

**Yukon Legislative Assembly
Whitehorse, Yukon
Wednesday, December 7, 2011 — 1:00 p.m.**

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

Prayers

DAILY ROUTINE

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

Tributes.

TRIBUTES

In recognition of Yukon/Stikine Regional Science Fair participants

Hon. Mr. Kent: I rise today on behalf of all members of the Legislative Assembly to pay tribute to all the students from grades 4 to 7 who recently took part in the 2011 Yukon/Stikine Regional Science Fair. I was able to attend this past Saturday, along with the Commissioner of the Yukon and our Member of Parliament. Also in attendance was the Leader of the Official Opposition, as well as the Member for Mayo-Tatchun. I saw them there, as well as the Member for Copperbelt South. Anyone else who was there, I do apologize if I missed you.

Students who study science are better equipped to handle the issues facing our world in the future. Science fairs encourage the use of the scientific method and an awareness and application of ethics in the conduct of science and experimental study. Supported by their classmates, their teachers and their parents, the 76 winners of their local school science fairs created 58 inventive scientific projects on a wide range of subjects from acid rain to pop stains; from nail polish to oil spills.

I was fortunate enough to be a judge at the Christ the King Elementary School local science fair and I know that, again, the Member for Copperbelt South attended the one at Golden Horn Elementary as well. The fair itself was evaluated by 30 professional scientists and engineers and there were numerous winning projects and awards given out.

Science Adventures at the Yukon Research Centre and the Regional Science Fair Society run the fair and they would like to invite Yukoners to participate in the next Science Fair on December 1, 2012. It's never too early to start thinking about your next research project.

I would suggest also that each and every member of the House check out www.scienceadventures.ca for a complete listing of the varied award winners from this year's fair. I would especially like to congratulate the three grade 7 winners who will represent Yukon next May at the Canada-wide Science Fair in Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island. Two of them are joining us in the gallery today, Mr. Speaker: Alyssa Bunce, from Christ the King Elementary School, with her project, "The Placebo Effect?" and Jacob Newkirk, also from Christ the King Elementary, with his project, "Busting Mouthguards". Unable to be here with us this afternoon, Mr. Speaker, is Pelly

Vincent Braun from Golden Horn Elementary School. His project was "The iPod Hydrocharger". Mr. Speaker, these winning scientists also received a one-year Yukon College scholarship.

Next year we'd like to encourage secondary students to get involved. I've had some initial discussions with the organizers and we're hoping that we can get some secondary students involved next year. Mr. Speaker, science is an integral part of our lives and I commend these students for their thorough investigation and articulate reporting at the 2011 Yukon/Stikine Regional Science Fair.

Applause

In recognition of National Safe Driving Week

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: I rise today on behalf of the House to recognize National Safe Driving Week. This year from December 1 to 7, all Canadians are encouraged and reminded to take added precautions on the road throughout these winter months and to recognize that safety on our roads is everyone's responsibility. This year's theme for national safety week is: "Who has your back on the road this winter?"

During the winter, weather in the Yukon can mean challenging, unforeseen driving conditions that can quickly change unexpectedly as we found out a few days ago — plus degrees to freezing and lots of snow. We are unable to control the weather and its effects on driving conditions, but we can control the way we drive and how we prepare. Advances in technology, infrastructure, and better law enforcement have contributed to the increasingly safer roads that we have been enjoying over the last few years. However, our own behaviour behind the wheel continues to be the number one contributor to safe driving: adjusting driving behaviour; responsibility for the drivers; allowing adequate travel time; always prepare and drive according to weather conditions; plan ahead and obey the laws. Being responsible drivers means that we must be prepared to adapt to rapid weather changes.

Equip your vehicle. Having an emergency kit in your vehicle is an excellent resource for unknown situations that can arise on the road, and some of us rural people will understand that, travelling long distances to get to the big city. Safety kits can consist of some simple things, such as ropes, non-perishable foods, matches, blankets, sleeping bags and flares. It is better to be safe than sorry. Seat belts must be worn properly by all travellers in your vehicle. This includes having the adequate carseat for children. I handed out some give-aways from the department last week to some people who had their carseats checked.

Transportation services for the Department of Highways and Public Works conducts free child carseat clinics throughout the Yukon. Parents, guardians and anyone travelling with children can take advantage of this service, learn about the recalls, have the carseat inspected to ensure it is not damaged, and ensure that the carseat is installed correctly. Carseats save lives and are a valuable investment in your child's life.

I am pleased to say that the holiday season is upon us and the community has started to light up with Christmas lights. Shoppers are now bustling through the stores. At this time of the year, we can bring lots of happiness and joy. It is important to remind people that while we enjoy the holiday season, we

must plan ahead and get home safely. For many of us, holiday celebrations are indeed one of the best parts of this time of year.

For many of us, holiday celebrations are indeed one of the best parts of this time of the year. But if alcohol is consumed at these celebrations, we must plan ahead and avoid getting behind the wheel and creating risks for ourselves and everyone else on the road. We are all aware of the risks involved with impaired driving. Getting home safely is as simple as a designated driver, a sober driver, or calling a taxi. I urge all Yukoners to think twice before getting behind the wheel this holiday season. Being a responsible driver means you're responsible not only for your own life, but the lives of others.

During this month, the RCMP will be performing their regular holiday checkstops to increase the safety on our roads. These checkstops are part of a long-term initiative to keep unfit and impaired drivers off our roads. Annually, there are approximately 6,000 vehicles that go through the RCMP Yukon checks.

Besides impaired driving, there are other leading causes to crashes, injuries and deaths on the road. Pay full attention when you're driving and avoid distractions. Do not use hand-held electronic devices for talking, texting or e-mail while driving. If you need to use these devices, park your vehicle legally and safely and ensure that you are not impeding traffic. Distractions impair your ability to react and make safe driving decisions as much as driving does after consuming alcohol. When behind the wheel, please remember: drive sober, be focused and be buckled.

I would also like to take a moment, actually, to mention the hard work done by my department, the Transportation division. The last few days, their hard work on the roads kept everyone safe through some of these safe driving practices. I'm proud of my crew. They work 365 days a year and are often doing long hours and work some of the holidays. They're in charge of being there Christmas Day and Boxing Day. I'd like to just pass on to them that they do a wonderful job.

In closing, I urge Yukoners to use care when operating a motor vehicle. Safety is everyone's responsibility. Your own behaviour behind the wheel is the number one contributing factor in safe driving. We must remember to be sober, focused and buckled.

In recognition of the CBC's 75th anniversary

Mr. Barr: I rise today on behalf of the Legislature to pay tribute to the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, the CBC, on its 75th anniversary. The CBC is an institution that brings us together as a country. The CBC has been the venue to tell our stories as Canadians. The space is getting smaller, but it's arguably more vital as we are bombarded by corporate media.

Everyone has a favourite past and present CBC Radio or TV show or a favourite personality or happening from the CBC's long history.

Here is what we came up with as our favourites in an informal office poll — I also hope some of our colleagues here share in these — Stewart McLean's stories on the *Vinyl Café*; alternative music on Radio 2; *The Current* with Anna Maria

Tremonti; *Cross Country Checkup*; *Writers & Company*; *North of 60*; *Hockey Night in Canada*; listening to Barbara Frum on Saturdays; *This Hour Has 22 Minutes* episodes with Rick Mercer calling for a national referendum to change Stockwell Day's name to Doris Day; gathering with the family to play board games on a Saturday night with Randy Bachman's *Vinyl Tap* on in the background; *Mr. Dressup*; *The Friendly Giant*; *WireTap*; *As it Happens*; and I personally miss *Don Messer's Jubilee* and *The Tommy Hunter Show*.

Yes, I had to sit down with the family, Mr. Speaker and, "You kids be quiet and listen." That was very good.

In 1958, CBC Whitehorse was established as the first station of the CBC northern radio service. In 1964, CBC moved to its current spot at 570 AM.

The Yukon is well-served by our local Whitehorse station. The behind-the-scenes producers and techs, and the on-air personalities bring us Yukon and national news, coming events from our communities, what's up in the local arts scene, and it also features local musicians like Hank Carr, Joe Loutchan, Kim Beggs, Death in Venice, Kim Barlow, the Undertaking Daddies — and the list goes on.

I know Yukon trappers out on their traplines stay in touch with the outside world during the winter months through our local CBC — for example, Pete and Mary Beattie out on Woodpecker Point. Some of you may know these folks.

Today our local CBC station is broadcasting live from the Food Bank, keeping us up to date, as they always do, while highlighting poverty and need in our community. We are so fortunate to have our public broadcaster, the CBC. On this, the CBC's 75th anniversary, let us reflect on all the CBC's contributions to our cultural life and the role it plays in binding our country. Let us stand up and make sure the CBC continues operating and is relevant long into the future. We look forward to many years of top-notch local programming based in Whitehorse.

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

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Ms. White: I ask the House to join me in welcoming the visitors to the gallery. Today from the Yukon Conservation Society, we have Karen Baltgailis, Lewis Rifkind, and Christina Macdonald. From the Friends of McIntyre Creek, we have John Carney and Gerry Steers. From the Takhini-North Community Association we have Jennifer Eskes. From the Porter Creek Community Association we have Jocelyn Laveck. We also have my friends Bonnie Dalziel and Vanessa Marchuk from the riding and my father, Don White.

Applause

Speaker's ruling

Speaker: Prior to calling for tabling returns and documents, the Chair will rule on a point of order raised yesterday by the Government House Leader. Yesterday during the tabling of returns and documents, the Member for Riverdale South sent to the table a document entitled *Minority Report on Whistleblower Protection*. The Government House Leader rose on a

point of order and informed the House that members had attempted to table this document during the 32nd Legislative Assembly and that this attempt was ruled out of order by the Speaker, Hon. Ted Staffen. The Government House Leader is correct.

In his ruling, Speaker Ted Staffen cited Standing Order 49(1), which says: "A report from a Committee shall be signed by the Chair, on behalf of the Committee, and shall be presented to the Assembly by the Chair or by another member of the Committee authorized by the Chair or the Committee."

The members who originally attempted to table the report were not authorized by the committee to present it to the House. The document was not, therefore, accepted as a tabled document and it was returned to the members.

Pursuant to Standing Order 49(1), the Member for Riverdale South is also not authorized to table the report. Therefore, the member's attempt to table it yesterday is also out of order. The document will not, therefore, be entered into the Assembly's working papers or distributed in the normal fashion as a tabled document. It will be returned to the member.

Are there any returns or documents for tabling?

Are there any reports of committees?

Are there any petitions?

PETITIONS

Petition No. 1

Ms. White: I have for presentation a petition signed by 366 people regarding the protection of middle McIntyre Creek.

The petition reads as follows: "We the undersigned strongly support the conservation and long-term protection of middle McIntyre Creek for the benefit of present and future Yukoners. We hereby petition the Government of Yukon to designate middle McIntyre Creek as an environmentally protected area and to oppose any municipal proposals for roads, housing and any other developments which are inconsistent with environmental protection."

Speaker: Are there any further petitions to be presented?

Are there any bills to be introduced?

Are there any notices of motion?

NOTICES OF MOTION

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to modernize the legislation related to the land titles process to utilize technology and to improve the timelines of transferring land titles.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to provide stable and long-term funding to the Whitehorse Food Bank to ensure that the Whitehorse Food Bank does not have to rely solely upon volunteer contributions to finance its operations.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to give a status report on the 33 "actions to be undertaken", contained in the Yukon government's *Climate Change Action Plan*.

I also give notice of the following motion:

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

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Yukon government to immediately create a system for registering paid lobbyists as recommended by the Conflict of Interest Commissioner in his annual report to the Legislative Assembly.

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

THAT the House urges the Yukon Government to provide leadership on protecting Yukon's environment by:

- (1) re-establishing the Yukon Council on the Economy and the Environment;
- (2) tabling species at risk legislation;
- (3) developing a wetlands conservation strategy; and
- (4) updating the *Environment Act*.

Mr. Speaker, I further give notice of the following motion: THAT this House urges the Government of Canada to provide international leadership in addressing climate change and to not abandon efforts to establish emission reduction targets for greenhouse gases as required in the Kyoto Protocol.

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

THAT this House urges the Yukon government to develop a comprehensive water strategy for the protection of water resources and the environment which addresses:

- 1) source water protection, including surface and ground-water;
- (2) protection of wetlands and headwaters;
- (3) restriction of deleterious land uses that may contaminate drinking water sources;
- (4) restriction of bulk water exports;
- (5) protection of drinking water; and
- (6) data collection, monitoring and training.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to make any necessary legislative or regulatory changes to allow extended-scope nurses to practice to the full extent of their capabilities and training in either a nursing station or a hospital.

I give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to proceed, based on recommendations contained in the *Minority*

Report on Whistle-Blower Protection, with drafting whistle-blower protection legislation.

Speaker: Is there a statement by a minister?

Prior to proceeding with Question Period, the Chair will rule on a point of order raised by the Government House Leader.

Speaker's ruling

Speaker: During Question Period yesterday, the Member for Copperbelt South referenced a government bill now before Canada's Parliament, and said, "I would point out, Mr. Speaker, that crime rates are decreasing without these vengeful actions."

At that point, the Government House Leader rose on a point of order and said, "Mr. Speaker, I believe it's contrary to our Standing Orders and to past rulings for a member of this House to refer to the actions of another government in Canada as being vengeful."

In her defence, the Member for Copperbelt-South argued that the term "vengeful" was not an unparliamentary term.

Freedom of speech during parliamentary proceedings is, perhaps, the fundamental privilege that members enjoy as MLAs. The exercise of this right is subject only to the rules, practices and precedents of the House itself. Members must appreciate that context is important in determining what language is or is not unparliamentary; it is not the words so much as how they are used that determines if they are appropriate or not.

If I may quote from the second edition of *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, at page 619: "In dealing with unparliamentary language, the Speaker takes into account the tone, manner and intention of the Member speaking; the person to whom the words were directed; the degree of provocation; and, most importantly, whether or not the remarks created disorder in the Chamber. Thus, language deemed unparliamentary one day may not necessarily be deemed unparliamentary on another day."

Another point to consider is that when a member chooses to use strong language in the House, he or she must be aware that if certain words in a certain context may be used by them, those same words in a similar context may be used against them.

In the context in which the word "vengeful" was used yesterday, the Chair does not believe there is a point of order. However, members should be aware that in the future, if the word is used persistently or in a different context, in a manner likely to create disorder in the House, the Chair may rule differently.

We will now proceed with Question Period.

QUESTION PERIOD

Question re: Whistle-blower legislation

Ms. Hanson: Mr. Speaker, yesterday during Question Period, my colleague, the Member for Riverdale South, asked the minister responsible for the Public Service Commission to confirm the government's intentions with respect to imple-

menting whistle-blower legislation. In reply, the minister indicated that the Premier had sent a letter to the opposition parties to reconvene the Select Committee on Whistle-blower Protection, a committee that met 13 times between 2007 and 2010.

Yesterday, at the end of the day, I did receive a letter from the Premier indicating his desire to establish a Select Committee on Whistle-blower Protection. I would ask the Premier to clarify his intentions. Does he see the select committee as starting from scratch or will this committee start where the last committee left off?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Mr. Speaker, in my capacity as minister responsible for the Public Service Commission, I would like to thank the Leader of the Official Opposition for the question. For clarity, again, I am very pleased that the members of the Official Opposition have agreed to put members forth to sit on a select committee that would oversee recommendations being brought forward to the Government of Yukon on whistle-blower protection.

As I stated yesterday in my response to the member opposite's question, there has indeed been a considerable degree of work that has been completed.

Of course that work would come into consideration looking at the timelines and that would form part of the response coming forward to the Government of Yukon.

Ms. Hanson: I think, for clarification, that the Member for Riverdale South indicated that the Official Opposition has a strong commitment to seeing this legislation being brought forward. The Official Opposition is willing to be part of the select committee but only if the government demonstrates in good faith that this will result in real improvements for our public servants in an expeditious manner. For too long the Yukon's public servants have existed without the benefit of strong laws to protect them from reprisals if they report unethical, corrupt, or dangerous practices.

The NDP participated in the last process. We support the 10 recommendations found in the minority report. We feel that any reconvened select committee must be mandated to report in spring 2012 so that legislation can be drafted for the fall sitting. This is a fair time frame given all the work done to date.

Will the Premier agree that the select committee will be mandated to report in the spring of 2012 so that legislation will be ready for the fall of 2012?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: I would have to reflect upon *Hansard* regarding yesterday's debate, but I am almost very clear that the Member for Riverdale South did in fact commit the Official Opposition to participate on a select committee that would oversee recommendations to the government on whistle-blower protection.

When it comes to just that, as I mentioned, there are provisions within our existing statutes and regulations, and even within our own collective agreements we have with our employees and their respective agents, with respect to protection already in existence, whether it be that or the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*, the *Ombudsman Act*, and so forth. As referenced yesterday, we look forward to receiving the nominees from both the Official Opposition and the third party, when it comes to doing the good work on making recommen-

dations to government on what that whistle-blower protection would look like.

There has been some work conducted; it was incomplete, as all respective parties did not sign on to the minority report. In fact, it should be a majority report; that's what this side is striving for.

We look forward to the Government House Leader working with the respective House Leaders, coming up with a motion that we hope to see and hear within the Legislature this sitting and getting on with the good work.

Ms. Hanson: I would remind the member opposite that on the first day of this legislative sitting, we were enjoined to attempt to conduct our business by asking questions that we were seeking an answer for and to not provide evasive responses. I simply asked: would the member opposite give an undertaking to ensure that this recommendation from a select committee should be participated on and be brought back for a spring sitting so that we can see legislation — legislation that has been promised by this government in 2002, in 2006 — finally got the committee going in 2007. We are simply asking for a commitment. I will remind this House and I did not raise it earlier: we got — at the end of the legislative session yesterday — an unsigned copy of a letter purportedly sent to us on November 29. That's true; I did receive it; it did indicate that they were looking for that —

Speaker: Order please.

Ms. Hanson: — I'm looking for an answer from the government. Will we see this convened?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned yesterday, again, we look forward to receiving the nominees from both the Official Opposition as well as the Third Party in terms of formulating a select committee that would oversee recommendations coming forward to the Government of Yukon in terms of whistle-blower protection. We applaud the work that has been done in previous years by other committees and so forth.

