

Yukon Legislative Assembly
Whitehorse, Yukon
Monday, December 12, 2011 — 1:00 p.m.

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

Prayers

DAILY ROUTINE

Speaker: We will proceed with the Order Paper. Tributes.

TRIBUTES

In recognition of the Kitchen-Kuiack family energy challenge award

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure for me to rise today to pay tribute to the Kitchen-Kuiack family and their outstanding achievement in being Canada's number one household in the *Canadian Geographic* magazine — Shell Canada Energy Diet Challenge.

This Energy Diet Challenge saw families across Canada become ambassadors of energy conservation as they competed to reduce their water, fuel and home energy use.

In this respect, Mr. Speaker, I can think of no better ambassadors for Yukon than the Kitchen-Kuiack family. They are a true northern family, and as their Energy Diet Challenge profile suggests, they are close to nature in everything they do. They see our northern climate here in Yukon not as a challenge to overcome, but as a privilege.

Marguerite, Brian, Simone and Marika, all of whom are with us today in the gallery, were tremendously successful in this challenge. They found creative ways to improve their fuel efficiency and increase their energy efficiency in their home.

You'd be very surprised, Mr. Speaker, as I was, to learn from following the Kitchen-Kuiack family that simply thinking about your driving habits and planning your trips to town, and your routes around town can create exceptional savings. Those savings are of course a benefit to the pocketbook, but also a significant benefit to the environment.

Another important lesson, Mr. Speaker, which is particularly relevant during this holiday season, is the idea of using family traditions and beliefs as a means to incorporate energy conservation and efficiency habits into our everyday lives. This was one concept that I found particularly remarkable.

Mr. Speaker, the Kitchen-Kuiack household has been a wonderful example for other Yukoners, and indeed Canadians across the country.

We as Yukoners are very proud of them and very proud that a Yukon family was able to accomplish such a feat. Although it really shouldn't come as a surprise that it was a Yukon family that won this challenge.

As the Kitchen-Kuiack family was quick to point out, they have enjoyed considerable support from their friends, neighbours and the community at large. I believe that Yukoners have a particular prescience when it comes to innovation and creativity, especially in terms of energy efficiency.

While the Kitchen-Kuiack family had tremendous support from Yukoners, they also had the benefit of an eco-coach, Lauren Mangion, who is also with us today in the gallery.

Marguerite noted to me earlier that Lauren was "crazy". Crazy, of course, Mr. Speaker, in terms of her creative ingenuity. The creation of a solar stove in November is just one example — and one, I might add, that I still haven't quite wrapped my head around.

I should also note, Mr. Speaker, that we are also joined today by Gilles Gagnier from Canadian Geographic, and Ashley Nixon from Shell Canada. These two organizations sponsored the Energy Diet Challenge and have really been quite progressive in their encouragement of energy efficiency in Canada.

And, of course, Mr. Speaker, I would be remiss if I failed to mention the grand prize of the Energy Diet Challenge, a brand new Toyota Pruis Hybrid, which was awarded to the Kitchen-Kuiack family this morning.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I have to reiterate how proud we are — the government and all Yukoners — of the Kitchen-Kuiack family. Brian, Marguerite, Simone and Marika, you've provided a tremendous example for all of us — as the jingle goes: how to "be the change that we want to see in the world." Thank you.

Mr. Barr: Mr. Speaker, I rise on behalf of the NDP Official Opposition caucus to congratulate my constituents, the Kitchen-Kuiack family: Marguerite, Brian, Simone and Marika. They won the Canadian Geographic Energy Diet Challenge and the new hybrid vehicle that comes with the honour.

I witnessed the young girls test sitting the Prius this morning — not the one they are going to receive, Mr. Speaker. I understand from Brian that, when they were in there, they have to pick out the colour. I'm not sure how they are going to go about that, but I'm sure that with their coming through as the grand prize winners, that it will not be a tough task. They seem to be able to work together quite well.

I have known the family for many years, and they are very community-minded folks. They are always out and about in the community. The first time I actually met Marguerite was when she used to sell flowers around town. Do you remember that? It was always great to see her smiling face, which brought lots of smiles to women in the community too, because of course the guys would immediately buy a flower and present it to their dates.

Brian plays music. I remember out in the middle of nowhere in the bush, Art Johns and I were down this old road, and there was Brian and another buddy sitting there. We stopped for tea, and that was it for the hunting. We ended up playing music for many hours after that. They happened to have a couple of guitars there.

It couldn't go to a grander family, I think.

Over the three months, the family was able to reduce their energy consumption, change some of their habits and are recognized as Canada's "slimmest energy household".

They were able to reduce their water use, reduce their fuel use through commuting, reduce their carbon footprint and save money. The *Energy Diet Challenge Guide* published by *Can-*

dian Geographic has some useful tips that bring economic savings through simple lifestyle changes in the home and one the road. Some of the tips: avoid buying products with excessive packaging; buy more locally grown foods; take short showers instead of baths. Of course, living in the north can be more challenging in terms of reducing energy use. The distances between communities mean we often have more ground to cover. With the darker days, we can be energy hogs.

The Kitchen-Kuiacks are ambassadors for the north and have shown that we can take action in our lives. The family's success was measured on public voting, overall energy, fuel and water use reductions, their ability to make innovative lifestyle changes, and their public outreach efforts. It was fitting that the Energy Diet Challenge concluded at the same time as the Durban climate change talks. Avoiding dangerous climate change is in large part an energy challenge. We need to reduce our energy diet and transition away from burning fossil fuels quickly. The Kitchen-Kuiacks have shown that we must walk the talk in terms of reducing our footprint. We need action on an international and national level, and we need to take personal responsibility too. All Yukon is proud of your accomplishment, and we have much to learn from your example.

Thank you. Günilschish.

Applause

Speaker: Are there any further tributes?

In recognition of Human Rights Day

Mr. Silver: I rise today on behalf of the Liberal caucus to pay tribute to International Human Rights Day held on December 10 each year. December 10, 2011, is the 63rd anniversary of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. This historic document, often labelled as a modern-day Magna Carta, outlines the human rights standards the UN believes should be enforced by all nations. Among them: the right to life, liberty and nationality; to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; to work; and to be educated and to take part in government.

Since its adoption in 1948, the declaration has been and continues to be a source of inspiration for national and international efforts to promote and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms. Human rights are the foundations of freedom, peace, development and justice, and laws to protect and promote human rights are indispensable.

Celebrating International Human Rights Day presents an invaluable opportunity to reflect on the persistent human rights challenges worldwide.

Discrimination infects societies and every religion of the world and is the root cause of many human rights violations, particularly in areas of conflict.

We need to intensify efforts to combat discrimination and exclusion, which continue to impair the rights, dignities and access to justice of millions of individuals worldwide as they still face discrimination and exclusion on the basis of race, religion, language and sex. The damaging effects of discrimination and exclusion are cumulative. They already affect those made vulnerable by inequality of treatment. There is still much

to be done in turning human rights into reality in the life of every child, woman and man around the globe.

We pay tribute to the extraordinary visions of the declaration's original drafters and to the many human rights defenders around the world who struggle to make their vision a reality. This year, we mark the 24th anniversary of the establishment of the Yukon Human Rights Commission to administer the Yukon *Human Rights Act*. We would like to take the opportunity to commend and recognize the hard work done by our Yukon Human Rights Commission and the Human Rights Board of Adjudication in defending the many rights of Yukoners.

I urge all Yukoners to take responsibility and to uphold freedoms and to stand against racism, sexism and discrimination. Let each of us be a human rights defender.

Hon. Mr. Nixon: I rise today to pay tribute to Human Rights Day. Human Rights Day is observed by the international community through the United Nations every year on December 10. This date commemorates the day in 1948 when the United Nations General Assembly adopted the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. This declaration came three years after the conclusion of World War II, when upwards of 10 million people lost their lives in global conflict.

Our American neighbours were drawn into this conflict with the invasion of Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941 — 70 years ago this week. This event set off the catastrophic war in the Pacific, resulting in four years of fighting, millions of lives lost and decades of international tension, including Canadians fighting in Korea, the tensions of the Cold War and, more recently, a decade-long battle in Afghanistan.

I know members of this Assembly, including you, Mr. Speaker, have served in uniform. I admire your willingness to offer your life to promote and defend these values and principles that Canadians hold so dear. Thank you. I realize that not everyone believes in these freedoms. Despite the positive work of so many over the last 70 years, human rights continue to hang by a tenuous thread in many parts of the world.

Next month, Canadian soldiers will be leaving Afghanistan, hopefully for the final time. Flags have already been lowered in Kandahar. Our hopes and prayers go out to the people of Afghanistan and throughout the Middle East, as peace and the continued recognition of human rights in this region remains a balancing act.

At home this government believes that Yukoners should be able to benefit from the efforts of so many people who have fought to establish human rights throughout the world since the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* was adopted by the UN. We are now benefiting from efforts of our previous government and modernizing Yukon's *Human Rights Act*.

This act was modernized starting in 2008 through two phases as a result of an effective consultation with Yukoners. The *Human Rights Act* now ensures the processes people follow when they believe their human rights have been violated are modern, efficient and reliable. I would like to thank and recognize the members of the Human Rights Panel of Adjudicators, the commission and the local advocacy groups for their role in Yukon's human rights process.

I would also like to thank them for their help over the last years in helping to modernize this important legislation. I trust that we all stopped and took a moment this past Saturday to celebrate the efforts of so many who came before us to ensure that we Yukoners continue to live in a peaceful society that fully supports the importance of human rights.

Ms. Moorcroft: On behalf of the Official Opposition, I rise to pay tribute to the United Nations International Human Rights Day, which falls on December 10. I was pleased on Friday evening to attend the celebration and ceremony, where the French language human rights site was launched, at l'Association franco-yukonnaise.

