that actually entered into a longer term agreement with the Hospital Corporation to provide them some fiscal certainty that allows them to be able to better manage and deliver health care services for the Yukon Territory and its citizens. With that, Mr. Chair, I could delve into the Minto Park statement and all the rest of it, but I won't. There's no point, Mr. Chair. We'll continue to present the facts and the members opposite can accept them as they wish.

Mr. Mitchell: Well, to use one of the Premier's favorite statements, at the risk of being repetitive, let me remind the Premier again on just how this works. The way it's meant to work in Committee of the Whole, Mr. Chair, is that we ask the questions, and members on the government side respond.

I won't say "answer", because we don't get that many answers, but "respond." The Premier seems to think that what should be happening is that he should ask questions and then the members on the opposition benches should answer all the questions of what they would do were they on the government side. Well, we know we're not right now, Mr. Chair, so we'll ask the questions and we'll hope that the Premier and his colleagues will respond and maybe even occasionally answer.

Now regarding why we're asking questions in general debate rather than waiting for departmental debate — that's why it is called general debate, Mr. Chair. We can ask questions generally on any area that is covered in the budget. We know that the Premier must be an excellent dancer, because he does this two-step all the time. He tells us, "Ask those questions in general debate," and then when we get to departmental debate, the Premier says, "Too bad you didn't ask that in general debate, because now is not the time." We will ask them now because this is the only time we can be certain that we have the Premier's attention. We never know whether he will call his or any other department once we get into Committee.

So the record will show that we got no answers whatsoever on how the \$67 million that is being financed off the books of the Government of Yukon will be handled, other than the Health minister may tell us when it is his turn, although not today.

Spiralling health care costs — since we're talking about health and since the Minister of Finance has indicated that, with this budget, we're up to approximately \$237 million being paid via the Department of Health and Social Services for health care for Yukoners — one of the things this budget shows is that it's \$7 million more than what was being anticipated when the main estimates were tabled. It raises the question of health care cost drivers, such as in the report that was presented earlier this year.

Can the Premier or the Health and Social Services minister provide us with any information on what progress has been made on addressing those health cost drivers as presented in the report, since the consultation process is long over?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: Well, we've just been talking about it: a significant investment here in the Yukon in health care facilities, a significant increase in this supplemental estimate for the health care department to deliver health care. Historically, over the last seven years, there's a significant increase in the health care budget for the Yukon Territory.

The member asked how we're addressing that. Well, the members have voted against our addressing it time and time again. How dare the member stand up and make statements in the manner he has regarding health care delivery in the communities. How dare the member do so, when the member has opposed, through his voting record and indeed his colleagues' voting record, opposing how we're taking care of those costs and those challenges that the Yukon faces in its health care system — unbelievable.

In general terms, the Yukon Hospital Corporation is delivering on its mandate to the full extent possible, which should be exactly what the Hospital Corporation does. To the credit of the chair and the board, they recognize that and are diligently working on ensuring that that happens. To the CEO and the staff of the hospital, doctors, nurses — they are diligently working on delivering health care, remaining committed to Yukoners on health care; to the department and all our officials and staff and others who work in the health care field; to the individuals, nurses and others at Copper Ridge Place, in extended care — to all involved, thank you for meeting those challenges that the member opposite speaks of.

It is really something to see, the way that this territory is dealing with the significant health care challenges that all jurisdictions in this country face. Frankly, when you consider and compare the Yukon to others, we are certainly doing something here that is in nature positive and a benefit to the Yukon public. But that doesn't mean we don't have further challenges that we must face; that's part of what the report points out. There will be an ever-increasing cost in health care; that's a given. Determinants such as age, growing population and other factors will continue to contribute to the costs of health care. It's not something whereby you can simply direct Yukoners to stop getting sick and having health care problems; it's just the way it will be. So that's exactly how we're addressing it — significant investment, Hospital Corporation working in consort with the department and the government, health care professionals, doctors, nurses — all inclusive.

That's how we're addressing those issues and those needs.

