

**Yukon Legislative Assembly**  
**Whitehorse, Yukon**  
**Tuesday, March 1, 2011 — 1:00 p.m.**

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

*Prayers*

**DAILY ROUTINE**

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

Tributes.

Introduction of visitors.

Returns or documents for tabling.

Are there any reports of committees?

Are there any petitions?

Are there any bills to be introduced?

Are there any notices of motion?

**NOTICES OF MOTION**

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

THAT this House urges the United States Department of Transportation and the State of Alaska to support the applications by the Municipality of Skagway to fund its Yukon gateway port project that will encourage the development of the most efficient modes of transportation by gathering freight at coastal seaports, providing barge service to Skagway and truck service northward to the Yukon from Skagway, as well as reactivation of freight rail service into the Yukon.

**Mr. Elias:** I give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to table a progress report on what targets have actually been met from the February 2009 Yukon *Climate Change Action Plan*.

**Mr. Fairclough:** I give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to undertake a review of the government's secondary school student travel subsidy.

**Speaker:** Are there any further notices of motion?

Hearing none, is there a statement by a minister?

That brings us to Question Period.

**QUESTION PERIOD**

**Question re: Medical travel**

**Mr. Mitchell:** In 2006, the Minister of Health and Social Services' predecessor, who now sits on this side of the House, put a program in place to increase subsidies to Yukoners travelling outside of the territory for medical purposes. He did this with time-limited federal funding that he knew would expire. He did this on behalf of this Yukon Party government with no long-term plan in mind. This program costs \$10 million a year to maintain and now that the federal funding is about to stop flowing, this government is scrambling to find a

way to deal with the situation, paying over \$300,000 to consultants to find solutions to a problem that it created for itself.

In 2007, the former Health minister described the medical travel subsidies as being cost effective. Does the current Health minister agree with his colleague, or former colleague, that this is still the case?

**Hon. Mr. Hart:** With regard to medical care, as well as medevacs being handled throughout the Yukon, it is the requirement of all the territories that we must do an assessment of the medical travel to the south that is provided to all northerners to ensure we are getting our bang for the buck. It is also a requirement from Health Canada.

**Mr. Mitchell:** Yesterday the Health minister was quoted as saying, "We don't anticipate any change to patient benefits but we expect we may be able to realize savings in how we do our business." With federal funding about to run out, this statement seems a little unrealistic. After all, if the money isn't there to support the program, how can the minister say this won't affect patient benefits?

This is more than just a pothole in the road. Why did this government create this program and raise public expectations without creating a long-term plan to ensure that it could continue when the federal funding ran out?

**Hon. Mr. Hart:** We have provided funding, and it has been extended until 2012 from the federal government. We are working very closely with our other sister territories on extending that funding to go into 2014, so that we can ensure that medical travel will continue in all northern areas of Canada.

**Mr. Mitchell:** Yukoners have come to rely on these subsidies for medical travel because this Yukon Party government decided to start a program that it had no idea how to continue. Yukoners trusted this government to look out for them and this Yukon Party government is once again letting them down. This is just one more example of this government's poor planning — short-sighted visions for long-term challenges and strong on promises but weak on delivery. This government's "pathway to prosperity" seems to be full of potholes, and when the federal funding runs out, the path seems to lead right off a cliff. How does this government intend to make up this shortfall, short of asking the federal government to keep the funding going?

**Hon. Mr. Hart:** With regard to medical travel, that has been a requirement and a provision that has been provided to all Yukoners for many years in providing services to Yukoners. We were very successful in getting funding from the federal government to contribute to this process.

This process, I might add, is the same in all territories. The provision is the same in all territories for providing health care and providing services similar to those that are available to all other southern jurisdictions with regard to health care. For the member opposite, the potholes are not being put into place, as he is looking at. We are looking at smoothing the road to ensure that, with the continuance of working with our other two jurisdictions to extend our health care to 2014, we will be able to provide this most valuable service to all northerners and not just Yukoners.

**Question re: Medical travel**

**Mr. Fairclough:** Let's summarize the situation. A previous Yukon Party Health minister used a temporary federal program to increase the amount of money Yukoners receive for medical travel. That federal money is now running out. The former minister quit on this Premier and the current minister is left trying to figure out how to pay for this program. The minister has now hired some expensive consultants from Winnipeg to try to find an answer to the problem his former colleague created.

A 2008 health care review recommended this government charge a \$250 fee to residents who have to travel outside Yukon for medical services. Is this fee increase now back on the table?

**Hon. Mr. Hart:** With regard to medical travel, we are looking at having these consultants provide us with an actual makeup of what our program consists of, where we can provide some efficiencies, and gain some value where it is possible. As stated, we do not intend to inhibit the service that is provided to Yukoners who do travel abroad.

**Mr. Fairclough:** A few years ago, the Premier made some bad investments. \$36 million of Yukoners' money is still tied up in those investments and we can't use it. It would sure come in handy now to pay for some of the rising health care costs. The Minister of Health and Social Services is now paying Outside consultants to try and get a handle on the expenses. The medical travel program is under review and the minister said yesterday, and I quote: "We don't anticipate any changes to patient benefits." That is no comfort to the people of the Yukon.

Will the minister give Yukoners the assurance that this government will not be cutting patient benefits?

**Hon. Mr. Hart:** As I stated previously on a related question to this factor, the Government of Canada, through the Health Canada branch, has indicated that we must do an assessment and review of our medical travel — not just the Yukon but all three territories — to ensure that we are maximizing the benefit that is being provided under this program from the federal government, and we are doing as requested.

**Mr. Fairclough:** Mr. Speaker, this Yukon Party government got some extra money from Ottawa for health care. It used the money. It used the money to help Yukoners who have to travel for medical treatment. Now that the federal money is running out, the Yukon government is left holding the bag. We're concerned that patients are going to end up paying more, Mr. Speaker.

The previous Yukon Party Health minister was happy to make announcements about improvements to the program, but there was no long-term plan put in place to pay for it. The current minister has hired some consultants to look at the program, so will the minister commit that Yukoners will not end up paying more for health care or having their benefits cut? Will he do that? Yes or no?

**Hon. Mr. Hart:** As I stated, we are doing a review of our medical travel system, which has been a requirement of Health Canada, with the aspect that we ensure that we can achieve some effectiveness of the medical travel, and to ensure

that it benefits all Yukoners. We are following through with that process at the request of the federal government; we are following through in conjunction with our other two territories on this very important medical issue that ensures that not only Yukoners, but all northerners, have the same access to health care as our southern jurisdictions.

**Question re: Social housing**

**Ms. Hanson:** During the first few weeks of the sitting of this Legislature, the minister responsible for housing has made repeated assertions that the previous NDP governments did nothing — nada — to address social housing needs in the Yukon. I know the minister is a keen history student, so I'd like to remind him that, in reality, the social housing stock in Yukon had been allowed to significantly deteriorate under the previous Yukon Party government. A priority of the NDP was to re-establish the Yukon Housing Corporation in its proper role and renovate the social housing stock to ensure that these units could continue to be available to serve Yukon residents.

The NDP introduced home-ownership and home-repair programs. NDP mandate saw a housing strategy and a mobile-home strategy that were innovative and far-sighted and met the housing needs of seniors and lower income Yukoners. These reports are readily available to the minister. Will the minister admit now that he misspoke the actual history of the NDP and the Yukon Housing Corporation?

**Hon. Mr. Kenyon:** The member opposite is right on a couple of points there. I would imagine the NDP government did want to desperately try to deal with the situation at the time, but still, the reality is that no units were built — not one — and it was under the NDP government that the Yukon government accepted devolution of the responsibility for social housing from the federal government back to the Yukon government with a constantly decreasing percentage which eventually — and in an alarmingly short period of time — devolved, so to speak, to zero, giving us the entire responsibility.

Being concerned about it is a very good thing, but they still didn't build anything and they didn't really address the problem. The mobile-home solution that the member opposite refers to unfortunately remained vacant; I live close to that and it remained vacant for many, many years.

**Ms. Hanson:** The minister may want to look on the waterfront and look at Closeleigh Manor — in fact, an NDP social housing unit. Let's look at what this government professes are its housing policies and what is actually done. Late into its current mandate, the Yukon Party chose a siloed approach to housing. No one argues that seniors and single-parent families require adequate housing. Backed by huge stimulus funding grants from the federal government, it has provided some relief. However, it has taken and redefined affordable housing to call it "social housing" to prove its statistics. It has ignored the needs of women who have been abused by not proceeding with the women's transition homes second-stage housing unit.

It has fumbled Northern City's project for hard-to-house clients back and forth between departments until the deadline will soon pass. It has ignored proposals for the homeless; many of them are youth.

When will this government respond to the serious needs for housing the homeless and the hard to house?

**Hon. Mr. Kenyon:** The member opposite kind of ignores in there the athletes village project, which was before the major stimulus funding. She also ignores the increase of housing for students at Yukon College, which was turned over to Yukon College by this government. At the time of this Yukon Party government coming into office, there was a significant challenge, as members of the Official Opposition have said; it was difficult to take over, given all the mistakes of the past. We did have an additional challenge in that people were actually moving back and the economy developed. We didn't have the U-haul economy of the Liberals — I'd say years, but actually it was months — and as people started to move back there was an additional challenge. Again, it was under the NDP who assumed the responsibility for social housing, a term which is dictated by the federal government I might add. It certainly wasn't by us. It was at that time that we inherited all these problems, including an increase in population.

So we think we're doing fairly well — a 40-percent increase, over 101 units added over the last few years and over \$200 million invested. Compared to what the NDP did in their years and what the Liberals did in their months, I'd say we're doing pretty well.

**Ms. Hanson:** I remind the minister that social research does tell us that housing first is the foundation for social inclusion. It's impossible for someone with no fixed address and who doesn't know where he or she will sleep that night to look for work or to support a family. The Yukon is in a housing crisis that has been documented in a dozen reports while this government looks away from these real, documented needs. Anyone who is able to find a rental unit has to do so under a landlord and tenant act that is archaic and badly in need of revision. But this government won't proceed with the revisions. This government blindly boasts about the mining boom to come, while at the same time ignores the fact that housing is a fundamental right of Yukoners. Does this government have an actual housing strategy that Yukoners can rely upon, or is housing just another example of bounding down the Yukon pathway directionless?

**Hon. Mr. Kenyon:** Certainly, an accusation of looking away from the problem I find absolutely offensive and very, very inappropriate and it completely ignores the facts of the matter. This government has provided a 40-percent increase. It has invested over \$200 million in the last five years, I believe, in terms of housing.

We are continuing to do everything — when you compare that to the NDP governments, again, who built absolutely nothing. Now, again, it was during an NDP government that the Yukon assumed responsibility from the federal government. So if the member opposite is going to provide documentation, I wish that she would provide the documentation from when the federal government controlled the housing in this territory. I think that's every bit as relevant.

#### **Question re: Climate change**

**Mr. Elias:** I have been asking for days and the Environment minister can't identify any progress whatsoever in

implementing the dozens of targets committed to in the Yukon government's *Climate Change Action Plan*. Climate change is an important issue for Yukoners and that is why so many people spoke up when this plan was being drafted, but it just isn't a priority for this Yukon Party government. I consider the Yukon Party inaction on achieving the targets on the *Climate Change Action Plan* as just another broken promise to Yukoners. Yukoners deserve a progress report.

Will the minister table a progress report and explain to Yukoners what this government has actually accomplished to combat climate change?

**Hon. Mr. Edzerza:** I think it is maybe time to give the opposition a lesson on what climate change really is. Climate change is a change in the average weather that a given region experiences. Climate change on a global scale includes changes to temperatures, shifts in wind patterns and changes in precipitation.

Between 1950 and 2000, winter temperatures in Yukon have increased by as much as three and four degrees Celsius. Yukon is experiencing greater precipitation during winter and more severe thunderstorms year-round.

The influences of these symptoms of climate change are, in part, responsible for some of the negative impacts the Yukon is experiencing. Some of these impacts are road damage due to melting permafrost, animal population changes, migration changes, floods and record forest fires. Maybe that will help the opposition direct some questions that are more relevant to climate change.

**Mr. Elias:** Mr. Speaker, that was a pretty poor progress report, and that response was probably the best imitation of Charlie Brown's teacher I've ever heard.

#### **Speaker's statement**

**Speaker:** Order please. The honourable member knew this was coming, I think. We have ruled cartoon references out of order in the past, so just respect that. The Member for Vuntut Gwitchin has the floor.

**Mr. Elias:** Mr. Speaker, subregional governments must be leaders in combating climate change, and being "somewhat leaders", which is how the Environment minister described his government's progress yesterday, is not good enough.

The Premier himself said of the climate change action plan, "It is number one on the priority list," and he went on to say, "We in the Yukon are doing our part to deal with climate change."

I will direct the minister's attention to page 5 of the *Climate Change Action Plan*; it has the former Environment minister and the Premier's signature on it. Responding to climate change is the minister's responsibility, and it's time he delivered on his responsibilities. The Environment minister said he was a "somewhat leader" yesterday. Can he give a single example of how he has gotten somewhat close to achieving these targets?

**Hon. Mr. Edzerza:** I'll refrain from stooping to levels that aren't acceptable in this Legislative Assembly, but 70 percent of the overall budget is dedicated to environmental sus-

tainability. The *Climate Change Action Plan* for February 2009 commits the Government of Yukon to reduce government greenhouse gas emissions by 20 percent by 2015; to become carbon-neutral by 2020.

Yukon Housing Corporation is building over 120 housing units built to SuperGreen standards, thus reducing energy use and release of greenhouse gases, while addressing the housing needs of Yukoners. All government-funded construction is to show leadership in energy and be environmentally design certified.

The *Yukon Solid Waste Action Plan* enhances recycling, waste reduction and diversion programs. The Yukon Housing Corporation and Energy Solutions Centre offer programs to help homeowners to become more energy efficient. Our territory is now over 90 percent powered by clean, renewable energy.

**Mr. Elias:** Three days and we're finally slowly getting somewhere. It seems the Environment minister is taking his cues from the federal Conservative colleagues. At the 2008 United Nations Climate Change Conference of the Parties, or COP14, in Poznań, Poland, his federal colleagues were called "obstructionists". The next year at COP15 in Copenhagen, Denmark, they were deemed the "fossil of the year". Just last December in Cancun, Mexico, at COP16, the federal Conservatives earned the "colossal fossil" title from climate change groups. Now it's March 1, 2011, and it's clear. The Yukon Party's response to their *Climate Change Action Plan* is simply a cop-out. I challenge the Minister of Environment to demonstrate on the floor of this House how he's meeting any of the targets set out in the *Climate Change Action Plan* — targets.

**Hon. Mr. Edzerza:** I'll repeat what I mentioned before on the floor of this Legislative Assembly. I think the opposition is having a hard time to really find fault with this Yukon Party government when it comes to working with climate change. When you look back in history, I think it'll speak for itself. The opposition did absolutely nothing.

The development of an energy strategy for Yukon in January 2009 was a long-term vision for the responsible development of energy resources. Our government, together with its partners, is currently exploring many renewable energy options. The Yukon government, Yukon Energy and Yukon Electrical Company have developed a draft policy that will enable Yukoners who produce electricity from renewable technologies for their own consumption to connect their power back to the electrical grid. This policy, which is currently available for the public to review, will encourage further development and adopt many renewable energy sources and promote energy conservation and greater energy efficiency.

The Yukon net metering policy will enable home owners to offset their electrical bills by feeding surplus power to the grid.

