

**Yukon Legislative Assembly  
Whitehorse, Yukon  
Monday, December 5, 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 with the Order Paper. Tributes.

**TRIBUTES**

**In remembrance of Stephen Roy Cardiff**

**Ms. Moorcroft:** Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Official Opposition, I rise to pay tribute to a dear friend and a former member of this House, Stephen Roy Cardiff, who left us in July of 2011.

Steve's devotion to his large family and to his friends, and his compassion for those less fortunate were inspirational. I recognize the presence in the gallery today of Steve's wife Rachel Cardiff and her children, Anne and Stewart; Steve's son, Jessen Cardiff, and Jessen's mother, Kathy Hanifan; Steve's parents, who have travelled from British Columbia to be here today: Steve's mother, Elizabeth Ritchie and Steve's father, Norm Cardiff, and his wife Greta. Unable to be with us here today are Steve's stepsons, John and Michael, his brother Bill and sister Julie, and Steve's grandchildren, of whom he was so proud.

I would also like to acknowledge there are many of Steve's friends and colleagues with us in the House today.

Steve loved politics, and his love of politics was probably inherited long ago through his great-grandfather, Stewart Beatt, who ran for the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation in Nelson, British Columbia.

Steve was a formidable campaigner for over 20 years, helping many other New Democrats to get elected before he threw his own hat into the ring. He had many campaign stories he liked to tell, including the time he was bit by a dog while campaigning for me in Marsh Lake in 1992. I learned from Steve to carry dog treats in my pocket while I was out campaigning, and I still do this.

Before politics, Steve was a proud sheet metal worker who served on the Yukon Federation of Labour executive and as president of his Local 310 of the United Association of Plumbers and Pipefitters for 16 years. He believed in being an active community volunteer and was appointed to the Yukon College Board of Governors for nine years, acting for three years as chair of the board.

Steve had a real passion for education and working with youth. He supported Yukon Women in Trades and Technology, promoted youth trades training and the protection of young workers' safety under workers' compensation. After many years of community volunteerism and political activism, in 2002 Steve stepped forward himself and ran for the New Democrats in the riding of Mount Lorne.

He was successfully elected to the Yukon Legislative Assembly in the general election of November 4, 2002 and re-elected in the general election of October 10, 2006. He won convincingly both times.

Steve was known as a constituency politician, the kind who stays close to his community and the voters who elected him, who works hard to represent their interests and makes the commitment to always be available on the phone, at their door when invited, and at the many community meetings that take hours in evenings to attend. He felt that this was his obligation and privilege.

Steve also had a great respect for the Assembly and he took very seriously the honour of being a member of Yukon's Legislative Assembly. He relied on and recognized the hard work and professionalism of the Legislative Assembly staff and spoke often about the high caliber and level of commitment of the staff in his office.

Steve read the newspapers cover to cover and his radio was always on at news time. He was a voracious reader and a meticulous note taker, and he took great efforts to come prepared and informed and to act with the dignity and respect that this office demanded of him. He also recognized there was room for improvement, and he brought a cooperative approach as the NDP member on five select committees that did extensive work consulting with Yukoners in every community.

Steve Cardiff will be remembered as the rock for the New Democratic Party and for Yukon. He was a kind and generous man who never hesitated to help people out. He looked at problems head-on, rolled up his sleeves and got to work. He had big shoulders and this was made abundantly clear to everyone when during the illness and after the passing of his friend and colleague, Todd Hardy, Steve served as the party leader, the House Leader, and, as he liked to say, the critic for everything. Steve's goal was to see the many initiatives they had worked on together over their eight years as opposition members come to completion, and that work will continue.

Steve was a passionate social democrat. He never failed to urge us to do more for the less fortunate, especially the homeless, the destitute and our youth. He was an advocate for Angel's Nest. He never forgot the days he spent searching for the missing young woman, Angel Carlick, and remained to the end committed to provide Whitehorse with a permanent youth shelter.

Steve stood in solidarity with the women's community, and he advocated for Kaushee's Place and their need for second-stage housing for women fleeing abuse, and it won't be soon forgotten that Steve and his wife Rachael were the first to be there with food, supplies and encouragement for the "tent city" residents camped on the lawn of the Legislative Assembly building throughout this past summer and fall.

Those who were fortunate to spend time with Steve will remember him in the coming years as a respectful politician, a willing friend, a loving family man, and an active community volunteer. His passing is a big loss to Mount Lorne and for all of Yukon.

Steve's beliefs are embedded in the J.S. Woodworth prayer he liked to say at gatherings:

"We are thankful for these and all the good things of life.

"We recognize that they are a part of our common heritage and come to us through the efforts of our brothers and sisters the world over.

"What we desire for ourselves, we wish for all.

"To this end, may we take our share in the world's work and the world's struggles."

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Elias:** It is with a heavy heart we in the Liberal caucus pay tribute to our friend and former colleague, Steve Cardiff, the NDP MLA for Mount Lorne.

Steve left us suddenly in a tragic car accident in July of this year and we all mourn the loss of a gentle man who was committed to helping others. Steve was a compassionate individual, a strong advocate and a defender of those who needed help.

He was a man of dedication and commitment, be it to his family, friends, his constituents, or the many causes he championed. He was an excellent MLA and representative in this Yukon Legislative Assembly.

I sat beside Steve for five years in this Chamber. Everyone knew he wore his heart on his sleeve, and I became a better MLA for knowing him. I was fortunate to have worked closely with Steve on many select committees in this Legislature, where we travelled throughout the territory. Steve was a good listener and contributor and we had many great conversations. I am going to miss those conversations.

I remember one time when I was in a heated exchange in this House in Question Period with the former Premier Fentie. I was getting pretty upset by the way the debate was progressing, and during a response from the Premier, Steve handed me a note that said something to the effect of "I'll buy you lunch for a week if you can slip in the name Bart Simpson in your next question." That's the type of guy Steve was. He knew people, and he was a good judge of character, and I think that day that note saved me from getting sat down.

Steve moved to the Yukon in 1976, prior to entering politics in 2002, representing Mount Lorne.

He worked as a certified sheet metal journeyman for over 20 years. He always put workers and workers' rights first, and his concerns for safe working conditions for all Yukon working families were well-known. Steve will be remembered as a champion of people's rights. He will be remembered for the hard work he did to make a difference in the lives of all Yukoners. Mr. Speaker, I believe that it would be fitting to celebrate and honour the memory of Mr. Cardiff by naming either a youth shelter, a homeless shelter or an affordable housing complex as the Steve Cardiff Place and I do hope that this comes to pass in memory of such a good man.

We wish to express our deepest sympathy to his wife, his children, his family, his friends and his colleagues. Be proud of the man he was. He has left his indelible mark on the Yukon and we're all better for having knowing him. I am working out of Steve's old office, and let me put it this way — I'm going to read a short poem from Mary Elizabeth Frye that just came to me one day.

"Do not stand at my grave and weep,

"I am not there; I do not sleep.

"I am a thousand winds that blow,

"I am the diamond glints on snow,

"I am the sun on ripened grain,

"I am the gentle autumn rain.

"When you awaken in the morning's hush,

"I am the swift uplifting rush,

"Of quiet birds in circling flight.

"I am the soft starlight at night.

"Do not stand at my grave and cry;

"I am not there. I did not die."

Mr. Speaker, there is a saying in politics: People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care. Believe me when I say that many, many Yukoners knew how much Steve Cardiff cared about our territory and its people. He will be missed but never forgotten. Rest in peace, my friend.

*[Member spoke in native language. Text unavailable.]*

**Hon. Mr. Cathers:** I also rise today in tribute to Steve Cardiff. Like other colleagues in this House, I was also shocked when we heard the news of Steve's tragic accident this summer. I worked with Steve for quite a number of years and in this House all too often the divisions along party lines tend to make us cordial acquaintances, at best, with many of the members. Steve was someone that I would call a friend and I was very truly sorry to learn of his passing.

I enjoyed working with him. I worked with him in a number of areas: as House leader and on committees, notably the Select Committee on the Safe Operation and Use of Off-road Vehicles being one of the more challenging ones we dealt with. The issues that fell under that committee were complex. They were very polarized among Yukoners and had feedback from more than 2,000 Yukoners who had submitted perspectives with widely varying views on what they wanted to see. I think Steve really deserves a lot of the credit for the fact that we actually reached an agreement.

At one point, I was not optimistic that we would be able to reach a final report. I give him credit for the fact that he played a role with all members of the committee by emphasizing the importance of respecting the more than 2,000 Yukoners who had taken their time to provide their views and wanted to see us complete the job and come up with a report.

In this House, even when I was on the receiving end of questions and debate from Steve, the one thing I always felt was that Steve was fair, and that is something that, unfortunately, we can't always say about other members in this House. I really always felt that he was trying to be fair, even when you disagreed very intensely on a policy matter. There was a focus on the policy and an attempt to remain respectful to fellow members even when he disagreed with them strongly.

I would echo the comments made by the Member for Copperbelt South and the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin. I know that there are many people across this territory whose lives were touched by Steve and who appreciated his approach in engaging in debate. I would encourage new members of this House to take a look at some of the excerpts from *Hansard* in

looking at Steve's approach to debate and consider taking that as a model for their own approach to engaging effectively but strongly in debate while remaining cordial to those with whom they do not always agree.

In conclusion, to all of his friends, to all of his family and all whose lives he touched, my sincere condolences.

**Speaker:** Are there any further tributes?  
Introduction of visitors.

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Mr. Elias:** I ask your indulgence, and I ask all members to join me in welcoming in the House today Ms. Lorraine Netro, a constituent of mine and also a former MLA for the Vuntut Gwitchin riding and, of course, Mr. Steve Cardiff's former colleague.

Applause

**Speaker:** Returns or documents for tabling.

## TABLING RETURNS AND DOCUMENTS

**Speaker:** The Chair has for tabling the following documents:

The 2011 Annual Report of the Yukon Child and Youth Advocate; the 2010-11 Annual Report of the Yukon Conflict of Interest Commissioner; the Report of the Chief Electoral Officer of the Yukon on Electoral Financing and Political Contributions 2010; the 2010 Annual Report of the Yukon Information and Privacy Commissioner; the 2010 Annual Report of the Yukon Ombudsman; the Yukon Human Rights Commission Annual Report April 1, 2009 to March 31, 2010; the Report on Travel Expenses of Members of the Yukon Legislative Assembly 2010-11; and a Report of the Clerk of the Assembly made pursuant to section 39(6) of the *Legislative Assembly Act* regarding the absence of members from sittings of the Legislative Assembly and meetings of committees of the Legislative Assembly.

Are there any further returns or documents for tabling?

## REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

**Speaker:** Under reports of committees, the Chair has for tabling the 18th Report of the Standing Committee on Appointments to Major Government Boards and Committees of the 32<sup>nd</sup> Legislative Assembly.

Are there any other reports from committees?

Are there any petitions?

Are there any bills to be introduced?

Are there any notices of motion?

## NOTICES OF MOTION

**Ms. Hanson:** I give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House will make good government and democratic reform a priority by:

(1) working collaboratively within the Standing Committee on Rules, Elections and Privileges to improve legislative processes; and

(2) working through other means, such as new select committees, in order to advance democratic reform.

**Ms. Moorcroft:** I give notice of the following motion:  
THAT it is the opinion of this House that

(1) housing is a human right; and

(2) in keeping with the principles of Yukon's current *Human Rights Act* and the United Nations' *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, to which Canada is a party, Yukon's *Human Rights Act* should be amended to recognize housing as a human right by adding the following to the Bill of Rights contained in the act: "Every individual is entitled to adequate and affordable housing and to protection from eviction without cause, particularly in cases where eviction will result in homelessness."

**Ms. White:** Mr. Speaker, I give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to work with all governments, including First Nations, as well as non-profit and private housing providers, to develop a Yukon housing strategy and policy framework that will:

(1) include all Yukon communities;

(2) have performance and risk-management measures;

(3) be comprehensive, innovative, practical and achievable;

(4) increase the housing supply;

(5) improve housing affordability; and

(6) support individuals and families in greatest housing need.

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

THAT this House urges the Yukon government to enact a residential tenancy act in response to the recommendations of the Select Committee on the *Landlord and Tenant Act* in order to:

(1) provide a legal framework for rental homes;

(2) outline the rights and responsibilities of both landlords and tenants;

(3) set basic health and safety standards to be met in all rental units;

(4) provide education to help tenants understand their rights and responsibilities; and

(5) provide a dispute resolution process which is easily accessible and avoids the use of courts to resolve conflicts.

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

THAT this House urges the Yukon government to accept and act on the recommendations of the *Final Recommended Peel Watershed Regional Land Use Plan* in order to:

(1) protect one of the last remaining pristine wilderness watersheds in North America;

(2) respect the time and commitment of the parties — the First Nation of Na Cho Nyäk Dun, the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation, the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in, the Gwich'in Tribal Council and countless Yukoners and local businesses — that have invested in their efforts to reach a fair balance between preservation and development; and

(3) respect and validate the processes of the Yukon Land Use Planning Council and the First Nation final agreements.

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

THAT the House urges the Yukon government to implement an immediate moratorium and conduct a full and rigorous scientific review and public consultation on the effects and desirability of hydraulic fracturing, a non-conventional form of natural gas extraction — also known as “fracking” — before any regulatory approvals or permitting is allowed in the Yukon.

**Ms. Stick:** I give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Yukon government to take immediate steps to complete and implement its social inclusion strategy in view of previous work done in this regard in order to achieve a territory in which everyone lives with purpose, dignity and satisfaction and to ensure that the strategy:

- (1) is based on consultation with stakeholders and the public;
- (2) demonstrates evidence-based policies;
- (3) responds to the recommendations in the Task Force on Acutely Intoxicated Persons at Risk; and
- (4) applies across all government departments.

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

THAT this House urges the Minister of Justice to undertake a full review of the territory’s family, child and property laws with a view to introducing amendments to this legislation by the fall of 2013, and that the review address the issues of:

- (1) custody and access;
- (2) property;
- (3) spousal support;
- (4) same-sex couples; and
- (5) the definition of a common-law relationship.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to move quickly to:

(1) articulate, negotiate and implement a clear definition of the role and jurisdiction of the Yukon Water Board in the context of Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Board assessments and the Government of Yukon decision documents on project. The role and jurisdiction of both the Yukon Water Board and the Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Board must be made explicitly clear and unambiguous; and

(2) investigate the concept of a process charter, which sets out how the overall assessment and regulatory process works, including the role of all relevant bodies.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the minister responsible for the Yukon Development Corporation to explain, by way of a ministerial statement, the government’s commitment to “planning the construction of large-scale hydro-electric projects to meet medium- to long-term needs.”

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

THAT the House urge the Government of Yukon to work with health care professionals and stakeholders in Dawson City to transition the Dawson City hospital into a collaborative primary care health care facility that supports community nurses and meets the needs of the community.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to amend the *Elections Act* to address concerns raised by voters with regard to rules for enumeration and voter identification.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Minister of Finance to reach a settlement, without going to court, with the owners of the Top of the World Golf Course to ensure the facility is available to the public for the 2012 tourism season.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to live up to commitments made during the 2011 election campaign and build a new recreation centre in the community of Dawson City.

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

THAT this House urges the Yukon government to improve Yukoners’ access to doctors, nurses, medical specialists and other health professionals by implementing a new health human resource strategy with components including:

- (1) doubling the family physician incentive to \$100,000 over five years for physicians who have recently graduated in exchange for working in the Yukon;
- (2) creating a new family physician recruitment incentive to help medical clinics with the cost of recruiting and supporting new doctors;
- (3) increasing the medical education bursary by 50 percent to \$15,000 per year for Yukon students attending medical school;
- (4) doubling the incentive for students who enter medical residency in a Yukon family practice after graduation to \$30,000 per year;
- (5) increasing the nursing education bursary by 50 percent to \$7,500 per year;
- (6) increasing the health professions education bursary by 50 percent to \$7,500 per year for Yukoners training for other health professions;
- (7) increasing funding supporting multi-disciplinary collaboration, including offering medical practices new funding to add nurse practitioners and RNs to their clinics;
- (8) piloting a collaborative primary care clinic in cooperation with the health care community; and
- (9) offering the Yukon Medical Association funding to expand supports to visiting specialists and medical graduates in residency.

**Ms. McLeod:** I rise to give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Yukon government to provide new supports for people looking after sick or disabled family members, including adults and seniors needing extra care and children with severe disabilities by taking steps including:

(1) establishing a new caregiver tax credit for families caring for a relative with a disability, including seniors and adults and children with severe disabilities;

(2) providing additional funding for therapies as well as money for specialized equipment, ramps and lifts, to assist disabled children through an expanded family support for children with disabilities program;

(3) helping seniors stay in their homes longer by assisting with minor home repairs and upgrades; and

(4) enhancing the home care program, including providing more help for respite care of children and dependent relatives.

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

**Hon. Mr. Cathers:** I rise to give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Yukon government to support development of the agriculture sector with actions including:

(1) working with farmers and industry associations including the Yukon Agriculture Association and the Growers of Organic Food Yukon to implement the agriculture multi-year development plan;

(2) developing a “Yukon-Grown Food Policy” aimed at significantly increasing the production and use of locally-grown vegetables, meat and food products;

(3) supporting the development of agriculture infrastructure that improves food security, facilitates access to market and encourages local production of food;

(4) supporting the development of local markets for Yukon agriculture products through measures including increasing the annual funding for the Fireweed Community Market; and

(5) working with Yukon farmers to conduct agricultural research.

**Speaker:** Is there a statement by a minister?  
This then brings us to Question Period.

## QUESTION PERIOD

### Question re: Housing shortage

**Ms. Hanson:** The government said in the Speech from the Throne that housing and land availability have been identified as pressing challenges. It is no exaggeration to say that housing in the Yukon is in crisis. This is due largely to the inaction of the previous two Yukon Party governments. It is not a pretty picture to see tents on the government lawns or to know that homeless youth continue to couch surf. As rents rise to unaffordable levels, some families have to choose between paying rent and eating. We are losing valuable skills. People have jobs, but can't find housing, so are forced to leave the territory. All the while, this government sits on \$16.5 million in federal funding earmarked for housing.

The previous Yukon Party government turned down recommendations to address housing needs in Yukon. Over a

dozen reports on housing have been prepared in the past five years and now this government hopes that the private sector will solve all the problems two years from now. That's too little, too late.

Will the Premier tell the House what his immediate intentions are to alleviate the housing crisis that Yukoners are facing this winter?

**Hon. Mr. Kent:** With regard to the housing issues, I will offer for members opposite some of the accomplishments of the previous two Yukon Party governments, including substantial investments in affordable housing facilities in Dawson City and seniors facilities in Watson Lake, Faro and Teslin.

We recognize, of course, that there still is work to be done. That's why we have identified land to increase the rental stock here in Whitehorse and are looking at other options, including working with First Nations to ensure that we can meet the housing needs, not only today, but moving forward.

So we recognize that there is work to be done and we look forward to that work. But we also want to congratulate the previous two Yukon Party governments for the work that they have done in building affordable housing and seniors housing for Yukoners.

**Ms. Hanson:** There are indeed many options to solve our immediate housing problems, and I do acknowledge the minister's comments with respect to the social housing stock that is being built. I would request that that minister actually visit some of those houses, because he will find that many of them are not designed for the citizens who are intended to be living in them — including seniors — when you have washrooms that are totally inaccessible. That's another day and another question.

A good start for the managing and addressing of immediate housing needs would be to manage the existing Yukon Housing Corporation stock effectively and to confirm a use for the Alexander Street Residence. A more immediate and pressing need would be to revise the *Landlord and Tenant Act*, as recommended by the select committee long ago.

Will the minister show good faith as a first step in demonstrating that this government is truly committed to addressing the housing problem by bringing forward new legislation to give effect to the recommendations of the Select Committee on the *Landlord Tenant Act* this spring?

**Hon. Ms. Taylor:** Mr. Speaker, as was outlined in our recent election platform, the Yukon Party government is very much committed to adhering to the recommendations of the select committee that oversaw the *Landlord and Tenant Act*.

This is a very complex piece of legislation, and one that has not been touched for some 50 years. We all recognize that it is a work in progress and that it is well overdue.

So, yes, we are very much committed to demonstrating a measured and responsible approach toward protecting the interests of both tenants and landlords, while promoting a healthy, private rental housing market.

