

Yukon Legislative Assembly
Whitehorse, Yukon
Thursday, April 29, 2010 — 1:00 p.m.

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

Prayers

DAILY ROUTINE

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

TRIBUTES

In recognition of International Workers Day

Mr. Cardiff: Today I rise on behalf of the Legislative Assembly to pay an advanced tribute to May Day, also known as International Workers Day, which is celebrated and always has been the first of May, since 1886. It is my intention today to use this opportunity to raise the awareness and to educate members of this House and the public of significant episodes in Canadian labour history.

Labour history is much neglected, but so valuable that we keep alive the memories of working people's struggles. Last year I talked about the Winnipeg General Strike of 1919, a seminal event in Canadian history. This year, on June 3 to be exact, marks the 75th anniversary of another powerful episode that has had far-reaching implications in Canadian history; that is, the On to Ottawa Trek. I offer Members of the Legislative Assembly a brief history of the On to Ottawa Trek of 1935. Much of this information comes from the On to Ottawa Trek Historical Society and I encourage all members, if they want to learn more about labour history, to check out their website or publications like *Labour/Le Travail* that do the essential job of keeping these stories alive.

On to the history lesson, Mr. Speaker. The backdrop of this history lesson is the hungry 1930s — the Great Depression. In response to the growing army of the unemployed, the B.C. government created relief camps in 1931. These work camps were for the most part located in the bush far away from cities and towns. Why were they far away from towns and out in the wilderness? It was clear that powers of the day wanted to prevent these men from organizing and making trouble for the authorities. At the start, these young men were paid two dollars a day for doing such jobs as building roads, airports, military bases and parks. The federal government got involved in jointly managing the camps, and working conditions and pay started to deteriorate further. Wages were reduced to \$7.50 a month.

In 1933, the Department of National Defence took over the camps, reduced the pay to 20 cents a day, plus meals, a bed and some work clothes. The men worked long hours. The conditions at the camp were deplorable. Life was work, eat, sleep and repeat. The food was bad; there were no recreation facilities. Tents and bunkhouses often did not have stoves, and blankets were rare. It is hard to say what was worse — the material conditions or the isolation these men suffered.

This is what Matt Shaw, a camp inmate and later a union leader, said about the camps, "The biggest quarrel was working for 20 cents an hour, eight hours a day with nothing ahead of us but a blank wall, day in and day out." The men were essentially prisoners or slaves in these labour camps.

But there is always a struggle and that is what labour history shows us. There is power when working people come together, get organized and fight back. The workers staged protests at the camps. They issued demands for better food, for fresh meat, new potatoes and one package of tobacco every three days. Eventually the workers formed the Relief Camp Workers Union under the leadership of Arthur Evans, a skilled carpenter, miner and a communist labour organizer.

The RCWU demand for work and wages spread quickly through the camps. Through 1934, the RCWU grew into a strong, disciplined, democratic organization focusing the hopes and the energy of unemployed men and women.

In April 1935, the strikers abandoned the camps and congregated in the City of Vancouver. I remember this from other stories that I've read about people like James Shaver Woodsworth, who was a participant in this movement as well. After two months of a valiant, but unsuccessful struggle for union wages, they decided to take their case directly to Ottawa, the nation's capital, 3,000 miles to the east. Their journey was enshrined in history as the On To Ottawa Trek. They left Vancouver on June 3, "riding the rod," on and in railway freight cars, across the mountains and across the prairies, and at Regina they were greeted by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

The RCMP, on orders from the government of R.B. Bennett and his Justice minister, Hugh Guthrie, treated the trek as an insurrection. They attacked the crowd of 3,000 workers and their supporters. Two people were killed and dozens were injured. The strike was smashed by the state and its leaders were thrown in jail. Despite the strike being suppressed, all was not lost.

The strikers had won the hearts and the minds of Canadian people. Their epic journey, standing up against repression and deplorable conditions, was inspirational. Their struggle was a major turning point in our history.

The federal election, a few months after the suppression of the On To Ottawa Trek, saw Canadians turf out the government of the day that was considered so out of touch with the people and too late in acting to address the pain, the suffering and the lack of opportunity that had presented itself in the Great Depression.

A new government was elected, the Mackenzie King government, and it was compelled to abolish those camps and institute some reforms, including things like minimum wage and unemployment insurance.

So there it is: a brief history of the On To Ottawa Trek and about the key workers' struggles during the Great Depression. As May Day approaches, all members of this House need to salute the memory of those workers through whose struggle our society has advanced, cognizant of the fact that that struggle continues.

Speaker: Thank you. Are there any further tributes?

Introduction of visitors.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Mr. Rouble: Mr. Speaker, I would ask all members of our Assembly to join me in welcoming Mr. Stephen Quin, president and chief operating officer and director of Capstone Mining and chair of the Yukon Minerals Advisory Board. Welcome.

Applause

Speaker: Are there are returns or documents for tabling?

TABLING RETURNS AND DOCUMENTS

Hon. Mr. Rouble: I have for tabling the 2008-09 annual report of the Yukon Minerals Advisory Board.

Hon. Mr. Kenyon: I have for tabling the annual report 2008-09 of the Yukon Lottery Commission.

Mr. Cardiff: I have for filing a document called *Success is No Accident: Declining Workplace Safety Among Federal Jurisdiction Employers*. It is produced by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives.

Speaker: Any further documents for tabling?
Reports of committees.
Petitions.
Are there any bills to be introduced?
Notices of motion.

NOTICES OF MOTION

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

THAT this House urges the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada to visit Whitehorse as part of its 2011 cross-country tour.

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

THAT this House thanks all concerned Yukoners who had the courage to come forward and express their very valid concerns regarding the Yukon government's proposed *Civil Forfeiture Act*, more specifically, concerns regarding the lack of public consultation from this government on the bill.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House thanks the Government of Yukon for:

- (1) seeing the error of its ways on Bill No. 82, *Civil Forfeiture Act*;
- (2) admitting it was wrong and the bill is flawed; and
- (3) finally agreeing to put the bill out for public consultation, after numerous questions were brought forward from the opposition based on comments received from many concerned Yukoners.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Canada to create and institute a policy which would ensure that the public has the right to use, and have access to, federal public buildings, such as the Elijah Smith Building in downtown Whitehorse.

Speaker: Any further notices of motion?
Is there a statement by a minister?

Speaker's ruling

Speaker: Prior to Question Period, the Chair will rule on a point of order raised earlier this week by the Member for Kluane. During Question Period on Monday, April 26, the Minister of Justice responded to a question from the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin regarding Bill No. 82, *Civil Forfeiture Act*. During the course of her response, the minister said, "I think we're using this again as a political tool."

The Member for Kluane then rose on a point of order, saying, "For the minister to suggest we're using this issue as a political tool is clearly contrary to our Standing Orders. I would ask you to suggest the minister should withdraw that remark."

After reviewing the Blues, the Chair does not believe the Minister of Justice violated the Standing Orders. This might have been the case had the minister phrased her remarks as an accusation against the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin or any other member. In her use of the collective term "we," the Minister of Justice may have been referring to the proceedings of the House as a whole. In any case, the minister's words were not phrased as an accusation against an individual member.

There is, therefore, no point of order.

We will now proceed to Question Period.

QUESTION PERIOD

Question re: *Civil Forfeiture Act*

Mr. Inverarity: Mr. Speaker, we have pressured this government to rethink and revise its approach to diminishing the rights of Yukoners for the last two weeks. Yesterday they finally got the message. During Question Period, the Minister of Justice continued to defend the government's decision to pass Bill No. 82 without public consultation. "It should be passed this spring," she said. By late afternoon, the Premier had done a 180-degree turn and said the government would delay passage of the bill indefinitely. It's a complete flip-flop, and we're glad the government has backed down. I would like to thank the many Yukoners who spoke out against this legislation; your voices were finally heard.

Will the Minister of Justice provide an explanation for this flip-flop? What changed between 1:30 p.m. and 4 p.m.?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: Once again, the House stands confused with the Liberals' position on the matter. Let me refer the member back to what precipitated bringing forward the *Civil Forfeiture Act*. I hope the member remembers that, a short time ago, this House debated a motion to proceed with bringing back to the Legislative Assembly said act. In fact, the Member from Porter Creek South was so keen to have this act brought forward that the member, during the debate on the motion, sug-

gested that, “enough talk, it’s time to put the question.” In other words, vote on the motion.

That said, Mr. Speaker, the Liberals unanimously supported that motion. Today the government has followed the direction of the Legislative Assembly and has brought forward the act. The act’s intent obviously is to deal with criminals and the proceeds of criminal activity. Yesterday the Liberals once again voted unanimously to support more work. Unfortunately, it appears that when the hard work actually presents itself, the Liberals run for the hills.

Mr. Inverarity: Any time, I’m prepared to sit on any committee to take this out to consultation, Mr. Speaker. The government was going to push Bill No. 82 through this House, but suddenly changed its mind, thanks to the hard work of many Yukoners.

The *Civil Forfeiture Act* itself is not the whole problem. Criminals should not profit from crime. The government’s handling of this issue is the problem. This government’s approach to decision-making is the problem and the government’s plan to push ahead without having done any public consultation is also the problem. We are thankful to the many Yukoners who helped send this bill out for public consultation. That is what should have been done in the first place and what we expected to happen after our debate back in December.

Can the minister — and we’re looking for the Minister of Justice — tell this House when those consultations will begin and when we will see the new and improved *Civil Forfeiture Act*?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: Mr. Speaker, it is very refreshing to have just heard the Member for Porter Creek South commit to sitting at any time, any place, on a committee to further the work on the bill. Let me point something out. While the Liberals in this House ran for the hills when the hard work began — the Member for Lake Laberge, the Independent member of this Assembly, the members of the Third Party and the government members were all diligently doing the hard work on the bill. In fact, it has gone so far as amendments being suggested to the bill. Actually, outside of the Liberals in this House, all other members are doing the hard work and now it is very comforting to hear that the Liberals intend to do the same.

Mr. Inverarity: Mr. Speaker, we have been doing the hard work. We’ve been asking this government to pull this bill for the last two weeks. In fact, I have for filing here 10 pages, totalling 27 questions. That’s the hard work that it has taken to get this government to flip-flop and finally change their attitude.

Many Yukoners have been asking as well. We saw that yesterday. This government backed down and agreed to listen to the Yukoners, and that’s a good thing and it’s something that all Yukoners should be proud that they have managed to accomplish. It’s too bad we had to do this. When will the public consultations begin on this revised bill?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: Mr. Speaker, first I must point out that shouting does not represent or demonstrate doing the hard work. Unfortunately, the member has already forgotten what the member voted for yesterday. The bill is not pulled. The member voted for extended debate and further public consulta-

tion. That’s doing the hard work, Mr. Speaker. So as long as the Member for Porter Creek South wants to shout it out, maybe he should add to that dissertation the fact that he and his colleagues — the Liberal Party in this House — are committed to continue to do the hard work in dealing with crime and the proceeds of criminal activity, in the best interests of the Yukon public, to ensure that we are managing that situation appropriately.

Question re: Health insurance survey

Mr. Elias: Mr. Speaker, I have some questions for the minister responsible for Health and Social Services. I have been getting more phone calls from Yukoners about the minister’s health survey, and they aren’t happy. Let me articulate some of the concerns I’ve been hearing. The purpose and objective of the letter and survey are not clear to Yukoners. The language in the survey is difficult to understand. People are shocked by the threat that their government would actually take away their health care coverage, and Yukoners do not appreciate the bold and underlying statement that says that if you do not sign and return this notice, your health care coverage could be cancelled.

Under both the *Statistics Act* and the *Health Care Insurance Plan Act*, nowhere is it mentioned that the minister has the authority to cancel health care coverage for non-response to a survey. Can the minister please explain to Yukoners where he gets the authority to threaten to pull the health care coverage of Yukoners for not responding to a survey?

Hon. Mr. Hart: I think we answered the member’s question yesterday with regard to this question. It’s important that we ensure that all Yukoners are actually Yukoners who are utilizing our health care system. For the last 10 years we’ve been sending this survey out. This survey has been going out for 10 years on this process with regard to ensuring that people are residents of the Yukon and those who are accepting and utilizing our health care services are true residents of the Yukon.

Mr. Elias: Well, Mr. Speaker, I have been hearing from Yukoners, and they consider this survey a threat — so a threat, is a threat, is a threat. I want to put the minister on notice right here and right now. I am holding the survey in my hand. I’m not going to sign it. I’m not going to fill it out, and I’m not going to send it back. So I guess the minister has a decision to make about whether or not he’s going to pull my health care coverage.

Mr. Speaker, the simple point of the matter is that nowhere in either of the acts does it give the minister the authority to revoke a Yukoner’s health care coverage for not responding to this survey in question. Can the minister please confirm that this Yukon Party government has no authority and that the statement will be removed from future mail-outs?

Hon. Mr. Hart: It is nice the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin is contributing to the Yukon system. It is nice to see that he is allowing the process to ensure that our health care system is being utilized by Yukoners — we want to ensure that it’s going to be utilized. Yes, we are doing that.

As I have said, we’ve been doing it for many years now. This service has been going out to ensure that Yukoners who

are utilizing our Yukon health care system remain Yukon residents, and that is the main focus for this entry going out and we continue to do that as we have in the past.

The only difference is that this year we have extended it from the normal 2,000 to about twice that number for this year.

Mr. Elias: I'll let the minister know that I'm a Yukoner and I received this letter and I take offence to it. I don't take kindly to threats and that's what I put on the floor of the House, Mr. Speaker. You know what should happen? You know what should happen here? The minister should immediately stop this mail-out because it's offending a lot of Yukoners and they're phoning our office telling us. What should actually happen is that the minister should get on his feet and apologize to Yukoners for making them feel so badly when they receive this from his department. That's what should happen here. He should take the whole concept back to the drawing board, recognizing and considering what he has heard from Yukoners and try to be a little more polite.

Will the Minister of Health and Social Services respond to the public concerns and immediately stop the mail-out of these surveys and find a better way to accomplish whatever he's trying to accomplish?

