

**Yukon Legislative Assembly
Whitehorse, Yukon
Thursday, March 24, 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.

TRIBUTES

In recognition of World Tuberculosis Day

Hon. Mr. Hart: Mr. Speaker, I rise today in the House to ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing March 24 as World Tuberculosis Day.

World TB Day originated to help build awareness that tuberculosis remains an epidemic in much of the world and that it is responsible for several million deaths every year.

M. le Président, en ce 24 mars, j'invite aujourd'hui mes collègues à se joindre à moi pour souligner la Journée mondiale de la tuberculose.

La Journée a été proclamée afin de sensibiliser le public au fait que la tuberculose reste une épidémie qui s'étend encore presque partout dans le monde et qui est la cause de plusieurs millions de décès chaque année.

The campaign titled, "On the Move against Tuberculosis", celebrates individuals around the world who are finding new ways to stop tuberculosis and who are introducing innovations in patient care, treatment and diagnosis, as well as raising awareness.

In 2010, Yukon had six positive cases of TB, with 212 contacts. Being a close contact to a positive TB case makes a person 15 times more at risk for developing TB. Contact tracing is done to find and test family, friends and coworkers of TB patients to stop the spread of TB.

Yukon public health workers spend a lot of time and effort tracking down potential TB sufferers; however, it is the patient's choice to accept treatment.

There are two types of TB, latent and active. Adults with latent TB have about a 10-percent chance of developing active TB during their lifetime. They can infect those around them with either latent or active TB.

Often people diagnosed with latent TB refuse treatment. Successful preventive treatment of even one high-risk person can lessen the threat of TB for hundreds of people in a community. If we hope to eliminate this disease, we need to ensure that all TB cases receive treatment.

We encourage those who are infected with TB, whether latent or active, to take steps to protect their family and friends by accepting the treatment offered to them. Effective preventive therapy can stop TB in its tracks.

Thank you. Merci beaucoup.

Mr. Fairclough: I rise on behalf of the Official Opposition to pay tribute to World TB Day. This annual event on March 24 marks the day in 1882 when Dr. Robert Koch detected the cause of tuberculosis and the TB bacillus. This was the first step toward diagnosing and curing tuberculosis. World TB Day raises awareness of the global epidemic of tuberculosis and the efforts to eliminate the disease. The World Health Organization's Stop TB strategy has brought major achievements, including impressive improvements in the way TB care is delivered. Over the past 15 years, well over 40 million people have received treatment in accordance with the strategy. Prevalence and death rates continue to fall, demonstrating the power of international commitment to save lives, but we must be ever vigilant. Without additional funding and further improvement in TB prevention, early diagnosis and treatment, some eight million people will die of TB between now and 2015.

TB care still fails to reach everyone in need and effective treatment for TB has existed for decades. In most cases, drugs that cost as little as \$20 can save a TB patient's life. About one-third of the people with TB do not benefit from accurate diagnosis and appropriate care. While TB is more commonly associated with conditions found in developing countries, the Public Health Agency of Canada released figures in 2008 showing the national rates for tuberculosis among First Nations were 31 times higher than among other people born in Canada.

The fact that First Nations suffer this disease at a rate of 31 times the Canadian average is a direct result of things like overcrowded housing, poor nutrition, unsafe drinking water and poor health care.

World TB Day gives us an opportunity to take stock of our progress in tackling a disease that kills nearly two million people each year, mostly in developing countries. In Canada, there are about 1,600 cases of TB each year. TB is preventable if caught in time. In the 21st century, no one should die from this curable disease.

Ms. Hanson: I rise on behalf of the New Democratic Party caucus to pay tribute today to March 24 as World Tuberculosis Day. This day was designated to recognize Robert Koch's identification of the tubercle bacillus on March 24, 1882.

This year the theme is, "On the move against tuberculosis: transforming the fight toward elimination." Research and development is needed to fight this disease and that is the idea behind this World TB Day of transforming the fight toward elimination.

Worldwide, tuberculosis claims the lives of 68,000 people annually and no less than 700,000 people are presently suffering from this disease. More than 400,000 people contract the deadly disease every year. Every untreated patient could infect 10 to 15 healthy persons.

Tuberculosis is a curable communicable disease. Often, out of sheer ignorance, tuberculosis is still considered a fatal disease, and there is a struggle to eradicate it.

The Yukon has about 60 infected people, which is higher than the national average per capita.

Before the 1950s and 1960s, there was no concept of chemotherapy, and TB patients were kept in ventilated sanatoriums and were subject to surgery. It was usually the patients with natural immunity that survived. Today, TB is curable with treatment and periodic monitoring by medical professionals.

When tuberculosis is active, you can infect others. A skin test can tell you if there has been a positive reaction to tuberculosis. Problems arise when the patients start to get asymptomatic, and the motivation to continue treatment decreases.

The emergence of multi-drug-resistant tuberculosis is dangerous. It is not curable by the usual treatment, and the treatment is 20 times more expensive and needs at least one and a half years to be cured.

Tuberculosis always needs three to four drugs to prevent it from becoming drug resistant, and it is important to continue with the full treatment to prevent reoccurrence.

There is a need for proper management of tuberculosis, and the implementation of preventive measures to control it. People should not ignore tuberculosis symptoms, such as persistent coughing and blood in saliva, as the disease is extremely contagious. It poses a serious threat to anyone coming in contact with a tuberculosis patient.

The Yukon's chief medical officer of health says that tuberculosis is a problem in this territory. In the north, historically, tuberculosis has had terrible repercussions. Hundreds of First Nations who had no resistance were sent thousands of kilometres away for months and even years of treatment. Some of them had never left their home communities before; some didn't return. That emotional upheaval has a direct effect on how TB is dealt with by individuals in contact with it now. They are afraid of being sent away and of the social stigma attached to the disease. They are afraid of dying. But they are at high risk for developing active TB.

Alcohol affects the treatment of tuberculosis by adversely affecting the liver. Support and addiction treatment and then making sure that the patient has a stable place to live can help to get infected people on prevention therapy. That also has a protection factor for the community. Several children have been infected with TB in the Yukon. Yukon's medical officer of health said the best way to protect our children and protect communities is to have high-risk people on therapy to prevent them from developing further active TB. Thank you.

In recognition of Native Hockey Tournament

Hon. Mr. Lang: I rise today on behalf of the House to pay tribute to an event that is focusing on promoting aboriginal hockey for all ages, and proving once again that Yukon volunteers are the greatest in the country.

Thanks to the Yukon Indian Hockey Association, Yukon has organized the 34th annual Native Hockey Tournament that is the biggest and best native hockey tournament north of 60.

This hockey tournament will have 42 teams and numerous supporters here in Whitehorse for one of the most anticipated sporting and social events of the year. There are also three teams here for the tournament from Ross River, who all had to cope with the devastating fire in their community recently. On March 10, the fire destroyed the arena and all their equipment. We are appreciative of the support of Yukoners and businesses

that have ensured that these hockey players could be well-equipped and be here for this tournament.

The Yukon government is committed to rebuilding the recreational centre and has been working closely with the Ross River Recreation Society to develop a plan. The government is proud to support recreation and sports because these are powerful means of promoting health and well-being. Hockey provides not only a great opportunity for physical activity, but for teamwork, good rivalry and friendship.

For Yukoners, the 34th annual Kilrich/Northern Native Hockey Tournament is also a celebration of community involvement and will take place from March 25 to 27.

I would like to thank the board of directors for their hard work and dedication. These volunteers are: Dennis Mitchell, Sandi Gleason, Michelle Miller, Jackie Callahan, Jeanie Dendys, Alicia Vance, George Skookum and the president, Karee Vallevand.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in thanking all of the volunteers and community leaders who are essential to building a healthy and active Yukon. Thank you.

Speaker: Any further tributes?
Introduction of visitors.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Mr. Hart: I am honoured to welcome here today a number of guests representing our firefighting community. From the Department of Community Services we have Ken Colbert, the director of Wildland Fire Management; we have Dennis Berry, Yukon fire marshal; we have Rick Smith, assistant deputy minister of Protective Services; we have James Regimbal, president of the Association of Yukon Fire Chiefs and the Dawson City fire chief; we have James Paterson, fire chief at the Whitehorse airport; we have Clive Sparks, who is the fire chief for the City of Whitehorse.

From the International Association of Firefighters Local 2217, Whitehorse Fire Department, we have platoon chiefs Don McKnight, John Ross, Norm Jensen; we have captains Morley MacKay and Kevin Lyslo. We have firefighters Paul Taylor, Mike Albertini, Dave Dowie, Yogi Ponsioen, Scott MacFarlane, Paul Harach and Dennis Baker. We also have fire prevention officer Bud Toulouse; chief training officer Warren Zakus, and I would also like to welcome a number of volunteer firefighters who have taken the time to join us here today.

From the Yukon Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board, we have the chair, Mark Pike; we also have a board member, Gary Annau; we have the president and CEO, Valerie Royle; and the director, Kurt Dieckmann here with us. We thank them all and extend our appreciation for them being here in the House today.

Applause

Speaker: Is there any further introduction of visitors?
Any returns or documents for tabling?

TABLING RETURNS AND DOCUMENTS

Hon. Mr. Rouble: I have for tabling the annual report and audited financial statements for Yukon College.

Speaker: Are there any reports of committees?

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

Hon. Mr. Edzerza: I have for tabling the final report of the Select Committee on the Safe Operation and Use of Off-road Vehicles.

Speaker: Are there any further reports of committees?
Are there any petitions?
Are there any bills to be introduced?

Hon. Mr. Hart: Pursuant to Standing Order 14.3, I request the unanimous consent of the House to move that Bill No. 95, *Act to Amend the Workers' Compensation Act*, be now introduced and read a first time.

Unanimous consent re introduction and first reading of Bill No. 95, *Act to Amend the Workers' Compensation Act*

Speaker: The minister responsible for the Yukon Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board has requested the unanimous consent of the House, pursuant to Standing Order 14.3, to move that Bill No. 95, *Act to Amend the Workers' Compensation Act*, be now introduced and read a first time.

Is there unanimous consent?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

Speaker: Unanimous consent has been granted. The minister may now move the motion.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 95: Introduction and First Reading

Hon. Mr. Hart: I move that Bill No. 95, *Act to Amend the Workers' Compensation Act*, be introduced and read a first time.

Speaker: It has been moved by the minister responsible for the Yukon Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board that Bill No. 95, *Act to Amend the Workers' Compensation Act*, be now introduced and read a first time.

Motion for introduction and first reading of Bill No. 95 agreed to

Speaker: Are there any further bills for introduction?

Mr. McRobb: I also rise under Standing Order 14.3 of our Standing Orders to request unanimous consent to waive the rules of this House in order that we can proceed to second reading on Bill No. 95, *Act to Amend the Workers' Compensation Act*, prior to proceeding with notices of motions and Question Period today.

Unanimous consent re second reading of Bill No. 95, *Act to Amend the Workers' Compensation Act*

Speaker: The Member for Kluane has requested unanimous consent to proceed to Orders of the Day to conduct second reading of Bill No. 95, *Act to Amend the Workers' Compensation Act*, and then revert to the Daily Routine. Is there unanimous consent?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

Speaker: Unanimous consent has been granted.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT BILLS

Bill No. 95: Second Reading — *Act to Amend the Workers' Compensation Act*

Clerk: Second reading, Bill No. 95, standing in the name of the Hon. Mr. Hart.

Hon. Mr. Hart: Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 95, *Act to Amend the Workers' Compensation Act*, be now read a second time.

Speaker: It has been moved by the minister responsible for the Yukon Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board that Bill No. 95, *Act to Amend the Workers' Compensation Act*, be now read a second time.

Hon. Mr. Hart: Mr. Speaker, Yukon firefighters risk their lives to protect the property and lives of Yukoners. In addition to the hazards at the scene of the fire, this bill recognizes the additional health risks of cumulative firefighting, through a presumptive section in the *Yukon Workers' Compensation Act*, for full-time firefighters diagnosed on and after July 1, 2011, with cancers that have a specific connection to firefighting.

Our government recognizes that volunteer and part-time firefighters are also vulnerable to the cumulative effects of chemical exposure; therefore, these firefighters will also be brought under the cancer presumption no later than 36 months from the day of assent of this bill.

Recognizing that specific evidence continues to evolve, Bill No. 95 also allows for the addition of other cancers and diseases that may be determined at a future date to be scientifically connected to cumulative firefighting duties with the retroactive application date being July 1, 2011.

Mr. Speaker, there is a second presumption for firefighters contained in Bill No. 95, where if any Yukon firefighter, be they full-time, part-time, volunteer or wildland firefighter, suffers a heart attack within 24 hours of fighting a fire, that heart attack will be presumed to be work-related.

By passing this bill, Yukon will join eight other Canadian jurisdictions that already have some type of presumptive legislation for firefighters in their legislation.

I urge all members to support Yukon firefighters and support this bill.

Mr. Mitchell: I would also like to thank all members of this House for providing their unanimous consent to the request of the Member for Kluane to proceed to second reading of this bill prior to other Orders of the Day.

As the minister has stated, this amendment will change the *Workers' Compensation Act* by adding the presumption that heart attacks and certain cancers are work-related injuries for firefighters, as well as for volunteer, part-time and, in some cases, wildland, firefighters.

We all know that the firefighters — full-time, part-time and volunteer — across this territory and, indeed, across this nation, provide an invaluable service to their fellow citizens, their fellow Yukoners, their fellow Canadians. We also know that they do so, and put themselves at risk in doing so, every day they go to work and every day they get out of bed — in terms of volunteers who do not know whether that will be the day that they have to answer the call and respond to the bell.

It is only right that we do everything in our power to ensure that their medical conditions and injuries are covered as a result of their service to their fellow Yukoners.

I'd like to point out that the Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board already does provide coverage to volunteer firefighters, to full-time firefighters, and part-time firefighters. The difference of this bill is that it is presumptive legislation. Once this bill is in effect and effective after June 30, 2011, people who are covered and become ill or suffer from a heart attack will no longer have to go through an adjudication process. It will be presumed that these injuries are work-related and the coverage will be automatic, saving unneeded delays and needless stress and anxiety for these people and their families.

I would like to thank the Justice department and the Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board for working so expeditiously to get this legislation forward before the end of this sitting.

We know the government and the Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board have been working on this for some time, and it was only because of the desire to include four additional cancers, which were brought forward by the IAFF, that the bill was delayed and a different version had to be drafted. It's to the credit of all the officials that we're able to bring that forward so expeditiously to ensure that these people receive the coverage they are due, and it's also to the credit of all members that we are doing so today.

There is a funeral today — thousands of people are lining the main street of a small Ontario town this afternoon to honour two volunteer firefighters who made the ultimate sacrifice and died battling a blaze. Ray Walter and Ken Rea died last week, after a burning store collapsed on them in a small town of about 6,000 people northwest of Kitchener. Our hearts go out to their families and to their fellow firefighters on this day. We know there would have been even more people in the gallery today from the IAFF and from other jurisdictions, had it not been for the fact that this is a very sad day, indeed, and they are attending those ceremonies.

But it is a positive day that we in this Assembly are doing something on behalf of our firefighters across this territory that will, in effect, provide health care with less stress resulting from having to go through the adjudication process. I think it's a very important work that we do here today. I want to note that while much of what we do in this Assembly is often seen as partisan, this is a very fine example of how government and opposition members can work together in a positive cause.

Mr. Cardiff: It's a pleasure today to rise to speak to Bill No. 95. This is something that, I believe, is welcomed here

in the Yukon. I would like to take the opportunity actually to thank all the members of the fire service here in the Yukon for their commitment, their dedication to the fact that, as has been mentioned, every day they get up, they put their lives on the line for their fellow citizens here in the territory and right across Canada.

I'm not going to get into a whole bunch of what the bill is about. That has been explained very well already, but I think that this is an example of how, when we as legislators raise issues here in the Legislative Assembly, we can do what's right for Yukoners and we can do it very fast.

It's less than two years ago that this issue was raised in the Legislative Assembly by my former colleague, the Member for Whitehorse Centre, who asked questions of the minister responsible for workers' compensation about presumptive legislation. This is an example of how we as legislators can work for the common good of all Yukoners. I believe that we should use it as an example of how we can work together on other pieces of legislation that come before this House and fulfill a demonstrated need.

Other than that, I would like to thank the members who were at the briefing this morning from the Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board — the chair, the president and the director — for their hard and diligent work on this, and the employees in the Department of Justice for turning it around as quickly as they did. We don't often see legislation come forward this fast, and I'm pleased today to be here to support this legislation.

Mr. Cathers: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the minister responsible for Yukon Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board for providing a copy of this bill prior to tabling. Having gone through it, I believe an excellent job has been done. I fully support this bill and encourage all members to do the same.

I would like to thank the staff of the Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board and the board, the firefighters, the legal counsel from the Department of Justice and many others whose efforts went into developing this bill and ensuring that it was ready in time to be dealt with during this spring sitting.