Many respective parties have contributed to that process. In terms of the good work forward, what has to proceed first and foremost is a group of individuals comprised of all representatives of this Legislature, then coming up with the terms of reference and timelines. Of course, I am not going to present the outcome of that process that is actually yet to commence.

We do look forward to receiving a response from the Official Opposition and the Third Party. Again, I thank the Member for Riverdale South and the team on that side of the Legislature for agreeing to participate in this committee.

Question re: Wetland protection

Ms. White: Mr. Speaker, in the Speech from the Throne, the Yukon government committed to planning and managing a system of wilderness preserves, natural parks and ecological reserves throughout the Yukon. Wetlands, including ponds, marshes, bogs, swamps, fens and shallow open waters are ecologically productive and valuable ecosystems. Wetlands provide multiple benefits to the environment and to our health and well-being. The benefits of wetlands include: habitat, water filtration, water storage, flood protection and carbon storage.

Will the minister commit to protecting Yukon's wetlands through a system of wilderness preserves, natural parks and ecological reserves?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Yukon's water resources are very important to Yukoners and we try to protect them as best we can with the tools we have. We recognize that and, because the water resources are so important to Yukoners, we committed to a Yukon water strategy and we will be implementing that in the future.

Ms. White: For years the Department of Environment has sought protection of wetlands in the Yukon. The standard refrain is that unless we know how many and where the wetlands are, no adequate protection can be offered. Those involved in the inventory work are then told there is no money for wetland inventories. Without funding we cannot have an inventory. Without an inventory we cannot have protection. This is a catch-22.

Instead of throwing obstacles in the way of protection, will the minister commit to adequate and reasonable funding for a proper and complete inventory of Yukon's wetlands?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: One of the key NGOs with regard to wetlands is Ducks Unlimited, and I look forward to working with Ducks Unlimited. I have a meeting with them set up for next week. I'll be taking their recommendations very seriously, and look forward to looking with them collaboratively.

Ms. White: I am happy to hear that. The Yukon has a high percentage of Canada's undisturbed wetlands, particularly in our boreal forests. To date, only 54 major wetland complexes have been identified, and only six have full protection.

These protections are mainly as a result of the long struggle to settle land claim agreements, not government policy. In fact, government policy has been to turn over Yukon's land base to resource interests with no protection for important ecological areas.

Mr. Speaker, before it is too late, will the minister commit to developing a wetland conservation strategy and to impose a moratorium on development in wetlands until the plan is developed?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Mr. Speaker, this is an issue we're committed to. We've committed to investing in baseline data. For some examples of some of the good work we've done around wetland protection, we can look to the *North Yukon Regional Land Use Plan*. Those are some of the biggest wetland protection areas in the country. We've done some excellent work thus far and we'll continue with that good work.

Question re: Kyoto Protocol

Mr. Elias: I have some questions also for the Environment minister. A week ago, news leaked out of the federal government regarding our country's plan to abandon the Kyoto Protocol that binds us to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions. This week, the federal Environment minister, Peter Kent, confirmed the news and said that Canada will not be making any new climate change commitments under the Kyoto agreement.

As we speak, negotiations are taking place at the Conference of the Parties in Durban, South Africa or "COP17", as it's called. Mr. Speaker, Canada's good-faith participation is a re-

quirement in these negotiations, especially for our part of the world.

Yukoners would like to know if our Environment minister agrees with Canada's decision to pull out of the Kyoto agreement.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: We're focused on our own actions here with Yukon. We have a good, collaborative working relationship with the federal government, but we're focused on our own actions here in Yukon. We've got a good climate change action plan, which we have committed to implementing. It sets the priorities for action to promote a healthy and resilient Yukon in a changing climate.

Mr. Elias: Here we go again. No answers to the questions. Canada's decision to pull out of Kyoto has earned us criticism around the world and is rightly viewed as a dereliction of our duty. This very morning, six young Canadians were ejected by security from the United Nations climate change summit after a peaceful protest in the middle of Environment minister Peter Kent's speech. The youth were applauded as they were escorted out; even more so at the conclusion of our federal Environment minister's address.

We have had record snowfalls in our territory already this winter and yesterday the temperature in Haines Junction was 14 degrees. Climate change is real. The minister has sent a contingent of Yukon government representatives to Durban, South Africa. What mandate have they been given on behalf of our citizens of this territory and what is their level of participation in the world negotiations?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: As I said before, we've got a good working relationship with the federal government, especially on this file. This is an issue that's very important to Yukoners. We are seeing the effects of climate change every day, especially here in the north and in Yukon.

We've sent a delegation to Durban, South Africa, to participate as the Canadian delegation. Their role is to advocate on behalf of Yukoners and ensure that Yukoners' voices are heard in any international agreement.

Mr. Elias: It has been mentioned before in this House about the crucial participation of subregional governments around the world in terms of avoiding the two-degrees Celsius threshold. I would encourage the minister to do whatever he can to send a united message from Yukoners to our federal government.

The unique character of Dawson City's infrastructure is at risk; the safety of travellers on the Alaska Highway is an issue; and, the health of our fish and wildlife populations around the territory as well. In February 2009, the Yukon government became the last jurisdiction in Canada to introduce a climate change action strategy. Since that time, we've heard very little about it. The report contained a number of action items, but the government has never released an update to tell Yukoners if we're meeting any of the goals or objectives in the strategy.

When does the minister plan to release a report card —

Speaker: Order please.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: I am very happy to stand and commit to implementing the *Climate Change Action Plan*. It's an excellent piece of work that was developed collaboratively with

Yukoners. The action plan includes 33 actions that support four goals: enhancing knowledge and understanding of climate change; improving Yukon's ability to adapt to climate change; reducing greenhouse gas emissions; and leading Yukon action in response to climate change. I can happily report for the member opposite that, of the 33 projects identified in the *Climate Change Action Plan* as priority actions, 16 have been completed, two more will be finished this year and 15 are ongoing.

Question re: Yukon oil and gas

Mr. Tredger: This government and several companies are exploring a hydraulic fracturing method of natural gas extraction in the Yukon. This process is known as "fracking". In this process, large amounts of toxic and carcinogenic chemicals mixed with water are blasted into the underground rocks. These toxins and chemicals leak into local groundwaters and rivers. There are substantial natural gas deposits in the north Yukon as well as in the heavily populated Whitehorse basin.

Will the minister tell this House whether his government supports fracking in the Yukon?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: The Yukon Oil and Gas Resources branch, Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Board and Yukon Water Board function under comprehensive existing legislation to appropriately assess, license and regulate projects.

Energy, Mines and Resources has been, and is currently, actively reviewing these practices with other Canadian and American jurisdictions and, of course, we want to ensure that any and all development of Yukon's natural gas resources is done in a safe, appropriate, environmentally responsible manner. Officials are reviewing this matter as we speak.

Mr. Tredger: Mr. Speaker, the demonstrated negative health and environmental consequences of fracking are enormous. In other jurisdictions, drinking water, water tables and whole watersheds have been contaminated with toxins and carcinogens. There have been, as yet, no public discussions or any efforts to honestly and accurately describe this non-conventional form of extraction to Yukoners. The Yukon public has never been informed of the possibility of fracking in the Yukon and has never been consulted.

Will this government commit to a full public consultation with all Yukoners and with all Yukon First Nations before any regulatory approvals?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Mr. Speaker, again, as I indicated to the member opposite, this area is something on which the Yukon officials within the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources have been active, and are currently active, in working with other Canadian and American jurisdictions reviewing matters pertaining to all practices with oil and gas.

Additional regulation, particularly for the development of natural gas, is something that needs to be proceeded with so that the Yukon can manage both those resources and, in fact, even the storage and transport of natural gas from other jurisdictions. These matters are under review. What we are committed to is to engage in an approach that is based on best practices and on evidence-based decision-making. We want to ensure that the regulatory structure reflects the health and safety of

Yukoners first and foremost and also net interest. I would encourage the member to review, in fact, our energy strategy, which places public consultation around development of new initiatives as a high priority. We will certainly commit to engaging appropriately with the public on this issue.

Mr. Tredger: Debates over the safety of property, wildlife and water resources are raging in Canada and the United States over fracking. Companies aided by cash-strapped governments are rushing headlong into approving this non-conventional form of natural gas extraction. The Government of Quebec has declared a moratorium on fracking and heated debates are raging in other North American jurisdictions. Mr. Speaker, will the government impose an immediate moratorium on fracking in the Yukon until such a time as this process has been shown to be safe and First Nations and all Yukoners have been consulted properly?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: What I'd like to again emphasize to the member opposite is that the Yukon has been part of this process. We were represented at the Canadian Unconventional Resources Conference in November 2011, which is a scientific conference endorsed by the Society of Petroleum Engineers International. We certainly recognize the public concerns and, as I've indicated to the member, our focus — the focus of officials within the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources — is to review the evidence around these areas, to work with other jurisdictions that have experience with these matters, and we want to ensure that, as we develop regulations to allow for the sale and transport of natural gas within the Yukon and to facilitate that, all decisions are evidence-based and that we involve the public at any key points that should require public input.

Question re: Water quality

Mr. Barr: What input has the minister responsible for drinking water standards and potable water infrastructure provided to the government about their plans to permit fracking in regard to natural gas in the Yukon?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: The answer is the same as I provided to the member's colleague. This is an area the Yukon government is reviewing.

Our approach is, again, based on evaluating evidence related to the best practices within other jurisdictions and also doing a full analysis of the risk. I can tell the member that if the Yukon proceeds with additional regulations related to oil and gas and facilitating the use of natural gas, including facilitating the transport of natural gas, which we do require additional regulations to allow — those matters — our focus will be on trying to ensure that all decisions are evidence-based, that they put public safety and public health and our environment as a paramount concern in the development of those regulations and that we have in place the appropriate regulatory structure to safely and responsibly manage development of Yukon's oil and gas resources.

Mr. Barr: The fracking process uses a cornucopia of nasty chemicals to pressurize underground pockets of natural gas and push them to the surface. Fracking processes come into contact with more than just the pocket of gas and throughout North America there are horror stories about fracking and the

toxic impacts on aquifers, the source of much of our drinking water. I want to give the ministers who are guardians of our drinking water the opportunity to make a clear statement that will oppose any controversial developments that threaten our drinking water. The Yukon public is listening.

Will the minister oppose any controversial developments like fracking that threaten our drinking water?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: I know the member's questions were written before I provided the response, but again, I am providing the answer I have already provided to the member. So I would again point out some areas and encourage the member to read the Yukon government's *Energy Strategy for Yukon*, review the priority actions for oil and gas that include developing a competitive and comprehensive oil and gas regulatory regime that will emphasize performance-based compliance; establish new pipeline regulations under the *Oil and Gas Act*; update best practices for environmentally responsible oil and gas exploration and development; and develop best practices for minimizing greenhouse gas emissions in the oil and gas sector.

So again, as I indicated, this is an active file — the development of additional regulations to responsibly and effectively manage our oil and gas resources — their development, their use, their transport, and first and foremost in all considerations is public health, public safety, protection of our environment and ensuring that as we do develop Yukon's oil and gas resources, it's done in a responsible manner and in a manner that is to the net benefit of all Yukoners.

Mr. Barr: The tale of Jessica Ernst of Rosebud, Alberta needs to be told to get the seriousness of going down the fracking path. After her well water was contaminated by nearby fracking, Ms. Ernst went public and showed the world how she could light her tap water on fire. Ms. Ernst received horrible burns and rashes from taking a shower. Tests revealed high levels of ethane, methane and benzene in her water. At least 15 other water wells in the community were contaminated.

How will this government guarantee that Jessica Ernst's situation won't be repeated in the Yukon?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Again, the answer to this is the same as I've already given five times this afternoon on the floor of this Legislature. We're focused on developing a regulatory regime that allows for the responsible development of Yukon's oil and gas resources, allows their transport and use and, in all areas, including public safety around the storage of gas resources, and their development, we are focused on doing so in a responsible manner by ensuring that ultimately the regulations we have in place to facilitate this development will be in the best interests of Yukoners. We place health and safety as a paramount priority and place environmental considerations as another paramount consideration in doing that development.

Again, as outlined in the energy strategy, we are focused on developing best practices for environmentally responsible oil and gas exploration and development and officials — as I indicated — are working with other jurisdictions to ensure that our regulations reflect the experiences in other jurisdictions and do so by both permitting gas development, but also ensuring that that is done in a responsible manner.

Question re: Yukon College endowment lands

Ms. Moorcroft: Yukon College has become a vital educational component for our territory, with a wide variety of post-secondary education, trades, and other training programs offered in Whitehorse and all the communities. Ayamdigut Campus also houses a childcare centre, climate change and research facilities, and student and senior housing. Yukon College has reached its capacity on the 30-hectare parcel of land it moved to in 1989. However, it has no ability to expand into surrounding lands that are owned by the Yukon government. Endowment lands for the college have long been discussed; it is now time to act.

What steps have been taken by the Yukon government to transfer endowment lands to Yukon College?

Hon. Mr. Kent: In our platform, we committed to providing land to Yukon College, as far as to accommodate a new student residence and the possible accommodation of a new school of mining.

I've had initial meetings. I have met with the new president of Yukon College and one of the vice-chairs came to my office here. Last week — I believe it was last week — possibly the week before — I had the opportunity to go up to Yukon College and meet with the president and her senior management team. Of course, this is one of the discussions that we had and we're working on that as we speak. So, you know, those discussions are ongoing and I've had initial dialogue with staff and members of the board of governors.

Ms. Moorcroft: Well, I'm pleased to hear that the minister is in discussions with the college. Yukon College can't plan into the future when they don't have a large enough parcel of land. With its many current facilities, the college's land is fully occupied. The proposed college endowment lands encompass parts of McIntyre Creek, which is valuable for educational and recreational purposes. The area around McIntyre Creek is now being used for experiential science programs and for recreational trails for students and nearby residents. The creek habitat is also an excellent site for scientific research and these values should be protected.

Yukon College requires endowment lands now for the new mine training facility, other educational programs, a possible university, and additional student housing. As the landholder of the property adjacent to Yukon College, does the government intend to transfer these proposed endowment lands to the college?

Hon. Mr. Kent: As mentioned in my previous answer, we are committed to providing land to Yukon College for a new student residence and, if required, land for the establishment of a physical building for the new school of mining at Yukon College. Again, I would like to mention to members opposite — through you, Mr. Speaker, of course — that I have had initial discussions. The college is bursting at the seams as far as land goes. I have had those initial discussions, not only with the president and vice-chair of the Yukon College Board of Governors, but also it was a discussion that I initiated when I met with the president and her senior staff within the past couple of weeks.

Ms. Moorcroft: We have heard from the chancellor and the president of Yukon College that they recognize the need for endowment lands. There is a question of how large a parcel those endowment lands will be.

We also need to emphasize that it is the Yukon government that owns the land and is also responsible for land use planning. It's long past time to do the planning with the participation of Yukon College, the City of Whitehorse, Kwanlin Dun and Ta'an Kwäch'än First Nations in order to transfer a parcel of land to the college for future development. Is the minister prepared to act now, not only on transferring the lands, but on working on the required land use planning with other parties, including the college?

Hon. Mr. Kent: As I mentioned, a platform of the Yukon Party government during the recent election campaign was to transfer the necessary land for the student residence and potentially a school of mining. I have had discussions with representatives of the college and there are other levels of government that have responsibilities when it comes to the land in question. We have had initial discussions with the college president, senior staff and one member of the board of governors. I have been invited to attend a board of governors meeting this weekend as an introduction to the balance of the board, including the chair and others, and I'm sure this issue will come up there as well.

I certainly welcome their interests and we also have to take into account other interests in this area. Again, we have committed in the platform to transferring the land for the student residence and the school of mining. Dialogue and work has begun on the balance of the endowment lands, but I'm not prepared to make a commitment at this time until I have the opportunity to meet with others and some of my colleagues.

Speaker: The time for Question Period has now elapsed.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Mr. Nixon: I would like to introduce a visitor if I may. During the election campaign, there are always a few key people who stand out. They stand out because they devote a lot of their time to causes that they believe in. Sometimes these people even stand out across party lines. Mr. Speaker, I would ask that my colleagues on both sides of the floor in the Assembly please offer a warm welcome to a friend and a volunteer extraordinaire, Krista Meekins.

Applause

Speaker: We will now proceed with Orders of the Day.

ORDERS OF THE DAY**ADDRESS IN REPLY TO THE SPEECH FROM THE THRONE — *adjourned debate***

Clerk: Motion for an Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne moved by Ms. McLeod; adjourned debate, Mr. Silver.

Mr. Silver: When I was informed by my colleagues yesterday that I would probably have a little bit of time to speak for my reply to the throne speech with the cameras still on, I decided to edit my speech a bit.

I was looking for a great shout-out opportunity and I found myself watching my now new favourite TV channel, community channel 9 documentary on the Hockey Day in Canada celebrations. I needed to look no further than the sold-out Dawson Nuggets game against the Ottawa Senators Alumni team. Ringer Brad May handed off a picture-perfect pass to Kevin Anderson, who fired a bullet stick-side and became the first and only Dawson Nugget to score on the Ottawa team — first goal in 105 years. Way to go, Kevin.

Almost as exciting was the gritty effort of Troy Suzuki battling to recover the puck behind the opposition's net, setting out a brilliant centering pass to the front of the net for Bruce Taylor, but no goal — but just as exciting. That's my community and that's my shout-out.

I just want to summarize from yesterday. I spoke about how proud I was to be representing the Klondike in the Legislative Assembly. I thanked my riding association and the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in.

I mentioned Dawson's significant presence here in the House with the banners that drape around us depicting the gold in the Klondike. That gold is our past, but it is also our future. I also mentioned that I was extremely happy with the government's slogan, which is *Moving Forward Together*, and this is a promise I would hope that I can help the government to achieve. Then I switched to some Dawson issues. That is where I will pick up.