Hon. Mr. Hart: You know, the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin just got up in the House here and he's accusing us of threat. What was that just a little while ago, Mr. Speaker? Was that not a threat? You bet it was.

Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned before, we're providing insurance benefits — health insurance benefits — to Yukoners; we've been doing it for 10 to 15 years this way. It has been out in the process and we are doing it to ensure that Yukoners who get Yukon health care are actually Yukon residents. That is the main benefit for this process and we are continuing to do that as we have in the past.

Question re: Silverfox death, public inquiry

Mr. Hardy: The NDP would like to thank the Justice minister for her press release yesterday in regard to a public inquiry into the death of Raymond Silverfox. Now we are looking for some clarifications for the Yukon people, however, whose faith and trust in the RCMP has been severely shaken. In her statement, the minister announced that investigations by the RCMP and Crown prosecutors should be completed prior to determining if a public inquiry is required. She also mentioned the review of policing. So we understand that, after the RCMP and Crown prosecutor's investigations, and after the review of policing, a public inquiry could still be announced.

So my question: do we have this right and what will be the time frame and process for determining if a public inquiry is still warranted after the investigation and review are finished?

Hon. Ms. Horne: Indeed, I'm very pleased with the cooperation of the RCMP in sending information to the Crown prosecutor, who is independent of government and the RCMP, and I'm sure will reach a fair conclusion.

Once we follow the due process of the RCMP review and the investigation by the Crown prosecutor, we will then decide if we will have a public inquiry into the matter of Raymond Silverfox.

Mr. Hardy: I guess the question is, who's "we"? Who are the ones making the decision on having a public inquiry?

We understand the need for internal reviews or investigations; we understand the position the minister is taking in this regard, but we have to go back to this one fundamental issue: Yukon people need reassurances that these investigations won't just sweep things under the rug. They've been very, very disturbed by what has happened.

The Yukon people want details about these investigations and want a guarantee that a public inquiry on the death of Raymond Silverfox will not be ruled out. So the question is this: will the minister provide this House with details about the RCMP and Crown prosecutor investigations, particularly the scope, length, powers and mandate of these investigations? And we would gladly accept written documents with more details from the minister in this case.

Hon. Ms. Horne: As I just said, I will reiterate that we will let the process take its due course and, if we feel there is sufficient evidence — we don't know what the investigation will uncover or if there will be charges laid and we'll see that process through and then decide, depending on the results. It is a very, very sad case with Raymond Silverfox and we all feel for his untimely death, for his family, and we sincerely regret what happened and we will follow this through.

At this time, I'd like to thank the members opposite for working with us on the motion yesterday — I'm glad that you worked with us.

Mr. Hardy: I agree with the minister opposite, this is extremely distressing. It is a difficult subject and there is no one to blame in here in that sense. There is no blame being assigned.

Yesterday the NDP was not given the opportunity to speak on the debate on whether a public inquiry should be called into the death of Raymond Silverfox, however. Our position has been clear. Since Mr. Silverfox's tragic death in December 2008, a public inquiry is necessary. Today we feel even more convinced of the necessity of a public inquiry. There is a growing sense of disenchantment with the RCMP among the Yukon public, born of the shameful treatment of Mr. Silverfox, plus the four other deaths in custody since in 1999, the actions of officers in Watson Lake, the national coverage of the deaths of Robert Dziekanski, Ian Bush and others, and the ongoing issue of taser misuse. All this adds to the distrust of the RCMP by the public, and that has to be dealt with.

So the question is this: will the minister guarantee to the Yukon people, in as clear language as possible, that a public inquiry could be called in the not-too-distant future, and that the mandate of this public inquiry will reflect the people's will and not political expediency?

Hon. Ms. Horne: Mr. Speaker, the reason we're having the RCMP inquiry is that it is all-encompassing — not only for this one incident but for the many incidents that have happened. I again say that it can be called back at almost any time, but we will wait to hear the results of the inquiry first, but we want to ensure — and the RCMP are working very closely with us to put steps in place so that this type of tragedy does

not happen again. We do have faith in our working together to come to this result.

Question re: Substance abuse

Mr. Hardy: We extend — I think we all extend — our deepest sympathy to the family and friends of the four First Nation fathers, mothers, sisters, brothers, friends who have died in police custody in the Yukon over the past decade. We also have empathy for the RCMP officers and other professionals who will suffer from actions taken and not taken in these events. Some of them do their jobs very well and are tarnished by these kinds of events.

There is a need to consult, to change policy, to train the RCMP and others dealing with persons who are intoxicated or under the influence of drugs to be more responsible and responsive. Many administrative actions need to be taken by everyone involved, and there's no doubt about that, but that is dealing only with the immediate results of years of neglect of the very serious problem of substance abuse in the Yukon.

So my question is for the Minister of Health and Social Services. Will he tell us what has been done since the latest in-custody death to deal with substance abuse in our community?

Hon. Mr. Hart: We are continuing to work on our substance abuse program. We are working with the Sarah Steele Building and services being handled from there to ensure that we are assisting those with addictions. We are also working with other aspects of addictions, through our FASSY program, and we are dealing with other issues as they relate to mental illness. Again, many of the issues related to many of the sicknesses that we deal with on a daily basis are as a result of alcohol, and we are dealing with those situations.

Mr. Hardy: The current use of police cells and the hospital emergency ward for treating individuals suffering from excessive substance abuse is wrong. These limited options are totally inappropriate both for treatment and for everybody's security. The RCMP should not be faced with a choice of charging someone and throwing them into a drunk tank or taking them to the hospital. One of the most important measures that could be taken, both for patients and for the professionals involved in this care, is the medical detoxification unit.

If the Minister of Health and Social Services is serious about reducing the shocking number of in-custody deaths, when will he establish a medical detox unit?

Hon. Mr. Hart: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member opposite for the question. With regard to dealing with that, as I stated, we are working, through our substance abuse program, in our Sarah Steele Building. We are currently looking at that facility in dealing with a situation there, and we are also looking at other alternatives for the government to consider in dealing with those guests who come or are inebriated on a regular basis, and we are dealing with solutions for how we can assist them and have medical staff available to assist them when in need.

Mr. Hardy: Now, according to a national RCMP report, 40 percent of in-custody deaths across Canada between 2002 and 2006 were due to alcohol or drug toxicity — a massively high number. Victims of our society need long-term, supportive help. Family support, employment, housing, social

assistance and long-term counselling are needed as after-care for someone coming out of detox. Programs involving the whole community and supportive help in familiar and safe environments, as well as training in addictions for everyone from the RCMP to family members are required, Mr. Speaker. New methods need to be explored and used if we are to be serious about dealing with addictions. One of the new methods is a wet shelter, which should be considered for chronic users of drugs and alcohol. Other communities and places are using it.

My question: will the minister consider setting up a three-year pilot project for substance abuse clients that includes the latest approaches to addiction treatment?

Hon. Mr. Hart: I thank the member opposite for the question. I thank him for listening to the radio also.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Justice indicated yesterday in her speech that we were going to address this situation with regard to substance abuse — it has to stop — and the way in which we are treating it, and we will be investigating that situation. We will be looking at alternatives to how we can deal with this situation in conjunction with the RCMP, in conjunction with the review and in conjunction with not only the Department of Justice but also the Department of Health and Social Services.

Question re: Workers' advocate report

Mr. Elias: Mr. Speaker, I've got a question for the Minister of Justice. Yesterday was the National Day of Mourning for workers who have been killed or injured on the job. Members from all parties spoke about the importance of Yukoners keeping themselves and each other safe at work, but the government is failing to uphold the key legal responsibility and that is tabling the workers' advocate report. The *Workers' Compensation Act* is clear: the Minister of Justice must have that information, "Within 90 days after the end of the calendar year." That report hasn't been filed yet and it is now overdue. When will the Minister of Justice table the overdue workers' advocate report?

Hon. Ms. Horne: This report will be filed before the end of this sitting. I am very glad that the member opposite is aware that it is to be tabled.

Mr. Elias: Mr. Speaker, it was supposed to be tabled months ago. The minister might not think that the report is important enough to have it done on time, but the law is clear. This isn't the first time that the government ignored its legal reporting requirements. We're still waiting on three years' worth of overdue environmental reports, as required by the *Environment Act*. Back in 2007, the Premier shrugged off the responsibility to the report, offering only to "look into the matter as far as the very benign legalities around this particular issue are concerned."

Does the Minister of Justice believe that the worker's advocate report is also just a benign legality that can be put off for years?

Hon. Ms. Horne: I was going to call a point of order, but I don't want to call any more interest or have his statements stand out any more than they do. This report will be filed by the end of this sitting, as it should be.

Mr. Elias: The government makes grand statements about worker safety, but it can't even be bothered to report on the advocate's work. If that sounds familiar, it's also because, after promising to be responsible with Yukoners' money, the government made investments forbidden by its own *Financial Administration Act*. The Auditor General made that determination when she had to remind the government to "... manage the investment of public money prudently and in accordance with legislation."

The minister is obliged to table the workers' advocate report; she hasn't done that; she's late in doing that, in following the law. Why won't this government obey its own laws?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: Mr. Speaker, you know, the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin has actually implied that the government does not follow the law and that the government breaks the law. Mr. Speaker, that's a pretty serious allegation, so I would hope that the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin rethinks that strategy, because the cunning approach to it is the incorrect approach.

Let me refer the member to the Auditor General's comment. The Auditor General's report, by the way — her notes in the public accounts said this — I can't quote verbatim, because I do not have the document before me, but this is what the Auditor General referenced: The investment in asset-backed paper had been a practice by the Yukon government for decades. The Auditor General went on to say that it also did not have any negative effect on the Yukon government's cash position. The Auditor General did not say that the government had broken the law. Let me emphasize and repeat for the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin — the Auditor General said that this has been a practice by government for years, and that the investments had not negatively impacted the Yukon government's cash position.

Question re: Workers' advocate

Mr. Mitchell: Mr. Speaker, I also have questions for the Minister of Justice. In 2007, this government fired the workers' advocate.

The individual in question was appointed directly to the position of workers' advocate by the Minister of Justice. The employee filed a grievance against the government after he was fired, alleging he was wrongfully dismissed. It is our understanding that that grievance was recently upheld by an adjudicator. Can the Minister of Justice confirm the adjudicator has ruled and that the decision is in favour of the former workers' advocate?

Hon. Ms. Horne: This is an operational issue to do with personnel and I cannot respond to this as I do not have the information.

Mr. Mitchell: Mr. Speaker, we know the government doesn't want to talk about this, because they just lost their case and we can tell you it has been a lot more than an operational issue to the individual involved. I should mention that the individual in question worked as the workers' advocate from 1997 to 2006 and was very good at his job. When this individual was fired, he filed a grievance for wrongful dismissal. That grievance was upheld by an adjudicator in 2009 and a recent settle-

ment included a substantial payment to the former workers' advocate.

Can the minister confirm that the grievance was indeed upheld and can she tell Yukoners what this unjust firing is going to cost Yukon taxpayers?

Hon. Ms. Horne: Again, I reiterate that personnel issues are not under the purview of the minister, although the members opposite like to think so. I do not have any information and I will not have any information on personnel.

Mr. Mitchell: This individual was directly hired by the minister, so I think she might have noticed his absence. Now, Mr. Speaker, the Government of Yukon fired the workers' advocate in 2007. The adjudicator has recently ruled the government is in the wrong on this issue and has to pay the individual in question. My understanding is the settlement is six figures.

The workers' advocate is appointed by the Justice minister, but the budget for the workers' advocate comes from the Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board. One of them is now on the hook for a six-figure payout. If it's Justice, taxpayers are on the hook and that's bad enough. If it's the Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board, employers are on the hook. I'm sure Yukon companies who paid Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board premiums would be happy to learn their money is going to pay for this government's mistake.

Can the minister — or I can see the Premier getting ready — tell Yukoners who is paying — the Justice department or the Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: You know, Mr. Speaker, this is really interesting. First off, the member is suggesting that a personnel matter, which includes due process, has worked.

Well, every employee has a right to go through due process and ensuring that the interference of government — elected officials and ministers — does not take place.

Now let me go on further. This government allows due process, especially in personnel matters. We do not Google employees who exercise their right to freedom of speech. We do not suggest or accuse employees in the Department of Finance of breaking the law when they make the investments that they do. We do not suggest that members and officials from the Department of Health and Social Services are threatening Yukoners about their health care when they're doing their job. We allow our personnel, our employees, to do the job that they're hired to do. Obviously, the Liberals have a problem with that, given the interference that they continue to demonstrate when they go after duly-hired public servants.

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Hon. Mr. Fentie: No wonder the public servants are concerned.

Speaker's statement

Speaker: Order please. Honourable members, I've asked you not to interfere when another member is speaking. Now, I'm going to start naming members if they don't control themselves.

Hon. Premier, you have the floor.

Hon. Mr. Fentie: In closing, Mr. Speaker, I would hope that the Liberals demonstrate some of that control and recognize that personnel matters are left in due process. Obviously, the member's point, if in fact what he has brought to the House is the correct information — the process works.

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

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

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

Motion agreed to

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Chair (Mr. Nordick): Order please. Committee of the Whole will now come to order. The matter before the Committee is Bill No. 20, *First Appropriation Act, 2010-11*, Vote 54, Department of Tourism.

Do members wish a brief recess?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

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

Recess

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

Bill No. 20 — *First Appropriation Act, 2010-11* — continued

Chair: The matter before the Committee is Bill No. 20, *First Appropriation Act, 2010-11*. We will now continue with line-by-line debate in Vote 54, Tourism and Culture. We were currently on line the Arts for \$3,330,000, and Ms. Taylor, you had the floor on that line.

Department of Tourism and Culture — *continued*

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Mr. Chair, I believe we left off at that very line item, which included discussion about funding for a number of arts-related funds. In fact, it was about two and a half years ago that our government was very pleased to be able to introduce new funding for sustaining operational requirements for arts-related organizations.

We recognize the importance the arts play within our community, and we understand that enhancement in funding for artists and organizations also helps to ensure their success in a wide range of activities. One only has to take a look at the recent display of arts and culture on the international stage during the recent 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games.