Many people, including me, owe a debt of gratitude to firefighters for protecting our homes and responding in times of extreme crisis. The firefighters put themselves at risk. It's appropriate that we do what we can to ensure that we support them and, if they develop cancer or another illness, that we will have the appropriate measures in place to compensate them and their families.

Presumptive legislation is the appropriate way to deal with these issues, particularly the cancers listed in the legislation, as well as death from a heart attack within 24 hours.

In conclusion, I want to again commend this bill to the House and thank those in the gallery and all the men and women who serve as professional and volunteer firefighters for the risks they take and the service they provide to all of us.

Speaker: If the minister speaks, he will close debate. Does any other member wish to be heard?

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Mr. Hart: I neglected to introduce Barb Evans, who is a board member of Workers' Compensation Board. I ask my colleagues here to join me in welcoming her here to the Legislature.

Applause

Speaker: Now if the member speaks, he will close debate. Does any other member wish to be heard?

Hon. Mr. Hart: First of all, I would like to thank the officials involved in preparing this information, as well as all of the individuals involved in making sure that the legislation meets the requirements of all those involved in the firefighting industry. I would also like to thank members opposite for their support on moving forward on this very important bill for our firefighting community.

Speaker: Are you prepared for the question?

Some Hon. Members: Division.

Division

Speaker: Division has been called.

Bells

Speaker: Mr. Clerk, please poll the House.

Hon. Mr. Fentie: Agree.

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Hart: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Kenyon: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Rouble: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Lang: Agree.

Hon. Ms. Horne: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Edzerza: Agree.

Mr. Nordick: Agree.

Mr. Mitchell: Agree.

Mr. McRobb: Agree.

Mr. Fairclough: Agree.

Mr. Inverarity: Agree.

Ms. Hanson: Agree.

Mr. Cardiff: Agree.

Mr. Cathers: Agree.

Clerk: Mr. Speaker, the results are 16 yea, nil nay.

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

Motion for second reading of Bill No. 95 agreed to

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Pursuant to Standing Order 14.3, I request the unanimous consent of the House to proceed at this time with Committee of the Whole and third reading of Bill No. 95, *Act to Amend the Workers' Compensation Act*.

Unanimous consent re Committee of the Whole and third reading of Bill No. 95, *Act to Amend the Workers' Compensation Act*

Speaker: The Government House Leader has requested the unanimous consent of the House to proceed at this

time with Committee of the Whole and third reading of Bill No. 95, *Act to Amend the Workers' Compensation Act*. Is there unanimous consent?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

Speaker: Unanimous consent has been granted.

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

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

Motion agreed to

Speaker leaves the Chair

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Chair (Mr. Nordick): Order please. Committee of the Whole will now come to order.

Bill No. 95: *Act to Amend the Workers' Compensation Act*

Chair: The matter before the Committee is Bill No. 95, *Act to Amend the Workers' Compensation Act*. We'll now proceed with general debate on Bill No. 95.

Hon. Mr. Hart: Today is a good day for Yukon firefighters and, I believe, a good day for the Yukon as we move Bill No. 95 into debate. The International Association of Fire Fighters approached the Yukon Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board and this government in 2009 requesting special legislative consideration for Yukon firefighters.

Since that time, on the direction from this government, the Yukon Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board has consulted with the IAFF and Yukon stakeholders to address this request from the Yukon perspective.

There are many individuals who serve the public in a variety of ways every day, many of whom face danger in the fulfillment of their duties. Hazard assessment, safety measures, training, and effective supervision are some of the tools that help to mitigate the daily risks faced by these courageous workers. However, in addition to the daily hazards of the job, firefighters are subject to the gradual impact of chemical exposure over their firefighting career — chemicals that seep past turnout gear and self-contained breathing apparatuses, chemicals that make their way into vital body systems through the lungs and skin, and chemicals which are known to cause a higher incidence of a long list of primary-site cancers among firefighters than in the general population.

This bill acknowledges the long-term health sacrifices of firefighters through the presumptive section of the *Yukon Workers' Compensation Act*. Under the *Workers' Compensation Act*, the Yukon firefighters are employed by and are considered workers of a variety of levels of government — Yukon government, First Nation governments and incorporated municipalities.

First let me assure members that all these Yukon firefighters are and have been covered for injuries and illnesses that are

determined by the Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board to be work-related.

A presumption section in the *Workers' Compensation Act* recognizes specific circumstances where an injury or an illness is presumed to be work-related without the rigour of the usual adjudication process. Bill No. 95 provides such a presumption for full-time firefighters diagnosed on or after July 1, 2011, with any one of the 10 cancers called "listed diseases" that have an established, scientific connection to firefighting.

These diseases include, but are not limited to, primary leukemia, primary site brain cancer and primary non-Hodgkin's lymphoma. There are four other types of cancers that, in January of this year, the International Association of Fire Fighters asked to be considered in this legislation. They were skin cancer, prostate cancer, multiple myeloma and breast cancer.

On March 11, 2011, the IAFF provided this government and the Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board with their evidence supporting the inclusion of these additional four cancers.

Mr. Chair, neither the board nor the government has had adequate opportunity to review this information in order to include these cancers in this bill; however, we do recognize that, like these four cancers, there may be other cancers, which, at a future date, may be scientifically linked to cumulative firefighting. Bill No. 95 contains a provision in which other forms of cancer can be added to the presumption in the future, with retroactivity to July 1, 2011.

The Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board has committed to giving due consideration to the recent International Association of Fire Fighters' request with the recommendation to this government as soon as possible. Mr. Chair, the IAFF supports this approach and has committed to providing additional information on these and other cancers as it becomes available, or as requested by the board.

For several reasons, July 1, 2011, has been chosen as the date on or after which diagnosis of a full-time firefighter's listed disease is presumed to be work-related. First of all, this day, July 1, coincides with the historic changes to the *Workers' Compensation Act*, which usually take effect on January 1 or July 1 during a year. Secondly, July 1 gives the Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board adequate time to prepare the necessary board orders required to support the act amendment.

Thirdly, and most importantly, this government, the Yukon Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board and its board of directors are firmly committed to the prevention and early detection of cancers among firefighters and plan to develop Occupational Health and Safety regulations with respect to full-time firefighters in consultation with stakeholders for implementation on July 1, 2011.

This government recognizes that volunteer and part-time firefighters are also vulnerable to the cumulative effects of chemical exposure during firefighting. Therefore, these firefighters will also be brought under the cancer presumption no later than 36 months after the date of assent of this bill, retroactive to July 1, 2011. This implementation framework gives the Yukon Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board time

to complete its due diligence on how this presumption will specifically apply to volunteers and to develop, in consultation with the affected stakeholders, the early detection and prevention Occupational Health and Safety regulations to accompany the presumptive legislation for volunteers.

It is not enough to compensate firefighters or their dependants quickly when work-related cancer is diagnosed. This government is committed to early detection and the prevention of cancer among all Yukon firefighters.

Mr. Chair, there is a second presumption for firefighters contained in Bill No. 95 where any Yukon firefighter covered under the *Workers' Compensation Act*, be they a full-time, part-time, volunteer or wildland firefighter, suffers a heart attack on or after July 1, 2011 within 24 hours of fighting a fire, that the heart attack will be presumed to be work-related. This presumption recognizes the medical connection between the attributes of fighting a fire, such as excessive heat, stress, physical exertion, carrying extra weight by wearing turnout gear and self-contained breathing apparatus, and the onset of heart attack. These heart attacks do not always manifest themselves at the time, but can occur up to 24 hours after the worker has finished fighting the fire.

I would also like to address a section in the bill that qualifies the cancer and heart attack presumptions with the term "unless there is evidence to the contrary". As I previously noted, the presumption is intended to reduce the adjudication process at the Yukon Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board. Therefore, the board will not be actively seeking evidence to the contrary in presumption claims. However, such evidence will be considered when it is provided, for example, by an employer, health care provider or in a medical report.

An exception to this, outlined in the bill, occurs in the event of primary lung cancer. Smoking has been medically determined to be a significant cause of lung cancer. A firefighter must have been a non-smoker in the 10 years immediately before the time of a lung cancer diagnosis, in order for the presumption to apply. A claim from a firefighter who does not meet this requirement would not be automatically denied by the board, rather only that the presumption section of the act would not apply and the claim would go through the usual adjudication process to determine work-relatedness.

It is important for members to note that the Yukon does not have a history of cancer claims for compensation among firefighters; therefore, the Yukon Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board is unable to determine the potential cost implications associated with this bill. Given that work-related cancers and heart attacks are already covered under the *Workers' Compensation Act*, and given the early detection and prevention focus tailored to the various types of firefighters that will complement this amendment, the financial implications of Bill No. 95 are not expected to be significant.

Once Bill No. 95 is passed through third reading, communications with affected worker and employer groups will take place. The Yukon Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board will review the additional four cancers presented by the IAFF, the board of directors will develop board orders to support the bill, and consultation with stakeholders will proceed on

extending the cancer presumption to part-time and volunteer firefighters, as well as on the early detection and prevention Occupational Health and Safety regulations that are an integral part of this issue.

Bill No. 95 acknowledges the service and sacrifice that firefighters and their families make daily and over time to protect the property and lives of Yukoners. This bill is one way to ensure that these sacrifices are recognized and appreciated by those served by these brave men and women.

I hope this information helps clarify the contents of Bill No. 95 as it moves forward through the process of Committee.

At this time, I would also like to express our condolences to the families, friends and comrades of two volunteer firefighters, Ray Walter and Ken Rea, who recently passed away in the line of duty in Listowel, Ontario.

Mr. Mitchell: First of all, I'd like to again thank the chair of the Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board, the president and CEO of the Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board, who are with us on the floor this afternoon, and the director of Workplace Safety, for the briefing they provided on such short notice — just a couple of hours ago — this morning.

This is highly unusual in this House. We basically first saw this legislation, Bill No. 95, just before 11:00 this morning, so we don't have the usual research, prepared notes and so forth that we would have in debating a bill, because we haven't had the opportunity to do so. However, the officials provided a very excellent briefing this morning into a bill that only reads three and one-half pages long, but is, as the president and CEO said, somewhat complicated in the approach that it had to take in order to accommodate the additional conditions of four particular cancers that the IAFF asked us to include.

I want to thank the Workers' Compensation Board and Justice officials. There was a different version of this bill that had been under preparation for some time. In fact, that is why earlier, at the beginning of this sitting, I urged the government to come forward with this legislation and said at that time that we in the Official Opposition would waive the five-day sitting rule for presenting legislation in order to get this through in this sitting.

But the board had to redraft this bill to accommodate those additional cancers and the facts are, as explained to us, that not all the details have been worked out as to latency periods and the amount of exposure to qualify in the case of part-time and volunteer firefighters. This is something that's going to be done by board order within the next three years, but I want to assure all members of the public, as well as all members of the fire service — regardless of whether they're full-time, part-time or volunteer — that the effective date will still be retroactive to July 1, 2011. Anyone who comes to make a claim because they've been diagnosed with a condition — one of these cancers — after midnight, June 30, 2011, will still be covered by this legislation retroactive to that date.

Secondly, from my understanding of it — and again this has been on short notice — is that even for the part-time and volunteer firefighters — and I'm going to look toward the officials to nod yes or no as I speak — the coverage and presump-

tive coverage for a heart attack goes into effect immediately on July 1, 2011. We are getting part of it done right away, but there's more good work that has to be done.

I think it's important that we did ask this during the briefing, but this being Committee of the Whole where we operate a little differently, I want to get it again on the record that it will be in writing because it's here in *Hansard*, thanks to the minister — that the board will not be, in any way, aggressively seeking alternative information regarding the presumptive nature of this legislation — that it will only be if other information becomes known through other matters or if there is a reason to believe that a cancer may have had a different origin — that that would take place.

It is important that this be enshrined in regulations by the Workers' Compensation Board that that will be the policy, because people come and people go in these positions. We would look for those assurances from the minister when he's next on his feet.

I know there is more than one of us in this Chamber — elected members who have served as volunteer firefighters. I know I had the privilege for some 20 years of serving in the Atlin volunteer fire department. I want to say something about our volunteers because I have witnessed men and women go into burning buildings without any second thought to their own welfare, what it would mean to their families were they to be injured, or were they to die on the job. They have done so for their fellow citizens, unfortunately sometimes in volunteer services, and not so much in Yukon, without necessarily as good turnout gear or self-contained breathing apparatuses as one might expect, say, in the full-time fire department of the City of Whitehorse.

I know, from having served in every position, up to and including chief, that one burning couch or chair in a house can emit thousands of toxic chemicals. Exposure is both cumulative and instant. One can suffer a fatality or injury in one instance or from numerous exposures over time. We look forward to the research that will be done by the Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board — the evidence-based research — to come back with a proper standard on how this is going to be addressed.

It's also important that we ensure that all our firefighters — full-time, part-time and volunteer — are protected in all situations. Too often I've seen in the past when I was serving — and I know it has occurred across Yukon, for example in fighting a dump fire — that sometimes volunteer firefighters have not worn full protective gear or self-contained breathing apparatus in those conditions where they might wear them into a dwelling or structural fire, but the fact is we have no knowledge of what items may be in many of these dumps, and there are all kinds of toxic chemicals that exist and that give off additional toxic chemicals when they are ignited in a fire.

As well, this bill will provide coverage, from my understanding for those personnel who do the inspections following the fire and the investigations — the fire marshal and other investigators — and that is also important because they too can be exposed to very hazardous chemicals. It is notable that in Yukon, unlike other jurisdictions, the condition of a heart at-

tack will also be covered in our legislation. We understand that this is unique to Yukon and it's a precedent that we hope will be repeated across the country following this legislation going forward.

Of course there are many mutual-aid agreements that exist between fire services and wildland fire services and volunteers, so there are people who can be exposed under a lot of different conditions. I want to emphasize something for those who are listening today that our firefighters — both volunteer, part-time and full-time — are already covered under the *Workers' Compensation Act*. It is simply the fact that right now they have to go through the adjudication process to, in effect, prove to the board that the condition resulted from their employment. That obviously is something that can be difficult to demonstrate at times, and it can be very stressful for the individuals and their families. This important step is to change it to being presumptive legislation. It is presumed to be a workplace injury, but the coverage still exists for all firefighters right now. That means that during this three-year period where the board is looking toward coming up with what standards will be used in terms of exposure, of time of service, of latency periods — those firefighters can still avail themselves of that coverage by going through the adjudication process.

We do have some specific questions about clauses in this bill, but I think the minister may just provide those assurances that the Workers' Compensation Board will change their policy and not be in any way seeking to find evidence to the contrary. I'd like that assurance at this time and I'll allow the minister to respond to that.

Hon. Mr. Hart: I thank the member opposite for his comments. As evidence in the preamble of my second reading speech, the approach to evidence to the contrary will be confirmed in the policy of the board of directors in addition to what was already recorded here in *Hansard* in the House.

Mr. Mitchell: I appreciate that; I just wanted to get it into the record that the policies themselves will change.

The bill is somewhat circular in how it's presented in order to deal with subsection (k) "any prescribed form of cancer" and we know that there are at least four that we're looking at.

Can the minister tell us if, beyond the four cancers that were noted — which were prostate cancer, skin cancer, multiple myeloma and breast cancer — are there any other cancers the board is considering including at this point in time under section 17.1(1)(k), based on evidence elsewhere or any information that has been provided by the IAFF, or is it strictly those four?

Hon. Mr. Hart: At this time, we have no other cancers being put forward by the IAFF with regard to firefighters.

Mr. Mitchell: I'm going to ask a couple of specific questions. We could do it in line-by-line debate, but I think I'll do it at this time. Under section 17.1(3)(b), where it says "if the listed disease is primary site lung cancer, has not smoked a tobacco product in the 10 years immediately before the time of the diagnosis." I do have a question about that. I know that an affidavit was mentioned during the briefing this morning. I don't believe this is how it's done in all jurisdictions. There are different standards that would go into this clause.

For example, we obviously don't want to be paying compensation to somebody on the basis of employment if in fact they have been a two-packs-a-day smoker for 20 years and there is clear evidence to the contrary that that's the reason for lung cancer. However, until not very long ago, it was a tradition, for example, when a family had a baby, for a gentleman, and, more recently, also for a lady — I've been offered cigars as a form of celebratory congratulation. I don't know how many of those cigars ever get smoked, but for someone to sign an affidavit when five years ago they may have puffed on a cigar in a ceremony and they're not in any way a smoker — there are cases like that. I'm just wondering whether there is any other way that this could be handled, other than a complete promise by affidavit that there had been no tobacco product smoked in the last 10 years. So, for example, is that the sort of situation that could, in some way, be excluded by regulation or some other way? We don't want to ask somebody to falsely attest in an affidavit to not having done something when they really, for all practical purposes, haven't done so.