**Ms. Hanson:** I would urge the minister opposite to ensure that that legislation and that commitment is delivered soon, and not in a delayed way, as we have seen in previous

commitments by previous Yukon Party governments on other important legislation.

The United Nations has described housing and homelessness in Canada as a national emergency. Canada is the only G8 country that does not have a national housing strategy. Unfortunately, the Yukon government reflects its federal counterpart. The NDP has long advocated long-term strategic planning. Actions need to be based on sound planning and demonstrate measurable outcomes, a plan that gives everyone access to homes, enhances social and physical health and well-being, builds communities and enables everyone to contribute to a growing economy. Without commitment to this organized process, there is no basis for full development of Yukoners' potential.

Will the Premier begin his mandate by working with all sectors of the Yukon and immediately develop a Yukon housing strategy to meet the needs of all Yukoners?

**Hon. Mr. Kent:** Last week I had the opportunity to attend the National Housing Day breakfast sponsored by CMHC and even by the list of presenters at that it became clear that this is certainly a problem that needs to be tackled on a number of fronts by a number of different partners. Of course the Yukon Housing Corporation Board of Directors, the Department of Community Services, and the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources have a role to play as well as the private sector, the City of Whitehorse and, indeed, municipalities throughout the Yukon. Of course we heard that NGOs have a role to play in that. I'm in the midst of arranging a meeting with the Yukon Anti-Poverty Coalition and Habitat for Humanity to discuss their concerns, and as we move forward on this issue, we will ensure that it is indeed a partnership as we move to solve some of the housing problems that exist in the Yukon today.

#### **Question re: Peel watershed land use plan**

**Mr. Tredger:** The Peel is one of the last remaining pristine watersheds in the world. The *Final Recommended Peel Watershed Regional Land Use Plan* recommended full and interim protection of 80 percent of the Peel watershed.

Affected First Nations, nearby communities and the majority of Yukoners have, in the spirit of compromise, accepted this balanced plan.

In January 2010, the Yukon government signed a letter of understanding with their First Nation partners. This letter had a series of timelines on when further consultations would take place and stated that a final decision would be reached in November 2011. These timelines have been missed.

What is this government's plan to get the Peel land use planning process back on track?

**Hon. Mr. Cathers:** Mr. Speaker, first of all, I have to dispute the member's assertion that the process is off-track. There were some delays to the original timelines, caused, of course, by the election cycle. I will inform the member — and I will provide him a copy later today — through a copy of a letter I sent to the chiefs of the four affected First Nations. They recently sent me a letter proposing new timelines for concluding consultation. The letter that I have sent to them indicates

that the government is in basic agreement with the timelines they have outlined and that we wish to have the senior liaison committee meet to finalize the precise details for concluding that consultation timeline.

**Mr. Tredger:** Mr. Speaker, I'm glad to hear that the government is finally beginning to live up to its commitments. Here we are in early December. There has been no decision. There have been no final consultations. As part of the letter of understanding with the First Nations, we were to meet with the residents of Mayo, Old Crow, Dawson City, Fort McPherson and Whitehorse for final consultations. My constituents, like all Yukoners, care deeply about the Peel and they deserve the opportunity to be involved and consulted.

When will the government fulfill its obligations, provide the public the opportunity to see this government's position on the Peel and hold final public consultations?

**Hon. Mr. Cathers:** The Yukon government is committed to following the process. I would remind the member that the Yukon government, under the *Umbrella Final Agreement*, has a duty to take that final recommended plan to determine where we believe it can be made better and then engage in a final round of public consultation. That's exactly what we're going to do.

We believe that debate over the Peel planning process has become unnecessarily polarized and politicized. The debate has also at times lost touch with reality. It's time to shift the debate from whether to protect the environment in the Peel to how to best protect the environment of the Peel while allowing responsible use. We believe that most Yukoners actually share common values. Yukoners value wilderness beauty and healthy ecosystems, but also want a strong, diversified economy that provides employment for their friends, families and communities.

**Mr. Tredger:** When the Peel Watershed Planning Commission was created, the NDP caucus called for a moratorium on staking. The Yukon government did not follow this advice until very late in the game. As a result, an additional 6,800 claims were staked in the planning area. The moratorium on staking in the Peel ends in February, just a few short months away. The Yukon Party is already well behind the agreed-to timelines.

Mr. Speaker, the current moratorium on staking is set to expire on February 4, 2012. Given the delays and the lack of movement on the timelines established in the letter of understanding, will this government honour the spirit of negotiations and extend the moratorium on staking in the Peel?

**Hon. Mr. Cathers:** Mr. Speaker, again I have to correct the member's understanding a bit with regard to the process. I know that he has been relying to a large extent on the political rhetoric to guide his understanding of the process and unfortunately, the NDP has not properly understood some of the details pertaining to this plan.

The Yukon government has an obligation under the *Umbrella Final Agreement* to take final recommended plans proposed by the commissions composed of citizens appointed to them to determine where we believe improvements can be made to make the final plan as good as we can make it and

then, following that, to engage in a final stage of public consultations and finally, consultations and discussions with First Nations.

In the letter that I sent back to the four chiefs — those being the chiefs of Na Cho Nyäk Dun, Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in, Vuntut Gwitchin and the Tetlit Gwich'in — I have indicated that we indeed agree substantially with the timelines they have proposed, and the exact details of that can be worked out by the senior liaison committee. We are, in fact, also committing to extending the moratorium on staking until September 2012.

**Question re: Fiscal management**

**Mr. Elias:** I have a question for the Premier today. The Yukon is in pretty good shape right now economically and I won't deny that. Yukon's unemployment rate is at five percent, tied for lowest in our country. We have the highest number of people ever recorded working in the territory at 19,100. In the mining sector alone, there was a projected \$300-million investment in exploration this year and our economic forecast is looking pretty good as well. That's why I'm asking these questions today — because the best time to prepare for difficult times is when you are in times of plenty — i.e. right now.

What is the Premier's plan to protect our territory as much as possible from another global recession?

**Hon. Mr. Pasloski:** As the Hon. Member for Vuntut Gwitchin has mentioned, things in the Yukon are good right now. It has really been the result of a combination of a lot of things that have happened. It's creating the economic climate — the opportunity for investment and for responsible investment that has gone on for the last two mandates — from the 2002 and 2006 mandates of the Yukon Party government.

Now we're sitting in our third consecutive majority government — unprecedented in the Yukon. We will continue to work to foster development in the economy, engage Yukoners and ensure that everybody has an opportunity, including First Nations, to be equal partners in the economy.

**Mr. Elias:** The United States' debt is about \$15 trillion and they are implementing a "Buy American" policy. Italy's debt is about \$2 trillion. The economies in Greece, and indeed, all of Europe, are on the brink of collapse. Canadian confidence in our economy is at an all-time low. We have a stagnant unemployment rate in Canada that stands at 7.3 percent and we are facing mass retirements of baby-boomers, leading to a combination of fewer workers to create economic growth and more demand on government, largely related to health care and other needs of the elderly.

All these ingredients, put together, are a recipe for another global recession. What Yukoners want to know is: what is the Premier's plan?

What is the Premier's plan to shelter our territory as much as possible from the real possibility of another global recession?

**Hon. Mr. Pasloski:** You know, the answer to that question is quite simple, and it really exists within our platform. The fact is that we do have a strong economy, and we have just actually just gone through, in 2008 and 2009, the

worst recession that this world has seen since the Dirty Thirties.

What we did with that is to come out of that essentially unscathed. We have money in the bank, and we have net positive financial resources, meaning that we haven't borrowed today for tomorrow's future. We are in a very positive spot and what we plan to do is continue to keep this economy moving forward, and that is the best recipe for success.

**Mr. Elias:** I'll be gentle, Mr. Speaker. If the Yukon Party is pointing to their platform or their throne speech, it was about as exciting as an empty-net goal in hockey is, as I said the other day. I surely hope the Premier realizes that what happens in Greece can affect the day-to-day lives of Yukoners.

Yes, we have weathered the storm before, but we need to hear a plan. What we don't need in our territory are people getting anxious about the economy and delaying their spending or purchases.

What I want to hear from the Premier today is some reassurance that he does have a plan and that Yukoners will see new investments in infrastructure, especially in rural Yukon, the true diversification of our economy, investments in training and trades and technology, education and innovation and strategies to maintain business investment. That's what I want to hear from the Premier.

What contingency plans does the government have in the case of a global recession, and can the Premier make those plans public?

**Hon. Mr. Pasloski:** Mr. Speaker, we'll leave the hockey analogies for another day, but just keep the elbows down.

I would like to say that there are a lot of answers to that question and we only have a few seconds to answer. Again, I will refer the interim Liberal leader to our platform, because it truly describes where we are and how we will continue to be successful going forward.

One of the major things that we have done in the last few years has been investment in infrastructure. Infrastructure not only creates stability and quality of life for Yukoners going forward, but it also creates jobs for Yukoners today as well.

We're also investing in diversifying our economy — film and sound, outfitting, tourism. The list goes on and on.

Ensuring that we have a strong economy to ensure that we can continue to see the quality of life of Yukoners and opportunities for Yukoners continue is a priority for this government.

**Question re: Dawson City recreation centre**

**Mr. Silver:** I have a question for the Minister of Finance about the future of recreation infrastructure in Dawson. In September of this year, the former Yukon MLA for Klondike and the former Yukon Party minister held a sod-turning ceremony to mark the beginning of construction of a new recreation centre. In the recent election campaign, the Premier came to Dawson and told people that they were getting a new recreation centre if they voted for the Yukon Party. The Yukon Party platform said this government would — and I quote: "invest in the improvements to recreation infrastructure in Dawson City".

The budget tabled last week contained no money to move this project forward. Why did the Premier promise my community a new rec centre and then not fund it?

**Hon. Ms. Taylor:** I want to point out for the member opposite very clearly that this government is indeed very committed to working with the City of Dawson as well as all Yukon municipal governments in addressing their respective recreational facility needs.

In fact, we have been doing just that over the last number of years with the City of Dawson. As the member opposite may or may not be aware, we do have a \$4-million contribution agreement in place between the Yukon government and the City of Dawson for respective safety repairs and upgrades to the current recreation facility. It's an agreement that has been in place since 2009. We do remain committed to working in collaboration with the mayor and council and with the citizens of the community of Dawson to ensure that the recreational facility needs today and tomorrow are indeed met.

**Mr. Silver:** I'm very happy to hear the minister say that their government is committed to a new rec centre. That \$4 million earmarked is going to be spent on the current building which shouldn't have been built where it was built and was fundamentally flawed from the beginning.

Being open and accountable means answering questions that are addressed to you — to the Premier, the member of the government who came to Dawson and made this commitment. In September, a former minister's statement said — and I quote: "In the next two or three years, you will see a building."

In the middle of the campaign, the Premier visited Dawson and repeated this comment. That project will not happen without sufficient financial contributions from this government.

If it is going to be constructed in two or three years, that funding has to start flowing now. We are not talking about \$4 million.

Why is there no money in the budget tabled last week to get this building going?

**Hon. Ms. Taylor:** Again I will reiterate for the member opposite that the government is indeed committed to continuing to work with the City of Dawson and all Yukon municipal governments across the territory in addressing the future and present recreation facility needs in the territory.

When it comes to investments within the Klondike region, this government has been investing significant amounts of dollars toward health care, toward the arts, toward sewage treatment, toward education, and the list goes on. When one only looks at the list of initiatives that we have been funding through infrastructure development funding initiatives such as the Building Canada fund, municipal rural infrastructure fund, gas tax money, this government has been investing to the tune of over \$45 million within the City of Dawson. That does not include the level of investment toward a new hospital within the City of Dawson or toward the new School of Visual Arts, and the list goes on.

So indeed this government is committed to meeting the needs of all Yukon municipal governments and we really look forward to working with the mayor and council in this regard.

**Mr. Silver:** Mr. Speaker, it's very disappointing to hear the government backing away from this particular commitment so early in its mandate. It is also disappointing to see that the Premier refuses to answer questions directed to him. At the November 7 meeting in Dawson, a member of the city recreation board told residents that nothing concrete was going to happen for several years. People are leaving our community.

The budget tabled last week by this government confirms that. The amount of money set aside to work on the new building is not there. Why is the government not moving forward on this project as it promised the residents it would only a couple of months ago?

**Hon. Ms. Taylor:** Mr. Speaker, I'll remind the member opposite that this is indeed the first supplementary budget within a five-year mandate of this Government of Yukon. We were just re-elected for the third consecutive mandate just short of two months ago.

Mr. Speaker, again, I don't know how to make myself more clear for the member opposite.

The Yukon government does look forward to working with the mayor and council and all municipal governments in terms of meeting the future and present facility needs of this particular municipality and all others, as I have just articulated.

As I mentioned before, the Government of Yukon has made significant investment in terms of infrastructure, and we are committed to doing just that. It is outlined within our platform in terms of all of our future commitments. We do have a five-year mandate. It will take time to meet all our commitments, but we look forward to it, and we do so on a track record.

#### **Question re: Homelessness**

**Ms. White:** Mr. Speaker, a group of eight non-government organizations in Whitehorse — the Northern City Supportive Housing Coalition — plan to help tackle the crisis for the hard-to-house in Whitehorse. The coalition's objectives were to provide the homeless population in the downtown core of Whitehorse with safe, affordable housing and with programming to alleviate the adverse effects of mental illness and substance abuse.

This group has taken on the government's professed policy of social inclusion and applied it with compassion and practicality. The coalition wrote and promoted a detailed proposal and business plan. They have now given up because of the lack of response from this government.

Will the minister responsible for the Yukon Housing Corporation advise the House what he intends to do with this proposal?

**Hon. Mr. Kent:** As I mentioned earlier in Question Period, Mr. Speaker, the previous government has made substantial investments in affordable housing with 127 new units built between 2009 and 2011.

The corporation is directly helping over 1,700 Yukon clients and their families to achieve a better quality of life. There are a number of different proposals that were put forward to the previous government that we're evaluating and looking at right now. Working with the Minister of Health and Social Services,



the Yukon Housing Corporation is evaluating a number of those proposals.

Again, the number of people that we're helping is approximately 4,250, through not only the social housing and the staff housing, but also our loans programs. So we are making a difference in the lives of Yukoners who require that access to housing. But again, as I stated earlier today in Question Period, there still is work that needs to be accomplished, and it's something that we look forward to moving on in the very near future.

**Ms. White:** I appreciate the efforts that the government is going through, but what I'm talking about is the hard-to-house. Housing First models have been implemented elsewhere and have proven extremely successful. This is not a new idea. This has been accomplished in other jurisdictions. The Northern City Supportive Housing Coalition is proposing a concrete solution to the complex problems this government faces with the hard-to-house. The reduction in emergency room use, ambulance calls, RCMP and court involvement alone will have a very positive effect on our ever-expanding budgets in Justice and Health and Social Services.

More importantly, this idea increases the potential for these people to become productive and self-supporting members of Yukon society. If this new facility is not going to happen due to this government's lack of political will, the minister should offer some other solution to the extreme situation many people find themselves in this winter.

Will the minister advise this House what this government's immediate plans are to meet the needs of the hard-to-house in the territory?

**Hon. Mr. Graham:** I'll take responsibility for answering this one. We are currently, as my colleague has mentioned, evaluating a number of proposals. The first proposal that we will be working toward is the renovation of 207 Alexander Street, turning that into dual-purpose housing, not only for the hard-to-house, but another section of our population as well. So that's the one where we're currently working toward implementing first of all.

**Ms. White:** This government is fond of talking about the collaboration between the various territorial government departments and non-profit organizations. We applaud their efforts. Social inclusion certainly demands that at least the departments of Health and Social Services, Justice, Education, and the Yukon Housing Corporation work together cooperatively and collaboratively to address the needs of the hard-to-house.

The dilemma of having no shelter is facing dozens of people who will end up living on the street or in the bush, regardless of the weather. I appreciate that 207 Alexander is not the immediate solution for the people I am speaking of.

Has the minister responsible for the Housing Corporation met with his colleagues to discuss how the government plans to respond to this dire situation?

**Hon. Mr. Graham:** As I said, we are working together with the Yukon Housing Corporation and other departments within the government on this problem. The first in the series is 207 Alexander. We are also looking at a number of

other possibilities; however, they haven't progressed to the state where we are willing to come out and say this is next on our list. We just got here. We are trying to evaluate the proposals as best we can and, of course, funding is a difficulty as well. All of those things must be put together and we are in the process of doing that.

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

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### CONSIDERATION OF SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

**Hon. Mr. Cathers:** I wish to inform the House pursuant to the provisions of Standing Order 26(2), that consideration of a motion for an address in reply to the Speech from the Throne, if not concluded today, will take place on Tuesday, December 6, 2011.

### ADDRESS IN REPLY TO THE SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

**Ms. McLeod:** I move

THAT the following address be presented to the Commissioner of Yukon:

MAY IT PLEASE THE COMMISSIONER: We, the Members of the Yukon Legislative Assembly, beg leave to offer our humble thanks for the gracious Speech which you have addressed to the House.

**Speaker:** It has been moved by the Member for Watson Lake that the following address be presented to the Commissioner of Yukon:

MAY IT PLEASE THE COMMISSIONER: We, the Members of the Yukon Legislative Assembly, beg leave to offer our humble thanks for the gracious Speech which you have addressed to the House.

**Ms. McLeod:** It's with great humility that I rise to address this House as MLA for the Watson Lake riding. I'm greatly honoured by the faith and the trust placed in me by the people of Watson Lake to represent them over the next few years. I'm blessed to have the support of a great many people, especially those dedicated volunteers who worked tirelessly to make sure that we were successful in our election campaign and did their part to ensure that the Yukon Party was successful in forming the next government. This was the strength of our belief in the direction the Yukon Party government has taken in the last two terms.

Watson Lake is the gateway to the Yukon, so it's only fitting that, as their representative, I'm allowed to speak first. The finest thing about southeast Yukon after the clean water, air and ample space for individual pursuits, is its people.

We're passionate about our lives, our towns and every person participates in maintaining our vibrant sense of community.

My home community of Watson Lake thrives because of its volunteers. The many hard-working volunteers provide a wide range of services to the community, and indeed are a forceful sector of the economy. These volunteer organizations

pay wages, which turns into people paying taxes. They and their employees purchase goods and services in Watson Lake and, of course, it must be noted that the business community supports these organizations each and every year, all year, with donations of time, space and goods.

These volunteer organizations donate incalculable hours to deliver programs, such as the women and children's shelter, second-stage housing, childcare programs, therapeutic programs and recreational and social activities for all ages. These organizations provide these essential services very effectively and efficiently and, no doubt, at a lesser cost than government is able to. I believe that volunteers deserve all the support that government can provide.

Many parts of Watson Lake are still served by wells and septic systems. Continually evolving rules and regulations make it difficult for homeowners to keep on top of the changes and, at times, they only fully realize the difficult position they're in when it comes time to sell their homes. Most recognize the need for rules and regulations to keep up with new science and technology and are happy enough to comply.

Government needs to make sure the message is getting out to the people and to work with the citizens to bring their systems into compliance.

Other parts of Watson Lake are serviced through the municipal water and sewer system, and our municipality faces great challenges due to our aging infrastructure. The reservoir requires expansion, filtration needs upgrading, new wells are needed, pumphouses need upgrading, and certainly most of the existing sewer and water lines need repair or replacing.

We are pleased to have been approved for funding in the amount of \$3.5 million through Build Canada; however, the financial cost to bring our community up to a satisfactory level of safety and efficiency is about five or six times that amount. The challenges are great and the Yukon government has been working with the Town of Watson Lake to address some of them. For that, I thank the departments and ministers involved and look forward to a continued, cooperative relationship.

Our town and those off the grid create electricity using diesel — a lot of diesel. A highway lodge owner tells me that he may have to finally close his lodge because he cannot afford to operate his generators. It's time to look at other options, and I support the resolve to diversify our power production. Many residents and businesses in the Watson Lake area are switching to biomass heating systems and this opens up new opportunities for suppliers.

There is much support for hydroelectric projects and we look forward to further discussions on this.

Restoring air service to Watson Lake continues to be of prime importance to southeast Yukon. Watson Lakers are pleased that Air North is looking at the business case for this, and we are looking forward to the assistance and commitment from government that may be required to make this a reality. Without air service, we are truly isolated.

