

**Yukon Legislative Assembly
Whitehorse, Yukon
Wednesday, April 7, 2010 — 1:00 p.m.**

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

Prayers

Withdrawal of written questions

Speaker: The Chair wishes to inform the House of changes that have been made to the Order Paper. Written Questions No. 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9, standing in the name of the Leader of the Third Party, have been removed from the Order Paper at the request of that member.

DAILY ROUTINE

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

TRIBUTES

In recognition of World Health Day

Hon. Mr. Hart: I rise today on behalf of the House to pay tribute to World Health Day. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to ask my colleagues in this House to join me in recognizing today as World Health Day, sponsored by the World Health Organization. This year's international theme is, "1,000 cities, 1,000 lives" and has been designed to draw attention to the effect of urbanization on our collective health globally and for all of us individually. Growing populations are associated with many health challenges related to water, environment, violence and injury, disease and risk factors like tobacco use, unhealthy diets, physical inactivity and the harmful use of alcohol that accompanies them.

La Journée mondiale de la santé a pour thème, cette année, « 1 000 villes, 1 000 vies ». On veut ainsi que les gens prennent conscience des effets de l'urbanisation sur la santé de tous les habitants de la planète et sur la nôtre. La croissance de la population mondiale pose bien des défis sur le plan de la santé, défis qui sont liés à l'eau, à l'environnement, à la violence et aux blessures, à la maladie et à des facteurs de risque comme le tabagisme, de mauvaises habitudes alimentaires, l'inactivité et l'abus d'alcool.

It doesn't take much to take the international theme and break it down into the Yukon. We know that by about 2030 our population could increase by as much as 50 percent, and many of those folks will live in our capital city. Even those residing in smaller communities outside of Whitehorse will increase the strain on services available.

We know this is coming, and we're working now to plan well enough that we will be able to meet these increased needs. We are taking action now to ensure our growing communities will be healthy communities.

Nous savons que cela s'en vient et nous commençons dès maintenant à nous préparer afin d'être capables de répondre à ces futurs besoins. Nous prenons déjà des mesures pour que les collectivités, dont la population va en augmentant, soient en bonne santé.

It is fitting that today, World Health Day, is the day we will be debating the need for a Yukon wellness strategy. We believe, here, that health is a shared responsibility. The World Health Organization speaks of the need for communities and individuals to work with a wide range of multiple partners that all share in the responsibility and take action to create a better quality of life for citizens and to ensure the lasting impact on health and wellness. We agree, Mr. Speaker, this is what wellness is all about, and I look forward to discussing this more in detail later today. Thank you. Merci beaucoup.

Speaker: Are there any further tributes?

Introduction of visitors.

Returns or documents for tabling.

Reports of committees.

Are there any petitions?

Any bills to be introduced?

Any notices of motion?

NOTICES OF MOTION

Mr. Mitchell: I give notice of the following motion:
THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to ensure that:

(1) the Department of Health and Social Services continues to develop an accountability plan on an annual basis for the government and minister that identifies the department's strategic direction and planned actions to achieve that direction;

(2) the plan includes the identification of measurable indicators that can be used by the government to assess performance and outcomes; and

(3) the plan is tabled annually in the House.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to:

(1) provide the chair and board of the Yukon Hospital Corporation with an annual letter of expectation that provides the hospital board with a written mandate and articulates the minister's expectation for the board, as well as the minister's obligations to the Yukon Hospital Corporation in order to improve accountability; and

(2) table the letter of expectation annually in the House.

Speaker: Are there any further notices of motion?

Is there a statement by a minister?

That then brings us to Question Period.

QUESTION PERIOD

Question re: Mayo B project

Mr. McRobb: I'd like to return to yesterday's line of questioning on the Premier's use of inflated numbers in describing the annual diesel cost savings from the Mayo B project starting in the year 2012. After swallowing the Premier's numbers, many Yukoners decided they had a distinct fudge flavour. Yesterday we coughed up the real numbers proving the Premier had chosen to exponentially overestimate the diesel cost savings of the Mayo B project. In his response yesterday, the Premier said he trusts the Yukon Energy Corporation. Well, after

the ATCO scandal, we know too much to expect this to be true in reverse.

Assuming the Premier's statement yesterday was true, why then did he choose to exponentially inflate Yukon Energy Corporation's own numbers from about \$3 million to \$20 million?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: Mr. Speaker, let me remind the Member for Kluane of his quote yesterday that he presented, based on the statement made by the famous author, Mark Twain, and then give the Member for Kluane an opportunity to correct the record with his assertions. The member tabled a document yesterday that he maintains is evidence that would corroborate his statements in the House yesterday. Why didn't the member then explain to Yukoners that his information includes the fact that no industrial loads are soon to be connected? Does the member want to correct the record?

Mr. McRobb: Mr. Speaker, our information is taken directly from the Yukon Energy Corporation's filing to the Yukon Utilities Board. The corporation reasserted its figures to the board yesterday in its opening presentation at the hearing, but the Premier couldn't live with the real numbers and replaced them with his own flavour of inflated numbers. It's no wonder why Yukoners have lost trust in this Yukon Party government. It's no wonder why recent opinion polls have identified the emerging issue of top importance to Yukoners, called "good governance". We're all Yukoners here, Mr. Speaker. Why is it so difficult to get a clear answer to this clear question?

Will the Premier now set the record straight and confirm that YEC's numbers are indeed the correct numbers?

Speaker's statement

Speaker: Before the Hon. Premier answers, Member for Kluane, you're stepping perilously close to accusing another member of this House of misleading this Assembly. I know you're skirting around the edge of it and I know you're an articulate person and you can figure out other ways to say that without stepping on the rules of the Legislative Assembly. Member for Kluane, just be careful, please.

Hon. Premier, you have the floor.

Hon. Mr. Fentie: The Member for Kluane has just stated that he's very comfortable with Yukon Energy Corporation's numbers. Let me refer him to the submission to the Government of Canada's federal green infrastructure fund, an excerpt from such application. It says, "Without additional infrastructure, Yukon Energy's annual diesel generation by 2012, to meet new mine and other growth" — this might come as a shock to the Member for Kluane, but Yukon is growing — "will jump from minimal levels today to over 70 gigawatt hours, resulting in 50,000 tonnes of annual greenhouse gas emissions, an incremental diesel generation cost of \$20 million or more per year."

Does the Member for Kluane want to correct the record, given Mark Twain's statement that he referenced yesterday?

Mr. McRobb: The correct response to the Premier's response is, Mayo B won't fill that void. The overestimations were not only applied to the annual diesel savings starting in 2012, they were also applied to the Premier's numbers used to

calculate the reduction in greenhouse gas emissions. The Premier used the number of 50,000 tonnes in his Budget Address and in several other references. Some of his colleagues have also used this same number; however, the figure used by the Yukon Energy Corporation is only half of the figure used by the Premier and his colleagues.

The Premier is good at making mountains out of molehills and molehills out of mountains, for that matter, as demonstrated in how he dismissed his secret parallel negotiating process to sell off Yukon's energy future to private interests from Alberta. Would the Premier now table the calculations he used to arrive at his numbers or admit they, too, were far off?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: So now we have the Member for Kluane suggesting that these are the Premier's numbers. I've just quoted for the member excerpts from the Yukon Energy Corporation's application to the green energy fund — not the Premier's numbers, the Energy Corporation's numbers — with projected growth. As I said, the Yukon is growing.

But it goes on further, and this includes the Yukon Utilities Board. The aforementioned realities were acknowledged in Yukon Energy's Corporation's 20-Year Resource Plan, which, by the way, was reviewed and approved by the Yukon Utilities Board in 2006-07.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the Member for Kluane has made statements in this House that require what I would call a "record correction". The fact of the matter is that the Member for Kluane has either misinterpreted the information he has presented or doesn't understand really what is going on.

Question re: Mayo B project

Mr. Mitchell: Well, Mr. Speaker, let's follow up with the Premier on this same issue. Last year, the Premier engaged in secret negotiations to privatize Yukon's energy future. The former chair of the board blew the whistle on that plan and we all know what happened next: the chair resigned. The MLA for Lake Laberge resigned as well. He said the government was trying to privatize and he could no longer back the story the Premier was trying to tell the public. All along, the Premier denied it was happening. Yukoners saw through it and didn't believe this government.

A year later, we have more of the same. The Premier has made some outrageous claims about the supposed cost savings associated with Mayo B. He says \$20 million a year will be saved in diesel costs starting in 2012, yet he has been contradicted by the Yukon Energy Corporation that projects to be \$3 million to \$4 million a year. Given the Premier's track record, why should anyone believe that his numbers are accurate?

Can the Premier explain why his numbers are so inflated compared to the Yukon Energy Corporation's?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: Speaking of track record, Mr. Speaker, again I point out that members are referencing values that assume no industrial load to be connected. That's a huge difference in the draw or the supply and demand of our electrical consumption.

The member keeps referencing "the Premier's numbers". Once again, let me repeat: the Yukon Energy Corporation presented this to the Government of Canada. But it also presented it to the Yukon Utilities Board, who, by the way, reviewed the

very numbers that we are speaking of, and approved these presentations by the Yukon Energy Corporation to the Yukon Utilities Board.

There is a track record, all right, here, Mr. Speaker: the continued misinterpretation and misrepresentation of fact.

Speaker's statement

Speaker: Order please. I'm going to issue the same caution to the Hon. Premier that I did to the Member for Kluane. The honourable member is stepping awfully close to accusing another member of not telling the truth, so I would ask the Hon. Premier just to be careful with that.

You have the next question, Leader of the Official Opposition.

Mr. Mitchell: Mr. Speaker, the fact is that the Yukon Energy Corporation filed the \$3-point-something-million-savings number again yesterday to the Yukon Utilities Board, so it does come down to credibility.

Last year when the Premier denied he was privatizing Yukon's energy future, his colleagues sprang to his defence and backed the Premier's story. They're all in it together, Mr. Speaker.

This year we see more of the same — the Premier's colleagues rushing to his defence. In his reply to the budget speech last week, the MLA for Klondike said, "Yukon Energy has projected a savings of \$20 million per year in fuel costs starting in the year 2012." We'll give the MLA for Klondike some free advice. He should check the numbers that he's getting from the Premier before he reads them into the record.

Why has the Premier told the public one thing, while the Yukon Energy Corporation has told them another?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: You know, Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure what part of "no industrial load to be connected" the member from — is it Whitehorse West? Sorry, Copperbelt. What is it the Member for Copperbelt doesn't get?

The Leader of the Official Opposition refuses to recognize the facts. The facts of the matter are the Energy Corporation did present, not only to the Utilities Board, but to the federal government — who, by the way, after doing due diligence invested \$71 million in this project because of factors like 50,000 tonnes of CO₂ emissions reduction and the saving of diesel costs here in the Yukon.

The Energy Corporation's presentation in this area is as follows: "By the year 2012, with the growth that we are experiencing, there will be levels of over 70 gigawatt hours of increased supply/demand resulting in 50,000 tonnes of annual greenhouse gas emissions and incremental diesel generation costs of \$20 million or more per year." That is from the Energy Corporation's application to Canada's green energy infrastructure fund.

The member can state their opinions all they want — the members opposite. The fact of the matter is that the Energy Corporation has presented this information to Canada and the Yukon Utilities Board.

Mr. Mitchell: Mayo B will only cut into a small portion of what the Premier is citing. That's what's wrong with his arithmetic. Now, this is the same Premier who invested \$36

million for 30 days and said: Don't worry. You can trust our government. Now we can't get the money back for nine years, if ever.

This is the same Premier who said he would never run a deficit, yet the budget for last year shows a \$23-million deficit. After seven years, Yukoners are catching on to how this government operates, and they no longer trust this government. The latest example is the inflated cost savings on diesel that will come with the building of Mayo B. The Premier and the MLA for Klondike say \$20 million a year, and the Energy Corporation says around \$3 million.

We know who the public believes and so does the Premier. Will the Premier correct the record and admit that the figures in his budget speech were wrong and don't apply?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: Well, Mr. Speaker, what doesn't apply is the Leader of the Official Opposition's numbers. Let me go on — and this is an announcement from Canada and Yukon — in accordance with the project known as Mayo B. Forecasts indicate that without the project — I emphasize "without the project" — \$20 million of diesel will be needed annually by 2012 to meet project demand. So, Mr. Speaker, here is what is at issue. The members opposite have now turned \$20 million into \$3 million. The members opposite have now turned a \$69-million net financial resource position in the black to a deficit. The members opposite have ignored the fact that the Yukon is growing. They are now suggesting that electrical supply needs will be based on the fact that no industrial loads are to be connected. I guess under the Liberals' approach to governing this territory, we'd get back to no economy, double-digit unemployment, an exodus of the population, no mines operating, no industrial activity, just one of those places where the Liberals can live in nirvana.

Question re: Social inclusion policy

Mr. Cardiff: Mr. Speaker, families who work for low wages — the working poor — face impossible choices: buy clothes or heat the house; feed the children or pay the rent. Along with this turmoil, poverty often breeds substance abuse, family violence and crime. The results for the family can be spiralling debt, constant anxiety, long-term health problems, child neglect and domestic abuse.

The results for governments are intolerable costs for social services, housing and health care. Eventually, without proper strategies in place, governments raise taxes to pay the bill. What is this government's social inclusion plan for ensuring that low-income families are not a burden on the territorial budget?

Hon. Mr. Hart: For the member opposite, I would just like to maybe take him back a little bit. It's this government that provided the first raise for those on social assistance in almost 20 years — and a substantial raise in that process — to allow those on minimum incomes to survive and live in our community. In addition to that, Mr. Speaker, we have indexed that process so they can, on an annual basis, increase the process into the future so that we don't have to make a large increase 20 years down the road to bring them up to date. That is what this government has done, specifically in dealing with those on low income — a much-needed process. And we are

very much looking at assisting those individuals under the new social inclusion program. We're looking to the stakeholders to provide us with ideas on how we could go forward with those ideas. We're also looking at getting that information later on this fall to identify which of those items are going to be on a priority list, and we'll follow through with those issues.

Mr. Cardiff: On April 1 of this year, the minimum wage in the Yukon was raised to \$8.93 per hour — a huge increase of four cents per hour. That increase is tied to the consumer price index as well, and that's the government's policy. It is also one of the lowest minimum wages in Canada.

At the same time that the minimum wage was raised by four cents, the average weekly earnings in the Yukon were \$903.46. I'll do the math for the Premier: working 40 hours a week, the minimum wage earner now makes the grand sum of \$357.20. That's less than 35 percent of the average wage.

The current trend in social inclusion practice is to change the minimum wage to a living wage. A living wage is meant to be high enough to support families, to ensure they have enough money to live just above poverty.

Will the Premier consider beginning to approach a living wage for workers and that the minimum wage be raised to \$10 an hour?

Hon. Mr. Hart: A lot of the questions the member opposite is bringing up, I look forward to hearing brought up in the symposium coming up this week. I sent him an invitation to that process. We are looking to get that information gleaned out from those attending that conference, in the workshops as well as the public speakers. We anticipate getting a lot of this information that the member opposite is discussing. We are looking at what is going to be needed to ensure that those families on low income can be included in all aspects of Yukon living, including basically being provided safe and affordable housing as was discussed yesterday. I believe that is going to be a major issue.

In essence, we are looking at starting from the beginning here as to where we are to ensure that people are not excluded but included in the process.

Mr. Cardiff: Mr. Speaker, 62 percent of minimum-wage workers in Canada are women and 60 percent of them are part-time workers. Many have lower levels of education and are in the service industries.

A picture emerges of a single mother, possibly even a teenager, who works part-time in a fast-food restaurant. She looks for another part-time job to meet her expenses. There's no time for a young, single mother to get training or to take the kids to a hockey game. She struggles even to have enough time and energy to care for her children.

Is this the picture of inclusion that we want in the Yukon?

If the Premier won't raise the minimum wage to a living wage, will he consider investigating the economic and the social advantages to the Yukon of creating a guaranteed annual income?

Hon. Mr. Kenyon: There are some interesting statistics on this to put it into perspective: 0.83 percent of employees are earning the territory's minimum wage of \$8.58 an hour. Ninety-eight employees earned that minimum wage out of a

total number of 11,848 at the time the survey was done. Three industry sectors accounted for 81 of the 98 minimum-wage earners, and the member is quite accurate on that. The combination is food services, information and cultural — actually there were 38 there, in information and cultural industries, 25, and in retail trade, 18.

So we're talking about a relatively small number of people on this. This is something that is reviewed from time to time. It is indexed and my understanding is that it's not something normally that the government is involved in, despite what the member opposite is chirping off-mic as I speak.

Question re: Lake Laberge road improvements

Mr. Cathers: Last summer the Department of Highways and Public Works released the functional plan for upgrading the Hot Springs Road. The recommended option includes widening the road to create cyclist lanes, improving the trail on the north side of the road for multiple user groups, and creating a trail on the south side of the road for non-motorized users, such as joggers, horse riders and skiers. This project is a high priority for many of my constituents in the area who are concerned about safety and the fact that the road surface is rapidly deteriorating. I have raised this issue with the minister on many occasions and asked him to seek funding to complete the project as quickly as possible.

Will the minister tell me how much money is in the budget for the Hot Springs Road and what work is planned for the 2010 construction season?

Hon. Mr. Lang: We're continuing with engineering plans and looking forward in the future to doing exactly that. It's a major project to do the job that the member opposite has just put on the floor. We're committed to do it and we will be doing it in the future, but this year will be taken up with more engineering and work that has to be done on the ground before we can trigger any kind of contract process or any kind of decision.

Mr. Cathers: Mr. Speaker, although that wasn't the answer I was hoping for, I appreciate the minister providing that information. If he could also provide a timeline for when any consultation will occur on this — if there are indeed further plans — and provide information about whether or not the plan is still to do the Hot Springs Road in two phases as was planned before and confirm — as I believe he was saying in his response to me — that construction is now scheduled to begin next summer.