Hon. Mr. Hart: As indicated, we'll need an affidavit from the worker. Lung cancer is medically connected to smoking, as I indicated also. This is an approach used by other jurisdictions, but not all. Presumption will not apply, but the normal adjudication will apply, as I also stated in my address with regard to this question. The applicant would have to sign an affidavit to assure this, but he still does have the ability to be adjudicated under the normal process of workers' compensation.

Mr. Mitchell: I don't want to draw this debate out at any great length. I know that the Third Party also wants to get into the debate and I think any other questions that we have could be answered when we go clause by clause and line by line. Again, I want to thank the officials for bringing this forward and I want to thank the minister for getting this job done.

Mr. Cardiff: Well, I'm going to try to be brief. First of all, I'd like to once again thank the president of the Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board for being here today and to her and her colleagues for the excellent briefing that they provided just a few short hours ago.

As was mentioned, this is rather unusual to be receiving a bill and debating and passing it in such a short time frame, but I think that this is a worthwhile piece of legislation. There are a number of reasons for that. As has been mentioned and noted, firefighters are indeed already covered under the *Workers' Compensation Act*. I think the purpose of presumptive legislation is to show members of the fire service and their families compassion, and to give them dignity and recognition for putting their lives on the line every single day that they go to work. I think that is a very important principle that needs to be noted and that is why we are really bringing this forward at this time. There are a couple of other things in this legislation that are a little bit out of the ordinary and I applaud those involved for including wildland firefighters.

I am pleased to see that it covers the whole gamut of firefighters — full-time, part-time and volunteer firefighters. I think that recognition is important, and the inclusion of wildland firefighters in the provisions around heart attack within 24 hours of being on the job shows the recognition that they too

put their lives on the line. They operate under high stress and it's an extremely physical, stressful job that they do — and dangerous.

In the briefing that was provided today, the provisions that are there for detection, prevention and — I'm assuming — treatment, if cancer is detected are most welcome.

In the time that I have had to go through this, I only have one question. I think we owe a debt of gratitude to those who worked diligently to bring this piece of legislation forward. The only question that I would ask the minister for some clarification on is about the clause 17.1(1). In that section, it identifies all of the primary site cancers. I'm not going to list them. In section (k), it says, "any prescribed form of cancer". They were listed for us earlier today. I remember there was breast cancer, prostate cancer, skin cancer and the other one that's difficult to pronounce. My question, I guess, for the minister and for the CEO is: is there the ability through this clause in the legislation — if there are any other diseases, not necessarily cancers, such as respiratory diseases or other diseases we find that come up as a result of prolonged exposure to chemicals or whatever dangers are encountered by the individuals employed in the fire service or volunteering in the fire service — are those able to be covered under this legislation as well?

With that, I look forward to the minister's answer. I don't believe I have any other questions. I'd just like to thank everyone for being here today. Once again, I thank the officials for their hard work.

Hon. Mr. Hart: To answer the member opposite's question directly, section (k) pertains to cancers only. Any other aspect that comes from the IAFF as related to disease or respiratory items would require an act change by amendment.

Mr. Cardiff: So that just brings up one more question for me then. Could this act be amended, or would it have to be another act?

Hon. Mr. Hart: It would just be an amendment to this act.

Chair: Any further general debate? Seeing none, we'll proceed clause by clause.

Mr. Cathers: I would request the unanimous consent of the Committee to deem all clauses and the title of Bill No. 95, *Act to Amend the Workers' Compensation Act*, read and agreed to.

Unanimous consent re deeming all clauses and title of Bill No. 95 read and agreed to

Chair: Mr. Cathers has requested the unanimous consent of the Committee to deem all clauses and the title of Bill No. 95, *Act to Amend the Workers' Compensation Act*, read and agreed to.

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

Chair: Unanimous consent has been granted.

Clauses 1 to 4 deemed read and agreed to

On Title

Title agreed to

Hon. Mr. Hart: I move that Bill No. 95, entitled *Act to Amend the Worker's Compensation Act*, be reported without amendment.

Chair: It has been moved by Mr. Hart that Bill No. 95, *Act to Amend the Worker's Compensation Act*, be reported without amendment.

Motion agreed to

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

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

Motion agreed to

Speaker resumes the Chair

Speaker: I will now call the House to order.

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

Chair's report

Mr. Nordick: Committee of the Whole has considered Bill No. 95, *Act to Amend the Workers' Compensation Act*, and directed me to report it without amendment.

Speaker: You have heard the report from the Chair of Committee of the Whole.

Are you agreed?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Speaker: I declare the report carried.

GOVERNMENT BILLS

Bill No. 95: Third Reading

Clerk: Third reading, Bill No. 95, standing in the name of the Hon. Mr. Hart.

Hon. Mr. Hart: I move that Bill No. 95, entitled *Act to Amend the Workers' Compensation Act*, be now read a third time and do pass.

Speaker: It has been moved by the minister responsible for the Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board, that Bill No. 95, entitled *Act to Amend the Workers' Compensation Act*, be now read a third time and do pass.

Are you prepared for the question?

Some Hon. Members: Division.

Division

Speaker: Division has been called.

Mr. Clerk, please poll the House.

Hon. Mr. Fentie: Agree.

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Hart: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Kenyon: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Rouble: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Lang: Agree.

Hon. Ms. Horne: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Edzerza: Agree.

Mr. Nordick: Agree.

Mr. Mitchell: Agree.

Mr. McRobb: Agree.

Mr. Fairclough: Agree.

Mr. Inverarity: Agree.

Ms. Hanson: Agree.

Mr. Cardiff: Agree.

Mr. Cathers: Agree.

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

Motion for third reading of Bill No. 95 agreed to

Speaker: The yeas have it. I declare the motion carried and that Bill No. 95 has passed this House.

Applause

Speaker: We will revert to the Daily Routine.

DAILY ROUTINE

Speaker: Are there any notices of motion?

NOTICES OF MOTION

Hon. Mr. Rouble: I give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Canada to continue to support the activities of the Canadian Space Agency as the information it provides has a direct impact on the lives of northerners, including access to vital communication networks; forecasting of weather and climate change; knowledge of environmental and geophysical issues; and security of northern borders.

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

THAT this House urges all federal political parties to reaffirm their support for a tax credit for volunteer firefighters and make the commitment that, whatever comes out of the budget votes and confidence motions, legislation will come forward to enact this tax credit at the earliest opportunities in the first sitting of a new Parliament.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Yukon government to commit to a full consultation with volunteer fire departments and volunteer emergency medical services crews in order to:

(1) improve the provision of essential services throughout the Yukon; and

(2) hear directly from responders working in our communities as to what they need from government in terms of financial and non-financial support, equipment and training.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Yukon government to follow the lead of Newfoundland and Labrador in its approach to tuition fees for post-secondary students to increase the number of students enrolling at Yukon College, and to encourage skill and career development by:

(1) reducing the student loan rate to the prime rate;

(2) reducing and freezing tuition fees;

(3) substantially increasing the number of grants available to Yukon students; and

(4) allowing students who are not Yukon residents to apply for STEP employment.

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

THAT this House urges the Yukon government to investigate options for expanding cellular service north of White-

horse, particularly in the areas of Grizzly Valley, Deep Creek, and other properties on Lake Laberge by considering the feasibility and effect of possible options including the following:

(1) installation of a powered or passive repeater on the hill north of the Vista Road cell tower;

(2) installation of a powered or passive repeater on the hills east of Grizzly Valley;

(3) installation of a new cellular tower at approximately kilometre 218 of the north Klondike Highway, on the former site of Northwestel's tower, which used to provide two-way radio service;

(4) installation of a new cellular tower at an alternative location in Deep Creek or Grizzly Valley; and

(5) installation of powered or passive repeaters at other locations in Grizzly Valley, Deep Creek, and near Lake Laberge.

Speaker: Are there any further notices of motion?

Is there a statement by a minister?

Hearing none, prior to proceeding with Question Period, the Chair will rule on a point of order raised yesterday during Question Period by the Member for Mount Lorne.

Speaker's ruling

Speaker: In response to a question from the Member for Mayo-Tatchun regarding Yukon Energy Corporation, the Premier suggested that members of the Official Opposition were motivated by personal interest, not the public interest. The Member for Mount Lorne then rose on a point of order, citing Standing Order 19(g). Standing Order 19(g) says, "A member shall be called to order by the Speaker if that member ... imputes false or unavowed motives to another member."

In this case, the Chair believes there is a point of order. The second edition of the *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, at page 618, advises us that parliamentary proceedings are based on long-standing tradition of respect for the integrity of all members. The Chair believes that suggesting that a member or caucus is motivated by a personal interest rather than a public interest does not meet this standard. The Chair would caution all members against making such remarks in the future.

We will now proceed to Question Period.

QUESTION PERIOD

Question re: Asset-backed commercial paper investments

Mr. Mitchell: We are reaching the end of the Yukon Party's time in government. It has been an expensive administration for Yukoners and that's not only because of the Yukon Party's out-of-control spending, multiple deficit budgets and upward of \$170 million in new debt in only a few short years.

Part of this government's financial legacy is the tens of millions of dollars locked up in bad ABCP investments. My question is for the Deputy Premier, who was a passionate defender of these investments at the time. Now that she and her colleagues are lobbying the Yukon public to keep their jobs, does she still think these investments were a good idea?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: Actually, this side of the House, the Yukon Party government and its team, will not be going out to lobby the public at all. What we will be doing is going out to present to Yukoners our plan for Yukon's future, as we did in 2002, as we did in 2006.

We presented clearly a detailed vision and plan for the Yukon Territory. We presented a vision and a plan for the economy. The results speak for themselves, Mr. Speaker. We presented a detailed vision and plan for improving the quality of life. The results speak for themselves, Mr. Speaker. We presented a plan for the protection and conservation of our pristine wilderness and environment. I think the results, again, speak for themselves. By the way, we also were very astute in investing in the course of developing a much stronger fiscal position for Yukon and, to date, those investments have earned millions for this territory.

Mr. Mitchell: I remember both of those plans — 2002 and 2006. I don't recall the Yukon Party campaigning on a promise to invest in structured investments that are not covered by the *Financial Administration Act*.

Now, the Deputy Premier stood by the Premier when he put \$36.5 million of taxpayer money into investments not covered by the *Financial Administration Act*. She backed him up when he ran aground with Yukoners' money. Now those investments are worth much less than the Premier put in and they're locked up for a lot longer than promised. At the time, the Deputy Premier said, quote: "...nothing has been lost. The investment is, in fact, being restructured." That was over three years ago.

Does the Deputy Premier still stand by the Premier's ABCP investments or does she believe Yukoners' money should be put in investments that pay what they promise, when they promise it, and remain liquid so the funds are available when needed?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: Well, of course the Deputy Premier and all members of this side of the House back up what they say, unlike the members opposite.

Now I recall just a short while ago that the Member for Kluane was going to resign over a certain item that apparently he thought was in *Hansard*. Well, Mr. Speaker, that item wasn't in *Hansard*; we're awaiting the Member for Kluane to back up what he said and resign.

Mr. Mitchell: Yukoners can be the judge. We asked a question about investments and we get a bunch of replies about *Hansard*. It was the Deputy Premier who stood up in this House and assured Yukoners their money was safe and it's the Deputy Premier who owes them an explanation now. That money was supposed to be invested for 30 days, to be returned after those 30 days with interest, and to then be back in hand and available to meet the needs of Yukoners. When that didn't happen, it was the Deputy Premier who stood up in this House and defended those investments. She said, quote: "We haven't lost any money." The \$10-million drop in these investments' values says otherwise.

Will the Deputy Premier finally admit she was wrong to back the Premier and his bad ABCP investments?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: We will back up our officials as we should. They are hard-working and have demonstrated continually during the mandate of the Yukon Party and its regime and leadership of this territory the good work that they do. Let me reference the Liberal leader's comments about the financial position of this Yukon Territory. We are one of the only jurisdictions, if not the only jurisdiction that has tabled a balanced budget, in surplus with a savings account. We are one of the only — other than Alberta — jurisdictions in Canada that can say that we are not in a net debt position, but in a net financial resource position.

Let's look back at Liberal financial management. The territory was broke. They allowed Dawson City to exceed its debt limit as required under the *Municipal Act*. They drove Yukoners out of this territory, especially our skilled and young people. They had us in double-digit unemployment and they went on a deck chair rearranging exercise on the good ship *Titanic* and called it "government renewal" when all officials of the government knew it was about government removal. We'll let Yukoners judge.

Question re: Asset-backed commercial paper investments

Mr. Inverarity: I'd like to follow up with the Deputy Premier on the key role she played in the biggest financial scandal of this government. There's no doubt she is right in the middle of it.

The Deputy Premier stood in this House, day after day, defending these investments. For example, on November 19, 2007, she said, "As I mentioned earlier, these investments are backed by the banks..." We called in the Auditor General of Canada, and she had this to say: "We also found that the investments in the two trusts were not issued or guaranteed by a bank."

Will the Deputy Premier now admit that the statement she made was, in fact, incorrect?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: The Deputy Premier was, in fact, correct. We all know that. We all know that banks were allowed to make that type of guarantee due to policy changes by OSFI; that's not news. What is at issue here, I think, is the Official Opposition, the Liberals, who will not back up statements they make. The list is a long one.

By the way, Mr. Speaker, the issue of the investment — the Liberals claim it's lost. How can this be when, to date, that very same investment has brought to this territory some \$1.9 million in return?

Mr. Inverarity: It's about accountability. You start with \$36.5 million and then you have a book value of \$24 million. You put a million and a half back in; you're at \$26 million. To me, that's still short \$10 million.

Let's look at another statement that the Deputy Premier made about the \$36-million investment that Yukoners can't get their hands on. On November 14, 2007, she said that this Government of Yukon is meeting "the letter of the law, which is the *Financial Administration Act*." What did the Auditor General say? These investments do not meet the conditions set out in the *Financial Administration Act*.

Will the Deputy Premier be accountable for the statements she made and admit what she told this House was not correct?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: The Deputy Premier and I and the whole of government will stand behind those statements — and that's why we are the government, by the way, and the opposition is where it's at — in opposition. It's all about accountability and credibility.

Will the Liberals back up their statements that this territory is broke? The fiscal position of the Yukon Territory today is quite clearly not a position of being broke. We're not insolvent; in fact, we are balanced. We are in surplus. We have a savings account, and we've invested a further billion dollars plus into Yukoners' well-being and quality of life. Will the Liberals back up their statements? Not at all, because they have nothing to back it up with.

Mr. Inverarity: Mr. Speaker, in the coming election campaign, trust and accountability are going to be talked about a lot. Yukoners no longer trust this government, and here's another reason why: the Deputy Premier told this House this \$36 million was: (1) guaranteed by a bank; and (2) in compliance with the *Financial Administration Act*. Neither of these statements was correct and the Auditor General of Canada said so.

Yukoners aren't really concerned about what this Premier has to say on this matter because he's probably going to be pushed out by his party before the next election. The Deputy Premier will be on the ballot, and Yukoners deserve to know why she made these statements. Will she defend the statements she made or not?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: I really am quite taken aback that the Member for Porter Creek South has some sort of crystal ball on what the future may hold. If the member does in fact have that crystal ball, I would encourage the Member for Porter Creek South to take a very close look at the future of the Liberals; it's not a very bright one. They have no plan, they have no vision, and they have nothing with which to back up their statements.

I must, at the danger of offending anyone, refer to a very proud and very important Prime Minister of this country, the Rt. Hon. John G. Diefenbaker, who once said to his Liberal adversary, "To lead this country, it takes a lot more for a backbone than a banana."

Question re: Mining skills training

Ms. Hanson: The New Democratic Party wants to see real benefits for Yukoners flowing out of the mineral exploration and development boom. We want to see the many, good paying jobs in this sector go to Yukoners, and we particularly want to see that First Nation people from rural Yukon have these opportunities. We recognize the good work the Yukon Mine Training Association does in helping First Nations persons to compete for these good jobs. My colleague, the Member for Mount Lorne, was at the Aboriginal Peoples Resource Opportunities Conference and said it was great to see so many companies, workers and First Nation leaders represented. It is also great to see the job fair was well attended and that there is a real interest in young Yukoners to work in this sector.

Does this government keep data on First Nations' engagement in the mining industry? Does it have equity targets in mind, and does it have an overall plan envisioned for First Nations' engagement in the mining industry and related trades?

Hon. Mr. Rouble: It is my honour and pleasure to rise as both the Minister of Education and Energy, Mines and Resources to address this important question.

Yes, we're seeing a significant increase in the economy of the territory, due in no small part to the proactive steps of this government and the investments that this government has made and the relationships that this government has helped to foster. We're seeing unemployment rates at record low levels — less than four percent — and leading the country in unemployment rates.

As I was reminded at recent job fairs, there are opportunities for people out there and training available and doors that are opening every day. The Public Service Commission has set targets within the Government of Yukon for representative public servants. We in the Yukon Party want to see job opportunities for all Yukoners. That's why we've made investments in training, investments in Yukon College, investments with the Yukon Mine Training Association. We want to see the doors open for all Yukoners to take advantage of the Yukon opportunities that are clearly visible. That's why we have been so supportive of the many opportunities for job fairs, for training fairs and the like. The Yukon economy is growing strong, and it's great to see Yukoners benefiting from it.