Like many small northern towns, Watson Lake has a few social issues. I'm strongly supportive of the government's commitment to increasing services to assist those in need of help to address drug and alcohol addictions. While the throne

speech speaks to upgraded services — largely in the Whitehorse area — it's clear that this great drain on our society must be addressed throughout the Yukon. I'm sure that given the ongoing improvements to the services offered, the future will bring a measure of assistance to all Yukoners wherever they are.

As unique as our communities are, so must be our solutions to our communities' issues. And, like other communities, Watson Lake has grave concerns around the attraction of doctors to our town. We welcome the government's commitment to ensuring that our citizens have access to the medical care they need. We thank the government and the Yukon Hospital Corporation for their commitment to ensuring that Watson Lake has a fully functioning and equipped hospital. The people of Watson Lake are looking forward to having more of their needs looked after in their home community and to the increased diagnostic abilities that a fully functioning hospital can provide.

Programs intended to help seniors stay in their own homes as long as possible are beneficial to those seniors. It is a difficult decision for them to have to acknowledge that it is time to leave their long-time home. 2011 saw the opening of the 12-unit seniors residence in Watson Lake. It is a beautiful housing unit and the seniors who have relocated there are loving it. It will take some time to fill it up with seniors, but they are making the move and last month one more senior took up residence.

I am pleased that the throne speech referenced making improvements to daycare funding and training of workers. Daycare is an essential service and it is an integral part of assisting people in entering and remaining in the workforce. It is a drawing card in their decision to upgrade their skills by attending school. It has long been accepted that one of the features of a healthy, early learning environment is to have childcare centres staffed with persons who have specialized training in the childcare field. However, there is an extreme shortage of people who have a certificate in early childhood education. It is very difficult to entice workers to work in such a high stress area and attend night classes to upgrade their education while barely receiving a living wage.

Any work we can do to improve the situation is a good move forward. Childcare centres have struggled long and hard to provide this essential service while trying to balance the needs of the users and the workers.

Providing education in a small town is a challenge. Generally, the student populations are lower, but this certainly doesn't lessen the need for quality education for all. Cutting teacher positions — as has happened in Watson Lake — strictly based on teacher/student ratios is not the way to go, in my opinion. The existing method of determining teacher positions is outdated and does not reflect the reality of teaching children with a mixed bag of issues. We are all aware of and accept that children diagnosed with FAS, autism, and other disorders need a greater level of support in order for them to be successful in the school system. Behavioural problems are just as draining on the teaching staff and affect the learning process for all students.

We must ensure that schools have the help and support they need so that we can improve our children's literacy and learning abilities and thereby improve their chances of success in further education and in the workforce. I'm encouraged that the throne speech speaks to enhancing early learning options for our children and surely, working together, we can find solutions.

Mr. Speaker, our government has much work to do to implement the initiatives outlined in the Yukon Party platform, and I look forward to working with my colleagues to move forward together.

**Ms. Hanson:** Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to stand in my place as a Member of the Legislative Assembly representing Whitehorse Centre, to reply to the Speech from the Throne for the 33<sup>rd</sup> Legislative Assembly.

I congratulate Premier Pasloski and his colleagues for their success in the 2011 election campaign. He and many of his fellow Yukon Party caucus members are new to the Legislative Assembly and new to government. As Leader of the Official Opposition, I look forward to getting to know each of them and to working with each on issues that matter to Yukoners.

The Premier and I have not yet had many occasions to meet, but when we have, we have agreed that one thing we share in common is an understanding that Yukoners expect us to represent them honestly, fairly and collegially.

It is no secret that, as Leader of the Yukon New Democratic Party, my views on many issues will diverge from those of the Premier. My job and his job is to find bridges between our views so that the interest of all Yukoners is served. The key distinction in our positions is my obligation to all Yukoners to hold the governing party to account on their behalf. I, along with my caucus in the Official Opposition, take this charge seriously.

Under our system of democracy, it is the key role of the opposition to hold those in power to account, to scrutinize legislation, to question their spending priorities and practices, to challenge them to do a better job for Yukoners. A government is wise to listen to the opposition, for we are here to improve a government's performance. The Yukon NDP has been on both sides of this Legislative Assembly. In opposition, the NDP caucus has a proud history of getting results for the public. In the last nine years, the NDP in opposition has been able to push the government in the right direction on a number of matters — for example, civil forfeiture. Along with the public, the NDP helped convince the previous government not to rush ahead with this controversial plan. The social inclusion strategy — it was really the NDP under Todd Hardy who got this initiative off the ground by pushing for an anti-poverty social inclusion summit. I remind the members opposite of the *Smoke-Free Places Act*. It is very rare that a private member's bill becomes law, but the NDP in opposition did just that.

The Yukon public can expect the Official Opposition to take strong stands to be an ethical and positive voice in the Legislative Assembly, to work with the government while holding them accountable to the public. I'm also pleased to welcome back to the Legislative Assembly the Member for

Vuntut Gwitchin and to welcome the newly elected Member for Klondike.

I am very proud to be joined in this House by my colleagues in the NDP Official Opposition. To a person, they are dedicated, committed and so very prepared to serve their constituents and all Yukoners as members of a loyal opposition.

Mr. Speaker, when after a 30-year career in public service, I decided three years ago to put my name forward for the leadership of the Yukon New Democratic Party, I anticipated that there would be challenges, but Mr. Speaker, I expected those challenges to be the rough and tumble of politics. The challenges of the last 18 months have been unexpectedly personal as well as political. Less than a year ago, Mr. Speaker, I was a candidate in a by-election for the riding of Whitehorse Centre; a by-election necessitated by the passing of my predecessor, friend and respected colleague, Todd Hardy. Almost five months ago to this day, July 6 to be exact, Mr. Speaker, my trusted friend, colleague and Legislative mentor, Steve Cardiff, was killed in a horrific car crash. On August 22, Yukoners joined Canadians across the country to mourn the death of the national leader of the New Democratic Party, Jack Layton. And yesterday, I joined with friends and family of John Edzerza, a former colleague in this House, to mark his passing. The celebration of his life was that of a man whose life mirrored the challenges often faced by First Nations members of our society.

It has been a challenging time for all New Democrats. I believe Yukon New Democrats have risen to the challenge set by Jack Layton in his letter to Canadians when he asked us all to recommit with energy and determination to our work. Remember our proud history of social justice, universal health care, public pensions and make sure no one is left behind and continue to move forward to demonstrate in everything we do in the four years before us that we are ready to serve. Like the legendary phoenix, we rise again, renewed and ready to begin again, stronger in our resolve to serve.

Mr. Speaker, I did not face the challenges of the emotional roller coaster of the past 18 months alone. I want to acknowledge the love and support of my husband, Douglas Mowat, who has steadfastly supported my decision to radically change our retirement plans, although I am sure there are days he wishes we were off on some other type of adventure, especially on dark winter days like today. His commitment to social justice is deep and he knows that what I do, I do out of our shared conviction for change that benefits all Yukoners. My daughters, Paula and Sarah, have provided inspiration, love and support and I thank them both. In fact, it was Sarah's decision to run for election in the 2008 Alberta election as a New Democrat in a rural Alberta riding that led me to reconsider my pursuit of happiness as a retiree.

Doug and I drove down to Camrose to help out in the campaign, something we had never done before. I was born and raised in Alberta. Over the years, I have been aware of the changes occurring in my home province, but I was unprepared for the stark reality of the impact of those changes. Albertans have a reputation for being outspoken risk-takers. The truth is that after many years of domination by one party, the province has become a place of haves and have-nots and a place where

the outgoing premier admitted there was no plan and that maybe the frenzied pace of development in the tar sands was a mistake — where the province, 60 years after the beginning of the oil boom, finally completed a framework for land use planning — not a plan, but a framework to guide how to mitigate the damage done in the intervening years of unrestricted development. A province famed for its wide open spaces has become a place where landowners' rights are trampled daily by industry backed by the government. The atmosphere was one of fear — speaking out might be to risk what little one had. I had the eerie realization that Yukon was on the cusp of falling into the same trap as my home province. I felt, and feel obliged, to stand up and say no — no to bullying Yukoners. That is essentially what I have witnessed the Yukon Party do in the past as government and has done to us as citizens.

So I felt compelled to speak out and to engage with my fellow Yukoners because, as a New Democrat, I know that Yukoners have a collective wisdom that can guide this territory to achieve great things for all Yukoners, not just a select few.

I know this because history has shown that when asked for their views, they respond with enthusiasm and careful thought. Proof of this is the legacy of previous New Democratic governments, which set the foundation for much that we as Yukoners take for granted. Yukoners were asked to share their vision for the Yukon. Not only were they listened to, but their ideas were transformed into real and lasting action, from significant legislation still in place today — such as the *Health Act*, the *Education Act*, the *Environment Act* and human rights legislation — to programs such as the mining incentive program, small business incentive programs, the community development fund, institutions such as Yukon College, the Yukon Arts Centre, the Yukon native teacher education program, and many, many more foundations for good government in Yukon — and all done without once having a government deficit.

I fundamentally believe that Yukoners have much to offer in developing a new vision for the Yukon in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It is time to engage in real conversations within and across the Yukon community to create a Yukon that reflects and acknowledges that the very foundations of Yukon have changed with the settlement of most land claims and with the devolution of provincial-like responsibility to the Yukon.

As Leader of the Official Opposition, I have begun that dialogue and will continue to do so over the coming months and years.

Mr. Speaker, I am both humbled and proud to stand here as a New Democrat, as the Leader of the Official Opposition and as MLA for Whitehorse Centre. The legacy of dedicated New Democrat representation for Whitehorse Centre is long. In addition to Todd Hardy, Roger Kimmerly, Joyce Hayden, Margaret Commodore — who you will remember as the first aboriginal woman Minister of Justice in Canada — also served Whitehorse Centre and all demonstrated a strong commitment to the New Democratic principles of equality, democracy, sustainability, community and cooperation — principles that are more than just words. They are the measure of every initiative we undertake and support on behalf of Yukoners. They are the principles that have guided New Democrats, whether we are in

government or when we are in opposition. They are the principles that have guided us when we worked across party lines or supported government initiatives because they were the right thing to do for Yukoners.

Mr. Speaker, over the course of the past months, I have had the opportunity to talk with many Yukoners. In particular, I have spoken with many of the residents of Whitehorse Centre. Going through two elections in less than a year has given me a unique opportunity to spend a lot of time in contact with the people of this dynamic riding. Having received the support of 63 percent of the voters, I am determined to work to maintain the trust of those who voted for me and to earn the trust of those who did not.

Whitehorse Centre stretches from the banks of the Yukon River to the clay cliffs and along Robert Service Way to the Marwell Industrial Area. Whitehorse Centre is an extremely diverse riding. It's home to light industrial and service industries, arts and cultural organizations, the only full immersion elementary school in the Yukon, bookstores, box stores and independent businesses, art galleries, carving studios, coffee shops, bicycle shops, a Harley shop, feed stores, medical practitioners of every sort, fine restaurants and the Weenie Wagon, high-tech industries and those that are decidedly low-tech. Whitehorse Centre has it all.

Whitehorse Centre is also home to several levels of government: the Ta'an Kwäch'än First Nation, the City of Whitehorse and, of course, this Legislative Assembly are all situated within the boundaries of Whitehorse Centre. Many, if not most, non-government and service organizations are also headquartered in Whitehorse Centre. All that being said, it is the people who make Whitehorse Centre a unique amalgam of all that is Yukon. I am honoured to represent First Nation people, francophones, long-time residents and recent immigrants.

One of the uniting factors of Whitehorse Centre is pride of place. As you wander about the riding, you realize that over the years, Whitehorse Centre, whether it is downtown or in Marwell, has developed a number of communities within the community. I look forward to serving them.

As I was reminded by one of my constituents, Audrey McLaughlin — who knows a thing or two about politics — citizens need to remind us regularly as politicians that they are the boss, and so it should be.

Today, we are reflecting on the Speech from the Throne for the First Session of the 33<sup>rd</sup> Yukon Legislative Assembly. We look forward to hearing the throne speech — the newly elected government's vision for this territory — and their plan to translate that vision into reality over the term of their office.

So as I listened to the Commissioner set out the Yukon Party government's vision last week, and despite the government's use of that word, there really was no vision and it saddened me. I expected more from a new Premier of a new government. Or, maybe there is a vision, but it's not to be found in a document or throne speech.

I am concerned, as I said earlier, that it's a vision similar to Alberta, of unfettered development; that it's a vision of prosperity for some, but not all; that it's top-down; that it's a status-quo vision. In truth, Mr. Speaker, the speech bore an uncanny

resemblance to the two previous Yukon Party Speeches from the Throne. The repetition of campaign promises from 2002 and 2006 were striking.

Prior to the calling of this 33<sup>rd</sup> Session of the Yukon Legislative Assembly, I met with the Premier for a general conversation on our approach to the session.

In that meeting, I told him that he can expect me to be hard on the issues and principled in my dealings with him and his colleagues. That does not mean that I or any of the NDP caucus will back down from vigorous debate or questioning the decisions made by this government that are not in the best interest of Yukoners. In the spirit of cooperative engagement that Yukoners expect of their elected representatives, the New Democratic Official Opposition will be offering the government suggestions and proposals that, if pursued, will allow them to exercise their responsibility to govern on behalf of all Yukoners and to realize a vision for an equitable and prosperous Yukon where no one is left behind.

In the Speech from the Throne, this government acknowledged that both housing and land availability have been identified as pressing challenges. Today, too many Yukoners are grappling with major housing problems, from having difficulty paying the rent or making the next mortgage payment or being homeless. The lack of available, affordable housing is one of the most serious failures over the nine years of Yukon Party government. During their two terms in office, vacancy rates remained low and the supply of land for any type of residential development continues to be in short supply. As a result, housing prices have skyrocketed, and this is not just a Whitehorse problem. It is a Yukon-wide problem.

This is hurting our economy, as employers can't recruit and retain the staff necessary to run their businesses. The Yukon Party is fond of saying that when it came to power in 2002, 3,000 Yukoners — our young people; our prime labour force — left Yukon to find work Outside. Well, today young people and families are leaving the territory to work in places where housing is available and affordable.

The current government has studied the housing issue endlessly but has failed to act on most of the excellent recommendations from various organizations and studies. We can do better. We can increase the housing options by implementing recommendations in *A Home for Everyone: A Housing Action Plan for Whitehorse* — this report is one of the 13 studies in housing done over the last five years, I might add — and by adapting them to apply to the whole Yukon.

One of the benefits of the work done over the last five years by Yukon non-government agencies and volunteers committed to addressing the serious social issues is that a significant body of evidence-based research and best practices and experience gleaned from initiatives elsewhere has been gathered. So it was a surprise to hear in the Speech from the Throne that the government decided to increase capacity of the Salvation Army shelter as well as support for options for independent living. New Democrats do not doubt the sincerity of the dedicated staff and volunteers of these organizations, but we do think that there are valid questions to be raised as to the basis

for the decision taken as it appears to have been done in a social policy vacuum.

I raise it today, Mr. Speaker, because we've seen in the past how the Yukon Party seeks the views of the not-for-profit sector and the public and then ignores the input. And we have seen the criticism levied by the Auditor General toward the Yukon Party governments in the past for taking decisions without sound policy rationale or a business case in place.

Mr. Speaker, today this House paid tribute to Steve Cardiff for his long-standing and passionate advocacy for the most vulnerable members of Yukon's community. Steve could not understand how the Yukon Party could promise time and time again to provide a youth shelter in Whitehorse, as well as to create and increase the number of emergency transitional second-stage and supported housing spaces for persons at risk, and never deliver. Today, I'm putting the government on notice that we expect them to deliver on these promises this time, unlike the failure to deliver over the last nine years.

Mr. Speaker, what was most noticeable about the Speech from the Throne was what was not in it. Nowhere to be found was any reference to the long-awaited social inclusion strategy. This was an initiative the NDP championed and were pleased to support because we know that all the studies and evidence-based research shows that when we begin to address the inequality in a real way, we begin to build a socially and economically inclusive society. Also missing was any reference to the 40-year-old *Landlord and Tenant Act*.

The report of the select committee of the Legislature said the act should be revised to incorporate best practices in residential tenancy legislation from across Canada. The Yukon Party platform acknowledged the need to act on this, and the Official Opposition encourages the new government to enact a new residential tenancy act in its first year following the recommendations of the select committee of the Legislature to provide a legal framework for rental homes distinct from the rules for commercial or agricultural properties. The new act must clearly outline the rights and responsibilities of both landlords and tenants, and it will require basic health and safety standards to be met in all rental units.

The Speech from the Throne is also threadbare in reference to education. Yukon New Democrats are committed to having an education system that is creative and flexible, and that provides the relevant tools for Yukoners to succeed in their working lives and in their communities. We believe that excellence in education for Yukoners should be guided by the *Education Act*, which was passed by a New Democratic government and reads: Yukoners expect their government to work to close the gap in educational outcomes, to eliminate barriers to education and support innovative programs that prepare the citizens of the future to build a prosperous, compassionate Yukon. The Yukon Party has failed to provide Yukoners and their families with the kind of public education system they want and need.

The Auditor General reported that high school graduation rates are lower in the Yukon than most of Canada. She also noted that the Department of Education was unable to demonstrate that the public school system is adequately preparing students for the shift from high school to post-secondary educa-

tion or training in trades. The Official Opposition will encourage the government to commit to improving classroom education and outcomes by implementing the recommendations of the Auditor General by setting specific targets for graduation rates and grade achievement levels for all students, and closing the gap for First Nation students by preparing students for the shift from high school to post-secondary education or training in trades by implementing a long-term facilities management plan that takes into account the condition and capacity of each school and by restoring the partnerships in education which featured respectful relationships with educators and the Yukon Teachers Association, parents and students, First Nations, the Commission scolaire francophone du Yukon, school councils and Yukon College.

This morning, the government broke its first promise of its new mandate. Just over three months ago, on the eve of an election, the Premier and then Education minister unveiled a self-congratulatory sign at the site of the new F.H. Collins Secondary School. The government told Yukoners that the new school would be completed in September 2013.

According to a government news release issued today, the completion date has been pushed back to the fall of 2015 to ensure that the building design meets long-term space and educational needs and to allow, again, for the potential inclusion of geothermal heating. Geothermal heating was an original design element that was eliminated in the Yukon Party government's rush to erect a new sign and host another sod-turning ceremony less than two weeks before the territorial election.

Ensuring the new F.H. Collins Secondary School meets the long-term space needs and student learning requirements is an admirable goal and including geothermal heating in the building design is the right thing to do, but today's enhancement begs an obvious question: why did the government not consider these things in August when it rushed to make a pre-campaign announcement?

While the Yukon Party has made vague promises to turn Yukon College into a northern university, we will continue to encourage the government to support circumpolar and the university of northern initiatives. In addition, the Yukon New Democratic Party will continue to focus on the importance of expanding and improving early childhood education programs, which will improve school readiness, student experience and outcomes.

As Yukon embraces the challenges and opportunities of economic development, this Yukon government must increase and support community-based literacy and numeracy initiatives, to ensure that Yukoners are ready to take on new job opportunities.

In an ever-changing economic environment, we will be calling upon the Yukon government to develop new flexible training programs targeting those who are already employed so that they can upgrade their skills, improve wages and be more productive.

It should go without argument that there is a need for this government to build upon various school-based initiatives, such as the anti-bullying campaign. We will encourage the government to develop and implement a diversity policy in public and

post-secondary learning centres to promote understanding, reduce discrimination, combat violence and provide safe schools where all students feel safe and welcome.

Members of the Official Opposition were pleased to have an opportunity to tour the new Whitehorse corrections facility last week. I thank the ministers of Justice and Highways and Public Works for arranging that visit. But, as Leader of the Official Opposition, I would be remiss if I did not point out the importance of the Yukon Party government taking a clear stance against the Harper government's omnibus crime legislation, commonly referred to as Bill C-10. Yukon New Democrats applaud the advances that have been made in the Yukon to bring a positive approach to community safety and restorative justice. All that we as Yukoners have worked so hard to achieve in terms of restorative justice is put in peril by the Harper ideologically-driven, fact-bereft, hard-on-crime legislation.