The arts and cultural community rose to the occasion — rose to the challenge — and did an exemplary job on behalf of Yukon in showcasing and presenting all that makes us very proud to call Yukon our home.

This line item does reflect ongoing funding attached to some of these programs. As I mentioned before, when we look at the Artist in the School program, for example, that has made a significant difference. We were able to add an additional \$75,000 a couple of years ago in new funding for this program, which has enabled additional programming to take place in schools outside of the City of Whitehorse.

It has increased the availability of arts instruction; it has provided more hours of instruction in the schools, more opportunities for creative projects and has also enabled us to provide a comprehensive resource guidebook on art education programming available to the respective schools in the Yukon and also to provide the additional outreach to all schools.

The program also provides additional employment income to Yukon artists through an increased hourly wage as well, as is reflected within the funding allotment of \$100,000. With that, there is also reference to the arts fund program and, again, by being able to help increase funding through a number of funding mechanisms — I mentioned before the arts funding program. It has provided additional dollars for ongoing operations of arts organizations, therefore sustaining and bringing stability on a longer term basis to a number of organizations. I know that the All-City Band Society, for example, does an exemplary job. They continue to help create young, Yukon musical minds, thanks to the deliberations of a number of very committed teachers in the Yukon and that of a lot of volunteers and parents, to say the least.

That is one example of a society that has been able to benefit from some of the ongoing sustainable funding that we have been able to make available, which has provided the base and the solid foundation for their operations.

There are a multitude of other examples of ongoing arts funding available through this fund. When we were able to do that, it also, as I mentioned the other day, freed up additional funds within the arts fund, which supports projects. It's applicant-driven, project-driven and has helped, again, to stimulate increased arts activity within all of our communities.

We have been able to also enhance funding to cultural venues such as The Old Fire Hall as I mentioned the other day. It has turned out to be an amazing example of a very unique and creative partnership between the Whitehorse Chamber of Commerce, the Yukon Arts Centre and the Yukon government.

I was speaking to a couple of members from the Yukon Arts Centre last night and we were talking about the success of that venue. It has served to provide a venue for community gatherings, for exhibits, for showing films, and for hosting book launches, such as the one last night in recognition of the annual Yukon Writers Festival, which we were able to tribute in this Legislature not long ago.

So this venue, because of its geographical location within the downtown core of Whitehorse, has served to help bring economic business to the downtown core. I was just talking to one of the individuals who has a store on Main Street, who is very appreciative of all the activity and the business going on within The Old Fire Hall. It has stimulated additional traffic in the downtown core and, therefore, also driven a lot of traffic to other stores in the area, which is one of the intended purposes

of having such a cultural venue in place. It also takes advantage of all the work that we have been able to invest along the Whitehorse waterfront, for example.

Over the course of the last number of years, this government has invested with the Government of Canada — in tandem with the City of Whitehorse, the Kwanlin Dun First Nation and others — \$19 million in expenditures and improvements along the Whitehorse waterfront.

We are really thrilled with the work to be completed by Kwanlin Dun First Nation on the development of their cultural centre, which will also include a new public library through the Department of Community Services. The Department of Tourism and Culture is providing continued assistance in terms of planning and support to Kwanlin Dun on their cultural centre, as we are with Champagne and Aishihik First Nations. They are to be congratulated for being able to achieve what they have to date and for the great excitement that we will be seeing coming alive on the waterfront in the next couple of years.

Housed within this line item, as well, there are dollars for, I believe, the Dawson City Arts Society — \$400,000.

That is a society for which we have been able to enhance funding as well over the years, in recognition of the leadership role that it continues to play in arts development in the Yukon. It is thanks to their efforts that also, in cooperation with the Department of Education, that the first school of visual arts was born north of 60. It has been an amazing success. I understand that another graduation of students recently took place at SOVA, and it's great to see that that complement of students continues to grow. They have done work in coming up with transfer arrangements, or accreditation, to schools such as Emily Carr and the Northern Institute of Arts and Culture. These are all examples of unique partnerships that have been struck. Again, through its very existence, it is also helping to put the Klondike region even more so on the map. The Klondike region has served to be a nurturing ground for arts and culture in the territory.

So again, Mr. Chair, there are other examples — the touring fund is \$100,000 to support touring of our individual groups who create and produce original work and who would like to expand their reach to new audiences. Of course, this couldn't come at a better time, following on the heels of the Olympic experience. That in itself has raised awareness of artists throughout the Lower Mainland. It has served to provide a lot of connections with local galleries and other arts-related organizations in the area for our performers and artisans to be able to continue to collaborate and to build on those partnerships that have been cultivated by the Olympic experience.

The advanced artist award — we are also very pleased to continue with this. This also provides assistance to visual literary performing artists practising at a senior level. We have very much indeed a matured level or a number of artists in the territory and we're very pleased to be able to help fund projects by way of education, whether it's workshops, mentoring, even assisting with post-secondary or post-graduate studies, as well as providing assistance for travel to attend openings of exhibitions, concerts or other specific related events.

It's but one more example of this government's commitment to the growth of the arts and cultural sector.

As I mentioned, I believe, the other day as well, Culture Quest was part of the decade of sports and culture that this government first initiated several years back in order to capture the very essence of some major sporting events, such as the Canada Winter Games in 2007 and, of course, the 2010 Winter Olympics.

As I've often said, it's not only about sport; it is equally as important to be able to focus and emphasize the important role that culture plays. Culture Quest was developed in 2003. It has provided ongoing, lasting benefits to both our tourism and cultural sectors. We have provided about \$157,000 a year to the Yukon Arts Centre for the administration of the program.

We know, for example, that over half of the projects that received support from this program were actually showcased at the Canada Winter Games in 2007. We know that just about all of the participants in the 2010 Winter Olympics had also received some support as an emerging artist at that time through this program as well.

As I mentioned earlier, at the 2010 Paralympic Games, it was really wonderful and amazing to be able to see artists, such as Manfred Janssen and Root Sellers able to perform on the international stage through the international broadcast network. To be able to have that kind of coverage and to have that level of experience on the international stage, there really is no dollar figure that can be attached to that. It's priceless, and I congratulate all of the groups and individual artists who participated throughout the Olympics. They really did a wonderful job as cultural ambassadors. They represented Yukon very well and of course one of the ongoing legacies of the Olympics is that of our investment in our artists, in the cultural performers, in our sports athletes and also the youth ambassadors.

Those experiences continue to resonate as individuals have come back home and have reflected and continue to reflect on their positive experience during the Olympics.

In speaking with a couple of youth ambassadors, for example, at the Aboriginal Pavilion in Vancouver, the Olympic experience really altered their perspectives. It changed their outlook on the potential and all of the opportunities that really lie before them — opportunities such as the 2010 Winter Olympics.

Mr. Chair, I could go on at great length, and I do have lots more information to reflect on, but I again did want to thank the Member for Porter Creek South especially for his line of questioning throughout the Tourism debate. I just wanted to also add my thanks for continuing to encourage me to continue to do the good job that I have been doing. That's actually my response to a quote from the member opposite for recognizing the excellent job the Department of Tourism and Culture has been doing in the Yukon over the last number of years.

So I know that things can get heated, debate can get perhaps heated at times, particularly during Question Period, but I did want to put that on the public record that I do acknowledge those statements put on the floor of the Legislature, and I very much appreciate that acknowledgement. Thank you.

Arts in the amount of \$3,330,000 agreed to

On Archives

Mr. Inverarity: I'd like to just ask the minister if she could not only go through all of the items on this particular line, but of particular interest — I'm kind of curious as to whether there is also any money in there for a legislative archive library that needs to be created, and if there are any projections to be coming out to move forward with a legislative archive library.

I don't believe we have one and certainly need to start looking at archives in general as they're important; they're our history and they need to be protected. I would be curious to see if there has been any consideration given, as she goes through these line items.

Hon. Ms. Taylor: I'll just start with the mandate of Yukon Archives, which is to acquire, preserve and make available documentary sources related to Yukon and the circumpolar north, including government, private and corporate records; it includes photographs, film, sound recordings, maps, newspapers and other published sources.

The archives reference room, as the member opposite may be aware, is open to the public and services are made available to schools and to other groups. I think I made reference not long ago to a public launch of the recognition of contribution of blacks people, for example, to the construction of the Alaska Highway, and their very integral contribution to the construction of the highway and all that that brought to the territory.

This was as a result of the unique partnership between Yukon Archives, between the Hidden History group and other partners as well. I think that, increasingly, Yukon Archives has been working to ensure that what it does has relevance in the Yukon public of today and that it also instills learning within our schools. Many schools have accessed and continue to access school classrooms in utilizing — for example, the Heritage Fair is coming up, if I'm not mistaken. I know that a lot of those projects have been put together by many classrooms throughout the territory. All the schools have used the services of Yukon Archives.

Funding does recognize personnel in large part, and there are a number of personnel. I won't go into all of the positions, but it does include our own territorial archivist.

We have a native reference assistant, archives conservator; we have a government records archivist, assistants, librarians; we have audio/visual digitization tech assistants, archives reference assistants, an archives page, and so forth. There are a multitude of various positions housed within this particular unit. Other expenditures include communications, as I mentioned before, helping to raise awareness about the archives, but also about the multitude of stories that Yukon has to tell. In fact, there is another exhibit opening coming up — James Quong photography exhibit opening on Friday, I believe it is — which we look forward to launching in collaboration, I think, with MacBride Museum and at Arts Underground, if I am not mistaken.

There are also dollars for contracts for specialized conservation services, for archival acquisitions, training, programming, advertising, repairs and so forth. It also includes contri-

butions to Friends of the Yukon Archives Society and the Yukon Council of Archives.

Again, this helps bring that added raised awareness regarding our archives to the community.

There was reference to the Legislative Assembly, I think it was, and I do know that there is actually a project that is underway right now between — it's actually a very unique collaboration, although I don't have all the details in front of me — there is, including our own Yukon Archives, I think it's the Friends of the Yukon Archives Society or perhaps it's Yukon Council of Archives and others. Yukon College is also included. It's in terms of taking a digitized, or I should say capturing, recordings of the Legislative Assembly. It's the best of the best over the last numerous years; that is since proceedings had first commenced — transcription, that is. They're actually taking actual sound clips — the best — and I don't know what the best will be for the Member from Porter Creek South.

I could probably give them a few ideas, but I'm sure there will be clips of the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin and of course all members from this side of the Legislature as well. They are assembling that information. I know they're also working with the Yukon Legislative Assembly. So that's just one example of how they are again breathing life into the Yukon Legislature and adding awareness of the work of the Legislative Assembly, its members and the many issues that have been raised over the years by respective members of the institution.

Mr. Inverarity: I find this a very interesting subject and I'm looking forward to continuing debate on this particular line item. I was interested to hear the minister talking about this new project coming out with regard to the legislative library and while I am looking — I'm not quite sure if I'm always looking forward to the video of myself on TV or being displayed at some cultural event — I wish I had more hair, but you know how it goes. It should prove to be an interesting subject.

But I know we need to move on to some of the other line items, because I'm going to be asking questions probably about all of them this afternoon. I'm looking forward to some stimulating debate and this is always exciting for me. Specifically, while I understand the legislative library project is an important project, I'm really curious about whether or not the actual archives of the research — there are things we table here every day in the House — and some of these, I understand, are getting a little tattered around the edges. Part of that would be a research component so that any member or any member of the public might be able to access the legislative library. I would hope the minister might be able to shed some light on whether this initial project she was referring to will lead into a bigger project, where we actually have something that everybody could use, particularly the Members of the Legislative Assembly.

Hon. Ms. Taylor: I would think that perhaps that discussion would first start with Members' Services Board. That is something — I'm not sure; I'm not a member of the Members' Services Board, but it does comprise all-party representation. If it is an issue of importance to respective members, that may be the place to start.

I haven't had any discussions recently with Yukon Archives or with the Yukon Legislative Assembly office on this issue but, if it is an issue of importance to members of the Legislature, I would anticipate that this would be raised in Members' Services Board.

Those discussions could take place then from there on out, providing direction to Yukon Archives, but I just do not have that information at my fingertips. Perhaps those discussions have already taken place; I'm just not aware at this particular point in time.

Archives in the amount of \$1,208,000 agreed to
Cultural Services in the amount of \$9,256,000 agreed to
On Tourism

On Directorate

Mr. Inverarity: I would like a breakdown of that, please.

Hon. Ms. Taylor: This entails personnel dollars. It also entails dollars for communications: telephones, cellphones, fax, long distance, Internet charges. We also have money for contracts, for travel, registrations, program materials, supplies, printing, rental expense and advertising. As well, as I mentioned, there are a couple of personnel positions.

Directorate in the amount of \$298,000 agreed to
On Product Development and Research

Mr. Inverarity: I wouldn't mind a breakdown on this. Particularly, I am interested in the change between the forecast 2009-10 of \$1.990 million and a reduction to \$1.504 million.

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Actually, if we're talking apples to apples — that is, estimate to estimate — there is actually an increase of about \$42,000. But I will go through the breakdown for the member opposite. This contains a number of personnel-related costs or investments, I would say. For product development and research, we have product development officer, tourism resource coordinator, marketing fund coordinator, research officer and manager. We have dollars allotted for travel for tourism fact sheets, database maintenance workshops; we have dollars for our Statistics Bureau — border crossings — and I know how much the member opposite very much appreciates reviewing those.

We have dollars for our conversions, joint research projects, and also dollars for focus groups, because, after all, with all that we do in Tourism, marketing is research-based. There are also dollars to provide tourism information, expertise, analysis for land use planning in the respective regions — I think I already alluded to this.

We have a position within the Department of Tourism and Culture who does a very fine, exemplary job in representing Tourism interests when it comes to land use planning exercises, whether that's in Peel watershed, Dawson regions and so forth. Agay Mene was another one; Kusawa is another. There are multitudes of park planning processes that are the lead in the Department of Environment — I should say the lead for land use planning is the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources, but I do know the very importance of how much Environment contributes, just as Tourism and Culture also contributes to the land use planning process. We have dollars for en-

hancing capabilities of tourism stakeholders through workshop deliveries.