December 10 commemorates the 1948 adoption of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, which was the first international instrument to detail universal human rights and fundamental freedoms. It is a common standard of achievement for all peoples and nations.

The preamble to the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* recognizes the inherent dignity and the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family. These rights are the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world. The declaration was crafted by world leaders to ensure the horrors of the Nazi death camps would never happen again.

The first article of the declaration says that all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act toward one another in a spirit of brotherhood. These principles in the declaration have been written into the constitutions of 90 countries across the world. Human Rights Day serves to remind us that we cannot become complacent about human rights and freedoms. I am sad to say that human rights violations are taking place in many places in the world today. It is easy to point to parts of the world where human rights are obviously being violated: where people are killed for expressing their views in marches, are forced to become refugees, or are jailed for what they write and their publications. It is harder to take a close look at our own country and to be aware of how human rights can be eroded almost without notice.

The current atmosphere of war and terrorism has made security a national priority for our federal government. It is a time when we must be most diligent in protection of Canadians' rights. Canada has been complicit in the arrest and deportation of suspected terrorists. Canada is the only western nation that has not spoken out about the detainment of prisoners in Guantanamo Bay. That goes against the *Geneva Convention* and Canada has failed to ask the United States to return a Canadian citizen who has been held in Guantanamo Bay. Canada is now deporting American soldiers who have sought refuge here because they refused to serve in Iraq. They are being sent home from Canada to face prison terms for their convictions.

The abuse of citizens perpetrated during arrests is a form of human rights abuse that is escalating in many countries and that sometimes results in death. In this month, where we recognize and deplore violence against women, we are reminded of the many Canadian women who suffer every day from viola-

tion of their human rights to live in safety and to live without fear.

We must be aware of these abuses and cannot let them pass without acknowledgement and condemnation. The way to start is to uphold human rights on a daily basis — to be human rights defenders. We must not turn aside from local, national and international prejudices, intolerances and injustices. If we ignore these acts, we allow human rights to deteriorate for all of us.

The minister just spoke of human rights amendments here in the Yukon, and I am looking forward to the day when the second stage of the human rights amendments do come forward to this Legislature. I am hoping, in honour of Human Rights Day, that will be soon.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Mr. Kent: I would ask all members of the Legislature to join me in welcoming Mr. Bell's grade 10 ACES class here this afternoon from Wood Street Centre School. Also, a special congratulations to Mr. Bell and the hundreds of dedicated Yukon employees who are receiving long-service awards. Mr. Bell received his on Friday last week.

Applause

Mr. Tredger: Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce my daughter Emily, who is back with us from university at Dalhousie. It has been interesting watching people progress through the education system. Our children have a wonderful opportunity here in the Yukon. We have children going from one end of the country to the other. When I was at the airport yesterday picking up Emily, there were a number of parents welcoming their children back. It's indeed an exciting and happy time for everybody as they come back to the Yukon, like it is in the spring when they come back to work.

Thank you to the education system and thank you, Emily, for coming back.

Applause

Mr. Barr: Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce Marguerite, Brian, Simone and Marika Kitchen-Kuiack. They are constituents of mine and have been personal friends for many years. Welcome.

Applause

Speaker: Are there any returns or documents for tabling?

TABLING RETURNS AND DOCUMENTS

Hon. Mr. Graham: Pursuant to section 103 of the *Workers' Compensation Act*, I am pleased to table the annual report of the Yukon Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board for 2010.

Speaker: Are there any reports of committees?

Are there any petitions?

Are there any bills to be introduced?

Are there any notices of motion?

NOTICES OF MOTION

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

THAT it is the opinion of this House that in order to fulfill the Yukon public's expectations that elected members improve the functioning of our legislative and democratic processes, this House:

(1) instructs the Standing Committee on Rules, Elections and Privileges to convene immediately for the purpose of preparing recommendations on legislative renewal for the fall 2012 legislative sitting, including, but not limited to, recommendations that will achieve:

(i) thorough debate on the budget and other government legislation;

(ii) provisions for members' statements in the Daily Routine;

(iii) reasonable time limits on speeches and replies during motion days, in departmental budget debate, and in debate on legislation;

(iv) equal representation on all standing, select and special committees of the Legislative Assembly;

(v) provisions to increase opportunities for members of the public to appear as witnesses or to make presentations about matters before the Legislative Assembly;

(vi) amendments empowering the Speaker to ensure members better serve the public interest;

(vii) establishment of a code of ethics for members of the Legislative Assembly;

(viii) establishment of fixed dates for the commencement of the spring and fall sittings; and

(ix) any other changes gleaned from best practices found in other legislatures; and

(2) creates a select committee on democratic reform to meaningfully consult the public over the spring and summer of 2012 for the purpose of receiving the views and opinions of Yukon citizens and interested groups on issues of improving our democracy, including but not limited to:

(i) reviewing electoral processes and amendments to the *Elections Act*;

(ii) consideration of fixed election dates; and

(iii) consideration of proportional representation; and

THAT the select committee on democratic reform report to the House its findings and recommendations no later than the 2013 spring sitting of the Legislative Assembly.

I give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Minister of Health and Social Services to work with Yukon health professionals to establish a pilot project collaborative health care clinic in Whitehorse to demonstrate the cost-effectiveness of an integrated, team-based health care delivery system that:

(1) is a first referral for patients;

(2) is accessible to all patients;

(3) is patient-centred with patients involved in decision-making on their cases; and

(4) houses a wide range of health care professionals, including but not limited to physicians, physiotherapists, nurse

practitioners, addictions and mental health workers and midwives.

Ms. White: I give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to develop a public awareness campaign to encourage all Yukon residents to follow the example of the award-winning Kitchen-Kuiack family of Marsh Lake, winners of the *Canadian Geographic* Energy Diet Challenge, in addressing the goals of greater self-sufficiency and combating climate change by:

(1) reducing our home energy consumption;

(2) reducing our water consumption and use; and

(3) reducing fuel consumption.

I give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to exercise leadership in establishing real and meaningful territory-wide emission reduction targets for greenhouse gases and to undertake swift action in addressing climate change in response to the Government of Canada not fulfilling its legal obligations under the Kyoto Accord, and especially in light of the most recent Statistics Canada report that found:

(1) the average area covered by sea ice during the summer has declined in all nine of Canada's northern sea ice regions over the past four decades;

(2) the ice lost for a decade has been around 24,000 square kilometres in the southern Beaufort Sea area above the north Yukon; and

(3) the Beaufort Sea, over that same time period, has had overall ice loss of 25 percent.

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

THAT this House recognizes that the antiquated free-entry system allows for mineral staking to happen virtually anywhere;

THAT there are hundreds of active claims within municipal boundaries, including residential neighbourhoods and recreational areas;

THAT at present the right of free-entry prevails over private property interests, as most private homeowners only own the surface rights to their lands and not the subsurface rights;

THAT miners are not required to notify a landowner before driving a stake through their backyard and the current regulations allow miners to establish camps, store fuel, trench and use explosives with no YESAA assessment required so long as these activities are below a certain threshold; and

THAT this House urges the Yukon government to issue a temporary mineral-staking ban within municipal boundaries and in residential areas until, through land use processes, citizens determine which areas are appropriate for mining.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to increase funding to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police M Division to aid them in solving outstanding major crimes cases.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to either plow the roads into the new Grizzly Valley subdivision to allow people to begin work on their new homes or extend the deadline for construction of new homes by six months.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to work with the private sector to improve cellular service in rural Yukon.

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

QUESTION PERIOD

Question re: FASD supportive housing

Ms. Stick: This government announced in its platform and in the Speech from the Throne that there will be funding provided to Options for Independence Society that currently provides supported housing to individuals with fetal alcohol spectrum disorder. This funding is to increase the housing units from six to 24. Will the minister explain how this society was chosen to provide this service over any other group or organization and how the decision fits within the department's policy or strategy on housing?

Hon. Mr. Graham: The Options for Independence Society was chosen as a result of a request for proposals that went out to a number of different organizations within the Whitehorse area. Their proposal was judged to be the best of the ones received and consequently received — or will, in due course, receive the funding to proceed with their proposal.

Ms. Stick: The Options for Independence Society has been told they will receive some funding, but is currently under investigation by this government. Complaints were made a year ago to Corporate Affairs by a group of concerned and credible citizens. Issues raised include concerns about the operations of the board and complaints from residents about some of the actions being taken by the society, including unfair eviction notices and unsafe living conditions.

Will the minister explain why the society would be named as a recipient of more funding to provide more service, while under active investigation by this government?

Hon. Mr. Graham: Mr. Speaker, at the time the proposals were received, the society was not under investigation. Consequently, the investigation came to light. We will be proceeding with a Management Board submission, and part of that submission will require several conditions being met prior to any funding taking place.

Ms. Stick: Because we don't know the results of this investigation yet, I would like to ask the minister whether he would consult and work with all agencies providing services to these individuals with disabilities, such as the Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Society of Yukon, Association for Community Living, and People First Society to come up with a clear housing strategy that will address all housing concerns for this population before we go ahead with increasing funding to this society when we don't yet know the results.

Hon. Mr. Graham: That's exactly what we are doing. We are looking at any number of different proposals for a full spectrum of housing and this spectrum includes people with disabilities; it includes people who are hard to house; and we include FASSY, as you said.

So this government is looking at a whole range of different options for housing these folks. We're still in the process of evaluating many of the proposals that we have received, and we will roll them out in due course.