Ms. Hanson: The role of public government in stimulating private industry to create jobs is one of the trickier public policy questions. It requires research, diligence and creativity. When it comes to the current mining boom, I have heard industry insiders say that they don't expect that too many direct jobs in the industry will go to Yukoners, that they would like to hire more, but flying in trained workers from elsewhere is the easier and more likely option.

One way we could get more benefits from this sector is with a cutting-edge school of mines. We could become real specialists with mining in the northern context with high environmental standards. Yukon College has created a new school of mining and technology and in the education plan it says it needs to renovate existing labs and create new ones for hydrology and geomatics.

I'm wondering if the minister, wearing either his Education or his minerals hat, can share with the House how he is working with the college to create such a cutting-edge school of mines?

Hon. Mr. Rouble: Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure to rise in response to this question. The Government of Yukon has taken a very proactive step in this area. We've worked with Yukoners, with First Nations, with stakeholders, and our employers on a labour market framework that has identified a strategy. I hear members opposite even promoting some of the strategies that have been developed through that. We've worked with Yukon College. We just have to look at our recent track record with Yukon College, with building campuses in Dawson and Pelly Crossing and, in conjunction with Justice,

putting in place the Northern Institute of Social Justice and expanding degree-granting programs at Yukon College.

The Yukon Party has a clear, proven track record of working with Yukon College to ensure that it is becoming a responsive institution, responding to the needs of students, to the opportunities in the territory, and to the territory as a whole. I look forward to continuing that relationship with Yukon College and with other education providers to ensure that Yukoners receive the access to training that they need to take advantage of Yukon opportunities.

Ms. Hanson: I just point out that the minister did not answer the question with respect to an investment in support of a cutting-edge school of mines. There are other mining schools in the country. I will file, for the interest of members, the course offered through northern Ontario through the Federated School of Mines. The list of courses on offer is extensive but it would take a huge investment to get up to that level. There are some things that we could offer that are unique. There are some really interesting avenues to train Yukoners for Yukon opportunities. The New Democrats believe that one way we can maximize the benefits to Yukon of the current mining boom is through making strategic, creative and leveraged investments in education.

Years ago, we put forward a proposal that we should be working with all stakeholders in developing a centre of excellence for mining reclamation at Faro, for example, to make the best use of that abandoned mine there. Has the minister looked into our suggestion, and can he make any comments on the feasibility of this idea?

Hon. Mr. Rouble: The Government of Yukon will take a very proactive approach to this issue. We will work to ensure that we continue to have a strong and thriving mining industry.

We'll continue to ensure that we take a balanced approach to the economy and to the environment. We'll continue to ensure that we have access to land that is rich in mineral resources, and we'll continue to provide training for Yukoners.

We only have to take a look at the initiatives the Yukon Party government has put in place in recent years, whether it's issues like putting increased residences in, so students from outside of Whitehorse can attend Yukon College, to increasing and indexing the student grant so Yukon students have access to more funding, whether they attend Yukon College here in Yukon or they attend an institution outside of our borders.

We look at the licensed practical nurse program or the home heating maintainer or the survey technician or access to the first two years of an arts or science degree. The Yukon Party government has a proven track record of providing assistance to Yukon students to help them achieve their educational dreams so they can become positive, contributing members of Yukon society.

Question re: Housing shortage

Mr. Cardiff: There's a shortage of affordable and adequate housing to fill the demands our communities have in front of them right now. This is due in large part to lack of planning, the lack of available land, the lack of a collaborative approach and the lack of political commitment.

The Yukon Anti-Poverty Coalition, employers, the Klondike Development Organization and many others have talked about the pressing need for more and better housing. The housing need here is depressing and it's dire. The government needs to work more closely with other levels of government, non-government organizations and even the private sector to address a gamut of identified needs and gaps. What is this government's plan to address the housing needs of this territory, considering there are huge tax breaks for corporations but little new money for housing in the federal budget?

Hon. Mr. Kenyon: There are actually two different aspects of the demands here. First of all, there is the increase in population after the mercifully short-lived Liberal government, which reduced our population between 10 and 15 percent. We have now recovered from that and have increased a good 10 or 15 percent above that. So the increased demand is certainly a big part of it. Much of what the member mentions is land availability and this sort of thing. That resides not only to one degree with the Yukon but also resides, to a large degree, with the municipalities that basically tell us what to develop and then we develop from there. So, if we don't have land to develop, that's part of it.

I certainly have to point out to the member opposite that, in terms of social housing at least, we have shown a 40-percent increase in social housing units. That's compared to the short-lived Liberal government and the previous two NDP governments, which produced no social housing whatsoever. They didn't even get a tent up in the backyard. I think we are making reasonable progress on some of these portfolios within the confines of problems that are really worldwide and involving many other governments.

Mr. Cardiff: As per usual, what we got was not an answer but blame and deflection. The average cost of a house in Whitehorse is \$400,000 and rising. The rental vacancy rate is 1.3 percent. A two-bedroom apartment, according to yesterday's newspaper, is in the \$1,200 range. Contrary to what the minister said, social housing units in downtown remain empty and the waiting list for this type of accommodation grows longer by the day. And contrary to what we heard earlier in Question Period — yesterday we heard in the media that students are having difficulty finding decent, affordable housing. We have a housing crisis in this city and many of our communities. All this government can do is criticize past governments; we just heard that. Rather than doing that or waiting for Ottawa to roll out more money or taking credit for Habitat for Humanity projects, when will this government take action to address the serious housing issues facing working people in the Yukon?

Hon. Mr. Kenyon: Again, for the member opposite, there are several aspects to that. There is the increase in population, which is a good thing. We are facing a housing shortage worldwide. I was reading a report yesterday that talks about, and I'll quote from it, "Still the housing prices continue to rise rapidly in many cities and the problem of housing affordability remains centre most in people's minds." That's a report from China, but we also have the problem right across the board, through Europe and through North America.

We have spent a lot of time working on social housing and trying to increase that. I think we've been very successful. We've certainly done much better than any other government in the last decade in working with municipalities, when we can free up some land — like Whistle Bend, a huge investment. It'll take a little bit longer to get it going, and I don't disagree with the member opposite that there are some housing challenges, particularly in rental accommodation. That's something that is more of a private sector than a public sector problem, but it is something that we can work with and something we will be working with in the future.

But it is something that we can work with and something that we will be working with in the future.

Mr. Cardiff: Well, now he's blaming the private sector. Yukon employers cannot attract workers if housing is not available, affordable or adequate. This government should be spearheading a coordinated approach, one that recognizes the many players and the responsibilities and opportunities, if it is serious about making a difference. Other governments are using a myriad of incentives and alternatives. This government needs to work more closely with First Nation governments, municipalities, non-government organizations and the private sector.

It needs to encourage more proposals like the one brought forward by the Northern City Supportive Coalition. It needs to provide more developed land to address the housing concerns raised by the Klondike Development Organization in Dawson City. It needs to update the *Landlord and Tenant Act* to compel landlords to provide safe, healthy rental accommodations.

When will this government show leadership by taking up the challenge made by non-government organizations, employers, and workers and pursue new —

Speaker: Thank you. Minister responsible, please.

Hon. Mr. Kenyon: Mr. Speaker, again, there are a number of different aspects to this question. Certainly when the federal government provided a very large chunk of money toward housing in general, \$32.5 million was turned over in a formula to First Nations for them to address some of their housing challenges.

Another challenge has been that the federal government — current and the last one, both political stripes — had defined housing for First Nations as on-reserve or off-reserve. Well, of course we don't have reserves, so we weren't eligible to have access to either pot of money until very recently.

We continue to work with these challenges. I'm glad to see that there's a group in Dawson that is looking at housing challenges up there. Again, one of the big problems there is land availability and I hope that the City of Dawson, as I suspect they will, works with this and other groups to provide land to build housing, because the land shortage is certainly a part of it. That's very much a municipal problem.

Question re: Asset-backed commercial paper investments

Mr. Fairclough: The Yukon Party's 2006 campaign platform asked Yukoners to imagine tomorrow. I'd like to ask Yukoners to imagine today. Imagine if this Yukon Party government hadn't misplaced \$36 million in asset-backed com-

mercial paper; imagine the bang that Yukoners could get for their buck if this government could still access this money. The F.H. Collins School, a new community recreation centre, more money to maintain health care services — these are just a few options that Yukoners could get for \$36 million. Instead, this government, with its poor financial planning, has ensured that these will remain imaginary.

In the fall of 2007, the Deputy Premier promised Yukoners, "What we will do is operate the government in a fiscally sound, responsible manner..."

Will the Deputy Premier explain why this government has broken this promise?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: The Deputy Premier, every member on this side of the House, will make no such explanation because it is not factual. The Liberals stand in this House and make statements like: the Yukon's broke; misplaced money — that has earned \$1.9 million already, plus other investments — we are pushing the \$20-million mark in earnings. I don't know how the Liberals come up with that not being sound financial management. I don't know how the Liberals can explain this to Yukoners: when the Yukon Party government took office, this territory had a financial capacity of around \$500 million. Today this territory has a capacity of over a billion dollars. It also has a balanced budget. It also has a savings account.

The Liberals have a real problem here. They are trying to reinvent and reconstruct history. The Yukon Party has been building the future financially, economically, environmentally, health-wise, socially, and the list goes on.

Mr. Fairclough: Mr. Speaker, we would like to hear from the Deputy Premier. In the fall of 2007, we asked the Deputy Premier if she supported the Premier's decision to invest \$36 million in asset-backed commercial paper. She told us, and I quote: "Our government — this government — prides itself on the very fine financial investments that we have been making over the last number of years."

Well, three and a half years later, the \$36 million of taxpayers' money that this government invested is still in limbo — unusable at this time. It isn't the Yukon Party's money. This belongs to Yukoners, and Yukoners trusted this government with their money, and this government, once again, let them down. I will ask the Deputy Premier: will she tell us that she still wholeheartedly supports the investment that this government made in asset-backed commercial paper, or is the Premier, once again, going to stand up and speak for her?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: Mr. Speaker, neither I nor anybody on this side of the House has to speak for another. They are very capable of speaking for themselves, and that is why the Yukon Party government, for nine years, has been delivering the goods to the Yukon public.

Let me give a quote from a report, Mr. Speaker. This has to do with a government making similar investments in previous years, dating back to 1989, 1990. This statement says, "We found that the government made investments in asset-backed commercial paper that were issued by trusts set up by non-banks in the past, dating back several years." Do you know who said that, Mr. Speaker? It was the Auditor General of Canada.

The Liberals have a real credibility problem. They can't even quote or represent the Auditor General's statements in writing factually.

Mr. Fairclough: None of those investments were ever frozen. This minister, this Premier, has a credibility problem here in the territory. In the fall of 2007, the Deputy Premier spoke of this government's so-called good investments and said, "As a result of those investment decisions and garnering a healthy financial surplus, we have been able to make those sound decisions and investments on the social side of the ledger..."

Since the statement was made, the government has had two consecutive deficits, has squandered the government's savings account down to almost nothing, and broken its promise to make major social investments, such as development of a homeless shelter. Does the Deputy Premier accept that this bad investment has meant delays in many worthwhile projects? We want to hear from the Deputy Premier.

Hon. Mr. Fentie: The Member for Mayo-Tatchun has just stated that the Yukon Party government has spent down the savings account to almost nothing. Can the Liberals add? If you look at the budget before this House, it shows the savings account at some \$43 million. The Liberals call that nothing? You know what else is really problematic with their statements? The only other jurisdiction in Canada that can demonstrate a savings account of any kind is Alberta. The Liberals do have a credibility problem and it's a big one. They can't even read the budget documents factually. Their presentation to Yukoners is, in fact, incorrect.

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

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

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

Motion agreed to

Speaker leaves the Chair

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Chair (Mr. Nordick): Order please. Committee of the Whole will now come to order. The matter before the Committee is Bill No. 24, *First Appropriation Act, 2011-12*. We'll now proceed with general debate on Vote 7, Department of Economic Development. Do members wish a recess?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

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

Recess

Chair: Order please.

Bill No. 24: *First Appropriation Act, 2011-12* — continued

Chair: The matter before the Committee is Bill No. 24, *First Appropriation Act, 2011-12*. We will now proceed with general debate in Vote 7, Department of Economic Development.

Department of Economic Development

Hon. Mr. Kenyon: It gives me great pleasure to rise, so to speak, today to discuss the budget of the Department of Economic Development for 2011-12. The Department of Economic Development has a mandate to develop a sustainable and competitive Yukon economy to enrich the quality of life of all Yukoners and to pursue economic initiatives with a shared vision of prosperity, partnerships and innovation, and to forge partnerships with First Nations in the economic development of the territory.

Economic Development's primary responsibilities are to develop and maintain a sustainable and competitive Yukon economy to enrich the quality of life for all Yukoners; pursue economic initiatives with a shared vision of prosperity, partnerships and innovation; to forge, maintain and expand partnerships with the First Nations in the economic development of the Yukon; to work in partnership with First Nations and others initiating or implementing regional economic plans; and proactively administer the community development fund.

The department is a valued partner and advocate in the building of a sustainable and diversified economy, focusing on prosperity for all Yukoners while remaining cognizant of social and environmental needs. In order to ensure Yukon's economy remains prosperous and diversified, the department continues to enable strategic and responsible economic projects. We strive to increase the benefits derived from these projects and activities to all Yukoners, First Nations and communities, and we work to enhance the competitiveness of Yukon's business environment in order to attract increased investment nationally and internationally.

Within our strategic goals are the following key priorities and initiatives.

In the development of mining and other resource development projects we will work with industry and with the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources on a coordinated approach to development and to continue and expand investment attraction and export development initiatives.

To facilitate the development of tourism-related projects, we will work with industry and the Department of Tourism and Culture in a coordinated approach to attract investment and to develop external investment pathways and markets.

In the development of research, innovation and commercialization we will work with Yukon College, industry and other partners in a coordinated approach to industry development, identify and examine opportunities to enhance innovation and commercialization of Yukon-based technologies in key areas of focus, such as ICT, renewable energy, cold climate, climate change and natural resources technology, and we will

continue to support the Yukon Cold Climate Innovation Centre and Yukon Technology Innovation Centre.

In the development of filmmakers and sound recording artists, we will work with members of the film and sound industries to target export markets, provide professional development opportunities for filmmakers and sound recording artists, and to support film and sound industry associations in their efforts to further the careers of film and sound industry members.

To maximize the growth of Yukon's small and medium enterprises, we will support entrepreneurial development, identify and examine regional business opportunities, work with export-ready companies to target external investors and markets, facilitate, advise and provide support to businesses, First Nations development corporations and start-ups, and support chambers of commerce and industry associations on issues of common interest. To create and enhance economic and community opportunities, we will identify, assess and communicate the economic benefits and business opportunities arising from industry development projects. We will work with the business community, including First Nation development corporations and businesses, to ensure that communities have the opportunity to secure local benefits and provide support to non-governmental organizations to address challenges and to take advantages of opportunities.

To support First Nations' economic development, we will work with First Nations and First Nation development corporations to enhance their organizational capacity for economic development. We will support the development of regional, First Nation and community economic development plans and initiatives. To create and enhance economic and community opportunities, we will work with communities, First Nation governments, municipalities and others to create economic opportunities and strengthen social and community networks by funding projects with sustainable benefits.

Through the community development fund, we will work to improve the standard of living, social capacity, cooperation and community involvement in Yukon communities with the aim of benefiting communities' well-being and we will work with communities to enable them to identify and pursue economic activities that will provide them with long-term, sustainable economic benefits.

To market Yukon as a place to live, work and invest, we will promote Yukon's strategic and competitive advantages, participate in trade shows and missions in priority sectors and target markets and we will develop, implement, evaluate and refine investment promotion initiatives and programs.

To advance Yukon's economic development interests through intergovernmental forums, we will work with Canada, provinces and territories to advance open trade relationships within the federation, to recognize Yukon's economic development requirements.

We will continue to participate as a member of the Invest Canada-Community Initiatives by participating and supporting in-bound and out-bound foreign direct investment activities. We will work with Canada to represent Yukon's interests in international trade negotiations and agreement implementation.

We will enhance relationships with trading partners through participation in common initiatives and, also, we will advocate on behalf of industries to ensure Yukon funding requirements are included in national funding programs.

To develop policies and strategies to guide Yukon government's economic development activities, we will monitor, evaluate, and report on business and economic trends, issues and opportunities affecting the Yukon. We will assist in development of a competitive business environment; develop and implement programs that support the start-up, expansion and growth of Yukon businesses; support capacity and workforce development; and we will review Economic Development programs and services to ensure they're effective and competitive.