We also have dollars for updating tourism activity, mapping for land use purposes, as I mentioned before, dollars for program materials, supplies, registrations, memberships and printing. This also contains dollars that reflect the tourism cooperative marketing fund. There was an increase of about \$200,000 in this program alone. It has been a very important program, first introduced in 2004. It has facilitated a lot of traffic from individual operators to organizations to further leverage their reach into tourism markets.

There are also dollars for product development activities and resource assessments.

I do know that, from the forecast to the estimate, as the member opposite was referring to before — again, this is attributed to revotes of the tourism cooperative marketing fund projects and is also inclusive of revotes for the banner program. The member opposite will see banners strewn throughout the territory as a result of a funding increase — I think it was last year.

So it's inclusive of many areas, and we're very pleased to be able to continue with this very important item of product development and research.

Product Development and Research in the amount of
\$1,546,000 agreed to

On Marketing Operations — Overseas

Mr. Inverarity: Again, I'd like a breakdown of this particular one. Perhaps the minister could expand on the decrease this year in overseas marketing?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: This line item reflects personnel costs — also general operations for marketing initiatives, travel, registration, familiarity tours, Rendezvous, sales kits, which is coming up in Winnipeg. We have rental expenses, supplies, advertising, program materials, registrations and so forth. There are dollars allotted for our European marketing program — again, contracts with our agent in continental Europe, our German sales agent, which includes Fulda advertising, registrations and so forth.

The dollar item also includes Asian-Pacific marketing programming, which includes contracts, advertising and other miscellaneous expenditures. The member opposite referred to the reduction in marketing overseas. The member opposite will recall that, as part of the stimulus initiatives as brought forward by the Tourism Industry Association of Yukon last year, there was a request for one-time funding for overseas marketing. We were able to deliver that over a period of two fiscal years, which includes the \$400,000. We are in the process of reviewing the results of those additional dollars and we will be working with industry to assess the strengths of that funding and the success of that funding initiative — those additional dollars. We actually even will be looking to a funding mechanism such as CanNor, which is a new funding mechanism that has been made available through the government of Canada, first time ever. We're very pleased to be able to look to that for multiple year use of ongoing funding for overseas marketing, should it be identified as a key strategic priority of industry.

Marketing Operations — Overseas in the amount of \$1,318,000 agreed to

On Marketing Operations — North America

Mr. Inverarity: I'd like a breakdown of that, too, please.

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Marketing operations for North America — this again includes a number of personnel, but it also includes other expenditures for partnerships, counsel, marketing agency services, planning, industry liaison, advertising campaigns, including our joint Yukon-Alaska program with the Alaska Travel Industry Association. It also includes ongoing money for Destination: Yukon which, as the member opposite knows full well, we were just able to increase by about \$500,000 this year. This will become ongoing annual funding rolled into our A-base, so we're very pleased to bring stability to that. There are also dollars for photography, for maintenance and development of our visual library, photo shoots and so forth. There's also the development of interactive initiatives.

Again, websites — we spoke at great length about the importance of our Travel Yukon website, electronic marketing and e-advertising. There are dollars allotted for media, public relations, including media tours, website, marketplace and some public relations activities.

This is yet another area that has been deemed of importance to industry — media public relations — as well as investment in our website. Data management, fulfillment, costs for distributing all of our print marketing material, including our vacation planner and our lure brochures. There is a whole host of print materials that we distribute to our trade partners and to our potential visitors.

There is also, as part of the transfer payments, money for the Wilderness Tourism Association of Yukon; Yukon Quest; Yukon Convention Bureau; Tourism North, which is comprised of Alaska, Alberta, British Columbia and Yukon. I think that's it for Tourism North.

There are also dollars for the decade of sport and culture that I referred to before.

Mr. Inverarity: I was wondering if the minister could tell us — I didn't hear it mentioned and maybe it was overlooked and maybe it doesn't happen — if there are any domestic marketing partnerships included in this line item or that she has specifically with Air North?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Air North is a very important partner for Tourism Yukon and for the Yukon in general. They are a large employer of over 200 individuals. They have made great investments in the territorial economy. They have made great investments, in turn, in a lot of organizations and events in support of many worthy initiatives throughout the territory.

I have great admiration for the quality service and excellence that their staff and their management team provide day in and day out. It is a family business and we are very pleased to have a good working rapport with Air North as a major air partner. When we talk about growing tourism in the Yukon, air access continues to be a strategic priority for growing tourism. I think I said before, last year alone we experienced another increase and that was another record that we set in terms of people planing and deplaning at the Whitehorse International

Airport. Much of that success can be attributed to the contributions of Air North and the investments that they have made over the years in our gateway cities, such as Edmonton, Calgary and Vancouver. It is for that very reason that we have been able to invest an additional \$500,000 toward the Destination: Yukon campaign, as well as an additional \$200,000 to our tourism cooperative marketing fund.

Over the years, I know that Air North has subscribed to the tourism cooperative marketing fund. For every dollar that individual businesses or operators or organizations contribute, that fund will match that activity, which further extends the marketing reach of that organization's ability. I'm very pleased to assist Air North in that regard. When it comes to Destination: Yukon, there are also opportunities for showcasing businesses such as Air North and the work that they do in our gateway cities, as I mentioned, through the Destination: Yukon campaign. We do go out to market; we do advertise in a number of advertising medium. We do go out to industry and we are working on providing more lead time for industries to contribute. That is pay to play, as well, in terms of showcasing one's packages or opportunities that await here in terms of travel packages throughout the Yukon. I should also mention consumer and trade shows. I just referred to a couple recent ones that took place in Edmonton and Vancouver, for example — the Home and Garden Show and the Vancouver outdoor show. Those are all examples where we are also able to provide that team-Yukon approach, joining with businesses, such as Air North and other businesses. I won't make mention of any specific names, because I don't have them at hand. The Klondike Visitors Association has taken advantage of Tourism Yukon. It just makes a lot of sense to have greater presence from Yukon, and that is something we've heard as a priority from industry. They want to see the Department of Tourism present at some of these major trade and consumer shows, and we're happy to deliver on that.

Mr. Inverarity: Let me rephrase the question: does the Government of Yukon/Department of Tourism have a domestic marketing partnership with Air North?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Maybe I wasn't being clear enough but also through, as I mentioned, trade and consumer shows. There are opportunities through TCMF. I know Air North has subscribed to that through Destination: Yukon.

I know that this program has been very important to Air North and I know that Air North views these additional investments as good investments. There are opportunities for Air North to, again, work with the Department of Tourism and Culture, among other individual operators — tour operators throughout the Yukon — to provide the travel packages available to prospective, potential visitors from those areas of Edmonton and Calgary, Vancouver, the Lower Mainland. So again, we work very closely with Air North and we view them as a very important travel trade partner to the growth of tourism in the Yukon.

Mr. Inverarity: I don't think I'm hearing the answer I'm looking for. It's a simple yes or no. Does the Department of Tourism have a domestic marketing partnership with Air North? Yes or no. I know they do lots of good things. I love Air

North just like everybody. However, I'm just asking if you have a formal partnership with Air North for domestic marketing.

Hon. Ms. Taylor: I guess I'm not following the member opposite. In terms of domestic cooperative marketing initiatives, yes, we do partner with Air North through the tourism cooperative marketing fund, which we have been able to enhance by \$200,000, which provides additional opportunities. In fact, as we speak right now, there is a session going on at the TIA AGM, which is solely dedicated to TCMF and where we are going with that fund.

We tweak that fund on an annual basis in collaboration with industry — where we need to work on and where we need to strengthen, perhaps other areas have not been fully subscribed to. I know that Air North has subscribed to TCMF in the past. They view that as a good investment and so do we. That is why, in fact, we implemented it back in 2004. We're very happy to invest an additional \$200,000 for \$700,000 for additional cooperative marketing initiatives and partnerships with initiative entities such as Air North.

In terms of Destination: Yukon, as well, as I mentioned before, there are opportunities to partner with tourism in Yukon. I can't say whether or not Air North is part of this campaign going on right now; I would have to get those details. There is an opportunity; it is at the discretion of the individual operator, Air North, if they choose to participate and I know that they are always willing and able to. We work to the best of our abilities to ensure that we can partner with them to assure that we have a good lead time for operators such as Air North to come on board and be able to also enter into joint marketing initiatives such as that.

One of the things about bringing stability to Destination: Yukon marketing to the amount of about \$750,000 — that's ongoing annual funding — we will now have extra lead time going into campaigns and that's something that will be a high item of discussion for industry through our Senior Marketing Committee and the industry at a greater length as well, as to how we can best work with operators and organizations and municipalities and others to give them enough lead time to ensure that their businesses are adequately represented, that they have enough lead time to plan so that we can have a concerted effort to raise awareness — consumer awareness — in our key domestic markets such as Calgary, Edmonton and Vancouver.

Mr. Inverarity: I have to say I was looking for just a simple answer. I guess the answer is probably no. I have to say that I'm probably revising my opinion of the good work of the minister at this point in time.

Having said that, I think I'll just clear this line and move on; we have a lot of other work to do.

Hon. Ms. Taylor: I just wanted to clarify for the member opposite again, it's unfortunate the member opposite is not choosing to listen to the responses but again, to be very clear, all our programs and how we deliver, implement and evaluate are for that purpose, and that is to generate leads, to follow up on those leads and, as we mentioned the other night, it's also to put bums in seats. That is what we are working to do.

We have made additional opportunities to industry by way of the tourism cooperative marketing fund. We have made opportunities known through consumer shows, for example. Edmonton and Vancouver I just mentioned earlier. Destination: Yukon, again, we have increased funding to that to the level of \$750,000.

I was just passed some information that Air North does have packages promoted within our ads and on our Travel Yukon website by way of Destination: Yukon. We have held a number of trade events, in addition to consumer shows in Edmonton and Vancouver. Especially in Vancouver, we have held about three trade events over the last number of months as well. We have a trade fair agreement in support of media and trade fairs. We also list Air North on our Travel Yukon website. We also make available a listing of their packages available through Air North. We also know that Air North continues to fully maximize our partnership allotment of \$75,000 per year through the tourism cooperative marketing fund. So, yes, Mr. Chair, the answer is unequivocally yes.

Marketing Operations — North America in the amount of \$4,120,000 agreed to

On Visitor Services

Mr. Inverarity: Can I have a breakdown on that, Mr. Chair?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: As the member opposite may be aware, visitor services coordinates delivery and distribution of all of our tourism marketing material in Yukon.

It works with communities and regions to provide expert advice to tourism companies and visitors throughout Yukon through our visitor information centres. This dollar amount also reflects a number of FTEs, including a manager for information services, and travel counsellor. We have a visitor information clerk and visitor information centre staff and their expenditures for travel in and out of the Yukon, including costs associated with visitor information centre staff training and travel to all centres in the Yukon.

In fact, I think it is this week that we have the visitor centre staff convene in a community — this year it happens to be in the City of Whitehorse — for four or five days each year, I believe, for training opportunities. It is always wonderful to see all of our staff each and every year. They do an exemplary job. Many of them have been with the department for many years; some have just come on-board recently.

There are monies for repairs, ongoing audio-visual equipment, for supplies, program materials in support of their operations and promotional items.

There are also dollars for the First Nations Tourism Association, for funding for the Tourism Industry Association of the Yukon, for the Yukon tourism marketing partnership, for the Stay Another Day activities, as well as for Yukon Sourdough Rendezvous.

This service provides a great amount of activity and reflects that, as I have just stated.

Mr. Inverarity: Could the minister answer if there's any money in here for the visitor information centres around the Yukon?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Again, there seems to be disconnect here. I think I just articulated that this line item reflects dollars, and I believe we're on operation and maintenance, not the capital costs, but operation and maintenance, which includes personnel. We have a number of visitor information centre staff.

It includes dollars for travel costs, as I just referenced, for the purposes of training. Also, I believe that there are dollars allotted for staff exchanges, as has occurred over the last number of years. There are ongoing dollars for repairs to the centre — supplies, which could be replacement of carpet, could be a change in the colour of paint, and it could be to change the eavestrough. I'm not sure; I don't have the specific breakdown on that. It also contains program materials for operations of our visitor centres.

Mr. Inverarity: Just for the minister, I'm aware that we're on operation and maintenance. I understand that there is a lot that goes into operation and maintenance, including paint and including eavestroughs and all kinds of things. My question was pretty simple: are operation and maintenance costs in this for visitor information centres? The answer appears to be, yes. Thank you very much.

The next question is — no, actually, that's fine at this point.

Visitor Services in the amount of \$1,751,000 agreed to

Tourism in the amount of \$9,033,000 agreed to

On Revenues

Revenues cleared

Total Operation and Maintenance Expenditures in the amount of \$20,048,000 agreed to

On Capital Expenditures

On Corporate Services

On Office Furniture, Equipment, Systems and Space

Office Furniture, Equipment, Systems and Space in the amount of \$210,000 agreed to

Corporate Services in the amount of \$210,000 agreed to

On Cultural Services

On Historic Sites — Historic Sites Maintenance

Historic Sites — Historic Sites Maintenance in the amount of \$95,000 agreed to

On Historic Sites — Historic Sites Planning

Mr. Inverarity: I request unanimous consent that all remaining lines for capital expenditures in Vote 54, Department of Tourism and Culture, be deemed cleared or carried, as required.

Unanimous consent re deeming all remaining lines for capital expenditures in Vote 54, Department of Tourism and Culture, cleared or carried

Chair: Mr. Inverarity has requested the unanimous consent of Committee of the Whole to deem all remaining lines for capital expenditures in Vote 54, Department of Tourism and Culture, cleared or carried, as required. Are you agreed?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

Chair: Unanimous consent has been granted.

Total Capital Expenditures in the amount of \$2,782,000 agreed to

Department of Tourism and Culture agreed to

Chair: Committee of the Whole will now proceed to the Department of Health and Social Services. Do members wish a brief recess?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

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

Recess

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

The matter before the Committee is Bill No. 20, *First Appropriation Act, 2010-11*, Vote 15, Department of Health and Social Services.