In terms of economy, I will argue that Dawson needs an economic development office. I have seen first-hand local businesses struggle to stay afloat as they attempt to provide services in the mining industry — services that if not provided locally will have to be imported. Imagine the marketing potential of a local economic development office in Dawson City. As our Member for Copperbelt North may agree, associations like the Klondike Visitors Association and their excellent marketing staff will have a dedicated ally in the promotion of tourism, a mandate that currently they cannot fill alone. They have been forced to scale back operations in the past five years and are now basically just running the casino. The Klondike Visitors Association — all they are doing is running a casino. There is in fact no organization currently promoting the Paris of the north.

Dawson City has fallen from the graces of the tourism marketing machine. The international jewel is underappreciated for its value. It is a shame, because we have so much to offer. The Hon. Member for Whitehorse Centre was quoted during the recent election, "There is more to the Yukon than just the Klondike" in terms of tourism. This may be true but there is more to the Klondike than just gold panning.

No doubt you have been to our golf course. The Top of the World Golf Course is one of the most unique tourist attractions in the Yukon. This under-developed asset is always an unexpected highlight for many of the tourists who stumble upon it. To golf in the land of the midnight sun at midnight never

ceases to amaze. The course is in the best shape that I have seen it in 13 years. The greens, for the last five years or so, have been top notch. The outstanding loan from the Government of Yukon is, of course, an issue, and this is the issue that may actually ultimately shut the course down. What a tragedy this would be.

We have a golfing association made up of dedicated and knowledgeable members. There is a certified golf pro/instructor on this executive. He even builds custom-made golf clubs.

There is a solution. There is an economic opportunity at stake here. The association has plans to work with the KVA and other organizations and businesses in town to finally promote this unique piece of Dawson City real estate.

The potential for executive retreats and AGMs is real. Investment through sponsorships and advertising from the mining industry in particular is unlimited and mutually beneficial. These are the best lands in Dawson. It is just beautiful over there. Yet, it is getting more likely by the day that this will instead end up in the courts. I am told that we most likely won't be able to open the golf course next year because of the looming judicial matters. I would assume that this would be the start of a slow death for another piece of our city — our town. More importantly, a great and underutilized piece of infrastructure for the future of the Yukon's tourism industry will be lost.

I'll switch to education for a minute. With over 15 years of teaching experience in the Yukon, you better believe that I have a thought or two that I would like to share with you on education. I have taught high school math in Dawson for 13 years. The kids who were in kindergarten when I began teaching back in 1989 just graduated last year. I was their guest speaker and, come to think of it, I can't remember a year that I didn't deliver a speech or a toast to the graduating students. This is important to me, because the students are the ones who get the chance to choose who makes these speeches. If the students want me to represent them year after year at grad, I would bank on it that my opinions on success and education are legitimate.

In the last 10 years, we have gone through the gamut of educational assessments from the department. The five-year planning PD initiatives were scrapped about year two. They then went to a school audit, where superintendents and other educational professionals toured our school. I quite enjoyed that opportunity, because this was the first year in which I was finally seeing real results from my teaching methods. My grade 9 class Yukon achievement test results were excellent and continue to be ever since. I was enlightened again and I was ready and excited to share my successes and to make suggestions into policy matters.

The superintendent present at the audit, a brilliant educator and a true mentor, Rosemary Burns, told me afterward, "You guys blew us away." We never heard back from the department. We were told they were going to go in a different direction. I was crushed — so much so that I refused to really participate in that next exercise that replaced the audit. I actually even forgot what it was called.

Then we had the school review, very similar to the audit, so similar that it had me enraged. But I swallowed my anger

and I participated once again. The results, in my opinion, did not consider our recommendations.

My point in bringing this all up is that I encourage the government to respect and listen to its greatest asset, its students.

I did so as a teacher and it worked for me. If you give an inch of respect, you will get back a mile. We need to be less top-down and directive and more approachable and proactive in education. I absolutely am looking forward to working with the Hon. Member for Riverdale North. There are exciting things happening in Dawson education. We are programming trades and skills education with partners in education, SOVA, Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in, the new Yukon College, and Robert Service School. Dawson is ready, willing and able to become a rural hub for technologies and trades education. All pistons are firing and there is no missing link. All we need is a minister who is willing, and I am very encouraged.

On housing — of course the issue bleeds into other issues, primarily the concern that without proper and affordable housing for both returning and new summer workers, Dawson will lack the infrastructure to support a very busy period for the town. Along the same lines, there is a concern that Dawson does not attract young people and families as much as it once did. Attracting staff and being able to keep up with the demand for supplying goods and services to a rapidly increasing market has business owners concerned.

I suggest, furthermore, working with the city and concentrating on infilling first and developing rural lots for those who prefer to live inside town and also developing the rural lots, for those people who are willing to live outside of town.

The Klondike development organization has done good work in this regard, and should be commended for it. I must tip my hat to the government for continuing their funding this year. They suggest matching housing stock to demand and demographic trends. People have come to the city and to the Government of Yukon with great ideas for building along the Klondike and have been refused. No recommendations, no callbacks — just flatly refused. Should the government not be working with residents who are expressing an interest in staying and investing in the community? The Yukon Housing Corporation refuses to consider funding log homes in the Klondike as part of their green building program — why? We need incentives for new construction and incentives for renovating existing rental properties. Across the territory, we should be ensuring that an adequate supply of residential lots is available to meet the demand. This cannot be done without getting the government out of the business of determining the fair market value of housing. This can be done by selling lots at cost to facilitate affordable housing for Yukoners; for example, the lots at Whistle Bend should be sold at cost. We shall see if the government does that when it comes time next fall.

I would like to turn to health care for a second. We are thrilled, as a community, to see a new hospital in Dawson City.

The hospital means a stimulus to the economy and a benefit to the professional community in human resources and infrastructure spending, not to mention better care and less money spent on medevacs and long-term care facilities down

south, in theory. But, a hospital is more than just a building. The building is one thing. Staffing adequately to the community's needs and housing and patient continuity and sustainability are a whole bunch of other things. It was quite obvious at the Yukon Hospital Corporation's AGM in Dawson last month that the local medical community had many unanswered questions, and felt that they had very little input into the programming of the new hospital. These guys are a wealth of resources. They are all speaking from the same page, and they all know what we need for Dawson. They are willing to work together and they are willing to hash things out locally first, and they are dying for the chance to communicate with this government. I hope that I can help facilitate that process.

It was at this meeting that most people became aware of two vacant positions on the Yukon Hospital Foundation's Board of Trustees — a public-at-large position and a municipality-other-than-Whitehorse seat. I will do what I can to support naming the municipality of the City of Dawson to the seat, and a member of our medical community to stand as the public member at large. We need representation on this board. This will go a long way to restore a positive relationship between our local medical community and the Yukon government.

Daycare — the situation at the little blue daycare in Dawson is dire. Dawson daycare was resurrected by parents due to a need for a service and it is running on a day-to-day basis. The main issues are staffing and funding uncertainty. They are being weighed down by paperwork and cannot compete with the pay of other daycares in the community — not even close.

We need to re-examine the daycare licensing requirements and pay grid. The director from Dawson daycare is receiving national awards recognizing her contributions in education in Canada, yet she is days away from shutting down the centre because her territorial government does not believe she is worth the extra money. Her salary doesn't even come from the Education department, yet she is receiving national awards in education. If daycare was under the Education ministry, this would be a no-brainer. One dollar spent on education in pre-school equals \$8 on education in high school.

The daycare needs long-term funding. They should not be left to hope that a community development fund application will be approved. This type of uncertainty will mean the end of this facility. The ball is in the minister's court.

Mental health services in general — they receive people with diagnosed illnesses. In Whitehorse, they are a small staff that is divided into two categories. You have the ASTAT team who sees general depression, et cetera, and then the outreach team that runs different programs for anxiety, depression, et cetera.

I am told the office in Whitehorse is a great place to work. It is a small staff and the waiting lists are large, but the workers are very dedicated. However, they are not without their own unique problems. Rural mental health services need a lot of work.

We are putting forth strategy suggestions on how to improve services in our election platform, and I will be raising these with the Minister of Health and Social Services. They include an inventory and analysis of existing services, prompt

access to appropriate services, improved collaboration among service providers and comprehensive and appropriate training for those people working within mental health services.

In land use planning, chapter 11 of the Yukon First Nations' final agreement called for the establishment of a land use planning process for the Yukon. To date, only one plan has been completed: the *North Yukon Regional Land Use Plan*. The Dawson regional land use planning process is in its early stages. The land use plan will be undertaken by Dawson Regional Planning Commission, prepared on behalf of the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in, the Vuntut Gwitchin and the Yukon government, and will consider issues such as mining and mineral exploration, renewable resources use, traditional uses, heritage and cultural significance, recreation and tourism.

The commission will identify regional issues and interests through the public forum in Dawson and in Whitehorse. For greater certainty, planning issues that may be addressed in the plan will include those relating to, but not limited to, traditional use, land surface tenure, renewable resource use, oil and gas, mining and mineral exploration, water resources, agriculture, climate change, transportation, communications, waste management, tourism, recreation, heritage and culturally significant sites.

The commission will prepare and present the results in a public document. A resource and assessment report is to be prepared that summarizes the valued resources in the region. It shall examine renewable and non-renewable resources uses. The commission will provide summary maps that represent a consolidation of the values of the region. In addition, the commission will identify areas where regional land use conflicts are occurring or may occur.

As an outside observer, I have questioned for years why we continue to do these plans one after the other, instead of all at the same time. Is it a capacity issue or a financial issue? I don't know. At the local level, I would hope the entire process would have been managed in Dawson, instead of most of the work happening here in Whitehorse.

Finally, I hope the planning commission takes advantage of the expertise of former Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in chief, Darren Taylor, who is an incredibly community-oriented resource.

I'd like to switch to the Peel for one second, if I may. Our agenda is a balanced one that ensures stability by encouraging economic growth while preserving special areas. You start with a concept of what you want the Yukon to look like in five years, or in 10 years, or in 100 years, and you look inside the democratic process to facilitate this for all sectors of the economy. We need to stop talking in extremes when it comes to land use planning. It's either environment or mining — that's what the political issues were, and it can't be that simple.

Most junior companies with interest in our minerals would prefer dealing with governments that have land use plans. Land use planning will bring the Yukon out of a third-world mentality in terms of land and mineral value. There is plenty of land in the Yukon to be staked for the purpose of mineral extraction. The industry needs to maximize that potential.

We need to ensure that the level of activity allows the communities to maintain healthy populations after the boom

turns to bust. We need to plan. We need to establish infrastructure and provide sector interests, as well as mining and oil and gas exploration and extraction. We can have it all. Land use planning allows for stability in all these sectors.

Not all of the Yukon is there to be mined. People should not have to worry that their home are going to be staked. Our fragile watersheds have international importance and they shouldn't be mined. Land use planning does not mean an end to mining. It means responsible mining. With the First Nation governments rightly working with industry and other levels of government, they are ensuring a future for all Yukoners, not just a select few.

I'd like to turn to recycling for a minute or two. Residents are concerned that a vital community service is being underfunded in Dawson. It has resulted in organizations like the Conservation Klondike Society shouldering the responsibility for service delivery without adequate funding to do so. They are also having difficulty scrapping funds together to provide basic services. Volunteer burnout results and this is a big threat to our community. This is an example of a broader issue of lack of core or operating funding available in the territory for non-profit organizations in general.

I do have a few other issues here, including the Quigley landfill, mining waste permits, waste management and also our aging septic sewage system in Dawson, but I will leave these concepts for another day. We have lots of time to talk of these.

In conclusion, I would like to close by once again thanking the residents of Dawson for placing their trust in me and electing me their representative. I would also like to thank my predecessor, Mr. Nordick, for his years of experience and his years of service as our MLA.

To the government across the floor, I intend to be a positive influence in this House as a member of the legislative committees. I will certainly be willing to work together to resolve issues that arise and I would encourage all members across the floor to work with me, particularly on concerns that affect Dawson and its residents. I have so many solutions to the issues in the Klondike. The members of this House will find me very, very easy to approach and that I'm very, very easy to work with.

I would like to say in closing a very special thank you to the Leader of the Third Party, the Hon. Member for Vuntut Gwitchin. I cannot express how privileged I am to be working with a political mentor of this caliber. He is intelligent, and a passionate and honest representative. I hope to learn as much as I can from him and I am excited to represent the Klondike.

Hon. Mr. Kent: It's my pleasure to rise in response to the Speech from the Throne. I had the opportunity to do so about 11 years or so ago, when I was first elected, but this is indeed an honour for me. I'd like to join other members of the House in congratulating you, Mr. Speaker, and welcoming you to your role as Speaker, and to also thank you and the Member for Kluane for being veterans.

With that, I'd like to step outside of the traditional part of responding to the Speech from the Throne and just offer a short tribute to my dad, who unfortunately passed away about three

years ago but is a significant influence in not only me but my entire family being here in the Yukon, and me representing the riding of Riverdale North.

My dad was born in a small town in Saskatchewan on a family farm in the mid-20s. He spent most of his childhood there and went off to World War II. He signed up as an under-ager and spent a little bit of time as a tail gunner in a Lancaster.— something that I know gives me a great deal of pride as well as the rest of the members of my family.

After the war he moved back to Saskatchewan where he met my mom, and they were married in 1954. My dad, at the time, worked for the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool, the grain elevators, and they transferred and bounced all around small-town Saskatchewan until the early 60s when he took a job with Indian Affairs. That eventually led our family up to the Yukon in 1973. I remember when we moved here in August — I was very young — it snowed that day when we moved here in August of 1973. I am sure there was some unparliamentary language spoken, but I don't think our stay was anticipated at being longer than a couple of years, or perhaps even a couple of months, when we arrived in an August snow storm. We persevered and my dad remained in the Yukon until his retirement in the early 1990s. I believe he actually worked with the Leader of the Official Opposition during his time at Indian Affairs. He traveled all over the Yukon, meeting with different First Nations as a housing officer.

Obviously I am very, very proud of him and his legacy. His legacy to the Yukon is myself, my four brothers and two sisters and all of their families, and of course my mother, as well. We all remain residents of Whitehorse. I'm unfortunately the only one left still in Riverdale North. The rest of them are scattered among different ridings in the Whitehorse area. Something that I'm very, very proud of is my dad and his commitments to the military and the country and, indeed, his legacy here in the Yukon.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to welcome all new members to the Legislature; welcome the members that are returning and the members such as myself, the member from Porter Creek North and Copperbelt South, who had a little absence and now have returned to these chambers. The one thing that I noticed during the campaign, Mr. Speaker, was that it was a campaign of ideas. There were distinct choices put forward to the voters and I'd like to take the opportunity to not only thank the people who ran against me in Riverdale North, including the leader of the Yukon Green Party, but also thank members from all political parties and the independents that ran.

It's an extremely difficult choice, I know, and others have said it, but when it comes to making that decision to run for public office, it's something that can't be done without the support of a vast number of people. Of course, all of our families support us. I'd like to thank my family, the volunteers and friends who participated on my campaign. A big thank you to my wife, Amanda Leslie, who was integral in helping me win the riding of Riverdale North. Actually, she and I live on the street I grew up on, just across the street from my childhood home.

I would like to speak a little bit about the riding of Riverdale North. It's a riding in Whitehorse, just across the bridge. It contains Whitehorse General Hospital, a number of schools, Macaulay Lodge, and the Thomson Centre. The constituents in the riding are what really bring the flavour and diversity to Riverdale North. As I mentioned, we have the seniors who are living in Macaulay Lodge and those who require extended care are at Thomson Centre, but there's also a number of apartment buildings in my riding of Riverdale North, as well as those of the Member for Riverdale South.

I think we have — coupled with the Member for Whitehorse Centre — most of the apartment buildings in the Yukon contained in our ridings.

There are a number of new Yukoners who live in Riverdale North as well as long-time Yukoners. It's a very diverse population of constituents and it certainly gives me the opportunity to learn a lot and bring a number of different perspectives to the floor of this Legislature.

I would also like to — as the Member for Klondike was giving a shout-out — I better give a shout-out to the residents and staff at Macaulay Lodge. The recent Northwestel Festival of Trees that was held in two venues — many members in this House would have seen the tree that was decorated in the foyer upstairs by the residents and staff at Macaulay Lodge and it did win the people's choice award for best tree here. So a big congratulation has to go out to all of those residents over there. I know they're very proud of their tree each year and it's something that brings a smile, I know, to my face as a former organizer of that event.

Since party politics in 1978, Riverdale North has had four distinguished representatives they have sent forward to these chambers, starting of course with the Minister of Health and Social Services' former colleague, the Honourable Chris Pearson, former Premier of the Yukon. He served as a Progressive Conservative, followed by our Commissioner, the Honourable Doug Phillips, who spent 15 years as the MLA for Riverdale North in these chambers — a very well-respected Cabinet minister and, again, now Commissioner of the Yukon Territory. Mr. Dale Eftoda, a former colleague of mine, was a Liberal Cabinet minister and a well-respected Cabinet minister, the Minister of Environment, Education, and, I believe, Tourism and Culture during his tenure in the House and, of course, followed by the last nine years by your predecessor, Mr. Speaker — the Honourable Ted Staffen, a Yukon Party member for those nine years and a very well-respected Speaker of the Legislative Assembly.

Again, I'd just like to touch a little bit on my personal story. As I mentioned earlier, my family and I moved here in 1973 and settled after a short tenure at what was then the Ben-Elle Motel and is now the Gold Rush Inn. We settled on Tagish Road in Riverdale and lived there, of course, for most of my childhood and through high school.

I mentioned yesterday in the House that in 1986, I and the Member for Pelly-Nisutlin graduated from F.H. Collins. From 2000 to 2002, I was a Member of this Legislative Assembly representing the riding of Riverside, a riding that no longer exists under our current electoral boundaries, but a piece of it

was in the riding that is now Riverdale North and another piece on the south side of the Whitehorse Centre riding. It was a very, very proud time for me, and the boundary review held back then eliminated that riding, so I was moved up to your riding, Mr. Speaker, Porter Creek Centre, where I ran in 2002, and the good people of Porter Creek Centre decided that maybe I shouldn't return to these Chambers for a bit. I respect that decision. Obviously, choices were made during that time. As a former Liberal Party Cabinet minister and member of this House, again, I certainly was proud of those years that I spent here before.