Question re: Continuing care facilities, patient care and safety

Ms. Stick: Mr. Speaker, we are all aware from the media reports of alleged incidents of assault on residents at Copper Ridge Place that have been reported by family members. Families have met together to discuss the alleged assaults and to try to find positive solutions. I would note that the minister has sat down with family members and my colleague here. When a resident in any of our facilities suffers abuse, it is extremely disturbing to everyone. We empathize greatly with those families.

Will the Minister of Health and Social Services inform the House what follow-up he has made to the issues that families and friends have flagged as important and requiring immediate attention?

Hon. Mr. Graham: As I informed the member opposite, we sat down with the families, not only the department. I sat down and discussed these issues with the families themselves. I don't mean to attempt to downplay the seriousness of these incidents, but you have to remember who we are dealing with in continuing care facilities. These incidents have happened in the past, and, despite our best efforts to the contrary, will probably occur in the future.

One of the incidents took place right in the middle of the day room. There was absolutely no attempt to hide it. We are dealing with people who have, in some cases, disabilities, and in some cases, mild or even advanced forms of dementia. We are not talking about people who would normally carry out these kinds of actions in the normal sense of society. There are problems up there in dealing with these folks, but we are trying to address them.

In the coming year we will also have an accreditation team visiting Yukon to carry out the accreditation of our facilities. We look forward to that as well.

Ms. Stick: I would like to thank the minister for responding to documents we did send to him last week, on December 9. In response to meetings and the formation of a group of concerned family members, the NDP caucus had encouraged the minister to look into the role they would play in hearing complaints and making improvements at Copper Ridge Place.

To that, the minister wrote, "While we are interested in working with any community advocacy group, it is also critically important that we hear from the 100-plus family members."

My question, Mr. Speaker: can the minister provide some details about how he will include these family members in terms of improving the care at Copper Ridge Place and at other long-term care facilities within the Yukon?

Hon. Mr. Graham: Mr. Speaker, we are always looking at ways to improve the care at any of our continuing care facilities. As part of this improvement strategy, we continually meet with the families of the residents. In fact, I think it was just last week that we had a meeting, to which all family members were invited. We listened to their concerns, and at the same time we provided the avenues for their concerns to be brought forward to the administration of these continuing care homes.

We found that most families are very, very happy with the care that they are receiving in the homes, and if there are improvements to be made, we will continue to do that as well.

Ms. Stick: Mr. Speaker, the suggestion has been made by family and some public that there is a need for legislation that would set out standards for the safety of patients in continuing care. Legislation is in place in some provinces and has proven to be effective. Many of the concerns with regard to patient safety and care in the Yukon are only addressed in the department's policy and regulations.

Will the minister consider tabling legislation that would respond to the need for care and protection and measurements of these for our patients who are under his responsibility?

Hon. Mr. Graham: Again, as I said, we're always interested in speaking to anybody who is interested, and we will consider this as a request for legislation. I still believe that the most effective care in our continuing care facilities is provided by staff — good, high-quality staff — following policy and procedures that are outlined very clearly at the present time. I'm convinced that we do have that staff. As I said before, there are small problems that will occur from time to time, and those will continue occurring whether we have legislation or not. So we will consider it. I don't rule it out completely, but it's not really high on my agenda.

Question re: Yukon Forum

Mr. Elias: I have a question for the Premier today.

In October of 2003, Yukon's Premier, the Grand Chief of the Council of Yukon First Nations, and chiefs of the self-governing First Nations set up the Yukon Forum as a place for dialogue among governments. The forum was expected to meet four times a year. Under the previous Yukon Party, the forum did not meet regularly, and by the end of the mandate was basically defunct. The last meeting took place over two years ago, in September of 2009. However, the Premier committed last week to reintroduce the Yukon Forum, and this is a positive step.

When will the forum meet and what agenda items will the Premier be bringing to the table?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: Thank you for the question. Yes, indeed, re-institutionalizing the Yukon Forum is a priority that we laid out during the campaign and, in fact, was in the throne speech and again spoken in the House on a couple of occasions. We want to move forward with this. I think it is important. We all agree that there are a number of things that we need to do together, in terms of the economy, but also dealing with opportunities and dealing with priorities or issues that are out there.

We have received a letter from the Grand Chief of the Council of Yukon First Nations and we will be working toward

creating an agenda, not just based on what we want to talk about, but what everybody wants to talk about. We hope to be moving forward with that in the new year.

Mr. Elias: In the *Cooperation in Governance Act*, it says the purpose of the forum is to provide a means for the members to discuss issues of common concern and identify opportunities and common priorities for cooperative action. The Yukon Forum was envisioned as a roll-up-your-sleeves venue for the Government of Yukon and Yukon First Nation governments to discuss the big picture items facing the territory.

I want to advise the Premier that this is a two-way street, and it has not been for the previous Yukon Party government. One of the reasons the forum fell apart was the former Premier's insistence on controlling what items were put on the agenda. Will the Premier commit to jointly developing the agendas for these Yukon Forum meetings with Yukon First Nations?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: The short answer to that is yes. What we will be doing is looking for those things that, as the honourable member mentioned, we want to do together. We will get our senior people together to really lay the groundwork, so that when we do get together, as the elected officials, we will then be able to really constructively look at what the opportunities are and be able to move forward on those issues that are identified, not only by the government, but by the Council of Yukon First Nations and all the other First Nations.

Mr. Elias: I ask these questions because I want the Premier to be successful. I want the Yukon Forum to be successful, and if Yukon Forum is successful, then it bodes well for our whole territory. Then the intergovernmental forum could be successful, and that is with the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development — when he is at the table.

If we look at the issues that face us today in our territory, whether it be housing, women's issues, education, graduation rates, the strength of our economy, the strength and health of our environment — this is why I'm asking these questions, because it's going to take leadership, and there's nothing in this territory that we can't solve, in my mind, if we all push in the same direction to solve those issues.

Again, I'll ask a simple question: how does the Premier envision the Yukon Forum working for the long term under his watch, during his mandate and beyond?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: I think the foundation of this begins with communication, and I think that's something that is fundamental to see the Yukon Forum succeed. I guess maybe what I should do is really talk about some of the ways by which we do get together to talk, and that's through consultation. There are a number of different venues through which we do provide consultation. First we have a legal obligation for consultation, and that's through the *Umbrella Final Agreement* and through the treaties. We also consult based on statutes like the *Yukon Environmental and Socio-Economic Assessment Act*. There are obligations there.

Other agreements, such as the devolution transfer agreement — we also consult when it comes to points of common

law and we also consult for policy reasons too, which is really promoting and encouraging good governance.

I do believe that what we can do is find those issues of common interest, that we can move forward. As the member opposite suggested, on some occasions that will also mean taking this to the next level, and that would be bringing in the federal government as well, to work together on those issues that they truly need to partner with us — creating and setting in place the consistency of seeing this process move forward on a regular basis on the long term.

Question re: Dawson City daycare

Mr. Silver: In my Reply to the Speech from the Throne, I highlighted a community issue that needs to be resolved. The situation at the Little Blue Daycare in Dawson is dire. The Dawson daycare was resurrected by parents due to a need for a service, and it is running today on a daily basis. The main issues are staffing and funding uncertainty. They are being weighed down with paperwork and cannot compete with what other daycares in the community pay; not even close.

The Dawson daycare is one of two non-profit daycare societies in the Yukon, the other one being in Watson Lake. They are surviving on CDF grants because they have no core funding.

Is the government prepared to work with the daycare to ensure it can keep its doors open?

Hon. Mr. Graham: Currently this government funds daycares, according to the regulations, and we fund every daycare in the territory on an equitable basis according to those regulations; we'll continue to do so.

Mr. Silver: The situation at the Dawson daycare is definitely a unique one that doesn't really necessarily follow under the auspices of regular care for daycares.

The director from the Dawson daycare is receiving national awards, recognizing her contributions to education in Canada. Yet she is days away from being shut down because her territorial government seems to not feel that she is worth this extra money. If daycare were under the Education ministry, this would be a no-brainer. One dollar spent on education in preschool equates to \$8 spent on education in high schools. The daycare needs long-term commitment to funding. They should not be left to hope that a CDF application "may" be approved. This is the type of uncertainty that would mean the end to this facility.

What steps is the government prepared to take to ensure that the Dawson daycare remains open?

Hon. Mr. Graham: Mr. Speaker, once again I can only reiterate what I said previously. We fund all daycares; we have regulations in effect that determine how much each daycare is funded and we'll continue to follow those regulations.

Mr. Silver: Once again the main issues here are staffing and funding uncertainty. This pay that the minister speaks of is not enough money. The pay grid starts at \$12 an hour and, through local fundraising, they had to increase this to \$14 an hour locally. At \$14 an hour, the daycare is still unable to compete for workers and they only retain workers that they have because they believe in the director and her vision. Staff continuously gets poached from the other daycares because they

cannot compete. This facility is the only option for very many parents in my community and it is also in my consideration an "essential service."

Is the government prepared to enter into a long-term funding agreement which does not exist currently with the Dawson daycare to ensure that the facility continues to operate?

Hon. Mr. Graham: In the past few years, our government has increased direct operating grants to daycares by 40 percent. We've increased wages for daycare workers. We've also enhanced through Yukon College childcare training. We've enhanced the childcare subsidy and we've made a commitment in our own platform to continue doing that and to look at further enhancements in the future. That's what I can promise at this time.

Question re: Yukon oil and gas

Mr. Tredger: The other day this House heard from the minister that Energy, Mines and Resources is actively reviewing fracking as an unconventional form of national gas extraction in the Yukon.