Mr. Mitchell: Just to remind the Premier, the question was, how is the government, which is headed by the Premier — the Minister of Finance — addressing the increasing costs resulting from those determinants? We weren't asking about, specifically, what the Hospital Corporation is doing, but rather about the financial side of it. The costs are going up. We see that they're going up. We know that there were some difficult choices laid out in that report. We wondered what the Premier was doing about it, or planning to do about those challenging costs, which the Premier has spoken about in this Assembly. That report was debated in this Assembly and the Premier talked about the difficult challenges that were ahead. We were hoping we would get an update for those spiralling health care costs. Has there been any progress? For example, what is the future of the territorial health access fund? Is that still up in the air or is it going to be renewed? Can the Premier or the Health minister provide us with information on that, since it was financing a number of programs that were helping to pay for the cost of providing health services to Yukoners.

Hon. Mr. Fentie: Again, the member asks the same question: how are we addressing health care needs and issues? Will the member please accept the fact that the budgets he voted against are a clear demonstration of how we're doing it? By increasing the investment in the health care system to where we are today, some 30 percent of the total expenditure in the O&M side, Mr. Chair — 30 percent of the budget.

Mr. Chair, I must emphasize and stress for the Leader of the Official Opposition — how are we meeting the needs and the issues? It is by investing in Yukon's health care system. As far as the territorial health access fund, the Minister of Health and Social Services will delve into that. The ministers for the territories have worked very hard with Health Canada, knowing full well that the first five-year term of the health access fund is coming due. Our work to date is to ensure that we can continue with Canada to put in place the measures required to meet the principle of comparable services based on comparable levels of taxation. That work is ongoing.

Mr. Mitchell: Incidentally, Mr. Chair, if the Premier is looking for clarification of why members on this side of the House have voted against budgets over the past number of years, that would be because members on this side of the House don't have confidence in this Premier and his government. In fact, the Member for McIntyre-Takhini voted against numerous budgets when he sat on this side of the House, so he clearly didn't have confidence in the Government of Yukon either. He said so on many occasions.

In terms of voting against budgets, if the Premier doesn't understand why that happens then he has forgotten his time in opposition. It happens when confidence has been lost in how government is conducting itself in governing this territory.

I have other questions for the Premier. Does this supplementary budget, anywhere within it, include money for a potential settlement with the Yukon Teachers Association and the teachers that has gone to some form of mediation? Is there money set aside for whatever the settlement may be, or will that just appear in yet another supplementary budget?

Hon. Mr. Rouble: In my purview as minister responsible for the Public Service Commission and the minister responsible for Education, that's a matter I'll be happy to discuss with the member once we get into some of the specifics about the department. There are certainly steps the government is taking to address the staffing needs and allocations for the variety of different departments we have. In addition to the contract with the Yukon Teachers Association, we also have other organizations we deal with to provide fair and appropriate compensation for all Yukon government employees. We are in a bargaining process right now, as the member knows full well, and it would certainly be inappropriate to have discussions about specifics on that until the collective bargaining process comes to its conclusion.

The member did mention mediation and, yes, that is a part of the collective bargaining process, and government is committed to working with all interested parties, with all of our involved parties in this matter, to ensure that our collective bargaining process meets the needs of everyone involved.

The member opposite did raise the issue of addressing such a situation in a supplementary budget, and I would suggest to him that could be an opportunity, and certainly we do use supplementary budgets when there are different allocations that are required. That's how this supplementary budget process works. That's the process that we're in right now where we do start at the beginning of the year with a specific budget number in mind, and through the course of normal operations, those numbers do go up or they do go down and that affects the final accounting that is done and is tabled in this Assembly with the public accounts.

The member knows what is budgeted at the beginning of the year. The member knows there is the flexibility to change those numbers through the course of normal operations with our normal budgeting process — that being the supplementary budget — and he does know the final result — the final accounting is then tabled in the Assembly. The short version for the member opposite is that yes, we are in a collective bargaining process; we will certainly honor that, and not conduct negotiations through the media but conduct our negotiations with the appropriate parties. Once we reach a conclusion to this, we will address the financial implications of that, as we would in any other normal process.

Mr. Mitchell: I'll thank the Education minister and the minister responsible for the Public Service Commission for his response, which I believe indicates that if more funding is needed for settlement, it will be in a future budget, and it's not in this budget. I think that would summarize. What we heard was that, if necessary, it would be done later.

Mr. Chair, we've received correspondence from community nurses regarding their belief in the importance — critical importance — of the Yukon palliative care program. Their understanding is that it's currently funded only until March 31, 2010. Now, of course, that is the term of the current budget and that may be all that that means, but because they've contacted us and given examples of how important this program is, they are looking for reassurance — these are community nurses — into the future of this important program which helps to pro-

vide extra expert health care professional assistance when people are reaching those final stages of their life within a community and the extra care is beyond that which can be provided by, for example, the normal allotment of community nurses within a community.