I remember, in speaking to the media after our defeat, while disappointed, Mr. Speaker, I certainly understood the choice that Yukoners made at the time and I recall wishing the new Yukon Party government, under former Premier Dennis Fentie — and a couple of members of that government are here. I wished them well because, as a long-time Yukon resident, of course, we all want to see the Yukon succeed. That's certainly something that was important to me, and I'm glad we have prospered, Mr. Speaker. It has been an incredible nine years of economic prosperity, and we've been very fortunate during that time that the economy has recovered to the point where it has, and it's an exciting time to live here in the Yukon.

During my nine-year absence — it was definitely time well spent. I was fortunate enough to work for a number of organizations that have helped to shape my beliefs, and I think have made me a better representative this time around than perhaps I was before the experience I've gained over the past nine years, which has been fantastic. I was on the YESA Board as an executive committee member; I worked for the Canadian Cancer Society and the Yukon Hospital Foundation. I did some work with the Yukon Chamber of Mines and the Yukon Gold Mining Alliance and the Klondike Placer Miners Association — work and life experience that, as I mentioned, has shaped my decision-making and, I believe, made me a better representative for my constituents as we move forward.

During the campaign — actually, it was on the election signs I had in Riverdale — I made a commitment to respect and cooperation and, of course, the other statement was that "Riverdale rocks" — The MLA for Riverdale South and I can certainly attest to that. But on that respect and cooperation, I was fortunate during my time at the Canadian Cancer Society to work with the late Todd Hardy, the former Leader of the New Democratic Party, on the *Smoke-free Places Act*. We provided support to the all-party committee that travelled the Yukon, and it really opened my eyes at that time as to how important that cooperation is — when people of the House get together and work toward a common goal, how incredibly successful projects like that can be.

I will also give credit to the former city councillor to my left, because I know they took it on the chin with the smoking bylaw they enacted and perhaps that did make it come through a little bit smoother.

But there were some testy times on the road with that *Smoke-Free Places Act* consultation. I know the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin also participated in that.

I also look forward to working with the MLA for Riverdale South over the next number of years. The yellow line that divides our ridings in Riverdale certainly doesn't divide the issues. I believe that we have a number of opportunities to work together and I look forward to it. We've both attended a couple of Riverdale Community Association meetings already and have had discussions on the FireSmart program and other issues. I know that she'll be a fantastic representative for her constituents, and I look forward to working with her, moving forward.

Another thing that I have committed to doing early in the new year is visiting the rural ridings of the Yukon in my capacity as Minister of Education and minister responsible for Yukon Housing Corporation, Yukon Liquor Corporation and Lotteries Yukon. When I was here previously, I did contact MLAs, regardless of political stripe, when I was travelling to their communities because I think it's important.

Certainly, they are the representatives of those communities, and when we can park the politics I think some good things can be accomplished. I look forward to reaching out to rural MLAs, such as the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin. I have spoken to the Member for Klondike, and I look forward to talking to the other rural MLAs. When I am in your communities, if I do have an opportunity to meet with you and discuss issues of concern, I will certainly make the time, if we can coordinate.

I would now like to talk about some of the issues that I heard on the doorstep and some issues that are important to me. Maybe the best way to frame this is to explain to members of this Legislature the reasons that I decided to run for politics again. I think one of the most important things for government to do is invest in our people and education and health and the environment. But I recognize that we need a strong economy to do so, and that is why I chose the Yukon Party because I believe under the leadership of our Premier and the team that was assembled that we offered that opportunity, and the best opportunity to move forward and to move forward together, as was our campaign slogan.

One of the issues I heard a lot on the doorstep was the economy and how happy people were that it was doing so well. So maybe I'll just touch on a few of the sectors of the economy that I was fortunate enough to be involved with during my absence from this Chamber.

First and foremost, mining: my time at the Yukon Chamber of Mines, both as an executive director for a brief contract, and also on the board, really opened my eyes even further to the importance of mining in the territory and the long history of discoveries we have dating back to the gold rush of 1898. The territory boasts a number of mineral resource deposits and occurrences, and this extraordinary potential has lured many prospectors, miners, development companies, as well as service and supply companies to the territory for well over 100 years.

We have significant deposits of gold, silver, copper, tungsten, nickel, lead, zinc, iron ore, and those deposits have ignited the exploration boom that we've seen throughout the territory to the point where a number of projects are in production and a number are on the cusp of development and are moving into production.

Mr. Speaker, the Yukon is fortunate that we have approximately 4,700 kilometres of all-weather roads, an international airport in Whitehorse, a number of community airports, access to two ice-free ports, broadband Internet, and a strong service and supply sector — all of which are extremely important to the mining industry.

Mr. Speaker, as mining and exploration in our economy, settled First Nation land claims and regulatory certainty, paired with the mining industry's own best management practices and respect for not only the environment, but also the social, cultural and economic values of the Yukon, poise that industry to build upon its rich and storied past and continue the upward trend to unparalleled opportunity.

I am very pleased that all members of the House have spoken about the importance of small business to the economy. I think that one of the small business, and even tiny business sectors, that I would now like to talk briefly about is placer mining.

Placer mining definitely has a rich and valiant history here in the territory, but it's very much founded on family-operated businesses, a way of life that continues for many operators today who are involved in the industry. Placer mining is often referred to as the "family farm of the north." Working a placer mine involves everyone from children to grandparents with some operations spanning generations and many dating back, of course, to the historic Klondike Gold Rush.

Today, the placer miners have replaced the pick and shovel and the pan of the very first prospectors and have moved into very, very innovative and sound operations. They're governed by regulations and legislation that ensures that environmental stewardship, reclamation and site restoration occurs. I know that many of the operating placer mines are found in the Member for Klondike's riding as well as the Member for Mayo-Tatchun and some out in the Member for Kluane's riding. I think we have to be proud of the contributions they have made, even when we have seen the downturns in the hardrock industry that the placer miners endure. I think it's really a sign of the tenacity that they have to find the placer gold and their passion to find better and more innovative ways to do things.

My time as chair of the organization called the Yukon Gold Mining Alliance certainly opened my eyes to the investment side of the industry. The Yukon Gold Mining Alliance is a consortium of Yukon junior companies that join forces to market not only themselves, but the Yukon as a place to invest for investors all over the world. I had the pleasure of chairing investor sessions in Toronto, New York, Vancouver — and I know the organization has also travelled to Europe — London, Frankfurt, Paris, Zurich and other centres. I know that high metal prices have been talked about in this House. They certainly bring money into the industry, but after it enters the industry, that money can go to any number of places. These junior companies, in partnership with the Yukon government, spend an awful lot of their time and resources out there attracting these investment dollars.

I think we can't lose sight of that and how important that is to tell the Yukon story to the world, especially in this day of Internet access and the information age where what happens in

the Yukon is instantly transmitted to investors all over the world. Again, we do have to recognize that although there is money in the industry, it can go to a number of other places. We have to make sure that we continue to provide regulatory certainty and an investment climate here in the Yukon that maximizes the amount of dollars that flow into the Yukon.

Something that I know spanned a number of governments, and was very, very successful, comes from the regulatory and land certainty that we enjoy here in the Yukon. I know that land claims were started a number of years ago by previous governments and continue through to this government with implementation, but those land claims that are settled are very, very important to investors when they are looking to park their dollars in the Yukon, hopefully.

Of course the YESA Board — and I did have the pleasure of working with the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin on the YESA Board a number of years ago. Again, that was born out of the land claims agreements which spanned a number of governments.

Devolution perhaps is one of the single biggest accomplishments for the Yukon Territory. Not one government can take the credit for it. It was finalized during the previous Yukon Party mandate, but negotiated over a number of years. That control of our land and resources is something very, very important and allows us to be responsive to the industry, but also be responsible to Yukon residents.

I want to speak briefly about the royalties. I know that mining royalties were an issue for the New Democratic Party during the previous campaign. Of course, as I mentioned earlier, their campaign was about distinct choices and it was a campaign about ideas. The ideas put forward by the New Democrats when it came to the royalty regime were a little bit of a concern to me, in the fact that wanting to increase those royalty taxes on Yukon hardrock, and especially the placer miners, the small business operators of the mining industry. It was suggested at the time that the Yukon wasn't taxed perhaps at accordant levels with other Canadian jurisdictions.

We do have extremely high costs of doing business here in the territory. The cost of energy, the cost of fuel, the cost of transportation, the competitiveness of the industry quite possibly could have been threatened by any adjustments to the royal regime.

I just want to encourage members of the House that when we are looking at increasing the mining and the investment we continue to maintain a competitive royalty and tax regime and grow the royalties here in the territory toward the cap that was renegotiated by our Premier with the Prime Minister earlier this year.

I want to speak briefly now about some of the responsibilities that I have as a Cabinet minister and to thank the Premier for entrusting me with the Department of Education and the responsibility for the Yukon Housing Corporation, Yukon Liquor Corporation, and Lotteries Yukon. Maybe what I would like to focus on first is the topic of a northern university. I know it was a campaign commitment of our government recently. I think it certainly provides some exciting times for us ahead. The Yukon Party platform stated that we would create a

Yukon university by developing Yukon College into a northern university by exploring models, identifying which model is best suited for Yukoners and northerners and beginning the process of achieving that goal.

In the spring of this year, the three territorial ministers of Education signed an MOU committing to working collaboratively and cooperatively to explore options for a northern university development in the three territories. Certainly, as the Minister of Education, I look forward to continuing those discussions, working with Yukon College as we move toward a new model for a northern university based here in the Yukon.

I'd like to speak briefly about something that came up during Question Period today — the Yukon College land — and, of course, just to reiterate my statement. We have committed to providing the land necessary for a student residence as well as a school of mining, and I look forward to working with everyone involved, including Yukon College and the city and other levels of government in moving the discussion of the college endowment lands forward.

One thing that I'm particularly excited about that happened recently — and I've had discussions with the Member for Klondike on this — is the dual-credit program that was announced just last week. The Department of Education is partnering with Yukon College to offer a dual-credit pilot program that allows eligible Yukon high school students to take one of three college courses for credit. All three courses will be transferable to universities and colleges in British Columbia.

One of the incredible benefits of this is that it will save students the cost of tuition for these courses, a savings of approximately \$324 per student, which is of significant benefit to Yukon families. I know this is a pilot project, but I'm very hopeful that it's successful in achieving its goals, and perhaps we can expand it beyond what it's going to offer now to trades. That's something that's extremely important to me and I'm hopeful we can do that in the near future.

The Yukon College right now does offer a number of degrees, and I know they're very proud of those, including the Yukon native teacher education program. There are five bachelor degrees and a couple of masters degrees offered by the college. It's very exciting times for them and, as we move toward the university model, hopefully more degrees are offered at the college — or the university, once it's established.

I would also like to speak about the Research Centre of Excellence. The Minister of Economic Development and I, prior to the swearing in of Cabinet, attended the opening of their new research facility on campus and are excited by the work that they are doing up there with regard to research and innovation. The greenhouse on campus is an exciting example of what can be done. I know they are planning to offer in the cafeteria some of the food grown in that greenhouse in the not-too-distant future.

The school of mining — I know many members of the House have spoken in support of that, and I am no exception. I am thrilled with the opportunities that are presented and the leveraging of the private sector involvement in that. There are three producers currently active — three mining companies in production — and we have a number, as I mentioned before,

that are on the cusp. Those jobs and opportunities and that training — I'm excited that it is going to be available here in the Yukon moving forward.

I would also like to talk about the trades and the work of Skills Canada Yukon, and Yukon Women in Trades and Technology, and of course congratulate Mr. Peter Menzies, a constituent of the Member of Klondike, who lives in Dawson City and was recently recognized with an award, and he received national acclaim for that.

It's the educators like Mr. Menzies and others who make a difference here in the territory. I'm extremely excited about the trades and skills opportunities. Three of my family members are carpenters and I know that that has brought them incredible success in their careers. Two brothers and a nephew have been able to take those skills and trades that they've learned and make fantastic careers for themselves.

Mr. Speaker, now I'd like to touch on public schools in my remaining time. One of the important projects in my riding is the replacement of the F.H. Collins Secondary School. I do want to reiterate for members in the House that this government is firmly committed to replacing that school. I did, for clarification, meet with the building advisory committee and the school council prior to the media conference on Monday morning. I felt it was extremely important that they hear the news first.

The chair of the school council wasn't able to attend, so I did call her immediately after our early morning briefing and let her know what was happening and why the delay in occupancy. So, for the staff and the students and parents and everyone involved, we want to deliver the learning model that they came up with and deliver a school to the people there that will last a number of years.

Some of the important public school initiatives, such as literacy and delivering education through enhanced technology are things that I'd like to focus on, but also the First Nation education initiatives that are underway. I know we talked in this House about closing the gap between First Nations and non-First Nations, but I think something that we should aspire to as members of this House is to eliminate that gap, and I think we can do it. I'm not naive enough to commit to a timeline so short into my tenure as the minister, but I think it's something for which, over the coming months, we'll be able to come up with a plan that works and a timeline where we can eliminate that gap, improve the quality of education and improve the educational opportunities for all of our students.

I know we've spoken at length about housing and it was of course an important issue on the doorsteps in Riverdale North, as it was throughout all the ridings in the Yukon. We've made a number of platform commitments, but speaking specifically to my responsibilities, social housing investments by the previous Yukon Party governments have been significant and we need to continue to move people through that housing continuum, as I heard at the CMHC National Housing Day breakfast. I think our work to provide affordable rentals will hopefully break the log jam that we see and we'll have attainable home ownership. Working with First Nations and of course working on the quality and quantity of staff housing is something that's

important to me as a minister as well — the housing that exists for our public servants in the communities.

I would like to talk quickly about another institution that is in the riding of Riverdale North and touches the lives of all Yukoners — the Whitehorse General Hospital. My experience there is as president of the Yukon Hospital Foundation. The foundation has been an incredible fundraising arm that has seen incredible success since its inception in 2005.

I believe that after this recent Northwestel Festival of Trees, the number should be closing on \$5 million raised to support medical equipment purchases over the last six years — incredible work done by the volunteers, the volunteer board of directors that runs that organization, as well as the generosity of Yukoners. It's something I've recognized during my time in the non-profit sector and it's something that's an incredible success story.

Quickly, something that is more of a personal story, but came up during my time going door-to-door, is adoption, and support for families and couples who wish to have a child. My wife and I have gone through it all — in vitro fertilization, not successful; adoption, we're still not successful there yet. This is something I heard on the doorstep quite a few times and is something that's important to me. I hope to be the advocate moving forward to help couples who want to adopt.

Mr. Speaker, I see you're possibly giving me the nod — no? Okay, good, because I do have a couple of other things I want to touch on.

With regard to the environment, we did hear from the Minister of Environment and other members about the importance of the climate change strategy, and a comprehensive water strategy has come up on the floor of this House. One of the things I'd like to talk about — again because it was a doorstep issue for me in Riverdale North — is land use planning and the importance that it has.

I mean, the *Peel Watershed Regional Land Use Plan* is something that a number of my constituents identified as an important issue, and I'm pleased that we're moving forward with the final consultation on that plan and working toward a final land use plan for the Peel watershed — something that I think the incredible success of the *North Yukon Regional Land Use Plan* that was brought in by the previous Yukon government and then the work that is underway right now on the Dawson land use plan — we'll see some significant benefit to not only a pristine environment, but also the encouraging economic development.

In closing, I'd like to let everyone know that I am committed to seeing the success of this legislative sitting and look forward to working with my Cabinet and caucus colleagues on this side of the House and assisting members of the opposite side of the House with their issues.

So, again, thank you for giving me this opportunity to reply to the Speech from the Throne. Again, I do look forward to the coming five years and making sure that the Yukon that exists at the end of five years is an awful lot better than the Yukon that exists today. Thank you.

Mr. Tredger: I would like to acknowledge and thank the elders and members of the Kwanlin Dun First Nation and Ta'an Kwäch'än Council, whose traditional lands we are meeting on. It is an honour and a pleasure and somewhat of a surprise to address the 33rd Legislative Assembly. Congratulations to you, Mr. Speaker. I look forward to working with you.

I would like to thank my wife Carole and my family for the support they have given me. I would like to thank my friends and the people of Mayo-Tatchun for the trust they have placed in me. I would especially like to thank the members of Selkirk First Nation and the residents of Pelly Crossing who welcomed me and my family into their homes and community when I first arrived in the Yukon some 21 years ago. I learned much from the elders, from my new friends, from projects and tasks we shared. My family and I were welcomed to celebrations, potlatches, fish camps and camping trips.

We were accepted as part of the community. My newfound friends and I struggled to retain the Northern Tutchone language, traditions, to preserve their elders' stories and memories and to incorporate them into the school. I enjoyed working with the parents and council members to improve the education for Pelly children, finding ways to help people and families struggling with the aftermath of residential schools to find meaning, inspiration and hope in the chaotic collision as traditional cultures slammed against the 21st century world.

The experience had a profound effect on me and the shared experiences taught me much. It was with pleasure I was able to build a home and retire on the banks of the Pelly River, near Pelly Crossing and Fort Selkirk. With the encouragement and support of my friends and neighbours, I decided to run in the fall election.

We talked about some hockey analogies so I thought I'd throw one in. Wayne Gretzky, playing on one of my favourite teams, the Edmonton Oilers — if people didn't realize he played for them — once said, "You miss 100 percent of the shots you don't take."

I'm glad I took this shot. I am honoured and humbled by the trust placed in me. It was a real eye-opener to travel door-to-door to talk to people from all walks of life, to listen to them, and to hope and to dream with them. As I travelled from home to home, community to community throughout the Mayo-Tatchun riding, I realized the stories and the experiences of the people who lived in Mayo and Pelly Crossing and Carmacks — the people living on remote farms and distant trap-lines; the outfitters; the placer miners; the seniors, the entrepreneurs of Keno and Stewart, looking for ways to contribute and to make a living — the teachers; the mining inspectors; the nurses and the elders and the councils — all had stories to tell.