Will the minister tell this House how long officials have been undertaking these reviews?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Again, as I indicated to the member the other day, it does detract from our ability to have a constructive debate in this Assembly if the member does not listen to the answers I give or read the Blues afterward to hear what was actually said. Again, what I pointed out to the Member for Mayo-Tatchun, the NDP energy critic, is in fact that with this area and all areas related to oil and gas development, the staff of Energy, Mines and Resources are involved in reviewing what is done in other jurisdictions, and being up to date on all matters related to oil and gas development.

Again, the member is fixated on something that at this point is very much a hypothetical question. There is no active proposal to do fracking in the Yukon.

Mr. Tredger: I am glad to hear that Energy, Mines and Resources is reviewing it because recently one company indicated that fracking is being considered as an option in the Yukon. It is our understanding that two other sites in the Yukon are also being considered by Energy, Mines and Resources for testing and exploration for the next year. The minister has stated that he will consider proposals from interested companies. Let's get ahead of the curve.

Does the minister intend to bring back to this House amendments to legislation to address fracking before any testing, exploration or development occurs in the Yukon?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Again, unfortunately, I am in a situation of having to repeat what I said before to the member. It would be much more helpful to debate in this Assembly if he listened to the answers I gave and reflected accurately on them. As I pointed out to the member opposite, in North America, over 60 percent of all oil wells and 85 percent of all gas wells are hydraulically fractured and percentages are increasing. Hydraulic fracturing was developed in the early 1950s and has been used worldwide since that time.

Again, I have to reiterate what I said to the member and to his colleague a number of times in this House. Officials from Energy, Mines and Resources are focused on — in the context

of reviewing best practices related to oil and gas — they are focused on understanding what is done in other jurisdictions and ensuring that our practices and anything that we allow in the Yukon put public health and the environment as paramount considerations.

Mr. Tredger: Recently, the US Environmental Protection Agency concluded that highly toxic and cancer-causing fluids from shale gas drilling most likely contaminated the shallow groundwater in Wyoming. This was despite assurances from the industry to the contrary.

I appreciate the minister's comments about the safety and well-being of Yukoners and our environment, but I have also heard him say that there is a possibility that they will consider the use of fracking in the Yukon. I ask again: will the minister commit here and now to a moratorium until full and adequate scientific studies and public consultation have been completed?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Again, I have to reiterate to the member opposite, as outlined in the energy strategy — I have a copy right here — available on-line. The Department of Energy, Mines and Resources staff of Oil and Gas Resources are doing exactly what was outlined as a priority action on page 19 of the energy strategy: "Update best practices for environmentally responsible oil and gas exploration and development."

Again, I point out to the member that he's dealing with a hypothetical situation. He is referring to a practice that — while he refers to specific cases of inappropriate practices that led to unacceptable situations — the actual practice of hydraulic fracturing is used in over 60 percent of all oil wells and 85 percent of all gas wells in North America.

So, again, for the member to point to examples of where regulations and good practices have not been followed, as the example of what he believes all cases of hydraulic fracturing will occur, is simply not an accurate view of the situation. But, again, for the member, there is no active proposal of the type he's referring to. Staff are reviewing practices in anticipation of possible future proposals.

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Point of order

Mr. Tredger: My question was whether or not the minister will institute a moratorium. I don't believe he answered that question.

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Speaker: Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, on the point of order.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: On the point of order, there is no point of order and I have answered the question.

Speaker's ruling

Speaker: There is no point of order.

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Speaker: There is no point of order.

Question re: Mining regulatory uncertainty

Mr. Tredger: In the Yukon Minerals Advisory Board's most recent report, the number one issue the board identified is a concern over the oversight and protection of water in the Yukon — namely, they wish to see the harmonization

of the Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Board and the Yukon Water Board.

In the Western Copper case, the judge ruled the Water Board is not required to issue a licence, even if the project gets a YESAA approval. The judge said the Water Board's role in licensing is different and more specialized than YESAB's. The Water Board is doing its job.

Will the minister clarify his position on the autonomy and independence of the Water Board with regard to the Yukon Minerals Advisory Board's request for harmonization?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Unfortunately, once again I have to point out to the NDP member that, if he listened to previous Question Periods — in this case, a response I gave to the Liberal Member for Klondike — his question was already answered. I pointed out there are some inconsistencies in process; there's a licensing process improvement team from the Water Board Secretariat, from YESAB and from the department, working on trying to improve the way they work together, while respecting — as I emphasized the other day, and will emphasize again — the independence of those regulatory processes.

Mr. Tredger: We hear words about harmonization and streamlining. These words are often buzzwords for reorganization and reduction of environmental oversight. The other day the minister referred to the activities of a licensing process improvement team. While we applaud efforts to ensure an efficient and clear process for applicants, we remain concerned that the government's improvement team may achieve harmonization reduction at the expense of environmental stewardship.

Will the minister clearly state that the improvement team's mandate is not to undermine the environmental oversight of water and mining activities?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: All I can urge the member to do is to read the Blues, read *Hansard* and what I actually said, because his questions are taking a very different spinoff into left field from what was said. What I would again point out, as I did the other day, is the licensing process improvement team is all about improving the way the separate processes work together to ensure they're assessing what needs to be assessed, and doing so in as straightforward and clear a manner as possible, working together in the assessment to better assess the project — again I emphasize, as I did the other day — while maintaining the independence of those separate regulatory processes.

As I've said a number of times to the member, first and foremost, protection of the environment and protection of public health and safety remain paramount considerations for this government.

Mr. Tredger: No more questions on that topic, Mr. Speaker.

Question re: Old Crow grief counselling

Mr. Elias: I have a question for the Health minister today. I just got back from my community of Old Crow. Unfortunately, I had to attend another funeral. In talking to many of my constituents over the years, we've lost dozens of people in our community. I was going to do this in person; however,

we're dealing with compound grief in Old Crow and many of the parents within the Chief Zzeh Gittlit School and community members are requesting the Minister of Health and Social Services' assistance in providing grief counselling for a longer period of time than what is present now.

I'll ask the Minister of Health and Social Services: will he be able to help my constituents in Old Crow in dealing with compound grief?

Hon. Mr. Graham: Mr. Speaker, I will have to take the question under advisement because I'm not certain what we are doing at the present time, but we're always open to suggestions and if the request can be accommodated, we would be happy to do so within reasonable bounds.

Mr. Elias: Again, over my time as MLA, we've lost dozens of people in our small community of Old Crow. It touches each and everyone's lives, right from the school kids to the elders. Whether it be cancer or suicides or motor vehicle accidents, you name it, it has happened at Old Crow. What has come to my attention is that I am being asked by the young people of my community. We've lost six, or maybe seven, very young people and it's affecting the whole community. There's not enough time actually for someone to grieve properly and so all the resources that we have in Old Crow are tapped out in dealing with this compound grief. So if there is anything that the minister can do to help our community immediately during this time of need — during the Christmas holidays — can the minister provide any assurance to my community that we can get help during the holidays?

Hon. Mr. Graham: Again, Mr. Speaker, I have every sympathy for the member opposite and will be happy to do what we can do. Again, I will have to take the question under advisement because I'm just not aware of department policies in this area.

Mr. Elias: I'll just give the minister a little bit of insight as to the commitment from our citizens of Old Crow.

I believe the Premier and some member of his Cabinet had the opportunity to visit Tlo-Kut. It is a traditional gathering place of the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation. They are building a number of tent frames and two large buildings to actually have an on-the-land treatment facility for the Vuntut Gwitchin citizens and any other Yukoners, for that matter, who wish to attend such programs. The building is almost complete and it is ready to be occupied. For any programs or services to help the community of Old Crow to deal with grieving, the facilities are already there.

The question for the Minister of Health and Social Services is this: how does he envision meeting our community of Old Crow half way, to deal with this important issue of not only grieving, but alcohol and drug addictions, and fulfilling the mandate of the people of Old Crow to utilize the facilities of Tlo-Kut healing centre?

Hon. Mr. Graham: This question seems to have expanded from a simple of question of grief counselling to a whole new area. I'll have to take it under advisement and come back with an answer in the future.

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

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 the 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: We will recess for 15 minutes, please.

Recess

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

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

Chair: The matter before the Committee is general debate on Vote 7, Economic Development.

Department of Economic Development

Hon. Mr. Dixon: In speaking to the fall 2011 supplementary budget on Economic Development, I'd like to say the Department of Economic Development envisions an economy driven by a healthy private sector that is expanding at a pace that maximizes opportunities for Yukon businesses and workers.

Our vision includes one that embraces Yukon First Nations as key partners in a thriving economy. It also envisions both regional and sectoral economic growth that diversifies our economy. The department continues to support all of Yukon's strategic sectors, including resource development, tourism, culture, film and sound, forestry, agriculture, outfitting and trapping, as well as its knowledge-based industries and value-added manufacturing. Maintaining the Yukon's extremely competitive general tax environment, which promotes investment in the territory, is also a contributing factor to our economic growth.

I rise today to introduce the supplementary budget, 2011-12, for the Department of Economic Development. This budget seeks approval for an overall increase in departmental operation and maintenance expenditures of \$1.943 million. On the capital side of the budget, we seek approval in the amount of \$373,000 in expenditures. Operation and maintenance recoveries in the amount of \$70,000 are also represented as revenue in the supplementary budget.

Madam Chair, the majority of the supplementary dollars signify revotes. A number of third party projects and initiatives funded through the department's programs were not completed

by 2010-11 fiscal year-end and, as such, were carried over to the 2011-12 fiscal year. There are a variety of projects within the Business and Industry Development branch's O&M supplementary, which is \$1.114 million, that have been carried over to 2011-12 as revotes. I will summarize a few of these projects.

The Yukon Cold Climate Innovation Centre is a partnership between applied researchers, industry and government, dedicated to developing, commercializing and exporting sustainable cold climate technologies. These revoted dollars will go toward the continuation of projects that focus on applied research around cold and varying climatic conditions in the Yukon.