Hon. Mr. Lang: Certainly, we haven't made a commitment for next summer — the start of the contract season. We're committed to do the engineering work that has to be done. Out of that will come a decision on whether it's a two-phase, three-phase or a four-phase process. But we haven't gone that far, and until we get the engineering done and we know what it's going to look like, and of course, the dimensions of the project, I couldn't honestly on the floor here today say that it's going to start next summer or the summer after that. This engineering has to be done before we move forward with a project of that size.

Mr. Cathers: Another road project I've asked the government to proceed with in that area is improvements to Takhini River Road.

The traffic on that road is also increasing due to more families living on it and it's used by people travelling to the TransCanada Trail.

A section of Takhini River Road needs to be reconstructed to fix the dangerously steep hill west of the river-level properties, where a number of vehicles have spun out or slipped in recent winters. The hill causes problems for large trucks delivering things such as water and heating fuel and prevents any possibility of school-bus service down the road.

This is not just an inconvenience, as vehicles and trailers have spun out and been stuck across the road. A vehicle coming down the hill at the wrong time would be unable to avoid an accident. Will the minister please update me on whether money for this project has been included in this year's budget?

Hon. Mr. Lang: Again, we maintain our roads throughout the territory. I would remind the member opposite that we have, seasonally, roughly 5,000 kilometres of road to maintain. Again, I can address the member opposite on the question before that. This is all part of the Takhini Road and this is the size and dimensions of the project we're looking at there. It's needed; the engineering has to be done. Then out of that engineering will come decisions on timelines and costs and, of course, budget questions the member opposite understands.

This year there will be engineering done, and there will be maintenance done on a regular basis to minimize any kind of danger there is on the road — or any kind of infrastructure that needs to be replaced as we do on all highways and systems throughout the territory.

Question re: Autism programs

Mr. Mitchell: Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Health and Social Services says there will be no cuts to the programs being provided for families with autistic children and for children with disabilities. Well, the only reason there may now be no cuts is because parents had to confront this government and fight the proposed cuts.

How can anyone trust this government to live up to its word? Time and time again, the Premier has to issue apology letters for things he has originally instructed ministers or departments to do. There would be no need to issue an apology if there was nothing to apologize for.

The Premier indicated in his letter to parents that the programming would continue on for the next year. This does not create much certainty for the struggling parents for ensuing years. Will the Premier make a three-year commitment not to cut the parent-driven programming for parents and families of children with autism spectrum disorders and for children with other learning disabilities?

Hon. Mr. Hart: We had a long discussion with those involved, with children with disabilities — those representing all aspects of children with disabilities. As we indicated in the House, we have not cut any funding to these individuals with regard to their services. We committed to maintain that service to these individuals this year.

We also indicated to those individuals that we'd be working with them on their plan that was developed, to ensure that we would go forth in the future to improve, enhance, and provide greater certainty for those individuals needing care for their children — not just for autism, but all aspects of children who require assistance for their disabilities.

Mr. Mitchell: The government asked why we would vote against their budget. Well, one reason we voted against it was because there were going to be proposed spending cuts in programs for children with disabilities and future budgets were not going to include continued funding for the parent-driven programming for children with learning disabilities or autistic children, either.

Parents are looking for continuity and improvements, not cuts to services. Now, last week the Premier was cutting back services, but now he and the Health and Social Services minister have agreed to keep everything as it is for at least one year. After hearing from concerned and angry parents, the Premier has partially backed down. The Health and Social Services minister has said it will stay as it was for at least this year.

Parents, quite rightly, want a commitment that lasts for more than just this year. Why are the Premier and the Health and Social Services minister unwilling to make that longer-term commitment?

Hon. Mr. Hart: I'll reiterate what I said before for the member opposite. There are no cuts in the program. The budget is in there — main to main. The funds are in there. Under Family Services for disability, those funds are there.

There has been no decrease in that funding for those parents with children with disabilities. We are continually emphasizing that with those individuals in question. We also indicated we would work with them with regard to their plan. We indicated we would allow the families to take an active part in looking after their children, as they have in the past, and we did commit to that. We did do that — while we review the plan that they brought up. Once that is complete, we will sit down and discuss the situation with all those families and parents who have children with disabilities.

Question re: Dawson City sewage treatment

Mr. Elias: Section 11(5) of our House rules say the following: "... a member who has been designated as a Cabinet commissioner may answer questions respecting the activities of his ... Commission."

The MLA for Klondike was recently made a Cabinet commissioner and yesterday we were informed by letter that he has the responsibility for all matters pertaining to the new Dawson City waste-water treatment facility. The Dawson City sewage treatment project was projected to cost \$24.8 million just eight months ago. Now, add the \$4.5-million district heating and you get \$29.3 million but, according to the Yukon Party government's recently released budget, the project has been allocated \$34.3 million.

I'd like to give the Member for Klondike another chance to be accountable today. To the MLA for Klondike: why has this project gone overbudget by \$5 million?

Mr. Nordick: First, I'd like to thank the members opposite for giving me a chance to speak to this very positive

initiative in our community. First off, it's a positive investment in the community. It's a solution-oriented — what the members opposite consider a problem. This project is on time and on budget. The dollar value the members opposite speak of is all inclusive from beginning to end.

Mr. Elias: I would like to welcome the Member for Klondike to Question Period. It's good to see we're moving in a positive direction. Part of the increase on the price tag of this project is due to the addition of a district heating system estimated at \$4.5 million. After doing the math, there's an unaccounted-for increase of about \$5 million and we can't seem to get answers to that specific question. The long-term capital plan tabled by the government last week shows the budget has ballooned to \$34.3 million for this project.

Can the new Cabinet commissioner who has responsibility for this project explain why it is so far overbudget?

Mr. Nordick: Once again, the member opposite is saying it's overbudget. Well, it's not overbudget. Mr. Speaker, the district biomass heating system could potentially be a revenue stream for the City of Dawson. That's a positive investment for my community. This government is solving the problem, the problem that was created under the Liberal government. Not only did they do nothing to solve this problem, they allowed my community to break the *Financial Administration Act*. This government solved that problem and it's solving this government. It's on time, on budget.

Mr. Elias: Mr. Speaker, we're asking questions here on the floor of the House about an unaccounted-for \$5 million of taxpayers' dollars here and we can't get any answers. The word "reckless" comes to mind, Mr. Speaker.

Yukoners deserve an explanation for this cost overrun. The contract for this project was awarded in July of 2009 for \$24.8 million. Eight months later, the cost is \$34.3 million. One reason why last year's budget was a deficit is this government's inability to bring projects in on-budget. The Auditor General has been very critical of how the government manages projects and her advice has obviously made no difference. The Yukon Party government just keeps missing the targets.

Will the Cabinet commissioner responsible for this project explain: why has it gone so far overbudget and where is the unaccounted-for \$5 million?

Mr. Nordick: Once again, I want to state for the record, this project is on time and on budget. The money the member opposite speaks of is all inclusive with two Cabinet board submissions — one for \$29 million and one for \$4.5 million.

The member opposite keeps referring to reckless spending. This is not reckless spending in my community. It is producing a potential revenue stream that takes greenhouse gases off the emissions. It cuts in diesel spending costs for the city. It improves the overall well-being of my community. The members opposite keep referring to reckless spending. They considered a hospital in my community reckless spending. Mr. Speaker, I disagree.

This project is on time, on budget and once again, all inclusive, beginning to end. I know it is hard for the members

opposite to understand — beginning to end it is what is in the budget.

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

MOTIONS OTHER THAN GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

Motion No. 1008

Clerk: Motion No. 1008, standing in the name of Mr. Nordick.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Member for Klondike

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to develop a wellness strategy to promote healthy living habits for all Yukoners.

Mr. Nordick: It gives me great pleasure to rise today to speak to this motion, especially on World Health Day. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in this House to debate this motion. It gives me great pleasure to do so once again, and I'm proud of what our government has done in the area of health and wellness. I think it is an important topic to debate today, as today, once again, is World Health Day.

Today I will speak to this government's support for the development of a wellness strategy for the territory. I believe that this reflects and reaffirms our commitment to the good health of Yukoners and to the sustainability of our health care system.

In September 2008, the *Yukon Health Care Review Final Report* on the sustainability of Yukon's health care system was released. This report recommended that the government, in conjunction with individuals and communities, work to promote and support healthy lifestyle choices.

Yukoners who had input into the review talked about personal responsibility for health, long-term care and community-based options addressing mental health, addictions and drug and alcohol abuse. Everyone has an idea of how wellness should be tackled.

Last month, the members of the oversight committee on health care sustainability met to discuss the health care report. My colleague, the Minister of Health and Social Services, has informed me that we have received written submissions from both parties as to what they think are important components of a wellness strategy. Already the Minister of Health and Social Services and this government are at work developing a social inclusion strategy and a healthy aging strategy, both of which would flow nicely from a wellness framework.

In fact, the NDP proposal speaks highly of the work that has already taken place on the healthy aging strategy and harkens back to the NDP motion from November 2008, in which they addressed their wellness concerns for seniors. Those concerns included addressing preventive health care, education programs, ensuring adequate pensions to support

healthy lifestyles, additional home care workers, respite care and improved seniors housing, among other things.

The Liberal proposal also speaks to increased options for in-home care and visits by health care professionals for seniors. Already the Department of Health and Social Services has increased the Yukon seniors income supplement, which is available to all Yukoners over the age of 65. We have added to our home care services, both in Whitehorse and rural Yukon.

The replacement of one of our seniors residences and opening of the new beds in the Thomson Centre has also been announced.

We are already taking some of the actions necessary to address some of the concerns raised by our colleagues in the other two parties. All three parties, despite our differences, recognize the value that our seniors contributed to this territory and want to ensure that they have adequate support in place as they age and when they need it. It is rare indeed, Mr. Speaker, that the three parties can agree, but we do appear to all be in support of the development of a wellness approach.

We recognize that by working together instead of in opposition to each other, we can change attitudes and behaviours. I believe that we all agree that whatever approach we take, we must recognize responsibility; adequate investment; a comprehensive, research driven and measurable strategy; actions to address the factors that impact on wellness; and a continued focus on the critical issues that face us.

I know we agree that we all have a role to play in what comes next and how we much improve the wellness of Yukoners, but before we head too far down the path about what we need to do, we need to acknowledge that we are already doing a lot to support the wellness and health of our residents. We are doing some fine work. Some of the work is seldom, if ever, recognized and may not be seen as part of our wellness framework, but it contributes to wellness of our citizens just the same.

Mr. Speaker, I will give some examples. In Faro, a group has come together for its second year to run the local *Biggest Losers* contest. One elementary school has, for several years, undertaken a bison hunt with students. Carmacks ran a community greenhouse. These are all activities that contribute to wellness. They are all about Yukoners mobilizing to support fellow Yukoners. The Faro group — healthy eating, exercise, social interaction, positive reinforcement — all about wellness. It's not about the final goal of how many pounds are lost; it's about the journey, and that creates wellness.

Mr. Speaker, a bison hunt — it's cultural exposure and awareness, it contributes to wellness as does the healthy food naturally grown. Mr. Speaker, think back. Nothing tastes better than a carrot pulled from a garden that you have grown yourself — the taste, the satisfaction of knowing that you were responsible.

Mr. Speaker, wellness is about so much more than health. It's about making things easy for people to do; it's about giving people options and the knowledge to make the right choices; it's about community.

When I say it's about community, it's about trails in communities. As an example, this government invests, through the

community development fund, in creating trails in my community of Dawson City. It provides a place for people to get out and exercise and enjoy nature. We are planning to build a hospital in Dawson — it's about wellness in the community.

We support recreation facilities in communities — once again, exercise, community involvement. There are ski hills in some of our rural Yukon communities and in Whitehorse. It's all to do with wellness. We invest in ballparks. I know the community development fund has invested a fair bit in the ball fields in Whitehorse. Physical activity and sports — that's all about wellness.

In Dawson City, Robert Service School partnered with Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nation on four projects: healthy drinking plus recipes for all students, a hot lunch of chili and whole wheat buns for all, made by the seniors cooking class, the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in representatives and served by the high school students in Dawson City. Drop the Pop ran for three weeks and winning classes got fruit kabobs, and a Robert Service school cookbook.

In Takhini Elementary, classes developed health menus that included a recess snack and lunch for the school. Each class developed a poster, and a dietician selected the most nutrition poster. The most nutritious lunch was made for the whole school. Recipes were collected for a cookbook. Classes also participated in brain gym activities during the morning recess to promote healthy living. Takhini Elementary School also partnered with the Kwanlin Dun First Nation for a First Nation perspective on healthy living and a traditional diet.

Mr. Speaker, the school in Faro prepared high fibre muffins for the whole school twice a week for a month. Nutritious cookies and hot chocolate were made to toast afternoon sledding and skating outings. Singer songwriter Steve Slade helped classes write and perform songs on healthy eating and physical activities and the making of traditional Kaska drums and the making of bannock served with moose stew was done by grade 4s through to 8. The home economics class made fruit smoothies for all students and teachers. A recipe book was made; fresh fruit was distributed and home economic class prepared lessons for students on nutritional and healthy eating. These are just some of the actions that flowed from the project.

Late last month, the Department of Health and Social Services also sponsored a public presentation on how to talk to kids about sex. A sexual health education specialist was here from Vancouver to meet with parents of both elementary and high school students, with the older students themselves, and with front-line workers from the department and non-governmental organizations who work with kids.

Dr. Julia Saunders was here to share her knowledge and help parents and youth answer questions and gain the knowledge they need to make the right decisions. Is it time to tell my children about sex? How much do I tell him or her? As a worker, what do I do when someone asks me a question or asks for advice? As a youth, how do I keep myself safe? What are my options for safe sex?

Wellness is not simply about safe sex or eating healthily. It's about so much more than lifestyle changes. Wellness is a state of physical, psychological, social and spiritual well-being

that enables individuals to live life to the fullest, achieve their fullest potential and be active, contributing members of the community in which they live.

Run for Mom is an annual walk/run to raise money for breast health programs in the Yukon. In the past 11 years, the community has raised more than \$750,000 to purchase a new mammography machine, and now a new ultrasound machine also used in breast-cancer detection.

This is about wellness, Mr. Speaker, not just the fact that we can detect this cancer earlier, but the wellness of the community who participates in fundraising.

This endeavour is led largely by volunteers, with significant input from businesses and government in a lesser, supporting role. It clearly demonstrates that no one sector can do it all and bring together such a broad group of supporters. It also brings together the different perspectives that are needed. Together we are strong and healthier.

Yukon has a strong volunteer history. Volunteerism supports people to be more active, contributing to the community by fundraising and building personal and community wellness at the same time. There are a variety of ways that people can contribute. We only have to cast our minds back to two months ago to recall all the efforts to fundraise for the Haiti relief. There were many events organized in different areas of our community, such as offices and community fundraising breakfasts, lunches and suppers. Perhaps one of the lesser-known events was a dinner prepared and served by a group of clients from Teegatha'Oh Zheh and Mental Health Services through the FAB Foods program.

Everyone has something to contribute to enrich and support our community. I could expound on examples of wellness for the rest of the afternoon, but I won't. I would like to hear what other members have to say about wellness, what their views are what they think efforts should be and where efforts should be made. Wellness is not just about health and health is not just about the absence of disease or infirmity.

Wellness is about practising healthy ways of living and making healthy choices. Wellness is about making sure that the places that define our lives — our work, our home, our community — are supportive of good decisions. Yukoners should be proud of their health care system, as indeed Canadians should be proud of their system also. Much of what causes Yukoners to use the system is largely preventable.

We believe that a wellness framework will help us place more emphasis on things that will support and help Yukon residents be healthier and happier. We believe we can make significant changes in preventing disease, disabilities and injuries.

This will improve wellness and quality of life and reduce the burden on Yukoners, their families, their communities and the health care system. We can help those who face challenges of chronic disease, heart disease, lung disease, cancer, arthritis, and mental illness.

Threats from infectious diseases are also a challenge. Only yesterday the Yukon chief medical officer of health identified a case of meningococcal meningitis, which can be life threatening and can be prevented by immunization. We need to remain

vigilant to protect Yukoners against existing and emerging infections that are potentially lethal, such as H1N1. Making sure that one is well means taking care of yourself in many different ways. Your health is greater than what the health care system alone can accomplish. We know prevention is a large key in meeting the health care challenges individuals face. We know that preventing disease or delaying the onset, along with reducing their severity, can improve the quality of life and reduce impacts on ourselves, our families and our communities, the health care system and our society. However, we also recognize that the prevention is not always possible and it is important to help Yukoners living with diseases to manage other symptoms and maintain a healthy lifestyle as much as possible.

Mr. Speaker, health is determined by many factors: heredity, age, sex and gender, a mother's health during pregnancy and early childhood development. It can be impacted by where we live, how much money we have and the quality of health, social services and educational services available in our community. Most of these factors lie beyond the reach of the health care system. Actions to influence them will require a broad governmental effort and a community effort as well. This government's effort will see results in the wellness framework.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, we are developing a wellness approach that supports this government's platform commitment to help Yukoners achieve a better quality of life. It will build on the good work the Department of Health and Social Services is already doing and planning to do. We will work with other departments to build those wellness supports that are needed outside of what health can control — education, housing, safe water.

Undoubtedly, as a wellness approach develops — for this will be an evolving process — all of us will have a better understanding of not only the idea of wellness, but how in the end this notion will contribute to a sustainability of wellness in the community and a sustainability of healthy living in the communities.

Mr. Speaker, we need to do anything and everything possible to help Yukoners with healthy living.