The rest of the Yukon needs to hear their stories. The wisdom of the elders, the hopes of the children, the struggles of their governments and the aspirations of their communities have much to teach us. The people of Mayo-Tatchun are a proud, vital, entrepreneurial and independent people. They are stewards of the land, people who live there because they love it. They celebrate the opportunity to build a life. They respect the past and their heritage. They revel in a sense of community and dream of a life lived to the fullest. The rest of the Yukon

has much to learn from their struggles, their victories and their support for one another.

Once again, Mayo-Tatchun is on the leading edge of a mining resurgence. Thousands of claims have been staked in the area. The airports, the towns and the countryside are swarming with exploration, mining and industrial activity. When campaigning in Mayo, the airport there was the busiest it had been in many years and as long as the sun was shining this summer, the planes were flying in and out.

The headwaters of the rivers are staked. Hunting camps are occupied by strangers. Traplines become trails, and sacred places are no longer quiet. The Peel River watershed, long a spiritual and traditional use centre, is threatened. Still, the people of the Mayo-Tatchun area look for the opportunity in this new-found activity. The First Nations are signing agreements with mining companies, inviting responsible development on their lands. People are working side by side with the industry to create a new economy, one that operates with integrity and one that works for their people. Placer miners are busy. Woodcutters are busy. Carpenters and mechanics are busy. As one of my constituents said: we welcome mining with integrity — mining that respects people here and respects the environment, mining that creates jobs and security for us, and mining that leaves behind a positive and sustainable legacy.

Mayo-Tatchun is the centre of the current mining boom. The people here are entering into a new phase of their involvement. They need the support of our government to ensure they have the skills, training and capacity to effectively manage this industrial boom. Their success will determine Yukon's success. How business is done in Mayo-Tatchun will set the template for the rest of the Yukon. All Yukoners would be advised to watch this area and provide support to the people of Mayo-Tatchun, to the industries that are working in Mayo-Tatchun as well as to the neighbouring areas of Dawson, Old Crow, Faro and Ross River, as they look to forge a better way.

Our rural areas are the heartland of the mining boom, the area where mining industry does its business. We need to listen to, value and involve our rural residents and their governments in the solutions that come from the strength of the land. Of critical and immediate importance is the need for land use planning. We can learn from the people of Mayo-Tatchun. The residents of Keno have lived with and for mining for over a century. The Keno mines were the life of the Yukon; tales from Elsa and Keno abound; fortunes were made, spent and re-made; companies have come and companies have gone. The area is rich in history and in minerals.

Recently, there has been a resurgence of mining in the area. Keno residents, independent entrepreneurs lured by the history, beauty and ruggedness of the area have created a small and vibrant community. Few in numbers, they have a volunteer fire department, a volunteer community club, a vibrant museum, a community centre and a community campground. They have legendary hospitality — stop by Mike's for a pizza; it's great — and an internationally recognized museum.

They're struggling to find a balance as mining activity surrounds them and their community. What is happening there in some ways is a microcosm of the Yukon. Many issues have

been raised as a resurgent mining industry floods the town. When United Keno Hill abandoned the property, with mounting environmental impacts due to metal-laden water coming from mine adits, in 2006, the federal government sold assets of the former United Keno Hill mines through the Supreme Court to Alexco.

For \$410,000, Alexco now became 100-percent owner of the Yukon Keno Hill silver district — 23,350 hectares, hosting 35 prior producing mines, its own private town of Elsa and the infrastructure — with the requirement to stop the environmental degradation and a contract to clean up past waste impacts. With this deal, in 2009, Alexco decided to resume silver mining in the district. Many residents of Keno City have opposed the proposal by Alexco to build the crusher/mill and tailings facility less than one kilometre from their homes, which will significantly impact this small, quiet community.

Despite local objections in regard to the closeness of the mill and tailings, this proposal was recommended to proceed, subject to specific terms and conditions. The Yukon Department of Energy, Mines and Resources issued the quartz mining licence in November 2009. While some residents of Keno continue to oppose this mill location, many are working for and with Alexco.

Support for the project includes the nearby community of Mayo and the First Nation of Na Cho Nyäk Dun. It's a struggle for the community; there aren't many there and they're trying to maintain their way of life and the beauty of the area. The only road into town is increasingly dangerous, as more and more traffic uses it. Daily ore trucks, large B-trains carrying dangerous goods and heavy equipment, leave the road in need of a serious upgrade. Tourists are now reluctant to travel this portion of the historic Silver Trail.

Alexco and the local residents are trying to find workable solutions. The residents of Keno have yet to be recognized as a local area council. Some form of recognition would allow them to have official status as a community and facilitate organization of a council to represent them.

I would request that the Yukon government conduct an independent review of all the activity, interactions and agreements in the Keno area, with an eye to making recommendations for a resolution to the dilemma and to make a compilation of the lessons learned in order that a template be created and made public for the rest of the Yukon.

We have much to learn from their struggles. Mayo is in the heart of the Yukon. It is situated on the Stewart River in Na Cho Nyäk Dun traditional territory. The village has a long history of mining and trapping, and has been the centre of commerce for many years. The Silver Trail Highway leaves the Klondike Highway at Stewart Crossing and wanders along the banks of the Stewart, with sensational scenery and an availability of many small-scale fishing, hiking, berry-picking and camping opportunities. Along the way you will catch glimpses of the Stewart River and several pullouts allow for spectacular views of the glaciated terrain. The Village of Mayo operates the Binet House Interpretive Centre. It is a wonderful collection of photos, information, an extensive geology display, and you must check out the 3-D relief map of the area. It is a stop well

worth the time. It has been a real pleasure to get to know the people of Mayo. What a friendly and welcoming town. It is known for its hospitality and for its entrepreneurial spirit.

The village council and the Na Cho Nyäk Dun Chief and Council worked together in a spirit of cooperation and are justifiably proud of their accomplishments. The town offices and recreation centre are much used and very functional. The government offices of the Na Cho Nyäk Dun are a beautiful tribute to the past and the future.

They are working together with Community Services and Yukon Energy to monitor water levels on the Mayo River to ensure they are ready should the river again glacial and threaten to overrun its banks and flow through the town as it did last winter.

Both councils also work with Yukon Energy to facilitate the success of Mayo B. I must compliment Yukon Energy for the consultations and studies they have done on their request to increase the drawdown of Mayo Lake. A decision has yet to be made on this controversial plan but, as I said, Yukon Energy is to be commended for the efforts they are making to involve the local residents and First Nations in the decision-making process.

The airport in Mayo has become one of the busiest in the Yukon and residents look forward to regularly scheduled flights from Whitehorse.

The Village of Mayo and the Council of the Na Cho Nyäk Dun have indicated they would be pleased to work with Yukon government to develop a northern mining training centre here in the heart of the Yukon, the centre of 100 years of mining. The opportunities presented by such a centre would be many. Why not take them up on it?

I was pleased to hear the throne speech make reference to an elder/senior complex in Mayo. The seniors of Mayo were indeed happy and relieved to hear their much-needed facility would go ahead. Much preliminary work has already been done and I urge continued involvement of local councils and citizens to build a convenient, well-located and functional complex. The Na Cho Nyäk Dun has encouraged responsible mining in their area. They have spearheaded recent letters of understanding and memorandums of agreement with mining companies and with the Chamber of Mines. They're working closely with the newly operational Victoria Gold as well as with other mining companies or exploration companies moving to mining stage in the area.

While they have welcomed responsible mining companies to their area, they are also adamant that the Peel watershed, long a cultural and spiritual haven for their people, be protected. Stewart Crossing is located at the crossroads and situated in a beautiful and strategic location. The highway maintenance camp is situated here and hats off to the crews who work so hard to maintain the area's roads. I certainly appreciated them on my last trip, which was right after a snowstorm much like the one we had here. The highway crews are working hard and are doing the best they can.

There has been a noticeable increase in traffic, both in volume and weight. It is important that the road be upgraded to accommodate this increase. There is a need for better signage,

lighting and traffic control, especially at the major junctions like Stewart Crossing. Highway maintenance is a priority and funding has not kept up with increasing demand. The local highway crew is often in an awkward position of not having the resources to do all that is required of them.

The NDP Official Opposition will work with the government to ensure there is adequate funding to keep all our roads and highways safe and in good repair.

Pelly Crossing is the home of the Selkirk First Nation. Sometime on your way through, check out the cultural displays and artifacts that are housed in a replica of Big Jonathan House — or visitors can take the journey from Minto by boat or from Pelly River Ranch to visit Fort Selkirk and see the original Jonathan House. Fort Selkirk is an important historic and cultural site for the Northern Tutchone. Selkirk First Nation and Tourism and Culture historic sites brands recently celebrated 30 years of co-management of Fort Selkirk. This has been an incredibly successful initiative and instilled in many of the workers a sense of ownership and jobs. My home is very close to there, and I often get over to visit them. It is indeed a wonderful spot, and I would encourage everybody to stop by there. If you like, as you go by the river, come by for a coffee. I'll be there — maybe.

Selkirk First Nation is also on the forefront of the current mining boom. They have worked with responsible mining companies to build a better community. Notably, they signed a royalty agreement with Capstone Resources' Minto mine, located on their category A land. The increased activity, while bringing many benefits, has stretched their capacity to meet all of their needs.

Stewardship of their lands is a priority, and they have pursued agreements that support mining with integrity. Pelly Crossing, as with Old Crow, Stewart Crossing and Keno, are not recognized as municipalities and do not benefit to the same extent that other communities do from municipal grants. I would like to look into that and work with the government to see what can be done and, if necessary, clarify any misinformation on that and help the citizens of those communities to fulfill their needs.

Selkirk First Nation has been working with the other Northern Tutchone governments to create land-based healing centres. Selkirk has focused their resources on Tatmain Lake and it was good to hear mention of land-based treatment programming in the throne speech. The local programming is much needed. The support of Yukon government — Justice and Health — will be a welcome relief.

The airport in Pelly Crossing will still not accommodate medevacs and all emergency ambulance service is usually routed through Mayo and sometimes Carmacks. This is a serious safety concern and must be addressed as soon as possible.

When my dad was visiting me one summer, he loved to come out and spend time with us there. He was visiting one summer and he took sick, and we had to take him into the nursing station in Pelly Crossing. It was about a 45-minute drive — maybe half an hour that day. He had to be medevaced. My wife headed south in the car to Whitehorse. I went with my dad by medevac — not south, but north to Mayo, where we took the

ambulance to Mayo and waited for the medevac plane to meet us in Mayo, pick us up and take us down to Whitehorse.

The process took about six hours. My wife was in Whitehorse in two hours. That was three or four years ago, and it's still there. I've heard from many residents of Pelly that it's something we need to look at, especially with the increased activity in the area and the number of people. It's a real safety concern.

I'd like to talk a little bit about Carmacks, the hub of the Yukon. Carmacks is situated at the confluence of the Norden-skiold and Yukon rivers on the north Klondike Highway. It is the site of one of four bridges over the Yukon River. The Robert Campbell Highway also intersects the community and carries on to Faro, Ross River and Watson Lake, providing a gateway to the Canol Road and some of Yukon's most spectacular scenery.

The Carmacks area has also seen increased activity, from Carmacks exploration east to the area around and north of Faro and Ross River and beyond, west through the Nogold Road, and Minto mines' copper and gold fields and north to the gold and silver fields of Dawson and Mayo. All of it is booming. It is important that the infrastructure be in place to accommodate the increased activity. Residents have long fought for a bypass route that would route the heavy industrial and often dangerous goods traffic travelling to and from the Casino area around the residential area. I look forward to working with Yukon government to alleviate this dangerous situation.

The Little Salmon-Carmacks First Nation meets regularly with the Village of Carmacks and have undertaken a number of projects. Little Salmon-Carmacks residents are excited about their new daycare centre and the First Nation offices currently under construction. If you have a chance, stop for a visit at the cultural centre. It's another great place. Once again, thanks to Yukon Tourism and the federal government for working with Little Salmon-Carmacks on it. My family and I always stop at the west Carmacks mall, now on two levels. What a great store it is.

The Little Salmon-Carmacks government is also committed to working with responsible mining companies in a progressive way that maximizes benefits for their citizens while protecting the environment. Driving through the fabulous land that is the Mayo-Tatchun area I am continually struck by the vastness, the incredible beauty of the area, the vast and sweeping valleys, the fir-studded hills and the great distances. Robert Service wrote: "Pines and pines and the shadow of pines as far as the eye can see". Living in the midst of such vast beauty, occasional towns, farmsteads and cabins are nestled along river valleys and the foot of great hills. Indeed, its people are living in a wonderful land — quiet, resourceful and independent.

The effects of prosperity are being felt in all our communities. More people are working, many in camps away from home for long periods of time. The stores and businesses are busy. The resulting challenges, spoken of in the throne speech, are magnified in our small communities, but our small communities have shown a resilience and a willingness to meet these challenges. The people of Mayo-Tatchun need to be heard,

taken seriously, listened to, valued and respected. They want to be involved in making positive choices for their future.

The people of the Yukon and we in the 33rd Legislative Assembly have an opportunity, a rare and unique opportunity. The wealth of Yukon's resources, our commodities, have become exceedingly valuable at just the time when interest rates are low and capital is abundant. Commodities are high, capital is cheap and, for awhile at least, transient labour is available.

This unique occurrence has led to the resurgence in exploration and mining, the boom that members opposite are trumpeting.

We have the opportunity to take the next step. No one in the Yukon should be left behind. Our education system must work with and in communities to ensure the significant performance gap between rural and urban is removed. Too many of our children and adults are struggling with low literacy rates. A territory-wide literacy strategy is a necessity. This isn't just the Department of Education; this is all of us. A strategy that involves all — from birth, to early childhood, to seniors — that engages in a concerted effort by all of the communities, governments, agencies and departments is necessary to ensure that all our citizens have the opportunity to participate in our prosperity.

I echo the minister opposite: we can do it. We can raise our literacy rates and we can include all Yukoners in that process. We must ensure that training facilities are such that all our children have the opportunity to grow and learn.

Shops, trade schools and workplace mentors must be available. Our education system must embrace experiential and land-based learning at every level. We must set attainable, clear and measurable targets, allocate our resources wisely, involve local teachers and school communities, and measure the outcomes. Only that way will we learn and grow as we improve our system. Changes made should affect our teachers and our children directly if they're going to be effective.

I enjoyed my time visiting with many involved in the mining industry at the recent Geoscience Forum. I thank the Yukon government for their participation in that. I was encouraged to see an emphasis on responsible mining and interactions with local residents through First Nation and/or community meetings. I was reassured that most companies want to do the right thing. The mining companies do not need a government to be a cheerleader. They need infrastructure, certainty and a clear and fair regulatory regime.

This requires long-term planning. The lack of progress on land management plans is a serious concern to mining companies, as well as to local residents. The longer land use planning is delayed, the more encumbered the process becomes. There's no excuse to delay. Many areas have already been identified. First Nation elders have shared their knowledge with scientists and biologists, who have worked hard to map traditional use areas, environmentally sensitive areas, and spiritual and traditional harvest areas. The geoscience centre has done extensive work to map and identify potential areas of rich mineralization. The hard work has been done. All that remains is the political will to proceed.

As I said, the longer we wait, the more uncertainly is created and the more polarization and potential for conflict. Delaying does a disservice to area residents, the mining industry and all Yukoners. I would urge this government to place an immediate moratorium on staking in residential areas.

It is not anti-mining or anti-progress when one opposes a development because it is done in such a way that damages your quality of life. The people of Mayo-Tatchun and all of the Yukon have shown clearly that they are encouraging mining. They have signed agreements with responsible companies. They are working in camps and on projects. They look for employment and training opportunities to participate, but insist the activity must not be unfettered. It must not compromise their quality of life. Mining with integrity respects local culture, spiritual places, and traditional use areas. Once again, there is a need to proceed as soon as possible with land use planning as well as updated community plans.

Another set of statistics came out yesterday proclaiming the gap in Canada between the rich and the poor and stating that it continues to widen. There has long been a gap between the well-being of rural communities and Whitehorse. We can use our prosperity to alleviate that gap. We have the opportunity to do things differently. Prosperity that involves only the few is a false prosperity. Prosperity that only enriches distant companies and transient workers and that builds in Whitehorse while leaving our communities behind is a false prosperity.

We must ensure that our rural communities that support and bear the brunt of industrial activities share in the wealth. We must ensure that a responsible and planned infrastructure is in place. Our roads must be built to accommodate the increased traffic for safety and for convenience. Our haul roads need to be identified with increased signage along routes engineered for increased traffic, volume and weight. The transportation of dangerous goods is becoming an increasing concern and our health centres, emergency measures services and volunteer fire departments along the way need to be upgraded and prepared for increased pressures. Dangerous goods throughout the Yukon need to be identified and diverted from population centres. Funding for these routes must be identified and allocated so that our rural community roads are not neglected. The departments of Environment and Energy, Mines and Resources are responsible for creating a measurable baseline of data, creating and enforcing regulations, and permitting and monitoring and managing activities, ensuring that the cumulative effects of significant activity are not endangering our environment.

There are currently close to 300,000 active claims in the Yukon. New mines are being moved to production; billions of dollars are being invested in mining. The pressure to get going while the going is good is enormous. The size and scope of projects undertaken in the Yukon has increased dramatically. The majority of miners want to do the right thing, but it is in everybody's best interest to ensure all are following the regulations. One or two mistakes can cause massive damage to our environment and spoil the reputation of all mining activity. We must ensure that these departments have the capacity and resources to ensure that they can meet their mandate.

I'm impressed with the integrity and competence of the folks at Energy, Mines and Resources and in the Department of Environment. The amount of work they're doing is phenomenal. They need our support to ensure they have the tools, policies and authority so they can continue to perform their job. The importance of local advisory councils, rural resource councils, trappers, outfitters and local residents cannot be understated.

This needs to be recognized and they need to be involved in gathering baseline data and monitoring activity. YESAB must ensure that all affected parties have the opportunity to be heard, from companies with billions of dollars to spend, to individual citizens with few resources. I was pleased to hear that the Yukon government has been much more accepting of YESAB rulings and recognize their skill and competence. As the NDP Energy, Mines and Resources critic, I will be holding the government accountable and ensuring Energy, Mines and Resources has the resources to ensure mining is done with integrity.