The enterprise trade fund supports business development and market expansion of Yukon businesses. From its inception in 2004 to the fall of this year, over \$3.2 million to support 450 projects has been approved for Yukon businesses. These revoted dollars are third party projects that will ensure Yukon businesses achieve a competitive advantage in external markets.

The strategic industries development fund supports Yukon's commitment to foster the development of Yukon's strategic industries that have the potential to generate increases in Yukon's economic output. From its inception in the fall of this year, the fund has invested approximately \$6 million toward 97 projects. These revoted dollars will stimulate strategic projects in the natural resource, tourism and culture, research, innovation and commercialization sectors.

Also carried forward are projects funded by the Yukon Film and Sound Commission through five Yukon film incentive programs and through the Yukon sound recording program. These programs provide local artists with opportunities to develop their craft and encourage production companies from outside Yukon to film in the Yukon.

The community access program is a Government of Canada initiative, administered by Industry Canada, and managed by Yukon government. The program aims to provide Yukoners with affordable public access to the Internet and the skills required to use it effectively. For over 10 years and through 28 site locations, CAP has been facilitating this service to Yukoners who would not normally have computer access at work or at home. Revoted dollars of \$137,000 and new funding of \$70,000 will continue the department's work with stakeholder groups to ensure delivery of the service for 2011-12. The revenue allocated in the supplementary budget will show a recovery in the amount of \$70,000 to reflect the amount refunded to the Government of Yukon by Industry Canada for the continuation of this program.

The department's regional economic development branch manages two funding programs that have projects also carried forward into 2011-12. The Regional Economic Development fund was established to support an inclusive and comprehensive approach to developing regional economic interests. From its inception in 2004 to the fall of this year, the fund has invested approximately \$2.75 million in 135 Yukon projects.

The long-standing community development fund was designed to fund projects in advance to provide long-term, sus-

tainable economic or social benefits to Yukon communities. Since reinstatement of this program in 2003 to the fall of this year, approximately \$25.5 million has been invested in hundreds of community projects throughout the Yukon. The CDF has three funding categories and several application intake deadlines. For applicants seeking funding under the tier 3 category, which is funding greater than \$75,000, there is one intake deadline each year, falling in January. The funding decisions for this intake are made in April and, as such, appear in the supplementary budget as a revote. This program continues to grow in popularity, with a history of supporting a wide variety of community initiatives, groups and events.

Turning to the capital side of the budget, Corporate Services indicates an increase of \$8,000, which reflects technical equipment purchases not completed by fiscal year-end and also reflects the life cycle replacement of office workstations. The Business and Industry Development branch increase in the amount of \$365,000 also represents revotes.

Through the Government of Canada's community development trust fund, funding was transferred to the Whitehorse Chamber of Commerce to project-coordinate a business program that will assist individuals with the early planning stages of their business endeavours. This amount also reflects a funding transfer to Yukon College to develop a pilot project with curriculum design to assist Yukon entrepreneurs. The supplementary amount of \$205,000 will extend the completion of these two initiatives into 2011-12.

Revoted dollars in the amount of \$53,000, also under the Business and Industry Development branch, represents marketing finalization of the *Yukonic* webisode project, partially funded by the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency's community adjustment fund.

The film industry in the Yukon continues to be strong and these revoted dollars contributed to the production of 13 webisode commercials, entitled *Yukonic*, that advertised Yukon as a premier wilderness and snow film location. This is a great opportunity as Yukon has a great deal to offer this industry in terms of our dependable snow, spectacular wilderness, long daylight hours, and our unique settings and surroundings. The project provided employment and mentorship opportunities for approximately 40 members of Yukon's film industry.

Madam Chair, the objectives of the Department of Economic Development include the continued development of a sustainable and competitive Yukon economy that will enrich the quality of life for all Yukoners. The department continues to pursue economic initiatives with the shared vision of prosperity, partnership and innovation.

We are furthering the mandate and objectives of the Department of Economic Development through our quest for the 2011-12 supplementary budget. Our vision continues for Yukon's economic growth and prosperity for all Yukoners. The values, goals and objectives of the department continue to help build and diversify Yukon's economy in support of local, small- and medium-sized businesses, First Nation communities, and all Yukoners. Our vision for a continued, prosperous Yukon is outlined in our *Pathways to Prosperity* document that

demonstrates an economic growth perspective, building the Yukon economy for many years to come.

Thank you, Madam Chair, and I welcome questions from the opposition.

Ms. Stick: Madam Chair, this is my first attempt at reading these documents and trying to follow along. I thank the minister for the information he gave.

I do have some questions that I would like to ask — the first one being: with regard to the Yukon entrepreneur support program, and asking where I might find more information on that — I was looking on the Economic Development website and I wasn't able to find any.

I was also asking about this program because it notes that it was voted zero to date and I wondered when this plan came into being after the mains had been voted on — the extra \$205,000. The webisode is the same; it was voted to date as zero and has gone up, and \$53,000 was added to this, though it showed at the mains as zero; it was not included in anything.

So could I have some answers on that first? Then I have some other questions.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: In regard to the member opposite's question regarding the entrepreneurship program, it's a new program and one you may have seen advertised recently in local papers and on radio. It's a program hosted in conjunction with the college and it's a part of our overall general response and support for small and medium enterprises. We're committed to providing programs and services to support and stimulate the development of growth of Yukon small-and medium-sized enterprises.

Through the Department of Economic Development, we provide business development support, information and advisory services to Yukon small and medium enterprises through partnerships with non-governmental organizations, industry associations and through direct assistance. This is an example of that in dealing with the college.

We also provide a number of supports for diversifying our economy through the development of the film and sound industry, as the member had asked. She asked about the *Yukonic* films, I believe. That was an excellent program which offered the opportunity for local filmmakers to develop their own short webisodes and was a resounding success.

Ms. Stick: When talking about economic diversification, we'd like to raise in the House today the idea of making other educational investments in Yukon College to create a cutting-edge school of mines focusing in particular in areas of expertise working in northern climates, setting high environmental standards, and remediation at Faro.

How does the department look at expanding our educational system at the college to increase this economic development? And has there been consideration of possibly making use of Faro as a training centre for reclamation work and training?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: In regard to the member's observation about the opportunities at Yukon College, I would have to agree. There is a tremendous opportunity in Yukon for the advancement of the innovation, technology and commercialization sector. We do a number of initiatives with the college, and in conjunction with other organizations, to develop that sector.

The Yukon Cold Climate Innovation Centre is a tremendous example of that in developing what I think is an excellent growing sector of our economy on the research side. There are a number of opportunities through the college right now and through the Yukon Research Centre. There are a number of really world-class researchers doing work in the Yukon now as a result of our creation of the Yukon Research Centre. We are seeing some development in that industry.

In regard to the member's question about Faro, we take it under consideration. I haven't seen anything in terms of a formal proposal to use Faro as a schooling mechanism, but it is something we could consider. The Department of Economic Development has no plans regarding the Faro mine site and the remediation program at this time.

Ms. Stick: I also would like to ask a bit about CETA, or the trade agreement with the European Union. In the spring the Yukon government announced that Economic Development and Executive Council Office officials would be meeting in Ottawa in a negotiating session to take a position on the European Union with respect to the CETA free trade deal. Procurement — the buying of goods and services — is a key element in the tool kit of government. Europeans' biggest demand in the lead-up to negotiations was the access to procurements by municipal and subnational governments. There have been concerns raised from the Association of Yukon Communities and from the Union of British Columbia Municipalities.

The Union of British Columbia Municipalities passed a resolution that calls upon the Government of Canada to prevent the European Union access to municipal and subnational procurements. Can the minister share what the Yukon government's position would be? What are the issues and how has the public been involved in the shaping of the Yukon's negotiating position at the table?

Has the minister done any analysis of the potential impacts this proposed trade deal could have, and has this minister negotiated a clear and permanent exemption for our local governments here in the Yukon?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Canada and the European Union launched negotiations for a comprehensive economic trade agreement in Ottawa, October 19, 2009. I am happy to report that, for the first time, provinces and territories are part of the Canadian negotiating team and can attend negotiating sessions relating to issues within their jurisdictions.

Reducing international trade barriers benefits Canadian businesses, workers and consumers and contributes to a stronger economy for the benefit of all Canadians, so Yukon's position has always been that increased trade prosperity with the European Union is a positive step forward. At the same time, as a small developing economy, the Government of Yukon recognizes the need to assist our new businesses to grow and diversify. Ensuring that Yukon continues to have access to the necessary tools for achieving economic strength and diversification is an important objective for us in these negotiations.

I think that sums up our role in the negotiations. It's a positive one, and it's important that Yukon voices are heard at these

negotiating tables, and they are right now for the first time, Madam Chair.

Ms. Stick: I just have one general question for the Minister of Economic Development. It has to do with those numbers that we see in the “voted to date” where it indicates “zero”. According to the *Financial Administration Manual*, we can put down a number of \$1, but when it’s “zero”, it doesn’t show that there has been planning when the main estimates were done. My question to the minister would be: where’s the planning? Why do we see a number of zeros in this column and not clear planning, but more planning on an ad hoc basis?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Madam Chair, in regard to the zeros that the member opposite is seeing, this is not because of a lack of planning at all. The two projects I can speak about are the community development trust, which is the Yukon entrepreneurs program. You will see a zero there “voted to date”, and in the supplementary request there is \$205,000.

For the community adjustment fund, which is the Yukon film industry commercial development project, for the year 2011-12, voted to date, is zero, and the supplementary request is \$53,000. These are new programs. This isn’t a lack of planning. These are pilot programs, and they have been funded by other agencies up until now. That is why you see that reflected here.