Mr. Mitchell: In the spirit of collegiality, let me thank the Member for Klondike for his motion — Motion No. 1008, that this House urges the Government of Yukon to develop a wellness strategy to promote healthy living habits for all Yukoners.

First of all, let's just get the suspense out of the way right away; the Official Opposition Liberal caucus will of course be supporting this motion. How could we not support it? We've tabled many notices of motion ourselves addressing similar areas. As has been pointed out, I am a member of the health oversight committee, along with the Member for Whitehorse Centre and, of course, the Health and Social Services minister. We did meet on February 17. Obviously this is a positive direction that we all can endorse.

In the budget speech, the Premier said and I quote: "On February 17, 2010, the health care review oversight committee met to discuss launching of a new initiative we call a wellness strategy for Yukon. The wellness strategy will be a broad,

overarching framework within which there will be specific areas of focus; namely children and youth, healthy aging and social inclusion. It will include actions that support such things as physical activity, healthy eating, healthy body weights, and other action areas yet to be identified.”

Mr. Speaker, in doing this in Yukon, we’re following the lead of other jurisdictions, such as New Brunswick, Newfoundland and, I believe, Ontario, who have had these types of initiatives in place for a number of years. I’ll come back to that in a few moments.

I submitted some recommendations to the minister, which he requested of me and of the Member for Mount Lorne — who was acting in that capacity at the time. I’m just going to go through them now and get them into the record, because over the past few months, I’ve met with many health care providers and people who belong to organizations that address not only health but social inclusion, as the Member for Klondike mentioned, including members of the Yukon Anti-Poverty Coalition. The Anti-Poverty Coalition acts as an umbrella organization for a number of NGOs that deal with poverty, wellness, social inclusion and health on behalf of Yukoners, including the Whitehorse Food Bank and many others like the Yukon Status of Women Council, Victoria Faulkner, Kaushee’s and other organizations.

The submission that I made reflects upon input that was received from many people, so areas that we in the Official Opposition — the Liberal caucus — feel that the committee should focus on — and that the government should focus on — a wellness strategy that includes a comprehensive strategy to improve the availability in Yukon of affordable and healthy housing. Now, it may seem that when we’re talking about wellness, people think of it in terms of old fashioned views of health, but, in fact, it has been established by many social agencies and non-governmental organizations — including the members of the Yukon Anti-Poverty Coalition — that affordable and healthy or safe housing is a primary social determinant of health.

While the government has worked to address this issue through a number of new initiatives in Whitehorse and some rural communities — and I’m sure that the Yukon Housing minister will refer to a number of those when he addresses this motion — there is a demonstrated need for additional, affordable housing units. We’re not just talking about social housing, Mr. Speaker, but affordable housing.

Now, last year the Anti-Poverty Coalition conducted a survey of their clientele or the clientele of many of the member organizations. What they found regarding the currently available housing for lower-income people in Whitehorse is that it’s very inadequate. Their survey, among other things, found that half the people surveyed did not have a place to call their own and half the people surveyed said that their housing situation was unstable. Four out of 10 people surveyed said that they could not afford their current accommodation, so I know that the Anti-Poverty Coalition and the affordable housing coalition hope that that data will be used to develop a more comprehensive housing strategy rather than just addressing some one-off projects.

Again, we’re talking about lower income people, but in point of fact, Mr. Speaker, I think the average house in the City of Whitehorse is now somewhere around \$350,000. That’s not affordable for very many people, not just lower income people. It’s difficult to maintain one’s wellness if you don’t start out with a safe, comfortable, stable home in which to raise your family.

Mr. Speaker, diet and exercise can contribute to a better standard of health for Yukoners. Several diseases such as type 2 diabetes are largely a function of poor dietary choices and lack of exercise, leading to moderate or severe obesity in many people. First Nation individuals are statistically at greater risk of developing type 2 diabetes during their lifetime than the general population. The rapid increase in diabetes in our population over the past 25 years can largely be attributed to poor diet and lack of exercise. We move more and more to pre-packaged food, to food that is not based on whole grains and other whole cereals and on vegetables and their best method of preparation, but to processed foods where much of the nutrient value has been removed for the convenience of long storage life and shipping over great distances, and we’re paying a price for that.

There is also evidence that some children do not arrive at school prepared to learn, because they haven’t had a nutritious breakfast or, in some cases, a nutritious dinner the evening before. I know that many teachers bring extra food with them every day to augment the diet of some of the children who arrive at school not prepared to learn.

Improved funding to programs such as the local Food for Learning organization, which provides an in-school breakfast program at several Yukon schools, would help to address this issue. I believe they are not associated with the national organization any more, so there may be a change of name, but I think we know that the breakfast program is what we’re talking about. I think the Clerk could probably send me a note and give me the appropriate name, because he, along with his spouse, has some experience volunteering for that organization,

This is something that is important. Children can’t learn properly if they can’t focus on learning because they’re hungry. Their brains don’t function properly if they don’t have the proper nutrition.

Funding to allow Whitehorse residents and indeed all Yukoners who are economically challenged to access the Canada Games Centre, which could either be provided by the territory directly to the City of Whitehorse and provided to non-governmental organizations through the Yukon Anti-Poverty Coalition or some other organization, would lead to improved wellness for many of the economically challenged people across Yukon. It’s a much better use of government funds to create wellness rather than treat disease.

Increased options for home care visits and visits by other health professionals for seniors — Yukon’s population has an increasingly older demographic. In 2002, there were 1,616 residents who were 65 and older, according to the Bureau of Statistics. In 2009, there were 2,600 residents who were 65 and older. That’s an increase of some 60 percent in this demographic in just seven years. By 2030, it is projected that this

demographic will double from today's numbers to 5,200 residents and the vast majority of those of us who are in this Assembly today will be included in that demographic by then, if not long before then.

Even with better health care and lifestyle choices, seniors make greater use of the health care system so it will save money and improve the lives of seniors if we assist them in living in their own homes longer instead of moving them into extended care facilities.

Increased efforts in implementing the alcohol, drug and tobacco reduction strategy — this is something where this government has had some success in moving forward but we need to do more. Alcohol and substance abuse, illegal and prescription drugs both, and use of tobacco products put increased pressure on our health care system by leading to disease and deteriorating health in Yukoners. The effect of alcohol- and substance-abuse reduction programs, including education, improved residential treatment options and harm-reduction strategies can reduce the financial and human costs of these activities and reduce dollars spent on treating negative health outcomes that result from substance abuse.

Similarly, tobacco use leads to increased rates of pulmonary and heart disease and cancer. It leads to emphysema and other preventable diseases. Money spent educating and assisting Yukoners to quit smoking will save many dollars downstream in our health care system.

Mr. Speaker, there are those diseases that are communicable. We talked yesterday in here about the \$1.8 million that the Department of Health and Social Services spent on the immunization program to combat the H1N1 pandemic, but there are many, many other diseases that are more environmentally caused or instigated, and those we can address. Most of us here in this Assembly today are wearing the symbol of having made a donation to the Canadian Cancer Society. Cancer is not a communicable disease, Mr. Speaker. There are certainly genetic or hereditary reasons why some people may be more prone to getting cancer than others, but there are many, many environmental reasons — things in our workplace and absence of certain nutrients in our daily diets, lack of healthy lifestyle and exercise — that could have an impact on this.

Mr. Speaker, some time ago, the Yukon published an active living strategy in 2000. So we don't need to reinvent the wheel; we have some of the tools in place. We've had active-living promotion pieces. There are some interesting statistics in some of those, and we looked at them in preparing for today's debate.

Fifty-eight percent of Yukoners reported being active to moderately active. That's according to the Canadian community health survey in 2003. That means that 42 percent of Yukoners don't even report or self-report being moderately active or active at all.

Currently, over half of the Yukon population faces unnecessary health risks due to inactive lifestyles. This means the children and youth are not getting enough activity for optimal growth and development, and adults face unnecessary risks of premature death and chronic disease. High numbers of inactive people pose a considerable public health burden, both in terms

of increased individual suffering and stress on the health care system.

Active living is an inclusive way of looking at physical activity that allows all people to work toward improving their health at their own pace. Active living is a way of life in which physical activity is valued and integrated into one's daily life. The benefits of being active every day are endless, and they include: better overall health; reduced risk, as I've said previously, of type 2 diabetes, heart disease and stroke; healthy weight management; increased relaxation and positive moods; stronger muscles and bones; better posture and balance; increased energy levels; and decreased stress.

Canada's physical activity guide to healthy active living recommends a minimum of 30 to 60 minutes of moderate physical activity every day to maintain or improve health. There's a lot we can do if we make a change in our lifestyle that can start with simply moderate activity like brisk walking or doing some household chores, gardening, recreational sports. There's lots of other information that was in that piece. I'm not going to read it all, but I encourage the government to review the work that has been done by past governments and incorporate it.

Mr. Speaker, I did say that I would return to a summary of New Brunswick's wellness strategy action plan from 2009-10, entitled *Live well, be well*, from the Department of Wellness, Culture and Sport. In this strategy, the Province of New Brunswick focused on three settings: schools, communities and homes. They had a number of recommendations in each setting.

In schools, which they said includes educators, support staff, students, district education councils, parents and parent organizations — we have parent advisory councils, one school board and community partners — they talked about partnerships and collaboration, engaging in new partnerships that help to promote wellness in school settings, supporting wellness with the implementation of their Department of Education strategy and education plan, entitled *When kids come first* and participating in a joint consortium of school health with a focus on the renewal process.

They talk about building for community development, providing school wellness grants, and a comprehensive school health framework to help schools develop and implement their own wellness action plans, including vegetable and fruit grants and tobacco-free school grants. They talk about a number of other things that can be done in the schools. Again, in terms of developing and supporting healthy policies, they recommend enhancing the capacity of stakeholders to support their Department of Education's policy that is entitled *Healthier Foods and Nutrition in Public Schools*.

So, there are a number of recommendations there. In communities, again, they focus on partnerships and collaboration. They talk about some non-governmental agencies that they can partner with, including the Healthy Eating Physical Activity Coalition of New Brunswick, Mouvement acadien des communautés en santé du Nouveau-Brunswick and the New Brunswick Anti-Tobacco Coalition, and they identify engaging First Nation communities in dialogue around improving the

state of wellness in First Nation communities throughout the province. Again, approximately 25 percent of Yukoners are First Nation, and we know there are serious issues of diabetes in First Nation communities on a percentage basis.

In home setting, again they talk about establishing a premiers committee on healthy families, supporting the implementation of their Department of Social Development strategy *Be Ready for Success: A 10 year Early Childhood Strategy for New Brunswick*, support wellness with the implementation of the senior and healthy aging strategy, long-term care strategy, *Be Independent. Longer*. There's lots of detail here and there's also a workplace section.

I'm not going to read them all, but I encourage the minister to make use of the good work that's being done by other jurisdictions. I'm confident the department will do that.

In the final report from September 2008 on the *Yukon Health Care Review* and in the summaries document that was sent to members of the oversight committee, some things were identified that would certainly be part of wellness. For example, some of the improvements that could be made that Yukoners suggested — many suggestions for improving our health care system — and I'll just read out a few that focus on wellness. Focus more on prevention, education, wellness, expand home care services — especially in the communities — partnerships with First Nations to deliver home care and palliative care services, more collaborative and alternative health care options.

There is certainly a lot more in that report and in the recommendations that we could look at. Recommendations were made by the different groups — and I'm not sure if I'm going to find those handy; I've got so many tabs and reports in front of me that it's hard to find them all — but again, I think it was RPAY who made a submission or perhaps it was the Yukon's department. I will just take a moment to find it, Mr. Speaker.

Well, suffice it to say, Mr. Speaker, that there are recommendations to focus more on activity. Here it is, the YTG Sport and Recreation branch, suggested to develop a strategy that parallels the pan-Canadian healthy living strategy and incorporates existing Yukon strategies and initiatives in a coordinated resource-sharing way. The pan-Canadian healthy living strategy is a framework for sustained action based on health living. It envisions a healthy nation in which all Canadians experience the conditions that support the attainment of good health. The goals of the strategy are to improve overall health outcomes and to reduce health disparities. There is a “create an accessible Yukon healthy living centre”. This centre could potentially house various non-profit groups that deliver programs— often funded by YTG — related to healthy living in terms of prevention and management. Examples include the Elder Active Recreation Association, which promotes healthy living for Yukon seniors; Recreation and Parks Association of Yukon, which delivers many healthy living programs throughout Yukon; diabetes prevention and management; cancer society of B.C. Yukon, Yukon Red Cross; Holistic Health Network, to name a few. The one stop shop facility has a proven track record in the sport and recreation environment, and that is referring to Sport Yukon.

This is a submission from YTG Sport and Recreation branch dated April 23, 2009, so certainly the departments are doing work toward this. One of the things that we also saw cited in the report was that there has been a bit of a silo mentality between departments, and so there needs to be better coordination between all departments to effect this.

I just want to touch briefly on some comments that have been made about providing community health by the Premier, the Member for Klondike and others in Watson Lake and Dawson. I want to make it clear that, despite the allegations or the claims of the Premier on numerous occasions, we have never said that there should not be improved health care facilities in Watson Lake and Dawson. In fact, on numerous occasions in response to the Premier's statements I've reiterated that we support improved health care in Watson Lake and Dawson. What we have said is that we would like to see the studies that were done and the reasons behind the decision to build the type of health care facilities that the government has now announced — the \$25-million hospitals. The Premier has repeatedly said that there has been a cottage hospital, called the “Watson Lake Hospital”, for some 30 years in Watson Lake. Yes, there has been. Yes, it is outdated and becoming decrepit to the point where it can't provide a healthy setting for providing health care, and we agree that it should be replaced.

The question was, what should it be replaced with? Where is the evidence of the consultation with the Yukon Medical Association or the Yukon Registered Nurses Association on what type of health care facility should be built? The Premier has often cited the cost of medical travel, including the travel Outside. Surely he's not intending that there is going to be health care provided in either Watson Lake or Dawson, such as MRIs or other advanced technologies that won't exist in Whitehorse, and so rural communities will replace the need to medevac people Outside for some of the more expensive treatment. It has always been the principle that we do what we can in Yukon based on there being one major hospital in Yukon. That's where we have the most extensive and complex equipment; that's where we have the most trained specialists and personnel and that, when you live in smaller communities, sometimes you have to go to the Whitehorse community for that treatment, just as people living in Whitehorse have to travel Outside.

So let's be clear: what we were asking for was how a decision was made originally to build a multi-level health care facility in these two communities and then that morphed into a replacement of the aging hospital. Then that somehow has now become two, \$25-million hospitals, whose goals and objectives have never been clearly defined in this Assembly.

I'm hoping that when the Premier is next on his feet, or the Health minister, they will acknowledge that we do not oppose there not being better health care facilities in the communities of Dawson and Watson Lake, because that simply wouldn't be factual.

I hear the Premier excited off-mic about that clarification and clearing up some of his confusion, so I'm glad that we've at least accomplished that today, Mr. Speaker.

In any case, there are others who want to speak, and I'm not going to speak much longer on this, other than to say that there is much that has already been done. There are other reports such as *Working Well: A Global Survey of Health Promotion and Workplace Wellness Strategies*, which is also one that talks about the priorities across the world, including Canada.

Building on the foundation of the work that has been done, I'm hopeful we can move forward to put a comprehensive wellness strategy in place in Yukon. This government has been in office for over seven years and is now just addressing this issue, so better late than never. They have some time left in their mandate and I look forward to seeing a productive result of the work that is being done in the departments, the work that is being organized by the Department of Health and Social Services, as well as the social inclusion strategy, beginning with the conference later this week on Thursday and Friday.

Let's not have any of this create another study that some other member of this Assembly refers to five or eight years from now, but rather a change in how we address health care, because the way we're doing it now is becoming ever more expensive and ever less productive, trying to treat the diseases that are preventable. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Mr. Hart: It gives me great pleasure to stand up today and speak to this motion. I'd like to thank the member opposite for some of his comments. At this time, Mr. Speaker, I'd also like to thank the member from the Third Party and the Leader of the Official Opposition for the comments they sent to me from our meeting on February 17, with regard to my request for wellness issues that they could bring up in there. I'd like to thank them here on the floor of the House for sending that information to me.

With regard to the member opposite talking about cancer, I think I will talk just quickly on this one and get into my speech. With regard to cancer issues, this being cancer month, I think the member opposite talked about healthy lifestyles, healthy eating. It doesn't always mean in many cases that individuals have to be involved in a sport. In many cases, a healthy lifestyle really means a brisk walk, a steady walk or a consistent walk during the week for all individuals to get in their exercise for that week and ensure that process.

There is a requirement for individuals to ensure that they do have a good diet, and I will get into that later on in my address. The member opposite talked about other issues, health issues that can assist with those who have been afflicted with cancer. I'd like to also state that I know several individuals who have been diagnosed with cancer who have changed their lifestyle, their eating habits and the way they just go about everyday life, substantially, and it has made a massive improvement in their lifestyle. That has gone from organic foods to a total change in what they eat, a total change in how they exercise, a total change of their whole lifestyle, and it has provided an excellent reprieve from the cancer in many cases and has also enabled them to carry on with a very enjoyable lifestyle.

I guess what I would like to say is, if it works for you, then do it. I think that's a very important element: if it works for

you, carry on and do it and let's hope you can continue on with that process.

I'll speak this afternoon about this government's support and intention to develop a wellness approach for the Yukon. This approach again reaffirms our commitment to the health and wellness of Yukoners and to the sustainability of our health care system.

Now I'll just provide a small bit of French here. C'est après-midi, je veux vous dire que le gouvernement a l'intention de favoriser le mieux-être au Yukon. Ainsi, nous réaffirmons notre engagement de veiller à la santé et au mieux-être des Yukonnais, et d'assurer la viabilité de notre système de santé.