New Democrats believe that everyone must play a part in the solution if the root causes of crime are to be addressed. We stand behind our belief of personal responsibility and accountability. However, we also recognize the validity of the concerns raised by the Canadian Bar Association and many other organizations with respect to Bill C-10. We will again urge the Yukon Minister of Justice to work with his federal, provincial and territorial counterparts to support the Canadian Bar Association in its call for amendments to the proposed federal criminal sentencing laws contained in C-10, and especially those that would address and accommodate the disability known as fetal alcohol spectrum disorder. It should not be treated as criminal, but should be recognized as a disability.

Another important matter not referenced in the throne speech was the review of the Yukon's police force that was set up in response to the death in custody of Raymond Silverfox. The policing review and the accompanying Task Force on Acutely Intoxicated Persons at Risk set out some important principles that could and should guide policies and programs in this area. Yukoners again invested much time and energy and good faith in the process leading to these reports. As the Official Opposition, we will hold the government to account to develop an implementation strategy, in consultation with First Nations and women's groups, to respond to the recommendations contained in the report, *Sharing Common Ground — Review of Yukon's Police Force — Final Report*.

Community policing and greater visibility are two important elements to strengthen relationships at the community level between police and the communities and people they serve. This is particularly important in my riding of Whitehorse Centre, where I have had many conversations with people about their perceptions that they are not safe at night, that seniors are afraid to walk alone and, as we saw this summer, that sexual assaults continue to occur. The NDP believe that the policing contract should ensure that the RCMP meets the expectations of Yukon people and communities. There needs to be increased accountability and performance measures with outcomes built into the contract services and this needs to be matched with strong roles with a new police council and public complaints body.

Mr. Speaker, Yukon health care is the fastest growing aspect of the Yukon budget. The previous Yukon Party government received a scathing rebuke from the Office of the Auditor General this year on all aspects of its management of health care. So it was disappointing to see scant acknowledgement of the challenges of delivering effective health care to and for Yukoners.

Restating the decision to build hospitals, adding in a new element of a new emergency ward for Whitehorse General Hospital, begs the question: has this new Yukon Party government actually paid any attention to the studies, the reports, the public consultations? And has it any intention to act based on solid, research-based evidence? Or, are we embarking on more politically-motivated and costly spending? Where there are challenges, there are also opportunities.

At the risk of being overly optimistic, I will assume, at least for the time being, that the Premier and his colleagues do want to make the system work for patients, clients, workers and health care professionals. I will assume that the Premier understands that with more emphasis on wellness and prevention, on client-centred approaches like collaborative care through an increased role of nurse practitioners and community-based clinics, and action — not avoidance — on the recommendations of reports and studies, that we will find that we are better able to provide more cost-effective health care. And I will go out on a limb and assume that the new Minister of Finance will direct that any public building project will be built based on the evidence and needs, not on political calculation.

The Canadian Institute for Health Information has stated as recently as this past week that the three major cost-drivers for health care are doctors, drugs and diagnostics.

The throne speech makes reference to two of these. Absent was an area that I would have expected the Premier to take on as a priority, and that is the escalating cost of prescription drugs and the antiquated legislation governing pharmacy in the Yukon. Another glaring omission from the government's stated priorities is any mention of how or if mental health will be addressed. New Democrats believe mental health must be included as part of a collaborative health care model. Government must act to address the fragmented way different departments and agencies seem to deal with this issue and we will be pressing this government to demonstrate how it is providing service for children and youth as a priority as well as ensuring services are provided in communities outside of Whitehorse.

New Democrats understand that intoxication and/or addiction must be dealt with as a health and social issue and not a justice issue. We will be carefully encouraging the Minister of Health and Social Services to make sure that the initiatives suggested in the throne speech are the result of evidence-based analysis to determine the appropriate service necessary, including prevention, harm reduction, medical detoxification services, counselling, residential treatment and after-care.

Guided by the belief that all persons are to be treated with compassion and dignity in a non-judgmental manner and by the recommendations of the Task Force on Acutely Intoxicated Persons at Risk, New Democrats will support initiatives that: (1) adopt a harm-reduction approach; (2) result in the creation

of a 24-hour accessible shelter near a sobering centre detox facility; and (3) result in the creation of a sobering centre in downtown Whitehorse where acutely intoxicated persons at risk are taken when they are detained.

Mr. Speaker, I have already commented on the notable absence of any reference to the *Yukon Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Strategy* launched two years ago by the previous Yukon Party government. I hope that this is not indicative of a lack of political will to tackle complex and interrelated problems. Poverty is consistently linked to poor health, lower literacy, poor school performance for children, more crime, greater public health care costs, increased policing costs, lost productivity and foregone economic activity. It costs us all, Mr. Speaker.

Poverty reduction is much less costly than allowing poverty to continue and paying for the consequences. Research has been done on the cost of poverty reduction in the Yukon and the cost of poverty in the Yukon. We do not need more research; we need action and we will work with the government to expand involvement and engage the public through a more open and transparent process, including the public release of the research already completed such as *What We Heard* and the cost of poverty reports that were completed months ago and have not been made available publicly.

We will work with the government on initiatives they put forward to provide individuals and families in need with social assistance at rates that reflect real costs in all areas, not just food rates, and specifically ensure that the housing allocation allows clients to live in a safe, modest accommodation. I had the opportunity to do a brief walkabout with the Minister of Health and Social Services last week in one of the hotels commonly used by Yukoners on social assistance. I believe he knows that these accommodations are not adequate.

New Democrats were pleased to hear in the throne speech that this government is committed to protecting, preserving and celebrating Yukon's pristine environment, sensitive ecosystems and wilderness landscapes. The Official Opposition is also committed to holding this government accountable for all actions or inaction that has the potential to negatively impact on this precious legacy. Yukoners know that our wilderness is unique in the world. We know that abundant wildlife, vast wild lands and clean fish-rich waters have supported us for millennia. They are an important part of our identity, and our deep attachment to the Yukon's vast, sprawling landscape, from the Southern Lakes to the North Slope, are an important part of our history.

We also know that what we enjoy today should also be a vital part of our legacy for future generations. Today Yukoners throughout the territory are calling for greater respect for the values of conservation and protection and for actions that are based on the sound and responsible management of the Yukon environment. Yukoners support and seek sustainable development — development that knows and respects environmental limits and that will benefit all Yukoners today and in the years to come. Yukon New Democrats understand that. That is why a Yukon New Democratic government passed the Yukon *Environment Act* 20 years ago.

My experience has shown that for the last nine years, the Yukon Party has managed the Yukon's economy at the expense of the Yukon environment. The management approach has been simple: remove any and all obstacles to development where possible, including sound environmental controls, and ignore the voices of ordinary Yukoners, First Nations and advisory boards calling for greater environmental responsibility and caution.

The New Democratic Party Official Opposition pledges to work in cooperation with the Yukon government to implement a management approach for the Yukon's environment that belongs in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Anything short of that is unacceptable.

Another major gap in the throne speech was any reference to the Peel Watershed Planning Commission report and its recommendations, or, for that matter, to land use planning at all. The Peel watershed, including the Wind, Snake and Bonnet Plume rivers and the lands they flow through, are among the world's great wilderness landscapes. Establishment of a special management regime for this area is long overdue. The NDP supports and respects the land use planning processes that were negotiated in the *Umbrella Final Agreement*. We believe the Peel Watershed Planning Commission has found the right balance between preservation and development. We will continue to urge the government to accept and act on the recommendations of the final report of the Peel Watershed Planning Commission, to set aside 80 percent of the watershed as conservation areas.

Mr. Speaker, earlier I described the sorry situation that Alberta finds itself in with rampant development and the need for land use planning. They have finally come to the realization that the negotiators in Yukon did long ago over the course of many years at the table — namely, that land use plans help avoid or resolve land use conflicts. Land use plans manage uncontrolled development and bring certainty that land is used for the best purpose. The best purpose could be certain types of development or conservation. Land use plans in special management areas are guaranteed instruments in First Nation land claim agreements for managing development and the environment throughout the Yukon. After two terms in government, the Yukon Party has achieved little and alienated many. Land use planning and the establishment of special management areas, agreed to long ago in land claim agreements, are stalled due to a complete absence of political will.

Worse, the Yukon Party has rolled back the clock, I would say, in this area to the pre-land claims colonial past. The result has been enormous public frustration and uncertainty, extensive land-use conflicts and debate and a view by many First Nations that final agreement commitments have been broken. It is past time to make land use planning a government-wide priority by (1) expediting the process at the municipal, local and regional levels with full public involvement in decision-making; and (2) fully and effectively implementing the planning provisions of First Nations final land claim agreements.

The Yukon NDP believes that it is imperative to commit to a timetable for the completion of regional land use plans in accordance with chapter 11 of First Nation final agreements

and also identify approaches for land use planning where land claims are not yet settled.

The practice of the predecessor Yukon government has been to foist difficult decisions on to others. I hope this government will take a different course. But tonight, the City of Whitehorse council will be meeting to address a contentious issue. As Leader of the NDP, I do not quibble with the right of the municipal government to work within the framework of the City of Whitehorse's official community plan.

What I do find offensive is the fact that the Yukon Party has effectively created yet another crisis situation stemming from its failure to effectively work with all partners to address the growing demand for land for residential and commercial purposes. It fueled the fire by providing \$500,000 to the City of Whitehorse for planning work associated with Porter Creek D prior to finalizing its own work with respect to the determination of the extent of the endowment lands for Yukon College. The Yukon government owns this land and must work with the City of Whitehorse, Kwanlin Dun, Ta'an Kwäch'än Council and Yukon College to assist them, where appropriate, to protect the McIntyre Creek corridor in Whitehorse for its unique environmental, recreational, and educational qualities. It must do this before decisions are made about whether or not it should be developed for residential purposes.

I was pleased to see mention of a water strategy in the throne speech. I will suspend my cynicism as to whether the 33<sup>rd</sup> Legislative Assembly will actually see it, as neither the 31<sup>st</sup> nor 32<sup>nd</sup> saw fruits of previous promises to develop a comprehensive water strategy.

Controlled development helps ensure responsible development that respects environmental limits and protects environmental conditions. Over the last nine years, the Yukon Party has paid only lip service to environmental monitoring and enforcement of controls on development. Under-resourced government monitoring of land and water use and inadequate enforcement of permit conditions has created the potential for long-term, adverse environmental impacts.

Yukon New Democrats are committed to environmental monitoring enforcement that meets 21<sup>st</sup> century standards and practices. The Official Opposition calls upon the Yukon Party government to establish effective and efficient environmental monitoring and enforcement standards and practices that anticipate and keep pace with development so that Yukon people can be confident that regulations are followed and that significant environmental problems are avoided or effectively managed. We call upon the government to work cooperatively with industry to enhance government's capacity to monitor and inspect industrial, commercial or recreational uses of land and water to ensure better compliance with the regulatory regime and to implement best practices.

Mr. Speaker, we have heard time and time again that due to the high commodity prices the Yukon economy is experiencing rapid growth in all industrial sectors. The challenge for any government with an eye on the future is to take advantage of the current growth and plan for that future. Our current growth is spurred on by increased activity in the mining sector. We must prepare for the inevitable downturn in world metal prices.



Sadly, the throne speech was largely silent on what this government plans to do to diversify our small economy.

The risk with being too dependent on one industry, such as mining, is all too well-known to the Yukon. The inevitable bust is destructive and harmful to people in every community. We need to ensure that more people actually benefit from our current economic upturn. Unfortunately, too many people are being left behind. They are on the sidelines looking for affordable housing or have jobs that pay little more than minimum wage. As the Official Opposition, the New Democratic Party renews our call for an aggressive economic strategy, linked to a strong community and social strategy that strengthens our local economies, creates opportunities for Yukon-based businesses during the current boom and seeks out opportunities for diversification and that recognizes First Nations and their development corporations as an integral part of the Yukon economy.

We renew our call to recognize that small businesses are the heart of our economy. They supply the necessary goods and services for our daily lives. They provide services to industry and government. They are integral to the tourism, retail and arts and culture sectors. They are important to a strong and vital economy. Most small businesses just want government to get out of the way and make their lives easier, with less bureaucracy. Some want a helping hand to get started and sometimes some assistance with the inevitable ups and downs of our economy.

New Democrats encourage this government to strengthen and support small businesses and micro-economic initiatives by helping chambers of commerce and small enterprises in developing business and marketing plans; to reduce insurance rates; to develop distributed training models for small business owners who do not have the time to travel or take time from work for professional development; to target new training programs for those already working to increase their skills and productivity; to work together with other agencies and partners that offer programs that assist small businesses so that such support can be accessed smoothly with less red tape.

We encourage the government to implement the positive suggestions from the government procurement review with a view to increasing the purchasing of Yukon goods and services and improving the contracting processes, so that they are transparent and fair. We encourage the government to collaborate with all levels of government to establish public transportation infrastructure and business opportunities, so that Yukoners can access job opportunities and businesses, both small and large, can get their products to market.

Yukon New Democrats know mining inside and out. Many New Democrat MLAs, past and present, have worked in the industry and have proudly represented miners, their families and their communities. We know the importance of working with industry and communities to create sustainable, responsible mining where environmental and safety standards are paramount, where jobs and business opportunities are created locally, and where Yukoners are not left holding an environmental liability when the mine closes.

Yukoners expect to get their fair share of mining revenues. It is time for the Yukon government to take action to bring in a royalty regime for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Mr. Speaker, the throne speech set out a number of proposed major projects intended to address Yukon's energy needs. As Leader of the Official Opposition, I give notice now that we will expect thorough and open consultation on all aspects of these proposed projects. Massive capital expenditures that have the potential to saddle future generations with heavy debt is unconscionable and unacceptable.

I note that the throne speech sets out a renewed interest in the development of the natural gas industry in Yukon. Mr. Speaker, I was at the Vuntut Gwitchin General Assembly this summer when Northern Cross made a presentation to the citizens of Old Crow about a new Chinese investor and their plans to utilize both conventional and unconventional — which essentially translates into hydraulic fracturing or more commonly known as “fracking” — means of extraction.

In the interest of full and transparent communication, let me be clear. The New Democratic Official Opposition will oppose any use of unconventional means to extract oil and gas in the Yukon.

We expect the Yukon government to set a moratorium on fracking in this industry until and unless environmental concerns can be addressed.

Another area where the throne speech was scant on detail was with respect to tourism. Yukon's tourism industry has emerged over the last two decades as a vital sector and an important foundation of the Yukon economy. It has proven to be a good investment of public funds with a strong economic return to Yukon communities and businesses. This sector has much untapped potential that will allow it to expand. A New Democratic Official Opposition will support initiatives by the government that demonstrate a close partnership with the tourism industry to support its continued and growing contribution of economic benefits to the territory by assisting it to diversify the market and increase the profile of the Yukon as a year-round destination.

The Official Opposition was encouraged by the mention in the Speech from the Throne with respect to food security and we will encourage the Yukon Party government to place increased emphasis on food security and local food production, community-based agricultural initiatives and community greenhouses. It is important that we develop a long-term strategy for increased incentives for food production and the NDP will be looking for evidence that the Yukon government is making sure that existing agricultural land is used for agricultural purposes and not other purposes.

The Yukon is a special place where we can enjoy diverse cultures, a rich heritage and a vibrant arts community. We are able to enjoy the art of a tremendous variety of performers, artists working a range of media forms, musicians and sound producers, theatre actors, film and television workers, visual artists, artisans, storytellers, writers, photographers and sculptors. This sector is supported by great administrators and has a number of excellent venues created over the years to help profile our historical and modern art and culture. This sector is

important to both our social and economic well-being, so it was surprising to see only vague mention of it in the throne speech. Given the growth in the arts and cultural sector, the New Democratic Party believes it is time to develop a 10-year cultural initiative that fosters collaboration among music, theatre, dance, visual arts and other participants in Yukon's cultural life to share regionally, nationally and internationally.

The throne speech heavily promotes the booming economy but makes no reference to the importance of ensuring that the workforce that makes that boom happen is respected. The NDP will press and continue to press the Yukon government to ensure the independence of the workers' advocate. We believe it is time to review the mandate and organization of this position through consultation with affected workers, labour, business and other affected groups, and we call upon the government to finally act to bring in legislation within the first year of its new tenure as Government of Yukon to protect young workers from injury and death on the job through minimum age requirements in certain occupations and through mandatory training in oversight of young workers, as well as foreign workers, who, by the nature of language and other barriers, may require more oversight and safeguards.

We note the mention of a school of mining at Yukon College in the throne speech. The NDP supports using education and training so that there are more jobs for Yukoners. A school of northern mining makes sense. It can be argued that it should have happened years ago. We don't want to see a fly-in, fly-out economy, where its non-resident labourers are doing the bulk of work, not paying taxes in Yukon and not buying from local stores. We know that under the Yukon Party the public receives scant payment in the form of royalties for our mineral wealth. We will scrutinize this government's approach to ensure more benefits of mining stay in the territory.

Earlier this year, the Yukon Party negotiated more authority to permit more short-term, temporary foreign workers to work in mining and the service sector. We understand that sometimes our small population cannot fulfill businesses' labour needs. We have persistent unemployment in Yukon communities.

The challenge now is to have more Yukoners working in mining and we will be watching that the temporary foreign workers program is not the long-term strategy for mining sector jobs. We will be watching to make sure that temporary foreign workers and Yukon nominees have full rights and protections.

The throne speech focused on the demand for new energy sources. Earlier, I touched on the controversial process of fracking in order to exploit natural gas. Securing new sources of energy is an environmental and an economic issue. We need to limit and minimize energy generation from dirty sources and increase energy from renewables.

It goes without saying that one of the biggest scandals of the Yukon Party was the attempted secret sale at a discounted, fire-sale price of Yukon Energy Corporation's assets to ATCO, a large multinational private corporation based in Alberta. The Yukon New Democratic Party will push for the continued public ownership of Yukon Energy Corporation and its assets. It is a public resource owned by Yukoners and is simply not for

sale. As the Yukon government moves to increase expenditures on energy, we will urge the Yukon government to pass legislation to prevent any Yukon government from selling, leasing or disposing of electrical generation and transmission assets of the Yukon Energy Corporation and Yukon Development Corporation.

We will support investments through our Crown corporations in projects that generate electricity that is affordable, reliable and renewable. While we talk about that, we have to recognize that system and infrastructure problems have not been addressed sufficiently. There are simply too many power interruptions and outages, and measures to encourage conservation have gone by the wayside. It's time for change. We can and we must do better. At the same time, we expect the Yukon government to develop a conservation strategy that will achieve results in the short term and the long term by promoting and rewarding conservation through a range of programs and incentives, including new building standards and incentives, district heating and other measures for new construction.

Mr. Speaker, the throne speech makes reference to continuing to implement cooperative governance and partnerships. Partnership means working with people to set common goals, not dividing to conquer. Integrity means dealing honestly and openly. Trust is built upon mutual respect and can only be earned over time.

New Democrats recognize that much must be done to restore faith in the Yukon government. We believe good government means elected members listen to people and work responsibly with other governments, the public service and public advisory boards for the good of all Yukon people.

Yukon New Democrats welcome the commitment in the throne speech, and I quote: "...practising open, accountable, fiscally responsible government and to working constructively with all members of this House to improve the operation of its committees and the proceedings of the Legislature."

Yukon New Democrat governments are no strangers to responsible fiscal management. Yukon New Democrats will encourage this government to engage in a participatory approach to budget making, from the bottom up, to involve Yukon people, First Nations, NGOs and community organizations in identifying community priorities for capital and program expenditures. We will encourage this government to provide more information in a timely way about budgets and spending and we will be making careful and progressive suggestions to the government, designed to facilitate a truly open approach to financial accountability, both during budget debate and throughout the year.

Mr. Speaker, New Democrats recognize that the Auditor General applies high standards of fiscal accountability in the public interest when it reviews Yukon government operations and reports to the Legislature through the Public Accounts Committee. Yukon New Democrats also believe that the agencies and individuals charged with watching over the operations of government that warn all of us of the abuses of power are allies of good government, not enemies. Government should listen to and heed their input. There are some improvements that we will be pushing for over the next while surrounding

Yukon's advocates — our watchdogs. They include the Human Rights Commission, the child and youth advocate office and the Ombudsman.