The Peel River watershed is a great and wonderful space; a cultural and spiritual place; a vast, remote tract of land unique to the world. One day, I hope to go there with my grandchildren. The affected First Nations have spoken. The Peel River Watershed Planning Commission has spoken.

I have heard over and over that it is a special place. Perhaps Chief Eddie Taylor said it best when he addressed the Geoscience Forum: "Come and do business with us, but hands off the Peel."

I was pleased to hear mention of agriculture in the throne speech, because I believe Mayo-Tatchun is the breadbasket of the Yukon. Food security and local food production, community-based agricultural initiatives and community greenhouses all have a place in our Yukon. A very successful community greenhouse has operated for several years in Carmacks. The fresh, local produce is sold in the local store. Near my home on the Pelly River is the Pelly River Ranch, the oldest continually operated farm in the Yukon. The Bradleys have been there since 1955, but the farm itself began in 1897. My goal is that we represent all Yukoners, ensuring that no one is left out and that all can share in our prosperity.

Speaker: Order please.

Mr. Tredger: We will build a strong and reliant Yukon. One more sentence?

Speaker: No.

Mr. Tredger: I want to thank everybody here and a big shout out to the members of the House.

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: I would also like to start by congratulating you on your election, Mr. Speaker.

I would like to begin by thanking the people of Mountainview for electing me to represent them as their Member of the Legislative Assembly. This is truly an honour and a privilege and I am humbled by the opportunity. Thank you for your faith and trust.

Mountainview is a new riding, consisting of Granger and Hillcrest from the previous riding of Copperbelt and McIntyre and Valleyview, which were a portion of the McIntyre-Takhini,

formerly held by the late John Edzerza. Mountainview is a mature riding with cultural and socio-economic diversity. I look forward to serving all Mountainview residents and all Yukoners for the next five years.

I would like to congratulate and welcome all members of the Legislative Assembly and of course their families too. Many of us are new to this House and I am confident that as the 33rd Legislative Assembly begins, we all feel positive about the contributions that we will make.

I would like to congratulate Ms. Liz Hanson for her success and ascension to the position of Leader of the Official Opposition, and Mr. Darius Elias for his assumption of duties as Interim Leader of the Liberal Party.

2011 has been a year of tremendous change for me and my family. As I take my seat in this House, I cannot help but reflect on the decisions made and the energy invested to be here today. None of these accomplishments were possible without the encouragement, support and help of my family. As pioneering farmers, starting a family in the Dirty Thirties and 1940s, my grandparents took nothing for granted and their children valued everything they had. Families and communities with little worked very hard and supported or celebrated with each other whenever necessary. I believe these experiences made my family stronger and closer.

Throughout my younger years, I was fortunate to have been able to spend a lot of time with my extended family, with my grandparents, aunts, uncles and my cousins. Gathering together was always something that we all looked forward to. These experiences helped me to understand where I come from and of the support that exists when so many people are behind you.

My parents, who laid the foundation of values and principles from which I have led my entire life; my parents, who sacrificed more than I knew so their children would have the opportunities they were unable to grasp; my parents, who insisted that I did not stop with a high school diploma but proceed directly to university — all that is for me could not have come to reality without the love and guidance of my parents.

My brother and sister and their families: thank you for everything you have shared and knowing that you were always there for me. It meant a lot to me to have my brother Terry Pasloski here for the swearing in on November 5. Our children — Erin Jane, Lynsey Elaine, Taylor Thomas and Bronwyn Rose-Marie — have always been and always will be the main reason for the existence of their parents. We are so proud of all of our kids and the contributions that they are making as young adults. Throughout the Yukon Party leadership and the general election, each contributed as much as they could, either here from Whitehorse or from afar. We were thankful that Lynsey was at home during the election. Thank you for doing everything that was asked of you — and that was lots — without hesitation. It meant so much to us that you could share in this experience with us.

As for my wife Tammie — I could expend the entire 40 minutes allotted to only begin to express my gratitude for her unwavering help and support. Quite simply stated, none of my political success would have been possible without Tammie.

I've stated many times that Tammie worked as hard, if not harder, than I through the leadership and general election. People had been suggesting that I seek the Yukon Party leadership for quite some time; however, this intensity increased markedly during March and April of this year. I remember clearly when it was coming down to the decision time, during yet another meeting with our team, that Tammie finally said, "We've discussed this more than we discussed getting married or having kids."

Mr. Speaker, we made the decision together and that truly was the hardest part. Once made, our focus was single-minded and, as they say, the rest is history. Of course, we knew what we were getting into. The decision to run for the office of Member of Parliament in 2008 gave us both lots of experience as to what to expect and what would be required to run a successful campaign. I would like to acknowledge all those people who supported me during 2007 and 2008.

I do believe that things happen for a reason. While I was unsuccessful in my quest at the time, the experience gained and relationships made have made me a better person, allowed me to be standing here before you today in the capacity of Premier and Yukon Party leader. While running our drug stores and raising our young family, we made sure that we had time to give back — giving back not only to the organizations that our children were involved in, but to the community as a whole.

These experiences have not only helped to shape our lives, but allowed us to gain lifelong friends. Thank you to my peers professionally, our friends and all the people we have had the privilege to know and work with over these years.

The party leadership race was an experience that truly contrasts a general election. While general elections pit one ideology against another, leadership contrasts party members against party members. I thank all the people who volunteered during my leadership bid and all the people who supported me. I would also like to thank Jim Kenyon and Rod Taylor for putting their names forward and everyone who supported these fine candidates as well.

October 11 — election day — was a day of somewhat mixed emotion: pure exhilaration at the election of a third consecutive Yukon Party majority but also sadness at the fact that some great candidates were not successful in their attempts to be a part of our governing team.

Through the summer months, we had put together an incredible team of candidates and volunteers, willing to do what it takes to support their candidate. During this time, Team Yukon drew together, and I know that the unsuccessful candidates will remain a strong part of the political party. Special attention goes to three unsuccessful candidates who were sitting Cabinet ministers during the 32nd Legislative Assembly — Glenn Hart, Marian Horne and Steve Nordick. Contributions to your constituents and to all Yukoners are a part of a successful Yukon Party legacy.

I also thought of those people who were not successful in winning the nomination to represent our party during the election. With a membership approaching 3,000, we are excited about the future of our organization. Thank you to everyone willing to put their name forward, to all the volunteers and to

the people who donated to the party. While many people were responsible for our success, I must identify four people for their outstanding contributions: Darren Parsons, campaign manager for my leadership and for the general election; Jonas Smith, party president; and Linda Hillier, memberships and financial agent. These three people were instrumental in the success of the party. I would also like to acknowledge Michael Lauer for being my campaign manager in Mountainview. I must acknowledge the vision and leadership of former Premier Dennis Fentie and his 2002 and 2006 caucuses. Notably, those members who retired this year were Dennis Fentie, Patrick Rouble, Ted Staffen, Archie Lang, Jim Kenyon, and the late John Edzerra. Each will be missed by us all.

Under former Premier Fentie's leadership, the Yukon has gone from debt to a savings account, from declining populations to record levels of population, creating a climate for responsible investment while ensuring we maintain our pristine wilderness and truly putting Yukon on the pathway to prosperity.

Thank you for this and so much more that has been accomplished in the past nine years.

I would like to thank the transition team, led by Craig Tutton, for their tireless work and preparation to ensure that we have the greatest opportunities for success.

Finally, I am proud to acknowledge the professional public service we have had the opportunity to work with. I believe that the role of the elected officials is to ensure government has a vision that reflects the public's wishes while providing professionals in the public service with the empowerment to carry out that vision. Policy decisions, good or bad, are the responsibility of the elected officials. The plan to carry out those policies belongs in the realm of the public service.

Success in my business life was due in large part as a result of the fostering and development of employees. Empowering employees to make decisions made our team stronger and has consistently proven to deliver the highest levels of satisfaction from the customers and from the employees. With a staff of approximately 100 people, empowering employees also recognizes the reality that I, myself, could not complete all the tasks without compromising somewhere, such as customer service, service levels, controls and procedures or financial management.

Standing before you, I am proud and excited to be the leader of such a great team. Each member of our team brings a wealth of personal life experiences from diverse backgrounds. Collectively, these experiences and backgrounds truly represent Yukon life. In the last few months, we have grown closer together as a team, and we are ready for all the challenges and the opportunities.

I will apply the same business philosophies in my approach to governance. I will ensure our team remains focused on the short-, medium- and long-term objectives that we have outlined to keep Yukon moving forward. To deliver those objectives requires a team effort — strong debate within our caucus that keeps the platform, the throne speech, and our commitment made to Yukoners in front of us. We are fortunate to be part of the Westminster system of government, a system that

enables the collective decision-making of Cabinet. I believe strongly in ministerial responsibility and the commitment and abilities of our executive council, a Cabinet consisting of experience and of new influence.

The foundation that is necessary to enable government to provide the programs and services that it does is a strong economy. Increasing private sector employment means more people paying taxes, and more people paying taxes means more money for the government. As I have stated, the previous Yukon Party mandates of 2002 and 2006 have placed us in a very enviable and exclusive club of two in Canada — ourselves and Alberta.

We have no net debt. In other words, we have money in the bank, we have enough cash and liquid assets — for example, investments, accounts receivable — to pay off all our liabilities, which are accounts payable, environmental liabilities and debt. And we still have money left over. In fact, Standard & Poor's has reaffirmed the Yukon's AA rating, which is a very high rating globally.

Tax revenues have grown 62 percent during the Yukon Party mandate, despite a CPI increase of only 15.6 percent and despite several new tax credits lowering the tax burden for our taxpayers — there's the child tax credit, adoption tax credit — and we have increased some credits, like the medical credit and the dividend tax credit, and we've increased Yukon child benefits, all of which have reduced the tax burden by \$5.9 million every year.

However, it has not always been that way. On Monday, the Leader of the Official Opposition stated in her response to the throne speech that previous NDP governments were fiscally responsible and did not run deficits. Quite simply, Mr. Speaker, this is not correct.

The NDP government of Tony Penikett in 1992-93 had an annual deficit. They overspent their budget by an incredible \$64 million. This deficit resulted in an unconsolidated accumulated deficit on March 31, 1993 of \$13.3 million. The NDP government did not control its spending and, as a result, did not have the cash and liquid assets to pay off all of their liabilities. The Penikett government had net debt. The financial mismanagement of the NDP was so profound that upon returning to power, the Yukon Party brought in a *Taxpayer Protection Act* to ensure no government spends more money than it has and it will give Yukon taxpayers a direct say in whether or not certain tax increases are justified.

Our government is proud of our legacy and proud of our throne speech. The opposition states the throne speech lacks vision and it's not exciting. Mr. Speaker, true vision is recognizing the pathway we have chosen offers the greatest opportunities for all Yukoners, and you can't get more exciting than that.

Our government will again focus on four pillars: better quality of life, the environment, the economy, and good governance. This strategy allows us to continue to foster a strong economy and deal with the challenges this prosperous economy creates: housing and land availability; increased demand for clean energy; the increased demand for transportation and communication infrastructure; increased pressures on our health and social services safety net; increasing demand for

more education, training facilities and programs, as well as increased pressures on our land and resource management systems designed to protect Yukon's environment.

Mr. Speaker, we welcome these challenges. Our government will implement a comprehensive strategy to address the housing needs of Yukoners, including working with the City of Whitehorse and other municipalities and unincorporated communities to make land available for residential and recreational use as soon as possible; modernize legislation related to the land titles process to utilize technology and improve timelines of transferring land titles; work with the Kwanlin Dun First Nation and the Teslin Tlingit Council to promote land leases as a viable alternative; make Crown land available to the private sector to ensure new rental accommodations are made available in Yukon; implement the recommendations of the Select Committee on the *Landlord and Tenant Act* to modernize the legislation. Note the name of the act, Mr. Speaker. While the NDP has referred to a tenancy act, this government believes that landlords have rights too.

Mr. Speaker, our government will work with Skookum Jim's to establish a youth centre in the downtown. We will work with the Salvation Army to expand or replace their existing shelter. We will invest in second-stage housing for Kaushee's Place, replace the aging McDonald Lodge in Dawson City and a new seniors complex in Mayo. We will invest in the construction of an Abbeyfield complex in Whitehorse and we will make land available for more student housing.

During the campaign, I stated that one of the greatest challenges we face is addictions. This indeed is a health, not a justice, issue. Addictions clog up our emergency ward and add great pressures to our EMS teams. They fill up our court dockets and our jails. It occupies a great deal of time for our peace officers and has a large toll on our health, justice and social services budgets.

Addiction is a cause of homelessness. It essentially leaves some children parentless. Addiction plays a major role in FASD and contributes to violence against women. Our detox program needs to become more medically oriented and we must acknowledge that a 28-day program is not enough to give these individuals the support and coping skills needed to prevent the cycle from happening again. Our government wants to implement an after-care program and also supports land-based treatment. These programs give people the best opportunities for long-term success.

This government has a short-, medium- and long-term plan to address the looming energy deficiency. We will continue to make energy efficiency and conservation a priority to reduce energy consumption, cost and emissions. Completion of the Mayo B is imminent. We are also committed to net metering and an independent power producers policy in the short term. We will continue to responsibly develop Yukon's oil and gas resources for Yukon energy and export.

A policy framework is being created to allow for the development of a liquefied natural gas — LNG — processing plant, to provide LNG for local use and for export. We will continue to prepare for pipeline developments, including inter-

nal pipelines for the transport of local oil and gas to other regions in the Yukon.

In the long term, our vision is to develop one or more new hydroelectric dams to produce clean, renewable energy for generations. Many suitable locations have been identified. This vision includes connecting our electrical grid south to British Columbia or west to Alaska so we can sell excess power, keeping the cost for Yukon consumers down.

Yukoners have told us at the door and at the ballot box that they want a strong, responsible economy and pristine wilderness. Our government will continue to work to ensure we deliver on both. *Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Act* is the envy of the entire country. Working with First Nations in Canada, we are completing a five-year review and have already begun to implement these recommendations.

Through instruments such as the YESAA process, the Water Board, Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board and renewable resources councils, we have in place the legislation, the regulation and consultation needed to ensure all projects are evaluated carefully and monitored throughout their lifespan. The Yukon Party government is the only government to successfully complete a regional land use plan. The Liberals and the NDP never did. One plan is completed with the second plan in the final stages and the third plan is beginning.

This government had the money in the bank to continue to invest in infrastructure even when the world economies were nosediving. This investment produced immediate jobs for Yukon workers and will continue to improve the quality of life for us all for many years to come. We will continue to utilize multi-year capital plans to guide the development of Yukon infrastructure projects and provide clarity and certainty for the public and industry about Yukon's infrastructure priorities. Our five-year strategic plan for education, entitled *Our Commitment to New Horizons*, focuses on improving literacy and numeracy, preserving culture and increased educational achievements for all Yukon students.

Our government is committed to work with education partners and to increase engagement of parents, families and communities for the purpose of improving student achievement and success; to promote a positive, inclusive and responsive learning environment that contributes to the success of each learner; to ensure continuous improvement; and, to develop and enhance critical thinking, creativity, collaboration and communication as fundamental competencies to support learning in the 21st century.

We'll continue to promote such initiatives such as: experiential learning; alternative programming at the Individual Learning Centre; continue to provide First Nation and French language programs; work with First Nations to provide a public school system that incorporates local and First Nation content; promote First Nation language and culture through the First Nations Programs and Partnerships unit of the Department of Education; improve access to higher education by continuing to work with Yukon College to develop and enhance community campuses in various Yukon communities; support alternative education and apprenticeship programs; support literacy; encourage greater participation of women in vocational skills and

trades training; and create a Yukon university that will allow more Yukon students to study here and diversify our economy.

This government will continue to foster strong relationships with all Yukon First Nations. Our economy is not that large and we must work together as equal partners in this economy to ensure maximum benefits for all Yukoners.

We will reintroduce the Yukon Forum and intergovernmental forum to deal with issues and opportunities facing all First Nations. I believe land-based treatment could be an excellent Yukon Forum that could then move into the intergovernmental forum of Canada.

Bilateral meetings with individual First Nations and the development of intergovernmental accords help build relationships at the political and department levels and are opportunities to build capacity and make a real difference for people. It is important that we continue to build relationships, not just within our territory, but with our neighbours as well.

We will continue to utilize the pan-northern collaborative approach with the Northwest Territories and Nunavut to advance northern interests with the provinces, the Government of Canada and with the international community. We'll continue to work with jurisdictions such as the State of Alaska, the provinces of British Columbia and Alberta and the Northwest Territories, as well as members of the Pacific North West Economic Region, to promote regional economic development initiatives in which we have a shared interest.

Western premiers and the Conference of the Federation will continue to ensure Yukon's voice is heard on the national stage, enabling our small jurisdiction to benefit from the support granted from these forums.

Yukon will also continue to be involved in the international circumpolar negotiations and support Canada as it assumes the role of Chair of the Arctic Council in 2013.

There is so much more that our government will undertake, including: addressing fetal alcohol spectrum disorders and the opportunity for health care sustainability through prevention — as a health care professional, this is very important to me; creating safer communities; caring for elders and seniors; caring for children and youth; and, promoting arts and culture — I'm personally excited and looking forward to National Aboriginal Day next year, June 21, 2012, which will see the opening of the new Champagne and Aishihik and Kwanlin Dun cultural centres. Also, support for sports and recreation — and again, on that, I think I can speak from personal experience and the fact that my kids have had the privilege of being engaged in sports throughout their lives. I have seen so many of our Yukon athletes who have raised themselves — elevated themselves — not just to territorial but western Canadian, national and international levels. A lot of that is due, in part, to the support of this government for sports and recreation.

As well, climate change strategy, support of the Yukon Research Centre — including the Cold Climate Innovation Centre — Yukon Technology Innovation Centre, Northern Research Institute, Northern Climate Exchange, innovators in the schools program, Social Economy Research Network of Northern Canada; management of Yukon's air, land and water and wildlife resources, including the creation of a Yukon water

strategy; promotion of recycling and responsible waste management; marketing "Destination: Yukon"; work with Yukon communities in "Our Towns, Our Future"; and, of course, forestry and agricultural development.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank you for your indulgence. I commit myself and our team to work constructively and collaboratively to deliver to Yukoners that which we stood for when we knocked on the doors of Yukoners during the election. We are moving forward together, making Yukon the best place to live in the world.