Department of Health and Social Services

Hon. Mr. Hart: The Finance minister has touched on some of the highlights in the Budget Address that will be implemented over the coming year by the Department of Health and Social Services. I would like to expand on those highlights and draw attention to some details.

As mentioned in the Budget Address, the department will be planning and developing a wellness strategy in response to the *Yukon Health Care Review*. In order to have a healthier society and a sustainable health care system, we need to do a better job of educating people and encouraging healthy lifestyle choices. We must better understand the social determinants of health and how we can challenge and influence personal decision-making that leads to a better quality of life.

We've already begun to explore the many facets of wellness. The recent Aging Well Expo and the symposium on social inclusion will both contribute to a fuller understanding of what wellness means to Yukoners. We are very pleased with the commitment in the recent federal budget to extend our territorial health system sustainability initiative for another two years. This funding, which includes the territorial health access fund, or THAF, will provide \$60 million to the three northern territories over the next two years to support health reform and medical travel initiatives.

While there are still details to be worked out, this funding will assist us to move forward on a number of fronts to address the current challenges of health system sustainability. There's a great deal going on in this department, the biggest department in the Yukon government.

To support effective planning, the department's ongoing strategic planning process ensures that our efforts are focused on goals that improve all aspects of our health, social and continuing care services and to ensure that we take the best advantages of the opportunities like the extended federal funding for THAF.

This budget supports the important work of our NGO partners such as Help and Hope for Families Society, Kaushee's Place, the Child Development Centre, Skookum Jim Friendship Centre, Challenge, LDAY, FASSY, Yukon Association of Community Living, Salvation Army, Teegatha'Oh Zheh, Line of Life and Many Rivers.

Services that support children continue to be a major priority for this government. For example, this budget continues to honour our commitment to childcare services with an additional \$1 million each year over five years. An additional \$50,000 of capital funding is also allocated to childcare facility operators for upgrades to their facilities and equipment.

This budget recognizes the work of foster parents who provide a family home for children who cannot live with their parents. Nearly \$200,000 of new funding is included to reflect the 17-percent increase in foster care rates put into place in October 2009. For the first time ever, it includes annual indexing to the consumer price index. The annual indexing of foster care rates joins decisions made by this government to index social assistance rates, senior income supplement and the pioneer utility grant.

Indexing of these rates ensures that the value of the benefits is not diminished over time and continues to keep pace with inflation. This is one of the many progressive social policy approaches of this government.

A new *Child and Family Services Act* will be proclaimed tomorrow, April 30, 2010. The new act will replace the 26-year-old *Children's Act*. Implementation funding is provided in this budget for key positions such as cooperative planning, family conferencing, extended family care, quality assurance, youth services and training.

We continue to enhance our continuing care services, both in our facilities and through our community home care programs. This budget sees over a million dollars of additional funding to support eight new positions as well as funds to address the expected increase in pharmaceutical drug costs and repair and maintenance costs.

We will also be continuing to fund the Yukon palliative care team so they can continue to support end of life care throughout the territory. Health and Social Services is currently examining the feasibility of opening continuing care beds in the Thomson Centre. Opening these beds will address a growing need for long-term care and take the pressure off the acute care system.

In preparing for the future of the Yukon, the Hospital Corporation will see an increase of almost \$5 million, as well as the transfer of the Watson Lake hospital, for a total increase in their budget of approximately \$7 million. These funds will support the ongoing operational costs of the hospital, as well as new challenges of their expanded mandate to provide community-based hospital services in both Watson Lake and Dawson City. Planning for the new hospitals in Watson Lake and Dawson City is about planning for our future.

Consider these facts: the Yukon population has been growing steadily for the past seven years. In August of last year we had the highest population ever recorded in Yukon. Between 2004 and 2009, the population increased by 3,500 people — that's an increase of more than 10 percent in only six years. Hospital statistics from the Whitehorse General Hospital confirm that the hospital use has been increasing significantly since 2000. Hospital admissions have gone from 2,914 to over 3,266. Patient stays have increased from 13,865 to 15,614. The

ER visits have increased from 20,294 to over 25,391. The pressure is on, and growing.

If Yukon experiences high population growth throughout the next while, the Bureau of Statistics predicts that by 2018, the population will increase by a further 5,000 people, and that's another increase of approximately 18 percent. Even if the Yukon experiences only a medium growth, we are still expecting to see an increase in the next 10 years of about 1,800 people — and that's an increase of approximately 5.4 percent, or similar to what we've received over the last six.

Regardless of whether the Yukon experiences low, medium or high growth in the next 10 years, the age group of people over the age of 55 will see the highest rate of increase. We know that as people age, they will require more hospital care and other health care. These stats tell us that demand for hospital care is going to go up in the Yukon, and we need to plan for that so that we are ready.

In addition to what the stats tell us, we know what Yukon residents have told us. They have told us that, if at all possible, they want to receive health care in or close to their home communities. Providing care closer to home has a number of advantages, both for the individual and for the health care system. Having services provided in the communities reduces the cost of medical travel, it relieves pressure on the Whitehorse hospital, and it provides options for care within Yukon when the Whitehorse hospital is full.

It also means that people who are ill have easier access to their family and community support systems, and we know that this is an important factor in the healing and overall wellness process.

To all that, let's add some other factors. The Yukon is a destination for visitors who come to share in the enjoyment of what we have to offer. It is also a traffic corridor, and our economy is growing. Ready access to hospital care in rural communities supports travellers, supports our tourist industry, responds to the increased traffic on our highways and encourages businesses to locate in those communities.

These facts speak for themselves. Demand for acute hospital care is increasing and it makes sense to ensure that increased hospital capacity is made available through the territory and not to just focus here in Whitehorse.

As a final point, I would like to highlight at this time that this budget also includes a major capital contribution of \$2.7 million to continue with a number of Infoway-funded system development projects. These include the teleradiology project that will provide digital links in Yukon and with the south for X-rays; the Panorama public health information and surveillance system; and the continuation of the integrated health records project planning.

This is a budget that not only responds to the demands of today, but one that also anticipates and prepares us for the future needs of our health care, continuing care and social services. I thank you, Mr. Chair. I look forward to questions.

Mr. Mitchell: I thank the minister for his introductory remarks. I welcome the officials back to the Assembly, and I thank them for their expertise and the professional way in which they administer the department's objectives and provide

information. I particularly want to thank this department for the fact that they are among a few departments that provide us with some meaningful summaries in the briefings that we go through in the budget process and that is appreciated.

Of course, Yukoners do appreciate — we'll add our voice to theirs — all the services that are provided across Yukon by all the health care providers, be they doctors, nurses, technicians, specialists, visiting specialists, now nurse practitioners and certainly community health nurses and everyone else who provides us with the excellent care that we get.

As the minister said, it's the largest department — almost one-quarter of the budget, which is both a challenge and an opportunity, I guess.

I look forward to the next seven or eight days of good debate. Oh, everybody is awake on that side. I thought that the minister would be coming up with a song pretty quickly if I said that. It probably won't take quite that long.

I would like to start with sort of the elephant in the room — or one of the elephants in the room; there might be a few in the pack — and that is the overall cost of providing health care. The minister and I have had some good conversations about this and indeed we have had, as well, some conversations within the health oversight committee or the Yukon Health Care Review Oversight Committee, I guess it would be called. The *Yukon Health Care Review* report identified the potential funding gap between the revenues available for health at the current growth in revenues and the projected total health expenditures of some \$250 million by 2017 or 2018. Indeed, with just a few exceptions, being 1995 and 1996, the government's health care expenditures have been growing at a positive rate under all governments, some years more than others.

We have some years where the growth was only 1.7 percent, such as 2003. There are years like 2001, where the chart shows 15.6 percent; 2006, 17.3 percent; and we've had some questions on whether this is sustainable.

First of all, just for the record, if I look at the chart that was in that study — page 65 for the official's benefit — it was unclear the way it was worded originally in the study — the *Yukon Health Care Review*. When it was worded on page 11 in the summary, it said, and I quote: "If nothing is done to control the rate of growth of health care expenditures or increase revenues to fund it, a growth in health care expenditures will result in a funding gap that could be as much as \$250 million by 2018."

At first I interpreted that to mean that if nothing has changed or if we didn't find solutions, in 2018 we might have a \$500 million health budget with \$250 million in revenues, but as I look at the chart, the accompanying chart from page 65 shows a gap of perhaps \$260 million in projected revenue versus \$310 million in expenditures for that year.

So then if you go back down, the chart shows the gap increasing, starting in 2007, and going up. Is that a cumulative amount over the next decade if nothing were to change, rather than a projected amount of shortfall for that year? I just wanted to clarify that.

Hon. Mr. Hart: I believe that's cumulative on the process to go out to the future.

Mr. Mitchell: That's how I interpreted it, but because I've seen other people state it differently, I just wanted to state for the record and make sure that we were discussing the same overall numbers.

Just to ask the somewhat obvious question — I've asked this of the minister before, but we have an opportunity to expand on this now — the projected reduction for 2010-11 in the main estimates, not a reduction from estimates to estimates, but basically from estimates to estimates, 2009-10 to 2010-11.

The numbers are virtually flat. They were estimated in 2009-10 at 229,546, with the current year estimate being \$23,744,000 — so virtually no increase from estimate to estimate. But in fact, a substantial \$18.2-million decrease, or \$18-million decrease, from, to be clear, \$18 million — from the forecast amount of \$248,751 to what we're estimating for this year. Yet, as the minister stated in his opening remarks, our population figures are going up and are at record levels. Our population demographic is aging, which puts, as the minister has stated, more demand on the system. We're undertaking to increase — and we think that's a good thing that we are increasing various areas that the minister mentioned — to a 17-percent increase for foster care rates and indexed pioneer grant. There are the plans for the expanded community-based hospitals in Dawson City and Watson Lake. There's obviously planning money going into that now.

We know that the biggest change out of that \$18 million is in Health Services for an \$11,369,000 decrease from the main estimates to the main estimates. We do understand that there is some funding that has not yet been received. The minister referred to THAF and we know that it will be called something different, but it is that type of funding that has to do with health access and involves everything from more surgeries being available here to more specialist services, et cetera. We know he needs to turn the trajectory around, because the report says that, otherwise, we have a serious problem. How can we realistically expect to turn it around so precipitously when all the demographics that the minister refers to are going in the opposite direction?

Hon. Mr. Hart: I thank the member opposite for the question. This funding will be adjusted in the supplementary in the fall when we finally get our monies from the federal government as they relate to THAF, which is actually a substantial amount of money. I will also state for the record that last year's hike also represents a large amount of money that was left over in THAF and that was brought forward from the previous year. The spike in last year is because of that particular process.

So as far as the money goes, as I indicated, I'm very happy that the federal government decided to extend our programming, not only for us, but for our two sister territories and also allows us — once we work out the actual agreement with the federal government as to how the money is going to be spent — that's still in negotiation right now as I indicated.

We're working with our other two territories on this situation, again, to try to obtain as much flexibility as possible so that we can utilize that funding in the next two years to look at how we can close the gap in the future and also, as I indicated in my initial address, put forth a wellness program for citizens.

Just for the member opposite, I think we brought this forth in our oversight committee. One of the issues that was brought up in the review was that many Yukoners feel it's time for Yukoners to look after themselves. They feel that's an important element toward reducing health care for the Yukon itself.

We believe that working on the wellness strategy, as well as, again, developing our social inclusion strategy, will provide excellent tools for us to look at in reducing our cost to the health care system, as well as the aging symposium, which we are just in the process of right now — to ensure that our individuals who are aging do it with grace. I have to be careful how I say that, because I guess I'm in that category now.

When I was at the symposium, it was amazing to see the wide variety of individuals there, from me all the way to individuals in their early 90s. Those people were taking a very good and active role in the aging well strategy and providing good input to that process.

I might also add, Mr. Chair, that there was a substantial number of representatives from the rural areas in Yukon, and they also provided good input into the system and also gave a different perspective of those aging in the smaller communities. Their concerns and issues were raised and put forth, and I look forward to the results of that consultation when it is complete, and I look forward to putting that into our wellness strategy and dealing specifically with seniors.

Again, education is an important aspect for all citizens of the Yukon. I know we're going to be working with the Department of Education on trying to provide further education to our students. Obesity is a big problem, not only in Yukon; it is a large problem across Canada, and we're seeing it every day on the TV about getting activities out — getting kids to be active in the great outdoors. I think that is another aspect that we are working on with the Department of Community Services — to again encourage young people to get out and get some physical activity.

Physical activity doesn't mean just sports. It means all aspects, dealing with walking, just getting out — activities, canoeing — in the summer now that the weather is warm. It was pretty nice this morning when I came to work, but might be a little tough going home.

In essence, I think that the member opposite gets the point that I'm driving at. We're looking at trying to encourage people to basically eat healthily and get some activity out there, so that we can cut down on obesity and also cut down on our visits to the hospital as well as our local doctors. In addition, some of our health care costs are not really controlled by us. We just don't have in many cases the facilities. We don't have the numbers sometimes in dealing with it. Dialysis is a perfect example — we don't have the numbers or the technology or the ability to provide that service in the Yukon, strictly because we only have two or three patients who are on that system.

Again, we've seen many of those costs increasing over time. But again, I'll reiterate that those costs are increasing right across Canada. We'll be meeting again in September in Newfoundland with my colleagues from other jurisdictions. One of our issues will be discussing the issue of trying to bring our physical activity up and trying to meet our goal of 2015 —

we joined together with the other jurisdictions on getting our children a little bit more active. I think that the members probably saw that although we didn't pass the grade, we were still the third best in Canada in the Yukon for our students being active. I will state though that we didn't pass. We never reached our goal, but nobody reached the goal in Canada for 2010. The goal was restated, so our new goal for 2015 is to get our activity up and increased for all of our citizens to ensure we have healthy students in our schools, as well as aging well, taking physical activity and eating well to ensure our good health.

One aspect I didn't talk about that's very prevalent in Yukon, as well as right across the north, of course, is diabetes. Diabetes is very prevalent in our First Nation citizens and it's very prevalent right across the north and right across northern provinces also. We have a very good program for diabetes in our local hospital and we're following through with that. We have a very good educational process in dealing with that also and we plan to continue it again — just further education and further services, basically, and providing education and prevention to assist in cutting back on some of our costs in dealing with health care.