#### **Question re: Energy policy**

**Mr. McRobb:** I have questions for the Energy, Mines and Resources minister on the draft net metering policy released today. While it's good to see the Yukon Party finally getting around to doing something on one aspect of the Liberals vision for the territory, it's disappointing to now see this gov-

ernment's version of our net metering initiative. It's simply too little, too late for many Yukoners. Our bill was introduced in the fall of 2007, about three and a half years ago, in the form of legislation. Now, after a long wait, all the Yukon Party has been able to produce is a draft policy that at best won't be finalized until about four years later. So is this Energy, Mines and Resources minister satisfied with his government's approach to make Yukoners wait four years for this?

**Hon. Mr. Rouble:** Well, the Liberal Party has certainly demonstrated how they value legislation in this territory. They did put forward a piece of legislation regarding net metering that was very similar to the piece of legislation that they tabled recently, the *Disclosure Protection Act*. We just heard from the members opposite yesterday that the *Disclosure Protection Act* is an incomplete piece of legislation that didn't have public consultation, that had questions in it, and the same was true of the piece of legislation that was developed and tabled by the member opposite previously.

We have taken the issue of energy in the territory very seriously. We have responded with an energy strategy. We have gone to work with our stakeholders and partners on this issue and have put forward a draft policy that has been worked on in conjunction with the energy companies in the territory. We didn't come forward with half-done, half-baked or half-developed legislation. Instead, we went to work with Yukoners. We put together a draft of the policy; we have taken it back out to Yukoners now so that we can get their feedback, so we can get on with the business of managing the territory's electrical infrastructure in a responsible and reliable way.

**Mr. McRobb:** The government's policy version looks surprisingly similar to our net metering bill, which refutes any logical explanation to the Yukon Party's decision to stall progress on this initiative for four years. However, there is one distinct difference between the two: the Liberals' bill would have accommodated up to 500 kilowatts of capacity for any eligible generator; whereas, the Yukon Party's draft policy limits that ability to only 25 kilowatts. While that might accommodate most residential customers, it rules out larger solar projects from retail customers such as big box stores and government buildings, and likely renders biomass generation economically unfeasible.

Obviously, the government isn't too serious about encouraging the ability of customers to feed electricity back into the grid for any sizable project.

Why is this Energy minister willing to settle for so little?

**Hon. Mr. Rouble:** One only has to take a look at the *Energy Strategy for Yukon* that was tabled in this Assembly. The energy strategy was done and demonstrates a long, forward-looking vision and recognizes there are tools we can use in the territory to support and encourage responsible renewable energy production.

The tools we have for that aspect are the net metering type of policy, where an individual homeowner or business would produce energy primarily for their own use and then supply their surplus back to the grid. The other part of that strategy is the independent power production part of it. That will come forward in another policy at a later date.

We recognize there are opportunities for both here in the territory. We certainly want to see an encouragement of renewable, responsible, reliable energy here in the territory and we'll work with all Yukoners in order to achieve these goals.

**Mr. McRobb:** It's now obvious the four-year wait for this government's five-percent solution is simply too little, too late. All members of this Assembly had the opportunity back in the fall of 2007 to do the right thing and pass the bill that was presented before this House then and on two subsequent occasions. But the bill was filibustered each time we brought it forward, preventing progress — a lost opportunity. Four lost years, and only a five-percent solution.

How many homes have been built in these past four lost years that could have been designed with green energy generation? Or how many large retail, commercial, small industrial and government buildings could have incorporated that design? What does this loss translate to in terms of diesel generation today? Does the Energy minister even know?

**Hon. Mr. Rouble:** Well, let's dust out that old piece of legislation again and take another look at it and see if the member opposite has any answers to the questions that were posed during the debate on that — because there were issues. The legislation that he proposed wasn't well-thought-out, had areas of concern, required additional consultation and needed to be looked at in the aspects of how it could be realistically incorporated into today's energy infrastructure. It's not an easy matter, as the members opposite seem to demonstrate on a daily basis, of simply tabling legislation and hoping that it will work and hoping that it will meet the needs — or tossing out legislation saying this is a starting point.

When legislation comes to the floor of the Assembly, it is expected to be complete. It is expected that we can vote on something and turn it into a law. Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, the Liberal Party has a history, growing ever longer each day, of tabling legislation that is incomplete.

**Some Hon. Member:** (Inaudible)

**Hon. Mr. Rouble:** You know, Mr. Speaker, the constant comments coming from the Member for —

**Some Hon. Member:** (Inaudible)

**Hon. Mr. Rouble:** I rest my case, Mr. Speaker.

#### **Question re: Economic development and the environment**

**Ms. Hanson:** A news release came across my desk with the headline "Little Salmon Carmacks and Selkirk First Nations successful in collaborative bid to ensure sustainable development in the Yukon." The release was in reference to the Yukon Supreme Court decision to uphold the Water Board's decision to deny a water use licence to the Western Copper project. The First Nation said it was a victory for sustainable development, and it upheld a decision against an unproven technology and a project that could not guarantee a walk-away mine.

I would take it from that, to the First Nations any economic prosperity they might have received from the mining project was offset by what they viewed as a significant risk to the environment. I would be interested in knowing the Pre-

mier's views on how best to reconcile the often divergent challenges of economic prosperity and environmental conservation.

**Hon. Mr. Fentie:** I think the Leader of the Third Party's question is evidence of how that is unfolding in today's Yukon. We have very stringent assessment processes in the Yukon, including very independent bodies, like the Water Board, which are mandated to ensure that this economic and environmental balance exists in the Yukon. The process obviously works in this matter and in many others and I can say with the greatest of confidence to all Yukoners that the way we are approaching economic development and prosperity, in concert with how we're approaching protection and conservation of our pristine wilderness and environment and what all that means in terms of development today and beyond, is very positive for Yukoners. The process certainly is working very well for all parties, investors and for Yukoners.

**Ms. Hanson:** Yukoners tell me they wonder whether the boom times we find ourselves in are being managed with a view to sustainable development. They see increased mining activity and a government that wants to see the industry succeed at all costs, but unwilling to engage in thoughtful discussion of the public benefits for today and for when the resources are depleted. They hear announcements about short-term temporary workers to fill the labour gap, but no discussion about measures to protect them. They hear we are in a crisis to meet future energy demands; with a growing population lured here by promise of jobs, there's a housing crisis and strains in the social safety net. More and more demands are piled on the already strained public service. Meanwhile, land use planning proceeds at a snail's pace and the Department of Environment is marginalized.

Beyond the platitudes, can this government tell us what the principles of sustainable development are that guide this government's management of the current boom?

**Hon. Mr. Fentie:** Here we have the NDP once again making reference to individuals who choose to come to the Yukon and seek gainful employment. The Yukon Party government actually is very supportive of that concept. Furthermore, we have the lowest unemployment rate in the country — three point some percent. All Yukoners who live here today cannot fill the job vacancies that exist because of the Yukon Party government's approach to sustainable economic development. That's what it is all about. We don't share the NDP's view of sustainable development, nor do we take any advice from the NDP. Their view of industry and sustainable development is to stop it.

We, the Yukon Party government, believe in development, believe in investment, believe in industry and believe we can do it, on balance, to protect our environment and be sustainable at the same time. We are demonstrating it. That's why we have the lowest unemployment rate in the country.

**Ms. Hanson:** Yes, and unfortunately the government will not tell us what those sustainability principles are. Under the NDP, the Yukon was the first jurisdiction in Canada to create a sustainable development round table that would bring together citizens of diverse backgrounds to research, review

and recommend courses of action that fit within the framework of sustainable development.

Over the years, the Yukon Council on the Economy and the Environment was tasked by successive governments of differing political stripes to review legislation within the lens of sustainable development, to study issues and report back with recommendations — for example, how to use tax credits to create economic diversification.

Such a body would be useful today as our small part of the world attempts to manage the boom correctly and bring economic prosperity with equity and without environmental and social ruin. The Yukon Party effectively killed the council early in its mandate. It didn't want any oversight from citizens on its development priorities.

Why did the Yukon Party kill the council? Was it just ideology or —

**Speaker:** Thank you. Minister responsible, please.

**Hon. Mr. Fentie:** Pretty harsh words — “killing the council”. I think it's more about the times we're in versus the times the NDP lived in. Let's look at the NDP's approach to sustainable development: double-digit unemployment; an exodus of our population — and what was worse than that, it was our young people and our skilled people leaving this territory to go find a job because the NDP sustainable development didn't produce one job; investment of our dollars dedicated to energy development, investments and failed enterprises like saw mills and oil companies, Mr. Speaker, and the list goes on, and, in fact, sustainable development by the NDP still shows up on our power bill.

That's not the approach the Yukon Party government has taken. We have taken an approach that has resulted in the lowest unemployment rate; one of the leaders in the country when it comes to fiscal position; one of the leaders in the world, out of 51 jurisdictions, when it comes to mining investment. Mr. Speaker, look at the diversification: tourism, IT, arts and culture, small business, and the list goes on — many economic engines running in the Yukon Party's sustainable development initiative. That's the pathway to prosperity, not the ditch the NDP had us in.

**Speaker:** The time for Question Period has now elapsed.

#### Notice of opposition private members' business

**Ms. Hanson:** Pursuant to Standing Order 14.2(3), I would like to identify the item standing in the name of the Third Party to be called on Wednesday, March 2, 2011. It is Motion No. 1331, standing in the name of the Member for Whitehorse Centre.

**Mr. McRobb:** Pursuant to Standing Order 14.2(3), I would like to identify the item standing in the name of the Official Opposition to be called on Wednesday, March 2, 2011. It is Bill No. 112, standing in the name of the Member for Porter Creek South.

**Hon. Ms. Taylor:** I move that the Speaker do now leave the Chair and 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 the House resolve into Committee of the Whole. Are you agreed?

*Motion agreed to*

*Speaker leaves the Chair*

#### COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

**Chair (Mr. Nordick):** Order please. Committee of the Whole will now come to order. The matter before the Committee is Bill No. 24, *First Appropriation Act, 2011-12*.

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. 24: *First Appropriation Act, 2011-12*

**Chair:** The matter before the Committee is Bill No. 24, *First Appropriation Act, 2011-12*.

We will now proceed with general debate.

**Hon. Mr. Fentie:** I am indeed pleased to rise in Committee to present the introductory remarks for Bill No. 24, *First Appropriation Act, 2011-12*, more commonly referred to as the 2011-12 main estimates.

In short order, I will take this opportunity to review some of the expenditure highlights of this budget. However, before I move on to those expenditure highlights, I wish to provide a few summary observations regarding Yukon's actual financial position.

Supported by revenues of some \$1.105 billion, the expenditures identified in this budget, the main estimates for 2011-12, total \$1.089 billion, of which \$237.7 million represents our government's 2011-12 investment in capital — that's strategic investment in such things as infrastructure — and \$851.8 million is being dedicated to operation and maintenance. That is an investment in programs and service delivery to the Yukon public.

This is the third consecutive year that the Government of Yukon's expenditures have topped the \$1-billion mark.

The \$1-billion threshold as an expenditure level is not significant in and of itself. Rather, Mr. Chair, our commitment to Yukoners and to fiscal responsibility while maintaining this level of investment on behalf of Yukoners is the salient point. Understandably, some will turn their attention to and focus on the statement of annual surplus as the primary indicator of the government's financial performance. Well, certainly, that statement provides one financial indicator by which year-over-year results can be measured, but certainly is only one small part of an actual financial or fiscal position.

So with all things known today and all decisions to date considered, our 2011-12 budget forecasts an annual surplus of \$38.456 million. This means revenues for the Government of

Yukon are greater than expenses for the 2011-12 fiscal year. Further, to explain this another way, not only is our government maintaining our net asset base, we are improving it. One of the objectives for the adoption of full accrual accounting was to improve reporting and understanding of the government's financial health — in other words, more clarity, more openness and accountability.

This meant a shift from the historical focus on net financial position in isolation to the current focus on multiple financial indicators, including net financial position, annual surplus and accumulated surplus. So despite the move to full accrual accounting, the statement of accumulated surplus has not been consistently considered as a primary measure of any government or our government's financial health. At some level, the reason for this appears clear.

An accumulated surplus includes all tangible capital assets. That is, accumulated surplus includes the value of capital assets that cannot be used to pay off liabilities. That's an important point when you consider all indicators. However, an accumulated surplus is an important factor of financial health. It represents the government's net economic resources. The accumulated surplus measures our government's net resources, both financial and physical, that can be used to provide future services. So our 2011-12 budget forecast has an accumulated surplus for March 31, 2012 of \$539.8 million, providing a very significant net asset base from which to provide future programs and services.

Our government made the shift to full accrual accounting for the 2004-05 fiscal year. An accumulated surplus for that year, as at March 31, 2005, was \$414.431 million. As noted, we are projecting for March 31, 2012 an accumulated surplus of \$539.8 million. This is a very significant increase of approximately \$125 million. I say it with pride — our government has continued to deliver infrastructure, program and service investments to Yukoners while not only maintaining but increasing net economic resources. With an accumulated surplus of almost \$540 million, the Yukon government and the Yukon Territory are well-positioned for the future.

Once again, our government is projecting a positive net financial position at year-end. Most other Canadian jurisdictions are reporting net debt. This fact alone is significant, but let me phrase this in a different way: net debt provides an indication of future revenue requirements for government. That is, net debt provides a measure of the future revenues required to pay for the past. The significance of this is really quite obvious. As one of the only jurisdictions in Canada not in a net debt position, it will not be necessary — it will not be necessary, Mr. Chair — to allocate future revenues to offset or cover off for past expenditures. Our government can say unequivocally we are paying as we go. Yes, we do have a positive net financial resource position to pay for future programs and services, even for those years where potentially revenues are not greater than expenses. Now isn't that the whole point?

As I have said, a net financial resource position is an important indicator of our government's fiscal health and this indicator speaks to the future. The 2011-12 main estimates

forecast our net financial resource position to be a very healthy \$43.1 million.

I have touched upon three important indicators. They are positive net financial resource position, annual surplus and accumulated surplus, all pointing to Yukon's healthy fiscal framework. Each contributes to our understanding of our government's financial health. The Public Sector Accounting Board did not make its recommendations lightly. The adoption of accrual accounting was to improve the understanding and reporting of government's financial health to the benefit of the Legislature, the public and any others who may be interested.

The adopted reporting framework means that individual financial indicators should not be considered in isolation. Let me emphasize: should not be considered in isolation. When speaking of the government's financial health, it is important to consider the complete picture. That is sound fiscal management.

We only need to consider that our government has accumulated surplus, that our government projects an annual surplus and that our government forecasts a positive net financial position in order to see that the Yukon's finances are very strong.

One final comment on our financial health: the budget is an annual exercise and, understandably, the primary focus is on the fiscal year for which the budget is tabled. The reality is that our government is striving to manage the Yukon's finances over a multi-year horizon.

Our government saves when it is prudent to do so; our government makes expenditures and investments when it is necessary. We do this on behalf of Yukoners. As legislators, we need to look beyond the short term and consider the long term. Our government has done this to the benefit of all Yukoners. We have done this without mortgaging the future. As I have said, our financial health is extremely strong. Our history of significant investments continues with our government's 2011-12 budget, as our strong fiscal framework provides us the flexibility to be responsive to emerging priorities and opportunities and needs as they are presented to Yukon.

I will move on and provide the Committee with highlights of some of the expenditure initiatives that are reflected in this budget. I noted in my earlier comments that this budget reflects total expenditures of \$1.089 billion, of which almost \$238 million is directed toward capital investments in a strategic manner, and \$851 million is allocated for operation and maintenance. Our commitment to fiscal responsibility remains strong while we continue to invest strategically in the Yukon and for the benefit of all Yukoners.