Ms. Stick: When the minister says they have been funded by other agencies, I’m presuming he means within the government. I would be surprised if I heard that there was money being transferred between departments for different projects.

I’ll just again go back to the *Financial Administration Manual*, where we can put down \$1 when we know there’s a program coming. The \$1 vote is a constitutional practice and courtesy to the Legislature that encourages the accountability of the government Cabinet to the Legislative Assembly and the control of the Assembly over expenditures.

Can the minister please speak to this again?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: These are programs, for which we’ve applied for federal funding, so the \$1 mentioned is used in some cases — this is not one of those where we need to. They are programs that haven’t occurred yet, so we’re applying for federal funding.

Ms. Stick: If it’s money that we’re applying for — then we talked about the webisode program under the Yukon film industry commercial development. That’s a project that has already gone ahead and is completed, as far as I understand. The Yukon entrepreneur support program is one that is already occurring at the college, as I understand it.

So I don’t see anywhere where it says we’re applying for government funding for that. We do talk about recoveries — the community access program getting \$70,000, but that would not cover the \$257,000 that’s just in these two line items.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: These are revotes, so they are not new money. That’s money that was voted in the last appropriation and are now revoted because they weren’t spent. That’s because, in a number of cases, they just weren’t able to get the projects done within the fiscal year, so that money is being revoted. That’s why the member is noting that.

Ms. Stick: I’m going to move on to a few other questions I have here. The *Yukon Economic Outlook 2011* — the November update we recently had — announced an increase in GDP of three to four percent, population down slightly to 35,300, unemployment at 5.5 percent, exploration at \$300 million — double the record of \$157 million for 2010 — much of this due to the high mineral prices.

The concern is: how are we preparing for when this inevitable boom busts? What work does Economic Development do, in terms of insulating the Yukon’s economy from this bust cycle?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: That’s an excellent question by the member opposite. There are a number of ways that the Yukon government works to diversify our economy to ensure that we’re insulated from any fluctuations in commodity prices.

I would correct the member opposite in her synopsis of the economic outlook — the population of Yukon was actually up, not down. In fact, the number of employed actually is up at a record high and our population is increasing.

In terms of the programs we have to diversify the economy — we recognize, of course, that the backbone of the Yukon economy is in the natural resources sector, but creating and developing other industries in other sectors of the economy is paramount for Yukon government and the Department of Economic Development.

As I mentioned in my speech earlier, there are a number of sectors of the economy that we assist and develop. We do that through the strategic industries development program, which supports government’s commitment to foster the development of Yukon’s strategic industries that have the potential to generate increases in the Yukon’s economic output. Government of Yukon continues to work collaboratively with industry to assess the state of the forestry sector and to identify future projects that encourage development and pursuit of opportunities that stimulate economic growth and benefits for Yukoners.

The Department of Economic Development continues to work with industry stakeholders and the Department of Tourism and Culture to identify opportunities and encourage growth in Yukon’s tourism industry and to develop new initiatives that include strategy development, business planning, growing revenues and enhancing export readiness.

Government of Yukon is committed to supporting Yukon’s research, innovation and commercialization sector, as I mentioned earlier, which is an area of prime strategic importance to the Yukon’s economy. The goal of Yukon’s research, innovation and commercialization sector is to enhance Yukon’s overall economic self-sufficiency.

Of course, the Film and Sound Commission continues to promote and support programs that were created following extensive consultation with the local and national film and sound industries. These programs provide local artists with opportunities to develop their craft, along with encouraging production companies from outside Yukon to film in Yukon, thereby promoting tourism and job opportunities for Yukon.

In the more general sense, I would say that the document *Pathways to Prosperity* really outlines, in a more fulsome manner, the ways that the government envisions diversifying our

economy while encouraging the development of wealth-generating industries, promoting business opportunities and increasing benefits to Yukon — while encouraging the development of those enabling factors that allow the economy to succeed.

I would encourage the member opposite to review the *Pathways to Prosperity* document if she hasn't already, as that outlines in much greater detail some of the efforts around economic diversification and our overall plan for strengthening Yukon's economy.

Ms. Stick: I have another question, and I thank the minister for that answer. We are all happy when we can see our artists being able to practise their art of music, film, fine arts, whatever, in the Yukon.

My next question has to do with the Yukon Gold Mining Alliance. Economic Development has given contributions to the Yukon Gold Mining Alliance, which is a group that is made up of companies active in mining and exploration in the Yukon.

Can the minister please tell us: what is the amount that the Yukon government has funded this group, and what can the tax payers expect to receive for this funding to this industry group?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: The Yukon Gold Mining Alliance is an excellent collaboration between Yukon government and industry. It's supported by Economic Development. It's an industry-led group with a focus on attracting mining investment to Yukon. Raising awareness of opportunities in Yukon's mining sector is essential to attracting investment, and the Government of Yukon welcomes the Yukon Gold Mining Alliance's efforts. Economic Development continues to work cooperatively with industry groups and the mining industry to market Yukon precious metals and base metal properties as attractive investment opportunities.

Another noteworthy feature of the Yukon Gold Mining Alliance is that all its industry components, all the companies that are a part of it have a common view of their environmental and social responsibilities to the territory. That's a requirement to join the alliance: meeting a standard of environmental practice, labour relations and general social relationships with Yukoners. It is an excellent, very progressive group, and one that I am happy to work with as Minister of Economic Development. This industry thrives on attracting investment to the territory, and that is what this industry-led group does. They bring in a significant amount of investment to the territory, which is important for our natural resources sector, and as I said, that is an important sector of our economy.

Ms. Stick: The business nominee program is one that is handled by Economic Development, whereby foreign investors with capital can come to the Yukon and establish a business or invest in a business. I'm wondering if the minister can tell us how many applications have been made what industries in this current year.

I would also like to make mention of the fact that, in the spring of 2011, it was announced by the government that there would be an internal review of this business nominee program. Can the minister tell us where that internal review is and will there be a public report the minister can table for us?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Under the business incentive program, the Government of Yukon — sorry about that.

Yes, of course the Department of Economic Development administers the business nominee program, which accelerates the immigration process for qualified business people, providing Yukon with the ability to nominate potential immigrants to Citizenship and Immigration Canada.

The business nominee program is to strategically increase business expertise and investment in the Yukon by providing the opportunity for non-Canadian citizens or permanent residents to invest in Yukon's economy and immigrate to Yukon. The business nominee program allows Yukon to recruit and nominate qualified business people from around the world, who have the intent and ability to move to Yukon, establish, purchase or become partners in a business.

So far the business nominee program has brought more than \$4.5 million in investment capital to Yukon since its inception in 2001. Ninety-nine business applications have been received to date; 32 of those were recommended for work permits; 20 were nominated for permanent residency; 13 of those were approved by Citizenship and Immigration Canada; and of those approved, a total of 10 plans have been implemented.

In terms of specific applications, there's some confidentiality around those but I would be happy to report back at a later date with a more fulsome accounting of the numbers. That's all I have right here now, Madam Chair.

Ms. Stick: I appreciate the clear answer on that question but, when listening to the minister, I missed the one piece from the previous question, with regard to the Yukon Gold Mining Alliance. What I didn't hear back from the minister on that question was the amount that Yukon government gave this group.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: In 2009-10, YGMA received \$38,250 in funding from the strategic industries development fund to support its initial marketing effort and formal launch of YGMA at the PDAC conference — Prospectors and Developers Association of Canada — in March 2010. In 2010-11, the ETF fund approved \$26,000 to support a tour of an investment marketing program and \$3,000 to attend the Prospectors and Developers Association of Canada conference. In 2010-11, the strategic industries fund approved \$72,250 for a sales call campaign. The alliance has also been approved for \$77,000 from the strategic industries fund for an investment attraction marketing campaign in 2011. Those are the funds that are received to date by the YGMA.

Mr. Silver: I'd like to begin by first congratulating the Hon. Member for Copperbelt North for his appointment to the ministerial position. I look forward to working with him in the future.

It was mentioned in the honourable member's address that First Nation representation is very important to this ministry. I also can quote from the previous minister's statement from the Department of Economic Development's strategic plan for 2010-13, that one of the goals was increasing the benefits Yukoners, businesses, First Nations and communities receive from economic projects and activities.

What has been accomplished in regard to the northern economic development accord? Has your government been meeting the objectives that have been set out from this accord from the First Nation governments that are involved?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Madam Chair, we have an ongoing relationship with First Nations governments and development corporations, and we have had a number of success stories regarding First Nation economic development in the territory. The Yukon government's support of First Nation economic development spans a range of activities from business planning to project evaluation and includes the following: building capable governance institutions and capacity of development; developing strategic direction through strategic planning and economic development planning; developing policies that support economic development; identifying and selecting worthwhile projects; developing feasibility studies and business plans; and establishing business ventures.

Economic Development supports aboriginal businesses by funding loan and microloan programs, which are managed by Yukon's aboriginal capital corporation, Dana Naye Ventures. Economic Development contributes to regional economic development planning, as outlined in chapter 22 of the *Umbrella Final Agreement*. As key players in the economy, Yukon First Nations have a positive impact on the economic direction and health of the territory. They have access to opportunities and they have the potential to take advantage of opportunities. They also have the ability to take a financial position on projects that interest them.

While the Regional Economic Development branch is the main departmental contact for First Nations, they are encouraged to apply for all departmental programs and services. In terms of some specific examples, specific businesses funded by the department include the following: with the Faro mine closure project, as discussed previously with the Member for Riverdale South, the department is working with the three affected First Nations to secure potential economic benefits from the mine closure, including the upcoming maintenance contract.

With the Ross River Development Corporation, the department assisted with corporate realignment, which enabled the corporation to maximize the benefits from mining sector activities.