Mr. Mitchell: I thank the minister for his response. First of all, I certainly want to make it clear that we would never suggest the minister wasn't aging gracefully.

Of course we all have to define just how gracefully we're aging, but as long as we're aging — consider the alternative, Mr. Chair.

The minister had quite a lot of information in that response and yes, regarding diabetes, among the materials I have here is *A Strategic Response to Diabetes — Yukon 2009-2012*. It says here, since we're talking about health care costs: estimated direct costs of treating diabetes in Yukon in 2000 — \$3 million; in 2016 estimated to be \$6 million.

That's a doubling and that's a serious problem in dollars. The prevalence of diabetes reflects a serious problem. We know that there is far more youth diabetes than there used to be and we know that it's particularly prevalent in First Nation populations, so we have to be very vigilant about that. I would say to the minister that since the sitting started, I have discovered that I have lost five pounds simply by substituting a McIntosh apple a day for the chocolate treat I used to grab at the breaks. This is not an occupation that lends to a great deal of opportunities for physical activity while we're sitting — hence it's called "sitting."

When the minister goes to Newfoundland, I would suggest that there is probably a lot of exercise just walking up and down George Street.

Anyway, getting back to the numbers, Mr. Chair, I'm still struggling with them a little bit, because while the minister indicated that some of the extra spending in 2009-10 was left over THAF funding from previous years, the fact of the matter is that the money was spent presumably on providing health care to Yukoners. Obviously it was put to needed uses and so it does beg the question of how much of it was spent on one-time improvements, where you spend it and you don't have to spend it again, and how much of it is spent on providing additional

trips for medical experts to come in, additional orthopaedic surgeries such knee surgeries done in Yukon and so forth. I would ask the minister when he is next on his feet to indicate how much money is anticipated for the THAF, or whatever it is going to be called at this point, in the current fiscal year. I thought that the spending was in the \$6 million to 7.5 million a year range in the past and so that would only make up a portion of the decrease that we were looking to spend.

It would beg the question of what services might not be continuing that existed in the past. In looking at the briefing notes, Mr. Chair, I note under Health Services the reduction of \$11,369,000. It said this includes the internationally educated health professional project, THAF, tri-territorial operational secretariat, patient wait-times guarantee pilot project and pan-territorial oral health initiative — so I would ask, are all these projects currently in fact terminated, or are they sort of dormant awaiting the funding?

What has happened to the FTEs who were working on these projects, the personnel? What's happening to those services and the clients who were previously served while we await additional funding? Or are we in fact simply continuing all of the programs with the knowledge that the funding will arrive during the year? Again, how much will that funding be, if that's what we're doing?

When I looked at the yellow pages — not referencing a phone book, but the yellow pages in the budget for Health and Social Services — particularly pages 12-27 to 12-35, the statistics are up. As the minister has said, the population is projected or estimated to be 35,000 compared to 34,500; physician services in Yukon, 240,000 visits or incidents versus 235,000; out-of-territory, 35,000 versus 34,500; Whitehorse General Hospital, a total between emergency room patient days, patient admissions, out-patient visits, et cetera of 78,500 versus 77,000 previously; surgical cases, 2,650 instead of 2,600.

I won't read them all, but pharmacare program subscribers increased, chronic disease program subscribers increased, children's drug and optical program subscribers projected to increase; travel for medical treatment within Yukon increased; travel for medical treatment outside of Yukon is projected to increase.

Again, if the minister could be more precise in explaining how much funding is anticipated from THAF with replacement programs in revenue in the current fiscal year, 2010-11, and how, if that doesn't add up to the \$18 million that we are projecting to spend less than we did spend last year, how are we providing all these increased services to more people of an aging population with less money this year? Long term, I know there are strategies, but how are we doing it this year?

Hon. Mr. Hart: We're looking at approximately \$15 million over the remaining two years of the THAF programming. We're looking at \$1.6 million for medical travel; looking at \$4.3 million just for THAF programming and an additional \$2 million for the operational secretariat, which is a joint facility between us and our sister territories — and that is how we currently fund the process. Basically that is just a carry-over of the procedure that is there and the remaining dollar differential relates to the previous supplementaries on the money that was

carried forward under THAF, which was carried forward previously and not used.

Mr. Mitchell: I thank the minister for the response but I don't think we actually got an answer to the question that was asked. First, I will start with an assumption and the minister can correct me if I am wrong, but if it is \$15 million over two years, I don't know whether it is front-loaded or back-loaded but I'm just going to cut it down the middle and say \$7.5 million a year. So \$7.5 million to add it on to \$230.7 million, so \$238 million roughly, which is still more than \$10 million, close to \$11 million, reduced from the year before.

The minister has explained that the funding was left over, but he didn't answer the part of the question about the services that the funding was provided to, as to whether those services were one-time services — something that one does once, which tends to be more on the capital side than the O&M side. But perhaps a computerization project or something like that — that's done once and then it's there for the next decade versus services or the description of them, such as the wait-times guarantee pilot project. Presumably, once you've done the pilot project, if it has improved wait-times, you want to carry forward providing the service.

So I'm trying to determine if there are services that we're not going to carry forward with as a result of this funding differential.

Hon. Mr. Hart: With regard to the THAF or THSSI funding, the original concept behind the funding that was provided by the federal government to the northern territories at the time was to basically provide the funding to search for innovative ways that the northern territories could provide services to their citizens, and they could achieve getting prevention programs that would enable them to provide services to other citizens.

In almost all cases, Mr. Chair, these services would have a natural end date in their process and that was there. But there was a delay in getting this program commenced and off the ground. In fact, it took almost a year before we actually received any monies under this program and, as such, it took us a little while to get moving under our programs.

We had things developed, but it took money and time to get here to the Yukon and to the northern regions, and thus we basically got caught in some carry-forward money going from year to year. That's what really resulted in the substantial overload that was in the previous year.

We did have many programs under THAF that were being provided. We are looking at providing funding for social inclusion, and the healthy aging strategy. We're looking at continuing care accreditation. We're looking at the children's mental health study, and we're looking at mental health complex cases for housing. We're looking at the cancer care navigator program and we're looking at a mentorship program. These are just some of the programs we're looking at providing under THAF in the remaining two years for the programming that's going to be received from the federal government — from the Department of Health and Social Services.

Previously, as I stated, the funding was provided for innovative ways that the territories could provide services. We pro-

vided a substantial amount of programming in the prevention and education aspect. Again, these were programs that don't require a substantial amount of, say, ongoing expenditures.

But, again, because we had some difficulty getting off the ground initially, we had some back-ups. As such, we had a bit of a back-load in the previous year.

One of the programs that was very successful under the THAF programming was our mobile palliative care unit. This mobile palliative care unit proved to be very successful.

We are getting excellent service under this process, and we are continuing to extend this program for the remaining two years of this THAF agreement but, when we were doing our assessment of the THAF funding and the programming, we looked at some specific programs that we felt were very necessary to continue and to ensure that these services were provided to Yukoners and, as such, we know that we will continue on with the palliative care unit, whether the funding continues from the federal government or not. We will put that palliative care program into our base funding in 2012 so that we can continue to provide that service, along with several other programs that have been identified. We're in that process right now of determining which programs we will carry on into the future.

There are some programs that have a natural end and we will follow through with that process, and there are other programs that we have to do some further assessment on: where we are going to go with them and how we're going to deal with them.

All the individuals who have been attached to the THAF funding have been put on notice of just exactly what their terms of reference are. In many cases, term positions were provided and we are following through with our commitment to them.

We'll be following through, as I said, with our review of what we call the essential programming and, once we have completed that, we will follow through with the funding and ensure that our funding is provided for those programs for the remaining two years.

Just for the member opposite, it's actually \$15.8 million over two years.

Mr. Mitchell: I thank the minister for that response, and he almost answered the question I was writing in response to his previous one, so I'll just do a bit of a follow-up. The minister said we're looking for innovative ways to provide services, and I was going to ask: have we found innovative ways and what are they?

The minister did mention several more programs that are being tried and he mentioned the mobile palliative care unit and said that will be extended, regardless of whether there's funding coming from the feds. Can the minister provide us with a list and description of what new innovative ways we've tried out that we are going to now implement and what services they provide? When we say "innovative", are they just providing better services or are they more cost-effective as well?

Also, the minister made reference to putting personnel who were in term positions for the THAF on notice. I'm not sure what he meant by that. Are there a certain number of term positions that are being anticipated to be allowed to expire and can the minister tell us what that number is?

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

Recess

Chair: Order please. The bill before the Committee is Bill No. 20, *First Appropriation Act, 2010-11*, Vote 15.

Mr. Mitchell: There is at least a 50-percent chance that that's where we're at. We were talking about various programs — patient wait-time guarantee, the funding, how much of it was per year — I think the minister had just given us an amount of \$15.8 million over two years, if I recall.

I have a letter in front of me, Mr. Chair, and maybe the minister can let us know whether any of this funding would apply in this area. It is for a Whitehorse specialist clinic at Whitehorse General Hospital and it is for an ophthalmology appointment. A Yukoner has been given a date of May 20, 2010 for the appointment and informs me that he has been waiting two and a half years for this appointment.

Is any of this funding coming in the THAF — whatever it's called this year — going to improve wait-times for specialist services, including ophthalmologic appointments?

Hon. Mr. Hart: With regard to our funding, as I indicated, we are still in negotiations with the federal government with regard to that funding and how it's going to be utilized, because they have indicated that there will be some restrictions on its use. We are working with our sister territories on trying to get, as I indicated previously, as much flexibility as we can on that funding as to what it can be used for. We are working toward, as I said, getting as much flexibility as we had before and we're looking for something similar to what we had in the previous agreement. Right now, until such a time as we can sit down with the federal government and work out what the details are going to be, the federal government has indicated to us that they want to see some improvement in some specific areas. Right now, we're negotiating with them on those areas.

Until such a time as we can get that kind of information down, we won't be in a position to, basically, determine the final outcome until later on this year — when we can utilize and what programs we're going to be able to go to, depending on the results that we get from the federal government, in particular, the Department of Health and Social Services.

Mr. Mitchell: I thank the minister for that response, and perhaps if the officials come up with a list of which services we're looking at spending the money on, we can get that by written response at some other time.

Earlier, we were speaking about diabetes. The minister raised it, and I responded with some questions — or a question — about the importance of dealing with it. I note, in that report *A Strategic Response to Diabetes: Yukon 2009-2012*, there's a summary document that includes the different jurisdictions and what their diabetes strategy are. We are in the minority.

There are a few provinces, but even our sister territories are working on strategies. Nunavut released their *Diabetes and Prevention Strategy* in 2005 with a series of goals for 2005 to 2010. The N.W.T. is developing a strategy and it says it is "...as well designed and laid out as Manitoba."

“As of February 2009 it was anticipated that N.W.T.’s Strategy will be tabled to the Minister in the near future.” It says here, “Yukon has no formal diabetes strategy. A strategy has been developed by members of the Yukon Diabetes Reference Group but has not been adopted by the territorial government.”

We know that there is an increase, certainly in juvenile diabetes. We know that First Nation communities — and some 24 percent or 25 percent of our population is First Nation — are more susceptible to diabetes. Can the minister provide us with an update? Do we now have a formal diabetes strategy? If not, when is it planned to have one and if we have one, is it being implemented?

Hon. Mr. Hart: We are looking at dealing with diabetes. We are also trying to look at dealing with nutrition, activity, prevention, and diabetes, again, will be an essential part of dealing with our wellness project. For the member opposite, we do have a substantial diabetes prevention program, which is being operated by the Yukon Hospital Corporation program and is being handled through them. Those services are being provided — services for those with diabetes.

Mr. Mitchell: I will just seek a clarification. So what the minister is saying is that there is a program being implemented through Whitehorse General Hospital, but Yukon has no overall Government of Yukon diabetes strategy. Is that correct and, if so, are there plans to have one?

Hon. Mr. Hart: As I indicated, we are looking at dealing with diabetes through our wellness program, which will include nutrition, which will include activities, which will include prevention, and diabetes will form part of an essential part of that process in dealing with wellness. In conjunction, as I said, Mr. Chair, we’re working with the Yukon Hospital Corporation, which has a diabetes prevention program.

Mr. Mitchell: We’ll move on.

I think I mentioned at the outset the elephant in the room, and said that maybe there was a few — so I’ll move on to another one of the elephants in the room. Now is as good a time as any — and that’s this whole series of issues and questions revolving around the decision process to replace the cottage hospital in Watson Lake — let’s agree among us that it needs to be replaced, that it’s aging and not up to standards, and that the people deserve a better facility than that — and to also replace the community nursing facility in Dawson with regional medical centres — which, as the minister says, are expanded community-based hospitals. They’re much more than just acute care hospitals. It’s a major decision, and we have been trying to determine how the decision-making process occurred, really throughout this sitting and from before this sitting, without much success.

There was a transfer of responsibilities April 1 to the Yukon Hospital Corporation. We did ask questions a couple of weeks ago — April 15th or 16th in this Assembly — of the chair and the CEO. We got some answers. Among the answers was a promise to provide some studies to us. I would note for the record that we have received no correspondence from the chair or the CEO of the Hospital Corporation since that time, so we are as absent of studies now as we were then.

When we asked the minister in the past, the minister has said to ask the chair, so just for the record we have asked the chair. Again, I want to note for the record that we agree and support the government’s position that improved services need to exist in those two communities. We’re just trying to find the evidence-based reasoning behind the decision to go from a cottage hospital in Watson Lake, for example, to a \$25-million regional medical centre. Our understanding about studies is that there were two main studies done for Watson Lake that have been commonly referred to — the Kobayashi & Zedda study, where Kobayashi & Zedda Architects did a review of the existing shell building to determine what functional changes would need to be made to convert what was designed and built to be a multi-purpose health facility into a hospital-type facility.