Allow me to highlight some of the more significant investments that we are making. The demand for land development is really quite obvious in today's Yukon. Bolstered by a strong and still improving mining sector, Yukon's GDP is on the rise. Not only are there important mining operations coming on stream in the immediate term, following the recent strong years of record-breaking mineral exploration here in Yukon, there are significant mining properties in development with operations targeted for the not-too-distant future. Our government is fully aware of this, and rather than being reactive, we

are choosing to be proactive, planning and developing appropriate infrastructure to meet these future emerging demands.

The availability of developed land is of concern to Yukoners. With the existing demand and the anticipated increased demand, our government will continue to ensure timely availability of developed land as Yukon's population increases. Our commitment to land development is indeed significant, totalling almost \$110 million over the next four years, of which \$41.9 million is allocated for fiscal year 2011-12.

Now, I anticipate criticism that our land development investments are targeted solely for Whitehorse. Well, indeed, there is a significant investment targeted for such developments as Whistle Bend. These are in the \$50-million range over the next four years. However, our planned investments in land development extend beyond Whitehorse. Looking into other communities, we see important developments in Dawson City, Mayo and Carmacks — just to highlight a few examples of where and how our government is committed to increasing availability of developed land across Yukon.

Yukon is a large territory connected by an impressive network of transportation infrastructure. We are investing approximately \$47 million in 2011-12 for transportation-related infrastructure — for example, highways, roads, bridges and airstrips. There is no doubt that our government has had significant success in leveraging funding from other sources through arrangements such as infrastructure stimulus funds, Shaktak, Building Canada fund and the Canadian strategic infrastructure fund, to name but a few. Yukon cannot count on these funding sources indefinitely. Our multi-year plan considers this and reflects annual increases under the transportation envelope starting in 2012-13 to be funded through Yukon's direct revenue streams — another example of paying as we go.

Management of the Yukon's fiscal framework over the long term requires that choices be made. Our government is ahead of the curve by identifying and striving to plan for and implement long-term and multi-year expenditure plans today. We recognize that the multi-year plan serves primarily as a planning tool, representing preliminary figures. These are plans continually under review and adjusted, as necessary, for emerging priorities and trends. Notwithstanding all things being equal, the multi-year plan highlights our government's undertaking to provide stable — let me emphasize — to provide stable and predictable expenditure investments. Our multi-year commitments are significant and will be supplemented should outside funding be made available.

Our fiscal framework provides the flexibility to further increase direct Yukon government investment and transportation infrastructure over time, as necessary.

Moving on to municipal infrastructure, the projects and initiatives identified in our 2011-12 budget are significant, totalling approximately \$67 million, of which just over \$50 million has been or will be initiated under our partnership with the federal government through the Building Canada fund.

Projects approved by Canada and identified in our 2011-12 budget include Dawson City sewage and district heating, Carmacks sewage treatment, Carcross water system upgrade, Ross River water system upgrades and the Old Crow runway. I en-

courage members to refer to the 2011-12 capital budget and the multi-year plan for additional details.

Turning to building construction, or vertical construction — on the major development or major works side, this budget provides \$25.754 million to advance and complete a number of projects of importance to Yukoners. These include: Whitehorse ambulance stations, some \$3.2 million; F.H. Collins school replacement, \$2.7 million; the Whitehorse Correctional Centre, \$7.46 million; and a secure assessment centre, of some \$3.580 million.

With approximately \$7.5 million, this budget reflects the extension by Canada of the affordable housing initiative, ensuring that reasonable time frames are provided to complete a number of projects initiated in prior years. Our capital investment is not only about new construction. Spurred by observations by the Auditor General, concerns about deferred maintenance — sometimes referred to as “infrastructure deficits” — are coming to the forefront. Our government is keenly aware that investments in our existing infrastructure are necessary. In last year's budget, we took a significant step in addressing this very important issue. Our government identified its commitment to a core investment for building maintenance of \$12 million. The 2011-12 budget continues with this theme and direction, providing \$12.4 million. Now add in another \$2.5 million for smaller development, and this is almost \$15 million in support of work that can be readily taken on by one of the most important sectors of the Yukon's economic fabric, small to medium sized contractors.

I know I'm running out of time, and I still have a considerable amount of material to present to the House, so let me just stop at this point and just quickly recap what has been presented. Firstly, what has been presented is that our financial planning, this government's financial planning, is all inclusive. We do not fixate on just one indicator. That's very dangerous. Secondly, we have multi-year plans, both fiscally and investment wise, which is important to ensure that we maintain a clear and dedicated focus to the future. Of course, that is also traveling on the pathway to prosperity. We are maintaining a savings account. We can say unequivocally that we are paying as we go.

The Yukon government has the necessary fiscal resources to finance future government operations. The only other jurisdiction in today's Canada that can say that is the Province of Alberta. What a remarkable achievement, and at the same time reducing taxes to Yukoners and maintaining thresholds of a \$1 billion plus of investment on behalf of Yukoners. We stand ready to go to the public with our fiscal management.

**Mr. Mitchell:** Once again, in starting general debate on the main estimates for 2011-12, I would just like to thank the officials for their hard work in preparing the 2011-12 Yukon government budget, as well as for the briefings that were provided. We do appreciate the effort the officials make in briefing us on the budget, as well as in the Department of Finance.

This budget lays out expectations for government expenses, revenues and how these ultimately will affect the Yukon's bottom line and financial position. As the Premier



says, it's a budget that must be considered in the greater context of all things, including how the Premier has managed Yukoners' money in the past.

It must also be considered in light of how accurate and inaccurate the Premier has been — how he has been proven to be when it comes to past budgets. This budget must certainly be recognized for its timing. This is the last budget, the last main estimates that the Premier will deliver before going to the polls to fight for his job. That does make this an election budget. So, my questions for the Premier about this budget will be based on this context.

How has he managed Yukoners' money in the past? How accurate have his budgets been, and what is he trying to convince Yukoners of with this budget?

Now the Premier in his opening remarks had quite a lot to say. Of course he laid out the numbers — a budget of \$1.089 billion, \$851.86 million in O&M and \$237.7 million in capital expenditures. The Premier also stated today that a statement of annual surplus and deficit is not the be-all and end-all — to summarize what he was saying. He suggested that we should focus more on the accumulated surplus position. He referred to a \$125-million increase in accumulated surplus projected at year-end. It leads to some interesting thoughts. For example, was the Yukon in fact — if we were to restate the year-end positions to reflect a system of accrual accounting as we now have in place — in an accumulated surplus or deficit position under the predecessor governments, Liberal or NDP? The Premier talks about this as if he has just accomplished all of this in his nine years at the helm.

The answer, of course, is that when the Premier took office, Yukon would have been in an accumulated surplus position, if we were going to look at all the assets of Yukon, all the buildings, which were not at that point stated in that same manner.

I think we should point out that it's the Premier himself who hung his hat so firmly on the hook of running annual surpluses. It's this Premier who, every year in his budget speech, has said, "Once again, we are tabling a surplus budget." It wasn't the opposition that said you had to do so; it was the Premier who said this is the seventh annual, this is the eighth annual, this is the ninth annual surplus budget.

Now he's saying — now that he has failed to deliver those surpluses for two years in succession — "Don't look over there." It's like a magician — "Don't look at what the left hand is doing. Look over here." Now what matters is the accumulated surplus. That's what's really important, now that he has run two successive annual deficits.

This is a Premier who, when he was in opposition, cried out to anyone who would listen about the unsustainability of the spending trajectory — those were favourite words of his — of the government of the day.

Now he says we have doubled the fiscal capacity. Well, what has happened certainly is a combination — because of devolution, which gave us responsibility for additional areas and additional personnel, and also as a result of increasing federal transfers and as a result of one-time stimulus funding. Yes, we have a lot more revenue. If you look at the own-source

revenue — the taxes and general revenues in these main estimates — it totals \$123.1 million. That's our own-source revenue out of this billion-dollar budget. Out of \$1.1 billion in total revenue, it's \$123 million — or about 11 percent — that is actually a result of taxes and general revenues from Yukon. The rest is third party recoveries, recoveries from Canada and transfers from Canada.

So, the lion's share of what's happening here is still coming from elsewhere and the Premier is no doubt going to stand on his feet and say, "Well, the Liberals say we don't deserve this funding." That is not what we are saying at all. What we are saying is that, yes, there is a large increase, but much of it is coming from Canada or in the form of the Shawkak program from the United States. It is not revenue that we are generating all here at home.

This budget promises many things. For one thing, it promises it will cost less to run the government than it did last year. When I say that, I'm referring to these main estimates of O&M at \$851.9 million. That totals \$10 million less than what we've spent to date this year when you include the supplementary budgets, and we've had two of them. Now, this estimate also stands in the face of every other year under the Yukon Party in which O&M has gone up throughout the year again and again in the supplementary budgets. This election budget, if the Premier wants us to believe that this is the full expenditures for the year — of course both the Premier and I know that's not the case, but he says it will cost less to run the government this year than what it has cost to date last year. According to this budget, if we look at what has been spent to date this year, including the supplementary budgets, the main estimates are to spend less in Community Services, Economic Development, Energy, Mines and Resources, Environment, Justice, Tourism and Culture, Executive Council Office and the Women's Directorate than we have already spent this year, including supplementary budgets.

So does the Premier expect that we will spend less in these departments, or is he in fact expecting that there will be significant additional spending during the course of this year via supplementary budgets?

**Hon. Mr. Fentie:** First, I'm going to take a moment to get my head wrapped around this. This Leader of the Liberal Party has just stated that operation and maintenance is going down. I don't know how he gets that. The budget document clearly shows that from 2010-11 through to 2014-15, the net operation and maintenance expenditures continue to escalate. In fact, we have, in our fiscal planning, built in an escalator on operation and maintenance. The only way that I can figure this out is that the Liberal leader believes we should continue to pay for one-time expenditures. In other words, buy the pickup in one year and keep paying for it in the next year, and the next year, and the next year, or continue to pay one-time expenses such as collective bargaining agreement obligations.

By the way, all from the point in time that the collective bargaining agreement was reached is built into the fiscal framework. So this is not a scenario of strong fiscal management by the Liberal leader because he doesn't even understand what it is he's talking about. Fact of the matter is there is an

escalator built into the operation and maintenance investments for Yukon, for the delivery of programs and services, and that escalator is built in within the confines of what our estimated increase in revenues will be going forward. It's called "pay as you go".

The Liberal leader takes issue with the percentage of grant versus own-source revenues. Well, let's just for a moment look back to the last Liberal budget, 2001-02. The total revenue grant and all-inclusive was \$503 million — 69 percent of \$503 million was federal grant. Now let's fast forward to today's Yukon. Total revenue is \$1.105.271 billion, of which only \$700-plus million is federal grant, so only 64 percent in today's Yukon is federal grant out of a billion dollars.

That is clear evidence, by anybody's application of arithmetic, that the Yukon is faring quite well, especially in terms of the percentage of own-source revenue versus federal grant.

The member also comments on such things as surplus, deficit, and on and on. Let me go from 2003 — the first Yukon Party budget — to 2010. All inclusive, the Yukon Party government has invested \$129.427 million less than the revenues taken in. What in the world is the Liberal leader talking about? That's why we have such a healthy financial position. We have invested \$129.427 million less than we have taken in through the nine budgets the Yukon Party government has constructed and tabled — so much for that argument.

Let me continue on with the factual elements of the fiscal position of Yukon — not the Liberal view of the fiscal position of Yukon, the factual fiscal position.

In moving on, these investments are strategic, as I noted. The Department of Highways and Public Works and Property Management division continue to work with all departments to identify maintenance priorities and immediate deliverables to ensure budgeted work will be completed work. Individual ministers will be more than pleased to address specific issues during general debate and, of course, department line-by-line debate.

Following the 2010-11 and 2009-10 capital budgets of \$263.5 million and \$240.6 million respectively, our capital budget for 2011-12 provides \$237.7 million of capital investment. Now, critics may observe that our capital budget is decreasing. Well, certainly, the government's direct capital investment is less, no doubt about it — is less for 2011-12 than for the two years prior. This demonstrates the whole point. In managing Yukon's fiscal framework over a multi-year horizon, we save when we can. Mr. Chair, we save when we can and we make expenditures and investments when we need to. The world experienced a very significant global economic downturn over the past two years.

I recall how the Liberal leader berated the Yukon Party government for doing nothing during that time. Well, there goes that argument also, considering the evidence. Our government did respond. We stepped up to significantly increase our capital investment over those two years. We increased our investment in the Yukon economy, supporting Yukoners and providing much-needed work for Yukoners. In other words, we did stimulate the Yukon economy to better manage our way through a global economic meltdown. As we see signs of im-

provement in the global economy, we see increased capital investment from the private sector. Isn't that one of the fundamental principles of an economy — growing investments from the private sector? We see an ever-improving balance between public and private sector investment. I think this is quite critical. Let's just look at a quick example of approximations. The Yukon government has tabled \$1-billion-plus budget. One sector of our economy is estimated or projected to be investing somewhere upwards to \$800 million. This is the point of that ever-improving balance between public and private sector investment. That's the Yukon Party's view of developing an economy and a quality of life and a positive investment climate and a great place to live. We are very proud of our achievements and do not hesitate to say so on the capital side of the ledger. It's part of what government did to help Yukon through a difficult global time.

We are no less proud of what we've accomplished on delivering programs and services to Yukoners by way of our investments. Critics have suggested that we have achieved our projected annual surplus and our positive net financial position through cuts. I think that's what the Liberal leader was disguising in his comments, that there were cuts. Let me assure you, Mr. Chair, that outside and beyond all the speculation and all the rhetoric, this is not the case.

In fact, on a mains-to-mains basis, comparing apples to apples and oranges to oranges and, in this case, 2010-11 mains to 2011-12 mains, over \$50 million of O&M has been invested in support of ongoing programs and services. \$50 million is significant.

This \$50 million is clear representation and evidence that show there are not cuts. I think we have to get a lot more serious in our debate, especially if the opposition, who are soon to head to the polls, is going to be able to have anything of substance to offer to the Yukon public.

Our investment in the Department of Health and Social Services is just one example. The 2011-12 budget represents a mains-to-mains increase of almost 14 percent, and, of course, the Liberal leader is implying cuts. There has been an increase to health care alone — one department — of 14 percent. We see significant budget increases for social assistance, physician and hospital claims, just to highlight our response to recent trends in a few of the areas related to the provision of essential health care and social services.

Our critics will look to the 2010-11 forecast or *Supplementary Estimates No. 2, 2011-12*, and compare the 2011-12 mains, and claim there must be cuts. The 2011-12 mains are lower than the 2010-11 overall projections, supplementaries included. I can hear it now; how can the Yukon Party spend less in 2011-12 than the forecasts for 2010-11 without cuts?

While most do understand project specific, one-time or the time limited nature of capital expenditures, I'm inclined to believe that it is not understood that this can and does apply to operation and maintenance as well. Individual ministers will be pleased to discuss this in detail during general debate, but allow me to at least provide some examples.

Work related to type 2 mine sites — annually this estimate is provided based on the workplan recommended by Canada.

We will see a decrease of approximately \$6.6 million from the 2010-11 forecast. I spoke at some length regarding our government's approach to budgeting —

**Some Hon. Member:** (Inaudible)

**Hon. Mr. Fentie:** I just heard the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin suggest, "Yeah." Well, just for the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin's information and to help the Liberals along, type 2 mine sites are a responsibility of the federal government, not the Yukon government. The flow is through our government because we manage, on behalf of the federal government, the work ongoing at type 2 mine sites, so if the Liberals believe in this fantasy that there are cuts, then the Liberals believe that we are responsible for the cost of type 2 mine sites. Good luck explaining that to the Yukon public.