We will continue to work cooperatively with our partners in northern economic development — Canada's Northern Economic Development Agency, known as CanNor, the Pacific NorthWest Economic Region, or PNWER, First Nations and municipal governments — to understand each other's priorities and objectives. We are committed to working together with these agencies on programs and services that respond to the unique needs and strategic priorities related to Yukon's economy.

To support the ongoing work of the Department of Economic Development, we are introducing a total capital budget of \$1.526 million and a total operation and maintenance budget of \$14.25 million, for 2011-12. We do hope we actually get a chance to debate that budget today.

Attracting external investment is critical to Yukon's economic growth and diversification. Investment enables Yukon businesses to expand operations, pursue new opportunities and explore potential. The department's investment attraction strategy continues to guide the development of a diversified private sector economy, while focusing on key areas of opportunity. The department has worked diligently to develop Yukon's reputation internationally and has continued to spread the message that Yukon has a wealth of opportunities across a variety of sectors.

Yukon is strategically located and has resources that fit the type of global demand generated by foreign markets. Our mineral deposits of copper, lead, zinc, tungsten, and iron ore are some of the largest in the world. The continuance of our working-relationship building through travel to Asia, hosting inbound investors in Yukon and attending trade shows, has led to significant investments by Chinese companies in Yukon-based projects. I should mention, of course, that there has also been investment from Korea and from other companies.

This relationship building has taken place over time and we are now beginning to see the results. Six significant deals between Yukon-based companies and Asian investors have been announced since October 2007. Yukon-Nevada Gold Corp. and China-based Northwest Non-Ferrous International Investment Co. Ltd. completed a \$3-million agreement to form Yukon-Shaanxi Mining Co. Inc. and a new Canadian company, which will explore for and develop mineral resources in Yukon.

New Pacific Metals Corp. recently acquired all remaining issued and outstanding shares of Tagish Lake Gold Corporation, making the company a wholly owned subsidiary of New Pacific. Korea Zinc Company Ltd., through its wholly-owned subsidiary Pan Pacific Metal Mining Corporation, recently purchased shares and warrants from Selwyn Resources valued at approximately \$5 million. China Mining Resources Group Ltd. has purchased approximately 14.6 percent of the shares of Selwyn Resources, representing an investment of over \$6 million in that company. Selwyn Resources and Yunnan Chihong Zinc & Germanium Co. Ltd. recently completed a \$100 million joint-venture transaction to advance Yukon's Selwyn project to bankable feasibility and, if warranted, to production with Yunnan and Selwyn each holding 50 percent of the new company.

The details of this transaction were previously announced on December 14, 2009, and again clarified on March 2 of 2010. The Selwyn project in eastern Yukon is one of the largest undeveloped zinc and lead deposits in the world. Yukon Zinc's Wolverine project was purchased by Jinduicheng Molybdenum Group and Northwest Non-Ferrous International Investment Company for approximately \$101 million. Yukon Zinc committed approximately \$155 million toward construction expenditures for 2009 and additional \$100 million for 2010.

These are examples of how the investment attraction efforts of the department are leading to new investment capital, critical to the growth of a wealth-generating industry.

Economic Development plans a key role in investment attraction by making introductions to potential investors and facilitating the development of business relationships. Yukon is focused on ensuring that Yukoners and Yukon businesses share in the secondary benefits generated by development in the mining and other industries. By ensuring this, we are helping to strengthen the private sector economy, especially in rural Yukon.

Increasing Yukon's share of benefits generated from these industry developments, as well as supporting First Nation economic development, is an important step toward diversifying Yukon's economy. The department seeks to optimize industrial benefits through supplier development initiatives to increase the number of local suppliers, procurement initiatives to increase their success in bidding on work, and working with stakeholders and partners on education and training initiatives to increase the number of local employees.

Another priority is to support the development of strategic infrastructure required for economic development in Yukon. Demands on Yukon's infrastructure base are set to intensify because of the development of the natural resource sector, an increased interest in infrastructure development from companies considering development in Yukon, and growth in the research, innovation and commercialization sector.

Improvements are necessary to all economic infrastructure areas, including energy, transportation, telecommunications and municipal infrastructure. Infrastructure enables social and industrial capacity and lays the foundation for economic growth. Improving national and international transportation and

trade links will lead to more business opportunities, jobs for Yukoners and a higher quality of life.

If we now take a look at regional economic development, with Yukon First Nations setting their economic priorities and playing the lead role in their economic futures, the Department of Economic Development works to support them from early planning stages through implementation. Our activities include: assistance in building capable institutions of governance; capability development and capacity development; assisting with the development of strategic direction, including strategic planning and economic development planning; assisting with the development of policies that support economic development; opportunity identification and project selection; assisting with the development of high level feasibility studies; and implementation of these plans and studies.

Some of the highlights of the budget — I'd like to highlight some of the many activities the department identified in our 2011-12 budget, which I hope we get into. The department will continue to administer a variety of funding programs to support the diversification of Yukon's economy. Yukon government's continued investment in business industry and capital projects supports long-term, sustainable economic growth. For instance, the Department of Economic Development supports the growth of Yukon business activity by allocating \$375,000 into the enterprise trade fund. With a focus on small- and medium-sized businesses, this program is designed to stimulate and support market growth, business development and export revenues. Through this fund, eligible Yukon businesses involved in export-related operations may receive assistance to conduct activities that open new markets, develop and expand existing markets, and implement projects that develop business activities while not creating unfair competition within the existing local Yukon market. The enterprise trade fund is available to all Yukon businesses, both for profit and not for profit, as well as business-related organizations and industry associations. The program supports marketing and export projects that enhance the likelihood of Yukon businesses generating increased production and sales of Yukon products. Most importantly, all of the projects funded by the enterprise trade fund require a meaningful investment by the companies and organizations themselves, essentially doubling the investment in promoting Yukon products, services and opportunities.

The department continues its ongoing partnerships with the industry stakeholder groups to help Yukon businesses develop and maintain a competitive advantage in external markets. Stakeholders such as the Yukon Chamber of Commerce help us to raise the profile of Yukon businesses and the services and products they can offer to both inside and outside markets.

Another program is the business incentive program. The department continues its support of the business community through the business incentive program with a budget allotment of more than \$1 million. This program offers rebates to businesses that hire Yukoners, use Yukon manufactured goods, and hire apprentices and Yukon youth to work on eligible Yukon government projects.

So that begins to get us into some of the programs that are involved in the budget that we are discussing today. I look for-

ward to continuing this with further discussion in a few moments.

Mr. McRobb: I thank the hard-working officials in the department for the excellent work they're doing, including the two who are with us today.

In listening to the minister's opening, prepared speech, one would perhaps conclude he was the mining minister because most of what he had to say pertained to the mining industry. We know the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources has responsibility for mining in the territory. Yesterday afternoon we were debating that department. Today, for some reason, the Yukon Party switched up and postponed debate on Energy, Mines and Resources and chose instead to bring forward the Department of Economic Development. Now that's fine, Mr. Chair. That is the government side's prerogative, and we're used to sudden change-ups in the agenda on this side of the House without any consultation. So we will debate this department today, although the minister did talk mostly about mining.

We don't take issue with this department's budget. What we do take issue with are some of the outrageous claims this minister has made, especially with respect to taking credit for all the Chinese investment into Yukon mining companies and mining properties. According to the minister, he was single-handedly responsible for this Chinese investment as a result of his numerous trips to China.

We still don't know the price tag of the minister's excursions to China because he won't show us his expenses. I wonder why? What's in that fortune cookie anyway?

With respect to Chinese investment in the Yukon, there are several ways to look at this issue. I suppose the first thing would be Chinese investment in the territory is good because it advances properties, creates jobs and helps our economy grow but, as we add to that list, we're going to start hearing concerns and perhaps other suggestions.

I want to pass on some advice to the minister and his colleagues that we picked up at the recent Mineral Exploration Roundup in Vancouver. In particular, I want to share part of a very interesting discussion we had during a meeting with the principals of a Yukon mining company. For the record, these people have substantial experience related to mining in the Yukon. This was also something we picked up from others.

These mining executives questioned this government's priorities with respect to marketing the territory's mineral properties and essentially scoffed at this minister's approach, his obsession, in travelling to China to market Yukon mining properties and companies. Let me clarify. The issue here is not with marketing in China. It's the sole focus on marketing in China.

Now, the minister recited a list of six fairly recent investments. I might be wrong on this, because I had to be quick in this analysis, but it appeared to me that five out of the six were from China. These experienced mining executives know what they're talking about. I don't think anybody is going to dispute that. They said China is well aware of any mining property that shows promising potential. They said governments don't need to market those properties because the Chinese already know

about them. These experts also said the Yukon government would be much better off sharing some of its marketing resources and dealing with some of the other countries in the world with reputable mining experience. These other countries included Germany and Australia. These executives also explicitly suggested there are some large mining companies that should be target-marketed, such as the Rio Tintos of the world.

Underlying these suggestions and recommendations from mining experts is the realization that the Chinese have become very skilled in their negotiation techniques, and it has become very difficult for mining companies in the western world to adapt to these techniques. It's difficult to put this on the record, especially to this minister who may choose to spin it into some political attack, trying to claim the Liberals are now anti-Chinese. Well, let's call that bluff right now, Mr. Chair. We are not.

I am standing here relaying information on to the record that I have picked up as a result of meetings with mining executives in Vancouver this past January — a trip, by the way, that was paid for by Yukon taxpayers, so I feel an added obligation to report these findings today.

If the minister cares to check, the receipts for my trip are all publicly available in the Yukon Legislative Assembly office, much unlike his ministerial travel receipts, which he refuses to provide. So it's a difficult subject to raise on the floor of the Assembly, but I felt the compulsion to do it because I feel it is the right thing to do. This matter concerns a lot of executives and people associated with Yukon mining companies. They have followed the Chinese investments into mining companies and properties in the western world since it started happening in recent years. What has happened is that, at the beginning, there were some fantastic deals for the owners of those properties, but not any more.

The Chinese learned very quickly how to negotiate. They learned very quickly how to gain the best advantage in the negotiations. You know, what we heard over and over again from these mining experts — they conveyed to us their experiences. I see the Deputy Premier has now advised the minister that yes, indeed, he should attack us by saying the Liberals are now anti-Chinese. Well, I think I already put that on to the record. This is not the position of the Liberal Party. This is not the position of the Assembly. I am merely conveying this on the floor of the House because I feel somebody should have the courage to do it.

Now, back to the examples that were relayed to me. There is a lot of frustration felt within the mining circles that once they feel an agreement has been reached, suddenly they find out it hasn't. There's a new group that is brought in and they have to renegotiate down from the previously agreed-to position. This happens continuously until the point where it's barely worthwhile to sign on the dotted line. Let's bring this back to the Yukon Territory, because I think it's fair to say that people in our territory want to maximize the benefits for the people in our territory, both today and into the future. Yesterday afternoon, we had a discussion on negotiating mineral royalties. That's the same argument. There is a good argument to be made for the owners of properties and companies in the ter-

ritory that are being marketed abroad, and that is to get the best deal possible. Well, in the early days, China was the main target. China had the money. China had the desire and China had the need for the commodities.

There was quite a bit of attention given to China by governments in the western world but that's indeed changing as people become more aware of the improved negotiating positions of the Chinese and their tougher bargaining and the delayed negotiation processes that I've already talked about.

These mining experts went on with all kinds of examples. They talked about the need to focus on some of these other countries and especially the need to focus on some of the huge mining companies in the world like Rio Tinto. One reason for that is these other countries and big mining companies have what the mining community refers to as well-established, reputable standards that we're used to in the western world.

On that, I would like to begin by asking the minister if he would, in his marketing exploits, give more attention to these other countries and big mining companies rather than what seems to be a sole focus on China?

Hon. Mr. Kenyon: Certainly, the overall goal of the investment attraction strategy of the department is to help enable development of a diversified private sector economy while focusing on investment-ready sectors and maximizing benefits to small and medium-sized enterprises. Current investment-ready sectors include film and sound, mining, tourism, research innovation, commercialization, and small and medium enterprises. The approach to investment attraction within the department includes marketing and investment promotion, initiatives, research, policies and incentives, and communications activities.

The strategy focuses on key markets in North America, including British Columbia, Alberta, Alaska, as well as European and Asian markets.

For the member opposite, I'll add to his list: while we have had very, very good success in China, we have also had many discussions with some success and some ongoing discussions with Korea — specifically, of course, South Korea — Japan, Brazil, India, Germany, France, the United Kingdom, the United States, Switzerland, Australia and a number of South American countries. We don't negotiate business deals. This is how far the member opposite is off. We put the companies together and they do their own negotiating and their own deals. If the member opposite seriously thinks that we negotiate private sector deals, he is very sorely mistaken.

The success of Yukon's major projects is dependent on outside investment. The department continues to market Yukon as an attractive investment destination that boasts unique advantages. The department invests annually in initiatives that attract Asian investors. Most successfully, six significant deals that I mentioned before have been announced. This investment has assisted in over \$460 million of investment to Yukon companies to date. I would argue that most of those companies, having arrived here, have invested more and that the figures might actually be starting to push the \$1 billion range.

We do work closely with the departments of Energy, Mines and Resources, Executive Council Office, Tourism and

Culture, Education, as well as Yukon College. But the member opposite has made a few very erroneous statements here. First of all, when the member opposite claims that I have refused to provide travel receipts — perhaps he should pay more attention in this House because they are tabled in this House on a regular basis — ministerial travel as well as MLA travel. Perhaps he could go back and dig through the clutter on his desk and see if he could find those things that have been tabled.

I am chuckling a little here because the member opposite talks about anonymous sources, and that sort of reminds me of one thing that I had heard about — I got this information from a reliable source. It came from a friend of a friend whose cousin is dating a girl whose brother knows this guy whose wife knows this lady because the husband buys hotdogs from the guy who knows the shoeshine, and it goes on and on. Therefore, it has to be true.

Again, the government has to deal with fact and data. The opposition doesn't seem to have that requirement or that need to keep things factual, and that's disappointing.

The member opposite was talking about how the Liberals might do things differently and would like to see things done differently. Perhaps that explains Bill No. 58, which effectively disbanded the Department of Economic Development. They had such a marvellous idea to develop economic development in the Yukon, they disbanded the department and scattered the staff to the winds. That seems to me to be poorly advised; it is up to others to judge and I'm sure others will judge, but I think that's a rather limited and very terrible way to deal with things.

Now in terms of travel, these are all tabled in the House, and if the member opposite would dig around on his desk, I'm sure he'll be able to find those. April 1, 2010 to December 4, 2010 — a total of \$32,910.07 toward travel — that's not just China; that's to a wide variety of places, be it Vancouver; Kelowna; Barrow, Alaska; Anchorage, Alaska; Ottawa, to meet with the federal government there; Quebec City; Calgary — a wide variety of travel. So that's a pretty good bang for the buck, especially when you consider that we got — depending on how you look at it — between \$500 million and \$1 billion of return for that. I would say that's a pretty good return.

The member opposite seems to have trouble understanding some of the investments as they pertain to the Department of Finance. But you know, maybe that one is a little more dramatic and he can work that one out. The member opposite claims that we have only mining, and I've already discussed the business incentive program and the enterprise trade fund. Let's look at some of the other programs the department has.

We're continuing to support Dana Naye Ventures' micro loan program that provides modest but meaningful support to entrepreneurs with innovative business ideas. There are no other programs in Yukon that provide this type of support to small business. It's an innovative approach that encourages and supports Yukon entrepreneurs who are launching new businesses. The department makes contributions to various business-related organizations to support small- and medium-sized business export, expansion and marketing initiatives.

If we then look at research and innovation and commercialization, the Yukon government continues to support re-

search, innovation and commercialization, thus helping to increase the economic diversity of Yukon and encourage growth in Yukon's manufacturing and knowledge-based sectors.

Yukon Cold Climate Innovation Centre continues to develop projects in applied research in cold climate technologies and other related technologies with interest to Yukon. The geographic realities of Yukon and the changing climate of the north make new and innovative solutions necessary. The centre's research and development fund has invested in local projects, creating innovative solutions to the challenges we face in the Yukon.

Economic Development is contributing over \$550,000 in funding for operational support for the centre and innovation projects. In addition, funding for the Yukon Cold Climate Innovation Centre is provided by a contribution agreement with Yukon College through the northern strategy trust program, consisting of \$125,000 per year for three years, starting in 2010-11. This will also support innovation projects. I think most of us are aware of the fact — once we sort of look at it critically and in a more evolved way — that while we perhaps have the least to do with the creation of the problem, we certainly take the brunt of the results of the problem. So it's important that we look at cold climate innovation, how to mitigate the results of climate change and mitigate all of the problems that we see here with the effect on permafrost and changing environment and changing animals, as well as flora.