What we know of that study is that it addressed issues such as the plumbing that was embedded in the slab, for example, on the ground floor. Was the drain plumbing and the supply plumbing in the right position and of the right standard and right dimensions for the use that it would be converted to if it became incorporated into a hospital? Were the elevator shafts of the right size for a hospital, as opposed to an extended care facility? Were the door openings the right size?

In other words, it was a functional study to determine if this was a practical change of use for a building that had been built for another purpose. We don’t believe there was anything in that study that was intended to answer the question or designed to examine the issue of what kind of hospital ought to be built or whether there should be a hospital built instead of a multi-level health care facility.

Secondly, Resource Planning Group examined the question, and we’re not sure about this because we don’t have the study. We’re pretty certain the minister must have read the study, but we just haven’t had a copy of it.

Our understanding from Question Period questions and from other debate in this House is that what RPG was doing was examining what kind of requirements would there be in a hospital — if a hospital were to be built, what it should include.

What we haven’t been able to find out: did the government before making the decision to not just convert the existing shell for the multi-level health care facility to a hospital, but in the decision-making process — because the initial change was sometimes described by the Premier as the fact that Watson Lake has always had a hospital. It is aging, and there has always been a cottage hospital there for some 30 years. This is nothing new; it needs to be replaced. It has now morphed into far more than a replacement and there have been a lot of statements made about providing services closer to home, cost savings, efficiencies, overflow capacity, and servicing the mining community in southeast Yukon to deal with industrial accidents should they occur. Although we just had one, we obviously hope we don’t have too many more.

Is there a study that the government did in the decision-making process to say, “This is what we should build, this is why we should build it, this is what it would do, this is what the savings would be,” because the Premier said to the Chamber of Commerce last month that there would be a savings in health care costs as a result of this — how to quantify those savings,

what is the study, who did it, when did they do it, and can we see it?

Hon. Mr. Hart: Let's see if we can rotate this back to 2004 or wherever it was. Back in 2004 — I think it was somewhere around there. Anyway, 2005 — when they were looking at putting a multi-facility in Watson Lake at the time, they were looking at land, which we happened to own, which was adjacent to the hospital, and that's one of the reasons it was put there.

Mr. Chair, we got looking into the hospital just shortly thereafter, and we found that the hospital in Watson Lake was requiring a substantial amount of work to bring it up to code. We looked at the fact that we could maybe struggle on for another year or two as it was, but we would have to definitely look at replacing the facility and bringing it up to code to meet standards of the hospital and also its accreditation.

As such, there was a decision made to look at the facility that was being built adjacent to the hospital at that time to see if it could be converted to a hospital from a multi-level care facility, which it was being originally built for.

Now, Mr. Chair, I think in this House we have had many discussions, many Question Periods, many to-and-fro answers with regard to this. I don't think I have to go into a long dissertation of where we were with regard to the so-called shell.

The Yukon Hospital Corporation was looking at their issue with regard to the hospital. In looking at the operation of that particular facility, we asked the Yukon Hospital Corporation if they would consider looking at that facility and taking on the management of the Watson Lake hospital since they are already in the hospital business. They have the skill and experience to deal with that process, so we asked them to at least consider that particular process.

Mr. Chair, a substantial amount of work went into consultation with the staff and the citizens of Watson Lake, the unions involved, the government and the Hospital Corporation with regard to this transfer. Part of the transfer, Mr. Chair, was the fact that the Hospital Corporation, prior to, or at least considering, taking on the Watson Lake hospital was that they wanted to make sure that the shell had the ability to be converted into a hospital.

The Hospital Corporation hired a consulting firm to do an assessment of the shell to determine if it could be converted into a hospital and also to provide some work on what would be required to upgrade the facility in order to meet the standards of a hospital versus a multi-level facility. Obviously there is additional work that had to be done and so the engineers were brought in to do an assessment of that shell and look at the facility itself. The member opposite gave several examples of some of the considerations in which these engineers would have to review in order to make their assessment. The assessment was completed and the information was provided to the Yukon Hospital Corporation.

There was some amount of work identified that would mitigate some of the issues in the shell, so that it could accommodate the hospital. But, in essence, it indicated that they could utilize the facility for the said hospital.

Now, based upon that information, Yukon Hospital Corporation also went out and received another consultant to do an estimate on what the facility could be utilized for in the space that was being allocated for the hospital, and what was the best use, and what could provide the best services in that hospital for the citizens of Watson Lake and how could they take advantage of that facility and basically ensure that the services would not only be the same as the cottage hospital that was built previously in 1979 or 1978, but could be enhanced services for the citizens of Watson Lake.

So, a substantial amount of work was done on the design and the make-up to ensure that the facility could provide the services and match the services and in fact, exceed the services provided by the existing Watson Lake hospital.

So, again, that work was completed. The firm provided has an extensive amount of experience in doing these assessments specifically in medical institutions. They provided that information to the Yukon Hospital Corporation. That information then was submitted to the Yukon Hospital Corporation Board at their general meeting and a decision was taken at that time to look at moving forward and doing a further assessment in addition to dealing with the staff with the idea that, if everything goes according to the plan, the Hospital Corporation would take over the management of the facility on April 1, 2010.

Now, Mr. Chair, there was, as I stated before, a substantial amount of work done, a substantial amount of consultation done, both with the citizens of Watson Lake and the staff — the medical staff of Whitehorse hospital and also the consultants, who have again massive amount of experience in this particular area.

The meetings, again, were held with the staff in the community who basically overwhelmingly supported this process — overwhelmingly. Now that is not to say that, when we first announced this, we didn't have a little bit of a stubble jump but, Mr. Chair, there was a need to get everyone involved and we got on to it right away and, from that time on, we held ongoing processes with staff and the community and we got their involvement through the whole process. I can say that I'm not quite sure how many people were there on April 10, but I understand the numbers were quite large in Watson Lake for its official opening or the official takeover by the Hospital Corporation. As the member opposite also stated, the facility has also made a big impact on the community already by assisting in the recent mining accident that happened just last weekend.

The aspect of delaying again with enhanced services in Watson Lake and providing additional services through the hospital, as a hospital facility — again, the expertise being provided by the Whitehorse General Hospital — will provide a savings to the citizens of Watson Lake. It will basically come in a large form in the base of travel costs.

As I've mentioned here on several occasions, individuals will be able to have their cancer treatments take place in Watson Lake now, instead of having to travel to Whitehorse. This may not be a big issue for some people but, for some of the older patients, it's a bit of a chore driving to Whitehorse, spending a day or two here and then driving home — and doing

it on a weekly basis for their treatments. We anticipate saving many dollars with regard to dealing with that.

I also want to state that the CEO of the Yukon Hospital Corporation mentioned here when he was a witness that the exact dollars and cents with regard to the medevac expenses could not be determined just yet, because how many medevacs we have or don't have is difficult to determine. We could have a very good year, for example, where we have a few medevacs, or we could have a very bad year where we have lots of medevacs.

In the past, a substantial number of medevacs took place from Watson Lake and Dawson City, mainly because the services had to be done in Whitehorse and could not be done in the smaller communities. We feel that it is imperative that in Watson Lake — especially since they already have a hospital — that we bring the hospital up to its current status so that they can have hospital facilities and services for the citizens of Watson Lake to ensure that they get the same services that are provided to those citizens who are here in Whitehorse.

Again, there has been a substantial amount of work done by the Hospital Corporation with regard to the Watson Lake facility. I might add that the Hospital Corporation also did some consulting work, both with the medical profession in Dawson City, as well as with the citizens in Dawson City itself, with regard to the proposed facility in Dawson City.

There was also work done on just what type of facility would be built there. The idea is to ensure that we're looking at infrastructure that provides complete services in both those communities and will not just be an acute care hospital, but will be providing services such as community nursing, providing doctors' offices, and providing all kinds of other services that we provide on a regional basis through these facilities. The member opposite will remember the first floor, for example, of the Watson Lake facility will be utilized as regional facilities and local health care services, while the second floor will be utilized for a hospital. We're looking at providing much the same type of facility in Watson Lake — or, sorry, in Dawson City, to ensure that we are putting the same footprint on the land.

The main feature there in Dawson City is that we are hoping to take advantage of the hospital and its facility, so that we can build a replacement for McDonald Lodge and attach that adjacent to the hospital in Dawson City, so that we can utilize both services available in Dawson City by mechanical and other shared services that can be achieved from both facilities in the future and provide excellent services for the citizens of Dawson, and, I might add, for many of the smaller towns and villages in and around Dawson City. In fact, I have received letters of support from Mayo and from First Nations in and around Dawson City all indicating support for that facility in Dawson City.

Mr. Mitchell: I thank the minister for his response and for the sort of history lesson in there. It is a little bit like the history of evolution, because there is kind of a missing link in that history. We started off very clearly with the 2005 multi-level health care facility; in 2005-06, we discovered much work

to be required to bring the hospital up to code and accredited, and the decision was made to examine the existing facility.

Somewhere in there, the government asked the Yukon Hospital Corporation to consider that particular hospital, which is within their mandate, as has been pointed out. Consultation was done with staff and community. The savings in large part will be done in terms of travel costs. The example given was cancer treatments, and it would indeed be beneficial to residents to have the chemotherapy in their home community. We can agree to that.

Then the minister said much work was done on just what type of facility should be there. I'm not sure where in that timeline that statement fits. It's after the discussion of RPG's and Kobayashi & Zedda's work. I'm not sure who did this much work — whether that's the Hospital Corporation, the Department of Health and Social Services, some working group of the two, or whether there's an Outside firm — to determine just what type of facility should be there.

I'm not certain whether that work was done before or after the government announced they were going to build two \$25-million facilities. Maybe the minister could clarify that when he's next on his feet.

Moving on with this — and we know that the head nurse in Watson Lake had a lot of concerns about it; the minister says everybody is now on side with what's being done so that must be a change from when the report was published by the nurse in charge of Watson Lake hospital and health centre — our vision for excellent health care delivery in Watson Lake, which was certainly a very different model, although it did speak to collaborative health care. Maybe that's where we'll finally see collaborative health care that has been so long promised — Watson Lake and Dawson.

We remain concerned when we consider the recent letter to the editor from Dr. de la Mare, who expressed concerns that these two regional hospitals might not be accredited and would compete for resources with Whitehorse General Hospital, indicating that the traditional model here and elsewhere is for the major hospital in the major population centre to concentrate their resources because that scene is most efficient. Are there now studies that have been done to show the opposite? And if so, do we stop at Watson Lake and Dawson or do we look at Teslin and Haines Junction and Mayo? Do we stop at three?

The minister quoted the recent tragic accident at Wolverine mine. We know that, sadly, one worker was killed, and obviously there was no medical care that could resolve that. The other injuries were described in the media as being minor and that the victims were treated and released. Any of us who have had medical issues know that one person's minor injury is somebody else's major deal, so I don't want to classify anybody's injury as minor, but when we look at the types of injuries that you often have in mining incidents and incidents with heavy equipment, you're looking at crush injuries, you're looking at broken bones and limbs. It's not anticipated, I would think, that there's going to be orthopedic surgeons or perhaps even a general surgeon at these two facilities, since we have a hard enough time maintaining two surgeons at Whitehorse General Hospital.

So I would have to question the minister's suggestion that everybody can be, or that these will be the primary locations where people would be medevaced to, should there be an industrial accident. They may go — particularly in Dawson where mining is fairly close at hand — there for first treatment, but then I would suspect for serious injuries they're going to be flown to Whitehorse anyway to see the specialist and perhaps flown beyond Whitehorse down south. I think there is going to be transport involved in any case.

In terms of the other suggestion the minister has made in the past — that these hospitals will be used for overflow purposes — I am not sure we follow the logic in that one. The logic of moving people from Whitehorse to the communities would appear to be no better than the logic of moving people from the communities to Whitehorse — or, no cost savings.

The other issue that was raised by the chair of the Hospital Corporation, which is — I think he noted that Whitehorse General Hospital was originally designed as a 102-bed hospital, and that it is now a 49-bed hospital, so we have a larger population, with only half as many hospital beds. He indicated that the Hospital Corporation was anticipating they needed to do major expansion and that they were going to require some \$45 million to \$50 million in order to do so.

Can the minister provide us with some more details on what he meant when he said that the work was done and just what type of facilities should be built there and by whom? Is it internal or is it external — in studies? And also, how does this decision fit in with the statement that we heard sort of for the first time, just a few weeks ago, from the chair of the Hospital Corporation that Whitehorse General Hospital requires a \$45-million to \$50-million renovation and expansion?

Hon. Mr. Hart: I guess I'm referring specifically to the Yukon Hospital Corporation with regard to the work that was completed for them, to assist them in determining what kind of services would be provided, or could be enhanced and done in the Watson Lake hospital. That's what I was referring to previously.

The member opposite talked about Mr. de la Mare and, I think, something about the head nurse. I also indicated to the member opposite on several occasions that not all of the employees went to the Hospital Corporation.

Obviously not everyone — 100-percent of those — thought this was a good idea. In essence, in our discussions, specifically with the citizens of Watson Lake and with the majority of the staff involved in Watson Lake, especially those who actually did transfer to the Yukon Hospital Corporation, this was deemed a very good process and they felt in many cases it was a very good process for them to consider. It also provided them with the possibility of promotion within the process. I think that there is an opportunity for all those in Watson Lake and, in the future, in Dawson City.

Now the member opposite talked about what were very limited accidents with regard to mining. In Watson Lake, EMS is responsible for almost 250 miles of roadway that they've got to go.

They go as far as Dease Lake and back to the Watson Lake to hospital to bring people to that facility and get them in and

out. In fact, Mr. Chair, we provide services to northern British Columbia — medevac services from Dease Lake, and we pick up those patients from Dease Lake and take them to Watson Lake to be flown out. A substantial amount of work is being done by the EMS people for our road traffic within the Watson Lake area; a substantial amount of area along the Alaska Highway; a substantial amount of area going up the highway; down junction 37, and we are covering a large area with that ambulance crew and ensuring we're providing services to those citizens on the highway.

Now, a substantial amount of mileage cost is incurred in the territory. We are looking at approximately \$500,000 a year in just mileage costs. Now we're not going to see a total elimination of that particular mileage cost, as the member opposite indicated.