I spoke at some length regarding our government's approach to budgeting, estimating and recording environmental liabilities in second reading of Bill No. 23, *Third Appropriation Act, 2010-11*. Consistent with the described approach, environmental liabilities is budgeted as \$1 for 2011-12 while for 2010-11, \$5.116 million is booked, or expensed — to estimate the estimate — to estimate our known liabilities. The 2011-12 mains represents an obvious change of \$5.116 million from the 2010-11 forecast. Surely, the opposition members of this House are not suggesting that an as-yet-unknown liability be expensed through the 2011-12 budget. Or are they suggesting that we should rebook, once again, \$5.116 million of known liabilities from the prior year, compounding the liabilities or the cost of liabilities on Yukoners shoulders? That's called "Liberal fiscal management". Good luck explaining that to the Yukon public. I am waiting with bated breath to hear that explanation.

**Some Hon. Member:** (Inaudible)

**Hon. Mr. Fentie:** "All in good time," the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin says. Yes, in a few short months, you'll have that golden opportunity to explain it all to the public.

Pension solvency for Yukon College and the Yukon Hospital Corporation — these are expenditures that are another example of one-time in nature, based on a revised pension evaluation. The 2010-11 forecast totals approximately \$4.25 million; current information indicates that zero dollars will be required for 2011-12. This is a change of just over \$4 million — \$250,000 for 2010-11 forecast.

Are the Liberals suggesting that there are cuts, because we should have compounded this liability or investment also? That's what they call "fiscal management"? Good luck explaining that to the Yukon public.

These are just three examples where one-time funding or one-time limited funding provided in 2010-11 expires and does not carry through to 2011-12. Therefore, Yukon Party fiscal management — we do not compound the expenses to Yukoners, encumbering or burdening the Yukon taxpayer for liabilities that do not exist. That is our fiscal management. The Liberals can explain why they would encumber Yukon taxpayers with further liabilities that do not exist at this time. Good luck explaining that to Yukoners.

Now, there are numerous additional examples. Unfortunately, critics have made sweeping statements about imaginary cuts. As I have indicated previously on a mains-to-mains basis,

the 2011-12 budget provides more than \$50 million in support of ongoing programs and services. These are not cuts nor are they reductions. Critics will also argue that the swings in the annual surplus calculation for 2009-10, 2010-11 indicate that our budget is unreliable. Well, it's quite the opposite. It should come as no surprise that we don't agree with the Liberals or the NDP on fiscal management. The Yukon Party government is entirely reliable and is making the appropriate and required choices on behalf of the Yukon taxpaying public. Our budgets are based on the best information available at the time when they are prepared.

The budget represents our forecast at a point in time based on all information available. As we are all aware, new priorities do emerge; in some cases, emergencies need to be addressed, and market and economic conditions do change. Luckily, Yukon Party government fiscal management has created the fiscal strength and savings for us to be able to address these variances and changes. Government is not static; it will respond as required to meet these challenges. In doing so, it is likely that there will be variances or an alteration of the fiscal framework. That is called "budgeting".

As I have said, our government has a healthy fiscal framework that allows us to be responsive and flexible in addressing the various challenges that Yukoners face. Changes in the financial indicators reported from budget to year-end actuals reflect the impact of our decisions and/or choices. This does not mean that budget forecasts are unreliable. The difference between budget and year-end actuals reflects the choices that are required throughout the year. The Yukon Party government has made choices; it has made decisions.

We would certainly like to hear from the opposition what choices and decisions they will make — or would have made.

Going on — to not make these choices or decisions would be to not fulfill our obligations to Yukoners, as we are required to, being the government of this territory. So the Yukon Party government is very conscious of fulfilling our obligations.

Obviously, the Liberals and the NDP place obligations secondary when it comes to the Yukon public and the public interest. They would have us table a budget, sit back and let the chips fall where they may. Well, this is not our approach at all. Government makes decisions every day, many of which cannot be anticipated at any given time in budgets or otherwise. As these choices are made, we are continually reviewing the fiscal framework and making the appropriate adjustments. That's why we have a Department of Finance. That's why there are financial people throughout the corporate structure of government. That's why we present our books to the Auditor General, and the list goes on. In 2011-12, this will be no different. Choices will be made and our government will be held accountable to the Yukon public through future supplementary budgets tabled, as required, and indeed through the public accounts.

This is the fiscal framework, with more to come yet, I'm sure, during general debate of the Yukon — the actual fiscal framework. It is the Yukon Party government's fiscal framework that we have created since coming into office in 2002. It certainly is a far more positive fiscal position than we inherited

upon coming into office from previous NDP and Liberal governments. In fact, it is similar to night and day.

**Mr. Mitchell:** We'll ignore all the exaggerated incredulity and the condescending tone that the Premier brings to debate in this House, and we'll just try to deal with some of the issues, because Yukoners are really tired of it. So good luck to the Premier in explaining that to Yukoners and why he persists in that attitude in this House. Running up the debt through Crown corporations — good luck explaining that, Mr. Premier — as to why the government not only spends more money than it takes in, but then it borrows yet more again through the Crown corporations. It was interesting when the Premier was making comparisons of the percentage of own-source revenue in his budget versus what comes from Canada.

He likes to explain it two different ways. When talking about the expenditures in O&M and in capital, he says that we are spending \$851.8 million on O&M and we are spending \$230 million and some odd in capital, and we are spending \$1.089 billion. Then he says only \$745 million is coming in transfers from Canada. Well, you also have to include the recoveries of \$142 million from Canada and the third-party recoveries of \$94.6 million. If you are going to talk about the percentage that we are personally responsible for, that we have generated in Yukon, you can't leave those out on the one side of the equation while talking about them on the other.

As far as the Premier's comments about increasing spending during hard times, asking us whether we were aware of a worldwide global downturn, they are kind of ironic. At the beginning, when we asked the Premier questions three years ago about that downturn, he said it wasn't going to affect us here. Now he says we had to spend all of that money and that's why we used the savings account during hard times.

Well, that would make sense if it wasn't for a couple of things. One is that we actually received record funding from Canada during those hard times. We received millions and millions of dollars — tens and tens and tens and tens and tens of millions of additional dollars in one-time infrastructure money — the money that went into Mayo B, money that came in terms of funding for affordable housing. Tens and tens of millions of dollars of one-time money, and yet the Premier still managed to spend down the savings account despite all that extra funding that was coming in to address the issue.

The ultimate irony is that the Premier is talking about how we had to spend all that money and spend down the savings account — and in a few years we spent it down from \$165 million to \$18.1 million projected at the end of the current year — the year that ends on the 31<sup>st</sup> of this month. Yet this is during the time when the private sector was already investing millions and millions of additional money in the mining sector, to which the Premier refers on a very frequent basis. The Premier was trying to stimulate the economy while it was actually being stimulated by the private sector. You know, silver hit a 40 year or so high today. I think it was \$32 an ounce. The Member for Vuntut Gwitchin is saying there's going to be a silver rush — he says in Dawson. We already know there's one in the Keno district.

But gold is at record prices, silver is at record prices, base metals are at record prices, and yet the Premier said we had to spend down the savings account to stimulate the economy. While he was doing that, was his government planning for the needed infrastructure in terms of housing which has become unaffordable — not just for homeless people? We understand that homeless people and people who are without jobs, or people who are having to live supported by social assistance, are going to have a very difficult time with housing, but people with jobs are finding it very difficult to afford housing — be it rental or purchasing housing — because the government hasn't planned for the upturn with the right hand that they were busy describing with the left. So it's interesting that the Premier leaves out one portion of the equation when he describes things, and focuses always on something else.

And, yes, under this Premier, we do question the estimates because O&M always exceeds the increased estimates. Last year in his main estimates, he told Yukoners it would cost \$812 million to run the government, but it wound up costing \$861 million. It was \$50 million more than was originally budgeted for. The Premier says these are simply decisions made during the course of the year. Well, we're suggesting he'll have to make a lot more of those decisions — at least up until the election — in the course of the current year.

It's interesting how the Premier has changed his tone. Here are some comments the Premier made on February 22, 2000, when he was a member of the NDP, in his budget reply speech. The Premier talked about another example of the government he was serving then, made to the Yukon public, and I quote: "...upon taking office, of budgeting in a pay-as-you-go manner, of budgets that take the sustainable, stable spending approach and do not contribute to the boom-and-bust cycles that this territory has faced for so long." Those were the Premier's words, budgeting in a pay-as-you-go manner, budgets that take the sustainable, stable spending approach. What happened to that Premier? Excuse me, he was sitting on the backbenches then. His views changed. What else did he say?

Well, he said, "On the other hand, the Yukon Party would have us back in the Dark Ages, focused on one sector of our economy — mining — and spending all the capital dollars in road building, when there are so many other facets of our economy that are contributing to the turnaround that we are experiencing today."

My goodness, the Premier was bashing the mining industry when he sat in the backbenches of the former government. I'll bet he doesn't bring those words down to the Roundup in Vancouver when he talks about speaking two different truths.

Well, there's one thing that was consistent: even as a backbencher, he was chiding the opposition parties for voting against expenditures, but mind you the Premier didn't spend a lot of time in opposition. He was very adept at hopping back and forth.

Now, what else did the Premier say? Oh, this is something he said about the Yukon Party. He said, quote: "The Yukon Party government's approach was that there was nothing they could do and it was a federal problem — absolutely nothing."

Under their watch there was a moratorium, a loss of jobs and a complete closure of the industry.”

What industry was the Premier talking about? He was talking about the forestry industry. He said that under the Yukon Party it wasn't doing anything. What has the forestry industry done? What has he accomplished for that industry in nine years as Leader of the Yukon Party? That's an interesting question.

I could go on, but I think the Premier gets the point. He did talk about tax increases too. He said I should go on, and I want to be obliging. He said that “the Leader of the Yukon Party, the former leader of the Official Opposition and former leader of the government, makes much about budgeting. Let's look at one of the Yukon Party budgets, 1993-94, and one of the Yukon Party's approaches to raising revenues in this territory for the purpose of expenditures through budgeting. That had the most obscene tax increases ever witnessed in this territory — increase in income taxes, increase in general corporate rate, increase in small business corporate rate, increase in fuel oil tax, tobacco, increase across the board, on and on. The Yukon Party's approach to budgeting was to take money out of Yukoners' pockets and spend that.”

Well, it's interesting, Mr. Chair: I only quote the Premier because he likes to quote governments that have been almost a decade out of office, of which no members who are sitting on the floor of the House today were part. I thought I would remind him of the previous Yukon Party government, since he enjoys those history lessons.

Yes, we do have some questions about the Premier's budget. Yes, we understand the Premier only wants to look at the main estimates to the main estimates, but the fact is that even looking main estimates to main estimates — I think in Health, it's a \$5-million increase over what was spent in all of last year's budgets, and yet last year in the O&M, we know how much it went up in that department alone.

The O&M estimates in this budget say three things: that it will cost less to run the government this year coming than it has cost in the past year with all the money that has been spent — we can't ignore those supplementary budgets because, as the Premier said, those are expenditures that the government makes when they discover the need; that, for the first time, government expenses will go down instead of up, year to year; and that we shouldn't worry about the Premier's habit of exceeding his estimates. That's just not believable. There's another promise in this budget. Once again, for the third year in succession, it promises a surplus.

This budget says that after the Premier spends less running the government this coming year than he has had to spend this past year, he'll deliver a surplus. It's certainly not the first time the Premier has promised a surplus on questionable grounds. For the year that's now drawing to a close, he promised a slim \$2.9-million surplus. The opposition, both opposition parties, questioned that at the time that he delivered the budget. A surplus of one-third of one percent of the budget isn't much of a margin. That's what we pointed out to the Premier. The Premier replied, quote: “The actual position of the government, if you calculate and take all factors, shows — and this is one component of what you must calculate — shows at year-end,

noted by, in brackets, ‘a’, \$2,907,000 surplus. Then you also notice that, going forward, as you continue on with the budget — and this is to ensure that we're inclusive on all matters that must be accounted for, we show a net financial resource position at end of year of over \$40 million.”

So the Premier predicted last year, in the spring, that we would have a net financial resource position at the end of this month, March 31, 2011, of over \$40 million. Now he is predicting \$18.1 million, and perhaps next fall, if the government were to table a supplementary budget prior to an election — if we actually get to then — we'll see yet another figure, and it will no doubt be less than the \$18.1 million. After all, just last fall, a few months ago, instead of \$18.1 million in the first supplementary budget, the Premier was predicting something quite a bit larger than that. If you go back another year, the pattern is clear: promising surpluses, overspending and delivering deficits. In 2009-10, the Premier promised a \$19-million surplus and overspent by \$40 million and, in the end, delivered a \$23-million deficit.

That's why it's so hard for us on this side of the House, and indeed for Yukoners in general, to believe the Premier will deliver a surplus this time, because he keeps failing to do so. When it comes to that savings account to which the Premier refers, it has declined dangerously under his financial management, but he says this year will be different. Now he's promising there will be \$43 million in the bank by the end of the coming fiscal year — the budget we're now debating. We've already seen how, in the supplementary budget, just in a few short months, how many millions of dollars that savings account has changed from last fall to now.

But he says to Yukoners, “Don't worry, be happy.” It will all change next year. But what we've seen over the last three years is that just like the operating expenses keep going up under the Yukon Party, the savings account keeps going down. In March 2008, we had \$165 million in net financial resources. When this fiscal year ends, he says it will be \$18 million, but maybe it will be even less than that. He spent almost 90 percent of the savings over those three years. That's not a pattern that Yukoners can afford for much longer.

But, as the Premier says, we have to look at all matters. We have to include everything when we look at it. We also should look at the \$100 million that has been borrowed through the Yukon Energy Corporation — a little over half for which the Yukon government has provided a comfort letter, as it has been described by the Chair — excuse me, by the president of the Yukon Energy Corporation — a letter of comfort that was written in 2009, that the Yukon government will be responsible for providing the principal and interest payments on \$52.5 million out of that \$100 million, the balance being the responsibility of the ratepayers.

Yet we don't see any more than \$1, perhaps, that has been indicated in this year's budget for the current year's liability on that matter. We don't see anything, but the letter says that principal and interest will be paid yearly. For the current year, what do we see — a dollar? We are not seeing an amount. That's why we are having such a hard time with this Premier's estimates.

I'll ask the Premier: can he tell us whether he still expects, with the most up-to-date figures, the net financial resources to be \$18.1 million at the end of this month? Does he still expect the annual deficit to hold at just \$20.19 million at year-end, March 31, 2011?

**Hon. Mr. Fentie:** I think what is quite obvious is that we have a failure to communicate here. Yes, I agree that the Liberal leader is having a hard time with the estimates because the Liberal leader doesn't understand what they even are, or what makes them up, or what is the purpose of main estimates or one-time expenditures. I hope the member doesn't want me to go back to the glossary because therein lies steps one, two, three — you know, how things are put together to create the estimates. But let me just try to alleviate the member's hard time with the main estimates.

You know, if you take the actual percentage of variance throughout the course of any fiscal year while the Yukon Party government has been in office, that small percentage of variance would be good on anybody's books — and isn't that the point? Solid, strong fiscal management results in these types of small percentages of variance. But at the same time we're meeting the needs of Yukoners without cuts or raising taxes. In fact, we're reducing taxes and building our savings account.