In particular, the question came from Haines Junction but I imagine this could have come from any part of Yukon. I wonder whether either the Health minister or the Premier, as the Minister of Finance, could make a commitment to this being an ongoing program rather than a program that would end with the current funding allotment on March 31, 2010.

Hon. Mr. Fentie: Obviously by investing as we have in palliative care, that is a clear demonstration of the government's view; however, we must also recognize that there are processes during a budget cycle that we must follow and that is something we will adhere to.

Yes, there is a term on this, but of course it is also the end of the fiscal year. The program as it exists has been well funded and now we're in the process of another budget cycle that will commence April 1, 2010.

Mr. Mitchell: To follow up, the Premier refers to this being a particular budget cycle, which I referred to in my question. Obviously we're aware of that, but we know there are many items in every budget that indicate that they are multi-year commitments. Building a new correctional centre is clearly a multi-year commitment. We're not spending \$67 million this year — some money was spent last year, more is being spent this year, yet more again will have to be committed next year — but the commitment is made in that case to a capital program that is a multi-year program. There are examples within O&M programs of multi-year commitments as well. So just to repeat the question, to see if we can get some clarification from the Premier, is this simply a question of the amount of money allotted in the current budget cycle, or is this one portion of a multi-year commitment? Can the Premier clarify that?

He must know whether the intent is to be multi-year or whether this was a very finite commitment.

Hon. Mr. Fentie: The debate on the Department of Health and Social Services is the appropriate place for this discussion. Contrary to what the members have been implying for some time now, the corner office merely provides direction for the corporate agenda. The Premier doesn't involve the Premier's office in these matters that are the responsibility of the department and its minister. So I would encourage the member to put that question on the to-do list and wait for the Department of Health and Social Services.

Mr. Mitchell: Frequently citing the collective responsibility of Cabinet and the collegial approach to governing, this Premier has provided that explanation in the past for why he was involved in the affairs of Energy, Mines and Resources, providing instructions directly to officials in Energy, Mines and Resources, when he was neither the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources or, since it involved the Yukon Energy Corporation and Yukon Development Corporation, why he was providing direction that impacted on the future of the Yukon Energy

Corporation — because he was Premier. He was the first among equals.

The Premier has previously cited that for explanations on why he was involved in a phone call to the deputy minister of Environment — as the Minister of Environment said, "To provide direction."

Perhaps he would be knowledgeable and be interested in providing direction on what we both seem to agree is an important program to the Minister of Health, but failing that, the Minister of Health can rise and answer the question, much as the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources provided his fascinating explanation earlier this afternoon. That's why we ask those questions.

If the Premier wants to rise or designate somebody else to answer the question, either way we would be interested in hearing it. I think the Member for McIntyre-Takhini has previously talked about the importance of palliative care when he sat in opposition, so he would probably be interested in hearing it as well.

The \$6 million for waterfront development — presumably this is some portion, in addition to the \$3 million previously put forward toward Yukon's commitment to the Kwanlin Dun cultural centre on the waterfront or perhaps toward the library that is associated therein — can the Premier provide any additional information about that?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: Mr. Chair, the government has met its obligations vis-à-vis the final agreement with Kwanlin Dun First Nation but is very pleased to report, as we have publicly already a number of times — and here again is this issue of partnership — we are very pleased to report that in partnership with Canada, the Kwanlin Dun First Nation and the Yukon government, the long, arduous, difficult, sometimes almost impossible process that the Kwanlin Dun First Nation has been in for so many years — a realization that has been so long in coming is now a reality. The dream has become a reality.

Establishing a symbolic piece of infrastructure in the traditional territory of the Kwanlin Dun First Nation on the waterfront, here in the City of Whitehorse, the government couldn't be more pleased with its investment in partnership with Canada and the First Nation. We have included in that an anchor tenancy for the library, which is certainly in keeping with the overall theme of the project and its concept; I'm more than pleased to be able to do that. So, it again is another example of what the government has been saying all along — building and fostering partnerships.

Mr. Mitchell: It's interesting to see that, in some areas, the Premier is quick to talk about areas other than his own portfolios, and in others he isn't. But we'll see which ones he answers and which ones he chooses not to.