In 2005, Canada's Conference of Federal/Provincial and Territorial Ministers of Health agreed on a set of goals to improve the health of Canadians. That goal reads as follows: "As a nation, we aspire to a Canada in which every person is as healthy as they can be — physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually."

What the ministers of health wanted in 2005 is the same thing that we are looking for here today: a healthy nation where all Canadians experience the conditions that support the attainment of good health. They, as we do, want to see improved overall health outcomes and reduce health disparities.

In September 2008, the report in the *Yukon Health Care Review* on the sustainability of the health care system in Yukon was released. This report recommended that the government, in conjunction with individuals and communities, work to promote and support healthy lifestyle choices. Yukoners who had input into the review talked about personal responsibilities for health, long-term care and community-based options addressing mental health, addictions, and drug and alcohol abuse.

I'd like to express my thanks to the members of the Health Care Review Oversight Committee. Last month we met and I've since received written submissions from both parties about what they think are important in the components of that wellness strategy, as I indicated earlier.

Before I go too much further, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to re-paint the wellness strategy as a wellness framework under which would flow as many different strategies as we can create or as many as we need here in the Yukon. A framework is much broader and gives us much more flexibility to respond to the ever-changing needs of our constituents.

Already this government is at work developing a social inclusion strategy and a healthy aging strategy, both of which will flow nicely from a wellness framework.

As my colleague mentioned earlier, the NDP proposal speaks of the work that has already taken place on the healthy aging strategy that ties back to the NDP motion from a couple of years ago, in which they stated their wellness concerns for seniors, including addressing preventive health care education programs, assuring adequate pensions to support healthy lifestyles, additional home care workers, respite care, and improved senior housing, among other things.

The proposal I received from the Liberals also mentioned increased options for in-home care and visits by health professionals for seniors, as the member opposite had also indicated in his speech here to the House.

We have taken action in some of these areas. Already, my department has increased the Yukon's seniors' income supplement, which is available to all Yukoners over the age of 65, and we have added to our home care services, both in Whitehorse and in rural Yukon.

We are already taking some of the actions necessary to address some of the concerns raised by my colleagues in the other two parties.

I think we can all say that all three parties, despite our differences, recognize the value of our seniors who contributed to this territory over the years and decades. We want to ensure that they have adequate supports in place as they age and assist them where they need.

It is rare, indeed, that three parties can agree, but we do appear to all be in support of the development of a wellness framework, as the member opposite indicated in his initial address that he would be supporting this issue.

We recognize that, by working together instead of in opposition to each other, we can change attitudes and behaviours. Also, I think we can address one of the major issues brought forth by Yukoners in the health care review. One of the major issues that was consistent through all the comments that were obtained by Dr. Reddoch and his company going around to communities was to ensure — one of the big issues was that people felt it was important for individuals to ensure that they look after themselves. In other words, get themselves educated on what's required to keep themselves healthy and keep themselves in their homes longer and in their communities longer in a healthier situation.

I think we can agree that whatever approach we must take, we must recognize some key principles, including responsibility, adequate investment, comprehensive research-driven and measurable strategy, action to address the factors that impact on wellness, and a continued focus on the critical issues that face us.

Before we head too far down the path of what we need to do, I would say here that there is a need to acknowledge that we are already doing many things to support the wellness and health of our residents. Some of the work that is already being done is seldom ever recognized and may not be seen as part of the wellness framework in a formal sense, but they contribute to wellness of our citizens just the same.

Recreation and Parks Association Yukon has an initiative that reaches across the span of wellness. The RHEAL program — it stands for Rural Healthy and Active Living — is all about increasing opportunities for active and healthy living in rural Yukon. This pilot project created team leaders who provided a variety of programming that engaged more than 453 Yukoners in Dawson, Carcross, Carmacks, Faro, Haines Junction, Tagish, Teslin and Watson Lake.

Activities included a running program and a play program in Faro. Pilates and yoga occur in several communities, including Beaver Creek, where a travelling instructor shared her knowledge. An aikido program was offered in Haines Junction for both adults and children. In Faro and in Tagish, carpet bowling was a hit. In Carcross the cross-country ski program introduced students from grade 1 through grade 4 to cross-

country skiing and reinforced the existing skills in grade 5 to 9 students. Active participating individuals report higher satisfaction with their wellness level. RPAY also has a healthy living menu — a series of free workshops designed to improve health and wellness. The soup and salad section offers a workshop on growing herbs, vegetables, berries, while the main entrees include a session on community kitchen label reading, grocery store tour, physical activity, motivation and strength training. Desserts include a workshop and wellness for stressful times, and the balancing act of juggling work, family and healthy goal setting. Not to ignore the younger ones, the children menu offers several options for youngsters from zero to young teens.

These are all activities that contribute to wellness. They are all about Yukoners mobilizing to support fellow Yukoners. Wellness is so much more than health. It is about making healthy things easy for people to do. It is about giving people healthy lifestyle choices and the knowledge to make the right choices. It is about the community.

Mr. Speaker, wellness activities include many items in one's own personal use of the day. Issues, for example, in the summer cover such things as gardening, boating and just general housework around the house — all those activities require individuals to move about, be active and put some exercise into the process. I think every one of us is starting to get the itch here with the warming weather. We're looking at our yards, starting to see the grass come up and we're all looking — maybe some of us are not looking forward to raking of the lawn and trying to get it all cleaned up and making it look better, and also getting us prepared for the summer. I am one who is looking forward to that process. I'm already in the repair mode of my shed in the back, and I am working on the roof there. I can see that the grass is going to come through in the next week or so, and we'll have to do remediation work on that from the amount of snow we got this year, and we hope to bring that through.

This year, the Department of Health and Social Services' health promotion unit changed the way it delivered the Drop the Pop program. Now, for the past several years — I think six — the Yukon elementary school teachers were asked to work with students and encourage them not to drink pop for a week. Small contests saw successful classrooms awarded healthy drinks for a month or the makings for smoothies for the entire class. Students didn't drink pop at school or at home for one week a year.

This year, however, organizers changed things up. For one, Drop the Pop was opened to all Yukon schools — elementary and secondary. They were encouraged to come up with their own healthy drinking/healthy eating projects.

Schools received funding to support their projects, and I am happy to tell you that 26 of the 28 Yukon schools participated in Drop the Pop. These young boys and girls, men and women, had the opportunity to think about their eating and drinking habits. They were given the information they needed to make the choices that will lead to a bright and healthy future.

We provided seed money and then let the creativity of the schools and communities run with it. Government, in this case, only served as a stimulus. We provided them with the action,

and we allowed them to come up with the project for them to move forward.

As my colleague mentioned earlier, there are activities happening in the communities, such as Robert Service School in Dawson City, partnering with Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nation on four projects — healthy drinking plus recipes for all students, a hot lunch of chili and whole wheat buns for all made by the senior cooking class, Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in representatives and served by the high school students. In Dawson, Drop the Pop ran for three weeks and winning classes got fruit kebabs and a Robert Service School cookbook— very healthy activities indeed, Mr. Speaker.

At this point, I would like to take the opportunity to discuss the *Yukon Nutrition Framework*. This, too, is all about wellness. I would just like to provide a couple of excerpts from this publication. It basically provides why we need to review the nutrition for our children and for ourselves, how we promote healthy eating, how we improve food security, support for special populations and address nutrition and health issues.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to just briefly provide a couple of points on each one of those categories. Under the promotion of healthy eating practices, the objectives are to “Develop policies and guidelines that support healthy eating. Create, expand and maintain educational programs, resources or services that provide nutrition expertise and information on healthy eating.”

Again, this is to take place in our schools, workplaces and communities and is being provided by health care professionals.

Mr. Speaker, we're also looking at improving food security. The objective here: “Create, maintain and sustain initiatives to improve access to adequate, safe, affordable and appropriate food for all Yukoners.” Again, I think it sort of speaks for itself on dealing with food in the process.

Mr. Speaker, support for special populations and individuals and their nutritional needs: “Create or enhance maintain initiatives to support optimal nutrition for special populations and their nutritional needs.” Again, we're dealing with First Nation people, pregnancies and infants, elderly who are homebound, persons living with mental illness or cognitive disabilities. These are all individuals who require special attention and special diets. Also, we're looking at addressing nutrition related health issues facing Yukoners. Objectives under that are to create or support group programs, resources, services that promote awareness and prevention of nutrition-related chronic disease; create and enhance and maintain initiatives to support optimal clinical, nutritional services for all Yukoners.

Again, these are all things that face all Yukoners. This booklet provides a good cross-section of services related to all Yukoners, covering diabetes, it provides education on items that are needed and provides references on where to find the additional information and also background on all issues with regard to wellness, a healthy and nutritional lifestyle for all Yukoners. It's something I highly recommend and I table it here for the Legislative Assembly and offer it for individuals here to review.

This newly published framework aims at building and expanding nutritional services, with a focus on healthy eating,

food security, chronic health conditions and special populations. This project has been a collaborative effort and speaks to the fact that good nutrition is an important part of individual community health and well-being. It is but one aspect of wellness.

Wellness is not simply about safe sex or eating healthy; it's about so much more than lifestyle changes. Wellness is a state of physical, psychological, social and spiritual well-being that enables individuals to live life to the fullest, achieve their fullest potential and to be active, contributing members of the community in which they live. We have heard this message before and we will hear it again and again as we develop a wellness framework and discuss the matter over the coming months and years.

Wellness is not just health, and health is not just about the absence of disease or infirmity. Again, this is one of the pervasive messages that we have heard. We will hear it again as we continue the wellness conversation over the coming months and years. Wellness is about practising healthy ways of living and making healthy choices.

Wellness is about making sure that the places that define our lives — our place of work, our home, our community — are supportive of good decisions. Yukoners can and are proud of their health care system; however, we should note that much of what causes Yukoners to use the system is largely preventive. A wellness framework will help us place more emphasis on things that will support and help Yukon residents lead healthier and happier lives.

Mr. Speaker, that just corroborates the statement that was made by many Yukoners in the health care review, stating that it was important for Yukoners to look after their own health to ensure that they can keep up and reduce the burden on the system. Ensuring that one is well means taking care of yourself in many different ways. I am speaking about individual health yet, at the same time, taking care of our own health is greater than what the health care system can accomplish alone. We need to play an active, ongoing role in our lives to ensure our own health and wellness.

We also know the role that prevention has in meeting health challenges that we may face. We know that if we can target diseases by preventing them or delaying their onset, and if we can reduce their severity, we can improve the quality of life and reduce the negative effects of the disease on ourselves, our families, our communities, the health care system and of course our society.

We must also recognize that prevention is not always possible. For those who are prone to disease or are suffering from some ailment, it is important to assist them as they live with the disease and to manage their system and maintain a healthy lifestyle for as much as possible for that individual.

We know that health is determined by many factors, including heredity, age, sex, gender, a mother's health during pregnancy and early childhood development.

Speaker: I'm sorry. Honourable member, your time has expired. I was so enthralled by the speech, I ignored the

time. My apologies. I'll try not to do the same with the next speaker.

You have the floor, Member for Mount Lorne.

Mr. Cardiff: I'll try to be as exciting or more exciting. I'm glad to be here today to speak to this motion, urging the government to develop a wellness strategy to promote healthy living habits for all Yukoners. And like the Leader of the Official Opposition, I was given an opportunity to provide some comments to the Minister of Health and Social Services about our thoughts on a wellness strategy.

I think the focus of a wellness strategy should be to improve the health of Yukon citizens. It shouldn't necessarily be to look at the cost savings to the health care system; however, that might be one of the outcomes if Yukoners are healthier — it could provide cost savings to our health care system — but I think it is important to note that the concept of a wellness strategy should focus on improving the health of Yukoners.

If you'll excuse my coughing, I had a chest cold on the weekend that I caught from one of my seatmates last week; however, I'm feeling much healthier today.

I would like to also reference the wellness strategy that was done in New Brunswick, as my other colleague did earlier. There is lots of information in other jurisdictions about wellness strategies. There has been a lot of work done on studies, and I, too, don't want to see a study that sits on a shelf and doesn't result in improvements to Yukoners' health.

I want to speak about shared responsibility; it talks about the shared responsibility in a wellness strategy — this is a quote — “A wellness strategy should be framed around shared responsibilities between individuals, communities, families and government.” It also goes on to say, “No one government, no one agency, no one group can make this change alone. We all have to do it together. It is only through the development of partnerships with government agencies, community organizations and the willingness of people that we can make a difference to our present state of wellness.”

The last thing I'd like to quote from this is: “Shared responsibility does not mean that we can shirk responsibility off on someone else, but that we are each individually and collectively responsible for our own health and for the health of others.” We have to remember that, that we bear individual responsibility but that we have a collective responsibility to our neighbours, to our children, to all the citizens of the Yukon.

Individual people exist in a community and we believe that any wellness strategy must be part of a broader health promotion strategy that deals with root causes and empowers communities to create healthy environments. Wellness programming that only targets individual behaviours is going to be less effective in populations that experience poverty and inadequate housing. We believe that you cannot separate the ideas for wellness from the social determinants of health, which include, according to the Public Health Agency of Canada, income equality — which is why we asked questions today about the minimum wage and a guaranteed annual income — social inclusion and exclusion; employment and working conditions; social and physical environments, including environmental

concerns; healthy child development; education and literacy; food security; housing and gender issues.

When the minister asked us to submit some of our comments to him about a wellness strategy, he indicated there was hopefully going to be a focus on seniors and youth. I think that's important, because we need to recognize the contribution that seniors have made to our society and we need to ensure that they live healthy, productive and fulfilling lives once they've retired, and that they're still able to contribute to our society and share their knowledge and experience with us. At the same time, we need to be concerned about our youth, give them an opportunity to be part of society and to grow up healthy and able to participate in our community, in the workforce and to have that self-esteem and sense of well-being.

A lot of that has been touched on here by other speakers. I'm going to go over some of it, but I'll try not to be too repetitive.

First of all, we congratulated the department for the workshop that they held in early March, where seniors were able to come together to discuss wellness and healthy aging. We also pointed out that in the *Yukon Health Care Review* 59 percent of respondents said they wanted to see expanded home care, community support programs and assisted living. We recognize that the government has made some steps in that area, but we believe that more is going to have to be done due to our aging population, some of whom are in this room. I'm getting a look from the Member for Southern Lakes, who is a member of the youth caucus, I remember. It is very true that we do have an aging population; that is what the statistics are telling us. At the same time, as was referenced earlier, a large portion of our population — and there are a lot of health concerns — are in First Nation communities. They're growing — and there's a growing aging population there, but there's also a growing youth population.

With regard to seniors, we felt that implementing preventive health care education programs for seniors, assuring that seniors' pensions provide for a healthy lifestyle so they can get out and be active and not shut in, so to speak, in their residences, supporting seniors community volunteer programs so they can get out and be part of the community and feel active and fulfilled and participate. That lends to their well-being and to their wellness.

I mentioned home care earlier and expanding that program, but it also means training relatives and friends who are caring for some of those senior citizens and their families and providing that assistance so they can live in their homes. I was speaking with my mother earlier this week and found out that her aunt, my great aunt, who just recently turned, I believe, it was 92, is now basically being told that she's going to have to move into a home.

That is, excuse me, a helluva accomplishment, Mr. Speaker, to live in your own home by yourself until you are 92 years of age. I believe that if you're able to. It was with the support of home care and people coming in and engaging her and keeping her mentally active, that led to her being able to live in her own home until she was 92 or 93. I think that is incredible and it is great that she was able to do it. It was family.

It was community people who came in and provided assistance and it was home care. It is training for relatives and friends who were caring for those seniors, expanding respite care for those relatives and friends who were caring for those seniors, providing financial assistance for those relatives and friends who are caring for seniors and expanding programs of financial assistance that support those seniors living at home, and of course, housing.

We need to ensure that housing is adequate and that seniors are benefiting from physical activity. There are a lot of seniors' organizations that encourage them to be physically active — the ElderActive Recreation Association. There are lots of seniors who still participate in many sports and community activities, and we need to encourage that.

I'd like to also speak a little bit about youth. Housing is a concern for them as well. It comes back to that income issue to some extent, and the ability to have a job that provides you with an income to get adequate secure housing and food.

When children grow up in poverty, they have more illnesses, they perform poorly in school and they have more mental health problems. When they grow up, they earn less when they are adults.

Research shows that for every dollar the country invests in giving children a good start in life, it saves seven dollars for health and other problems that arise when children's needs are not met. Helping children out of poverty is morally, socially and economically productive and it is also necessary.

Encouraging our children to live healthy lifestyles, to not smoke and to make the right choices is something that needs to be included in a wellness strategy — encouraging them to work safe and play safe, to be active but to be safe. I've heard lots about physical activity and encouraging people to be active, but at the same time, they need to be safe.

We talked about this a little bit about a year and a half ago, when we were talking about the *Young Worker Protection Act* and how we need to ensure that not only are our children, when they're in the workplace, being paid fairly and adequately, but that they're working in a safe manner, and that the workplaces they work in are safe. There are programs through WCB that are helping to do that, and there are programs that teach children, our young people, not to take risks when they are pursuing recreational activities and when they're out with their friends. I think we need to ensure they're not taking those risks. I believe it's the PARTY program that is part of that.

Involving youth in defining wellness and designing their own programming — that's an important part of it, involving the youth in defining that wellness and designing their own programming, because they'll buy into it. That's what some of that programming is about.

Programs that do not directly deal with healthy eating and active living still contribute to wellness in youth — as an example, arts and cultural programming all contribute to the wellness of young people.