Ms. McLeod: It has been a very interesting week for me as a newcomer to the Legislature. I hope it has been informative to everyone here, both new and returning members. It has been valuable for all of us to hear a little about the members sitting in the House, particularly about some of the issues they have. Knowing a little about each other will aid us as we move forward on the issues that are important to Yukoners.

We all want what's best for Yukoners and, after all, that's why we're here. This government has an action plan that was outlined in our election platform and again through the Speech from the Throne.

I know that we are all eager to get to work on those action items and I thank all members of the House for their involvement and thoughtful discussion. I want to give thanks to the pages for their very attentive work here in the Legislature. They are very busy, and to the good people producing the *Hansard* for their patience.

Applause

Speaker: Are you prepared for the question?

Some Hon. Member: Division.

Division

Speaker: Division has been called.

Bells

Speaker: Mr. Clerk, please poll the House.

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Agree.

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Graham: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Kent: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Nixon: Agree.

Ms. McLeod: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Agree.

Mr. Hassard: Agree.

Ms. Hanson: Disagree.

Mr. Tredger: Disagree.

Ms. Moorcroft: Disagree.

Ms. White: Disagree.

Ms. Stick: Disagree.

Mr. Barr: Disagree.

Mr. Elias: Disagree.

Mr. Silver: Disagree.

Clerk: Mr. Speaker, the results are 10 yea, eight nay.

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

Motion No. 26 agreed to

Motion to engross Address in Reply to Speech from the Throne

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Mr. Speaker, I move the Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne be engrossed and presented to the Commissioner in his capacity as the Lieutenant Governor.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Government House Leader that the Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne be engrossed and presented to the Commissioner in his capacity as the Lieutenant Governor.

Motion agreed to

Speaker: Government motions.

GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

Motion No. 4

Clerk: Motion No. 4, standing in the name of the Hon. Mr. Cathers.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Government House Leader

THAT the honourable members Stacey Hassard, Hon. Brad Cathers, Hon. Currie Dixon, Patti McLeod, Jan Stick, Kate White and Darius Elias be appointed to the Standing Committee on Appointments to Major Government Boards and Committees, established pursuant to Standing Order 45; and

THAT the committee elect its chair from the government caucus members appointed to it.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: The establishment of this committee of course is somewhat procedural in nature but I do have to highlight the fact that the establishment of an all-party committee to review appointments to major government boards and committees is something that the Liberals promised and the NDP promised. Both of them broke that promise repeatedly. The Yukon Party was the party that upon taking office, implemented this committee and brought it into fruition. It had been established initially through a motion tabled by myself and chaired by the Member for Whitehorse West, I believe, for its entire inception. The committee does good work and it is something that, while it is not always possible to reach 100-percent agreement around the table, has brought more engagement around reviewing the credentials of Yukoners who put their names forward to the boards and attempt to depoliticize the process and have it about appointing good Yukon citizens who provide perspectives to boards and committees.

With that, I commend the motion to the House.

Motion No. 4 agreed to

Motion No. 5

Clerk: Motion No. 5, standing in the name of the Hon. Mr. Cathers.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Government House Leader

THAT the Hon. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 45(2), be appointed Chair of the Members' Services Board;

THAT Hon. Currie Dixon, Hon. Brad Cathers, Liz Hanson and Sandy Silver be appointed to the Members' Services Board;

THAT the board have the power to call for persons, papers and records and to sit during intersessional periods;

THAT the board consider:

(1) budget submissions for the following votes:

(a) Vote 01 – Yukon Legislative Assembly, including the Conflict of Interest Commission,

(b) Vote 23 – Office of the Ombudsman, including Information and Privacy Commissioner,

(c) Vote 24 – Elections Office, and

(d) Vote 26 – Child and Youth Advocate Office; and

(2) policy questions concerning matters such as:

(a) space allocation,

(b) staffing,

(c) caucus funding,

(d) media gallery House rules, and

(e) *Hansard*; and

THAT the board fulfill its statutory responsibilities, including those in the *Legislative Assembly Act*, the *Legislative Assembly Retirement Allowances Act, 2007*, the *Elections Act*, the *Conflict of Interest (Members and Ministers) Act*, the *Ombudsman Act*, the *Cabinet and Caucus Employees Act*, and the *Child and Youth Advocate Act*;

and
THAT the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly be responsible for providing the necessary support services to the committee.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: I'll be very brief in speaking to the motion. This is one required by our Standing Orders and with this and the others required by our Standing Orders and with the previous motion that was passed to appoint the Standing Committee on Appointments to Major Government Boards and Committees, I should mention for the record for Yukoners reading the copies of *Hansard* that the government, of course, did seek nominations from the other parties and has put forward the names of members of both the Official Opposition and the Third Party caucuses, as identified in the Standing Orders and in keeping with past practice. With that, I commend the motion to the House.

Motion No. 5 agreed to

Motion No. 6

Clerk: Motion No. 6, standing in the name of the Hon. Mr. Cathers.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Government House Leader

THAT the honourable members Patti McLeod, Hon. Scott Kent, Hon. Brad Cathers, Jim Tredger, Lois Moorcroft and Sandy Silver be appointed to the Standing Committee on Rules, Elections and Privileges, established pursuant to Standing Order 45(1);

THAT the committee elect its chair from the government caucus members appointed to it;

THAT the chair of the committee be required to participate in all votes before the committee;

THAT the committee review, as necessary, such standing orders as it may decide upon;

THAT the said committee, following the conduct of any review, report any recommendations for amendments to the Assembly;

THAT the said committee have the power to call for persons, papers and records and to sit during intersessional periods; and

THAT the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly be responsible for providing the necessary support services to the committee.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Again, this is a motion required by our Standing Orders. I don't need to speak at great length on it or the subsequent motions here. We can proceed with other matters.

Motion No. 6 agreed to

Motion No. 7

Clerk: Motion No. 7, standing in the name of the Hon. Mr. Cathers.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Government House Leader

THAT the honourable members Patti McLeod, Hon. Scott Kent, Hon. Mike Nixon, Stacey Hassard, Liz Hanson, Jan Stick and Darius Elias be appointed to the Standing Committee on Public Accounts established pursuant to Standing Order 45(3),

THAT the said committee have the power to call for persons, papers and records and to sit during intersessional periods; and

THAT the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly be responsible for providing the necessary support services to the committee.

Motion No. 7 is agreed to

Motion No. 8

Clerk: Motion No. 8, standing in the name of the Hon. Mr. Cathers.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Government House Leader

THAT the honourable members Patti McLeod, Stacey Hassard, Hon. Wade Istchenko, Hon. Elaine Taylor, Lois Moorcroft, Kevin Barr and Darius Elias be appointed to the Standing Committee on Statutory Instruments established pursuant to Standing Order 45(1),

THAT the said committee have the power to call for persons, papers and records and to sit during intersessional periods;

THAT the said committee review such regulations made following the date of its appointment as it may decide upon;

THAT the said committee review such other existing or proposed regulations as are referred to it by the Legislative Assembly; and

THAT the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly be responsible for providing the necessary support services to the committee.

Motion No. 8 agreed to

GOVERNMENT BILLS

Bill No. 3: Second Reading

Clerk: Second reading, Bill No. 3, standing in the name of the Hon. Mr. Pasloski.

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: I move that Bill No. 3, entitled *Second Appropriation Act, 2011-12*, be now read a second time.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Hon. Premier that Bill No. 3, entitled *Second Appropriation Act, 2011-12*, be now read a second time.

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: Mr. Speaker, before I delve into some of the details of the *Second Appropriation Act, 2011-12*, and accompanying *Supplementary Estimates No. 1*, allow me to revisit the summary financials of the 2011-12 main estimates.

The 2011-12 mains were tabled back on February 3, with budgeted gross expenditures of \$1.089 billion, of which just under \$852 million was allocated to O&M and \$237.7 million was allocated to capital. It is worth noting that 2011-12 is the third consecutive year in which the budgeted gross expenditures of the Yukon government have exceeded \$1 billion — \$1 billion, three consecutive years. This billion-dollar spending threshold speaks volumes to the services, programs and infrastructure delivered by our government on behalf of all Yukoners. Further, it highlights with emphasis the financial demands facing our government on an ongoing basis.

Allow me to pause here for a moment to comment on planning and budgeting. In its basic form, planning and budgeting is about decision-making. It's about identifying priorities and then considering, developing, resourcing and implementing appropriate actions to provide the best services possible to Yukoners.

At its core, planning and budgeting requires decision-making and decision-makers to make choices. The budget process supports us as decision-makers to consider all issues and identify appropriate solutions. In this regard, the development of a budget serves us both as a planning tool and as a control tool. Mr. Speaker, decision-making is an ongoing, frequently evolving process. Decision-making is not an isolated event. It remains the prerogative, and more so, the obligation, of the government to consider emerging issues and priorities and to recommend effective and appropriately resourced solutions and actions to the Legislative Assembly. This has resulted in the adopted practice of the Yukon government to have in-year adjustments tabled as supplementary estimates for the Assembly's consideration to the original budget plan. This approach has served the Yukon well, offering significant opportunity within the context of a multi-year fiscal framework to consider resource requirements for competing priorities and make sound recommendations for scrutiny, debate and approval by the Legislative Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, I apologize for this minor tangent to discuss our vision of budget planning.

My colleagues and I take very seriously and respect the importance of a strong and effective basis in process and pro-

cedure in support of our decision-making responsibilities. I believe it was important for me to share this vision with all members of the Legislature. Thank you for your indulgence.

The strength of our government's financial health gives us the ongoing ability to be responsive to emerging pressures and priorities on behalf of all Yukoners — \$1 billion for three consecutive years. Our government continues to maintain a healthy financial position and we continue to maintain financial flexibility to be appropriately responsive as we move through our mandate.

Our government is in a very strong financial position. At the time the 2011-12 budget was tabled, and again noting the gross expenditures exceeding \$1 billion, an annual surplus was forecast for 2011-12 of approximately \$38 million. In addition, and perhaps more importantly, our government continues to avoid net debt with a very healthy net financial position forecast for March 31, 2012 of just over \$43 million.

I know we will be speaking of a number of changes identified in the 2011-12 supplementary estimates tabled in the Legislature today, but I believe it's meaningful to revisit the 2011-12 budget, as it sets some context in understanding that our government continues to maintain a healthy financial position, allowing us to be responsive.

The strength of our financial position and our government's ongoing commitment to fiscal discipline allow us continue to make resource allocation decisions such as those identified in the *Supplementary Estimates No. 1* on behalf of all Yukoners. Supplementary No. 1 provides for both O&M and capital increases. This, through the *Second Appropriation Act, 2011-12*, gross O&M expenditures will total \$873,762,000 while gross capital expenditures will total \$255.94 million. These are significant expenditures made for the benefit of all Yukoners. The first supplementary estimates for a fiscal year provide us with two opportunities. First, it provides us the opportunity to present to the Legislature and to the general public an update on the financial position of the government. It is important for us as legislators to understand the issue of timing.

I am confident that members can appreciate that, at the time the 2011-12 budget was prepared and tabled, the audited results for the 2010-11 fiscal year were not finalized. Therefore, the summary projection for 2011-12 may have been subject to change. This is the case every fiscal year. Now that the results for 2010-11 have been finalized, *Supplementary Estimates No. 1* represents the first opportunity to provide this Assembly a financial update for 2011-12, inclusive of the 2010-11 final results.

Second, and more to the point of seeking required spending authorities, this first supplementary estimate details the proposed expenditure changes that require legislative appropriation authority, in addition to the spending authorities previously granted by the Legislature when the main estimates were approved.

This *Supplementary Estimates No. 1* provides for an increased spending totalling \$40.123 million. Of this total, \$21.899 million represents an increase in gross O&M expenditures and \$18.224 million represents an increase in the gross capital expenditures.

These increases result in total government expenditures of almost \$1.13 billion. The continued investment of our government on behalf of Yukoners is impressive.

Moving on to our summary financial indicators, after incorporating the 2010-11 final audited results and the expenditure and revenue changes detailed in our first supplementary estimates for 2011-12, our government continues to be in a very healthy fiscal position. *Supplementary Estimates No. 1* presents a forecast annual surplus of just over \$29 million, resulting in an estimated accumulated surplus for March 31, 2012, of \$543.9 million.

Continuing to avoid net debt, our year-end net financial position is projected at \$43 million. I wish to emphasize for all members the significance of having net financial resources as opposed to net debt. This is a very significant indicator of our financial health, as it means that the government is not relying on future revenues to provide current services. This is an enviable position for Yukon, as very few governments are in this position. This is something to be very proud of.

Individual ministers will be pleased to provide members of the Legislature with complete details for their respective portfolios during the Committee debate. However, at this time, I wish to comment on some of the summary elements identified in the *Second Appropriation Act, 2011-12* and the accompanying *Supplementary Estimates No. 1*.

Members will recall that a special warrant was issued on July 6, in which a number of expenditure initiatives were identified. In accordance with the *Financial Administration Act* — the FAA — items previously authorized through a special warrant are to be included in an appropriation bill during the next sitting of the Legislative Assembly.

The *Second Appropriation Act, 2011-12* and the *Supplementary Estimates No. 1* are prepared inclusive of the amounts identified previously through the special warrant. This meets the requirements of the FAA and brings the opportunity for scrutiny, debate and approval of the Legislature. The special warrant provided \$45.769 million, the majority of which — approximately \$38.6 million — was attributable to amounts identified for revote of prior year lapses.

The remaining balance of approximately \$7.1 million was allocated to a number of important initiatives advanced by our government. As I announced back in July, the \$7.1 million covers initiatives for a range of services of significant benefit to Yukoners, including multiple sclerosis trial support; opening of six additional beds at the Whitehorse General Hospital; partnership with Kaushee's Place housing society to provide secure, affordable housing for women in crisis; interim solutions for the Ross River arena; urgent care services for people without family doctors; and mine safety equipment.

Mr. Speaker, I mentioned revotes earlier as the Yukon government continues to follow its tried-and-true practice of revoting funds to ensure that capital projects continue to move forward as appropriate. Almost \$38.6 million has been identified for revote. As a result, significant components of the requested expenditure authority in the first supplementary estimates come about because departments are seeking capital and O&M revote authority for lapses in the previous year. Much of

this represents funding required to continue our investment in infrastructure projects.

As I mentioned earlier, individual ministers will be pleased to speak to the details during general debate. Mr. Speaker, along with the theme of revotes, members will no doubt note that the Department of Community Services has identified a number of decreases to specific projects detailed in the supplementary estimates. If you will allow, Mr. Speaker, we can consider these decreases as early revotes. Let me clarify. Department officials are continually reviewing and adjusting project implementation plans as better information becomes available.

Community Services has determined, for a variety of reasons, that some of the work originally planned for 2011-12 cannot be completed during the current fiscal year. Accordingly, for a number of projects, the department has adjusted its project implementation timelines. The results for 2011-12 are reflected in the *Supplementary Estimates No. 1*.

Let me assure all Yukoners these projects are not cancelled. These projects will move forward. The Department of Community Services continues its excellent work in revisiting implementation timelines and these projects will be picked up in future budgets, as appropriate.

I, for one, appreciate the efforts of departmental officials as they continue to deliver infrastructure improvements on behalf of all Yukoners. As Minister of Finance, I am very pleased with the supplementary budget and the financial position of our government. The *Second Appropriation Act, 2011-12* and accompanying first supplementary estimates call for increased expenditures of \$40.123 million, resulting in total gross expenditures of almost \$1.13 billion. Of this total of \$1.13 billion, \$255.941 million is allocated to capital for infrastructure improvements throughout the Yukon, and \$873.762 million is allocated to O&M in support of the many ongoing programs and services provided to Yukoners.

Over the past few years, ministers and their departmental staffs have worked very hard to ensure that we achieve sound fiscal management, while at the same time still ensuring strong, effective, yet prudent and sustainable investment in Yukoners. This supplementary estimate builds on that theme.

We will see significant spending initiatives undertaken by our government while maintaining our strong fiscal position. We project an annual surplus for 2011-12. This contributes to our savings account, as we see an increase in our net financial resource position of approximately \$14.5 million over the 2010-11 fiscal year. With our positive net financial resources — really, our savings account — our government continues to avoid net debt. We are not delivering current services, programs and infrastructure at the expense of future generations of Yukoners. We continue to be prudent and disciplined, responsive and flexible, all to the benefit of Yukoners. I am proud of these expenditure initiatives. They speak directly to our commitment to the Yukon and to Yukoners.

I am doubly proud that we maintain a strong fiscal position, allowing for our government to be responsive to emerging issues and priorities on behalf of Yukoners. I and individual members will be pleased to discuss this supplementary budget

in further detail when we reconvene to discuss in general debate.

Ms. Hanson: I am pleased to have the opportunity to speak to this *Second Appropriation Act, 2011-12*. Mr. Speaker, during the spring session, I had the opportunity — my first opportunity as the Leader of the NDP — to speak to the budget for 2011-12. It was clear to me then, as it is now, that there are areas, both of where we come together and where the NDP does differ with respect to the current economic situation in the Yukon, and also with respect to the long term and the short term, and also with respect to the issues that we think need to be addressed — from the broad strategic issues to the immediate and the day-to-day.

What we asked and what we spoke to in the spring session with respect to the budget from which this supplementary budget arises, is the need for a thorough analysis and a really thorough give and take in terms of the discussion that occurs between and among members as we consider the financial resources of this territorial government and of the responsibilities we have to be accountable to all Yukoners.

We look forward to talking with ministers and the Premier with respect to how they link the planned expenditures with the programs and objectives and their strategies for this government and the departments.

As the Premier indicated, between February 3, when the Premier tabled the budget and gave his Budget Address, and March 28, when that budget was passed, there was a lot of discussion. It was a debate that continued off and on for basically two months. That budget was passed by a majority Yukon Party government and it was passed without full debate or discussion of most departments and agencies of this government.