With the Liard First Nation Development Corporation, the department is assisting them with the creation of Kaska Energy, which will enable the Kaska Nation to explore potential energy-producing opportunities in the Kaska traditional territory. With the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations, the department provided funding for an economic development workshop, which was used as a starting point to develop a new economic strategy for the First Nation.

For the Teslin Tlingit Council, the department provided assistance with phase 1 of the "Reviving Our Economy" project, which focused on formalizing a multi-year economic development strategy for that First Nation. With the Kluane First Nation, the department is assisting the First Nation in developing an economic strategic plan. With the Na Cho Nyäk Dun, the department provided financial assistance to the First Nation to

help with the involvement and participation in the Mayo B project, which has been an economic boom for the territory. This funding was to hire a coordinator to manage overall involvement in the project, assist NND in the creation of an investment agreement with Yukon Energy Corporation for the Mayo B project and assist NND with the identification of businesses and employment opportunities during the construction of the Mayo B project.

The department works to ensure that other departments, such as Highways and Public Works, Executive Council Office, Energy, Mines and Resources and Tourism and Culture, have an opportunity to engage with First Nations in specific projects that directly support First Nation economic development.

We are working collaboratively with First Nations on economic development. In regard to the north Yukon economic development accord, Economic Development works with the accord and individual members on their own interests. This relationship continues to evolve and we have a collaborative working relationship with First Nations.

It's still consistent with the original intent of that accord.

Mr. Silver: I'm happy to hear that such initiatives in Economic Development are actually going forward and I'm relieved that the minister's department is actually working with the communities and with the First Nations. As a point of procedure, I would have liked to have had a financial debriefing. There are an awful lot of new members to the House, and as I understand, there are also new methods of accounting going on in the Legislative Assembly. I know that because of the steep learning curve — the steep learning curve that we're all facing here — I think a lot of us are going to be looking back in a couple months and realizing there are probably some positions and points that we should have brought up — but without these briefings, it's really hard to kind of go forward.

With regard to economic development and growth in rural communities, I feel the ministry could play a much larger role in the promoting of economic development through partnerships with local not-for-profits, like the Klondike Visitors Association and also with other agencies like the Klondike Development Organization. I would like to hear from the minister how his department works with the Klondike Visitors Association in my community of Dawson.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: There are a number of initiatives the Department of Economic Development has in the Klondike region and in the north Yukon in general. Through the Regional Economic Development branch of the department, there is an individual assigned to the north Yukon, which includes Dawson, of course, and the Klondike region. Also, there is the north Yukon business advisory outreach. The department delivers the north Yukon business advisory outreach program through a contract in three communities — Old Crow, Dawson and Mayo. The program provides mentorship and guidance in business planning, business development, marketing strategies and other related business activities to new and experienced entrepreneurs. Approximately 100 businesses have accessed the program in the region so far. The department initiated business counselling outreach services in north Yukon in July 2005,

as a result of the accord mentioned earlier, which was signed by the Government of Yukon and First Nations in July of 2004.

The Department of Economic Development issued a request for proposals to provide the north Yukon business advisory outreach services and Maritime Consulting, which is run by a fellow Xaverian secured the current three-year contract in June of 2011, which expires on March 31 of 2014.

The objective is to improve the viability and profitability of existing businesses in the Klondike region and north Yukon and to encourage and facilitate new business starts or expansion of existing businesses. This service includes instruction and guidance in areas of business planning and business development; business counselling, including business planning, business financial planning and business management; assistance in developing business plans, marketing plans, market research, marketing identifying sources of business financing and preparation and presentation of loan or funding applications to institutions or investors.

Services will be provided in person and on-site in the communities. Provision of services are coordinated and delivered through the First Nation and municipal government offices in Old Crow, Dawson and Mayo. Communities are visited once a month, at a minimum, based on demand and based on requests by local businesses. Services are also provided to other communities along the northern corridor in an on-demand basis.

With regard to the specific question about the Klondike Visitors Association, I believe the Department of Tourism and Culture does some more work, but I don't have that information; I only have what the Department of Economic Development undertakes.

Mr. Silver: I appreciate the answer from the honourable member. I asked the question because the Klondike Visitors Association, as an ideology, is an excellent source of knowledge and experience and direction for the ministry of Economic Development. It's just too bad that they have been scaled back to a position where they are basically just running a casino now. With a name like the Klondike Visitors Association, you can see how a lot of information can be shared with the world of tourism through Economic Development for a lot of smaller groups that want to get involved in that industry. However, I will approach that in other ministries at a later time.

I have a couple of specific questions about the actual numbers. The department is listed as a funder for the Yukon Mine Training Association. I was wondering if this particular ministry's commitment will continue. Could the minister commit to funding for the Yukon Mine Training Association through this department in the spring budget?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: The Yukon mine training program referred to by the member had been tapped into federal funding, which, we understand, they are reviewing at this point. This government is focused on providing mine training in collaboration with Yukon College and in preparation of the possibility of a Yukon school of mining.

There are a number of training opportunities for those interested in getting into the mining industry, and we look for-

ward to working with those, both through Yukon College and with the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources.

Mr. Silver: Madam Chair, I'm not going to make any assumptions here, so I will ask the question once again, specifically, and if I don't get an answer, we can always move on. Specifically, I was wondering if there could be a statement — from this particular minister for this particular ministry — of their commitment to continue funding to the organization mentioned.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: What I can say is that we are committed to training for employment in the mining sector. The labour market programs and services administered by the Advanced Education branch of the Minister of Education's department are not directly involved with mine training; however, labour market programs and services do fund several programs that support mining training and employment in the territory. We are committed to ensuring that Yukoners have the opportunity to get the training they need to participate in our growing economy.

Mr. Silver: I just have a couple of line items I would like to go over. They have been mentioned also by the Official Opposition. On page 3-3, we are talking about the venture loan guarantee program, and also the Yukon film industry commercial development project. The minister did reply that these are new, so therefore that is why they are in the column that they are. Can we get some information as to what they are particularly?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: I will start with the venture loan guarantee program. The Yukon venture loan guarantee program is one of several programs offered by Economic Development to support small businesses. The program helps local businesses secure commercial financing by guaranteeing a portion of the loan. The Yukon venture loan guarantee program supports the development of new products or services for companies with gross revenues under \$5 million and with fewer than 100 employees.

Maximum total loan guarantee exposure at one time is \$3 million and maximum guarantee per loan is \$100,000. The venture loan guarantee represents a guarantee to a financial institution to provide greater certainty to a portion of the financing. The Government of Yukon repays 65 percent of the net loss on the outstanding principal amount of the venture loan. This program has had limited uptake since its inception, with only 14 businesses approved under the program. The program was launched in the 1990s.

In terms of the community adjustment fund, this is a revote to support Yukon's commitment toward this project, to create 13 one-minute film commercials — as I mentioned before, the *Yukonic* webisodes — and 80 percent of that was funded by the federal government.

Mr. Silver: Just one last question — this summer, Dawson City had the number one TV show from the Discovery Channel in our community. I was wondering if Economic Development put any money toward commercials on their particular channel, or if they were looking at any type of advertising for the gold rush?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: We didn't host any commercials on that particular program, but it was eligible for a number of funding programs I outlined before in the Film and Sound Commission, and it did access some of those. Government certainly played a role in bringing that feature here. As the member opposite indicated, it did have an impact on the local economy, and a positive one at that.

To answer the member opposite's question, we didn't run any commercials on that program, but we did provide funding and support through the programs and funds mentioned previously.

Mr. Elias: Congratulations to the Member for Copperbelt North on receiving the confidence of the Premier to help lead the territory in the Department of Economic Development. I'm going to bring up a topic that I think is an opportunity, and I have advocated for this type of economic diversification.

It deals with expanding our oldest industry in the territory, and that is trapping. I do recognize that the minister is responsible for the Department of Environment and the Department of Economic Development, and I think that is going to bode well for expanding on the issue that I am about to bring up. I think that if the minister could work with his respective portfolios, as well as with the Minister of Education to expand on developing the trapping industry in the territory to the point where we can increase the amount of Yukoners, especially youth, troubled youth — programs in the education system — as well as our existing trappers, to use their existing traplines and group trapping areas to get out on the land with support from the Department of Economic Development, the Department of Environment and the Department of Education to develop programs that are similar to those in northern Ontario — the genuine Mackenzie Valley furs marketing program. The minister could develop a trapper education certification that's offered in all Yukon schools with the help of community members and experienced trappers out there in all of the communities.

The minister could also advocate for a hunter education and ethics development program to be delivered in all Yukon schools. I see a lot of success coming out of the land-based experiential learning program that has been developed in partnership with the Department of Education and is being implemented in Old Crow right now. I see a lot of good coming out of that program where students from K to grade 9 go out on the land and learn, in conjunction with the values that we do have in and around Old Crow — in terms of the land, the water, the wildlife, the language and various organizations that live in the community — that includes all federal departments, including the RCMP, Parks Canada, Yukon territorial government biologists, Porcupine Caribou Management Board representatives; obviously the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation — they all come together and they implement this program to achieve educational outcomes.

When I see those children from the Chief Zzeh Gittlit School participate in this program, they not only meet the educational requirements, but they exceed them. I will just give you one example: the coordinators of the program take them out trapping, for instance. They trap muskrats and they learn the traditional harvesting methods; they learn the respect; they

learn the cultural traditions; they learn the language associated with trapping. They then bring them back to the classroom, which is out on the land, and they dissect the muskrats. They learn biology; they learn science; and they have microscopes and they learn that aspect of education. Not only do they learn biology, living and travelling out on the land, and the value of fur, but they also achieve the educational outcomes, like I said.