Now, the Liberal leader mentioned the global situation that we found ourselves in. I'll ignore the remarks, but let me just once again help the member, who is having a hard time with that. The facts of the matter are the premiers and the Prime Minister of this country gathered to plan Canada's — Canada's — approach to dealing with a global financial and economic meltdown. At that time, it was defined as something as difficult as or even worse than the Depression and the meltdown of the stock market in the late 1920s and 1930s.

The premiers and the Prime Minister of this country provided input into the creation of Canada's economic action plan. So of course we invested our required portion of that action plan. One of the reasons why Canada is faring so well is the action plan that was created by the premiers and the Prime Minister of this country.

Once again, the Liberal leader has stated we spend more than we take in. How can the member justify that statement? How can the Liberal leader justify that statement?

The facts are that we have taken in by way of revenue, all inclusive, \$129 million plus more than we have spent. Does the Liberal leader not even grasp that simple element of the fiscal position of Yukon? \$129 million more of revenue than expenditures made — that's one of the reasons why we have such a healthy financial position.

You know what Yukoners can't afford? Yukoners cannot afford Liberal fiscal management, because the evidence of Liberal fiscal management is certainly being presented by the Liberal leader in his dissertations and what he perceives to be the fiscal framework of the Yukon. That's what Yukoners can't afford. That's very dangerous. That's why we get into such things under Liberal governments as "renewal", which actually was "removal", because it did cut jobs and place hardships on Yukoners. That's Liberal financial management.

You know, the other point that's really quite interesting is how today the Liberal leader continues to fixate on spending down the savings account. The Liberal leader is fond of quoting passages from *Hansard*, from the past. Well, here's one: "The Yukon Party government has \$85 million in the bank — more than enough to build a \$5.2-million health centre. Will the minister commit to spending some of this money that is growing mouldy in his pocket to getting Dawson's health facility started this year?"

Now, you know what's important about this? At that time, when this was said, this happened to be the Liberal leader — the same Liberal leader of today — who was actually encouraging the government to spend down the savings account on a health facility in Dawson City. However, let's look at what the Liberal position is now, more recently, about that health facility and spending down the savings account. The Liberal leader is now saying that it's bad to spend down the savings account — that bad Yukon Party government went and spent down that savings account, the account he said was there with money growing mouldy in our pockets, and also had referenced that this should be spent on a health facility in Dawson, but recently this same Liberal leader has said publicly that the Liberals would never build that health facility in Dawson.

Here's the problem, Mr. Chair: a failure to communicate. I think it comes down to factual understanding of anything. By the way, this institution and what we do here by way of debate and all that goes with it is not about filling the pages of *Hansard* with useless information. There is no credibility coming from the Liberals on any of these matters and, on the financial position of the Yukon, that is a glaring problem for the Liberal leader and the Liberal Party.

Back to a more constructive approach: as I have highlighted just a small number of specific expenditure initiatives, individual ministers — and this is what it's all about, actually, having individual ministers stand and present the detail of their budgets, so hopefully the Liberals will get a better understanding of what the budget actually is — will be pleased to provide additional detail on these and other initiatives, as we proceed to department-by-department review of their appropriation requests.

Through that discussion, you never know, the Liberals might decide to support this budget and claim it as their own. That would be a smart move for the Liberals to head to the polls with. Just like the last Liberal Party, in running in a general election, said to the Yukon public, "We'll just do the same as the incumbent government only we'll do it better." Is that what the Liberal plan is? Well, I would hope that we hear at least some elements of how they intend to do it.

Now before I conclude, allow me a final observation regarding the Government of Yukon's finances. These are factual, not Liberal fantasy. Thanks to the sound financial management of the Yukon Party government, we have a positive net financial resource. This speaks to our future — and that indeed is what it's all about — and highlights that we are not relying on future revenues to fund past and current expenditures. Does the Liberal leader not understand that element? We are not relying on future revenues to fund past and current ex-

penditures. We have an accumulated surplus. This speaks to our future and highlights our economic resources, both financial and physical.

These are resources available for the provision of future programs and services. We have an annual surplus, and this highlights that revenues exceed expenditures, allowing us to build the bank and save. As it has in recent years, our savings account will allow us the flexibility to be responsive on behalf of Yukoners when it is needed most. The Yukon Party government is extremely proud of the efforts of our government to provide significant capital infrastructure investments and deliver effective services and programs to Yukoners while maintaining this very healthy long-term fiscal position. Looking to our multi-year forecast tabled with this budget, future years remain extremely positive with revenues projected to exceed expenses for each of the next four years. In addition, over this very same period, our net financial resource position is expected to increase. This provides a strong indication that we are living within our means, pay as you go and so on. This forward-looking healthy fiscal framework is what Yukoners can take great comfort in, and indeed I'm sure they do. Yukon remains financially well-positioned for the future.

Continuing on, there has been quite a lengthy presentation of the actual financial position of Yukon. What has been tabled before us is not only a budget for today, but it is the plan, fiscally and capital-wise and beyond when it comes to program and service delivery for future years. The Yukon Party government has the ability to present this kind of plan to the Yukon public. What do we hear from the Liberals? What somebody said 10 years ago, what isn't a fiscal position, but what they believe is. They say to the Yukon public that we spend more than we take in. The facts are clear; that's not the case. The member said that in our spending down of the savings account to provide stimulus, we did nothing to prepare for the growth that's happening here. Well, does the member not know what those investments entailed? It was investments in infrastructure, housing, highways, bridges, campuses. Hospitals are being built. I don't really think that the Liberal leader is capable at all of understanding where the Yukon has come from, where it is today and where it's going. That's the problem here, and that's the failure to communicate.

We are in a very good position — one of the best financial positions in the country. We did not get there by magic or by fudging the books or by creating estimates that have nothing to do with reality. We got there because we had a plan, we had the ability to manage the finances and to build them, we had strategic plans for investing in Yukon, especially in infrastructure, programs and service delivery, and we have the continued plan ongoing to keep Yukon on this pathway to prosperity.

That is the difference between the Yukon Party government and the opposition. We have Yukon on the pathway to prosperity; we are heading in a positive direction; we have improved the quality of life. The Liberals have nothing to offer — absolutely nothing. So I challenge the Liberal leader to at least come to his senses and, in the best interests of the Yukon public, tell the Yukon public what it is the Liberals have to offer.

Now, if the Liberal leader wants to sit here for the next 20 days berating the government side and accusing the Minister of Finance of fudging the books, the Liberal leader can continue to do that, but at the end of the day it won't change this fact: the Yukon Party government has not only delivered over the last nine years — we have built this territory. We have put it in a position that is the envy of many. We are being talked about across the country and we are now solidly placed as a member of the global community. Our quality of life has improved dramatically. Our young people are moving home. They are getting gainful employment here. Our infrastructure is being built that will provide benefit to Yukoners not just today, but long into the future. We have created great partnerships with other governments and First Nations. We are the first government, by the way, to ever create a land use plan in this territory. We have accomplished a lot, but we have a lot more to do. Yukon Party government has a plan to do it. We have something of substance to offer the Yukon public.

The Liberals have nothing to offer and the NDP — we all know what they'll offer — anti-industry, anti-profit, and the list goes on. They want to create a council; the Yukon Party has created an economy. I don't think it's going to be very difficult for Yukoners to make a determination on what the differences are in this House and who has the best interests of the Yukon public and its future in mind.

**Mr. Mitchell:** Well, you know, let's talk about a failure to communicate. First of all, when the Premier says he's not interested in hearing something someone said 10 or 11 years ago, we should be clear that it's something he said 10 or 11 years ago. It was this Member for Watson Lake, not some unknown person. But perhaps the Premier — if he finds it's so offensive that there are questions and criticism from this side of the House — needs to grow a thicker skin.

We did urge the Premier to get started on building the long-promised \$5.2-million multi-level health care facility for Dawson. We did. We said take some of the \$82 million in savings, or \$85 million in savings, and get going on that, Mr. Premier. We didn't know the Premier would take those words as a blank cheque to build a \$28-million hospital — which is the most recent estimate provided by Yukon Housing Corporation for the cost of the Dawson facility.

We told the Premier, "Yes, it's time to replace an aging facility," and the Premier's government had estimated spending \$5.2 million to do it. Then they turned around and turned it into a \$28-million hospital. So that's where there is a failure to communicate. We tell the Premier, "Go ahead and spend \$5 million," and he says, "How about \$28 million?" We said, "Go ahead and build a multi-level health care facility," which the then Member for Klondike had asked for and used his influence to get into the budget. The Premier said, "Heck, why spend \$5 million? We can spend \$28 million."

Now, as far as the Premier taking credit for writing and delivering the first ever land use plan in Yukon, I'd like to correct the Premier. Vuntut Gwitchin, other northerners, Yukoners, officials, people from north Yukon and others worked very hard for many years to write that plan.

The Premier didn't write the *North Yukon Regional Land Use Plan*. He takes credit for it like his government just did it. They sat down in the back room and wrote the plan. That's not what happened at all. I know that when he enters into debate, the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin will have a lot to say about that —

**Some Hon. Member:** (Inaudible)

**Mr. Mitchell:** Oh, and the Member for Whitehorse West apparently wants to comment on it, as well. She'll get her chance. Let's —

**Some Hon. Member:** (Inaudible)

**Mr. Mitchell:** Excuse me, Mr. Chair. I'm not sure what the Premier has said. Not with what?

**Some Hon. Member:** (Inaudible)

**Mr. Mitchell:** She won't get a chance. Well, if the Premier shares his time in an equitable and gender-neutral manner, I'm sure that he'll provide that time, even if he says he's not going to. Now, how much money —

**Some Hon. Member:** (Inaudible)

**Mr. Mitchell:** I hear a lot of kibitzing from that side, so it's difficult. I don't have as hard a time concentrating as the Minister of Environment does when people whisper things on this side, but if he's going to just throw remarks over, he might as well read them into the record because he is doing a lot of chirping. Do I have the floor?

#### Chair's statement

**Chair:** Order please. When members are speaking, it's common courtesy and part of the rules of our Assembly to let the member speak.

Both sides throw comments back and forth, off microphone, and all members know that they are supposed to rise to speak. If members have something to say, say it after you have been recognized by the Chair, not back and forth off microphone. That doesn't provide productive debate in this Assembly, and both sides are guilty of this.

Mr. Mitchell, you have the floor.

**Mr. Mitchell:** Thank you for that ruling, Mr. Chair.

#### Chair's statement

**Chair:** Order please. The statement that the Chair just made was about all members. It wasn't a ruling that the member opposite should be thanking the Chair for. All members are guilty of this, off-microphone comments have been occurring for the last couple of days, and the Chair is just reminding members that it is up to members themselves to keep order and decorum in the House. I would encourage members to keep with the oath that they took when they took office and keep the level to a more respectful level.

**Mr. Mitchell:** The Premier was talking about health care for rural members. He was talking about the need to spend money on health care. So yes, we do have questions about health care and when we look at the health budget, we see that the 2009-10 actuals for total health services in O&M were \$105.68 million.

That's just under health services. Then the 2010-11 estimate was \$82.4 million — over \$23 million less than it had been the previous year. What actually happened in 2010-11? Now they are forecast to be \$100 million, and yes, they are forecast to be \$100 million again in the coming year's budget. We do question whether this government is considering all factors when they make these estimates.

The statistics are interesting. When we look at health services, the statistics in the budget say, for example, under outpatient mental health services, direct and indirect clinical hours — 2009-10 actual was 10,944 hours; 2010-11 estimate was 10,000 hours; 2010-11 forecast was 10,000 hours; 2011-12 estimate was 7,000 hours.

Why would the government estimate that they're going to spend 3,000 to 4,000 fewer hours dealing with direct and indirect clinical hours for outpatient mental health services in the coming year than they did in the present year and the year prior? But there's a footnote, Mr. Chair: footnote 2, in 2009-10 and 2010-11 there was an increase in program delivery due to additional resources made available by time-limited funding. Aha, the THAF and the THSSI funding — hard to say that, Mr. Chair. So what happened?

Well, when Yukoners found out that the government had no plan to continue these services — they had actually issued notices of potential layoff to employees; they had told people that the services were going to be terminated — there was a public outcry. not just from the opposition, a public outcry. This government rushed back in and put in a news release saying, "We changed our mind. We're not going to cancel those services after all. We'll find the money."

Well that's good — it's good that they do so — but then you keep looking, and in area after area we see a projected flat line or downturns of services.

Then the government, when people noticed them, they came back to say, "Oh, we won't do that. We won't expect there to be less hospital services, less mental health care services, less travel Outside. We'll fix that. We'll fix that." So, yes, we do question whether this government has adequately estimated for the health care. We question when we see that the forecast for 2010-11 for the Yukon Hospital Corporation was \$46 million, and it's being estimated again as \$46 million for the coming year, despite the fact that they have taken on responsibility for Watson Lake and the Hospital Corporation. So we do get concerned about that.

We see, among other things, that this government keeps promising Yukoners that they're going to deal with the need that was identified in the report on severely intoxicated persons at risk — a medical need — not just a need for people who were being detained — for a sobering centre and a medical detox and a shelter to be located in downtown Whitehorse.

The government says, "We're working on that. We're looking into how we're going to do that." But there is no money in the five-year plan. There is no money in the long-term capital plan. Where is the government going to get that money? That's going to affect the surplus deficit position; that's going to affect the accumulated surplus of the government — not just the annual, but the accumulated. So why does



the government expect us to have confidence in this budget, when they continue to not include things that they announce or when they do things like take the F.H. Collins school replacement, which was identified in the long-term plan — the year's budget we're debating now, 2011-12 — as being some \$24 million a year ago and push it forward another 12 months. How can we be confident in these estimates when the government changes them in such a cavalier fashion? What happened to that promise that the school would be built this year? I believe it was to be opened in 2012.

What happens? The government just pushes it away and says, "Not now." How did they make that decision?

They said the contractors asked them to. They said that they were going to delay that a year because the contracting community didn't want to be building it in the current budget cycle. That's how they made the decision on the education for kids who are going to that aging facility, one that we all agree needs to be replaced and updated. No, we don't have confidence.

We don't know when the election will be. Maybe it'll be this spring; maybe it'll be a month from now or two months from now; maybe it will be in the fall. We know it has to occur in the next seven months or so. Will the Premier commit to providing updates in the coming months on the fiscal position of Yukon beyond the current main estimates, if we don't have an election in the near future?

**Hon. Mr. Fentie:** I guess the bottom line is it's up to the Liberal leader to be confident or not be confident in the budget documents before him, but let me just point out a couple of things. Instead of the stuff the Liberal leader is writing on pieces of paper, why don't we look at the actual budget document. I mean, it does have some very important information in the pages of this document.

The Liberal leader said there are reductions in operation and maintenance expenditures for health care. I'm really trying to understand how the Liberal leader comes to that conclusion. In the document, page S-12, the 2009-10 actual shows \$252,497 million. So, let's just round it off. The 2009-10 actual — that means that's public accounts done, duly audited and presented — is \$252 million. The 2010-11 forecast — that's all-inclusive for operation and maintenance in health care — \$257 million. It's actually \$257.738 million, rounded off, \$257 million. Then let us look at the estimate for 2011-12. The estimate for 2011-12 for O&M for Health and Social Services is \$262.611 million, rounded off, \$262 million.

How in the world can Yukoners have confidence in the Liberal leader's presentation of the fiscal position of Health and Social Services when it comes to O&M, operation and maintenance, when the budget documents themselves clearly demonstrate there has been an increase from 2009-10 through to 2010-11 and on to 2011-12?