I would like to speak a little bit about inclusion. I know my time is limited and the one thing that I would like to say is that, as I said earlier, wellness programming that targets individual behaviour is going to be less effective in populations that ex-

perience poverty and inadequate housing. We need to be sure that we do not blame those people for the situation that they are in. We need to go back to this shared responsibility and take collective responsibility to ensure that we're looking after those least fortunate. We believe in investment in the people side of health care, and that is why we've been asking about operation and maintenance budgets. That is why we're concerned about a spending imbalance that is biased to the capital side and creating debt instead of investing in the people side of it.

We're asking about front-line workers who are in the most direct contact with some of society's most excluded. Recently we heard a report that front-line social workers may have caseloads that are more than double the best-practice guidelines. Workplace conditions may not allow these front-line workers to facilitate the inclusion and the wellness of their clients.

There's a lot more I could say. The other thing, I guess, that I would like to touch on is, when it comes to wellness and including people in society and inclusion, in some communities we're seeing an absence or a shortage of childcare, and that inhibits opportunities for wellness, because it inhibits people's ability to participate in their communities and in the workforce. It's important to their well-being and self-esteem to be able to participate in that. Childcare is one of the things that would facilitate the wellness of those individuals so that they can get out and be part of their community.

As I said, I know there's much more that I could say on this, but I realize that my time has flown by, so I'll sit down and leave it to other members. Thank you.

Hon. Mr. Kenyon: Mr. Speaker, I agree with the member opposite that people are talking about sort of repetitive things, so I'm going to take a little bit of a different tack and look of the overall picture and then some specific areas that really have been alluded to, but haven't really been gotten into.

Creating safer communities is certainly part of the matrix, and it addresses the importance of creating neighbourhoods that are safe and environments that are safe for our most vulnerable citizens, as well as all of us — children, seniors and persons with disabilities. We need to create environments where all Yukoners can live, work, and play with peace of mind. Expanding housing for seniors and women leaving abusive relationships — and really, anyone leaving an abusive relationship, because, while women constitute a majority there, it's certainly not exclusive. We need to recognize the importance of housing as the cornerstone of individual and family wellness. Giving our children the best start in life by investing in childcare and early learning builds strengths and resiliency for future generations.

Efforts to support and diversify our economy address not only the wealth and prosperity of Yukoners today, but build a future of hope and jobs for those who will be entering the workforce in the years and decades to come. Our *Pathways to Prosperity* document, which is available on-line, is a plan for the next 20 years and recognizes that income is an important determinant of health. It's part of the matrix.

We recognize that not all Yukoners benefit equally from opportunities that are and will be available. It's for this reason that we're developing a social inclusion strategy that addresses the hopes, needs and aspirations of those who have been traditionally left out of the richness that the Yukon really holds.

This strategy, which brings together many government departments in common purpose, will in the long run reduce the disparities that exist within Yukon society. We will know we have succeeded when the gap between the richest and the poorest, the healthiest and the unhealthy, the employed and the unemployed — and the underemployed, too, of course — are all reduced.

There are eight elements of wellness considered in one's life that work together to create fulfillment and satisfaction. This is really what we're talking about here. When each of us takes active steps to foster a higher level of awareness and action in each area, we build a more whole and complete way of living. There are eight aspects of wellness and they are: physical, emotional, social, occupational, intellectual, environmental, financial and spiritual. Each of the eight aspects directly affects the other so the physical wellness, for instance, has an effect on emotional wellness. Occupational wellness can affect the social wellness and inclusion. Without a spiritual wellness plan, many would feel a lack of purpose or meaning in their lives.

Intellectual wellness keeps our minds moving, curious and interested in learning new things. And, of course, environmental wellness, the world around us has an immense impact on all of us, really, whether that is our personal environment or the global environment. Of course, financial security is essential to well-being.

It is important to pay attention to each of these aspects regularly to achieve a more balanced life. In practical terms, the development of a strategy will be an iterative process, potentially identifying four pillars or priorities that we could consider establishing, including work already underway, as identifying work to be done while the strategy is in its early days.

These pillars are expected to include social inclusion, healthy aging — always an interesting way of putting it — children and youth, which should include the important transitions to adulthood, and persons with disabilities. And this pillar would include current important issues, such as transitions between child and adult systems and supported housing.

I enjoyed the comment from the Member for Mount Lorne about aging being important to some of us, and I would remind him that, like others, graying around the muzzle is considered by many to be a good sign — a healthy sign. So, welcome aboard.

In 1986, the Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion recognized shelter as a basic prerequisite for health. It's only recently, however, that the researchers and policy-makers focused on housing as an important determinant of health. Housing insecurity can be determined by a variety of factors, including the number of people who sleep in the streets — difficult for part of the year up here and, of course, homelessness takes on a completely different meaning here than it would down south — use temporary shelters, live in substandard dwellings,

and who spend more than 30 percent of their income on housing. I need to point out on that that our rent-g geared-to-income program is based on 25 percent. It's the lowest in Canada. It's the best in Canada. So we're making some strides on that.

The Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation uses the term “core need” — we hear that all the time in Yukon Housing Corporation — to track the number of households unable to access adequate rental accommodation in their community. The term measures affordability, suitability of accommodation and adequacy. Increasing evidence shows that households with core housing needs face one or more of the following issues: the affordability — again, the national standard or line there is 30 percent; we consider it 25 — suitability, do they live in overcrowded conditions; household size and composition exceeds the actual home space requirements; and adequacy — the homes lack full bathroom facilities or require significant repairs.

These intertwine in so many ways. For instance, some of the disease statistics, particularly in Nunavut and, to a degree, Northwest Territories, look at all sorts of reasons why the rates of certain diseases might be higher in those jurisdictions. It's perhaps more explainable when you look at the overcrowding within the homes — sometimes 12, 14, 16 people in a house. The overcrowding is going to cause disease problems.

Ask any teacher or childcare worker who's exposed to large numbers of children, or anyone in a summer thing who is exposed to large numbers of adults. They tend to have more disease. The housing aspect there has to be part of it.

Now, statistically, about 60 percent of Canadians own their own home. The other 40 percent rent, primarily in the private rental sector. Most rental households are concentrated in urban centres and when we look at the urban centres here, of course, we think of Toronto, Montreal, Vancouver, but there are a number of major cities. We like to think of Whitehorse as a major city and, from our perspective, it is — everything is relative — but really it's not quite the same situation, but it brings up other potential problems at the same time.

In recent years there has been a housing crisis in many different sectors for many different reasons. It has affected the larger urban centres with homelessness problems, drug problems; it has affected all of us here, including Yukon, with a lack of affordable rental accommodations. There are a number of factors on that. In the 1990s, the federal government and many provinces stopped providing social housing. We continue, but we fund it on our own.

When the federal government stopped funding a good chunk of the social housing, the way they did it was they set us on an exponential curve that shows that contribution coming from the feds decreasing each year. So that means, while we think we have a problem now, each year that problem will get worse. The major inclusion of funds into housing that has happened in the last couple of months or the last few months has been a welcome respite, but it delays problems; it doesn't solve them. We have an aging housing stock that continues to, in many respects, be inadequate and we're going to have a hard time keeping up with that.

At the same time, some provinces have reduced social assistance rates; we've increased ours — first time in about 20 years, but we increased them. But many provinces and jurisdictions have actually reduced them.

We have concerns of waiting lists for social housing or rent-geared-to-income housing in Yukon. Yukoners might be interested to know that in Peel Region in Ontario, which is west of Toronto, the waiting period for social housing is 22 years. I will repeat that: 22 years on a waiting list. So that takes on a whole new role. We have problems; we have other problems, but everyone is facing some difficulty at one point or another.

The private sector really hasn't moved to replace the role of government by providing affordable rental housing. In most jurisdictions, the private sector in building housing is going to build what they are going to make a profit on. It is difficult to get them to build something that isn't going to be the most profitable.

Ontario, again, is a place that has been the most heavily hit on that but all of us have had that at one point or another. The Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation in 2000 found that over one million tenant households in Canada who live in core-need situations have an average income down in the range of \$14,600. On average, these households spend 47 percent of their income on rent; that doesn't leave an awful lot at the end of the day, probably in the range of about \$7,700 to cover all other expenses like transportation, education, health products, other living costs, and recreation — it goes on and on and on. I think you can start seeing how housing is really making a huge dent in that.

The document, *Integrated Pan-Canadian Healthy Living Strategy*, provides a conceptual framework for sustained action based on healthy living. It envisions a healthy nation in which all Canadians experience the conditions that would support the attainment of good health. The goals of this study are really to improve overall health outcomes and to reduce the disparities in health and risk.

Grounded in a population-health approach, it emphasizes key modifiable risk factors for chronic disease, physical inactivity, unhealthy eating and the relationship to unhealthy weights. The approach focuses on living and working environments that affect people's health, the conditions that enable and support people in making healthy choices and the services that promote and maintain health.

It also provides a national context and reference point for all sectors, including governments, non-governmental organizations, aboriginal organizations and the private sector. Utilizing these concepts, all stakeholders consider their role and what their actions will be in healthy living. It offers a means to ensure greater alignment, coordination and direction for all partners. It provides a forum for multiple players to align efforts. It's a tool for all to work collaboratively to address common risk factors and a rallying point around which like-minded partners can achieve shared results.

I should mention at this point that one of the leaders at the time in this, a number of years ago, was the Village of Mayo, that sponsored a wellness fair over one weekend and brought a number of speakers in and a number of displays, and sponsored

a very healthy meal. I think it drew more than the population of Mayo. I think people were coming in from a lot of other communities to attend that. It was an incredible weekend for us. I think the Member for Mayo-Tatchun would have enjoyed it, had he been able to attend.

Integration, partnership and shared responsibility are all the best practices and guiding principles — the key guiding principles really — of this whole concept. The entire population has to be targeted on this, Mr. Speaker. There's no one group that we're really looking at — with particular emphasis on children and youth — those in isolated, remote and rural areas, which includes a good chunk of the Yukon, and the aboriginal communities. The settings that we have to focus on include home, family, school, workplace, community and health care settings.

We look at healthy living targets, which really most people agreed would seek to obtain a 20-percent increase by 2015 in the proportion of Canadians who are physically active, eat healthy and are at healthy body weights. Data to measure progress in these three indicators are taken from the Canadian community health survey of 2005. They set a baseline really against which progress will be monitored. Physical activity, for instance, in 2005, it was calculated that 25 percent of Canadians aged 18 or older were active in their leisure time and an additional 25 percent were moderately active. That is 50 percent.

Healthy eating — in 2005, 42 percent of Canadians aged 18 and older reported that they consumed fruit and vegetables five or more times a day. People should sit back and think where they would stand in that and probably reflect on some of the V8 commercials.

Healthy body weights — in 2005, 47.4 percent of Canadians aged 18 and older had a body mass index in the normal range. I think for an awful lot of us, it has been a lot of years since we've seen that normal range. We really have to look at everything, though, and put it into perspective. Going back to my sentence in Ontario — after spending 20 years there and escaping during the Rae regime — I can remember watching a marvelous presentation on one of the news channels.

An incentive that the Ontario Ministry of Health had made was to outfit and fund several vans that were set up to do fitness testing. They hired a number of graduate students — master students in physical education or kinesiology — to go out and do testing. They were interviewing one of these graduate students about how they were doing this, what communities they were in. At one point toward the end, the reporter put the microphone out and asked, "Well, can you tell us what you're finding in all of these surveys of how healthy Ontario residents are?"

With a straight face, she said, "Well, you know, we're finding that some people are pretty good and some people are pretty bad. Unfortunately, we're finding that most people are only average." At that point, the reporter almost dropped the microphone; she got laughing so hard and I think the graduate student realized what she had said. But it's true, most of us are only average. We always struggle to bring that average up, but that's really what we're all about and what we're trying to do.

Now when we look at housing, it's really a part of this. It really is a central hub of what we're doing. It's a multi-dimensional concept, encompasses characteristics of the house, the physical structure and design.

Some are very good, some are bad, but in the north we have to look at that construction as a big part of it, which is why we've made the decision to make every attempt to build nothing but SuperGreen construction and look at the overall building and home and how it's going to be run over the time period.

We're looking at social and psychological features in the neighbourhood, the physical and social characteristics and local services that are available. It's what city planning is all about; it's what regional planning is all about; it's what land use planning is all about.

The central influence of housing on people's lives raises the possibility that housing could act as a pathway through which social and economic determinants of health influence population health. The purpose of this whole concept is to really look at what's known about the relationship between housing and health, and that has to be a huge part of our strategy.

So with those comments of looking at housing as a big part of this matrix, I look forward to what other members have to say and will close on that point.

Mr. Fairclough: I would also like to respond briefly to this motion as put out by the Member for Klondike. I thank the member for bringing a motion like this forward. After seven years, this is urging the Yukon government to develop a wellness strategy to promote healthy living habits for all Yukoners. We on this side of the House, in the Official Opposition, have said we would support this motion. I just want to briefly talk a little bit about this.

Governments over the last so many years have tried and attempted to bring communities together to look at promoting healthy living styles, and what we found is that we're falling behind and other people are taking the lead. Like the previous speaker mentioned, communities are coming forward and bringing their community members together and having a wellness week or a wellness day, and promoting healthier families within the community.

I have gone to the wellness week in Mayo. They are taking a step forward to bring some healthiness back into the community. They looked at community healing, which I haven't heard the government side talk too much about. Most recently, there was a wellness fair in the community of Carmacks, and that was put on by the Little Salmon Carmacks First Nation, as the one in Mayo was put on by the Na Cho Nyäk Dun. They bring together their social services department and all those who are involved and all their different departments, and look at ways of making improvements in the community.

What we're asking is that all members in this House approve and vote in favour of this motion to develop a strategy that would promote healthy living habits. It says, "for all Yukoners" too, by the way. This is a bit interesting too, when we

talked about how we can make improvements to, for example, housing or drinking water in homes.

This government, the Yukon Party government, ignored a lot of that in the communities. Take for example the Little Salmon Carmacks First Nation. The Premier says they're there for the greater public, but ignored that First Nation. They had to go outside of the Yukon to get help through the Canadian Auto Workers Union. They've been in that community for three years, putting their money into it, along with the First Nation. There's nothing wrong with the First Nation and any municipal government addressing these issues, but we're saying we're going to develop a strategy that should be addressing that. The biggest one that has been facing the communities lately as far as health goes is mould in houses. Now, we asked the government to address the issue of mould in schools and it took a long time to get any answers out of the government. It's always a fight and that there is no problem in these schools. As a result, we have seen replacement of schools. I thank the communities for bringing those forward.

One of the guest speakers that was up in the community of Mayo — also he has been in Carmacks and Pelly Crossing in their wellness week or wellness fair — was the famous Don Burnstick, a First Nation comedian. He always talks about how laughter is good medicine and how it brings people together. He always talks to the youth. The communities like him and keep inviting him back into their communities for functions such as this. The community of Carmacks recently had a couple of days, which they call a wellness fair, and they had some support from around the community and from Whitehorse. They had elders talking about the language and about traditional medicines. They had Dr. Jim from Whitehorse who does acupuncture and looked at different ways of bringing health back to — or assisting, I guess, in bringing health back — to some of the people.

Some, of course, take advantage of that, whether it is to quit smoking or lose weight or deal with stress.

I thought that those are really good moves on the part of the community to be able to do that. They've had conferences on FASD in that community, where government employees were invited down to really learn exactly what this is all about, including teachers and so on. To my surprise, there are a lot of people out there that just did not know what this was all about, particularly when it comes to teaching young children that understanding the issue better makes it that much easier to be able to understand and change the ways in which they deal with these children.

Some of the government employees have talked over the years about wanting to be healthier in the workplace to improve the output of their work. Many have talked about how government buildings and offices should have exercise equipment and showers so the employees can use it, rather than having to go somewhere.

Other governments, such as First Nations, have bought their employees seasonal passes to the Canada Games Centre, for example, to use the facilities there. Many of them are taking advantage of it and it is reflected in a higher output within the community. Many of the First Nations have talked about want-

ing to get out more. They feel like their lifestyle has changed so much that they are running governments like we are here; they have offices and seem to be stuck in their offices quite often and have taken on the challenge of ensuring that their employees have access to language lessons, do outdoor activities and even at times bring meetings outside of the building into the sunshine or outdoors. Some of them go on fishing trips just to bring the staff together to say that they are all fighting for the same cause.

Some people have tremendous stress in their jobs and need something like this — something different from their workplace — and this is being done. So I'm hoping that when government goes away and we approve this motion to develop this wellness strategy to promote healthy living habits, that it does involve the community that has been working on things to help them put this strategy together and perhaps look at how they can deal with some of these communities individually.

I heard some of the members talk about how recreation is a good thing for communities and how communities need recreation centres. There are a couple I have in mind that could probably benefit a lot from them, and one is the community of Old Crow. The community of Carmacks, for example, has only gone through phase 1 of their recreation centre. Those communities could definitely use improvements.

Another is that when the community of Pelly Crossing and Selkirk First Nation finished their arena, what they put together as a package was to bring down coaching into their community, and that made a huge difference, whether it was coaching of hockey or figure skating, broomball — any of that would allow the members to use their facilities more. That helped tremendously.

It has been talked about a lot and I think that is one area that could be looked at a lot more closely. The other is having government support the communities more when it comes to one thing all our young people like to do: go swimming in the local swimming pools. Well, some of these communities don't have these facilities opened up early enough. There's a cost to it and often it is the municipalities that foot the bill for these facilities and that perhaps needs to be addressed too.

The other that a lot of the local people talk about is of course the eating habits of our population now and this motion, this strategy that will be put together, is about healthy living habits. One of them is good eating habits and I know we have it in the schools right now and some of the young kids really know what's healthy and what's not.

Sometimes it's the parents who just don't follow that healthy habit and perhaps need some assistance in that. One of them is just trying to live off the land. That's probably one of the healthiest things we could do, knowing what's out there to feed ourselves. A lot of local people have gone away from that, and we find a lot of people are migrating to the bigger centres, like Whitehorse, and are just away from that type of healthy living habit.