The centre is a partnership between applied researchers, industry and government and is dedicated to developing and commercializing sustainable, cold climate technologies for use in the Yukon, as well as for export markets. The centre is open to a variety of potential projects, specifically in the area of cold climate, as previously mentioned, permafrost effects on transportation corridors, building construction, renewable energy, climate change, and those that address geotechnical challenges. The centre has a permanent home located in the main campus of Yukon College in Whitehorse and, as well, Yukon government continues to support the Yukon Technology Innovation Centre and its applicant-driven projects in the amount of \$235,000. The Technology Innovation Centre is now housed within the Yukon Cold Climate Innovation Centre to take advantage of the synergies between the two programs. The department's total contribution to these programs is \$793,000.

There is also the strategic industries development fund. In addition to the innovation and technology sector, Yukon's other key economic sectors include natural resources and tourism. These industries initiate strategic projects that will generate wealth and act as catalysts for development and generate secondary business opportunities. These projects support the government's stated goal to strengthen and diversify Yukon's economy.

The Department of Economic Development's strategic industries development fund will continue to provide significant support to these sectors with \$800,000 this year allocated in the operation and maintenance budget. The strategic industries development fund provides assistance to identify and assess emerging opportunities, including the preparation of scoping

studies, feasibility studies and business planning. It's also, in a broader range, investment promotion and marketing. As I mentioned before, the department's efforts to attract investment to Yukon is really paying off, and it's starting to pay off big time.

Recent support of outbound missions in Canada, United States, Europe, Hong Kong — I didn't mention that in the list before — in partnership with industry has stimulated interest and investment in Yukon companies through the capital markets. We have allotted \$534,000 in this budget, which will represent a variety of activities including marketing, promoting, facilitating events and conferences, websites and consulting services in order to raise awareness of Yukon's investment opportunities, and support initiatives that facilitate foreign direct investment deals.

I'll give you a good example of some of the successes on that. I had the good opportunity to be invited out to dinner by a film production company that had just flown in from Los Angeles and I was rather pleased to be told right off the top, "We're not here looking for sites. We're not here looking to see if we want to come to the Yukon. The familiarization tours showed us what you had. We are up here to make final decisions on filming locations and we're here to make a movie."

The fact that we had such equipment and such incredibly trained staff and people within the film and sound industry means that they didn't have to bring a lot of people in to do the work. The people here are quite capable of it. There was nothing more obvious than the Cold Snap film festival about a week ago up at the Beringia Centre, which was attended by the NDP. I didn't see any others of the Official Opposition there, but it's too bad because they missed a very good example and good demonstration of what some our people are capable of. That was the people that were just starting out. They were mentored by the people who had been more active in the industry.

You can take a turn and look at the regional economic development fund. In our efforts to assist Yukon communities and First Nations to fully benefit from the economic activities of the regions, we are allocating \$405,000 to the regional economic development fund and its administration. This fund provides financial support to foster regional and community economic development. The fund was established in recognition of the need for effective coordination of planning and economic development efforts by all parties with regional economic interests.

Funding activities have included support for economic development planning, capacity development, opportunity identification, and associated research needs assessments and training plans in general. The strength in this funding program lies in the fact that it supports a variety of stakeholders, including First Nations and municipalities.

Another fund which our government reinstated, after a real challenge in having previous governments try to either destroy it or limit it, is the community development fund. This is another avenue in which the department supports a variety of stakeholders through the community development fund, which is a program that's very widely known throughout the commu-

nities. One change in that fund that I was very happy to suggest and the department agreed to was that we have the community development fund staff go out to the communities and actually present this within the rural communities to show what can be done, rather than think that they can just simply pick it up from a website or simply make contacts and have to come into Whitehorse to do the research on that.

So the primary goal of the community development fund is to support projects that provide long-term well-being and bring social or economic benefits to Yukon communities. The fund's projects continue to create employment, continue to generate local spending, continue to develop usable skills, and continue to enhance the Yukon's physical and social infrastructure.

We've allocated \$3.3 million to the community development fund and its administration. The community development fund contributes substantially to the health of rural Yukon communities by giving community members an opportunity to network, to share and to participate in strengthening their neighbourhoods and organizations. This fund fosters cooperation, partnerships and collaboration among groups and emphasizes the importance of recreation and training for Yukon people.

I mentioned in passing a moment ago the Yukon Film and Sound Commission, and the department continues to work to diversify the economy in the cultural industries. While I haven't looked up the statistic most recently, the last time I looked it up, which wasn't that long ago, when you look at the average Canadian spending on film, sound, culture, recreation, including sports, the Yukon government was spending close to 10 times the national average. Not a bad average, and we are very happy to do that because I think it really does add to the diversification of the economy.

We are very fortunate to have such an incredibly talented and vibrant film and sound recording industry. Another statistic — again, it was awhile ago that I saw it — was that one in every 1,000 Yukoners had produced a commercial CD. It's scary when you look at some of the other jurisdictions in Canada and expand that out on a population basis into Vancouver, Toronto, Calgary and such — you understand what a vibrant film and sound group that we have here.

The Film and Sound Commission administers six different film-funding programs aimed at meeting the diverse needs of this industry, for which \$660,000 has been budgeted. The film industry in Yukon continues to be strong, providing Yukoners with employment and training opportunities. A bit of a surprise, going around through Porter Creek North — my riding — is the number of people within Porter Creek North who are involved in the film and sound-recording industry. It's incredibly important to my riding and, I suspect, to most ridings.

The Department of Economic Development was approved for \$635,000 over the 2009-10 and 2010-11 fiscal years from the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency, or CanNor, and that was done through the community adjustment fund to produce 13 webisodes — commercials to advertise Yukon as a premiere wilderness and snow film association. The Government of Yukon contributed approximately \$150,000 to

the project. It's a great opportunity, as Yukon has a great deal to offer this industry in terms of our dependable snow — sometimes a little too dependable, but you know, we take what we can get — spectacular wilderness, long daylight hours — getting longer all the time — and our unique settings and surroundings.

The project provided employment and mentorship opportunities for approximately 40 members of Yukon's film industry. The webisodes are modern and effective in reaching filmmakers around the world and they're being showcased via the Internet and at film trade events, really, across Canada and internationally. I invite people to look at www.yukonic.com and they can see a wide variety of these and what has been done.

We also have shows of these episodes running in Times Square in New York City to attract people within the film industry in New York to come and look at the webisodes online and to get people involved in that. So I suspect that there should be a good draw to the economy out of that. But, again, the main thing that most people aren't aware of is the fact that that was done as a training exercise as well. So the number of people we have trained and put on the ground — the recent visit by Discovery Channel for some filming in the Dawson and Klondike area — they were quite surprised to find the number of people that we had here who were trained. They don't have to bring in people from the Outside. They can employ Yukoners because they are very, very good and very well trained and excellent at what they do.

With those comments, perhaps the member opposite will have a better understanding of what the department does. I realize since the Liberals in the last government destroyed the Department of Economic Development that this may be a new concept to them. So anything else I can do to help, I would be more than happy to do that.

Mr. McRobb: Another 20-minute speech, mostly on matters that weren't even asked about. I won't bother rating that response like I did yesterday, because it would be a negative. Now, is this the same government that blames us on the opposition side for not fully debating the budget by the conclusion of a sitting? Is this the same government that spends 20 minutes going on and on about matters that weren't even asked about? Is this the same government that refused to have a longer sitting than 30 days, yet it blames the opposition parties for not being more diligent in debating the budget? I think it is, Mr. Chair — little surprise.

In listening to the minister about 15 minutes ago and his comments on the previous Liberal government, it hit me again that the minister just couldn't help himself — he had to resort to his old standby of attacking a previous government that has no members in this Assembly to defend itself. One would presume he launched that attack in the guise of accountability. Well, that particular government, for this minister's awareness, was held accountable about nine years ago by Yukon voters, so what's the issue today?

Now, let's see how accountable this minister is willing to be for his own actions. I think this is more topical, rather than

going back three elections. People deserve to know about this minister's accountability.

There is an outstanding matter from an issue that infuriated many Yukoners. They would like an answer before they go to the polls later this year so they can better pass judgment on the record of this Yukon Party government and, in fact, the record of this minister. The Premier's November 7, 2008, letter to ATCO's CEO and president said, "I have discussed your proposal for partnering on a new entity for electrical generation, transmission and distribution in Yukon with the Government of Yukon Caucus and have full approval to proceed." This minister is part of the Yukon government caucus and was part of that caucus back in November 2008. So, did this minister give his full approval to proceed? Yes or no?

Hon. Mr. Kenyon: To correct the member opposite when he talks about discussing matters that were not even asked, according to my notes, they were very definitely asked in terms of diversification of the economy, areas other than mining, et cetera, et cetera. It's important that we get correct information on the record for that.

I do understand that the member opposite, as he says, that the previous Liberal government — the shortest lived majority government in the history of the Commonwealth of Nations; a record that maybe they are proud of, maybe they're not — I don't know; they'll have to have those discussions — the government that put us into double-digit inflation, double-digit unemployment, with a 10- to 15-percent loss of population who headed south — as one member put it, with the teary little eyes of the children in the back window watching as they headed south; the first election that I participated in to knock on doors to find mostly single mothers whose husbands were down in the oilpatch working so that they could try to stay here — the previous government decided that the best way to develop the economy was to wipe out the Department of Economic Development by Bill No. 58. I could go on and on.

None of the current members were part of that, but again, when you get into politics, you look at where you want to go and what you want to do. It would appear that the members opposite hopefully did their research, hopefully were aware of what had happened during that time period and said, "Boy, I want to be a part of that. I want to really get involved in that. I think that's a good idea that we should develop the economy by wiping out the very people who are enshrined to do it."

We think that it's probably a good idea that, in that shortest lived majority government in the history of the Commonwealth of Nations, they fired 11 deputy ministers. Boy, is that a block of votes that they're going to go after in this next election. I think there are a lot of people a bit nervous about that — who have called officials as giving untrue, non-factual information, because he reads minds, he reads body language and all of that. I mean, this is getting really quite silly. There is another group of people I suspect really aren't going to be too interested, because they're looking and saying, "If the Liberal government gets in the next time, the Liberal Party gets in, what have we got to look forward to? How are the ministers of the day going to treat us?" They're getting a really good exposure of what's going to happen in that.

I think that's kind of scary when you look at some of the background on that and what has happened, but I do want to get back to the budget and I do want to get back to the Department of Economic Development, where we're one of two jurisdictions in all of Canada that have money in the bank — it includes the federal government.

We have the lowest reported unemployment rate. Several people on this side have said the lowest in Canada. I'll correct them on that. We have the lowest reported unemployment rate in North America. I would say that's pretty good. That's what we do. What did the Liberals do? Double-digit unemployment — they had to float a line of credit from the banks in order to keep the salaries of government employees up because they didn't have the money in the coffers to deal with that. That's how they dealt with it.

The members opposite — they weren't here; that's true. But they said, "Boy, we want to be a part of that." I'll give them credit. Maybe they said, "We want to go back and we want to correct that." So let's hear how they want to correct it. Well, they don't want to follow the land use planning. They've already come out with things that are totally contrary to chapter 11 in the final agreement, and that's kind of sad. I think there are a lot of people nervous about that one.

I could go on and on, and I'm quite prepared to, but I think maybe we should get back to some of the things that are going on in this economy and some of the things that are happening and what we have within this budget. It's obvious the member opposite doesn't really want to talk about the budget; it's not a favourite of his.

I'll call a point of order for the member opposite since he seems to be bouncing up quite a bit.

Chair: Are you finished?

Hon. Mr. Kenyon: Either that, or perhaps the Sergeant-at-Arms should check to see if he has a medical problem over there.

Chair's statement

Chair: Order please. I would encourage members to refrain from personal comments. The budget debate today has been going quite well.

Mr. Kenyon, are you finished? No? Mr. Kenyon, has the floor.

Hon. Mr. Kenyon: Thank you. No, I want to get back to the budget and talk about some of the marvellous things that are in this budget that our department has crafted.

We're showcasing the webisodes, as I was mentioning before, via the Internet — www.yukonic.com — and that will be promoted as well outside of Canada in Times Square.

Now, the Yukon sound recording industry also continues to grow as professionals develop their talents. "One in a thousand" is the last statistic I saw of Yukoners who have produced a commercial CD, and that's an incredible record in this jurisdiction. They continue to expand their portfolios, with assistance from the various programs of the Film and Sound Commission, and market their musical products across Canada and around the world. For a little jurisdiction like this, I think we have two Juno awards.

We have one musician who, when I do travel in China, is considered a superstar in China and Taiwan and through much of Asia. It's interesting that, when I had the very good opportunity to meet Canada's ambassador to China, the very first thing out of his mouth was: did I know Matthew Lien and would I say hi to him? That's the kind of reputation that Yukon musicians have internationally.

The department's sound recordings program provides Yukon musicians with financial support to create professional demos and CD recordings. The 2011-12 budget allocation for this program is \$50,000. There is an event called BreakOut West, and I had the very good fortune to be able to go down and attend that — to the Western Canadian Music Awards conference and festival in Kelowna. It was quite fascinating. We will be hosting that this year. So not only are we hosting musicians Canada-wide, it will likely be broadcast on CBC and bring more attention to the Yukon and hopefully assist the Department of Tourism and Culture in their very good work. Of course, if people remember back last year, it was the Liberal opposition that kept being critical that our tourism was falling apart and we are up 10 percent right now — I think 13 in some of them. So that criticism didn't really work out too well for them. Again — not factual. Let's deal with fact and not with fantasy.

As I mentioned, BreakOut West is an annual opportunity for members of the western Canadian music industry to showcase their performances and to attend workshops and panels and to network and participate in the awards gala. That took a few minutes to get used to: going to some of the venues in Kelowna and watching the events and the people and realizing that you're not necessarily only dealing with a bar or a venue where someone is performing, but that the majority of the people in the audience are producers, event coordinators and organizers, and festival organizers and on and on and on. So it's an incredible chance to really showcase.

I had the good opportunity to present the awards for the Western Canadian Music Awards in the classical category and had a marvellous discussion with some of the principal people in that group, who were concerned about where they would perform in Whitehorse. We sat there and talked for some time about the Yukon Arts Centre and the acoustics and everything else, and they're very pleased and very happy to come back up now. So it's a networking opportunity.

Economic Development has identified \$335,000 in the 2011-12 fiscal year for preliminary costs for support of BreakOut West 2011, of which \$245,000 is recoverable from the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency, or CanNor. By supporting the film and sound recording industry, we're in a situation of positioning the Yukon and its people to be competitive in the national and international marketplace.

The Yukon government continues to work cooperatively with the Yukon film industry in order to provide Yukoners with employment and training opportunities. So if we look at the outlook of where we're going — since we have a Department of Economic Development, we have that ability to look forward as well as backward to see where we stand and where we're going in the future — mining development spending for

2010 is estimated at over \$150 million. It might even go higher, if you start looking at what's on the net and what's being planned. Mineral exploration expenditures for 2010 are now expected to exceed the 2007 record of \$140 million — not bad. During the short-lived Liberal government — \$6 million.

The highest level of interest in mineral exploration in Yukon is being reflected in the very high level of claims-staking occurring in the territory.

With respect to tourism, visitation to Yukon in 2010 has outperformed early expectations with border crossings totalling over 311,000 — up 10 percent. Quite right, I stand corrected.

Construction activity in 2010 primarily consisted of continued work on projects that were initiated in 2009 and retail sales in 2010 were up over nine percent from 2009, to \$576 million. Statistics Canada revised estimates for the real GDP — gross domestic product — for the provinces and territories. They indicate Yukon's real GDP grew 3.9 percent in 2009 to \$1.571 billion. It's the highest in Canada, Mr. Chair. In fact, only one other jurisdiction in Canada had a positive GDP. Everybody else is in the negative figures. It's the best in Canada — 3.9 — and it is expected to be there or perhaps higher this year.

We had the strongest growth. As I mentioned, we were one of only two jurisdictions — Manitoba was second with 0.05 percent growth. We were 3.9, so we did considerably better than the second one.

The fifth time in the last six years, the real GDP growth rate in the Yukon was higher than the national growth rate.

The Conference Board of Canada Centre for the North is currently estimating the real GDP growth of 3.9 percent in 2011 and another 3.2 percent in 2012. Again, I'm suspicious that might actually go up a little bit more. As of December 2010, the population of Yukon was estimated at 34,667, up 1.5 percent from the December 2009 population estimate. December 2010 marked the eighth consecutive December that recorded an increase in population — better than the previous government that recorded a 10- to 15-percent decrease and a rather quick decrease, I might add.

The Department of Economic Development's Business and Economic Research branch continued to monitor, analyze and report on Yukon's economic position.

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 in Vote 7, Department of Economic Development.

Ms. Hanson: If I may, just before we start, I wanted to raise this earlier and I didn't rise fast enough on a point of order. I'm not sure it would have been a point of order, but I recognize that the minister opposite is an astute historian and obviously keen on parliamentary history and so over the course of this, my first sitting, I've heard him make repeated refer-

ences to the “shortest lived majority government”, being that of my esteemed colleagues in the Official Opposition, but in fact the shortest majority government lasted 486 days.