The fruitless, pointless approach in all of this is what is going to ensure that Yukoners have no confidence whatsoever in the Liberals and the Liberal leader in any facet of leadership. Once again, the Liberal leader has put on the public record a statement that is in complete contradiction of the budget document tabled, which includes a duly audited factor for the year

the member referenced of 2009-10. The estimates and projections clearly show increases. In fact, the 2011-12 main estimates show approximately a 14-percent increase in the budget for Health and Social Services.

I think what the Liberal leader is saying is that he doesn't agree with those expenditures. Maybe that is the issue here. The Liberal leader and the Liberals do not agree with those expenditures. They don't agree with the fact that the Yukon Party government went ahead and actually increased in these years the allocation for the Department of Health and Social Services — meeting the health care needs of Yukoners. This is actually quite astonishing that a party leader and a party would take that kind of position — that they don't agree with, nor do they support or even believe in these kinds of expenditures — meeting the health care needs of Yukoners?

By the way, during the course of this coming fiscal year, if the need arises that Yukoners need more access to doctors and to hospitals and for operations and for medevacs and whatever the case may be — when it comes to the clearly defined obligations of government for delivering health care to Yukoners and to Canadians because there are a number of laws that govern this whole area of obligation and responsibility by government.

The Yukon Party government will, regardless of the estimates as tabled, meet those needs. And the reason we will is because we can. And we can meet those needs because of the fiscal management the Yukon Party government has provided this territory since taking office in 2002.

The Liberal leader can go on and on and on. The bottom line is — and this is where the rubber hits the road — the Liberal leader says there has been a reduction in O&M for health care when all evidence, regardless of how you look at it, demonstrates clearly that the Liberal leader is in fact wrong, has put information on the public record that is not factual, and this is a fruitless discussion and should be put in that filing cabinet labelled "useless information".

**Mr. Mitchell:** What is fruitless is expecting this Premier to ever answer a question with a genuine response. What is fruitless is to expect this Premier to ever actually properly state what has been asked of him or stated by members opposite, instead of using a partial quote or an incorrect quote or simply coming up with his own opinion as to what the quote must have been.

We didn't say that there has been a cut mains-to-mains in the budget for Health and Social Services. We said, "If you look at what's forecast for what has been spent, including two supplementary budgets, the amount that's estimated for next year is barely more than what has been spent, and why would we expect it to be so?"

Let's look at page S-12 that the Premier refers to in the O&M budget. What does it say on page S-12 for Vote 15, Health and Social Services? 2009-10 actual, \$252,497,000 — or, as the Premier says, if we round it off, \$252.5 million. What did the Premier, as Minister of Finance, estimate a year later, after seeing these actuals of \$252.5 million in 2009-10? He estimated we would spend \$27 million less — \$230,794,000.

The Premier said, having looked at what we just spent — \$252.5 million — let's estimate we're going to spend \$27 million less in the next year.

What did happen in the next year according to the forecast on page S-12? We've spent \$257,738,000, so the Premier missed by \$27 million between his estimates for 2010-11 and what's forecast, because he missed by \$22 million in his estimates, so what's he saying now for next year? That we're only going to spend \$5 million more — that's what he has put in the estimates, \$262.6 million for health — than what he's forecasting for the year that's just about to end, and we don't know if these are the final figures for the year. There will be a final supplementary budget sometime later this year — that's what we said.

The Premier just simply restates the position and then says, look at that, it makes no sense. Well, it makes no sense because he constantly restates it and changes it in doing so. Let's try another question, another area; let's talk about the borrowings of the government.

Now, we know that we've run deficits this year and last; we know that the government is projecting that there will only be \$18 million left in net financial resources at year-end — the so-called savings account. How much is being borrowed by this government? We know about the \$100 million through the Energy Corporation. We know the borrowing limit is \$300 million and we know that some money has been borrowed against the \$70 million that is authorized through the Department of Health and Social Services to build the visiting medical specialist and nurses residence and health offices across the river. We know that there is going to be \$28 million for a hospital in Dawson, according to the Hospital Corporation, and \$22 million beyond the \$5 million that was spent to build the shell in Watson Lake. How much, in total, has the government borrowed to date toward its borrowing limit of \$300 million? Then we can do the math for how much it will be by the time those other facilities are completed.

**Hon. Mr. Fentie:** First off, the Yukon government, the Yukon Territory, does not have a net debt position. I hope we are clear on that. Now, corporations do borrow money and have borrowed money. In fact, the Yukon Party government, as of March 31, 2010, has been paying down debt all through our mandate, to the tune of \$54.8 million. What we have done is provided support to our corporations to do what they must do, to do what they're mandated to do and that's really a good business practice — allowing corporations to function in a manner that they are mandated to function in, and this is in building infrastructure.

I think we can connect some of this legacy debt that we've been paying down to past governments, if the member wants to go there, and I think we all remember what that is — failed enterprises; money used out of the Development Corporation for failed enterprises. I see the Liberal leader pointing to his left. That would be toward the NDP. Let me just caution the member that the Liberals are rapidly moving to the left in this territory, somewhat of a problem for the Liberals; great news for the Yukon Party government.

This issue that the member is pointing out is in fact an overall position that we must build infrastructure to meet the needs of Yukoners, not only of today, but long into the future.

Fundamentally, the Yukon Party government's approach to this is to not encumber the taxpaying public of today for the cost of something that will be to the benefit of and accessible by Yukon taxpayers long into the future. It is part of doing business. In that case, we have provided support to our corporations — both the Hospital Corporation and the Yukon Development Corporation — to do exactly what they are doing. Does that mean that we have gone beyond the overall territory's debt limit? No, not even remotely close to that. Furthermore, we have no intention of using the remaining room we have in our borrowing capacity. Furthermore, the other fact is that because we have solid fiscal management and a solid fiscal position — I would remind the Liberal leader that the Yukon received a double-A credit rating to issue a bond — good business all in all.

With that, the member will not find, for example, an expenditure in the estimates for the Development Corporation in terms of what it may be paying on any annual basis to extinguish liabilities on any annual basis. What we have provided is a commitment of support for the Development Corporation in the conduct of its operations overall. But what that support will be based on is year-end work, which is what we, the shareholder, are requiring of our corporation. I think that's pretty logical that we do year-ends and determine what our Crown corporation's fiscal position is before we start leaping to exposing Yukoners to liabilities that they need not be exposed to.

I'm not sure what the member is trying to achieve, but the bottom line is that we have, all-inclusive, an authorized borrowing limit. This is federal, by the way — there's an order-in-council that creates this authorized borrowing limit. We don't create it. It's an order-in-council by the federal government of Canada of \$300 million.

We have long-term plus short-term obligations that total about \$162 million, which means we have room of about \$137 million, \$138 million within that authorized by way of federal order-in-council borrowing limit. If you want to do a comparison to our sister territories, we're in pretty good shape compared to where they're at.

So overall, we have made decisions in supporting our corporations that are going to result in infrastructure put on the ground to meet the needs of Yukoners to the benefit of Yukoners today and long into the future. What a wise business decision our corporations have made and we readily jump to their support, because of those wise business decisions our corporations made. Thank you, thank you to those hardworking, dedicated Yukoners who sit on the boards of the Yukon Development Corporation and the Yukon Hospital Corporation, and we say to them: a job well done.

**Mr. Mitchell:** Well, the Premier actually did answer a question, which is an improvement. He said that the long-term and short-term obligations total \$162 million, so their last accounting was more money to be spent as borrowed money in the authorization of the Hospital Corporation to complete the residence across the river on Hospital Road, plus the two hospi-

tals — Watson Lake and Dawson — which so far have been projected to cost \$50 million, all of which is being borrowed — is that not correct?

We'll ask the Premier to answer whether or not all of that \$50 million is to be borrowed, and then the Premier can provide us with an estimate of what the borrowings will total after the construction of those two buildings, since we do have an estimated cost via the Hospital Corporation from them. Is it the intention via the Hospital Corporation to borrow \$50 million to build those two facilities?

**Hon. Mr. Fentie:** We do have ministers who bear great responsibility in their areas of obligation vis-à-vis the departments that they manage. This is certainly a very worthy discussion and debate to have, in this case with the Minister of Health and Social Services, because the Minister of Health and Social Services has provided an instrument for the Yukon Hospital Corporation that meets the requirements for the board and its members, as we saw fit as a government. That instrument is in writing, by the way, and I don't know what more I can say about that.

I guess the member opposite is going to be extremely excited and waiting in great anticipation to get to the Department of Health and Social Services to have that discussion. It is certainly an instrument that demonstrates our support for the Yukon Hospital Corporation Board and the individuals who sit on that board. Again, they have made a great decision to ensure we meet the immediate and long-term health care needs of Yukoners, and we say once again we are more than willing to support their efforts — and once again reiterate to them: a job well done.

**Mr. Mitchell:** Well, we could ask that question of the Health minister and no doubt we will, but in past years we have sometimes asked questions of ministers only to be told that you have to ask that question of the Minister of Finance because he controls the purse strings.

Since it's the Minister of Finance who's here today, then surely the Minister of Health and Social Services would not be issuing commitment letters to any Crown corporation without the authorization of the Minister of Finance. That's why we ask it of the Minister of Finance — because, at the end of the day, as he says, the buck, or all \$50 million bucks, stops there.

Again, I'll add a question to it. The Minister of Finance has said that the long-term and short-term obligations of government are \$162 million. There needs to be some \$50 million or \$60 million more to complete the building across the way plus the two hospitals, so another \$50 million or \$60 million added on to that. We think that the Health minister should be able to answer that, but we'd rather hear it from the Finance minister, because he's the top minister when it comes to the spending decisions.

Again, has the Finance minister made any commitment to the Health minister regarding the Hospital Corporation's request for improvements to their campuses — it has been recently referred to — of some \$50 million that is needed by the Yukon Hospital Corporation to provide adequate services in terms of the emergency room, the operating theatres and intensive care units of that hospital, which we hear about on a daily

basis from the hardworking doctors and nurses who work in that environment? Has there been any commitment made to date and has there been a commitment asked for of the Finance minister?

**Hon. Mr. Fentie:** Actually, these decisions are made by Management Board when it comes to monetary decisions of government, so on the matter that relates to any commitments to corporations, such as the Hospital Corporation, it certainly would have been a decision made by Management Board.

Secondly, I'm sure the Liberal leader is aware of the fact that there has recently been an announcement that the Yukon Hospital Corporation and government in the related areas are and have embarked on a planning process for future needs that may arise for the Whitehorse General Hospital — once again, demonstration that we have a plan going forward into the future of further meeting the health care needs of Yukoners. That announcement, I believe, came out a few weeks ago, or a couple of weeks ago. I just don't have a firm date on the top of my head, but that has certainly been done and that has commenced.

**Mr. Mitchell:** Regarding another prior commitment and long-term plan, and that is the previously committed \$24 million that just last fall was being talked about as being in the upcoming year to build the F.H. Collins replacement, who made the decision to cut that from this budget? Was that the Minister of Finance or the Minister of Education? Either one can answer.

**Hon. Mr. Fentie:** Here we have another example, Mr. Chair: on one day the Liberal leader will suggest that we expend or book money without planning. Then on another day, depending, I guess, who the Liberal leader has talked to recently, when we are in the process of planning for expenditures, the Liberal leader determines that these are cuts. Well, if the Liberal leader looked at the budget, he would clearly see what the fiscal flow is for a project called the F.H. Collins replacement. The point of the matter is, nobody made a decision to cut anything.

The planning process will dictate how much, in any given fiscal year, will be dedicated to a project — similar to what we've been working on all along as a government actually, always enhancing and improving the planning processes, which is part of what a multi-year capital plan is all about, to ensure more effective fiscal management. I go back to an earlier point: that is why, when you take our total budget of \$1 billion plus and the variances that occur during any fiscal year from estimates to the public accounts actuals, the percentage of variance is extremely small and would certainly look good in anybody's books.

**Mr. Mitchell:** That's an interesting point that the Premier has attempted to make. First of all, the concerns about F.H. Collins are not a question of who the Liberal leader is talking to. They are a concern of those people whom the Liberal leader is listening to, and those are the parents of kids who attend F.H. Collins. That's who we're hearing from who are extremely disappointed, extremely disappointed — extremely disappointed.

The chair of the council was shocked to learn about it in the newspapers, as opposed to from the minister or the depart-

ment. As far as us — again, is the Premier just manufacturing things he wished he had heard? For the Premier to suggest that this is because we would want the government to embark on this budget without planning is ridiculous. It's absurd. Of course, it should be planned. Was not the government working on this plan all of last year when they were projecting that \$24 million would be spent next year? That was the point where we thought the planning was being done because the government must have been pretty confident that they would have achieved the planning and concluded the planning when they said in their long-term plan that there would be \$24 million expended in 2011-12. Is the Premier just saying that neither he nor his minister could get the planning done? Who made the decision to push this project forward yet another year to the year beyond the election?

**Hon. Mr. Fentie:** Actually, the project hasn't been pushed forward.

Through the planning exercise, and all that goes with planning exercises — and we leave that to the professionals involved, which includes engineers and others, project managers, so on and so forth, committees that provide input. The list is quite extensive. Through those exercises there are occasions when what was estimated in years out may be changed. Isn't that the whole point? What the government has stood up and said — the Liberal leader says this is a cut. It's not a cut. It's an exercise that is ongoing, and we actually commend all of those people for pointing out through the planning processes that they have embarked on, and are well underway with, that we should do certain things as a government. I think that is indicative of good, sound planning and management of such things as capital projects, and that's the point.

By the way, I think we have to refer back to some of the other criticisms that the Liberal leader leaps to his feet on when he gets a report from the Auditor General. In part, what the Yukon Party government is doing is continuing to follow what has been pointed out by the audits that we — on other matters that we, the Yukon Party government, ensure take place and want to take place because we want to improve and enhance always our ability to provide good government to Yukoners. In this particular instance, it certainly has some linkages to some of the areas that the Auditor General pointed out in reporting on Other Matters.

The multi-year plan is actually quite extensive and certainly has been received quite well by Yukoners. They see into the future a lot of areas of investment that is something that they too can plan for. Not only is the government conducting planning exercises to ensure that we are doing the best possible job we can, we have created, through our budgeting instruments, ways for the Yukon public to even plan. What a marvelous idea — having the government and the public in lockstep in planning the capital infrastructure of the future.

All I can say is, Mr. Chair, a great deal of credit goes to those individuals in departments like Highways and Public Works and others who contribute to creating such plans. I'm sure that the minister responsible for Highways and Public Works and other ministers are at the ready to provide the opposition with great detail on why we have taken the steps we've

taken in our budgeting exercises and our planning exercises and what it all means — always the fundamental underpinning of it all is that we are acting in the best interests of the Yukon public and will continue to do so.

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

#### *Recess*

**Chair:** Order please. Committee of the Whole will now come to order. The matter before the Committee is Bill No. 24, *First Appropriation Act, 2011-12*. We will now continue with general debate.

**Some Hon. Member:** (Inaudible)

**Mr. Mitchell:** The Premier says clear, but it's not yet clear.

We were just having a discussion on the F.H. Collins school, which is heading into the future. Based on this capital budget, F.H. Collins school now shows a large expenditure in 2012-13 of \$29.4 million; \$16.2 million in 2013-14; \$2.8 million in 2014-15. For the edification of the parents and the students attending, can the Premier tell us — since, as the Minister of Finance, he would have oversight over this long-term, multi-year planning process — what year students could expect to start attending the new facility?