A Yukon New Democrat government introduced the Yukon *Human Rights Act* more than 20 years ago, and we believe the work of the Human Rights Commission is a fundamental force for fairness in Yukon society. The Official Opposition believes it is time to support the independence of the commission so it can do its work in an effective and timely manner. It's time to effect the necessary changes so that the commission reports directly to this Legislature. It's time to address the recommendations of the Select Committee on Human Rights and the law reform consultation, and it's time to adopt amendments to existing legislation to eliminate all legal barriers for same-sex spouses.

Mr. Speaker, New Democrats firmly believe that children and youth are vulnerable members of society. How they are treated affects whether they will contribute to society as adults or become continuing clients of social and corrections services.

The office of the child and youth advocate is relatively new; however, in its short tenure, it has become clear that it is essential that the advocate report to the Yukon Legislature, and not through a minister, to ensure that our collective efforts to meet the needs of youth and children are subject to independent oversight.

A Yukon New Democratic government established the offices of the Ombudsman and Information and Privacy Commissioner. We believe that oversight of bureaucratic procedure, access to information, and protection of privacy are essential elements for a working democracy. There was reference in the throne speech to the Ombudsman and Information and Privacy Commissioner, and we support the notion that it be made a full-time position, to ensure adequate responses to public demands for service, sufficient time to find solutions to problems, to ensure that public access to records is provided in a more timely manner, and to ensure the prevention of unauthorized collection, use and disclosure of personal information.

We also support the amendments to the *Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act* to bring it up to current Canadian standards and to increase access to information while protecting privacy.

Yukon New Democrats believe that openness and transparency make for better government. New Democrats recognize that lobbyists are part of the political system. However, we also know that the public has a legitimate fear that lobbyists are being paid by private interests to influence government decisions that may have an excessive or unfair impact. We will continue pushing in a renewed way to ensure that the Yukon government introduce new legislation to govern lobbying activities that will require the registration of lobbyists, set out a code of conduct, and impose penalties for violations.

Our conflicts commissioner called for this modernization, among others, and we in the Official Opposition are in support. It is no surprise that across the country lobbying legislation is in place and the Yukon needs to join with the rest of the country in ensuring this aspect of transparency.

I mentioned that I came to political life after a long career as a public servant for provincial, municipal and federal governments, as well as an aboriginal organization in Australia. I raise it today because as Leader of the New Democrats, I recognize that public servants are not in the public sphere and they should not be dragged into this Assembly as a means of deflecting attention from the fact that the political direction comes from the Premier and Cabinet. The public service must not only be seen to be separate from the political, but it must be allowed to operate at arm's length if it is to be expected to offer quality, objective policy advice, even at times telling the Premier or a minister that an idea may be good politics, but poor public policy — that is, they must have the freedom to speak truth to power.

New Democrats value the work of government employees. We respect their contributions to the development of public policy and their participation in the operations of government.

We also recognize that government employees are entitled to a life outside of work, where they may have opinions that differ from those of the government of the day. The Official Opposition will continue to raise issues in this House to address the culture of fear that has developed in recent years within the Yukon public service, which has smothered employees' ability to express their views to the political level within government and also limited their involvement in public issues outside of government.

New Democrats understand that wrongdoing may at times occur in government, despite the measures in place to safeguard democracy. If public servants become aware of wrongdoing in the public service, we believe they should be able to report it without fear. Previous Yukon Party governments have refused to act on this important legislation. We will urge the government to enact, as a priority, effective whistle-blower legislation to protect employees who report wrongdoing from retaliation from superiors, co-workers and others.

New Democrats believe that open and respectful debate in the Yukon Legislature can contribute to better government. Our goal is a more open, respectful and business-like Legislature and a more fiscally accountable government. I have shared, by a letter to the Premier, some ideas on how we can make this more than just a good idea, by opening discussion with both Members of the Legislative Assembly and the public.

Yukon New Democrats believe that the commissions, board, committees and advisory councils set up under Yukon law can provide vital advice to responsive and responsible government. They were set up by law for valid reasons and their input must be given fair and due consideration. We want to see an open process for making appointments to boards and committees and that public advisory bodies are representatives of the full range of Yukon people — women and men, First Nations, young and old, urban and rural.

Yukon New Democrats believe in a cooperative and collaborative working relationship with all Yukon communities. It was a Yukon New Democratic government that passed the *Municipal Act* that established greater autonomy and fiscal responsibility for local governments. Although there are references to the "Our Towns, Our Future" process in the throne speech, we

believe that its scope is limited to financial aspects, and as a result the *Municipal Act* review process is not formalized and leads to confusion and misunderstanding. Municipal officials and citizens would benefit from a clear understanding of the process and a timeline for future *Municipal Act* reviews. Yukon New Democrats believe further changes are required in the *Municipal Act* to better guarantee public participation in decision-making and accountability for decisions by elected officials. Recent court decisions require amendments to the *Municipal Act* in consultation with local governments and local people to enhance accountability and participation.

In closing, I restate my commitment as Leader of the Official Opposition to work along with my caucus colleagues to serve Yukoners. We look forward to working with the Third Party and the members opposite. May we approach the challenge and the opportunities placed before us as servants of the people with open minds, candour and tenacity. May we do so guided with the simple, but profound words of Dom Helder Camara: "Beware the death of ideals."

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Hassard:** Mr. Speaker, it's truly an honour to stand here in front of you all today, representing the riding of Pelly-Nisutlin. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of the wonderful people from this riding for the support and the trust that they have placed in me. I will do my very best to ensure that their issues and concerns are addressed in this House over the next five years.

I would also like to utilize this time to congratulate my colleagues, as well as members of all the parties on their election or re-election to this Legislative Assembly. To all of the individuals who ran in this election successfully or not, I commend and thank you.

Not everyone has the ability or desire to run for public office, but without choices we do not have a true democracy and I personally feel that that is very important. I would like to say a special thank you to my family and friends who have been so supportive through the whole election process. Running a campaign is definitely not a one-person job and without their untiring dedication, it would have been a much more difficult journey.

Mr. Speaker, who is Stacey Hassard? Well, I was born July 4, 1969 in Fort St. John, British Columbia. I'm the third and youngest son of Bob and Evelyn Hassard. We moved to the Yukon in my first year of life, so I guess I can call the Yukon my true home.

I attended Teslin School for grades 1 through 9, and spent most of my summers roaming the hills and valleys of my parents' outfitting concession. In 1978, my parents purchased the Nisutlin Trading Post, Teslin's only grocery store. It was there after school that I decided I needed to pursue a career that involved dealing with the public at large. Now, if any of you have ever spent any time in a community, you know that the general store can be quite a mixing pot of people and ideas coming and going. This is probably where both my brother and I got introduced to politics, of a sense. I worked at the store every afternoon and Saturday until 1983 when I moved off to

Whitehorse for high school at the ripe old age of 14. It's funny what three years of being away from your parents and home life can do to a teenager.

When I graduated in 1986, there were only four things on my mind: making money, beer, girls and cars, in no particular order. Just days following graduation, I convinced Rod Adams to hire me on at Nuway Crushing. I soon got a quick lesson on all four of the previously mentioned items.

I thoroughly enjoyed the next three years as a crusher hound and will always be grateful to Rod and Carol for their amazing patience with me. It was during these years that an old friend of my father's moved to Teslin, and he brought his two daughters with him. The youngest and prettiest of the two was soon to be the most important thing in my life. Within a couple of years, I had moved home from the road of crushing, had a young daughter and was making plans for marriage.

In the summer of 1991, I had a brainstorm and packed up my pregnant wife and young daughter and headed back to what I thought then was my homeland — Fort St. John. During the next 12 months, I was to receive what were probably to become two of the most valuable life lessons that I now know. This period, even though I didn't know it at the time, was probably the key that directed me toward politics. During that particular summer, northern B.C. was a boom. Life was great. By Christmas, you couldn't buy a job. I spent most of the winter rebuilding cats and scrapers for an old friend on the promise that when he got work, he would square up with me. That leads into life lesson number one: it's hard to support a family without a job and an economy.

In January of that same winter, my wife gave birth to our second child, our only son. He was a wonderful gift, but he had a few issues. He was born two months premature, with underdeveloped lungs and weighed four pounds, nine ounces. Within hours after birth, he was on a plane to the Royal Alexandra Hospital in Edmonton. The next two weeks clued me in to how important a health care system really can be — important life lesson number two.

My son is now 19 years old, five feet, 10 inches and over 200 pounds, so apparently he caught up somewhere along the line. By the spring of 1992, the B.C. economy was still crumbling. Now, our fathers can be pretty shrewd and mine is no exception.

Knowing our determination as a young family to work things out on our own, he called me to say that he needed help with a job that he had taken on at the Watson Lake airport. It took me about three and half hours to have everything I owned packed, the back of the truck tarped in, and headed home to the Yukon. I don't plan on leaving any time soon. As the next few years progressed, I continued to work with my father and brothers in their construction business. With the birth of our third child, and the older two getting on to school age, I decided to run for school council.

I did two terms as chair of the Teslin School Council, and I stepped aside to let my wife run, and she too was successful. In the spring of 2002, my wife and I purchased the Nisutlin Trading Post from my parents. We soon after purchased the North Lake Motel. We constructed a new grocery store and expanded

our business to include the gas station and motel as well. This proved to be a very good move and it was nice to have our children be able to work with us, as I had the privilege of doing with my own parents.

In 2008, I ran successfully for town council for the Village of Teslin and was re-elected in the last election, where I sat as deputy mayor until October of this year, when I was elected as MLA for Pelly-Nisutlin.

In the spring of 2011, we sold our business and took the summer off to plan our next challenge in life. For me, it was the decision to run for politics, and here I am.

Well, Mr. Speaker, enough of the past — what about the future? As Pelly-Nisutlin is one of the largest ridings by geography, it's probably one of the most diverse as well, with three communities — Faro, Ross River and Teslin — and several small pockets of constituents in such places as Squanga Lake, Johnsons Crossing and Little Salmon. Thankfully, I enjoy driving.

As I said earlier, Pelly-Nisutlin is one of the most diverse ridings in the Yukon. It consists of two separate First Nations — the Teslin Tlingit Council and the Ross River Dena Council — and it also has Faro, which is the only Yukon community with no First Nation. Another twist to the dynamics in this is that while TTC has been practising self-government for quite some time, the Ross River Dena Council has yet to sign a final agreement.

This being said, there are still several issues that are relevant to the riding as a whole. One of these issues is that of wildlife harvesting, moose in particular. In the Teslin Tlingit traditional territory, one main area of interest is the Nisutlin River. Ross River has the North Canol, while Faro has the area behind the mine. All of these areas are frequented by hunters from throughout the Yukon and the locals to each area have concerns of over-harvesting by non-locals. When you have a family that has traditionally hunted sustainably in an area for many years — in some cases, a century or more — it is somewhat distressful for them to think of possibly having to move to a new area to fulfill their traditional harvest.

I believe strongly that hunters need to understand the importance of providing the governments, both territorial and First Nations, with accurate numbers and information of all game, either harvested or not. This valuable information can help everyone involved so that departments can make intelligent decisions on how to best deal with arising issues.

Another area of concern is land availability. Now, when we are talking about an area of this magnitude, it hardly seems possible that this could be an issue, but it is. I am a firm believer that everyone should have the right to the opportunity to own their own land. I also feel that this is a high priority with this Yukon Party government. This leads into the issue of housing shortages. It is hard to deal with housing issues if you don't have anywhere to build the houses.

The Town of Faro has a need for infrastructure upgrades. Some of the facilities were built by the mine, and they are getting old and are due for some renovations. In order for Faro to entice tourists, there is a need for road improvements.

A few of the attractions in Faro are the sheep and crane viewing festivals, Pelly Valley Festival, the Faro Fireweed Festival — all wonderful events. Faro is said to be the Yukon's best kept secret. Maybe it's time to reveal to the rest of the world that secret. With the mine clean-up budget in the neighbourhood of \$20 million next year, and the enormous amount of staking in the area, I feel that there is a great potential for Faro.

Ross River is also in a staking boom, and the potential is wonderful there as well. They are in the process of completing approximately a \$1-million road upgrade, as well as the water system upgrade and arsenic removal system. On top of that, on March 15 of this year, the Minister of Community Services at the time, Archie Lang, had a press release committing to rebuilding the recreation centre that was destroyed by a devastating fire.

Teslin is in the design stages of receiving a new water well and arsenic removal system as well. Teslin is also preparing for street upgrades in the spring. With the great help of the community development fund, the Village of Teslin was recently able to complete the mezzanine and viewing area of the arena.

We, too, have a new seniors complex in Teslin, and four seniors have now moved in. As you can see, this government is committed to helping the communities of the Yukon and not just Whitehorse.

Mr. Speaker, the economy is an issue that is very close to my heart. This government refers to it as “pathways to prosperity”. It's important to continue to work with all partners, industries, First Nations, governments, as well as the federal government. By doing this, we can establish a greater certainty for access to resources, water licences and permits by creating a clear permitting regime with established timelines. This should put us on par with other jurisdictions in Canada that have successful regimes.

We are also committed to providing access to land for exploration and development. I understand the importance of continuing to work with the Government of Canada to resolve the issues pertaining to the problems with the *Yukon Environmental and Socio-Economic Assessment Act* and the *Yukon Waters Act*. Seeking the participation of the resource sector industries on ways to encourage new investments and promote the growth of current investors is always a challenge but one well worth working on.

Because of the hard work and dedication of this Yukon Party government, the Yukon has done well in the past years and will continue to do well in the future. This year, the Yukon saw nearly \$300 million in exploration spending, \$420 million in mineral production and over 108,000 new quartz claims staked. Approximately 300,000 people visited the Yukon this year, helping retail sales top \$650 million. It is important that this government does everything in its power to keep this trend moving forward, and I believe that we have the team in place to succeed with this endeavour.

In regard to this team, we have a very diverse group of individuals, from many long-standing and experienced ministers, to new MLAs such as myself. I believe with the leadership of the experienced and the new and refreshing ideas of the new

members, the next five years will be an exciting time here in the Yukon.

In closing, I'd just like to remind everyone here today that because we sit on opposite sides of the floor, it's imperative to remember that at the end of the day, we're all here for the same cause: the betterment of the Yukon. Once again, I'd like to thank everyone for their support and trust, and I promise to work hard for all.

Thank you. Günilschish.

**Mr. Elias:** Mr. Speaker, let me begin by congratulating you, on behalf of our caucus, on your appointment. I trust we will see a greater civility in decorum in this Chamber. I must say, as I look around the Chamber today, I recognize that there are about six or seven long-time hockey players who are now members of the Assembly, and I've actually witnessed, or been on the receiving end of a lot of on-ice hockey trash talk, and it is my hope that that kind of dialogue actually stays at the local hockey rinks around the territory and that it doesn't enter the Chamber. For *Hansard's* purposes, I am saying this with a smile on my face.

We also extend our congratulations to the Premier and the Yukon Party caucus for winning the 2011 election, as well as well wishes to the new Leader of the Official Opposition and her caucus, and of course my colleague, the Hon. Member for Klondike, who, I might add, received the most votes of any MLA during the election. I wish you all well.

On a personal note, I would like to recognize the fact that we sadly lost three members of this Assembly who represented Yukoners during the 32<sup>nd</sup> legislative sitting: Mr. Todd Hardy, Mr. Steve Cardiff, and Mr. John Edzerza. It kind of puts things into perspective for me when we lose our colleagues well before their time.

On behalf of the great Vuntut Gwitchin riding that is full of such richness and grandeur, and on behalf of the community of Old Crow, let me express my profound gratitude for the privilege of addressing this Assembly today.

Firstly, I want to thank my wife and my children, my friends and family and all of my supporters for standing by my side and believing in me once again. I say to you today that I humbly accept the confidence of the people of Old Crow to lead as your MLA. It will be an honour to once again help our citizens' vision forward.

Secondly, I stand here today to salute each and every one of my constituents and say to those whose support I have yet to earn that I will be your MLA too, and I need your help if we are to be as successful as we can, because we have much more work to do.

To those Yukoners who put their names forward to seek the confidence of the citizens of this territory in the last election to be an MLA, I also salute you for your hard work and your courage. You may not have won this time around, but as our territory's political history has proven, anything can happen at any time, so you just might get another chance.

I stand here today, humbled by the tasks that face us, grateful for the trust my constituents have bestowed in me and always mindful of the sacrifices borne by our citizens throughout

the times of our Gwich'in nation. Over the years of my tenure as the MLA for the Vuntut Gwitchin riding, many of our elders and community members have also passed away. I know on this day, they look down on me with pride.

When the boundaries commission did its work in 2002, it recognized the unique situation of my electoral district. It recognized the importance of the Vuntut Gwitchin riding having its own representative in this Assembly due to a number of special circumstances, some of which are that the riding is sparsely populated and remote, that my riding is almost exclusively made up of Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation citizens, that the Vuntut Gwitchin language is not spoken elsewhere in the territory, and that our distinct language, culture, lifestyle and traditional practices equate to a strong common interest found nowhere else in the territory.

So when I say that I represent a very unique and distinct riding in this Assembly and that my constituents' vision, goals and guidance are paramount in any decision I make, this is why.

I invite all members of this Assembly to come and visit our community, maybe during the holidays or community celebrations, to catch a glimpse as to why I'm so proud to be the representative of the Vuntut Gwitchin riding as their MLA. We will enjoy some great partnerships and successes over the years to come but there will be those outside our community who will say that our goals cannot be done. They will say that our goals will not or should not be realized. When that time comes — and it will, Mr. Speaker — our community will all stand up together and we will tell those who try to impede our progress that they do not know the resolve of our citizens of Old Crow because we are a rare, strong, resilient and fun-loving people with a kind and friendly demeanour. We will tell them that our vision is one that reflects our traditional values, remoteness, distinct language, culture and sustainability principles, and we still strive to create and maintain a healthy, vibrant community that provides a safe, supportive environment in which to live, work and raise our families. We will tell them that we value the empowerment of our community, that we value all that is living, that we value our children and youth who are the leaders of tomorrow, that we value our traditional language, culture, spirituality and teachings of our elders, and that we value accountable and transparent governance.

I have watched and learned from past and present leaders of my community as they reaffirm those values and our vision over the years in our territory, around our country of Canada, and around the world. I thank all of them for their tireless dedication and years of service.

To the people of our territory, I pledge to work alongside you to make your needs, wants, concerns and aspirations not only heard, but listened to and acted upon. Yukoners should not have to choose between compassion and prosperity for its citizens, whether it is keeping our economy strong through diversification; or solving an energy shortage in our territory; or dealing with the wooden water mains in the Town of Faro that desperately need to be replaced; or dealing with wolf management issues in Teslin and moose hunting issues along the Nisutlin River; addressing the demonstrated need of building commu-

nity and recreation centres in the communities of Old Crow, Ross River, Dawson and Carmacks; or addressing on-line privacy protection for our children throughout the territory; or preparing our territory for the possibility of another North American recession because of the European and United States' debt crises; or the all-terrain vehicle laws and regulations that simply do not fit in every community; or developing and implementing a new up-to-date *Landlord and Tenant Act*; or developing local industries to provide for the refinement and value-added manufacturing of our precious metals and ores right here in our territory, or whether it's recycling large quantities of paper fibre here in our territory; or developing innovative technologies to make use of used automobile tires for building foundations throughout the territory; or establishing and providing the proper funding for the number one recommendation from the Yukon police review consultations of establishing a Yukon police council so that they may then begin to deal with the other 32 additional recommendations; or addressing the terrible state of our First Nation graduation rates; or combating the terrible violence against women and family violence statistics in our territory.

These statistics have been going on for far too long. If I can elaborate on this point, I have been advocating for a collaborative effort in this territory to address this issue. They have been going on for decades and for far too long. With a territorial budget of \$1 billion — if we look at this in terms of finances alone — with all the self-governing First Nations, who, let's say, on average, get a transfer of \$10 million, with all the municipalities and industry in this territory — if we are booming in this territory, if we get a collaborative effort to deal with these terrible statistics that I am tired of talking about over the decades, then let's show leadership and set the example for the rest of the federation of this country, look this problem in the eye, and all push forward to solve it.

But it's going to take leadership to do that. Before my time is over in this Assembly, I hope that at some time those statistics will be drastically decreased.

Whether it's recognizing and addressing the fact that our local food banks are serving more people than ever before, and yet our economy is booming, or whether it's recognizing the fact that the community of Haines Junction doesn't have a grocery store right now any more, and the community has no choice but to travel to Whitehorse, and that many citizens of Haines Junction consider sections of the Alaska Highway between Haines Junction and Whitehorse to be unsafe — these issues come from Yukoners.