Mr. Chair, Hamilton Boulevard — the extension: we were all there at the ribbon-cutting, so to speak, ceremony this summer — in August, I believe it was — in my riding, and very pleased to be there, because this was a long-awaited and important project in the interest of safety — to have a second access and egress for the residents of Copper Ridge, Granger, Arkell, McIntyre, should it even be necessary, and of course a better approach and access for the residents of Lobird.

But we've all also witnessed the dips that developed in the lanes at one end of this extension. What is the financial liability for the Government of Yukon in that? Is that something that is fully in the hands of the contractor to remedy, or does the Government of Yukon have to pay for tearing this up and then repaving it next summer? We recognize that at this time of year, of course, there is nothing to be done. But the question goes to who will be responsible for it? And why did it happen? Was there a rush to pave it and get it open prior to it having been fully compacted? Does the government have any engineering information about this? I see the Highways and Public Works minister is prepared to answer, so we look forward to that.

Hon. Mr. Lang: In addressing the member opposite, the dips on Hamilton Boulevard arose from some issues about compaction, which is true. We're monitoring this with the City of Whitehorse and the repair or the mitigation will be decided on next summer. We are working with the City of Whitehorse doing our good work and certainly we'll be looking at what we can do next summer to mitigate the issue on Hamilton Boulevard.

Mr. Mitchell: I thank the minister for that response.

Mr. Chair, we've seen the adjustments to date in the value on the books of the government's ill-considered investment in asset-backed commercial paper that is now being restructured into the MAV2 notes, and we've seen that the government to date has written down some \$11 million in those notes — roughly the price of an elementary school in a community. Perhaps it could have been an elementary school in Copper Ridge to overcome the crowding that's developed over time at the existing school in Granger — the Elijah Smith Elementary School.

These figures that we saw in the public accounts of course only show the adjustments as at March 31, 2009. Since then, we've seen companies — public companies — sell some of these same restructured notes — MAV2A1 notes — at 40 cents per \$1 of face value, and in the case of A2 notes, at 28 cents per \$1 of face value. Does the government have any anticipated additional adjustments for the current year in those notes, or are they waiting to see what happens? They're not traded frequently, but those trades that have occurred in the marketplace have been at lower values than the adjustments we've seen to date.

Hon. Mr. Fentie: Mr. Chair, the Leader of the Official Opposition has just made a statement that we have written down the value of the investment. That is not correct.

The booking in the public accounts is an interest adjustment. The notes are at full value upon maturity. This should not be unusual to the member. It is something that is an anomaly. That is how investments work. Yes, the interest adjustment has to be made — that is accounting requirements — but will be regained through the course of maturity. Furthermore, there has been no actual or realized loss. I emphasize and repeat, Mr. Chair, there has been no — that would be no — realized or actual loss. The whole purpose of investments is to earn a return. That is certainly happening. As the member continues to suggest that we've lost money on this investment, I believe, to date, our return is in the neighbourhood of \$1.7 million plus.

How on earth does the Leader of the Official Opposition come to the conclusion that this is a writedown and a loss? It is an earning.

Furthermore, the investments in total for the territory since the 2002-03 fiscal year have a total earning value of \$17.8 million. The member says it's a loss, and that's the problem. This member has just stood up and once again made a statement that is incorrect. There're so many other examples, Mr. Chair — ATCO discussions, the Energy Corporation, the Hospital Corporation, the facilities in Watson Lake and Dawson City, the Public Accounts Committee, the Members' Services Board — the list goes on and on and on. The member should stand up and explain to Yukoners how — what methodology does the member use to turn a \$1.7-million earning, or almost \$ 1.8-million earning, on a specific investment and a total earnings on investment of \$17.8 million since 2002-03 to come up with a loss? We'd all be quite interested what that methodology is.

Does it include $2+2=4$? Does it include $4 \times 10=40$? I mean, we're interested in hearing from the member, and I'm sure all Yukoners are, how positive earnings in millions of dollars turn into a loss. It's this member who continues to espouse this notion. We'd like to hear from the member, and so would Yukoners: what kind of a calculation does the member use? Does the member use a calculator, with the buttons and everything and a screen with numbers on it? Is it faulty? Is the member just using pencil and paper? Is the member taking advice from the Member for Kluane? We are astounded at the statement — a writedown, a loss — millions of earnings. Millions of dollars of earnings, and the member somehow draws the conclusion that it's a loss.