**Hon. Mr. Fentie:** Once again, I'm sure the Minister of Education, accompanied by Education department officials, can provide great detail to this matter and many others in the Department of Education.

Let me remind the Liberal leader once again that Management Board makes the monetary decisions in government, not one individual and again, we are dealing with projections here. The parents — considering that the revisions were the result of the planning process that is underway and has been underway — can expect, based on all available information that we have to date through the course of the planning exercise, a completion date by August 2013.

I just want to make one cautionary comment: the undertaking here is also to maintain an existing school and its functions during the course of construction, which for any engineer is probably quite a difficult challenge as to how they will structure this particular facility in and around the active operation of a school such as the existing F.H. Collins. With all the available information through the course of the ongoing planning exercise, there is an expectation of an estimated completion date of August 2013.

**Mr. Mitchell:** I thank the Minister of Finance for that response, since he sits on the Management Board and is certainly part of the process. He should be informed of what the date is and now we have all been informed.

Going back to the frequently discussed need for a sobering centre and a shelter in downtown Whitehorse, and since the Health minister has indicated that the government has committed to doing this, can the Minister of Finance — because there are no dollars in the multi-year capital plan for these projects — give us any indication as to when those would be constructed?

**Hon. Mr. Fentie:** Look, I think it's pretty clear that not that long ago — this afternoon — what was presented by way of the summary of the 2011-12 mains was an investment for the secure assessment centre of some \$3.5 million. So it is already in the overall fiscal framework as it exists today, all inclusive — closing out fiscal year 2010-11 and also going forward with 2011-12. So here we have the budget document once again.

I know there are difficulties with the Liberal leader accepting what is put on the pages of a budget document. But I want to reference that in the multi-year capital plan project listing, page 5, it clearly shows under Justice, secure assessment centre — \$3.580 million. Maybe the member calls it a sobering centre, but it is a secure assessment centre. That is the investment being made.

Now, there are two reports that have been put together by a number of individuals, including the RCMP, Department of Justice, First Nations, medical professionals and so on. The first report, of course, is the police review that has a list of a number of recommendations. The secure assessment centre, by the way, is an initiative that is actually in partnership with the RCMP. The second report is the report on acutely intoxicated persons, and there are a number of recommendations there. We are, as a government, having recently been in receipt of these reports, working through the process that we must, in terms of the recommendations and an overall implementation plan in regard to these two reports.

So the only thing that's in the fiscal framework right now is to deal with the immediate issue, so that the era of the drunk tank has ended in this territory. The secure assessment centre is an initiative that is a very marked departure from the historical, normal practice of dealing with individuals who are acutely intoxicated and in public. This secure assessment centre will provide security for individuals, both those who are acutely intoxicated and others, including staff. There will be medical professionals there and available for assessment, and determinations from that point will be made. It also reduces the pressure, once in operation, of the Whitehorse General Hospital and its involvement in dealing with acutely intoxicated persons. So, that is the investment and we are proceeding with that while the work continues on the two reports and all the recommendations that are housed in those reports — the product of many.

**Mr. Mitchell:** The Premier must be tiring; he's having an apples-and-oranges conversation with himself now. I didn't ask the Premier about the secure assessment centre to be built onto the new Whitehorse Correctional Centre, which was announced back in January. I asked him about a sobering centre, a medical detox and a shelter to be built in downtown Whitehorse with a health perspective, not with a justice perspective. Now that's a commitment that was made on the floor of this House by his Health minister — that the government was working on this. It's beyond the secure assessment centre. The government was looking at how to respond to the Beaton and Allen report, the report on severely intoxicated persons at risk, which very clearly said that we had to take a holistic medical health approach to this issue, not only a justice approach.

The Health minister has said that, beyond the secure assessment centre up at the Whitehorse Correctional Centre — to end, as the Premier says, the days of the drunk tank, which will deal with people certainly if they've been apprehended for a criminal matter — there is a need for a centre for people that may simply be brought in by a family member or friend, associate, or a member of an non-government organization because they need help. They haven't necessarily committed any criminal offence.

Are these people then to be taking them up to the Whitehorse Correctional Centre? Is that what the Premier is now suggesting, because that is not what the Health minister was saying in this House over the past several weeks? It's also not what the Deputy Minister of Health said publicly at the news conference that was held to announce the two reports to which the Premier refers, as well as the simultaneous announcement of the secure assessment centre to be built at the Whitehorse Correctional Centre. Members of the media asked at that meeting: "Does this mean that this health approach is being abandoned, despite the report that has been tabled here today, for a justice approach at the Whitehorse Correctional Centre?" The deputy minister said: "No, we are working on that as well." The Health minister has confirmed that in this House.

So, I would like clarification from the Premier. Is it now just to be the one centre up at the Whitehorse Correctional Centre or is there an additional commitment? If so, where is the funding coming from?

**Hon. Mr. Fentie:** Let me just repeat what was said. Yes, there is a secure assessment centre for obvious reasons. That is not strictly a Justice initiative.

That's why I clearly articulated for the benefit of the Liberal leader that medical staff is involved here. Furthermore, we do have a detoxification centre in operation now. It's the one that we, the Yukon Party government, got back up and running after it was closed in the past.

This is exactly what was just said on the floor of the House. We are working on the recommendations of the two reports. I don't find any reason why the member opposite thinks there's some kind of issue here. That's exactly what has been said all along.

**Mr. Mitchell:** For the benefit of the Premier, when the Member for Mount Lorne and I visited the Sarah Steele centre this past fall, the officials working there — and this was also corroborated by the deputy, who attended that tour — stated that that facility needed to be replaced with an updated facility. That's why we're asking whether there's a plan to have an updated facility that takes a health perspective for its people who need detoxification, along with a sobering centre and an actual living shelter, so there's a continuum of care for people who are trying to break the bonds of addiction. The report to which the Premier has referred suggests that that should be downtown.

It doesn't appear that commitment still exists. We're surprised at that because certainly statements have been made to many reporters, and statements made in this House, that indicated government was working on this. It sounds like government is working just on something up the hill. Maybe that will

be the repurposing of the old jail — who knows. Maybe the Premier should just tell us if he intends to run in the next election, or if we're wasting our time asking him these questions. Is the Premier going to lead his party into the 2011 general election?

**Hon. Mr. Fentie:** Well, as my learned and esteemed colleague has just said, maybe the Liberal leader is seeking a membership in the Yukon Party — I don't know. But at the end of the day, Mr. Chair, I cannot believe what I just heard the Liberal leader say. The Liberal leader actually just said that maybe the option for the existing old WCC is the one that will be used for a sobering centre or a detoxification centre or whatever.

I mean, this is actually infantile to even have on the floor of the Legislature. What has been said is exactly what has been presented in all venues, including this institution — that there is an investment in a secure assessment centre, so that the end of the drunk tank era is now a reality for Yukon.

Secondly, there are two reports, as presented by the work of many, with a number of recommendations in them that are being worked on — all-inclusive.

Thirdly, yes, there is a detoxification centre that is in operation right now. The member has some confused view of how Justice and Health and Social Services interact. The fact of the matter is there are many examples of where Justice and Health and Social Services interact. That includes the fact that the RCMP themselves have actually been taking people to Whitehorse General Hospital and that facilities in rural Yukon have historically, in many instances, provided a place for medical professionals to provide some form of detoxification for individuals who are acutely intoxicated, because there is a medical issue with that — a very serious one.

I'm not sure what the Liberal leader is even talking about. The future is what the future will be. We're not here to discuss who's doing what in a coming election; we're here to present to Yukoners our budget, which includes a plan fiscally and beyond for the future. The Liberals and the NDP have firmly committed in the public that they would use this sitting to present their plan to the Yukon public. What we've heard so far, halfway through this sitting, is absolutely astonishing — that both the Liberals and the NDP are actually going to go to the public to seek their support at any level. They haven't presented a plan at all. They've presented a whole bunch of discussion that has no foundation in substance whatsoever. Good luck to both parties, the Liberals and the NDP.

**Mr. Mitchell:** We seem to have hit a sore point there. Yes, the Premier can't believe what he heard. That's because we couldn't believe on this side of the House what we had just heard from the Premier. That's why I asked rhetorically whether those were their plans for repurposing the jail, since the Premier has now told us that this is going to be a combined justice and health initiative.

This is directly attached to the Whitehorse Correctional Centre. This sounds like it's going to be the one and only sobering centre, which is also the secure assessment facility, so aside from members of the RCMP, who may be transporting people there instead of to the drunk tank — and we can all

agree that is an improvement — apparently when brothers, sisters, parents or children of people who are suffering from severe intoxication need to take them somewhere, they're going to have to take them up to the Whitehorse Correctional Centre and go through the security. These are people who have not committed any criminal offence. They may be sitting in their own living room and they've been convinced by a family member that they need help, and this is the solution that the government — a one size fits all solution — that the government is proposing. Or I suppose people will continue to take inebriated and intoxicated individuals when they're at risk to the emergency room and then be told, no, take them up to the Whitehorse Correctional Centre. Well, that's very illuminating.

Well, if the member opposite, the Premier, wants to hear of a plan, here's a plan: yes, we will build a shelter. I'm glad the Premier is taking notes. Yes, there will be a replacement for the Sarah Steele centre that can combine the needs of both medical detoxification and a sobering centre. Yes, we will deal with homeless people. Yes, we will deal with the issues of affordable housing, because this government hasn't created housing, not just for homeless people, but for all kinds of people who can't afford it, and they are hard-working Yukoners. They can't afford either a rental or a housing purchase in the Yukon. If the Premier had so much confidence in this budget and in his message to Yukoners, he would just stand up and say: of course, I'll lead the party into the next election, Mr. Chair. Maybe the Premier, too, lacks confidence. I don't think we are going to get any more answers out of this Premier today.

I'll ask one more question. Is the Premier prepared to commit to a fall sitting of the Legislative Assembly?

**Hon. Mr. Fentie:** Well, we have some semblance now of a Liberal plan. Let's review.

The Liberals will build a sobering centre and a detoxification centre and a home for everyone. The problem here is the Liberal leader says the budget before us is not correct. Maybe the Liberal leader can enlighten us and Yukoners on where the Liberals would get the money from if the budget before us is not correct? Do we or do we not have the finances available that are presented in the budget document — the main estimates — for 2011-12? This is not some sort of game. This Liberal leader has just said this is what they would do. They'd build all these things, yet, by the same token, the Liberal leader says the budget before us is incorrect. Well, let's hear from the Liberal leader on where the Liberals intend to get the funds to build the stuff that the Liberal leader has just committed to and explain to Yukon taxpayers why the Liberals will now encumber Yukon taxpayers to build a home for everyone?

**Ms. Hanson:** Prior to sitting in this Legislature, I watched the procedure of this House from the visitors gallery. I was shocked then to see the colossal waste of taxpayers' money and faith in the political process by the repetitious, partisan process and by the non-productive activity that apparently is called budget debate. We have 15 working days of this Legislature left. We have 20 departments and agencies that, as the Premier has indicated this afternoon, we should be spending focused time and effort on. From my observation in that visitors gallery, it was very clear that the intent of the government

then was that oversight — the holding of government members to account that members of the opposition are elected to do on behalf of all Yukoners — was not a shared objective of the government. My observation now is that that will be very difficult, but I will be working diligently to ensure my constituents that that is my objective.

The Premier delivered his Budget Address on February 3. He has delivered most, if not all, of that address on numerous occasions in this Legislature subsequent to that date. Those who choose to read *Hansard* will see that many, many of the statements that were contained in that Budget Address have been repeated and repeated.

As Leader of the Yukon New Democratic Party, I did provide my response to the address, indicating the areas of both convergence and where the NDP does differ with respect to the current economic situation in the Yukon and the long term, and the issues that we think need to be addressed — broad, strategic issues, as well as those that are affecting Yukoners on a day-to-day basis.

Despite the demonstrated change of view or political affiliation over time by the current Premier, I can say with certainty that, when we talk about fiscal management, what does not change is the NDP belief in the principles of probity and prudence in both budgeting and managing of expenditures.

So what is really not at question here? It's not the credibility of the Yukon New Democratic Party; it's the very credibility of this Yukon Party government and what they need to demonstrate to all Yukoners through a thorough analysis and a thorough give-and-take and discussion across this legislative floor on what they have set forward in terms of what their plans are, in terms of expenditures — that they do link — that there is some link between the proposed expenditures and the stated government objectives, their strategies and their plans. We will be looking, and we will want to talk with the ministers and with the Premier about how those objectives will be achieved and how they will link and do link to those plans.

I hear often and very clearly over the last six or eight months as I was talking with people — in particular, in Whitehorse Centre. When you're in the midst of an election campaign, as the Premier will find himself again soon enough, people say things to you. One of the things that was said to me over and over again about their concerns about the current government was that people are really tired of being told where things are at.

They are tired of being told by the Premier about things. It is the sense that, if you say it often enough, that is the way it is. What they told me is: don't tell us, show us. I think that what we are going to be looking for as we work through this budget is "show me" and then we can make the assessment based on that as to whether or not there is a link between the government's stated purpose and intent and what they actually are putting forward to all Yukoners in terms of this budget.

I have to make the observation that there are some heroic efforts made at times, but it reminds me of Sisyphus, you know: there is an attempt to push that rock up the hill. It's a very steep hill and you think you are getting right up to top and

you might get an answer but, ultimately, you are pushed back down.

I am hopeful that we can change that dynamic around, that in fact we will get an answer and it won't be a Sisyphean kind of futility that we feel at the end of this session on March 28.

Really, the budget is the sum of its parts. I would like to suggest that we move to an analysis and a really thorough and collegial discussion of those parts. With that, I move to clear.

**Hon. Mr. Fentie:** That's quite refreshing, and I'm sure the government side will certainly accommodate such a presentation and request that we do so. That's why the ministers are standing at the ready to have that collegial discussion and debate on the budget.

The member's point about the budget being the sum of its parts is, in some respects, exactly what it's about, but it is also the result of a tremendous amount of work by a tremendous number of people across the government and the corporate structure. Since the Leader of the NDP skyrocketed to political prominence in a by-election in Whitehorse Centre, I have to ponder a little bit in this statement about the credibility of the NDP and how that reflects on what the NDP's plan is.

The nervousness of the Yukon public is the experience they've had with NDP governments. We're all very interested in hearing the Leader of the Third Party reflect on these matters and how the NDP would budget. This would be very interesting: where they would invest the available fiscal resources for Yukon.

At least the NDP, unlike the Liberals, have some concept of what the main estimates are all about and where the investments are going, because the NDP leader has just requested that we demonstrate some linkages, so let me just try in very general terms, because this is general debate.

Beginning in 2002, upon being elected to office, it was at a time when the Yukon had really endured great difficulty — there is no question about that. The Yukon Party at the time, in 2002, in a general election, went before the public with a plan — it's called a platform — and the Yukon public demonstrated that its view was that the Yukon Party plan as presented at that time was the better choice out of the three parties and that was the result of that election.

The Yukon Party was elected to a majority government. We began at that time to implement that plan and vision for the Yukon, and that included financial management and the approach we would take. Now let's look at some of the evidence going forward.

There's no question, and no denial and no dispute, that part of that plan was to increase the fiscal capacity of the Yukon Territory to better meet the needs of Yukoners, to better build a future for Yukoners, which includes infrastructure and so on. Stimulus is not new to the Yukon Party government. We began stimulating the Yukon's economy with our first budget — the 2003-04 budget. If you look at the record — public accounts, duly audited; not estimates any longer, but actuals — the member will see a clear trend of stimulus and investment by ever-increasing budgets, both capital and program and service delivery to Yukoners. So that in itself is certainly one of the linkages.