This, again, is all about putting together a strategy that addresses these healthy living habits. I know one that really knocked down the physical activity in the communities was the introduction of the television. I remember that, because the

community of Carmacks went dead after television came to the community because everybody was stuck in front of the TV screen.

Of course, right now, with the recreation centres, they usually have built-in fitness centers that the community members can use. Some of them are used a lot. I think there needs to be a lot more material given out to the general public about what could be done.

I heard members talk about having trails developed and, of course, walking is pretty healthy and some places have it better than others and some communities develop walking trails, hiking and skiing trails. I think a lot more of that could be done and a lot longer trails developed. In and around Whitehorse, they even have the snowmobile club that has decent trails to go on. Some of the communities are following that and trying to live this more active, healthier living.

I for one would like to see, when government develops this strategy, to put something like that to ensure that all communities have this. I did go on a trail in the community of Carmacks with a few other people. This trail was overgrown and it was through the Village of Carmacks that they cleared it all out and now it is about a 10-kilometre snowmobile trail that could be used for hiking at any time.

I was surprised that something was actually being done about it, because there were attempts to apply for dollars through government and none of that has been proved, and now we see the community is moving in that direction.

We've seen how we've gotten rid of a lot of this junk food in schools and how the communities are trying to ensure that some of the more unfortunate people have something to eat by having meals available for them. I think there has been a lot of recognition and perhaps some improvements, but I think more could be done for aboriginal people. Usually diabetes is the pretty big issue with them and it affects a lot of the aboriginal people. It's all about how dramatically their eating habits have changed over the years.

I think that a lot of information can be gathered together, along with the communities, along with the First Nations, to show exactly what's out there. For example, small things like mapping out where certain berries are, the seasons — and it's the same with the fish, and getting people out there, more active — either ice fishing or fishing off the shore, or going out to the lakes at a certain time of year — and the same with the berries. I know the First Nations are moving toward this. I think governments — this government — could learn a lot from what they have been doing to try to bring wellness back into the community. Like other speakers have said before, it starts with the individual — if we're talking about healing — into the family, and from the family into the community. That's where this education process needs to go.

I do thank the Member for Klondike for bringing this forward. I am anxious to see what develops in this strategy, because it talks about developing one for healthy living habits.

I want to know how, perhaps, government thinks it would be implemented and how much it's geared toward smaller communities that just don't have the facilities like the City of Whitehorse does, and that is access, for example, to fresh fruit

and vegetables like we do here in Whitehorse. If you're wondering what I mean by that, next time you're in the communities, stop by and look at what they have. It's just not the same as what we have here in the bigger city.

I know my time is running out here, so we on this side of the House will be supporting this motion, and I thank the Member for Klondike for bringing it forward. I do look forward to how this strategy will be developed in conjunction with other things that government is doing to date, and how they will be addressing those issues in the smaller communities and with First Nations. I say that because this motion says "for all Yukoners". Thank you.

Hon. Mr. Lang: Again, I'd like to thank the Member for Klondike for introducing this motion this afternoon — Motion No. 1008. It's an appropriate time for this to be brought forward by the Member for Klondike, because as everybody in the House knows as the advertising is out, this is something that the Health minister has jump-started forward with a background of this motion, this wellness strategy and the inclusion and all the other things that go with it.

I'd like to thank the department for the work they did. The presentation they gave us six months ago was very thorough on how we as a society could work with the less fortunate to get them involved in not only the financial end of the territory, but also into the workforce and other aspects that have to be addressed. Mr. Speaker, as we speak about this and look at this, this isn't about resources as much as it is about how we include individuals in everyday life in the territory. This includes all Yukoners, Mr. Speaker. It includes our smaller communities, it includes the bigger centres, and certainly it is an issue that has been front and centre for our government for many, many years.

Of course, my position as Minister of Community Services also gives me the added responsibility to be in charge or to oversee sports and recreation. I fully understand the relationship of active living for healthy living.

That part of the Department of Community Services works actively on every level to make sure that we understand our mandate, which is recreation in the territory and also promoting a healthy lifestyle, whether it's our seniors, our youth, and the many things that we sponsor as Yukoners in the territory and outside the territory — we move our athletes to the Arctic Winter Games; we move our Dene and First Nation activities to the Olympic Games in Vancouver — which is a very active and positive thing for our society to do.

Many Yukoners are very active indeed. The very nature of our history and geography contributes to a very active lifestyle. This can be seen every day on our ski trails, hiking trails and walking trails, at our excellent community recreational centres and through youth and adult involvement in our multiple sports and recreation clubs throughout the territory.

I remind the House on the investment this government has made over the last seven years to enhance the availability of recreational facilities, not only in Whitehorse, but in Marsh Lake and, of course, throughout the territory. Mayo — I talked about the infrastructure the other day for that community.

I would even go so far as to say that active living is part of our Yukon culture from, of course, our First Nations — traditional activities, Arctic sports and Dene games. If you had the opportunity to see the Arctic sports and Dene games and the presentations that Yukon did before and at the Olympic Games, you only have to see that to realize that there is a real groundswell of participation in our Arctic sports and Dene games. I'd like to compliment all the organizers and all the athletes themselves who went and represented us so well during the Vancouver Olympics.

Of course we have the youth and adult participation in swimming. We only have to listen to the radio on a daily basis and keep updated on our swimming — our individuals who are going out — our youth and the people who are competing on a world-class level that come from our community here in Whitehorse, Mr. Speaker.

Then, of course, there's softball. Softball is a big part of our society and our sports in the summer. Curling — we only have to see again yesterday our newspaper welcoming our curling team back into the territory — a gold winner. So these kinds of individuals are happening here in the territory. We can look at Arctic Winter Games, snowshoeing, dogsledding and other organized sports.

Yukoners do a pretty job, when you look at the number of Yukoners — 35,000 individuals — that we represent ourselves fairly well on the world stage. You only have to compliment the individuals who have gone from the Yukon — cycling, I think of Zachary Bell from Watson Lake. I think of our weightlifting individuals who went to the Olympics — all of that came from a community of 35,000 people. Again, it's well worth mentioning here in the House, because I think we tend to forget about the positive things that happen in our community.

These individuals have gone out, not only to represent us as a territory, but to represent the country as excellent in their chosen sports. So, again, a lot of the facilities we've built — Yukoners have built in the territory — have complemented, of course, the healthy lifestyle that we see in our youth today.

I was honoured to go to the cross-country ski competitions that Yukon hosted two weeks ago, and saw the number — 400 participants from across Canada. That was a success — but also I was very pleased to get the comments I got about our cross-country facility. They couldn't get over that we had 60 kilometres of trail and we had all this facility within walking distance of some peoples' homes in the City of Whitehorse. That in itself — we tend to forget about those positive things and it compliments us as a community to have those kinds of facilities.

We wouldn't have the swimmers that we have today out competing in the many levels of competition if we didn't have the Canada centre for the swimming facility we have today. That is what generates the kind of standard that we have today.

In saying that, it contributes to a healthier Yukon and, of course, healthier Yukoners, which is important, but also it is not something that affects all of us in the territory. It is a great role model for our younger generation to see the opportunities out there that these kinds of facilities give Yukoners.

Of course, not all Yukoners are physically active and a lack of physical activity can lead to obesity, diabetes and other chronic health conditions and that, again, is another issue.

That's a health issue that comes along with lifestyle and this can severely impair and shorten lives. In other words, it can put a cost, a burden on our health care and also it's not a positive thing for individuals. These conditions are also very costly to the Yukon health care system and of course that reflects on all Yukoners. That is why it is so important that we find ways to address the root cause of chronic health conditions, such as lack of physical activity, to reduce the cost of our health care system and, in the end, to improve the quality of life for Yukoners.

As we move through this program or this seminar or this workshop we're going to be doing over the next two or three days, I think out of that will come a lot of positive recommendations and probably realistic recommendations that we as a government and we as a society can implement. I know that we've had discussions in the House here extensively about many avenues of lifestyle. Now whether it's healthy eating, whether it's a standard of housing that is a question or is it general lifestyle, there are also substance abuse issues that we in the House over the last seven years have addressed in a very positive way to get that kind of a lifestyle behind people.

As we get into our smaller communities — the member was talking about Mayo and other smaller communities — that we don't forget about their needs. Of course, their needs are parallel to what Whitehorse needs, and we certainly have to work with the individual communities. Any program we put together from these workshops we're having will certainly have ramifications in our smaller communities. And we have to remind ourselves that we have to work with them.

So, this government has worked with our communities, whether it's health centres, hospitals, recreational facilities — investments on the ground. We have been very active with our communities to make sure that they have a standard of recreational facility that supports the community itself.

Again, those kinds of things are investment issues. As I said before, it's very important for us to remember that a lot of the conversation we're going to have on this motion and at this workshop involve resources. But it also involves lifestyle and direction — if we could move toward that direction, those resources and lifestyle and also personal acceptance of responsibility of lifestyle on the individual.

I think that is going to be part and parcel, hopefully, of these discussions. As a community, in sports and recreation, we have accomplished — okay, if I were to review some of the work that sports and recreation has accomplished that we've included in the 2009-10 — increasing operating grants to 33 Yukon sports and recreation groups to improve sports and physical activity in the Yukon. So this government, in 2009-10, increased the grants to 33 Yukon sports and recreational groups.

That is important, Mr. Speaker, because as we all know, as we move through, things get more and more costly to manage and to produce the product that has to be produced and so we have increased that funding through that budget. Yukon gov-

ernment adopted a Yukon active living strategy, which has been implemented Yukon-wide since 2001, based on commitments and goals made by the minister responsible for sports and recreation and physical activity to increase physical activity levels of adults, children and youth.

This is a national program, Mr. Speaker. All our jurisdictions have an issue with this. As I meet with my fellow ministers wherever we are in Canada on the national level, this has been of concern to us nationally on how we participate, how we activate the youth and also our seniors to make the decisions that will lead to a better, more active and more healthy lifestyle.

Now there is going to be a review and an update of the Yukon active living strategy to 2015 and it is currently being conducted at the moment. This includes the most recent research nationally and locally. Again — a national program on physical activity, behaviours and levels that incorporates national, local goals for increased physical activity levels here in our jurisdiction in the Yukon. So again, it's another project that we're working on to see where we're going to be in the year 2015.

The branch finalized and transferred the funds to the \$1 million 2007 Canadian Games aboriginal sport legacy fund. These are resources put together — this began the first year of the shared funding with Canada for eight Yukon projects approved under RInC. That, again, is the Recreational Infrastructure Canada fund. Of course, this government partnered with that to get the money out into the communities, so again, we can upgrade and get our recreational facilities upgraded. Of course, we went out, consulted and worked with the communities. Those resources have been committed to.

Sports and Recreation also participates in three leadership-building initiatives: Canadian Association for Advancement of Women and Sport physical activity and sports leadership workshop, Yukon Aging Well Expo, and the 2009 Sports and Recreation Leadership Summit. Again, that's more projects out there to work with our Yukoners to get a better understanding, not only from a government point of view, but a leadership point of view — that the commitment we make as individuals has impacts on our lifestyle, and to certainly encourage our youth, and also, whatever stage of life individuals are in, that a healthy lifestyle is the right choice.

I also want to mention that this government has been working with other Canadian jurisdictions to establish specific physical activity targets for children and youth. To reach these targets, ministers responsible for sports, physical activity and recreation approved a national action plan that consists of three major directions: cross-sectoral collaboration, social marketing, and a focus on physical activity during the after-school time period. This again was driven by the federal government, but it's something in our jurisdiction that you'll see happening, I guess, in a way that is concerning to somebody like myself who spent his life here in the territory — but also that we as parents and as Yukoners encourage our youth to become more involved. How do we do that when a big part of our population is individuals who, when they leave school, have a period of time when they're inactive or, even worse, they go home and sit in

front of a computer. How do we encourage that to change? I tend to look at the government, but I think we as a society have to look at that and say, "How do we encourage our kids and individuals to have a balance between an active lifestyle and a computer-age lifestyle?" There has to be a balance between the two of them.

Yukon status on these three major directions of the national action plan is as follows — this is what we did in our jurisdiction: for cross-sectoral collaboration, Yukon agreed to a national MOU between the sports and recreation, health and education sectors. In other words, we've agreed to work with the national board and our partners — those being the other jurisdictions.

On social marketing, Yukon has a representative on the national physical activity social marketing working group. What I'd like to clarify is that the federal government is spending a lot more money, and I see that myself as a consumer and individual watching TV. There is a lot more Canadian advertising directed toward Canadians for more of an active lifestyle.

With regard to physical activity during the after-school time period, this will become a major initiative in the upcoming 2010-11 healthy living bilateral agreement with Yukon and Health Canada. So, again, it's another active partnership. How do we jump-start this mentality to get people out and being more active?

Again, Mr. Speaker, I fully support this motion and I feel the development of a wellness strategy to promote healthy living habits for all Yukoners must also include a strategy to promote — which is one of the more important things — active living. So active living is part and parcel of the whole promotion that comes along with healthy living — a balanced lifestyle for all Yukoners.

Again, to the Member for Klondike, thank you very much for bringing this timely motion forward. I look forward to the rest of the debate this afternoon and of course the vote later on this afternoon. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. McRobb: It's a pleasure to rise and speak in favour of this motion today as put on the floor by my colleagues earlier. We will be supporting this motion. However, that said, Mr. Speaker, I can't help but draw the conclusion that everything put on the record this afternoon all sounds fine and dandy, but is this Yukon Party government really practising what it preaches with respect to wellness for Yukoners? I think that's what I'm going to explore within the limited time I have available.

First of all, let's look at what is a wellness strategy, what should a wellness strategy include and who should be included in the wellness strategy? Well, first of all, a wellness strategy should promote healthy living across the territory and this should involve all Yukoners in all Yukon communities, not just Whitehorse. Some of us in here tend to be too Whitehorse-based in our thinking and it's up to us few rural MLAs to check that thinking and ensure that everything is applied equally and fairly to all rural communities.

What should it include? Well, I think to properly answer that question, we have to look at some of the challenges we

currently face in today's Yukon. One of the challenges is the fair delivery of programs and services to all of our rural communities. That's sometimes a difficult task to ensure that people, let's say in Old Crow, get the same wellness services and programs available in Whitehorse — or people in Beaver Creek or Ross River or Watson Lake all get the same levels of service.

I think ensuring that vital community infrastructure is safe, practical and healthy is of primary concern whenever developing a wellness strategy. Let's just examine that for a minute. I'm going to speak to that in reference to the communities I know best, which are located in the Klwane region. Let's start with Canada's most northwesterly community, Beaver Creek. Well, just last week in my budget reply speech, I identified a few projects that should have been in this year's budget for the community of Beaver Creek. The first one is the community hall. For your information, the community hall is the central meeting place for the community and has been for years. Adjacent to it is the new curling rink constructed about 10 years ago. The post office is also nearby and the school is across the street. So it's centrally located. It's a primary building in the community and one that is used for all types of events, including a children's school lunch program and just about everything in the community.

Well, what's the condition of the building? Not very good, Mr. Speaker. This Yukon Party government has been aware for quite some time now that the roof is structurally unsound and is in danger of caving in. Yet nothing is in this budget — this \$1 billion budget — to correct this problem. Is that a way to promote wellness in this community by ignoring the safety of citizens in a primary community building? I don't think so, Mr. Speaker, and I would like to hear someone on the government side speak to that issue.

Another government building in Beaver Creek is the community library. This too is a gathering place for people in the community, albeit on a smaller scale. Sometimes the schoolchildren visit the library as part of a class. What's the condition of the Beaver Creek library? Again, the Yukon Party government is aware that there is a severe mould problem in that building. Is there anything in this budget to deal with that problem? The answer again unfortunately is no.

Let's look at the fire hall building in Beaver Creek. This is a building that should be condemned. It is also impractical to provide the services expected today of our front-line emergency workers. It's inadequate in terms of storage for emergency vehicles and the Yukon Party government has been aware for years now of the need to replace this building. Is there anything in this billion-dollar budget for this building, or last year's billion-dollar budget? Again, the answer is no, Mr. Speaker.

Now, there are other examples within this community, but I think these three examples here are more than adequate to drive home the point that the government is simply not practising what it preaches, in terms of wellness in our rural communities.

Let's look at Burwash Landing. The First Nation and community citizens have been requesting a new school for sev-

eral years now. The Yukon Party government has denied that request. The Yukon Party government is opposed to a new school in Burwash Landing in principle. I don't expect the Yukon Party government to ever build a new school in Burwash Landing. For that to happen, a change in government would first need to occur.

Let's look at Destruction Bay. There has been a serious shortage, in terms of land availability, in that community. Is there anything in this billion-dollar budget to provide new land on which residents can build their homes? Again, the answer is no. Further to this need, there are good people in these communities who are at risk of being forced to move out because they don't have a place to live. What are the repercussions of that? I know one example in Beaver Creek, where the husband is a member of the volunteer fire department and the spouse is a member of the Beaver Creek community club, and they are volunteers for all kinds of activities. These smaller communities simply cannot withstand the loss of such key people. There is a real shortage of volunteers in these smaller communities. Without these volunteers, there is a serious problem about maintaining wellness in these communities.

I hope I've connected the dots for the government. It's nice of the members to stand up and fill the airwaves full of platitudes about the nice things that are being done, and I'm sorry to have to pour some rain on their parade, but this is the reality I bring here as a rural member, Mr. Speaker, and I feel compelled to point out these shortcomings at this opportunity.

Now, if you just take the concerns I've identified so far and dealt with them in terms of budget, Mr. Speaker, I would fully expect each one of these buildings could have been paid for with change left over simply by the unaccounted for \$5 million the Yukon Party government has spent in Dawson City that has gone missing. This is the \$5 million we've been asking for about a week now, that today the newly appointed Cabinet commissioner could not simply identify what happened to it.