That was one year, three months and 30 days, and it occurred during the second Parliament, which was the government of Sir John A. Macdonald — so it was between September 3, 1872 and October 12, 1872 and Parliament was actually dissolved January 2, 1874. So, just for the record, I know that the minister would appreciate having that correct information. I know that the minister from Southern Lakes is enjoying that as well, so there we go.

I appreciate the opening comments and the further illumination by the Minister of Economic Development on the initiatives, the efforts of the Department of Economic Development. I also appreciate the first opportunity I had for a briefing with officials of that department when — it feels like forever ago — we were beginning to look at both the supplementary and the main estimates for Economic Development.

It's not my intention to go on at great length. I do have a few questions for the minister and hopefully we could then move this forward and achieve the objective of getting through a number of departments.

As I said, I personally see the Department of Economic Development — and the Yukon NDP sees Economic Development — as playing a key and important role in the government, particularly as it goes, as the minister outlined, as an agent for leveraging investment in the whole of the Yukon and the fabric of the Yukon economy.

So therefore I would expect, or one would expect, as Yukon's fiscal capacity expands, so too would our investment in the Department of Economic Development. I do have some concerns. I'm hoping that the minister can elaborate on this in a few moments.

When first glancing at the estimates for 2011, there appears to be a decline in O&M expenditures projected from last year's forecast of \$16.3 million to this year's mains of \$14.2 million and what appears to be — and I'm certainly looking forward to clarification from the minister — there appears to be a decline in the community development fund of about \$800,000. It looks like industry and development overall expenditures are down. It appears, also, that there are some decreases in regional economic development — film and sound and of the northern strategy. As well, it would appear that the capital budget has declined from about \$3.2 million to \$1.5 million. I'm sure the minister will inform me that there may have been new injections or new information since this budget document was prepared, so I certainly will look forward to hearing that from the minister.

As I said, there appeared to be this decline in the community development fund.

The minister outlined a number of the kinds of projects that CDF does fund. Certainly, as a member of the NDP, I am aware of the history of the CDF. It was an initiative from a long time ago — as the minister has alluded to — strategic perspective of the New Democratic Party. So I would be interested to know whether or not Economic Development is taking the

CDF in a new direction. Maybe that's a reflection of why there might be an appearance of decline. I'd also be interested in hearing from the minister with respect to how the community development fund has evolved over time. Is the community development fund solely project funding or are we — I've heard this perception from some community members that there is a tendency at times to view the CDF as a stop-gap for essential community initiatives for really what should be core funding — administrative dollars — but they are required to submit projects.

I would be interested in knowing if in fact this government has reviewed or looked at the objectives of the CDF with a view to assessing what necessary changes there might be — or not. Those would be my opening comments. I'll come back and speak to some specific areas within the department. But I would be interested in the minister's overall comments with respect to what appears to be a decline in funding.

Hon. Mr. Kenyon: I hope the member opposite has patience with my shock. There's finally someone who has actually read the budget. That's quite good and a huge compliment to the NDP for that.

There is a variety of comments I can make. The only functional change we've made is to actually get the staff out and go to the communities and explain the program and what's there, rather than just hope that somebody notices it on the website. We can get a much broader effect throughout the Yukon.

In reality, over the time period, if you really delve into the budget, the CDF has been consistent for a lot of years. It hasn't really changed, and it's not my intention to change it. In fact, it's my intention to keep it there in perpetuity, unless there is some huge change.

It is, however, dominated by a number of one-time projects. There are three tiers — under \$20,000, under \$22,000, under \$75,000 and then \$75,000 and beyond. It does also cause a number of revotes, particularly because a number of the big, expensive projects — the so-called tier 3 — are awarded in the spring, and guess what? We can't do them until the next time. So there are large amounts of money that are revoted in there, but the actual budget has been consistent. We've also been able to take advantage of CanNor and leverage some of the money into it on that. We've had really good success with that.

It is an interesting fund, for instance, during the Canada Winter Games and all the preparation and flow of that. Many of these programs I'm talking about are applicant-driven. People have to actually apply for that money. There was a time when applications were down considerably. I got myself in trouble with one group. I said look, if you have a good project, we'd like to see it, because there is some room in here, but by the time they got the project in, all of a sudden the Canada Winter Games were over and lots of projects were coming in and we had to go to some of them and say, look, it's a good project but we're going to have to put it off a year, or it's not time-sensitive — that's a common one — so let's put it off until the next intake.

We're now back in a little bit of a flux that we do have a bit of room right now. I can say again that we encourage people

to apply for it. The objectives are very broad; they fund many community initiatives, from trails to sheds. It has some limitations — for instance, articles that cannot be readily moved, but we work with the Lottery Commission on that because they don't have that restriction and sometimes we can provide some of that and the Lottery Commission can provide the other. I hope that covers most of what the member opposite wanted. It's a combination of things. No, CDF isn't down. It's consistent and it's our intention to keep it that way.

Ms. Hanson: The intention then is to maintain the investment in the community development fund. The minister also then just spoke, relating that to the regional economic development initiatives. I'd be interested if the minister could — again, when I look at the transfer payments for regional economic development, not looking at the First Nation and regional economic development section, but just the transfer payments component, it's at \$405,000 so I'm presuming that's for the support for First Nations and municipalities. That shows a decline — a real and a forecast decline — and I'd be interested in an outline of the comparative roles and responsibilities of the Yukon government capacity with respect to regional economic development and what kind of cooperative initiatives protocols exist between the department vis-à-vis its role with First Nations, the municipalities and that of CanNor.

Is there work to be done or is there work done with respect to — when we talk about capacity development, strategic planning, effective coordination and planning across these various levels of government, it seems to me that this has been a perpetual challenge for governments over the last — well, at least since Economic Development funding returned in about 2003 to this territory from a federal source, there has been a difficulty in terms of coordinating and having some sort of a unified regional economic development strategy that reflected the interests of all the stakeholders here in terms of stakeholder governments. I'm interested to hear what role Yukon government is playing to facilitate, as opposed to having a number of potentially competing strategic approaches to economic development in this territory. Is there an effort? What I would hope to hear is that there is some move toward and success at getting a unified strategic economic development approach as opposed to “we all have our own strategies and maybe sometimes they'll connect.”

Hon. Mr. Kenyon: The member opposite is dead on with that one. Both CanNor — and I'll sort of go backward — CanNor and the Department of Economic Development have their own strategic planning sessions. We attend each other's. So the best way to leverage the money and combine and do things a good way — by attending each other's planning sessions, we each know what the other one's doing. That's critical. We've done that right from the beginning. The rest of the questions around the regional economic development — most of that is, again, revotes. If you look at the amounts, basically there is a decrease due to a one-time transfer — this gets into line-by-line, but I'll throw it out now — a one-time transfer of \$51,000 from the contracting budget in the directorate to cover increased intake to the regional economic development fund.

It's applicant-driven — and then another revote of something like \$78,000 as well. That was approved in 2010-11, but it wasn't budgeted for in 2011-12. So, again, that will be a revote in the supplementary. Personnel costs — there was a slight decrease by a turnover of staff and bringing in younger staff. There were some vacancies in there that we handled in a variety of different ways. But now the positions are filled. It's expected that the budget's support will be expensed in 2011-12 of about \$47,000.

Again, contribution allotments — really, the revotes are the big thing in there, and that's again when projects are approved and then not completed within the fiscal year. Unfortunately, fiscal year does not fit too well in a lot of our programs.

Ms. Hanson: Thank you to the minister as well for that information. Mr. Chair, I'd like to come back to a couple of initiatives that the minister highlighted when he was speaking earlier this afternoon, one of which I inadvertently and, as it turned out, incorrectly lauded the government for when I was speaking to the budget with respect to tourism. That was, in fact, the *Yukonic* website — a kind of quirky initiative. I like it. I find it very interesting as a potential marketing tool for the film industry as well as for tourism, which is why I had linked it to tourism. But when I look at both it and the initiative like the staging of the Western Canadian Music Awards in October of this year, what I would be interested in knowing is what evaluative criteria does the Department of Economic Development employ on, for example, *Yukonic*, to determine what the return is for our investment on that kind of innovative marketing tool, I guess, for want of a better term.

As well as, do they have plans in place with respect to the net economic benefit analysis stratagem that will determine what the net economic benefit to Yukon, to Whitehorse, is from investing in \$325,000 — I believe it is, at least from the Yukon government — with respect to the staging of the Western Canada Music Awards in the autumn of this year?

Hon. Mr. Kenyon: I remember at the time, when the member opposite mentioned that and lauded Tourism — great; we're happy — but it was the Film and Sound Commission within our department.

We worked on that for quite some time and leveraged the money through CanNor, so there's quite a large contribution coming from that. I think it cost us around \$150,000 and there was \$650,000 coming from CanNor — somewhere in that range.

The webisodes will get an incredible amount of play in New York, which is the market we're going after on that.

It really created 13 one-minute webisode commercials advertising Yukon as a premier wilderness and snow filming location.

The training aspect is always the hard part of that because it's hard to quantify that, except when somebody shows up and finds that they've got all these trained personnel handy here they can utilize. That suddenly makes it even cheaper to work here — and add the other programs on top of that as well, and it can be quite significant.

I encourage people to go on the Web and take a look at those, because they not only served as a training function, but it also highlights the different locations, the different places that are for people — everything from the White Pass trains to Dawson to everything else.

We're also monitoring the films and the scripts. I'm told there are many thousands of hits a day on that location, so it's getting out and people are taking a look at it and really taking a look on that. A senior producer from Vancouver mentored the Yukon production services company to produce the series. Four local writers, under the direction of the senior writer from Vancouver, helped on that and six Yukon film directors directed episodes — again, with training and mentorship on that. So we filmed in Whitehorse, Carcross, Kluane, Dawson, Tombstone Park and we've had very, very good success with that.

I'm not really sure if the member opposite was talking about BreakOut West, the Western Canadian Music Awards, on that, but we actually put the bid off for a year because there was some concern about whether or not Whitehorse would have the capacity to do that. But with a lot of soul-searching and talking and looking at venues and this sort of thing, we made the decision that yes, we did have that capacity. Again, what that brings in are all of the people who book talent from across western Canada and, in many cases, well beyond, who will be here, who will listen to local talent and will really have a chance to see what we can do out here. It's an annual event. It's featured on CBC, so again there will be a tourism aspect of that in terms of showcasing Yukon and what we've got.

Two Yukon bands and one Yukon management company were award nominees at BreakOut West in Kelowna in October. We hosted the closing reception of BreakOut West in Kelowna and invited, there and in the main production, participants to come up here. I should mention too that I wasn't totally aware of the fact when I went to that reception that it was hosted by the Yukon, and I stood there in awe because the quality of music and everything else was way beyond — and I mean way beyond — what I had been seeing in other venues — and then found out that we were hosting it.

That was probably a pretty good reason why it was that far ahead. We're in the process now of finalizing that. It will run October 20 through 23 — the 2011 BreakOut West — and, again, training opportunities and everything else. But when you look at the amount of talent that exists up here — very, very well worthwhile in doing that. So I don't know if that was part of the question, but I thought I'd throw that out.

Ms. Hanson: I think all of us would acknowledge that these events are fun and they do contribute a lot to the community, if nothing else, as the minister said, showcasing the wonderful talents that we have and the location. What I'm really looking for is that when we make investments — for example, in *Yukonic* — and if \$150,000 of that and \$650,000 coming from CanNor — how do we measure success? This is an innovative approach. The market this time was New York. If this is to be replicated, how will the Department of Economic Development know that it was a success? What are the parameters for evaluating whether or not this kind of a marketing tool

is something that would be replicated again? Similarly, when we stage a major event — and I go back to when Whitehorse staged the Canada Winter Games in 2007 — considerable work was done with respect to identifying what the economic spinoffs would be for Yukon, Whitehorse and, to some extent, the communities.

It's helpful to know what is projected in advance of a major event like that, and to do a retrospective as well, as in: did we actually achieve it? Have there been lessons learned from the initiative in 2007? So that's the October 2011 event, and then going back to the *Yukonic* thing — that is a marketing tool that has many dimensions of training and all that. When we look at it as something we might want to use again, how will you know you've been successful?

Hon. Mr. Kenyon: The *Yukonic* is perhaps a little bit harder to judge. I don't have it in front of me, but it seems to me it will run something like four times an hour, 20 hours a day, for a month in the middle of New York's Times Square, right in the end of it, which is mostly the film thing. We'll get a big idea out of that, but we'll also get an idea from the number of hits. As I say, it's thousands every day. It has been there a short time; it will be up there a lot longer.

The number of hits is significant and gives us a pretty good idea. Of course, the product will come in further on. We don't have statistics or a way of measuring right now the number of hotel rooms or this sort of thing it will book.

But to give you an idea — again going back to the other half of what I think was the question with BreakOut West — it's becoming BreakOut North — if you look at the actual attendance of people coming in, I suggest that anybody who needs to book a hotel room or something, boy, do it now. The conference attendance is generally around 500, with 50 to 60 bands participating in the festival, and 3,000 to 3,500 audience members, each attending one or more of the festival events.

You could really look at what the effect is at that point in time in terms of hotel rooms and restaurants and this sort of thing. More to the point, I think, is the effect on the people up here who are doing their performing in front of all the people who do the bookings across western Canada.

One that we did some time ago, for instance, is a performance where we invited all of the various booking agents, et cetera, up here to attend it. It was kind of humorous because I remember one performer who didn't really want to book and perform at the actual event. We hired him to be the background performer during the reception, so everybody got to see him anyway. It is a good way of trying to get it in front in there, but we haven't to my knowledge done detailed studies like we have done with Yukon Quest and this sort of thing. Again, CanNor has been leveraged on that to get a really good assistance on the hits.

Ms. Hanson: Earlier today we, the NDP, raised an issue in the House about making investments in educational institutions. In particular, we were talking about Yukon College, to create what we would call a cutting-edge school of mines. The minister referred to the investments the Yukon government has been making on really what is cutting-edge research and

work with respect to the Yukon Cold Climate Innovation Centre and others.

What I'm interested in, and certainly the NDP is interested in, is how we expand that kind of approach to looking and focusing on particular areas of expertise so that we create the kinds of centres of excellence that emanate quite naturally from the north. We're working, as the minister outlined, with cold climate, northern climate challenges, the whole issue of environmental standards and climate change, but we have additional opportunities as we go forward — what we hope is a sort of long-term future with respect to the mining industry in this territory. We currently know that we have a number of sites requiring remediation — not just the big one at Faro, but there are six or so identified ones from the federal watch and, despite best practices being developed by industry, over time there will be a need for continued approaches for remediation of industrial sites.

So from our perspective, we're interested in knowing how the department looks at continued investments or would it be looking at, has it been looking at continued investments, expanding our educational system at the college to increase economic development and diversification with respect to those industries so that we can actually attract the knowledge industry here that would also provide the ability for Yukoners to benefit from that, in terms of direct job creation and employment in the Yukon and across the north?

Hon. Mr. Kenyon: Yes, there are a few different points to that one. I mean, the easiest thing, of course, is Yukon College and education and everything else; it's not our department. But I agree that we do have an interest in promoting that. I think what people have to understand first of all is that some two years ago, legislation was passed by this government in this House that allows Yukon College to grant degrees more than they do now.

That's a good thing. It sets up a lot of flexibility on behalf of the college, but it also allows them to process at their own pace. Our job in this department is to help that pace along. At the moment, you can do a variety of degrees through Yukon College in conjunction with other universities but they do have the ability to grant their own degrees. The theory that has been promoted in some circles about building a university is that they will come and what a great economic driver it would be. While it might be in the long run — unfortunately, *Field of Dreams* was a good movie, but it does have its limitations. But can we develop that more gradually? Yes, we can. Absolutely, and we should. This is why we're committed to supporting the Yukon's research and innovation commercialization sector. It's an area of prime strategic importance to Yukon's economy. The Cold Climate Innovation Centre — I think people forget that while we're trying to keep the cold out, there are other jurisdictions in the south that are trying to keep the cold in. Some of that technology is very similar. It also involves everything from permafrost, road construction — and we can go on and on and on — as well as mining. It's a much broader spectrum in mining.

The mining sector at this point — the Mine Training Association and the mine training programs — we can sort of assist

private companies in meeting with investors or this sort of thing. The official Liberal opposition seems to think that we are just going over and fishing for money. We bring over investment-ready companies that have something they are looking for investment in and then bring them in. While we can assist with connecting the investors and the mines together, we can't really, legitimately, be seen to be jumping in and financially assisting the companies. That's kind of where the line is drawn.

What we can do is train people; hence the Yukon Mine Training Association and what the member opposite talks about in terms of increasing the capacity of Yukon College into that. There are a lot of long-term benefits for that. It certainly enables growth in the private sector, supports the development of wealth-generating industries and secondary industries. The whole thing is part of the diversification.