Actually, this whole debate is a lost cause because it does not reflect a factual discussion from the member opposite. No matter how hard the government side tries to present the facts, to work constructively with the Leader of the Official Opposition, the Leader of the Official Opposition rushes headlong into the oblivion of misinformation. How else can I present this to the Leader of the Official Opposition?

The short-term notes were exchanged for long-term notes. Under the global situation, pretty understandable; however, over almost two decades, the Government of Yukon has been investing in this particular area. Now that we've had this challenge — which is a global challenge — the Government of Yukon, along with many others, has gone through a process that included the courts and has exchanged short-term notes for long-term notes at full value.

By the way, for the member's information, the government had been investing in asset-backed commercial paper since 1990. The exchange of short-term notes to long-term notes is at full value. The interest adjustments that we are booking are an accounting requirement — this is not a loss or a writedown of the value of the notes.

Surely, the member will accept the fact that we are earning millions of dollars on our investments, and on this particular investment, \$1.826 million has been earned. In fact, I'll give the exact number to date: \$1,826,231 has been earned, interest and principal. How does the member come up with loss, a writ-

edown? We would like to hear the methodology, the formula — how does the member do this?

The government will continue to make investments. Obviously, since 2002-03, and coming into office, \$17,828,558 in positive earnings for the Yukon Territory — I think that's significant. We've also taken the fiscal capacity of the Yukon Territory from some \$400 million plus to \$1,071,000. That would be \$1,071,000. We've more than doubled the fiscal capacity of the Yukon and look what the government is doing with that fiscal capacity.

We are investing in infrastructure, highways, public buildings. We are investing in hospitals. We are investing in schools. We are investing in correctional centres. We are investing in women's transitional units. We are investing in affordable housing. We are investing in social housing. We are investing in seniors residences. We are investing in student residences. We have invested in the Canada Winter Games, which was a tremendous and resounding success. We are investing in health care. We are investing in the economy. We are investing in the future. We are investing in Yukon. We are investing in a quality of life. We are investing massive amounts of fiscal capacity on behalf of the Yukon public. We are not losing money, we are making money.

Clearly, in more than doubling fiscal capacity of the Yukon, once again, I would like to hear from the member opposite how he comes up with some notion that we've lost money. This is astounding. This is astounding, Mr. Chair.

The member's topic, due to fixation, is investments. The investments made to date, Mr. Chair, are on the positive side of the ledger. We have expectation that is going to continue. We don't control the global marketplace, but through the astute and sound fiscal management of Department of Finance, all is well. All is well, Mr. Chair.

I can recall a statement made by the member opposite about incompetence and being overzealous, and I want to apologize on behalf of the Finance officials and the department for the member's statement. That is on the public record, and that's unfortunate, because the Yukon is in a positive fiscal position. The Yukon is earning money with its investments. The Yukon has more than doubled its fiscal capacity, and the list goes on and on and on.

I'm not sure what this all means for the member opposite, but considering the budget, we've got over \$68 million of investment here. I would just like to go over a couple of those areas with the member. Mr. Chair, it would be virtually impossible to come forward with a billion-dollar budget if we were losing money.

In the course of the fiscal year, a fiscal year that has an investment on behalf of Yukoners of over a billion dollars — which the Member for Porter Creek South finds humorous. Maybe that's because the quality of life has improved so much, and the member is in such a good mood that all matters are humorous. That is a possibility. People should be happy.

How can the member justify making a statement of loss when we see the dramatic increase in investment in the course of this fiscal year? It's an investment that includes — as I said earlier — Community Services. This department, with a total

investment now voted year to date, is quite significant. It would be based on the revised vote, and we know the members opposite will probably oppose. It will be some \$64,130,000. This is operation and maintenance.

Mr. Chair, that's significant because this touches every Yukon community. But it includes a capital investment, with the revised vote for Community Services of \$67,677,000. How on earth, if we were losing money, are we going to make those kinds of increases?

The Department of Education — this fiscal year began with a \$119,782,000 investment in Education. A supplemental request by the department for this estimate, Bill No. 17, is another \$4,868,000 of operation and maintenance investment for the Yukon public in education, totalling a revised vote of \$124,650,000.

Mr. Chair, on the capital side in Education, the fiscal year begins with \$8,390,000 and the request in this supplementary estimate is another \$3,474,000, bringing the revised capital vote for the Department of Education to \$11,864,000. How on earth can the member justify a statement of loss considering those numbers?