There are some services for which they may have to come to Whitehorse or go Outside. In essence, we feel that we'll make a big dent in the mileage costs.

Now, the member opposite talked about the fact that if you have an accident in Dawson City you will probably go to Dawson City temporarily and then be medevaced from there, either to Whitehorse or directly to Edmonton or Vancouver. As I said, we are not in control of every situation that comes our way, but what we are in control of is providing the everyday services to our citizens, and we're in control of providing to the best that we can. The citizens of Watson Lake have had a facility there. All we're doing is ensuring that facility is current and operating. They'll be providing enhanced services in Watson Lake. The Hospital Corporation has indicated to us that they will be in a position to operate this facility. There'll be some minor adjustments being made with regard to technology to assist them in this process. There will be minor adjustments in relation to the operation of the facility so they can utilize the local doctors more and also to utilize physicians more to provide the direct services required in a cottage hospital.

Now, we are looking forward to the process with regard to Watson Lake. Again, I was personally down there on several occasions with regard to this facility. I walked this facility a couple of times, both with the Hospital Corporation and with the citizens of Watson Lake. Yes, the member opposite did pick up one or two people — or one person for sure — in dealing with the integration of our health care services, and we are doing just that. We intend to do just that in Dawson City with the connection of the new McDonald Lodge with the new hospital facility there, so that they can take advantage and operate in close proximity to each other. They can take advantage of their shared services to ensure that we can keep our O&M costs to a minimum and provide the excellent services to the individuals of Dawson, as well as to areas such as Old Crow and Mayo.

Mr. Mitchell: Just to clarify a couple of things — I don't think we were talking about one or two people because the minister mentioned he picked up one or two people, and I'm not sure — I presume he would mean we became aware of health care professionals who had concerns about the way the changes were being done.

The report about health care delivery in Watson Lake, *Our Vision for Excellent Health Care Delivery in Watson Lake*, does not just reflect one person. It refers to the staff that existed there. It does quote from the *Yukon Health Care Review* study and it says, “The statements regarding the aligning of the Watson Lake Hospital with the Yukon Hospital Corporation are:” — and this is from the *Yukon Health Care Review*: “The government should examine if the transfer of Watson Lake Cottage Hospital to the control of Yukon Hospital Corporation will improve the alignment of responsibility for acute care service delivery in the Yukon and in doing so also improve the effectiveness and efficiency of these services.”

Then the author of the study, who was the nurse in charge, went on to say, “We do not believe that a transfer of Watson Lake Hospital to the Yukon Hospital Corporation will improve effectiveness or efficiency of services. We believe that a change in the way we deliver services will do both of these things and in addition will give better health care to the residents of Watson Lake. A Primary Health Care facility is well supported in the Yukon Health Review, the Romanow Report and by the WHO.”

It’s noted that there was nothing in the *Yukon Health Care Review* study that suggested that a completely different type of health care delivery at a different model of hospital should be built. It asked the question, as referenced in this study, about whether the cottage hospital or its replacement cottage hospital should be transferred under the control of the Yukon Hospital Corporation. Be that as it may, that decision could have gone either way; the decision has been made.

Nowhere in there was there discussion of building a completely different type of hospital. We’ve asked the minister before if he can provide us with the results and the evidence of formal consultation with the Yukon Registered Nurses Association, which has expressed concerns about this, and the Yukon Medical Association.

The minister made reference to “Mr.” de la Mare. I would correct the minister and say “Dr.” de la Mare, who has certainly expressed real concerns about the impact of trying to staff and run these regional health centre hospitals under the hospital in Whitehorse. It’s not a hospital just for Whitehorse, as the Premier likes to say. Whitehorse General Hospital, over its entire history, has provided services across the Yukon, just like Vancouver General Hospital is not just a hospital for Vancouver.

So I don’t think we’ve heard answers yet that explain how this decision-making process occurred, but I suspect we’re not going to hear them either.

Just to clarify some things in the budget — there’s a reduction in Health Services called “program transfer” of a \$2,075,000 decrease for the transfer of the Watson Lake hospital. These costs will be included in the base budget of the Yukon Hospital Corporation, and indeed we see a similar increase in the budget that will be provided this year to the Yukon Hospital Corporation, so there are no savings in that area by our understanding of what has happened. It appears that other savings are predicted, but not projected.

The minister said he feels that we’ll save money, but he hasn’t really indicated the impact. He said we don’t know how much money we’ll save and we can’t predict what type of accidents will occur and of course we can’t, but we would have liked to have seen more explanation of this process.

Time is limited, Mr. Chair. I’m going to move on now to some other areas, although we might return to this later.

I will ask some questions. Can the minister tell us — because if you’re building a \$25-million hospital and you’re describing the services that will be provided there and the one that we’ve heard repeatedly is the cancer treatment — what kind of medical doctors will be resident in Watson Lake and in Dawson? Will they be family physicians? Will there be general surgeons or anesthesiologists? What kinds of doctors are expected to be there, which would help for us to know what kind of services will be provided?

Hon. Mr. Hart: Right now, we’re focusing on the family physicians for both those facilities and we’re in the process of working with the Yukon Hospital Corporation on those needs, and dealing with meeting the requirements in both those small communities.

Mr. Mitchell: So just to confirm, the types of doctors who will be providing services in Watson Lake and Dawson City are the types of doctors who provide the service today — family physicians — but it will be a different type of facility. I have asked the minister this question before, but I’ll ask it again. Can the minister give us a more precise amount of what the interest costs will be for the nurses and visiting specialist facility that is being built on the Whitehorse General Hospital grounds right now over the 17- or 18-year term of the loan at the 5.23-percent interest rate? Can the minister confirm whether that is the same interest rate for the \$25-million hospitals? How much is the interest going to cost over the term of those loans, because presumably the minister will have to transfer those amounts for those hospitals as part of the transfer to the Yukon Hospital Corporation?

Hon. Mr. Hart: Obviously, I can’t answer that question. The Yukon Hospital Corporation did and I believe — I don’t have the Blues here, but I think the question was asked of the chair of the Hospital Corporation when he was here with regard to that facility. I think the percentage rate was at least provided; I’m pretty sure of that. I am not in possession or in control of what the rate of interest will be for the Watson Lake and Dawson City facilities. That is something the Yukon Hospital Corporation is in charge of and they’re the ones negotiating the deal with their financial institution.

Mr. Mitchell: Perhaps we should go at this another way. Can the minister confirm that whatever the amount is, it will become part of the annual base amount of the transfer to the Yukon Hospital Corporation once these other facilities are built to cover the repayment of those loans?

Hon. Mr. Hart: I believe that I discussed this question with him once before. We will be providing the Hospital Corporation with a contribution for some of the process. We’ll also be providing rent for the other space that’s going to be allocated in the facility. That rent will go toward the retirement of the loan.

Mr. Mitchell: Is the minister planning to have a similar arrangement in place for the two community hospitals; that is, will the Department of Health be renting back space in each of those facilities and providing that revenue as a portion of how the revenue will be available to the Hospital Corporation to pay the principal and interest on those loans?

Hon. Mr. Hart: Well, obviously, as I indicated, we are hoping to utilize that infrastructure for the purposes of Health and Social Services, and we will have to negotiate some deals with the Hospital Corporation on the space provided, depending upon what's available in each of those facilities.

Mr. Mitchell: So I guess what we can take from this is that somehow, obviously, the loans will be repaid and, since the hospitals are not really profit centres, it's basically going to be repaid out of the revenue that is either raised locally with taxes or just transferred from Canada for the provision of health care from the Government of Yukon's coffers.

Is that correct?

Hon. Mr. Hart: Currently we are paying rent and we plan to utilize that rent toward paying the loan.

Mr. Mitchell: So whatever the amount of the interest is — and we can all take out our mortgage calculators if we take that 5.23-percent rate, but it may be higher or lower when the loans finally kick in for the other two facilities. That will come out of general revenue. I guess it will compete as a portion of that potential gap in health care costs that we see between now and 2018, and indeed 2025 or 2030, or whenever all these loans are retired. The millions of dollars in interest will also be a portion of the money that Yukon has to come up with in the provision of health care.

Mr. Chair, I'd like to turn to the Thomson Centre and see if we can get any better answers than we got briefly during supplementary debate. The minister said during supplementary debate that, while the Thomson Centre wasn't really in that budget — but it's part of this year's budget or it should be — can the minister tell us where the \$2 million in capital costs for this year before it opens is coming from? Who is paying for that — the Department of Health or the Hospital Corporation with additional funds to be transferred from the Department of Health — whether there's an O&M projection for the new pod at the Thomson Centre and the future continued expansion and renovation timeline and costs? I'll group those together so that we can perhaps make some progress.

Hon. Mr. Hart: For the member opposite, I guess I'm not in a much better position than I was the last time he asked this question. We currently have the consultants in there doing design work on the Thomson Centre. They are identifying the work that has to be done in the Thomson Centre to bring it up to code and also to bring it up to the standard for accreditation of continuing care.

That currently is underway. We are hopeful that we will have that information next month and that we will be able to put an RFP out this summer so that repair work can be done and we can have that work completed and hopefully move into that facility late in the fall.

Mr. Mitchell: There has certainly been a lot of discussion over the past couple of weeks about the very tragic and

sad events that occurred with the death of an individual in custody. One of the issues that has been brought up by the Member for Mount Lorne, and I also raised it in motion debate yesterday, was the possibility for a more dedicated facility to deal with detox, people suffering from alcohol abuse, rather than having them sent directly to RCMP cells and perhaps not also competing for already overburdened services at Whitehorse General Hospital, which is not necessarily set up to deal with people in this condition.

I believe that either the minister or the Justice minister — I apologize for not recalling which minister — has indicated this is being looked at or considered. Is there any more information the minister can provide? For example, there's still the unknown of what services will be provided in the building currently built as the women's transition centre when it's turned over to the Department of Health and Social Services. Is this one possibility for that building? Or has the consideration and planning gotten to any kind of a level where the minister can provide us with some answers about whether the government will take this on and, if so, how they're planning on doing it?

Hon. Mr. Hart: With regard to this program, I indicated earlier today that we would be working with the Justice department and other related departments and the RCMP with regard to this issue. I'm looking at trying to deal with this situation. In keeping with our platform commitment of strengthening governance of partnerships, we were going to — this project is basically looking at an update of the status of individuals who are inebriated.

We are looking at trying to do an assessment of the service gaps that are identified for these individuals. We are looking at implementing solutions to address health and legal concerns, identifying options to assist a specific client group. We are looking at reducing individuals requiring the emergency health care system, reducing deaths due to substance abuse, decreasing the rate of re-contact with the criminal justice system and lowering the incidence of public intoxication.

Obviously this requires, again, a lot of work within the departments to deal with this situation and this is something that has to be looked at very closely. It is also going to be very important to ensure that we build the right facility or look at the right aspect of how we're going to approach these individuals and not just pick them up and throw them into the drunk tank — but even if we pick them up, we have to have a place to take them.

In some cases, the hospital is the place to take them — not always, but it is a place where they have to go, especially if they need medical attention. The other thing that we're looking at, or has to be addressed, as I indicated — we have to look at reducing the individuals' need to go to emergency. We are looking at having a place where we can put people, but in facilities that are safe and look after their needs and really take into consideration the person's substance abuse. I think our objective in the long term is to decriminalize this issue somewhat — you know, take it out of the aspect that it is right now — and deal with it basically as a health and social issue. Again, this is a large program that has to be worked on from a societal point of view.

We have to get the community onside; we have to get the individuals onside; we have to get our First Nation groups onside and all those stakeholders who are involved in this process. We have to seek out their information to come up with a solution that in the long run, again, will take the stigma of this situation out of our community and hopefully prevent the problem that we recently have been discussing in the House.

I think that what we're looking at by taking a different approach with regard to individuals who are inebriated in public, on a repeated basis, is that we have to look at methods of putting them into facilities, so individuals who are experienced can discuss the individuals' problem with them.

I mean, obviously, we have to take care of the individual until they're at least in the state where our social worker or our health worker can assist them and hopefully get them into a treatment program that will assist the individuals with their addiction problem. The big thing for us is to ensure that the individuals are treated humanely and, if they do need medical assistance, that medical assistance is provided to each and every client to ensure that their health is looked after and, in the long term, their particular addiction is being treated.

Yes, we are looking at that particular aspect, and we hope to get that underway. Again, that's something that will be done in conjunction with the other departments in relation to providing services — Justice department, Health and Social Services — possibly directly with Alcohol and Drug Services in dealing with these individuals and incorporating our Sarah Steele Building somehow into this process, and that will provide a very important element for individuals who need our assistance to make it through the day.

The large part of the process in dealing with individuals who are inebriated, again, is to ensure that they have a safe place to stay. We will be looking at this, and this will guide us in our process and give us some time to think about solutions. I think the members opposite from the Third Party brought up other solutions today and yesterday with regard to this also.

We will look at these facilities Outside and consider what the pluses and minuses are. Across Canada there are very limited areas we can walk into and see what type of facilities there are. I did visit several youth facilities last year and the year before, similar to what we're talking about here. But there is still a major amount of expertise required in all these facilities.

In all cases, medical staff has to be there, has to be provided. It's a kicker.

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

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

Motion agreed to

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Mr. Chair, I move that the Speaker do now resume the Chair.

Chair: It has been moved by Ms. Taylor that the Speaker do now resume the Chair.

Motion agreed to

Speaker resumes the Chair

Speaker: I will now call the House to order.

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

Chair's report

Mr. Nordick: Mr. Speaker, Committee of the Whole has considered Bill No. 20, *First Appropriation Act, 2010-11*, and directed me to report progress.

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

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Speaker: I declare the report carried.

Hon. Ms. Taylor: I move that the House do now adjourn.

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

Motion agreed to

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

The House adjourned at 5:26 p.m.

The following documents were filed April 29, 2010:

10-1-147

Yukon Minerals Advisory Board 2008 Annual Report (Rouble)

10-1-148

Yukon Minerals Advisory Board 2009 Annual Report (Rouble)

10-1-149

Yukon Lottery Commission 2008-2009 Annual Report (Kenyon)