If we look at the details and drill down into that a little bit, I think we have put an enhanced focus on research innovation and commercialization in 2010. I got into a good-natured fight, shall we say, with the federal Minister of Industry and my colleagues, compatriots and good friends from British Columbia and Alberta and Ontario, partially kidding them that every time somebody got a little handy with a backhoe, they wiped out our infrastructure, they wiped out our fibre optic link to the south — that has huge implications.

It's not just getting on and checking your e-mail, but think about it. You go into a car dealership or parts store; you used to have 14 feet of catalogues sitting there with parts. Now you have a terminal, and if you can't access that, that business is down for awhile. So the digitalization and digital economy is huge and, while Ontario argued that they had the greater population and they should get the lion's share of funding from the feds, my argument was that's very nice, but it's very much like health care. A \$300 ambulance ride in Toronto becomes a \$30,000 ambulance ride from Old Crow or Pangnirtung, and if we're going to be treated equally as Canadians, you have to perhaps give the north a bit of a leg up.

That being said, the developing commercialization of research and innovation through the college is a big part of that, and a big part of that is mine training and providing the workforce. I believe one statistic I saw has one of the highest levels of education in Canada being in the Yukon — more PhDs per capita in the Yukon.

If we can move that along by providing major funding for Yukon Cold Climate Innovation Centre and the Technology Innovation Centre, some of that may not involve mining, but a lot of it does. Drilling is one thing, but how do you drill at 40 below zero? At 40 below, a lot of the companies shut down. Are there ways to get around that? In partnership with CanNor, Northwestel and Vuntut Gwitchin Development Corporation, we look at Internet bandwidth in to and out of Old Crow. That's a tight subject at the moment because, of course, they went down yesterday and I believe they're just coming up now.

We have to develop a strategic plan in terms of all of this that will allow the college to grow. Through these various research centres and centres of excellence, we can get the people in not only to do the research, but also to mentor, to teach and to work with the students.

There has been a lot of talk in this House about a university of the north. To a large degree, I agree with that. But again, *Field of Dreams* was a nice movie — simply building it; you have to work up to it and there are a lot of long steps to get there. All three territories are arguing politely to become that university of the north.

The other two territories have offices or office buildings and this sort of thing. We have a campus. They're looking for the ability to develop degree-granting programs. We've had that authority for the last two years. There is a lot that we can do with Yukon College and really develop with that. Certainly, the current president has been very helpful on so many different levels. We hope that the new president they're trying to recruit will also help us to develop that. But it's important that they develop that at their own pace, so they have that capability.

Ms. Hanson: I understand the notion that we have investments in particular areas that do relate and do contribute to the Yukon becoming a centre of excellence on matters related to the north — climate change, cold climate innovation. What I'm suggesting is that, you know, sometimes it takes a bit of courage to step back and look forward. For many years in this territory, people in the social services field had to look and rely upon getting two-year certificate kinds of programs. Somebody finally said, "You know what? It's time to get a bachelor of social work degree program here." The NDP — many years ago — said it's time to have teachers — Yukon First Nations people being able to get a degree in education in the Yukon.

We lauded and talked earlier this afternoon about the importance of the Yukon Mine Training Association. What I am suggesting and asking is whether or not this government has put any thought into, or invested in, any high-level research from this department on developing a cutting-edge school of mining. I am not suggesting that it's solely a government responsibility. Clearly, when the minister was describing earlier one of the roles of the Department of Economic Development, in terms of linking investors from elsewhere in the world, I made a note to myself as he was describing these six deals that had been done since October of 2007 — that was essentially like a matchmaking role the department plays, in terms of linking those with an interest in the resources of the Yukon with the opportunity to invest here. Similarly, maybe there is a way to link some of those investors who really do want to have the benefit of highly skilled professionals — because we know that mining is a very technically challenging as well as a professionally demanding field and has many elements to it.

If we are not talking about a boom-and-bust approach to the mining industry, which has been the history off and on in this territory — but if we really have a view that this is a long-term, sustainable industry for the Yukon — for the north — it would be useful to hear that this government is actually taking a longer term, strategic approach to researching how we could in fact begin to develop that capacity here in the territory to augment the good initiatives being done by the YMTA and others. What I'm interested in is how the Department of Eco-

nomics Development can use its strategic leveraging power to work with educational institutions, industry and others to see something like this come into place.

Hon. Mr. Kenyon: I suppose the easy answer to that is that it's not our department. Again, there is some involvement in that. We are working with outside stakeholders, we're working with the Department of Education — where this really lives, not with us — but also with the Chamber of Mines, with the Yukon Mine Training Association and with many of the companies. I think, you know, the ethics of the mining companies have certainly been front and centre in terms of, for instance, the large influx of cash and the early childhood money that was donated to the Selkirk First Nation by — I can't remember what it's called now — into Minto.

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Hon. Mr. Kenyon: Oh, Capstone Mining. Thank you. So there are a number of different ways on that. It was very encouraging on the last trip to China to visit Chihong Zinc & Germanium Co. in Yunnan. Their relationship with their First Nations over there has been absolutely stellar in contributing to villages and building schools and this sort of thing. Interesting to note — which I don't think anyone here has done the research to find out — there are 56, what they call "minority groups" — which we would call "First Nations" — in China, 26 of which are in the Province of Yunnan and virtually all of them — in fact, I think all of them are represented in the workforce of Chihong Germanium, and they have worked very closely with those various groups. So to say that they don't, or suggest that they don't, does them a huge disservice.

We will certainly continue to work with the college and work with the Chamber of Mines. I see the head of the Chamber of Mines on a weekly basis. Education is always working with that, and I'm sure this will be part of recruiting a new president for Yukon College — or, at least, I certainly hope it will be. I have every indication it will be. They have the authority to do it. They can move forward on their own time. I have no doubt in my mind that they will.

Ms. Hanson: Just a note here that I forgot at the outset — one of the programs — when we were doing the briefing, there was clarification for us about the business nominee program. I know that my colleagues down the aisle here made various allegations. That's not what I want to talk about. What I want to confirm is my understanding that there is an internal review underway with respect to the business nominee program. I was hoping that the minister could confirm for me that the findings of this review will be shared with the public when it's completed and when it might be completed.

Hon. Mr. Kenyon: There is an internal review committee that reviews applications within the department. The review that the member opposite refers to is actually a review done by Citizenship and Immigration Canada, which is looking at all programs across Canada for business nominees.

We look after the so-called PNP, provincial nominee program or skilled worker, which lives in the Department of Education. I suspect that they're also looking at the investment nominee program, which again is within the Province of Quebec and the federal program. I have had some difficulty con-

vincing this government of the benefits of the investment nominee program. I think they're substantial and that's certainly something that I will be working on.

Citizenship and Immigration Canada, actually when they were here, referred to us as one of the best run programs in Canada and they were very pleased with it. Are they doing a formal review or something I could table? I kind of doubt it, but they were happy with what we're doing and they're comparing what we do to other jurisdictions in Canada.

Ms. Hanson: Earlier in the opening remarks at some point, there was a discussion with respect to the role of the Department of Economic Development on trade and their involvement, the minister's responsibilities for engagement on international trade agreements, and I wanted to come back to that. During the briefing with officials, we had a bit of a discussion with respect to the comprehensive economic trade agreement with the European Union.

From that briefing, I understood that the Department of Economic Development and Executive Council Office officials have co-responsibilities, and perhaps it could be clarified with respect to engagement around CETA. Further, my understanding is that there is to be another round of discussions in Ottawa in late March or early April. Could the minister please share what the Yukon's position is going to those discussions as a regional government, what the issues are, and how the public has been involved in shaping Yukon's views that will be expressed at the table?

Hon. Mr. Kenyon: The trade parts of the portfolio reside in Economic Development. CETA stands for the comprehensive economic trade agreement. Canada and the European Union launched negotiations for a comprehensive economic trade agreement in Ottawa on October 19, 2009. For the first time provinces and territories were part of the Canadian negotiating team and attended the negotiating sessions relating to issues within their jurisdictions.

Reducing international trade barriers benefits Canadian businesses, workers and consumers and contributes to a stronger economy for the benefit of all Canadians. It's always hard to convince everyone that it's not a question of one jurisdiction doing better than another. Frankly, it's a situation of both jurisdictions doing better because of the cooperation.

So at the same time, as a small, developing economy, the Yukon government recognizes the need to assist our new businesses to grow and diversify, ensuring that Yukon continues to have access to the necessary tools for achieving economic strength and diversifications — an important objective for us in these negotiations.

Six rounds of negotiations have occurred to date. In Ottawa, October 19 through 23, 2009; in Brussels, January 17 to 21, 2010 — and I can assure the member before she starts making notes that I did not attend Brussels. I don't think we had anyone attend Brussels — someone from the Executive Council Office, but no one from Economic Development went — Ottawa, April 19 to 23, 2010; Brussels, July 19 to 23, 2010; Ottawa, October 18 to 22, 2010; and Brussels, January 17 to 21, 2011.

As provinces and territories have the constitutional jurisdiction over enforcing most of the international trade subject areas — like industry, trade, labour, government procurement — the European Union specifically requested that provinces and territories be at the negotiating table. However, the constitutional jurisdiction to negotiate international trade agreements really rests with Canada. It's a federal issue.

On October 17, 2008, the EU and Canada released a joint study, entitled *Assessing the Costs and Benefits of a Closer EU-Canada Economic Partnership*. I suspect that is probably on the website. If it isn't, I can probably come up with a copy if the member is interested. The study concluded that both would benefit from liberalized goods and services, trade, labour, mobility, science and technology, and cooperation in environment regulation.

Economic modelling shows an estimated annual real income gain for the EU of \$18.6 billion Canadian, and gains for Canada of \$13.2 billion Canadian. There is already a cooperative agreement between Canada and the European Union. That was established back in 1979. The subjects involved in the negotiations — and I'll go through the list because I suspect the member opposite is going to ask anyway, so let's put it on the record. The negotiations involved goods, sanitary and phytosanitary issues, technical barriers to trade, trade facilitation, customs procedures, cross-border trade and services, investment, government procurement, intellectual property, movement of persons, competition, policy, administration and dispute settlement, sustainable development, and there's a clause that covers basically any areas of mutual interest.

While Economic Development and Executive Council Office's Intergovernmental Relations have the lead on these negotiations, other departments are working with specific input to their areas of jurisdiction. So for instance, Education; Energy, Mines and Resources; Highways and Public Works; Community Services; Justice; Finance; and Environment — to finish the list that I have here — are all participating to one degree or another within those negotiations. So I hope that gives you a better idea of what's going on there.

Ms. Hanson: I appreciate the background information. Mr. Chair, I raise this issue, and we have raised concerns with respect to the potential implications of CETA for regional governments, in particular the issue of procurement.

The Federation of Canadian Municipalities — I'm aware of the Union of British Columbia Municipalities and I do believe the Association of Yukon Communities, as well, has raised some concerns with respect to the pressure — and I think this is one of the reasons why, from the reading I've done, the EU wanted provincial and territorial governments to be participants in these discussions — the EU is looking for access to municipal and subnational procurement. So what we have seen across the country is the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, the Union of British Columbia Municipalities and others calling on their provincial governments — and I would suggest the territorial government — to be there to negotiate a clear and permanent exemption for local governments from CETA. One of the things this Department of Economic Development has, as one of its lines of business, is the support

through the various incentive programs for Yukon construction, Yukon labour, in terms of preferential arrangements. So what I am really looking for is a confirmation that the Government of Yukon, through whatever means it has at its disposal, will be seeking to ensure that there will be a clear and permanent exemption for local governments from CETA so that we are not going to see transnationals from the European Union being able to basically decree what kinds of preferential arrangement for them at the municipal and subnational levels.

I think there are governments across this country who are very concerned with the intrusion of CETA into local government operations. So that was and is the intent of my line of questioning here.

Hon. Mr. Kenyon: If I can sort of expand on that a little bit — because I have a feeling that it will anyway. First of all, would CETA have an adverse effect on Canada's aboriginal peoples? Obviously, that has an impact regionally in many of our communities. In all international trade agreements, Canada maintains a number of reservations to preserve the government's ability to regulate in the areas of aboriginal and minority affairs. These reservations allow Canada to reserve the right to deny foreign investors or service providers any rights or preferences provided to aboriginals, as well as socially or economically disadvantaged minorities. So there are some things in there. Again, this is why provinces and territories are very pleased to be at the table. Will CETA negatively impact on local job creation?

There is another aspect of that. I think businesses on both sides of the Atlantic have long called for closer ties. They clearly see the benefits. A recent study predicts a potential, as I mentioned, of a \$38-billion increase in bilateral trade and a significant economic boost on both sides. The further liberalization of the European Union market through a Canada and EU comprehensive economic trade agreement has the potential to benefit all Canadians. Securing improved market access through a Canada and EU comprehensive economic trade agreement means increasing opportunities for our experts and in turn for jobs within Canada. Will CETA prevent governments from sourcing goods and services locally to spur job creation and Economic Development? I think that's where the bulk of this question is. As a trading nation, Canada believes that free and open markets are the best way to ensure that the local economy can rebound from its period of instability. Overall, Canada's procurement systems are quite open at all levels of government and any commitments undertaken by Canada will have to take into account domestic interests and sensitivities.

Canada has an interest in ensuring access to European Union procurement markets, particularly in certain EU member states where Canadian companies may be impacted by the application of social criteria that fails to recognize certification schemes that use internationally accepted science-based data.

I think the overall thing on this whole thing, too, is that Canada will only accept a deal that's in the best interest of Canadians.

As a small developing economy, the Yukon government recognizes the need to assist our new businesses to grow and

diversify. Ensuring that Yukon continues to have access to the necessary tools for achieving economic strengths and diversification is an important objective for us in these negotiations.

We've worked closely with Canada during the negotiations to make sure Yukon's interests were advanced. The monetary thresholds, above which the obligations of CETA will apply for government procurement contracts, have not been set at this point in time. So we really don't know what we're talking about here. The levels that have been under discussion have been similar to our other trade agreements and very high by Yukon standards. The biggest thing on that will probably come in line to a degree with the *Agreement on Internal Trade* and that continues to develop. There are a number of things within there that recognize protection of environment and health and safety of workers. Those things are all recognized. The *Agreement on Internal Trade* does not apply to First Nation people, cultural industries or the government's ability to raise money through taxation and there are incentive programs such as the business incentive program which were specifically exempted from those discussions.

I have every faith that much of what happens within CETA will follow those guidelines. It will, however, reduce extra costs and red tape by making trade across provincial and territorial boundaries more efficient, increasing market access for Yukon companies and facilitating work mobility for trades people and professionals.

I do have a bit of an interest in this, of course. I don't know if the member opposite is aware of this, but my background is a veterinary surgeon. Up until the *Agreement on Internal Trade*, there was no ability to get a licence on the B.C. side of the border and there was a case of, I believe, a four-year-old girl who was killed by a pack of dogs in Atlin and one of the biggest recommendations by the B.C.'s coroner office was to start a spay and neuter clinic to reduce the population. I was promptly told by the B.C. Medical Association that if I went down there to help, I would be instantly charged with practising without a license. It's crazy. At that point I could practise in the Yukon, Northwest Territories, Ontario, the United Kingdom and most of the Commonwealth. I couldn't go down to Atlin and give a rabies shot. That's crazy. It's the same thing.

Those are the sorts of things that are going to be coming up in the CETA negotiations.

Again, the lead on that is the Executive Council Office and Intergovernmental Relations, and maybe that is a good place to ask some of those questions. But, as I say, most of what we expect will come out of similarities with the *Agreement on Internal Trade*. I also wonder how fast this is going to go, given the current palpitations in Ottawa and what is happening there; we don't know. Our indication is that they have Cabinet direction to proceed, but that doesn't mean that anything is going to happen. We will continue to work with the Executive Council Office as sort of co-lead on that and see where it goes.

Ms. Hanson: A final comment, given the time, Mr. Chair. I understand the placations and that from the federal government with respect to negotiating the international trade agreements. We have heard this all before. The only thing I

was seeking from the minister was a commitment that he would be seeking exemptions so that municipalities and local governments would not have to deal with incursions in terms of procurement, hiring and contracting responsibilities that they have; so they are not negotiated away by Canada; and that in fact this Yukon government would take a strong position, so we don't see the ability of municipalities to do their own procurement, hiring and contracting responsibilities exchanged for providing access to the European Union for Canadian pork, beef and grain producers. It is simply asking the Government of Yukon to advocate on behalf of local governments. CETA is probably one of the best kept —

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

Speaker resumes 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 on it.

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

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Speaker: I declare the report carried.

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

The House adjourned at 5:31 p.m.

The following Sessional Papers were tabled March 24, 2011:

11-1-211

Yukon College 2009/2010 Annual Report (Rouble)

11-1-212

Yukon College Audited Financial Statements (dated October 22, 2010) prepared by the Office of the Auditor General of Canada (Rouble)

11-1-213

Safe Operation and Use of Off-road Vehicles, Select Committee on the: Report (dated March 2011) (Edzerza)