In that regard, if the NDP leader wanted to, we could certainly present a long list of deliverables that are clearly linked to the plan or the platform, as presented to the Yukon public. It is a very significant list of deliverables that we have accomplished to date. But now we are looking forward into the future. Part of this also includes where we're at with major reform processes. Before I move back into the economics of the situation, I think we have to reflect on the fact that there were major significant steps taken by the Yukon Party government during the time of our office to date.

Correctional reform was a significant step in addressing a long-standing problem for government. Correctional reform, again, was the product of many and it was a partnership with First Nations. It took approximately five years to go through that process and the resulting product that came out of that process is something that even the federal government's Department of Justice recognizes demonstrates leadership in the country. That's another linkage to the Yukon Party plan: correctional reform.

Educational reform is another example. Strengthening of the social safety net — you know, it's the Yukon Party government that is the first government in a long, long time — years and years and years in this territory — that actually increased social assistance. It's this Yukon Party government that actually started making real investments in providing housing for Yukoners. I think the minister responsible for the Housing Corporation can certainly give a lot more detail to it, but it's a dramatic increase in making available housing for Yukoners who need it. Here are some examples: did we place a priority for housing for seniors? Yes.

Surely the members opposite can agree with the fact that our seniors and elders in this territory, in the past, dedicated themselves and committed themselves to providing input into this territory at the time and for its future, a future we are living in today. We do have a debt to our seniors and elders that, in part, helping them with affordable housing is addressing.

Did we place a priority on second-stage housing? Yes, the first example of that is what we've done in Watson Lake with the Help and Hope for Families Society. Did we place a priority in providing housing for single-parent families in this territory to give them a basis and foundation to then move beyond in addressing their quality of life overall? Yes, we did that.

Did we sit down with First Nations and share a significant investment in affordable housing? Yes, we did. Out of a \$50-million affordable housing investment initiative, over \$30 million was directly allocated to First Nations in the Yukon, for First Nations to take on the responsibility of providing affordable housing for their citizens.

These are clear examples of linkages to the governance plan that the Yukon Party brought to office on being elected. You know, when you consider what has transpired in the Yukon for some 17 years before this time — in 2006, the Yukon Party was the first government to be re-elected to office in those 17 years. Well, there is a clear example of what the Yukon public thought about the plan and the deliverables to date during the general election of 2006.

Let me move back to the economics of it all because, frankly, one cornerstone of quality of life — regardless if it's for those who need assistance for affordable housing or social assistance or whatever the case may be — one of the cornerstones in all of that in delivering programs to any citizenry, in any jurisdiction, by any government, is to create an economy — to create the wealth and the cash flow and the tax base that assists in creating capacity to provide other programs and services to citizens. We do have a very good economy these days in the Yukon because of the Yukon Party plan. As a government, in carrying out that plan, here are some of the linkages by way of results: the lowest unemployment — now, I know the Leader of the NDP takes exception to repetition and makes the inference that if you say it enough it becomes fact.

Well, the fact is that — not by what we're saying but by all statistics that are gathered by the appropriate agencies — the Yukon has the lowest unemployment rate in the country. That's a significant accomplishment based on a plan. Therein lies the linkage, Mr. Chair.

Furthermore, when you look at what agencies, such as the Fraser Institute, are pointing to, there is a reason why the Yukon is receiving such significant investment in sectors like the mining industry. It's not what we're saying; it is, again, a factual element of what others are saying, not just here in Yukon, but far beyond our borders, including internationally.

Furthermore, let's look at another measurement, GDP. The Yukon has really done well in that regard. It is a measurement that certainly demonstrates the well-being of any jurisdiction, and we have outdistanced the national average; in fact, we are one of the leaders in the country when it comes to gross domestic product.

Where others were shrinking, the Yukon was growing. There is another linkage to the plan that the Yukon Party brought to government and delivered for the Yukon public. Let's look at cash flow vis-à-vis retail sales. In this whole country, year to year, December of 2009 — because this is the time that we have available data for — to December 2010. Who is the leader in increase of retail sales in the Yukon — or sorry, in Canada? It is the Yukon — 12 percent. Our growth factor in retail sales, year over year, 2009-10, is 12 percent. How does that relate in dollar values? Well, if you want to compare a time before the Yukon Party government came into office, the retail sales in this country were some \$379 million. Let's look at where they're at as of December of 2010. They are at \$576 million. This is indicative of another link to the plan of creating economic well-being for the Yukon public.

I could go on at great length, but given the spirit and the intent of the Leader of the Third Party's approach, I could not concur more.

As I said at the outset, I'm sure that our ministers are standing at the ready to continue with providing the detailed information that will come out of line-by-line, department-by-department debate. That's what it's all about and I couldn't thank the Leader of the NDP more for the approach as taken. It is indeed quite refreshing.



**Chair:** Any further general debate? Seeing none, Committee of the Whole will proceed to general debate in Vote 3, Department of Education. Do members wish a brief recess?

**All Hon. Members:** Agreed.

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

#### *Recess*

**Chair:** Order please. Committee of the Whole will now come to order. The matter before the Committee is Bill No. 24, *First Appropriation Act, 2011-12*. We will now start with general debate in Department of Education.

#### **Department of Education**

**Hon. Mr. Rouble:** I rise in the House today to present the 2011-12 budget for the Department of Education. I have quite a few pages of detailed notes that I would like to go through at the beginning in anticipation of being able to answer members' questions before they're asked in an effort to expedite the debate for our Assembly.

I'm pleased to say that with this budget — the fourth budget in our second mandate — we are continuing our good work and creating a better quality of life for Yukoners by educating tomorrow's citizens so that they can contribute to the community and to its economy. To that end, we aim to create a more responsive education system that enables all learners to succeed, enhance transitions between different levels of education, training and the world of work, and further develop and maintain meaningful relationships with all partners in education and training.

We are very pleased this year to have a very comprehensive strategic plan that outlines the goals and priorities that have been identified through the education reform process, *New Horizons*, and that respond to the requirements of the Auditor General's report in January 2009. Members will recall receiving a draft of this strategic plan that has been widely distributed among Yukoners. We've been very pleased to incorporate their comments and concerns in our plan.

The total budget for the Department of Education this year is \$145,388,000. Before I speak to the numbers behind the 2011-12 budget, I'd like to thank all Yukoners for their continuing commitment to education. The Department of Education's main objective is to deliver accessible and quality education so learners of all ages can become productive, responsible and self-reliant members of our society.

Our vision is for all Yukon people to possess a desire for and appreciation of lifelong learning, a strong commitment to their community and the knowledge and skills needed to live meaningful, productive and rewarding lives.

You will see this vision reflected in the Department of Education's programs and in the budget. Education plays a vital role in building Yukon's workforce and economy by developing and enhancing programs and/or resources to meet changing educational and labour market needs.

I would like to speak directly to the department's plan in the terms of the 2011-12 capital and O&M budget for the De-

partment of Education. First, I'd like to begin by addressing the capital portion of this year's budget. The capital budget for 2011-12 is \$9,377,000. The capital budget reflects a decrease from our 2010-11 capital main estimates. This change is mainly due to the completion of some important projects during 2010-11.

Both the Yukon student information system and the school library management system were implemented during 2010-11. The systems were successfully put into place as part of the Department of Education's continued commitment to the implementation of recommendations from the report of the Auditor General of Canada, which was released at the end of January 2009.

The completion of both Yukon College campuses during 2010-11 also reflects our ongoing commitment to ensure Yukon College has adequate facilities in the communities. I'm pleased to report that the construction of the Yukon College campus in Dawson City will be completed on time. The Yukon College campus in Pelly Crossing should be completed in early April 2011. In pursuit of the department's vision, we are committed to ensuring that educational facilities meet the needs of Yukoners and that commitment is very much reflected in this budget.

The single largest component of this budget is the \$2.7 million for the F.H. Collins Secondary School replacement. The building advisory committee, which includes a representation from a variety of stakeholder groups and Yukon First Nations, has worked very hard on this project. This funding will continue the design process and begin the site infrastructure work.

The Department of Education is also seeking funding for other capital projects to help maintain other public school facilities. \$952,000 is being requested for roof repairs at various schools. For general site improvement, recreation development and soccer field repairs throughout Yukon schools, the department is requesting \$506,000.

For ongoing routine projects such as school-initiated renovations, various school facilities' renovations, indoor air-quality improvements and capital maintenance repairs, the department is requesting \$2,408,000. Also under our capital budget, the Department of Education is requesting funds to support our instructional programs. \$898,000 is requested to support the school-based information technology program. This funding will be used to purchase computer hardware, software, network infrastructure upgrades and associated curriculum software upgrades for a variety of Yukon schools. \$435,000 is requested to purchase school-based equipment, and \$25,000 is requested to continue to support distance education. Where our school populations are small, distance education and technology-assisted learning can help to ensure that students are able to enroll in courses they need to make their desired transition to post-secondary education.

Video conferencing access is available in schools in all communities. The importance of information to communication technologies in education is increasing and video conferencing ensures equity of access for all our communities. The government is also committed to continuing its support for labour-

market development in the territory. That support is expressed in the capital expenditures for an information system required to administer the Canada-Yukon labour market agreement. Under the Canada-Yukon labour market development agreement, Government of Yukon is now overseeing assistance programs that will help prepare employment insurance clients for new jobs. By assuming responsibility for these programs, Government of Yukon is now better positioned to work with our stakeholders and match our skills development programs with our economic agenda and prepare Yukoners for Yukon opportunities.

As part of that agreement, Canada has agreed to fund the development and implementation of information systems required for the delivery of its benefits and measures. The department is requesting \$800,000 for the Advanced Education branch to continue the development of this case management and information system. The most significant benefit of the information system is that it will allow Yukon to comply with the information exchange as outlined in the agreement.

It will also allow Yukon to analyze the effectiveness of the employment benefits and support measures being implemented under this agreement.

The 2011-12 operation and maintenance budget will see continuing support for several initiatives, as well as support for labour market activities in Yukon. The most important work at the Department of Education is to ensure that all Yukoners have the skills and education they need to support their families and to participate fully in their communities and workplace.

The \$136,011,000 is dedicated to the Department of Education under this year's operation and maintenance level. Before I go into the operation and maintenance budget in any detail, I'd like to give members opposite an opportunity if they have any other questions regarding the overall mission, vision, goals, purpose or some of the capital expenditures in the budget, and also to hopefully to clear my throat a bit.

**Mr. Fairclough:** I do have questions for the minister in regard to the Education budget. I would like to thank the officials for providing information during the budget briefing in Department of Education and also to thank them for being here, assisting the minister, and ensuring that we do have all the proper information coming forward.

We have had many questions during the briefing. I've asked the minister in Question Period about F.H. Collins Secondary School. It is a capital project that I think the general public is quite interested in. I've asked many questions of the minister about the involvement of parents and the general public, when it comes to the design and the running of education in their communities and in their school. Unfortunately, the minister didn't act on that. Parents want to have a bottom-up approach when it comes to education.

I was fully recognized in the education reform project and consultation that took place. I asked the minister to ensure that the consultation on the whole issue of governance was to be fully part of the education reform project. Before the minister could even defend that, the Premier got up and said that no, it's not part of that; that discussion is not going to be a part of the education reform project at all — overruling the minister, the

whole process, frustrating parents and the general public. I'm sure that the minister felt it tremendously. The whole issue came from whether or not this government was going to do a review of the *Education Act* at all, since by law they were supposed to do it. This minister and that government have failed to do it in the last nine and a half years. They've never provided one to the House. The previous Education minister is puzzled by that, but I'm sure we've asked him many questions in regard to this and he failed to answer.

The fact of the matter is that the Premier controlled this process. It's one I hear the Yukon Party talk about a lot over the past years — following due process — but in this case they did not. When it came to the issue of governance, which was a big issue particularly with First Nations, the Premier kicked it off the discussion when it came to education reform.

I'm sure the Minister of Education was not happy about it; I'm sure there was a lot of a discussion within caucus with his team on this matter. We went from needing and having to do the *Education Act* review to going into the education reform process. Years have gone by, a lot of money has been spent on this process, and now the minister is bringing forward New Horizons. I'm sure he has another name for something else beyond the horizon of New Horizons. I'm sure that, if the minister had the opportunity, we would be seeing another document by the minister, but it's not going to happen, because he'll be voted out of office by that time.

He can be asking questions from the opposition side. The general public has been frustrated; a bottom-up approach is what they wanted to see. A prime example was when there was a demonstration outside of this House, with the previous Education minister, about the involvement of grassroots people, community people; that minister did not allow it to happen fully, and those were pretty descriptive signs. I think the ministers could all recall outside of this House — it was in the papers — and that was the approach that the Yukon Party government took with the general public and communities and it hasn't changed. That whole approach has not changed with the Yukon Party government, and to this day it still takes place. They make a decision and say, "How do you like us now?" That's the approach of the Yukon Party government and they on that side of the House are all proud of that process. But do you know, they do not say that in the House here. It's always pointing fingers at others to blame for what took place.

Here, the minister promised the public, the students, parents and teachers that there will be a \$24.4-million line item in the budget that we're debating today for replacement of F.H. Collins school. Well, it didn't happen. The minister could use all the excuses he wants. He says he wants to take this slow. Of course he's going to take this slow. The thing is, it's not going to happen under this minister. That school will not be built under this minister and a tender for the contract will not happen under the Yukon Party government. It's funny how that line item — or that commitment — that was taken off was over \$20 million. It's just the amount that the Yukon Party needed to balance their budget.

What happened in Management Board? What happened at the Cabinet table? Where was the minister for the parents, the

teachers and the commitment he made just several months ago in this House? What happened then? Now we've seen a drastic reduction in the commitment to the replacement of F.H. Collins Secondary School.

They are still in the design and architectural phase of this project and the minister is singing a different tune now than he was four months ago. It is very much recognized when the school council is not even informed. The minister's own partners in education were not even informed of this delay. Well, they are informed now and, from what I recall, they were informed through the media. The minister should have taken that initiative and at least talked with his partners in education and ensured that they at least had the information provided to them. It was interesting to read the comments in the local paper about this minister's partners in education not being informed about this.

What we have now is what I would say is a major capital project here in Whitehorse that would definitely benefit the community a lot.

We would see parents and teachers involved in this project, as we see them involved in the design. We even had students who wanted to be able to graduate from the F.H. Collins newly built school. The minister put it off. That's not surprising, seeing as how the Yukon Party takes its time in building capital projects in this territory. The Carmacks school is a prime example. We're still not finished it. How many years do we have to ask questions of the minister before we see the completion of this school, which includes the school grounds?

The minister is going to say, "We're going to take our time and plan this project right." That's what he's going to say, but how does he explain the health care centres in Watson Lake and Dawson? They've gone from \$5 million to \$25 million. There was no asking of professionals in that case. There was no asking anybody about whether or not the community even wanted something like this. Now the hospital could have been as simple a thing as a replacement for those communities, but no. They took a different approach and it wasn't with the involvement of the people at all. That's the Yukon Party way.

When we're talking about a budget that's on the floor of this House right now, the Premier talked a lot about how —

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

*Speaker resumes the Chair*

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

#### **Chair's report**

**Mr. Nordick:** Committee of the Whole has considered Bill No. 24, *First Appropriation Act, 2011-12*, and directed me to report progress.

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

**Some Hon. Members:** Agreed.

**Speaker:** I declare the report carried.

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

*The House adjourned at 5:31 p.m.*