Well, I'm saying that all these projects, from the roof in the community hall, to the library and fire hall, new school in Burwash Landing and some more land availability in Destruction Bay, all of those could have been dealt with had the Yukon Party government found that missing \$5 million and spent it in these communities to promote the wellness of people on the north Alaska Highway.

Let's move down the road to Haines Junction. Now, there was a positive example constructed in recent years. It was the Haines Junction seniors facility — I believe the proper name has morphed into something else now, something about affordable housing, whatever. Well, who paid for that project? The answer, Mr. Speaker, is the former Paul Martin federal government. That's who paid for that project. Some of us remember. It is a good thing some of us do have that corporate memory because, without it, one would have been led to believe it was the Yukon Party government that paid for that project; but that is far from reality.

What about the jobs being displaced by the expiring Shakwak project on the north Alaska Highway? This problem has been known for years. I remember speaking to a motion about this a dozen years ago. This government was fully aware

that there would be dozens of local jobs expiring as the Shakwak project wound down. Has it done anything about it? No. The Yukon Party expects people to move to the Campbell Highway or something if they want that job on the front-end loader to put food on the table for their family. There's nothing in the Kluane region.

The purpose of the motion I referred to earlier that occurred some dozen years ago talked about other options that could be done within the region to continue those jobs, but nothing has been done. Is employment part of wellness? Well, I would say undeniably yes to that question, and if anyone feels otherwise, you have 20 minutes to explain it this afternoon.

Let's move even further down the highway toward Whitehorse. The community of Mendenhall, about halfway to Haines Junction from Whitehorse, has been requesting a new community well for years now. Was there anything in the Yukon Party billion-dollar budget for a new community well in Mendenhall? Again, this government has come up bankrupt. There is nothing. The only visible thing this Yukon Party government did was post a notice in June 2005, advising local residents not to drink the water, because it's contaminated with uranium. That's it — nothing since then but empty promises. Well, that's not good enough.

Members can talk about wellness all afternoon and fill *Hansard* with accolades and platitudes and pat themselves on the back for all the good work they're doing. But when the rubber hits the road in communities like Mendenhall, Haines Junction, Destruction Bay, Burwash Landing and Beaver Creek, this government is doing nothing in terms of improving the wellness of those people with respect to these items I've put on the floor here today.

Now, let's move from the Kluane riding to the Yukon as a whole. And within the short time I have left, I want to speak briefly to some of the major issues affecting everyone. Two of these issues are obesity and diabetes. How good is a wellness strategy without positive programming to help reduce the incidence of obesity and diabetes in our territory? Well, the answer to that question would be: not very good at all. This government needs to do more to address those two major issues. I recall — going back about four or five years now — asking the government if they would appropriate a reasonable amount of funds to continue the CHIP program in the territory, but the Yukon Party's answer was no.

Now, for members' information — because we deal with acronyms in here all too frequently — the CHIP is the abbreviated version of the community health improvement project, which was formerly the coronary health improvement plan. Two of the constituents of the Member for Southern Lakes, I believe — Butch and Laurie Johnson — were instrumental in bringing that program to Yukoners. Those two individuals should be really held up as people who have done a lot to improve the wellness of people in our territory.

How did this Yukon Party government treat them? Well, the Yukon Party said no to providing funds to continue the CHIP program. Mr. Speaker, I personally know people who have changed their lifestyles as a result of taking that program

and in terms of healthy living, there has been a tremendous improvement.

This program also integrates well with the school curriculum in terms of combating childhood obesity and preventing future diabetes, which also has its beginnings in the eating habits of our school-aged children.

I see, Mr. Speaker, that my time has run out and I look forward to listening to what other members have to say.

Mr. Elias: Mr. Speaker, I would also like to engage in the discussion today about the motion put on the floor of the House from the Member for Klondike that urges the Government of Yukon to develop a wellness strategy to promote healthy living habits for all Yukoners. Again, just like each and every member of our caucus who spoke, we are in favour of this motion; however, I would like to put some comments on the public record.

The Member for Kluane just raised a couple of important issues with regard to the reality of situations that his constituents face. I would just like to go over some of the realities that many of my constituents face in terms of working toward healthy living and wellness in our community of Old Crow. One example that has come up numerous times over my years of being MLA for Vuntut Gwitchin was the scheduling of opportunities for my constituents to go see an optometrist or to go see a dentist — to receive those health services. This is not an isolated incident. If, let's say, the dentist or optometrist contracted to go to Old Crow happens to cancel in December, and the person who was hoping to receive those services still has to get services, so they have to come to Whitehorse. They have to plan. Let's say it's a single mother who has to put wood in the stove every day, because it's minus 50 degrees Celsius outside. The single mother has to worry about who's going to watch her kids. A single mother is going to have to worry about who is going to make sure her house keeps warm, so it doesn't freeze up and cause thousands of dollars of damage to her water and sewer systems. Maybe she has to worry about who is going to look after the pets, and the list goes on and on and on.

So when we talk about healthy living and wellness in the community, the delivery of programs and services to an isolated, remote community, like my community of Old Crow, is far from being equal. And I'll use the issue of education as it relates to the motion put forward on the floor of the House today.

In terms of a wellness strategy, it's well known that, as soon as students in the Chief Zzeh Gittlit School get to grade 9, they have to leave their support structure and their family. They have to leave the guidance of their parents and the elders in the community, and they are not able to participate in community events. They have to leave and come to the capital city of Whitehorse to get their high school education. Is that healthy?

A jug of milk in the store in Old Crow was \$10 when I last checked — around \$10. Last fall in this House we passed the motion about how important the food mail program is to a healthy lifestyle, healthy living, to receive nutritious and healthy foods in Old Crow, how important that is. The federal government has embarked on reviewing that program and has

yet to explain the details of what the new program is going to look like, but I do have an excerpt from page 132 of the federal budget book, chapter 3.4, that was released last month. I'd just like to quote from the budget and it's about improving access to healthy food for northerners.

This is what it says in the federal budget, "Consumption of nutritious food is a key component of a healthy lifestyle. In order to provide northerners living in isolated communities with greater access to affordable healthy food, the government has operated the Food Mail Program since the late 1960s.

"Over the past year, the government has consulted northerners in order to develop a more modern, efficient and cost-effective program. Budget 2010 commits \$45 million over two years to fund this new program, including existing funding. This will bring the annual budget of the program to \$60 million. The program will alleviate the cost of shipping healthy foods by air to isolated communities and include activities to encourage nutritious eating. The program will focus on supporting a basket of healthy foods that will be based on Canada's Food Guide and will include a process for ensuring program sustainability. The Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development will announce further information on this new program in the coming months."

That's what I'm waiting for and what my constituents are waiting for: further information. Because my recollection of the food program was that it already cost \$69 million to operate last year and the federal budget numbers don't seem to match well with the documents that I have. Furthermore, the discussion paper that was released with regard to food mail and nutritious foods being delivered to isolated communities, of which Old Crow is one, were unsatisfactory. Those options were unsatisfactory.

Hopefully, we can hear from the federal minister soon with regard to this new idea on how to deliver the federal food mail program.

There are many definitions about what healthy living actually is. I did some quick research this morning about some definitions. Health Canada describes healthy living this way: "With dramatically rising rates of overweight and obesity, healthy living needs to become a way of life for more Canadians. Making healthy food choices, staying physically active and maintaining a healthy weight are essential to good health and key areas of focus for the public health agency of Canada."

They define healthy living this way: "At a population level, healthy living refers to the practices of population groups that are consistent with supporting, improving, maintaining and/or enhancing health. As it applies to individuals, healthy living is the practice of health-enhancing behaviours or, put simply, living in healthy ways. It implies the physical, mental and spiritual capacity to make healthy choices. The integrated pan-Canadian healthy living strategy focuses on healthy eating, physical activity and the relationship to healthy weights.

In November of 2008, I put a motion on the floor of the House that many of my constituents considered important for a healthy community, and they were looking for partnerships to help achieve these projects or initiatives or ideas or concepts so that we could help achieve a healthier community of Old Crow.

Some of them were addressing the infrastructure deficit with regard to seniors and elders homes in Old Crow, addressing the need to replace the St. Luke's Anglican Church, upgrading the community's drinking water well — which I must say I do not see an allocation to the community water well in the 2010-11 budget this year, which is of concern.

Another concern was ensuring that community members of Old Crow have proper access to territorial health services; providing a proper certified and safe school bus for the safe transportation of the students of Chief Zzeh Gittlit School; ensuring a successful implementation of the *Helicobacter pylori* bacterium study in Old Crow.

Going back a couple of days to when the Member for Whitehorse Centre was talking about his experiences in Vancouver during his cancer treatment and about how the doctors asked: "Why are there so many Yukoners coming down for cancer treatments?" And I've heard the same thing from doctors who come to Old Crow: "Why are there so many internal cancer problems in such a small community over the last couple of decades?" The answers still need to be found.

Obviously, working toward a healthy community is the protection of the Porcupine caribou herd and its calving grounds in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. That's always a big concern, and it's a given.

Another issue with regard to a healthy community was expanding the community to multi-residential subdivision lots under Crow Mountain, so that the community can expand, and so it's not congested just down by the Porcupine River. So those are some of the things that our community members were concerned about with regard to a healthier community.

If I could talk about the issue of diabetes, from which my community of Old Crow is not immune. We do have citizens and constituents who suffering from diabetes. Diabetes has become a disabling and deadly disease, with First Nations suffering at a rate three to five times that of the general Canadian population. What is diabetes? Diabetes happens when your body does not make or use insulin in the right way. Insulin is important for your body to turn sugar from food into energy. There are three types of diabetes. Type 1 diabetes happens when the body doesn't make insulin; type 2 diabetes happens when the body has trouble using the insulin it makes; and gestational diabetes is where the body can't use the insulin during pregnancy.

Aboriginal people are more likely to get type 2 diabetes, the most common kind, than other Canadians. Younger aboriginal people are developing type 2 diabetes more than before. Diabetes is of concern and the Canadian Diabetes Association has heard from parents who have been told that their children can't register at school because they have diabetes. Other parents have told the Canadian Diabetes Association about their children being denied school trips or educational programs because of their diabetes and still other parents have contacted the association to discuss how to convince their school staff that denying access to orange juice during class, or asking the child to test glucose levels unsupervised in a washroom or closet, is inappropriate and potentially dangerous to the health of the child.

There was actually a law in Ontario called Sabrina's Law, that was passed to enhance the safety of students with anaphylactic allergies. Except for New Brunswick's education policy 704, at the time when this report was written, there were no provincial policies, regulations or legislation requiring school boards or schools to accommodate and protect students with life-threatening illnesses, including diabetes. Maybe this is a question that the Education minister can answer during debate today: does the Yukon have any policy, regulations or legislation requiring our schools to accommodate and protect kids with diabetes or other life-threatening illnesses while attending classes, or a school activity, for that matter? Maybe that's something the Education minister can address during the debate today.

Today at the Canada Games Centre there is a Living with Diabetes, a Wellness Program going on. It starts today and it goes until Monday, May 31, 2010. The sessions will run for Monday, Wednesday and Thursday from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. In the release it says that all fitness levels are welcome and please bring comfortable, supportive indoor shoes, a water bottle, a pen and a notepad; wear comfortable, loose-fitting clothing. So there are initiatives that are going on in our capital city to address this.

Going back to my riding and some of the comments from my constituents on what their thoughts are with regard to a healthy community, many of my constituents consider our isolation and the lack of an all-season road access as contributing to a healthy community and it always has.

You know, a better quality of life includes adequate housing that contributes to individual and family health. One of the comments that I found interesting was healthy living also includes having the ability to empower our community members to contribute to a strong, healthy community; working toward a sustainable community with a coming together and working to develop a vision for the future, to work out what the community values are and what the long-term goals are — and our community of Old Crow has done this work. They have developed a common vision for the future as it relates to a healthy community.

As far as the development of a Yukon wellness strategy, I think it would be a good idea for this to have a community-based approach because, in our community of Old Crow — I'll just read it: "Our vision is one that reflects our traditional values, sustainability principles and long-term goals as a community, as a self-governing First Nation, in the Yukon and Canada. Part of the vision is to create a sustainable community that provides a safe, supportive environment in which to live and work consistent with the Vuntut Gwitchin land ethic. Our vision promotes a sustainable community within the context of the Vuntut Gwitchin land ethic. We want the same services and amenities as other Yukon communities have and so far as our unique location can support them. We want to see Old Crow as a healthy community with the resources to meet current and future needs without compromising the environment and our children's future."

Some of the community values that were discussed — I see I'm running out of time, so I'll just briefly go over some of

them — is that we value the empowerment of our people to contribute to a strong and healthy Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation. We value all that is living and strive to create a balance in our interactions with them. We value children and youth and are committed to a safe and healthy environment within our traditional ways. We value our traditional knowledge, culture, spirituality and the oral teachings of our elders.

We value accountable and transparent governance. It goes on and on and on. I've watched many, many of my constituents over the years participate and take the time out of their busy lives to come and work toward a healthier community. So when we're talking about building a strategy for all Yukoners, I think there are examples out there — other communities around the Yukon that have already done some of the initial work. I think that could be used to make this Yukon government's wellness strategy that much stronger.

With that, I thank the Member for Klondike again for his motion today. I support it, and I look forward to the development and implementation of this motion.

Thank you very much for your time today, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Ms. Taylor: I, too, would like to lend my support to the Member for Klondike for bringing forth this motion of utmost importance to all Yukon citizens.

A lot has been said on the floor of the Legislature today and my remarks will be somewhat brief. I did, however, want to reflect on a couple of things that have been said here.

Today's discussion is all about coming up with a strategy — a social inclusion and poverty reduction strategy. It's focused on what work has already been done in not only the respective governments, but in our communities, delivered by agencies, non-profit organizations and individuals alike. I think that when you look over the last number of years, the last decade for example, a lot has been accomplished. This discussion is all about putting our support forward and behind an initiative that ought to be community driven. It has to have the grassroots support of communities, individuals, governments and organizations, because if it isn't, it will certainly be all for naught. I think that this really builds on the success of the work that has been done in the Department of Justice, for example, on correctional reform, the substance abuse action plan and the education reform initiative, which produced New Horizons. It builds upon the housing initiatives that are underway — well over \$60 million that has contributed to seniors, elders housing, children's housing, housing for single parents and many other initiatives.

So I think it is really important that this particular initiative is not just building on something that is brand new, but on initiatives that have already been a success and which have garnered the community's support.

I think that there is a lot to be commended by the respective agencies and governments around the territory. You know, I keep on referring to a child and the old adage saying that it takes a village or community to raise a child. I truly believe that that is the case, Mr. Speaker, because from the day a child is born — from the day, I should say, a child is conceived to birth — to early lifelong learning and so forth, that child is sup-

ported and must be supported by a whole host of individuals, entities and communities alike. We all have a role to play in the health and well-being of community citizens, whether it is providing services even from full-day kindergarten or through the Child Development Centre, services through our new unit providing services for children with disabilities, services providing housing for single-parent families or providing childcare — that is, providing enhanced wages for childcare workers, capital infrastructure subsidies for childcare, as well as a direct operating grants.

It's about looking at, also, the Individual Learning Centre. That's another initiative that our government was very successful in bringing forward to fruition. There are countless examples, and I think a lot has already been said here on the floor of the Legislature. But, unlike members opposite who have referred to initiatives such as the Individual Learning Centre or the School of Visual Arts or perhaps the child and youth advocate as being bankrupt or examples of reckless spending — I say that is very unfortunate.

I will, however, thank all members of the Legislature for supporting this motion that has been put forward on the floor for debate and discussion. It is a very important one, and I would just like to congratulate the officials in their respective departments who have been working with the multitude of agencies around the territory, the communities and First Nation governments.

This will be an inclusive process, and it will entail a number of stakeholders. But, most importantly, the objectives of this particular initiative, of course, are to really emphasize the shared responsibility — to make the best efforts to ensure that all Yukoners have the right to participate in the affairs of our community and the health and well-being of our community.

I thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I, too, would commend this motion for going forward.

Mr. Inverarity: I've listened all afternoon with great interest as to the different points of view that have been put forward on wellness and specifically on the motion from the Member for Klondike. I found the debate quite interesting. I think I'm going to try to focus on a little higher level attitude, in terms of how I'm going to approach wellness in general. I'll actually take a little bit of a lead from the Member for Porter Creek North, in terms of some of the discussion he brought forward that I thought was very interesting. I'm probably going to expand a little bit on that area this afternoon, if I may.

Really, the one theme that I've seen run through this is that everybody has a broad interpretation of what really wellness is and what makes up wellness. For this afternoon, I think I'm going to probably dwell on those issues as to really what wellness is and how we as individuals can improve our personal wellness state of mind.

I guess the best way — and I know the Member for Porter Creek North discussed the definition of wellness and I think that it's interesting that more than ever before, we hear this word in the news, on billboards, in conversations and even at work. It's interesting that universally there is no real accepted definition of the term "wellness." There is, however, I guess, a

set of common characteristics that is seen in most thoughtful attempts as a definition of wellness.

We generally see a reference to state of mind, for example, which is quite vague, to say the least. Also, frequently we will see a state of acceptance of satisfaction with our present condition. The truth in fact, Mr. Speaker, is that wellness is a very difficult word to define.

If I were to pick one individual who has tried to define it, Charles Corbin of the Arizona State University gives this definition of wellness: "Wellness is a multidimensional state of being describing the existence of positive health in an individual as exemplified by quality of life and a sense of well-being." And we heard this afternoon continuous references about a state of well-being that we have to have in order to achieve a state of wellness.