No one political party has all the answers or all the good ideas, and I surely don't want to bombard the Yukon Party government with the volumes of unique and distinctive or downright vintage ideas from our Liberal caucus in the few minutes that I have today, but during its mandate the government could work with health care professionals and key stakeholders in Dawson City to transition the Dawson City hospital into a collaborative primary health care facility that supports community nurses and meets the needs of the community. This is an idea that can actually be used as a model.

In clarifying the roles and jurisdictions of the Yukon Water Board and the Yukon Environmental and Socio-Economic Assessment Board while working with these organizations to harmonize and provide more fluidity in their processes and investigate the value of a process charter, the government could consider creating a re-connecting with the land, trapping and traditional practices program for youth at risk that supports land-based accredited education and learning — or whether it's regulating the practice of midwifery and ensuring that the cost of midwife services is included in the Yukon health care insurance plan.

These issues and concerns from Yukoners are important and they matter to me. The world we live in is constantly changing and we have to be prepared to change with it. That means being flexible and deviating from rigid ideologies. I think we have to move forward with a belief that we are connected as Yukoners. If there are a number of families and individuals in our territory living with autism that require support for their children in our education system, then that matters to me.

If there is a single mother out there who has to choose between buying heating fuel and paying for hockey registration for her child, that makes all of our lives as parliamentarians poorer, and that matters to me. The successful implementation of business plans of mines and exploration of oil and gas companies such as Northern Cross, Victoria Gold Corp., North American Tungsten, Alexco's Keno Hill project, Yukon Nevada Corp., Golden Predator, Capstone, Dublin Gulch, Ground Truth Exploration — and the list goes on and on, Mr. Speaker — it matters to our economy and it matters to me.

It is my hope today and every day that each member in this House feels the same energy and compassion and urgency about issues that I do. So we can look at the lingering problems of our time right in the eye and say, "Not this time. Not on my watch." In quoting Mr. Rohn, he said: "The challenge of leadership is to be strong, but not rude; be kind, but not weak; be bold, but not bully; be thoughtful, but not lazy; be humble, but not timid; be proud, but not arrogant; have humor, but without folly."

All 19 members in this House understand or soon will understand that the impact that being a parliamentarian has on everyone's day-to-day life and yet we are willing to bear that responsibility. For many of you, it's the first time. For many of us, it's a time and time again.

Regardless, I thank each and every one of you in the House today because this is no easy task. This is a journey we continue today.

In focusing on the 12-minute throne speech the other day, I have said before and I said it in Question Period today, it was about as exciting as an empty-net goal in hockey. It was also pointed out by the Member for Riverdale North that the great Wayne Gretzky's 39<sup>th</sup> goal in 50 games was actually an empty-net goal. I remember watching that on TV; it was pretty exciting at that time. But moving forward, I believe Yukoners were hoping for more from the throne speech. I was expecting more, especially from a new Premier at the helm with a third consecutive majority mandate. I expected the throne speech to be

detailed in vision with a plan and direction for the short- medium- and long-term future of our territory, but it wasn't.

If we are to be an effective opposition, then the Liberal caucus will be demanding more from this government. I do not endorse the throne speech mainly because it was about 80 per cent old news that I have heard before, and will not ease the apprehension many Yukoners have about so many issues, some of which I have touched on today.

The Yukon Party's Speech from the Throne contained few surprises and if it was representative of the government's blueprint for moving forward together, it was long on generalities and short on specifics. However, it did contain measures the Liberal caucus can support. We are pleased to see the government moving forward with a youth shelter, a territorial-wide water strategy for the territory, the independent power producer policy, net metering, and the government's plan for the construction of a large-scale hydro-electric project. These are priorities we have been encouraging the government to move forward on for some time and we support them. The construction of a large-scale hydro-electric project is certainly something the public will be interested in hearing more about and it's something we will be asking questions on in the days ahead.

I was disappointed to hear the tone of the opening of the throne speech, especially after the Premier stressed over and over again prior to this sitting his interest to cooperating with the opposition. The opening tone was completely uncalled for and certainly not conducive to promoting an atmosphere of cooperation. If I wanted to foster cooperation, I certainly wouldn't begin deliberations by poking my opponents in the eye. However, I must remain optimistic that the government will be coming forward with specific plans to involve all members to find solutions to the challenges we face in making a better Yukon.

Today is December 5 in the Yukon Territory, and when I came to work this morning, it was raining. At lunch time there was a blizzard outside. I've said it before, many times in this House, and I'll say it again. For decades we've been warned by legions of scientists with mountains of evidence that this was coming, that we couldn't just keep burning fossil fuels and contributing to the changing atmosphere without consequence. Yet, for decades, far too many have ignored the warnings, either dismissing the science as a hoax or believing that it was the concern of the environmentalists looking to save polar bears and the rainforests. What's also discouraging was that this morning it was confirmed that the federal Conservatives have pulled out of the Kyoto Protocol and have refused to commit to any additional measures to cut Canada's greenhouse gas emissions. I'll put the Environment minister on notice today that I will be asking questions in the House about this and Yukon's participation in the conference in Durban, South Africa. Climate change is a real and present danger in our territory and it will be viewed as a dereliction of our duty by future generations if we do not give climate change and the impacts it's having on our environment, our economy and our lives the attention it deserves.

I'll change focus, Mr. Speaker, and talk about the Porcupine caribou herd for a few minutes. It is 123,000 strong and

our community of Old Crow has never lost faith that this day would come. Our elders encouraged us to be vigilant, and those elders who have passed on, I know they are happy too. For the Gwich'in, the relationship with the caribou starts in the womb. That's where it starts. I cannot put into words how proud I am of our territory's people for showing the moral and ethical leadership during the past nine years of uncertainty when we could not achieve a population census of the herd. I have said it before and I will say it again here today: the Yukon Party's past Environment ministers have done an excellent job in helping us move forward with the protection of the Porcupine caribou herd and I will thank them on the floor of the House today. They know who they are. It has made a difference. Let us continue to prove that conservation of the Porcupine caribou herd is held paramount here in our territory by our citizens. What our territory chooses to save and protect is what our territory chooses to tell the world about itself. The Porcupine caribou herd is the lifeblood of our community of Old Crow. It is much more than just food to us. Our culture and spiritual survival depends on the herd. It is a belonging and connection that defy English words. The herd is all we have. If the Porcupine caribou herd population is allowed to crash, it will be the Vuntut Gwitchin and the community of Old Crow that will suffer the most. After all, our community is not going anywhere, and we will always be residents of this great territory.

Mr. Speaker, if future times dictate that I must once again raise the profile of the Porcupine caribou herd issue and challenge those who need to be challenged, then so be it. That's my job.

Again, shifting focus, Mr. Speaker, to another community priority, it's about a community service centre and recreation complex in my community of Old Crow. My community of Old Crow recognizes that an investment in a new community service and recreation complex will substantially assist in developing young, successful citizens. It will support and encourage community healthy living and will contribute greatly to the long-term demonstrated need of our community in the social and economic areas. I will be seeking partners to make this community priority a reality. Mr. Speaker, believe me when I say that this is a winner for everyone. The building will hopefully include a community hall, a daycare, an ice hockey rink, along with a community kitchen. It's also important to note, as the Community Services minister was mentioning today about the recreation complex in the City of Dawson, that she is going to be working with the municipalities.

Well, again, it's important to note that our community of Old Crow does not have a municipality, and it's our community pulling together with committees to deal with these kinds of tangible priorities to make them become a reality.

It is our community that has worked diligently over the last decade on this project and, in doing so, we have accomplished a great deal. There have been several Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation General Assembly resolutions passed by consensus dating back to August of 2000. Throughout the process, we have had dozens of public meetings, presentations and progress reports seeking continual input from the community.



In April of 2007, we successfully completed a feasibility study, funded by the Yukon government, for approximately \$10,000. In mid-2007, the Vuntut Gwitchin government provided \$60,000 to the working group to complete the actual building design options and conceptual drawings. I submitted a community petition in the fall of 2007 to this Assembly in favour of the project. The working group then created a society and successfully raised \$136,000 to begin the development of schematic drawings in late 2008. In 2009, the community finalized the building site and entered into a memorandum of understanding with Yukon Electrical Company to utilize the waste heat from the ATCO generators in Old Crow. The committee has also successfully completed the schematic designs and cost estimates. And last year, with the help of the Premier, the Yukon government released the land in question for the proposed project, and that was an important step moving forward.

So, as you can see, there has been a tremendous amount of work and due diligence completed to date and a new community service centre and recreation complex in Old Crow will go a long way toward a healthy community in combating diabetes, addressing childcare, youth leisure time, community member physical activity and general healthy living for decades to come.

It can provide an economic stimulus in an isolated northern community, not only for Old Crow but for workers and businesses around the territory. Very importantly, it can reduce an Arctic community's carbon footprint by maximizing the use of all of the energy, including the waste heat produced from the diesel generators. It could be a major opportunity to address an economic, social and environmental need in Old Crow, Yukon and, as far as I'm concerned, if we do this properly, it could be considered a green project north of the 67<sup>th</sup> parallel in the Canadian Arctic. Utilizing the waste heat from the ATCO generators would also minimize the operation and maintenance costs of the complex.

It's important to note that Yukon Electrical has verified with the committee that the community can utilize the waste heat from the generators. The new building would be built in close proximity to the water well, which is an important factor because of the amount of water that will be required eight-and-a-half months of the year for the ice surface. The ice rink surface can also be used for various other activities, such as a removable swimming pool in summer, basketball courts, et cetera. It also can be used for large public gatherings. In the next couple of years, our community of Old Crow will be host to a large Gwich'in gathering, so we need a large space within the next four years. Those are the kinds of gatherings it can be used for.

Old Crow is one of the last remaining communities to be solely dependent on the burning of fossil fuels for its energy, so I think it's important that we maximize all energy produced. There is also potential for the waste heat to be purchased and distributed from the heat exchange infrastructure to heat the health centre, the conservation officer warehouse, the Yukon Housing residences, and the Yukon territorial government's garage, where the water delivery and sewage vacuum trucks

and fire trucks are stored. So it has the potential to reduce our community's overall carbon emissions.

The design will include solar panels feeding energy back into the community grid. We have had successful examples of this already with the John Tizya Visitor Reception Centre and the Heritage Research Centre.

Our community has been working towards this facility for well over a decade, as I mentioned earlier, and has committed their own financial resources of up to \$200,000 to get to the stage of receiving schematic drawings to determine actual construction costs. I am requesting the Yukon government's commitment to recognize the decade of hard work and demonstrating a need by our community in developing a partnership to build a community service centre and recreation complex in Old Crow. I know there are many members, if not all members, in this House, who know the value of sport and the effect it has on children with regard to discipline, teamwork, respect, sportsmanship, preparation, determination, competitiveness. I know that many MLAs in this Chamber have first-hand experience and know about the power of sport and what it does for the soul, and that's what it can do for a healthy community. I look forward to discussing this important issue with many of the government members.

I'll leave this topic by quoting Bobby Orr when he said: "Growing up, if I hadn't had sports I don't know where I'd be. God only knows what street corner I would be standing on, and God only knows what I would be doing, but instead I played hockey and went to school and stayed out of trouble."

Our future looks very bright, and it also looks very challenging as there is so much yet for us to accomplish with our partners who rightly expect our professionalism to continue.

I've looked at how far our community of Old Crow has come in comparison to the Yukon government's 75 years of governance experience and the federal government's 135 years of governance experience, and I am proud of how far Old Crow has come since 1994 when we did away with the oppression of the *Indian Act* and accepted the tools of the final and self-government agreements that took us a long, long time to negotiate. Some of our community's major achievements speak for themselves. The calving grounds of the Porcupine caribou herd on the coastal plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge continue to be free of industrial intrusion. We have Vuntut National Park in my riding, which encompasses 4,345 square kilometres that is co-managed with Parks Canada and the North Yukon Renewable Resources Council and is protected for all time. We have completed the Old Crow Flats Special Management Area, which encompasses 19,000 square kilometres, and within that, there are 7,785 square kilometres that are co-managed with the Yukon government.

We also have Ni'iinlii'Njik, or Fishing Branch, which is 5,400 square kilometres of wilderness preserve and 1,000 square kilometres of habitat protection area. This protected area took our community over 50 plus years to negotiate and secure, but we did it. The Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation has 7,750 square kilometres of category A settlement land with ownership of surface and subsurface. We have a land-based experiential education model that's in its third and final year, and the

learning programs being implemented on our lands right now from this program are incredibly successful.

I know the Member for Mayo-Tatchun has an interest in experiential education and we have talked about this before. This program in Old Crow has been an incredibly successful project. Actually, the project coordinators just made a successful presentation in Winnipeg, Manitoba to Education officials and ministers across the territory, and they were very well-received and there was a tremendous amount of interest and questions from various people across this country actually about that program in Old Crow.

We also have completed the *North Yukon Regional Land Use Plan* which is the first under the *Umbrella Final Agreement*. In our community, we still have very strong ties to the land, water and wildlife, especially the Porcupine caribou herd. Our community is now able to tell its own story to those who will listen around the world and tell them with our books, our television shows, through the Internet, radio and our newspapers. That was important for the elders to share that with people. That program through the heritage department, as well as in cooperation with the territorial and federal governments, has been incredibly successful.

Our community will continually seek out partnerships in cooperation to achieve what we need to get done at home and abroad. I've heard many people say over the years during my tenure as MLA, "We can work with the community of Old Crow and we like working with them, because they're professional and solution-oriented." So it is my hope to continue that sentiment.

I will take this opportunity to speak of a few challenges that I see ahead of us as the community of Old Crow. They are developing local and regional economic development initiatives, including a local energy policy, strengthening the use of the Gwich'in language, and again, building a community service centre and recreation complex, complete with a community hall, an ice surface and a daycare.

For our communities to become healthier and our citizens better educated and better equipped to be strong players in the Yukon's diversified economy, and to ensure environmental sustainability, we must prove to Yukoners that we can work together in this House. We will work together for our future children, the generations yet to come and for the role our citizens will play in the betterment of our territory, Canada and the world. I welcome all of the members of this Legislative Assembly and I look forward to working with each and every one of you on the issues and challenges that face our territory for a better Yukon.

Mahsi' cho, Mr. Speaker.

**Hon. Ms. Taylor:** Mr. Speaker, it is indeed an honour and privilege to rise in this Legislature as a member who has just recently been re-elected for the third term.

First, I want to just say that I am so thrilled to see a lot of new faces in the Legislature and some familiar faces in the Legislature. I just want to extend a warm welcome to everyone in the Legislative Assembly. I have to say that the past couple of months have been very interesting for me. It has been inter-

esting because, being one of two members who are part of the — I don't know if you should actually coin it as the old crew, but the original crew from 2002 — it's an interesting time, I find, because we do have a new team. We have a new leader, yet our vision and our principles have not changed. I have to say that it is very humbling for me to be here, to have received a very strong mandate from the constituency of Whitehorse West, and it is indeed a privilege to represent those who chose to elect us to represent the people of the territory.

I've said time and time again that Yukon is a place of endless opportunity and abundant potential and it's a place that continues to attract a diverse population from all walks of life, from all places of the continent and the globe at that. It's a place that's rich in First Nations culture and tradition. It's a place with a colourful history and a place that continues to beam with pioneer spirit.

Yukon has been my home for the past 44 years and I can say that, having grown up as a child, as a student and as a mother, and now as an elected representative, I consider myself to be incredibly fortunate to have had the opportunities that I have had over the years, having resided in the territory. I have to say that there have been a lot of changes over the years. Our population has grown substantively to an all-time high of 35,000, almost reaching 36,000. Our economy has grown. Our economy has diversified. We've seen tremendous growth in all particular areas and we've seen a real influx of individuals from all parts of the world.

That's a new Yukon. The face of the Yukon continues to evolve and change, and that's a good thing. That's a healthy thing because it breathes new life; it breathes new energy and new ideas as to how we can continue to be a very vibrant and a very attractive place, whether we choose to live here, to invest here or to even visit here on a temporary basis.

Yukon boasts tremendous majestic beauty. Our scenery is second to none. It serves to attract individuals to live in the territory, but it also continues to serve as a destination of choice for many individuals all over the world. Yukon, as a result of the growing economy, is also continuing to see an influx of new individuals seeking to live here and to work here because of the employment opportunities that continue to be very bountiful.

There has been a lot of discussion about the Yukon and how we have evolved, and how we haven't evolved, but I have to say that it is indeed changing and, as with any change, we have to change with that as well. That's the wonderful thing about this place called "the Yukon" — it does boast the civility to be able to change, to be able to do business effectively. It breathes that confidence of collaboration and cooperation among many different partners, whether it be all levels and different orders of government with respect to our communities, individuals or families. It is indeed a great place for doing business, breathing innovation, and it's a tremendous place to raise a family.

I want to thank, in addition to all the members who are here, my constituency of Whitehorse West for their continued support these past nine years. I have to say that, when we talk about changes, my own constituency of Whitehorse West has

evolved significantly over the years. I have actually been a resident of that area for more than 15 years. Even though the area has been condensed into perhaps a lesser degree of geographical imprint, the population continues to grow.

It's a flourishing community, part of Whitehorse, and it comprises individuals, again, as I said, from all walks of life, and it has a whole host of housing options within the riding itself. My own constituency, Whitehorse West, has, as I mentioned, seen incredible changes. We've seen an influx of individuals, which has precipitated lots of different infrastructure changes in the area, the extension of the Hamilton Boulevard being a very significant addition to the community, which has resulted in a second egress to and from the constituency, which has certainly provided that security to individuals and also has helped ease some of the traffic that we experience at certain times of the day. It comprises the area of Copper Ridge, Arkell, Logan, and now the new area of Ingram. Ingram is indeed flourishing as we speak. There is considerable home building going on in the area.

It comprises, and will comprise, just over 220-some dwelling units within the subdivision upon its completion.

It is a new concept of what they are calling "high-density housing." That was something that was certainly driven by the City of Whitehorse, as per our land development protocol. It's a whole mix of housing options comprised of duplexes, triplexes, four-plexes, town homes, condos, and single-family residences. It's coming along very well.

There are many individuals who are already living within the parameters, including a six-plex that was constructed by Kwanlin Dun First Nation as part of the Ingram subdivision. I think that it's just indicative of the amazing housing options that are coming up and the different housing mix that is being made available as a result of creative planning and thinking among the respective stakeholders.

I also want to recognize my former colleagues, with whom I had the privilege of serving over the last two terms. In particular, I wish to say thank you to each of the previous Members of the Legislative Assembly for the work that they accomplished and the difference that they made in the lives of many Yukoners. I wish to also thank their families and that of mine for the support that our families have provided and continue to provide on a daily basis. As I believe the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin has already articulated, it's not an easy job. It is perhaps, I would say, the most rewarding profession that one can choose, but it doesn't come without its challenges. Again, I make reference to working to resolve these challenges and using those challenges as opportunities to move the territory forward. I am heartened by the spirit of collegiality within the Legislature and, again, I look forward to working with each and every member as we move forward in the next number of years here.

I want to also recognize those members who have passed since we met last and just recognize the work and the tremendous achievements that they were able to achieve, whether in opposition or whether in government. It is a stark reminder to us all just how short life can be and that it is important to stop and take a look and to reflect upon our successes, but also to

take a look to the future and work toward meeting the common objectives, as we have identified.

As I've said, to serve the people of the territory is a tremendous privilege and one which we can never take for granted. We do live in what has been coined as the greatest place on earth to live. As one who was born and raised in the Yukon, I can say with great pride that it is, in fact, the best place on earth to live, and it's a tremendous privilege to be part of the territory to this day.

I heard some reference to perhaps reflection of old news — perhaps being reflected within the throne speech — but I have to say that it is important to reflect upon our past in order to be able to move forward. I think it is important that, as a government that has achieved its third mandate — consecutive mandate, I might add — it is important to reflect upon where we were and where we are today and where we are going.

When we look back to 2002, it was a different Yukon at that time. Of course, at that time, we were elected on our platform, "Together, we will do better", and, of course, again in 2006, we were elected on our platform of "Building Yukon's Future Together — A Clear Vision for a Bright Future". Prior to 2002, there were extenuating circumstances, and I have to say that since that time, Yukon has been growing. We've seen the population grow and flourish. We have seen the labour force grow to an all-time record. We've seen building permits grow substantially, as well as seeing a tremendous growth in retail sales.