The members opposite have chastised the Minister of Environment and this government's policies and agenda when it comes to the environment.

How can the member justify a loss when we see the Department of Environment, on the O&M side at the beginning of the fiscal year, voted to date, which the members voted against, at \$26,296,000, with a request this supplementary estimate for another \$1,028,000, for a revised vote in O&M. I remind you, Mr. Chair and the members opposite, of the great criticism of this government and Minister of Environment, yet we demonstrate through our investments a very high level of priority when it comes to the Department of Environment and our environmental agenda. This increase goes to a total now of \$27,324,000 in O&M expenditures. On the capital side, Environment also is at \$2,228,000 with a revised vote.

How can the member justify that the government is in a loss position, or has lost money? We're investing more and more money. Highways and Public Works — \$102,942,000 of O&M. There's a request for an increase of \$1,875,000, totalling a revised vote of \$104,817,000. Not a loss, but an increase.

It's an increase because we have through earnings — through sound fiscal management — fiscal resources available.

On the capital side for Highways and Public Works, there is \$91,309,000 voted to date, which the members voted against. That's in highways, bridges, and other infrastructure. There's a request for this supplementary estimate of \$11,798,000 for a revised vote for Highways and Public Works and capital infrastructure of \$103,107,000.

It is astounding that the Leader of the Official Opposition seems to think that there has been a loss. The government side has been increasing its investments each and every year and has been earning through its investments each and every year a good return for the Yukon and our fiscal position.

We've also had seven years of surplus — year-end surplus. Now I know the Member for Mayo-Tatchun and the Member for Porter Creek South are really excited about that, because

they're kibitzing away and smiling and laughing. I'd be smiling and laughing too if I were on the other side, knowing that Yukon has seven years of annual surplus.

This is something to be positive and smiling about, happy about and laughing about. Yahoo, we have surpluses. It wasn't that long ago that under the Liberal government leadership and New Democratic government leadership, we were in deficits and debt, and the list goes on and on, Mr. Chair.

Getting back to what was hopefully my original point, though it has been some time now in the confused state of the government side, with the member coming up with a statement of loss — the member came up with a statement of loss, which is really quite confusing, given the facts. I have to assure the member that the Yukon government, the Yukon Party government, hasn't lost. It has gained; it has earned; it has increased. It has done everything possible to ensure that we can build a better quality of life for Yukoners.

As is the case in many, many areas, and there are many examples, the member opposite, the Official Opposition leader, is truly confused. I hope the response has helped clear up that confusion. We don't have a loss, we have an earning. We haven't done a writedown; we have had to do an interest adjustment. The notes are full value.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair, may the force be with us all.

Mr. Mitchell: Well, I will just point out to the Premier that there are only two choices on this side. We either have to laugh or scowl when we listen to these explanations. Being glass-half-full sorts of people, we laugh at them rather than scowl.

Mr. Chair, the public accounts on page 65 indicate that on March 31, 2009, the government held portfolio investments in floating-rate notes with a carrying value of \$24.1 million. Those notes started out before they were restructured with a value of some \$36.3 million, so the Premier can define it any way he wants. The interest rate adjustment to which he refers now adds up to some \$11 million. Without a calculator and buttons, Mr. Chair, I would say that \$11 million over \$36.3 million is over 30 percent. It is a large interest rate adjustment, Mr. Chair — a large adjustment.

As far as how much money has been made since 2002-03, it is not the matter at hand and it is irrelevant. By that logic, Mr. Chair, the Premier could quote his salary over the last 12 years in this House and say he's a millionaire because look at how much money he made over those 12 years — but if he doesn't have the money any more then he's not.

My God, if you were going to take that approach — if the Premier took that approach when he was in the private sector, he'd have had to declare bankruptcy.

Now, when we take a look at some of the statements made in the past about these notes, it's quite fascinating. The Premier himself had lots to say about it. So did the Deputy Premier. What did the Premier say? As well, the banks have provided guarantees to the investors. He said that on November 8 in this House. That turned out to be factually incorrect. The litmus test was met. This investment was backed by the banks. The Pre-

mier said that on November 7 in this House — factually incorrect.

So the Premier shouldn't take umbrage when we question his explanation on these matters because so often, from the beginning, they were factually incorrect. The Premier brought incorrect information to this Assembly. So that's why we ask these questions.