"Wellness is an active process of becoming aware of and making choices toward a more successful existence." I think it is important to look at that statement and see what it means. For example, we talk about process. It could mean, for example, an improvement in the way that things are possible. Okay? It is a step-by-step process that we go down. We also mentioned that we have to become aware of ourselves and that could be how we learn, how we discover who we are, and how we seek more information about who we are as a people and as an individual. I think that's important.

Choice makes up a significant portion of how well we are. If we choose healthy lifestyles, for example, then our wellness will be improved over time, so that's important. Success is determined by each individual to be their collection of life's accomplishments. As we go through life and we see that we have successes in each of these individual areas that we achieve, then our internal clock and our internal well-being will be improved.

It was mentioned earlier that there are a number of different facets that make up wellness. For example, wellness is a multi-dimension state. The Member from Porter Creek North mentioned eight, in my research I've come across 10, and I know the Member from Vuntut Gwitchin mentioned three or four in his particular speech. Today I thought I would talk about some of the ones that I've come across. The 10 that I have picked are social wellness, occupational wellness, spiritual wellness, physical wellness, intellectual wellness, emotional wellness, environmental wellness, financial wellness — which we haven't really talked about a lot — certainly mental wellness and medical wellness. They all make up the capacity which we have to become a well-rounded person.

It's important that we don't look at one individual dimension as different from the rest. I think it's important to look at these as a wheel — that they're all interdependent upon each other, and to be fully, fully well, we must have a moderation of all of them to achieve this goal.

The first one I'd like to talk a bit about is social wellness. The social dimension of wellness encourages contributing to one's human and physical environment to the common welfare of one's community.

Social wellness emphasizes the interdependence with others and with nature. It includes the pursuit of harmony in one's

family as we travel down this path that we're going to choose to become better and more well. We will become more aware of our importance in society, as well as the impact we will have on nature and our community when we look at social wellness. We will take an active part in improving our world by encouraging a healthy living environment and initiating better communications with those around us. We will seek ways to preserve the beauty and balance of nature along the path. Social wellness is a positive interaction with and enjoying being with other people.

It is having comfort and ease during work and leisure situations and communicating feelings with others. As we proceed on the social wellness journey, we will discover many things about ourselves and about the community we live in. Socially, it is better to contribute to the common welfare of our community than to think of ourselves. It is better to be in harmony with others and our environment than to live in conflict with them.

If we look around the world, and we see the conflicts that exist, most of these — if we were to look at our social well-being and how we interact with these individuals as what's important, we would probably have less and less strife. Certainly, we would have less stress in our life, and we would be more positive people.

I have a few social wellness tips and some facts. Socially isolated people are more susceptible to illness and have a death ratio of two to three times higher than those who are not socially isolated. So you can see that if we spend more time together — I know the Member for Mount Lorne talked earlier about his 92-year-old aunt and the fact that she's just now moving out of her own home. It's good to see people like that who have social interdependencies and have kept a social life together and have been able to maintain that social network.

Approximately 20 percent of North Americans feel lonely and isolated during their free time, so a significant number who feel lonely and out of touch. I know earlier today there was some talk about laughter. It's really good medicine. It's good for us and I think that when we get into the chuckles around the Legislative Assembly here, that is sometimes being encouraged because it helps bring things and relieve stress and so it's good to see.

Cholesterol levels go up when human companionship is lacking. I didn't know that. Warm, close friendship causes higher levels of — and I'm not sure about this word — immunoglobulin — it's an antibody that helps our respiratory infections and believe it or not, improves cavities, which I didn't know. So it's good to have friends, if only for our teeth.

One of the things that I note about social wellness — and this is a little bit of a digression, Mr. Speaker — when I had my business in the 1990s, I had a staff policy — and I didn't have many staff policies — but this particular one was if you worked in our store I expected you to contribute back to the community. In other words, I didn't care what you did, but if you belonged to a church, belonged to a church group, go and participate actively. If you wanted to join the Lions or the Rotary Club, or in those days the Jaycees or the Kinettes, or whatever, it was important that you participated in a community event or

some kind of community function. While it wasn't mandatory, it was strongly encouraged.

I also encouraged them to come to me, as their employer, and say, "What are you doing within this community that you have?" Because what happens is if you need the support of this enterprise we will support you in your community endeavour. It was sort of a quid pro quo type of relationship. People knew that my business was actively involved in the community and therefore they probably came and supported the employees I worked with, who then gave back to the community.

I think that that's the kind of social wellness that we're talking about at this level, and certainly at all levels I encourage people to participate in theirs.

If I may digress just one more little bit, I would like to remind everybody that there is a spaghetti dinner this Friday night at the CYO Hall in support of the Braeburn Christian summer camp, from 5 to 7 p.m., so if people could attend that, it would be really great. It's for a worthy cause in trying to build community — and this a youth-orientated function, and so it's worthy of our support.

As we move on, we move into the area — and I'm going to pick on emotional wellness at this point. The emotional dimension of wellness emphasizes an awareness and acceptance of one's feelings. Emotional wellness includes the degree to which one feels positive and enthusiastic about oneself in life. It includes the capacity to manage one's feelings and related behaviors, including the realistic assessment of one's limitations, development of autonomy and ability to cope effectively with stress. The emotionally well person maintains a satisfying relationship with others.

Emotions and stress, and things along those lines, are highly looked at these days. We have psychiatrists and psychologists. We emphasize — and there just seems to be so much more stress in our lives, that we perhaps don't pay attention to us being physically well in our lives. We need to take time for ourselves and increase our ability to be emotionally mature in this area.

Again, among some of the practical tips that I think we can talk about, emotional wellness is striving to meet emotional needs constructively. It is maintaining good mental health, a positive attitude, high self-esteem and a strong self-image. It is the ability to respond resiliently to emotional states and the flow of everyday life. It is dealing with a variety of situations realistically and learning more about yourself and how things you do affect not only your feelings but the feelings of others. It is taking responsibility for your own behaviour and responding to the challenges and opportunities.

We should practice optimism. I know people come to me at the beginning of the day and they ask me, "How are you feeling today?" To me, it's always the best day of my life; at least I'm starting the day off that way. Spend time with friends and family discussing important personal concerns and being supportive with each other. Participate in self-esteem workshops, read self-help books, learn time-management skills. Certainly if you manage your time better, you will have less stress and your well-being will be far more functional. Here is a good one for everybody: smile at least 20 minutes a day. Mr.

Speaker, I think if we could all do that we would certainly be well down the road to mental and emotional wellness.

Mental wellness, which sort of follows the emotional wellness — when searching the literature on mental health, it's difficult to find a straightforward definition of mental wellness. Instead, we define it by its absence. Although many adults do not fit snugly into descriptions of depression and anxiety, depressive symptoms and behaviours that identify anxieties are seen in many people. Unfortunately, even if these adults recognize their depressive symptoms and feelings of anxiety and even if a low-cost treatment is available around the corner, the stigma of mental illness inhibits many of them from seeking help.

So you see, Mr. Speaker, this is one of the big ones. It's very, very difficult to try to cope and have very good wellness if your mental attitude is being — or if you've been subjected to some mental illness in your past, to try to break out of that is difficult. Everywhere you turn, your records follow you everywhere and it's difficult. Mental illness can be affected by things like biological factors and social environmental factors. Certainly many barriers may hamper detecting any type of depression or anxiety in adults and may result in underreporting the seriousness of symptoms that these include.

Certainly some of these symptoms are age related, for example. As we get older, we have a tendency to forget a little more than we used to, and this can certainly cause depression in us and cause our mental states.

Illness, in general — cancer has been mentioned here. It's significant — the number of people in the Yukon who seem to be getting cancer. We don't seem to have any — at least, we haven't been able to see any statistics as to whether we're higher or lower than the national norm. If we are higher, we should find out.

Attitudes of others — signs of depression and/or anxiety may be dismissed because of stereotypical beliefs about people; for example, defining them as difficult, irritable, forgetful, or complaining about their health and/or SAD, which are areas of attitudes that some people put upon other people, and we should be careful about that.

Denial — I grew up in a time when "toughing things out" was the approved remedy. Older adults may deny their depressed feelings as signs that they are weak or lazy. I know that when I talk to my father, who is 93 years old, I try to get him involved in things like the Veterans Affairs, or some of the things that would help make his life easier. He says, "I don't want to do that. I can't do that. It's too much paperwork," or whatever. Really, what has added to it, is he's really saying, "Our generation had to do it all ourselves. We had to stand on our own two feet," and there's a reluctance to accept help.

Certainly drug and alcohol and other health complaints and the significance of stigma — as long as the stigma of mental illness remains, the difficulty in identifying the disorders in adults and providing them with proper care will remain a significant barrier to their ability to reach mental health.

I know I'm running out of time, and I'm going to bring it down here at this point, as we wind up the afternoon. I think that the other areas that I would have liked to have touched on

were particularly spiritual wellness and physical wellness. I know that if we were all in better shape, we would do better ourselves. So, with that, I would like to commend the Member for Klondike for bringing this particular motion forward. I look forward to the wellness symposium that's going to be happening in the next few days, and I thank you for your time.

Speaker: If the honourable member speaks he'll close debate. Does any other member wish to be heard?

Mr. Nordick: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank all members for their comments today. There were some questions related to other jurisdictions of Canada, and, yes, this government will look at other provinces and territories for aspects that could be used in the Yukon. Once again, thanks to the members opposite. Their comments will be taken into consideration.

Mr. Speaker, this government takes a holistic approach for Yukoners to be physically, mentally and emotionally healthy. I expect the wellness strategy will be a broad overarching framework within which we will include specific areas of focus. The strategy to be developed under this broad umbrella will include children and youth, healthy aging and social inclusion. The desired results are to improve overall health outcomes and reduce health disparities. The overall idea of a wellness strategy is to encourage Yukoners more in the health supporting activities and choices that they have some control over in their lives. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Are you prepared for the question?

Some Hon. Members: Division.

Division

Speaker: Division has been called.

Bells

Speaker: Mr. Clerk, please poll the House.

Hon. Mr. Fentie: Agree.

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Hart: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Kenyon: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Rouble: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Lang: Agree.

Hon. Ms. Horne: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Edzerza: Agree.

Mr. Nordick: Agree.

Mr. Mitchell: Agree.

Mr. McRobb: Agree.

Mr. Elias: Agree.

Mr. Fairclough: Agree.

Mr. Inverarity: Agree.

Mr. Cardiff: Agree.

Mr. Cathers: Agree.

Clerk: Mr. Speaker, the results are 16 yeas, nil nays.

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

Motion No. 1008 agreed to

Motion No. 999

Clerk: Motion No. 999, standing in the name of Mr. Nordick.

Speaker: It is moved by the Member for Klondike THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to be fiscally responsible and continue to lay a solid foundation for Yukon growth in all sectors by:

(1) making strategic investments now in economic, education, health and social capital infrastructure such as schools, hospitals, energy facilities, and transportation and communication infrastructure;

(2) obtaining maximum benefits from federal funds under Canada's economic action plan that expires on March 31, 2011;

(3) proceeding with capital projects identified in the multi-year capital plan, which provides strategic direction for the next three years, in order to provide the necessary certainty that will allow the private sector to plan and grow their companies; and

(4) scheduling major infrastructure projects in the Yukon that will match the capacity of local contractors.

Mr. Nordick: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It gives me great pleasure to speak to this motion today.

To start off, I'm going to be speaking on how the investments that we're making in the economy, education, health and social capital infrastructures — projects like schools, hospitals, energy facilities and transportation and communication infrastructure — help stimulate the private sector economy.

So here are a few of our government's initiatives to start off with in this regard. We released our *Climate Change Action Plan* in February 2009. The action plan has already implemented several actions and set out 33 new or enhanced actions.

Our government is in support of enhancing knowledge and understanding of climate change — adapting to climate change, reducing greenhouse gas emissions and leading Yukon's action in response to climate change. We support the *Climate Change Action Plan* and the energy strategy for Yukon through such initiatives as the Yukon Research Centre of Excellence, established at Yukon College.

The *Climate Change Action Plan* is linked to the energy strategy for the Yukon, which was released in January 2009. A Yukon Party platform commitment during the 2006 election was to work toward the development of a territory-wide electrical grid. It is our government's intention to connect the Whitehorse-Aishihik-Faro grid to the Mayo-Dawson grid by completing the Carmacks to Stewart transmission line and upgrading the Mayo B hydro dam. The Government of Canada has agreed to provide up to \$71 million for this \$160 million project.

Mr. Speaker, our government, chaired by the Premier, created two committees. The first was the Deputy Minister Oversight Committee on the Economy. Its mandate is to monitor and assess economic trends, identify and analyze Yukon opportunities to address impacts and identify key strategic options.

Mr. Speaker, the second committee was the Deputy Minister Committee on Major Capital Projects, which provided advice on the implementation of our government's capital investment plan for the Yukon, with the priority objective to en-

sure maximum benefit to Yukon. These two committees consulted and sought advice from economic stakeholders in the Yukon, and their advice was used to help build our 2010-11 budget that includes a multi-year capital plan. This plan gives us a schedule of specific capital projects that we are committed to.

We are committed to a three-year plan of annual core expenditures related to the information technology initiative of \$6.5 million, capital building maintenance projects of \$12 million and \$15 million for land development. This plan also includes a minimum of \$40 million for highways and airports, with the flexibility to adjust priorities, respond to emerging priorities and other commitments.

Another of our key election platform commitments was to continue to utilize government budgets and policies to stimulate the private sector economy and promote the development of balanced budgets for the future. Capital spending in Yukon for the 2010-11 fiscal year is going to be over \$600 million when the capital projects of the private sector and other governments and agencies are included. I'd like to mention just a few of these projects.

The 2010-11 budget is providing \$10.3 million for the Kwanlin Dun Cultural Centre with a new public library — a library that will be the centrepiece in the development of the Whitehorse waterfront. This budget is providing \$3.775 million for history research and the establishment of a new Yukon core library. Mr. Speaker, we are establishing a new addition to Yukon College in Dawson City, not to be confused with the core libraries. Core libraries support mineral exploration and provide valuable information to enable stewardship and sustainable development of the territory's mineral, energy and land resources. This will be very beneficial for the Yukon and the Klondike and for all those who are involved in the mining industry.

This budget has allocated over \$40 million for a variety of work, including upgrades, reconstruction, resurfacing and erosion control on the Robert Campbell Highway, north Alaska Highway, Dempster Highway, Atlin Road, Annie Lake Road, Fish Lake Road and the Jackson Lake Road, including the Shakwak project. We have a total of \$10 million this year for the Shakwak project.

Mr. Speaker, this budget has committed \$9.66 million for bridge work, including repainting, rehabilitation and replacements. People who travel the Klondike Highway will be interested to know that the Pelly River bridge on the Klondike Highway will receive a \$2.5-million paint job and a further \$2.6 million will be spent to replace the Nordenskiöld bridge this year.

Our government knows the importance of maintaining the safety of Yukon's airport infrastructure. This budget has committed \$4.8 million for airport infrastructure, which includes improvements at Whitehorse, Dawson City, Faro, Mayo, Silver City, Burwash and Old Crow, and that is on top of the dollars that we've spent in the last number of years to improve the airports in Dawson City and Old Crow to allow jet service to land and service those communities.

Our government has committed monies in this budget for land and lot development. We have committed \$15.1 million for land development in Dawson City, Carmacks, Destruction Bay, Haines Junction, Mayo, Watson Lake and Whitehorse. Our election platform committed to protecting and preserving Yukon's environment and wildlife, while researching, mitigating and adapting to climate change as one of the four major pillars of vision for the future.

In this regard, the Yukon Placer Secretariat is working with Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in government in another three-year \$350,000 northern strategy program to increase the ability of individual First Nation governments to participate in the fish habitat management system for the Yukon placer mine. There is \$2.184 million over two years to build a research and rehabilitation centre and barn at the Yukon Wildlife Preserve. The Arctic research infrastructure fund is providing \$1.052 million for the expansion of Yukon's forestry research infrastructure, including upgrading and renovating of greenhouses and the development of a research laboratory at the Forest Management branch compound and the research centre at the Gunnar Nilsson and Mickey Lammers Research Forest.

As well, the northern strategy is funding a spruce beetle impact mitigation project in the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations traditional territory.

There is \$844,000 for the Yukon Cold Climate Innovation Centre in this budget. Our government has committed to ensuring Yukoners have safe, sustainable drinking water, and our government follows national standards for drinking water and waste-water treatment to minimize the risk to health and to the environment. Federal, territorial, municipal, and First Nation governments are working together to build or upgrade water treatment systems in many Yukon communities.

Our government has budgeted \$1.133 million under the municipal rural infrastructure fund to improve the Little Salmon-Carmacks First Nation's water supply.

There is \$1.45 million to complete upgrades to the surface water treatment system in Carcross in order to meet newly revised guidelines for Canadian drinking water quality. There is \$3.41 million for arsenic treatment upgrades to meet the new guidelines for the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations, Carcross-Tagish First Nation, Haines Junction and Teslin.

\$1.1 million is to treat Ross River water supply for arsenic and magnesium.

Mr. Speaker, our government is working with Canada in order to address waste-water treatment to meet regulatory requirements and the needs of our communities. One of these partnerships is with the City of Dawson. We are investing in a waste-water treatment facility in Dawson City, which includes a district bio-mass heating system. The district bio-mass heating system in Dawson City will provide a potential revenue stream for the City of Dawson. It will reduce the expense that's borne by the taxpayers of Dawson City and the ratepayers of Dawson for heating the municipal water supply, and will also be used to heat the new waste-water treatment facility building.

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

Debate on Motion No. 999 accordingly adjourned

The House adjourned at 5:30 p.m.

The following document was filed April 7, 2010:

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Yukon Nutrition Framework (dated March 2010) (Hart)