We have also seen growth in tourism visitation despite the worldwide economic recession. Compared to other jurisdictions in the country, the territory has fared relatively well, considering all that has happened on the global scale. We have seen mineral exploration and development of new mines — tremendous expenditures in this regard. I think it's very important to be able to reflect upon some of these successes. I think it's also important to reflect on some of the good work that has taken place over the last nine years as this has also formed part of our renewed platform moving forward together in 2011.

Throughout our mandates, we have recognized and reflected in all of our policies, in our programs and in our legislative initiatives, the importance of a balanced society. While it is very important to focus on developing our economy, it is also important that we focus on ensuring that Yukoners are provided services that strengthen and support healthy individuals, families and communities.

Throughout the past terms there was a considerable amount of consultation with Yukoners on policy and program initiatives, such as energy and climate change strategies, education, correctional reforms and health care. We have also been working to streamline our regulatory regimes for the mining sector and of course fostering a healthy investment climate for the private sector to operate and for established businesses to also expand and to continue to do business. I think it is very important to reflect upon some of these items as I just reflected upon the corrections review, the *Solid Waste Action Plan*, the *Victims of Crime Strategy* that came out of the corrections consultation, the New Horizons initiative that flowed through from the education review, as I mentioned, the climate change strat-

egy to the Yukon energy strategy. Many of these certainly encapsulated a lot of dialogue and consultation among Yukoners and have now produced particular reports that have many recommendations and actions built on principles and objectives based on the input that Yukoners delivered.

I can say that it is from there that we are able to continue to provide the direction that is necessary to continue to take the territory in the direction that it has been going in the last nine years.

As I mentioned, working in collaboration with our partners is of utmost importance in terms of being able to deliver on many of our strategies and plans. There was some discussion earlier today about tourism and the importance of the cultural sector. I can say that tourism is but one example of why, in collaboration with the tourism industry, we have been able to develop annual tourism implementation plans built on the core values of the tourism industry — that it's market driven and it's research based. I have to say that as a result of working together, for example, with the tourism sector, we have been able to deliver on many different initiatives.

Again, under the leadership of the minister responsible for Tourism and Culture, we will be able to continue to deliver many of the priorities identified by the Department of Tourism and Culture and the industry it serves.

On that note, Mr. Speaker, I also wanted to take the opportunity to thank the Department of Tourism and Culture because I haven't actually formally and publicly said thank you to them. I had the privilege of serving as the Tourism and Culture minister for nine years and I don't believe that any other individual had that privilege in this country to the length that I had. So it is bittersweet that I say goodbye to the Department of Tourism and Culture but I know that I support the minister, I support the government and the department in all of their good work. I just want to say thank you to each of the officials for their leadership they provided and for working so collaboratively with the tourism industry over the years and working with respect of communities on great initiatives that have helped further diversify our economy — initiatives like the Whitehorse waterfront. Mr. Speaker, it was just on Saturday we were able to help formally celebrate the grand opening of the Whitehorse Public Library. That is indeed visionary.

I attribute that to the Kwanlin Dun First Nation and their vision in seeing two very important initiatives come to fruition — a new public library — and what better location than the Whitehorse waterfront? — and the creation of their own cultural centre, their own place to be able to tell the stories, share their traditions and their culture with not only the people of Kwanlin Dun, but also the people of the territory and people worldwide.

That is one piece of critical public infrastructure that has been made possible as a result of Yukon government working collaboratively with the Kwanlin Dun First Nation, the City of Whitehorse and the Ta'an Kwäch'än First Nation. It holds together a whole host of various initiatives that have been developed by the government over the last several years — from the Old Fire Hall being used as a cultural venue, to the expansion

of the MacBride Museum and the new Whitehorse wharf, which was also just recently opened.

These will also create even more opportunities for presentations and creative venues for performances to take place by industry and by business alike.

It also ties together the improvements at Shipyards Park and the restoration of many heritage buildings and facilities. There has been a tremendous amount of investment and it is but one example of the work that Tourism and Culture has been working on in collaboration with the Department of Community Services, who have also taken the lead in terms of administering many infrastructure funding initiatives, including the municipal rural infrastructure fund and the Canadian strategic infrastructure fund.

There have been other investments made in support of developing our economies — Carcross waterfront. The Government of Yukon has been working in collaboration with the community of Carcross, Carcross-Tagish First Nation, and the Government of Canada on a number of improvements as well to their respective areas.

It has definitely improved many key assets within the community and it is serving as a catalyst for additional businesses being invested in and it also serves to attract more individuals to come to the territory. Those are just but a couple of very small but very key substantive examples of how this government has been investing in infrastructure to the benefit of tourism, and the cultural sector of that.

I spoke earlier today about the School of Visual Arts and how we have been able to also work with Yukon College on the development of two additional campuses, Dawson City and Pelly Crossing — again, a couple of key pieces of infrastructure in aid of developing our labour market. The list is tremendous, but there are tremendous opportunities still ahead and challenges also ahead of us as well. Within the throne speech there was reference to many of our key platform items, one of which was housing. We all heard, perhaps at the doorstep, that housing, having access to affordable land, access to affordable housing are key, important platform commitments.

I just want to say that our government recognizes that housing is fundamental in building and maintaining a strong Yukon economy and maintaining strong communities and families. It's working to enhance the availability of housing throughout the territory — a continuum of housing options — as well as land availability as well. As well, we're doing significant work to tackle affordability and the adequacy of housing as well. It all points along the housing continuum, from ensuring that those who require shelter and support to assisting those who already have homes, through home repair programs and upgrade programs as well. We will continue to work with our partners in the community to assist those vulnerable and at-risk individuals who require services and supports to live independently.

Over the last while, and certainly as was addressed throughout the throne speech and throughout our election platform, there is reference to enhancing emergency shelter — a transitional housing as was talked about through 207 Alexander Street — supportive housing, social housing, and again work-

ing with all our partners, whether it be with Kwanlin Dun First Nation on making land available for both residential and commercial purposes, as was recently signed by the Premier and the Chief of Kwanlin Dun First Nation on looking at various options to be made available for the availability of their respective lands within the City of Whitehorse. There is also of course reference to looking at private-market rental and our commitment to freeing up Crown land for the purposes of making affordable available rental housing options. I am very pleased to say that recently there was a request for proposals that was issued looking for options to be made available on a key piece of property within the City of Whitehorse. These are just some examples of how we have been working with the communities. It is key to have community involvement and significant government involvement at all levels. It is necessary that affordable housing and land availability does come through and that demands are being met.

As has already been referenced, we recognize that there are needs, whether it be of young people, seniors, families, single individuals looking to work, looking to come to the territory, to move to the territory, and to contribute to the workforce. We are committed to working with all citizens and looking at the housing options.

Within the throne speech, there is reference to a host of housing initiatives and we in fact remain committed — emergency shelters, as I mentioned, and collaborating with the Salvation Army to look at either expanding or relocating their shelter with a larger facility in mind. We are committed to looking at a youth shelter. Of course, in terms of the Women's Directorate, we are looking at progress on the second-stage housing project. In fact, we're very pleased to be able to commit \$1 million within this year's supplementary budget and we are committed to \$4 million toward this very important initiative.

It has been an initiative that has been in the making for some time and I want to commend Kaushee's women's transition home for the leadership and for the work they have provided over the years. It's unfortunate that we have to enhance housing of this kind but it is of the utmost importance. Victims of violence, working to address their needs and their families' needs, is very important. I'm very pleased to say that we are working with Kaushee's Place to move this very important initiative forward.

I would be remiss if I did not mention that this would also build on second-stage housing that has been made available in previous years by the Yukon Party government toward expanding second-stage housing in the Town of Watson Lake. I believe it was just over a year ago that their second-stage housing was opened and it is indeed a welcome place for many mothers and their respective families.

I just want to commend the Watson Lake women's shelter, the Help and Hope Shelter, for their continued work. Likewise, the Dawson City women's shelter — I had the opportunity to actually meet the executive director recently at a meeting on Friday evening of the Yukon Advisory Council on Women's Issues to discuss this and many other issues of importance to women and children throughout this territory.

When it comes to making land available, we are committed to working with the municipal governments, working throughout all the communities in the territory to enhance the degree of land being made available, Whistle Bend being the first phase of lots to be made available in less than a year. The second phase will follow. We are working with the City of Whitehorse on phases 3, 4 and 5 of the Whistle Bend development with the ultimate goal of seeing a growth of up to 8,000 individuals seeing their homes being developed in that particular area.

That has been a work in progress for some time. It is great to see the development of many different mixes of housing options being made available. It's great to see so many new Yukoners being able to move into the area, as well as Yukoners who are looking for new homes to live in.

We're also working with a number of other communities on making land available, whether it be in the Haines Junction area, whether it be in the Dawson area, Destruction Bay, Carmacks — all of these and more we are working to make more land available. Grizzly Valley is yet another area where we're going to lottery fairly quickly here on making the lots available — country residential lots — so again, another welcome change.

We are continuing to work on other land developments with other areas. I think it's very important, and I have to say I was very heartened to hear the Leader of the Official Opposition mention her willingness to work with communities and to adhere to the official community planning process and to have the respect for the leadership of those respective municipalities in being able to drive — in terms of providing the overall direction for identification of areas of land to be developed in their respective boundaries, and, of course, planning and design and zoning. That is in fact what we have had in place with the City of Whitehorse over the last number of years.

There was reference to many other initiatives within the throne speech. When we talk about education — and there has been a substantive amount of great work being done within the Department of Education, working in collaboration with other governments. In terms of our commitment of implementing New Horizons — and, of course, that's the five-year strategic plan for education, which came out of the education reform initiative in collaboration with Yukon First Nations — which focuses on improving literacy and numeracy, preserving culture and enhancing educational achievements for all Yukon students. We are very pleased to be able to continue to work toward implementation of this, which includes a continuum of learning options from primary to secondary to advanced education.

We are continuing to promote experiential learning and support alternative programming at the Individual Learning Centre. We are committed to providing a school system that incorporates local and First Nation content and that is responsive to the needs of all students, including Yukon First Nation students.

We are committed to carrying on with the planning and the construction of the F.H. Collins Secondary School. Likewise, we're committed to working with our partners in education to increase engagement of parents and families, administrations,

schools, for the purposes of improving achievement and success, which are of the utmost importance in terms of being able to carry on and meet the challenges associated with the continuation of a vibrant economy, as we have seen in the territory.

We are promoting positive, inclusive and responsive learning environments for Yukon students. We are working to develop and enhance collaboration and communication and critical thinking, working with our partners in education — Yukon College — in terms of working to build on opportunities, whether it be in mining, tourism or whether it be in providing additional access to justice and investing in our own Yukon individuals to assume work within the corrections system or within the justice system.

We are committed to carrying forward with our plans on working to enhance the knowledge sector, and the creation of the Yukon Research Centre of Excellence is but one great example of what can be achieved when we work together with industry, work with the college, and work with our municipalities, to again enhance what is available — all of the significant research that has been done within our back yard, so to speak. That is the whole mandate of coming up with such a facility — to be able to capitalize on that research and be able to invest in research, invest in technologies as a result of that research that has been conducted and make it available for the benefit of all Yukon citizens.

We are very committed to continuing to support the School of Visual Arts in partnership with the Klondike Institute of Art and Culture, Yukon College and the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nation. It's another excellent example of collaboration that has been achieved, and it has provided some wonderful results. I do recall being part of the discussions when that institution first evolved and it has come a long way. I am very pleased with the evolution of this particular program.

We are committed to implementing our labour market framework for Yukon, which includes the skills and trades training strategy, immigration strategy, labour market information strategy and the recruitment employee retention strategy. I refer to some of the work that has been done previously in collaboration with our education partners that we are now being able to deliver, to encourage the greater participation of our own Yukon students, as well as individuals from all ages.

I see that my time is pretty much done, and it's unfortunate because there are many other items or many other priority areas I would like to be able to speak about. I would just conclude my remarks by saying thank you again to all members and congratulations to you, Mr. Speaker, on your new role. We look forward to working with you and look forward to working with all of our colleagues in the years to come. Thank you.

**Ms. Moorcroft:** Congratulations, Mr. Speaker, on your appointment as the Speaker of this Assembly. I have the great honour of once again serving in this Assembly. For that honour, I would like to thank my constituents, my family and my hard-working, capable campaign team who were such a big help to me during the months of campaigning preceding the election. As in 1992, when I was first elected as the MLA for Mount Lorne, the 2011 electoral district boundary redistribu-

tion created a new riding. I now represent Copperbelt South, which has country and rural residential neighbourhoods as well as agricultural and industrial properties.

To briefly describe this new riding, Copperbelt South begins at the Mount Sima Road and extends along the Alaska Highway to the Yukon River bridge. The McCrae and Mount Sima industrial areas have a number of businesses, including a service station and RV shop, an art gallery, building supply stores, a woodworking shop, many contractors and home-based businesses. Within the City of Whitehorse boundaries the riding includes Mount Sima, Whitehorse Copper, McCrae, Fox Farm Road and Fox Haven Estates, Wolf Creek, Pineridge, Spruce Hill, Mary Lake and Cowley Creek. Beyond the Carcross Cutoff, the Golden Horn subdivision, Gentian Lane and properties on the east side of the Alaska Highway to the Yukon River Bridge are in Copperbelt South.

Most of these Copperbelt South neighbourhoods were part of the Mount Lorne riding I represented from 1992 to 2000, which was ably represented by Steve Cardiff as the MLA from 2002 to 2011. Steve was also an effective member of a number of legislative select committees. This morning, I paid tribute to Steve Cardiff. His sudden death this past July is a big loss for our community and for all Yukon. Steve and I had been campaigning together in the new Copperbelt South and Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes ridings this spring and summer, and over the past 20 years we enjoyed many conversations on the political issues of the day, issues that remain current. I and other members of the Official Opposition caucus will advocate for whistle-blower protection legislation, for improvements to the *Human Rights Act*, for a Whitehorse youth shelter, for a residential tenancy act and for mandatory helmet use on off-road vehicles.

Sadly, two other members of the 32<sup>nd</sup> Legislature for whom I had respect have passed on: Todd Hardy and John Edzerza. Each of them championed a number of causes during the years that they were in office, and we will work collaboratively over the next few years to bring those forward.

During the recent election campaign, all political parties spoke about the need for cooperation in this Chamber. I would like to congratulate all members who have been elected to this Assembly and say that I do hope we can work collaboratively.

At the doorsteps of my constituents, I made a commitment to act with ethics and integrity as their MLA and to practice civility and decorum in the House. I want to thank all those who voted for me for their support. I will work hard for all constituents to earn the support of those who did not vote for me, as well. We do all need to work together.

We in the Official Opposition promote collaboration and will work to develop consensus, but we fully intend to hold this government to account on the issues that matter to the Yukon public. We want to see the government tackle the housing crisis head-on, get a fair deal on our natural resources, protect the Peel and support a democratic renewal process.

The Yukon Party platform contained a number of promises that are common to New Democrat values. I encourage the government to deliver on those commitments. We expect to see a comprehensive housing strategy, more training opportunities

so we have a skilled Yukon workforce in order that Yukon citizens and communities benefit from economic development.

We want to see progress on Yukon land use planning, implementation of First Nations land claims and self-government agreements and protection of the pristine wilderness of the Peel watershed for present and future generations.

In the Copperbelt South riding, an important feature is the Golden Horn Elementary School attended by children from all areas of Copperbelt South as well as from the neighbouring riding of Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes. This year the school launched GOES — the Great Outdoor Experiential School program — and I enjoyed taking part in a school walk as well as attending the book fair, the school council annual general meeting, Remembrance Day ceremonies and the science fair this fall.

Golden Horn parents are active members of the school community. I will be working with the Golden Horn school council and Department of Education officials to ensure the school continues to offer a good learning environment for its students.

I will encourage other schools around the Yukon and the Department of Education to move forward in supporting outdoor experiential education in other schools as well as responding appropriately to the Auditor General's report on education, which identified a number of concerns, one of them being the terrible gap in graduation rates and in student success between aboriginal students and non-aboriginal students. This needs our attention.

I would like to take this opportunity to speak about other issues that affect my constituents. The practice of allowing mineral staking within municipal boundaries is an outdated one and is not sustainable. Residents of Spruce Hill and other Whitehorse neighbourhoods oppose the right of mining companies to stake over their properties. I urge the Yukon government to listen to the residents and the councils of towns and villages in the Yukon, and to withdraw residential and municipal lands from free-entry staking.

Highway safety is important to all of us. With the high number of commuters travelling from Copperbelt South, Marsh Lake and Mount Lorne every day, the Alaska Highway from the Carcross Cutoff to downtown Whitehorse is the busiest stretch of highway in Yukon.

The expensive meridians that have been built there eliminated passing lanes. This impedes the traffic flow and results in some drivers taking bigger risks when they are stuck behind slow-moving traffic. The intersections of Copperbelt South country residential areas to the Alaska Highway are not safe. We need to see better road planning and this government should investigate the feasibility of twinning the Alaska Highway along this route.

Mr. Speaker, this throne speech fails to address a number of critical issues now facing the Yukon. Notably, the government has failed to state whether it will accept the *Final Recommended Peel Watershed Regional Land Use Plan* prepared by the Peel Watershed Planning Commission. This plan is now in the hands of the parties: the Na Cho Nyäk Dun, Vuntut Gwitchin, Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in, Gwich'in Tribal Council, and

the Yukon government. Yes, the Yukon government is one of the parties and it has an obligation. It is up to them to consult with Yukon communities and to either approve the plan, modify the plan or reject the plan.

The Peel Watershed Planning Commission, which included representatives of the Yukon government as well as affected First Nations, worked for six years to develop this plan and has recommended it to the parties and to the public. As stated on its website, the arm's-length commission believes that the approach taken in the plan enables Yukoners to serve as responsible stewards of this landscape. It is time for the Yukon government to indicate whether they will approve or reject the plan.

I can assure the government the protection of the Peel is important not only to my constituents but to all Yukoners. Take a stand and tell the public what it is. New Democrats support responsible mining and the development of a strong local economy. The mining industry requires certainty, and that certainty will only be provided when the Yukon government completes the land use planning required under the Yukon First Nation land claim and final agreements and self-government legislation. It is irresponsible of the government to fail to indicate in its throne speech whether or not it will accept the Peel planning document which was achieved in over six years of work.

We need to ensure that Yukon workers are trained and hired for mining sector jobs and that our economy benefits from the resource extraction industry, and we need to take into account the environmental costs of mining in the long term. The social costs of a boom-and-bust economy mean that we need to address housing and social service needs for communities during the boom times.

Mr. Speaker, I have just stated that we support responsible mining and we believe that we need to get a fair deal on our natural resources. We need to provide better training for Yukon workers and see more economic benefit to the Yukon.

I was pleased to see in the throne speech that the government has said it will make a range of housing options available. Unfortunately, the throne speech made no reference to the work of the Select Committee on the *Landlord and Tenant Act*. As the select committee recommendations indicated, it is now time to modernize the language, principles, and the substance of the legislation that regulates residential and commercial tenancy. Language is important. The residential tenancy act needs to be written in plain language so that it's easy for landlords, tenants and the public to understand. The residential tenancy act should recognize the principle that housing is a human right.

Canada has ratified the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women and the new convention that speaks to the rights of indigenous peoples.

Each of those international covenants recognizes that housing is a human right. As signatory to these covenants, Canada's and Yukon's governments have a responsibility to enact laws that respect, protect and fulfill those human rights obligations.

Yukon's *Human Rights Act* recognizes that respect for human rights is a fundamental part of Canada's heritage. Yukon's new residential tenancy act should include sections that state that the *Human Rights Act* applies to residential tenancies and that housing is a human right.

The *Human Rights Act* prohibits discrimination in connection with any aspect of the occupancy, possession, lease or sale of property offered to the public, and the residential tenancy act should recognize the paramountcy of the *Human Rights Act*. A new Yukon residential tenancy act, to be fair, would clearly lay out the rights and obligations of landlords and of tenants. It would define who the law applies to. It would balance rights and protections for landlords and tenants. It would provide clear definitions and be organized and coherent.