Another one is first, the investment had the highest rating available; second, it's backed by the banks — the Hon. Premier on November 7 — again, factually incorrect. "We reiterated on a number of occasions that the commercial paper we refer to so often is backed by the banks." — Deputy Premier on December 3, 2007 — factually incorrect.

There are quite a few factually incorrect responses about this.

"As I have articulated on a number of occasions, I certainly want to reassure members opposite that we do have investments. Nothing has been lost." — Hon. Deputy Premier, November 19, 2007.

Yet they're now on the books at \$24 million, not \$36.3 million. Then there are all the statements regarding the Auditor General saying that everything was in compliance, Mr. Chair. "...the Auditor General states that, in her opinion..." "...that have come to her notice these investments have in all significant respects been in accordance with the *Financial Administration Act*" — Hon. Deputy Premier, November 13, 2007, in this House.

Mr. Chair, when the Auditor General finally did take a close look at them she said that they did not comply with the act at all. They weren't backed by the banks. They weren't.

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Point of order

Chair: The Hon. Premier, on a point of order.

Hon. Mr. Fentie: Just as a matter for clarification, which year are we talking about? The first 20 — or could the member give us some enlightenment?

Chair's ruling

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

Mr. Mitchell: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I would just point out that these are the investments we hold today. Since the Premier seems to be somewhat unsophisticated in these investment matters — and again, I hope he never delves into them in his personal life because who knows what might happen — I would point out that in 1990, since he refers to them there, they weren't consisting of credit default swaps or collateral dead obligations, as they are now.

They were different — they actually had assets behind them, behind all of them.

Mr. Chair, seeing the time, I would move that we report progress on Bill No. 17, *Second Appropriation Act, 2009-10*.

Chair: It has been moved by Mr. Mitchell that Committee of the Whole report progress on Bill No. 17. Do members agree?

Some Hon. Members: Disagree.

Hon. Mr. Fentie: Well, we've got to go right to the end, Mr. Chair. Our job is to deliver for the public.

Chair: Order please. The motion has been defeated. Mr. Mitchell, you still have the floor.

Mr. Mitchell: Well, Mr. Chair, I guess we'll just have to remind the Premier of his other factually incorrect statements — and the Deputy Premier — because they don't feel we've made progress in this House on this day. Perhaps we haven't given enough examples.

At the risk of being repetitive, Mr. Speaker, I'll repeat — but not verbatim — “Yes, it's backed by assets. Yes, it is still reconfirmed for November 6, 2007, and has the highest investment rating. Yes, the banks have said they are providing guarantees to the investors.” — Hon. Premier, November 8, 2007, another factually incorrect statement that the Premier brought to the floor of this House. You know, Mr. Chair, when the Premier brings so much factually incorrect information to the floor of this House, it causes confusion, Mr. Chair. The Premier causes the confusion of which he was speaking earlier, because he brings factually incorrect information about investments. The Premier, who needed to look at only some three dozen investments in the summer of 2007, couldn't notice that almost a third of them were in these particular vehicles. At the time, Opus and Symphony were not backed by the banks — not backed by the banks. The Auditor General told us that, Mr. Chair, and they weren't rated by two independent investment rating agencies.

So, in fact, contrary to what the Premier assured this House, they were not in compliance with the *Financial Administration Act*.

I hear now that the Member for Mayo-Tatchun is not laughing any more. He's worried about Yukon's future; he's worried about the future of his children — if the Minister of Finance could have made such large mistakes in his judgement. But it's a good thing that we still have another minute to talk about this, because it's clear the Premier wanted to make sure that more of his incorrect statements were on the record. That's what the Premier wanted us to do, and so, as we like to be agreeable on this side of the House, we'll do so. We'll do so.

Let's find some other ones, Mr. Chair. There are so many, which ones should we chose? Mr. Chair, we certainly —

Chair: Order please. Seeing the time, the Chair will rise and report progress.

Speaker resumes the Chair

Speaker: I will now call the House to order. May the House have a report from the Chair of Committee of the Whole?

Chair's report

Mr. Nordick: Mr. Speaker, Committee of the Whole has considered Bill No. 17, *Second Appropriation Act, 2009-10*, and directed me to report progress.

Speaker: You've heard the report from 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. Thursday, November 12.

The House adjourned at 5:31 p.m.