So that gives me great concern and reminds me again why the Official Opposition will continue to hold this government to account, to their pledge as they said in the throne speech, of practising open, accountable, fiscally responsible government and to working constructively with all of us in this House to improve the operation of its committees and the procedures of this Legislature. One of the key procedures of this Legislature is budget debate and ensuring that the monies that are available to the Yukon are spent properly. When we talk about fiscal management, what does not change and will never change, is the NDP belief in the principles of probity and prudence in both budgeting and managing of expenditures. I will come back to that many times over the course of my time in this Legislature because I believe that is fundamentally what we are required to do in terms of how we approach any discussion of the finances of this territory.

We do look forward to getting into Committee. As I said earlier, during previous budget debates that went from February 23 to March 28, second reading remarks dragged on and on.

Both government and opposition sides, I would say, were guilty of making long-winded statements of dubious relevance to the matter at hand. As a result, I don't believe that at any time over the last nine years — and I say this from my own observations over the last several budget cycles, both as the

Leader of the Official Opposition, watching from the gallery before I was elected, and then as leader in the House — I don't believe that budgets and all departments have been thoroughly debated. There was always some department that received no scrutiny for its budget. I don't want to carry on this practice.

This being our first budget debate of a new Legislative Assembly, I want to get off on the right foot. The NDP caucus wants to get into committee and scrutinize this government's spending choices. You know, the Premier made a couple of comments, and it sort of begs one or two questions that I will sort of just throw out there — you know, he made the comment that this is a normal process and talked about lapses and revotes. But what if — what if, Mr. Speaker — what if the job had been done? What if F.H. Collins wasn't delayed? This was a commitment made by the Yukon Party government. It was delayed and was delayed again. The surplus would be about \$13 million by my calculation, and the savings account would be that much smaller.

We'll be asking for more clarification. My colleague, the former Member for Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes, raised many times in this Legislature concerns about cost overruns and expenditures at Whitehorse Correctional Centre. We're concerned when we see the \$8 million over budget. We'll be looking for a full reporting on that.

There are a few key areas we'll be looking at, but we also want to point out that second reading is a time when we look at the budget and the expenditures and the planned expenditures of a government through a set of principles and our own principled lens. During the election period, we did put forward some serious proposals about fiscal management in this territory. We want to ensure, when we look at the decisions that are being made, both in the supplementary budget and future budgets, that our prosperity is distributed so that no one is left behind. We're going to be looking to ensure that we've used this process and this legislative debate — let's talk about doing this in a different way.

This supplementary budget, as I said earlier, contains some interesting expenditures and some items that are dropped, but I'll save asking detailed questions for Committee. Really, what we need to be looking at as we go forward is where are we going? Which direction is this supplementary signalling the Yukon is heading in? As I indicated, if it's continuing sort of delayed action, and you keep saying, "Well, we've got more money," — hmm.

With this supplementary budget, the Yukon Party has reduced the surplus to \$29 million from \$38 million. This will likely be further reduced and we will have to wait and see the variance between now and the last supplementary in Public Accounts.

The lack of detailed financial controls in the Government of Yukon practices was detailed by the Auditor General, and our internal auditors have probed this on the operation of, for example, emergency medical services. They often lead to great variances. I've said it before in this Chamber and I'll say it again: having \$1 billion to spend does not mean effective management of the financial resources of this territory. Spending

money is not the same as effective expenditures based on the needs and the desires of this territory.

I hope to be able to explore this idea further with my colleagues in this Legislature: that we need to consider other budgeting models so we can have more accurate snapshots of government spending, so we're not looking backward and also not waiting until Public Accounts to get, like a year later, a sense of really what the actual expenditures are and where this government stands.

The NDP looks forward to getting into detailed discussions by department. I'll be the only speaker. We'd like to move this debate along and that's where we'll leave it today.

Mr. Elias: I'm going to be short in my response here, but it is a privilege to get up and speak to the *Second Appropriation Act, 2011-12, Supplementary Estimates No. 1*. First of all, it's my hope that we carry the moral rectitude that Yukoners rightly expect us to display in here. We in the Liberal caucus are ready and willing and prepared to make the world-class decisions Yukoners require of us to move forward in this new era.

I've already been witness to some eloquent soliloquies exhibited by some of the members in the House and I hope that, over time, the words carry the master virtue of wisdom in here. Looking at the estimates, I think it's important that we ensure in here a balance — especially for rural Yukon — that we ensure that all Yukoners receive nothing more or less than the same opportunity enjoyed in this country of ours and the programs and services that other jurisdictions, especially our capital city, enjoy. I'll speak about my riding.

My constituents can't just walk down the street and enjoy a swimming pool, or go to a drug store, or go to an optometrist or dentist, or simply go to a lumber yard to build something they need. That has to be recognized, the different situations that exist throughout our territory.

Looking especially at the \$18 million increase in capital, \$8 million more is requested for corrections infrastructure. We too, within the Liberal caucus, will be asking if that's cost overruns for the new correctional facility we toured the other day with the Minister of Highways and Public Works and staff. It was an excellent presentation. Those are the things we have to ensure — our job and the oath we swore is to keep the government to account on those kinds of expenditures, so please expect that of us.

We are pleased to see the million dollars for the second-stage housing for Kaushee's Place, and it looks like our neighbours in Alaska are continuing to send us money for the Shakwak projects to the amount of \$2.4 million. We have to express our disappointment that there is no money allocated for the Dawson City recreation facility, as well as the Ross River recreation facility, which were committed to prior to the election.

In Committee, we also look forward to going into line-by-line and talking about the issue of the F.H. Collins delay in what I call the Yukon Party's "flagship education election campaign promise". Very conveniently, after the election is complete, it is set back for two years. We do have some ques-

tions. There were a lot of shovels throwing dirt prior to the election, and we have some specific questions with regard to that in Committee.

I would also like to mention that we in the Liberal caucus will be providing some legislative ideas and options for the government to consider.

We haven't decided yet whether or not we are going to go to the extreme length of tabling possible legislation, but will put the Premier on notice that some of our ideas moving forward would be to take a very serious look at the *Environment Act*, the *Fish and Wildlife Act*, as well as our legislation around family law in the territory, which is incredibly outdated. I think there are some excellent jurisdictions in our country that have moved forward in putting the children in the centre of those pieces of legislation being the only concern in disputes between parents. I think the Province of British Columbia does have the high-water mark with regard to this. That is something that we will be advocating for, not just in this sitting, but in face-to-face meetings with the ministers and in the upcoming spring sitting where, I hope, we can see budgetary line items simply for contributions to the food bank. We are in a boom here, and the food bank has not seen this level of clients ever. Those kinds of things are important to discuss in committee.

I will be — should I talk about that? No, I'll wait. I won't talk about that item — scratch that one off.

I did bring it up with the Premier in my first question in the Legislative Assembly the other day, about having a plan for a potential world economic crisis, once again. The last global economic recession we weathered, buzzwords, like “shovel-ready projects” were thrown around throughout the territory, based on a demonstrated need. I believe every one of our ridings can show a demonstrated need, so this is just one aspect of being prepared for infrastructure projects, keeping people working, keeping people paying taxes, et cetera, that we'll be advocating for throughout the supplementary budget debate.

I also want to mention an important thing that was requested and wasn't provided for. On this side of the House, I see five brand new members of this Legislative Assembly, who haven't had the opportunity to go to departmental briefings and go through that experience — especially with the new spring sitting budget, which is presumably going to be another billion dollars — and how that process could be learned and embarked upon by these new members, on this side of the House especially.

It was disappointing that briefings were not provided for these supplementary budgets to my new colleagues on this side of the House — as well as a Finance briefing, for that matter. But those are some of the things that we're concerned about.

We're also concerned that for every \$10 that is brought into this territory, \$9 comes from the Government of Canada. So own-source revenue is still a concern. As the Premier mentioned, there seem to be a large number of lapses within each department. As a measure of courtesy, I would request that maybe the Finance minister and Premier could provide, by legislative return, a list of lapses by each individual department. That would be — what's the word? — productive to departmental debate once we get into Committee. I think — let's see

here — I'll avoid going into some of the issues and priorities that have been discussed throughout the years in my riding of Vuntut Gwitchin.

But I will say that I give credit where credit is due, but I also hold the minister's feet to the fire when necessary, so to speak. But I'll leave my remarks there and we look forward in the Liberal caucus to delving into line-by-line items and getting breakdowns from the ministers where necessary, but there are some pretty large items within the supplementary that require some debate. One that I neglected to mention — and I'll conclude by saying that there is an extra \$3.3 million for the Kwanlin Dun Cultural Centre for instance, and we'll be asking for explanations for those expenditures as well.

So Mr. Speaker, thank you for your time and indulgence today. I think I will leave it at that. Thank you.

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

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: Again, I wanted to speak to the investment that the Yukon Party government has been making in the Yukon and the prudent financial management that has occurred that has allowed us to continue to invest and to reinvest in infrastructure during a time when there was a world economic recession, which we have not seen the likes of since the Dirty Thirties. During that time, we were in a position financially to be able to continue to invest, which ensured that we were creating jobs for Yukoners and continued to provide the services and the programs that are expected by Yukoners. When the dust settled, really Yukon can look back and say: what recession? It was because of the prudence in investments and the fact that we have maintained money in the piggy bank that we are able to continue to do that. So, three successive years of \$1 billion or greater investment in this territory is something that is not only noteworthy, but is to be cheered.

As I've spoken, there are a lot of things we have done and accomplishments that have occurred, and there is still work to be done. There are more things to be done, but programs and services and capital investment in infrastructure relies on money. That really means we need to continue to foster a strong economy, which would deliver money for this government to be able to do what it does. That is the foundation of what this government has done leading to this point and how we continue to want to move forward.

When you have money in the bank, you can do what we're doing right now — adjust to situations and have money there; have the flexibility to spend money when things come up. It is also the ability, as we've historically done, to have tighter controls. It's about developing good programming; it's about investing in good infrastructure; and it's also about financial control and the mechanism we have used that has allowed us to keep our thumb on the spending. That is very important.

As to the comment about the Auditor General, we will be bringing forward a final supplementary in 2010-11.

The Auditor General does the job of reviewing the financial statements of the Government of Yukon annually, and we will be speaking to the fact that, you know, the Auditor General

did give us an unqualified opinion, which means that we had a clean bill of health. So, with that, I would like to say that we're very proud of the accomplishments. There is a lot that is left to do, and this government is ready to do that. We look forward to debating in Committee the details of the supplementary. Thank you.

Speaker: Are you prepared for the question?

Some Hon. Members: Division.

Division

Speaker: Division has been called.

Bells

Speaker: Mr. Clerk, please poll the House.

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Agree.

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Graham: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Kent: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Nixon: Agree.

Ms. McLeod: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Agree.

Mr. Hassard: Agree.

Ms. Hanson: Disagree.

Mr. Tredger: Disagree.

Ms. Moorcroft: Disagree.

Ms. White: Disagree.

Ms. Stick: Disagree.

Mr. Barr: Disagree.

Mr. Elias: Disagree.

Mr. Silver: Disagree.

Clerk: Mr. Speaker, the results are 10 yeas, eight nays.

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

Motion for second reading of Bill No. 3 agreed to

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

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

Motion agreed to

Speaker leaves the Chair

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Chair (Ms. McLeod): Order please. Committee of the Whole will now come to order. The matter before the Committee is Bill No. 3, *Second Appropriation Act, 2011-12*. Do members wish a brief recess?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

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

Recess

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

Bill No. 3: *Second Appropriation Act, 2011-12*

Chair: The matter before the Committee is general debate on Bill No. 3, *Second Appropriation Act, 2011-12*. However, before the Committee proceeds to general debate, the Chair would like to remind members of certain procedural matters regarding the reading of supplementary appropriation bills. Once general debate is concluded, the Committee will only deal with those departments, corporations and other entities that have new appropriations identified in Schedule A. These amounts can be found in the column, "sums required this appropriation". Should members wish to ask questions or make comments about a department, corporation or entity that does not require new appropriations, or if they wish to discuss other issues such as revenues or lapses, they should do so with the context of general debate.

Thank you.

Ms. Hanson: Madam Deputy Speaker, may I ask a question?

Chair: Yes.

Ms. Hanson: Okay. In the interest of a comment earlier by my colleague down the aisle here, the Interim Leader of the Liberals, it would be helpful as we're doing this, since we haven't had a briefing and most of the people in this room have never done this before — so when you say, "the column" or whatever you just referred to, if you could say where it is and point us to it, that would be very helpful.

Chair: Yes, I would love to do that. Right now we are in general debate.

Ms. Hanson: I realize that. Which document are we referring to and which document are we using at the moment, please?

Chair: We are dealing with *Supplementary Estimates No. 1*. Schedule A is in Bill No. 3, *Second Appropriation Act, 2011-12*, about two pages down.

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: Madam Chair, I'm pleased to introduce to Committee of the Whole, Bill No. 3, *Second Appropriation Act, 2011-12*, along with the accompanying *Supplementary Estimates No. 1* for the 2011-12 fiscal year. The first supplementary estimates for 2011-12 provides an additional \$40.123 million in total expenditure authority, increasing total projected spending for 2011-12 to \$1,129,700,000, of which \$255.9 million will be directed toward capital investment. As noted, this supplementary provides for \$40.123 million in increased spending.

Specifically, there is additional operation and maintenance requirements of \$21.899 million, and additional capital requirements of approximately \$18.224 million.

Madam Chair, our government continues to deliver a healthy financial position. The first supplementary estimates for the 2011-12 budget reflects a net financial position of \$43 million and an accumulated surplus of \$543.9 million. I want to emphasize the importance of having net financial resources, as opposed to net debt. Maintaining a positive net financial position means we are paying as we go. We are not sacrificing future revenue streams to pay for current programs or services. In

fact, we forecast an annual surplus for 2011-12, contributing an increase to our net financial resources over that of 2010-11 of almost \$15 million. These are significant indicators of our financial health. Madam Chair, I would like to reiterate that the supplementary estimates include \$40.123 million additional expenditure authority in several key areas of importance to Yukoners.

Our financial framework remains strong, and I assure Yukoners that our government remains committed to managing and directing the Yukon government's finances in a disciplined, responsible, and strategic manner.

The supplementary estimates provide significant increased investment in Yukon. My colleagues will, of course, be pleased to discuss these initiatives in great detail during line-by-line debate.

I am extremely proud of our government's success in providing significant investments on behalf of Yukoners, while maintaining our commitment to prudent financial management. As noted, our financial position remains strong and will provide more opportunities for our government to make future significant investments in the Yukon on behalf of all Yukoners.

I am confident the supplementary estimates speak to addressing the needs of Yukoners. I look forward to the opportunity to discuss in further detail in the days ahead. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Chair: The Chair recognizes Liz Taylor.

Some Hon. Member: No.

Chair: Taylor — I knew I was going to say that. It works. Ms. Hanson —

Ms. Hanson: I don't know what you can do. All right. Well, I'm not sure if I should be insulted or not. I think she's almost dead, so I'm not. What an afternoon. Thank you, Madam Chair.

I'm interested in the speech that the Premier gave — outlining the general financial state of the territory. One of the areas that he spoke to was the increased revenues to the territory, and I'd ask him to clarify exactly where those increased revenues are. He's referencing both his throne speech and his discussion this afternoon about the benefits to the territory with respect to the mining boom that we're experiencing in this territory. I'd be interested in having him explain where I would see, in the revenue stream here, the royalty revenues accruing to the territory — the increased revenues that we would see for this last fiscal year as a result of that.

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: What I would like to do is remind the member opposite, or just tell the member opposite, when we are talking about revenues at 62 percent, it was referring to the increase in revenues for the Government of Yukon since 2002 — when you compare that with the fact that the consumer price index, or CPI, has only gone up 15.6 percent. With that 62-percent increase — as described — we have instituted a bunch of credits and new credits that have actually reduced the amount of the tax burden for Yukoners by \$5.9 million annually.

While we have reduced the tax burden by \$5.9 million, we have increased the amount of resources that we have collected by 62 percent during that same time.

I'd like to maybe give a little bit of information with regard to that, and some of the tax revenues we have and how they have changed since the Yukon Party government took over in 2002-03: personal income tax in 2002-03, \$32,144,235; in 2010-11, \$51,323,630, which is a 60-percent increase in personal income tax over that period.

Corporate income tax, 2002-03, \$4,103,586; in 2010-11, \$8,228,067, a 101-percent increase in corporate income tax. Fuel oil diesel, in 2002-03, \$2,727,062; in 2010-11, it was \$4,071,415, which was a 49-percent increase in fuel tax for diesel. Fuel tax other, 2002-03, \$4,199,711; in 2010-11, it was \$4,278,524, a two-percent increase.

Tobacco tax — \$5,970,189 in 2002-03; \$11,436,228 in 2010-11 — a 92-percent increase.

Insurance premiums — for 2002-03: \$1,185,082; \$2,152,773 in 2010-11, which was an 82-percent increase.

Property tax, including grants-in-lieu for non-profits — in 2002-03 was \$2,143,042; in 2010-11 it was \$3,639,320 for a 70-percent increase in property taxes collected.

Liquor tax — 2002-03: \$2,418,697; in 2010-11: \$3,828,443, a 58-percent increase.

Total taxes were \$54,891,604 versus 2010-11 of \$88,958,400, an increase of 62 percent.

In the supplementary that we have, on page six, in the grey column it will give you the increases to this point: \$162,000 increase in property tax; liquor \$102,000; lands, mines and forestry — mostly mining fees — \$1.4 million and under other, \$38,000, which is mostly weigh station.

Seeing the time, I move that we report progress.

Chair: It has been moved by Mr. Pasloski that the Chair report progress.

Motion agreed to

Hon. Mr. Cathers: I move that the Speaker do now resume the Chair.

Chair: It has been moved by Mr. Cathers that the Speaker do now resume the Chair.

Motion agreed to

Speaker resumes the Chair

Speaker: I will now call the House to order.

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

Chair's report

Ms. McLeod: Committee of the Whole has considered Bill No. 3, entitled *Second Appropriation Act, 2011-12*, and directed me to report progress.

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

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Speaker: I declare the report carried.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: I move that the House do now adjourn.

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

Motion agreed to

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

The House adjourned at 5:34 p.m.