I recognize the value and relevance of the Yukon Status of Women Council's research into housing needs and the rental markets in Yukon as well as the comparison they have done of residential tenancy laws across Canada. They submitted this to the government. I want to emphasize that a majority of landlords are responsible and fair. Nevertheless, some women have encountered serious difficulties as tenants and have reported that the act is out-of-date and unjust. Women tenants feel vulnerable to retaliation if they complain about substandard housing conditions.

This government must improve and update the act and remove outdated and unfair provisions. They failed to address this in the throne speech. The Yukon remains the only jurisdiction in Canada to allow landlords to evict tenants without cause. The Yukon residential tenancy act needs to offer basic protection to tenants, which state that a landlord must provide a written notice of eviction, identify the causes of eviction, and allow for an appeal period for notice of eviction.

Yukon has an appallingly high rate of spousal assault, and this has been the case for many years. There are a number of women and their children who are not safe because they do not have access to housing. A new residential tenancy act could give an abused woman the right to move out in less than 28 days' notice if she provides evidence of domestic violence affecting her personal safety. I believe this would make Yukon's residential tenancy act a best practice in an area where it is much-needed, responding to the high levels of male violence against women in Yukon communities. In the current housing market, with the shortage of units and the vacancy rate for rental accommodations under two percent, I do not think it would be unduly onerous for a landlord to fill a vacant unit if a woman needs to move to protect her personal safety and that of her children.

Conditions of housing must be safe, sanitary and fit for human habitation. The residential tenancy act should establish health and safety standards, even if this means referencing another statute such as the *Public Health and Safety Act*. Health and safety standards and the condition of a rental unit should be acknowledged by the landlord and the tenant at the beginning of a rental contract and throughout the tenancy period.

A new residential tenancy act should use modern, clear, plain language and remove archaic and unnecessary words; recognize housing as a human right and the paramountcy of the

*Human Rights Act*; require landlords to provide tenants with causes for eviction in keeping with all other Canadian jurisdictions; clarify landlord and tenant rights, security deposits and last month's rent; establish minimal rental standards and use inspection reports and regulations for enforcement of rental housing standards, referencing the *Public Health and Safety Act*; establish a penalty for retaliation by landlords if tenants assert their rights to live in a rental property that meets safe housing standards; and establish a dispute resolution mechanism that could be used as an option prior to the landlord and tenant court.

Finally, as a public education service, the government needs to develop and circulate plain-language brochures that would clearly explain the rights and obligations of landlords and tenants that are contained in the residential tenancy act.

The Official Opposition advocates for a comprehensive housing strategy, and I was pleased to see the commitments to housing projects, including the construction of a youth shelter and second-stage housing for Kaushee's Place, in the Speech from the Throne. These are much-needed facilities, and the need for them has been demonstrated in a number of studies conducted by researchers in Yukon in the last few years. I hope that these commitments will be met.

Previous Yukon Party governments made a commitment to build Kaushee's Place second-stage housing in 2009 and again in 2010. As critic for Highways and Public Works, I trust that Public Works will work effectively with Kaushee's Place, which has demonstrated the need for second-stage housing for the last 10 years. More than two years ago, Kaushee's Place prepared a business plan for this proposed new facility and the organization has been meeting with government officials for some time now, providing information as requested. It is now time for this government to get things done, and I call on it to ensure that the construction of Kaushee's Place can begin at the earliest possible date in the spring construction season of 2012. We don't need any further delays.

Besides the need for a new residential tenancy act that I have spoken about, other elements of a comprehensive housing plan should include enhancing Yukon Housing Corporation home ownership programs for low down payments and low-interest loans and increasing the size of its mortgage portfolio, increasing the supply of building lots to release more lands for housing, including lots for owner-built homes, as many Yukon people dream of the possibility of designing and building their own homes, repairing the Yukon Housing Corporation's stock in downtown Whitehorse that has been sitting vacant for more than a year.

The Yukon government should also be working with First Nations to develop options for housing on settlement lands. We must also develop measures to increase the supply of affordable market and social rental housing.

I have a deep commitment to social justice. Yukon has a record to be proud of in supporting restorative justice measures, such as pre-charge diversion, First Nations justice initiatives, and the work of community justice committees. As the 2010 review of Yukon's police force heard, the Yukon public supports a model of community-based policing, where there are



strong and respectful relationships between the RCMP and the public. The Yukon public also supports an emphasis on crime prevention, partnerships and collaboration, which are part of restorative justice.

I served as a representative of a coalition of eight Yukon women's groups on the advisory committee to that police review. We heard that in a democratic society civilian oversight of the police is essential to gaining and holding the public's trust and confidence. The Yukon police review clearly heard that this belief is widely held across the territory. A proper management and civilian oversight structure for the RCMP must be developed and implemented in order to build and sustain public trust.

I will be asking the Minister of Justice to appoint an equal number of men and women to the proposed police council that was recommended in the *Sharing Common Ground — Final Report*. Last week I wrote the Minister of Justice about the federal bill, C-10, known as the *Safe Streets and Communities Act*, and urged him to ask the federal government to withdraw this crime omnibus bill. This bill will not make our communities safer, and it fails to respect the fundamental principles of supporting rehabilitation, healing, and reintegration of offenders that is found in Yukon's *Corrections Act, 2009*. As the Canadian Bar Association has stated, Bill C-10 ignores the fact that crime rates in Canada continue to decrease and, in fact, have now fallen below 1973 levels. This bill does not improve public safety. In the United States, lawmakers and politicians who have tried such mandatory sentencing approaches are adamant that the punitive measures proposed in Bill C-10 are completely counterproductive. An approach that is built on the state incarcerating more of its citizens for longer periods of time is a step backwards from a humane justice system that seeks to reintegrate people into society.

If the Yukon government is truly interested in creating safer communities as stated in the Yukon Party election platform, then I invite it to support restorative justice approaches. Yukon's unique contributions to the justice system could and should be ones that support healing and dignity over incarceration and retribution. Instead of requiring stronger sentencing for at-risk youth, I would urge the government to consider advocating that this segment of our society be best kept out of custody. When youth are held in custody, they learn how to become better criminals. This is particularly true for youth with mental health conditions such as autism or fetal alcohol spectrum disorder. Providing housing first and access to health and education programs for all members of society are safer and lower cost solutions to community safety.

Mandatory sentencing provisions such as those found in Bill C-10 will increase the numbers of inmates in our correctional system. It's also likely to add to the numbers of First Nation inmates who are already over represented in Canada's prison population, which is a human rights violation that the Supreme Court of Canada has ruled to be in violation of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*.

The bill will eliminate the ability of judges to make a sentence appropriate to the circumstances and to have any discretion over sentencing. Bill C-10 will victimize the vulnerable

once again. There are significant financial and social costs attached to Bill C-10. It will overload the justice system with more expenditures in apprehensions, trials and incarcerations. Conservative estimates predict this crime legislation will cost Canadian taxpayers an additional \$2.7 billion over five years.

I'd like to express my gratitude to the Minister of Justice for arranging a tour of the new Whitehorse correctional facility for members of this Assembly last week. I hope that the plan of this government is not one that wants to put more people into the new Whitehorse Correctional Centre as soon as it opens — at significant taxpayer expense. The Yukon government has an opportunity to play a leadership role by telling Ottawa that the Yukon government will not pay for this costly and counterproductive legislation, and I urge the government to repudiate Bill C-10 and its approach to criminal justice, which is vengeful, costly and unproductive.

We all should know that the level of violence against women in Yukon is appalling. In a report that I submitted to the police review co-chairs, "If My Life Depended On It: Yukon Women and the RCMP", I presented a number of concerns and recommendations based on what I heard from the Yukon public during the course of this review. I am expecting that the Yukon government will act on a number of those recommendations. I'm looking to the government, along with the RCMP, to commit resources to establish an impartial and independent legal advocate position to assist women victims of violence and women who are charged with offences in their dealings with the police and the justice system. This position could work closely with Yukon women's groups and provide support and act as a liaison for the victim and for the specialized domestic violence response team that was recommended by the review.

RCMP in the Yukon also need to have locally developed and Yukon-specific training that the Northern Institute of Social Justice could prepare in consultation with women's groups and First Nations.

That training needs to address violence against women in the north, missing and murdered aboriginal women, disappeared women along the Highway of Tears and an understanding of the differences between women's and men's responses to violence, training on community safety measures and civil remedies, such as *Family Violence Prevention Act* orders; family property and support orders; gender and cultural awareness training; encouraging non-judgmental and compassionate perspectives on the part of the police; and information about Yukon women's groups' services. We need to see the RCMP and the government supporting opportunities for developing inter-agency cooperation and information exchange by inviting community and service agencies, inter-agency groups and senior RCMP to meet and to participate in this Yukon training that has been proposed.

There's also a need to develop curriculum for the Yukon RCMP on the history of the relationship between First Nations and the RCMP in the north. This would include information about the historical and contemporary RCMP and First Nation relations; recognizing the contributions of Yukon First Nations community constables to the Royal Northwest Mounted Police and to police survival; the RCMP agency in removing First

Nations children and transporting them to residential schools and the sixties scoop. They also need to learn lessons from the deaths of Yukon First Nations citizens during interactions with the RCMP.

Between 1999 and 2009, seven people died in police custody in the Yukon. That police review was set up in order to respond to the most recent death, that of Raymond Silverfox, and to respond to the unconscionable behaviour of two constables who had sex with a woman who was drunk. I want to see this government and our police force working to change the circumstances that have allowed these kinds of things to occur.

Communities have said that they want to see community orientation for new RCMP; they want the RCMP to be part of their communities, so I am looking for collaboration with First Nation governments, with municipalities, service agencies, inter-agency committees and working groups to develop an orientation protocol for each detachment, and that will take time and resources.

The RCMP and the office of public prosecutions need to establish a sexual assault and domestic violence prosecutor team with training and expertise in evidence gathering and criminal law and adopt skilled interview techniques when they question women who are survivors of violence. This work should be done in cooperation with women's groups and a women's legal advocate.

There are a number of best practices that have been identified in the *Sharing Common Ground — Review of Yukon's Police Force — Final Report* and in the submissions that were made to the police commission. Those were the ones that I will follow up in future discussions in this Assembly.

The Speech from the Throne made no reference to the long-awaited social inclusion strategy. I am very disappointed by this because we know that we need to promote equality in order to build a socially and economically just society. From 2006 to 2009, I served on the Yukon Human Rights Commission. That commission was unsuccessful in its request to the former Minister of Justice to appear before the Legislative Assembly to present its annual report and to speak to the need for updating and revising the Yukon *Human Rights Act*. This act was brought in by a previous New Democratic government more than 25 years ago. I hope that this government will allow the Yukon Human Rights Commission, the child and youth advocate, the Ombudsman, and Information and Privacy Commissioners to appear before the House annually. This is a way for the Assembly to work better and will provide for good government.

The Yukon government needs to support the independence of the Human Rights Commission to change its reporting relationship so that the commission reports directly to the Legislature, and to address recommendations of the Select Committee on Human Rights and to bring forward amendments to eliminate all legal barriers for same-sex spouses.

The government also needs to work responsibly with the Yukon College Board of Directors and to look at some of the issues they face. They have been running out of space. Just this weekend, the board met and spoke about the need for more land, and to identify the endowment lands parcel and to bring

that forward so that Yukon College can make long-term plans moving toward a university, and toward providing more mine training. These are all initiatives that we support.

I would like to speak to the need to support more agricultural development within the Yukon. We presently produce a very small amount — approximately one percent — of our own food within the Yukon.

We need to support the Yukon Agricultural Association and the Growers of Organic Food Yukon in improving food production in the Yukon. We need to look at initiatives, such as buying local food for government facilities. We need to improve our food security. As elected members of this Legislature, we have a responsibility to engage in constructive and informed discussion on all public issues, and the key role of the Official Opposition is to hold those in power to account, to scrutinize legislation, to question government priorities, and to challenge them to do a better job for every Yukoner. We are here to improve the government's performance, and I encourage the government to listen to the Opposition.

I look forward to the challenge of working for my Copperbelt South constituents and for all Yukon people in the years ahead. I truly appreciate the privilege of serving as the Member for Copperbelt South in the 33<sup>rd</sup> Legislative Assembly. Thank you.

**Hon. Mr. Nixon:** Mr. Speaker, I want to begin by thanking my constituents in Porter Creek South for providing me with the opportunity to represent them here in this Assembly. I commit to work hard on behalf of everyone in my riding, and I sincerely appreciate their support, and I look forward to building on the relationships and the new friendships I have established. I would like to thank my family for their support, specifically my wife, for hours and hours and hours on the campaign trail, and also my sons Matthew, Kyle and Jack were my greatest supports and inspiration.

My parents and in-laws were also incredible supports. I would also like to thank my brother Jeff and his family, who live in Ontario, and my vast extended family here in Yukon.

I am grateful that the Yukon Party has been re-elected for the third mandate, Mr. Speaker. It's important for us to reflect on where we have come from and the challenges that we have overcome.

Prior to the Yukon Party taking office in late 2002, the Yukon had experienced several years of economic recession. Our unemployment rate was too high, our population was declining. Almost 3,000 Yukoners, many of whom were our young people — our prime labour force — left the Yukon to find work Outside.

One of our mainstay industries — mining — was nearly defunct, with exploration and development spending in the territory being less than \$10 million. Rebuilding Yukon's private sector economy was priority number one for the previous Yukon Party governments elected in 2002 and re-elected in 2006.

Given the daunting challenges they faced, the previous two Yukon Party administrations are to be congratulated for their superb job in reviving our economy. I want to thank each of the

members who served in those administrations. We are grateful for your contributions to Yukon.

Our vision for moving forward together continues to build upon the previous four pillars: better quality of life, the environment, the economy and good government.

We committed to dealing with the challenges that a growing, prosperous economy creates. Such challenges as housing and land availability, clean energy, transportation and communications infrastructure, greater access to health care and ensuring the social service safety net is there for people in need, more education and training facilities and programs, as well as robust land and resource management systems.

Your Yukon Party government welcomes these challenges. Yukoners selected us to lead the territory because the Yukon Party team has the vision, energy and experience to meet these challenges head on. On October 11, Yukoners made a choice to continue to prosper and grow under the stewardship of a re-elected Yukon Party government.

I would like to talk for a few minutes about supports for families — specifically families of children and adults with disabilities. During the campaign, many Yukoners shared with me the challenges they face with respect to medical issues they or a loved one faced. For some, the challenge was getting access to tests, treatments and therapies. For others, it was accessing opportunities that would allow them to remodel their homes to accommodate a loved one's physical disability.

The issue hits close to home for me. I have three children, one of whom has autism. I know first-hand the challenges we face. As a parent, there are moments when one feels completely helpless. You know that your child needs help and you know that it's your job as a parent to ensure that the help is found, but there are times when a parent just can't do it. That's an awful place to be. I cannot put into words the feeling, other than to say it is awful and it is overwhelming. We were very fortunate that, with the support of the previous Yukon Party government, our son was able to get some help from an incredible team. I cannot say enough about the work of Joanne Stanhope, Nate Searle, Andrea Sharpe, Karen Rach, Teresa Smith and others who have helped my son. A family-centred approach to support for children and adults with disabilities is essential. Each child is unique and each family is unique.

One of the reasons I decided to run for office was because I wanted to work on this issue. After setting up services for my son, which in return opened doors for many other children and families to receive support, and after founding Autism Yukon, I became convinced that it was an area that I could play a part in making our territory's response even better.

During the campaign when I was knocking on doors, Yukoners shared with me their struggles, not only with autism, but with other situations. As we talked about this as a campaign team, I know many of my colleagues were hearing similar stories. I take great pride in the fact that the Yukon Party committed to providing support services for children and adults with disabilities in addition to the services already provided to children with autism. Having seen firsthand how much these support services can improve the life of a child with autism, I am pleased to support these services being extended to families

with other disabilities. I'm also proud that we committed to provide assistance to Yukoners with disabilities to modify their homes to accommodate their disability. Again, that commitment speaks to the concerns that I heard at the door. Even as I read that commitment, I can think of specific individuals in my riding who will benefit from that commitment. I'm pleased that we will establish a new caregiver tax credit for families caring for a relative with a disability including seniors, adults and children with severe disabilities.

A few moments ago, I mentioned that some families need access to therapy.

Our government has committed to providing additional funding for therapies, as well as money for specialized equipment, ramps and lifts to assist people with disabilities through an expanded and revitalized family support for children with disabilities program.

I go back to my own experience as a father of a child with autism. The early intervention that my son received made all the difference in him having a great quality of life. Early, intense and sustained intervention in a child's life can be clearly life-changing for the child and the family. Unless one has experienced it firsthand, it's difficult to explain how challenging raising a child with a disability can be. Our government recognizes that, and that's why we committed to enhance the home care program, including providing more help for respite care of children and dependant relatives. We all want to improve the quality of life by improving how we care for Yukoners. We recognize that the key to better health care is to improve access to medical professionals. We are committed to improve Yukoners' access to family doctors, nurses and medical specialists by implementing a new health human resource strategy, including doubling the family physician incentive program for physicians who have recently graduated in exchange for working in Yukon; creating a new family physician recruitment incentive; increasing the medical education bursary; increasing the nursing education bursary; increasing the health profession education bursary; and offering the Yukon Medical Association funding to expand supports to visiting specialists and medical graduates in residency.

Access to medical services is not just a Whitehorse issue; it affects the Yukon as a whole. That is why our government committed to continue to build new regional hospitals in both Watson Lake and Dawson City.

During the campaign, one of the main issues was housing and land availability. I want to talk about this issue for a few minutes as it illustrates a great point. In 2002, 30,063 people lived in Yukon. Our most recent population count has us at 35,175. That's an increase of 5,112, or 17 percent.

The 2006 census showed the total number of rental households that year was 3,840, which is roughly 30 percent of all households.

First, what has the government been doing? Well, under the Yukon Party's watch, the government has increased its social housing stock by 40 percent. Think about that for a minute. There are 40 percent more social housing units today than there were eight years ago. This is in addition to the 300 units this government has refurbished and renovated. That means we

have 500 new and improved housing units. The Yukon Party has and will continue to make great progress addressing the housing needs of Yukoners.

What impresses me is the realization that we have been so successful in revitalizing Yukon as a place in which people want to live. Just think about the changes we've made in the past decade. It is worth noting the kind of housing that we have built. The Yukon Advisory Council on Women's Issues advised the government that single-parent housing was the greatest need they identified. The Yukon Party government responded to that on a priority basis. The government identified the need for more senior-sensitive housing, not only in Whitehorse, but in other communities as well.

We know that Yukon elders and seniors want to stay here, in the communities where they've built their lives, raised their children and formed great friendships. The Yukon Party made addressing seniors housing a priority. That results in 78 new units in Whitehorse, 48 units built on the Yukon College campus and another 30 units on the waterfront. Individuals who have toured both buildings are very impressed with the beautiful views from both locations. These are wonderful, wonderful complexes. We have 35 new units in other Yukon communities like Haines Junction, Watson Lake, Teslin and Faro. Clearly, we are addressing this problem head-on.

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

*Debate on motion re Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne accordingly adjourned*

*The House adjourned at 5:30 p.m.*

**The following Sessional Papers were tabled on December 5, 2011**

33-1-2

Yukon Child & Youth Advocate 2011 Annual Report (Speaker Laxton)

33-1-3

Conflict of Interest Commission Annual Report for the period from April 1, 2010 to March 31, 2011 (Speaker Laxton)

33-1-4

Election Financing and Political Contributions 2010, Report of the Chief Electoral Officer of Yukon (Speaker Laxton)

33-1-5

Information & Privacy Commissioner 2010 Annual Report (Speaker Laxton)

33-1-6

Ombudsman 2010 Annual Report (Speaker Laxton)

33-1-7

Yukon Human Rights Commission, April 1, 2009 to March 31, 2010 Annual Report (Speaker Laxton)

33-1-8

Subsistence, Travel and Accommodations of Members of the Yukon Legislative Assembly 2010 – 2011, Report on (dated April 2011) (Speaker Laxton)

33-1-9

Absence of Members from Sitzings of the Legislative Assembly and its Committees: Report of the Clerk of the Yukon Legislative Assembly (dated December 1, 2011) (Speaker Laxton)

33-1-10

Appointments to Major Government Boards and Committees, Standing Committee on: Eighteenth Report (dated September 9, 2011) (Speaker Laxton)