I think the minister is in a great position to develop this type of economy in our territory to benefit all citizens who want to participate. I think that this is something that could be fleshed out, discussed more and debated more, but I think that this is good because if we have more of our territory's citizens out on the land, the more eyes and ears you have, and people who can say this is an aspect of our economy that's important. It's the oldest industry in the territory. We're supporting it and here are the outcomes.

I'm willing to bet that if this type of economic diversification were implemented in our territory, it would be an excellent initiative. So I encourage the minister to take a look at this and I'm asking him whether or not he would look into this and develop this further through the internal government processes. That's something that I've been advocating over the years, and I'd like to hear some of the minister's response to this idea.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: The issue of trapping in Yukon — it's an important one and the member has touched on this a little bit. It's one of Yukon's oldest industries, if not the oldest industry. It's one that has seen some attention in the past. There are a number of initiatives undertaken through the Department of Environment, which isn't what we're debating today, but I will mention that the Department of Environment does financially support the Yukon Trappers Association, I believe — off the top of my head — to the tune of \$35,000 annually. The Department of Environment also offers trapper training and certification programs in the communities, and those programs that are well subscribed.

The importance of trapping is something that has been brought up to me in the past, both from RRCs as well as the Fish and Wildlife Management Board, but they recognize as well that there are challenges in that industry. I would say in terms of the educational components of trapping, it's something I can bring up with the Minister of Education certainly. Like I say, I can commit to continuing to work on the file, both as minister responsible for Economic Development and Environment. Perhaps this will come up again in the Environment debate, but as I said before, we do provide financial support to the Yukon Trappers Association to maintain their association and maintain an office here in Whitehorse. I look forward to working with my colleagues on this, both in Education and with the Minister of Environment. We've got a tremendous relationship and I look forward to working with them on that file.

Mr. Elias: It's encouraging to hear some openness to some fresh new ideas from the minister, and I appreciate that. Earlier on in the general debate in the Department of Economic Development, I had to step out to deal with some case files, but it is in regard to the investments that have been sought by the department in China.

I recognize that over the years there have been several business trips to China to seek investment. I have a couple of questions here.

Can the minister explain, or tell the House, what the return on investment would be throughout the territory in direct relation to those trips to China? Considering other emerging markets in the world, one that seems to be obvious to me seems to be India. India seems to be becoming a very fast-growing economy, and I was wondering if the minister was planning to seek any investments from India? If he could elaborate on those two questions, that would be great.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Yukon is committed to encouraging private sector growth, and one priority strategy for this is the development of wealth-generated activities in the natural resources sector.

Development of Yukon's resource base requires partners from outside our borders, and attracting foreign direct investment is critical to the progress.

Continuing relationship-building work, such as travel to Asian regions, as well as other regions in the world — we've travelled to eastern Canada in the past, as well as the eastern United States, to access financial markets there.

Hosting in-bound investors in Yukon and attending trade shows have led to significant investments by Asian companies in Yukon-based projects, as well as other regions of the world in terms of investment in Yukon.

Specific to the question about the outcomes of these trips, seven significant deals between Yukon-based companies and Asian investors have been announced since 2007, including Yukon Nevada Gold Corporation and China-based Northwest Non-Ferrous International Investment Co. Ltd., completing a \$3-million agreement to form Yukon-Shaanxi Mining Co., a new Canadian company that will explore for and develop mineral resources in Yukon.

In September 2009, Korea Zinc Co., through its wholly owned subsidiary, Pan Pacific Metal Mining Corporation, purchased shares and warrants from Selwyn Resources, valued at approximately \$5 million.

In October 2009, China Mining Resources Group purchased approximately 4.6 percent of the shares of Selwyn Resources, representing an investment in the company of more than \$6 million.

In December 2010, New Pacific Metals Corporation completed the acquisition of 100-percent interest in Tagish Lake Gold Corporation, and is operating as a wholly owned subsidiary of New Pacific.

Selwyn Resources and Yunnan Chihong Zinc and Germanium Co. Ltd. recently completed a \$100-million joint venture transaction to advance the Yukon Selwyn project to bankable feasibility, and, if warranted, to production.

Yukon Zinc's Wolverine project is being purchased by the Jinduicheng Molybdenum Group and Northwest Non-Ferrous International Investment Co. Ltd. for approximately \$101 million.

Madam Chair, in general, we recognize that the Yukon is a small jurisdiction, so we have to look outside Yukon's borders for support from investors if we want our projects to advance.

We operate on a number of fronts and look at a number of regions throughout the world for financing. The regions we typically target are driven by requests from industry.

If industry is interested in attracting investment from other regions, we'd be willing to work with them. There are a number of potential regions in the world we'll look to in the future, including within our own borders in Canada — looking to eastern Canada for investment, looking to the eastern United States and the financial sector there, as well as looking to Europe. The member opposite mentioned India. These are all possibilities, and if there's the desire from industry to attend conferences or attract investment from those regions, we'd be willing to work with them.

At PDAC last year, the Prospectors and Developers Association of Canada, we met with a number of countries and discussed investment there, as well. There's really an attempt to get a diversified investment portfolio, in terms of the regions and countries that invest in the Yukon. I hope that answers the member opposite's question.

Mr. Elias: I thank the minister for that response. I just have one more question, and it's in regard to value-added manufacturing in the territory. I wanted to ask the minister what his department is doing, if anything, in terms of developing the climate in the territory to maximize the benefit of the raw materials that are taken out of the ground in the territory.

It would bode well for the industry to try to maximize the benefits and keep as many jobs and economic benefits within the territory. I'll just use one example. In other jurisdictions, they're developing the ore to make copper wire, and then selling the copper wire or the sheets of copper, and using that as a value-added industry for economic development purposes and longevity.

Could the minister tell the House if he's aware if Energy, Mines and Resources is expanding that value-added industry through Economic Development?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: There is certainly an opportunity in the Yukon to increase our value-added manufacturing, relative to mining. It is an industry that requires a significant amount of labour, as well as significant resources in energy. It's an issue that permeates a number of sectors of the economy — our need for energy. It's something that we've addressed through our energy strategy. I know the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources could probably speak at greater length about the prospects of energy developments in the Yukon.

In terms of the labour file, the kind of value-added manufacturing the member's talking about, I think, is along the lines of creating smelters or other such developments. As I said, those require significant pools of labour and significant inputs of energy. It's something that we're interested in and we do want to see develop, but it's something that's a little further down the road than we are right now.

The *Pathways to Prosperity* document does lay out the goal of trying to ensure that the development of our natural resources does create, improve and enhance other sectors of the economy — like small businesses and medium-size enterprises — and ensuring they can benefit from the development of those

natural resources and ensuring that they are able to enjoy the benefit of the economic strength of that sector.

It's something we're interested in and something we're working on, and we look forward to continuing to work on in the future.

In terms of a smelter or other value-added manufacturing, it is something that needs to be proponent-driven. It can't be driven by the government. It is something that you have to have an interested proponent to advance. We are open to hear from the private sector if they have interest in this and remain vigilant in working on this file.

Ms. Stick: I have one more question. It is with regard to a question that the third party brought up with regard to investment from China.

Over the last number of years there have certainly been many trips, not just to China but to Japan and South Korea, by this government. I am just wondering if those costs are actually in the Economic Development budget. More importantly, to me anyway, is: are we communicating with these companies that have invested in the Yukon, specifically in the mining industry, that they have a clear understanding of our workplace safety standards and our human rights for workers standards? We've heard of complaints and suspicions from some people about workers possibly not being treated properly. I just wondered if there is a communication strategy with these companies coming in to ensure that their workers, who could possibly be coming from China, have the same rights and the same protections?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Projects, regardless of where they're financed, are held to the same standard, regardless of who finances them or who develops them. We have a vigilant Yukon Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board, which ensures that worker safety is held paramount. In terms of environmental sustainability, our environmental regime and regulatory regime apply to everyone. I have faith in those regimes and the Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board to ensure that workers' safety is held at a priority.

The previous government did a successful job in attracting investment from regions around the world and, as a result, we have a number of projects that have been advanced. So it has been a positive development for Yukon's economy.

Chair: Is there any further debate?

Seeing no further debate, we are going to proceed with line-by-line of Vote 7, Economic Development.

On Operation and Maintenance Expenditures

On Business and Industry Development

Business and Industry Development in the amount of \$1,184,000 agreed to

On Regional Economic Development

Regional Economic Development in the amount of \$759,000 agreed to

Total Operation and Maintenance Expenditures in the amount of \$1,943,000 agreed to

On Capital Expenditures

On Corporate Services

On Information Technology Equipment and Systems

Information Technology Equipment and Systems in the amount of \$8,000 agreed to

On Business and Industry Development

On Dana Naye Ventures Business Development Program

Mr. Silver: Could I get a breakdown on this line item, please?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: The Dana Naye Ventures business development program is \$49,000, and is an increased expenditure under the business development program offset by increased recoveries to Yukon.

Dana Naye Ventures Business Development Program in the amount of \$49,000 agreed to

On Venture Loan Guarantee Program

Venture Loan Guarantee Program in the amount of \$58,000 agreed to

On Community Development Trust — Yukon Entrepreneur Support Program

Ms. Moorcroft: I note in the main estimates there was no line item for this amount. There was a zero, and now there is a \$205,000 expenditure. Can the minister explain what this line item is for and why there were no provisions made in a line item in the main budget?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: It's a revote. It's money that wasn't expended in 2010-11, and is now being revoted. It's a budget procedure.

Ms. Moorcroft: And what will these expenditures go toward when they're revoted?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Training and assistance to businesses or individuals in the early planning stages of their business.

Chair: Is there any further debate?

Community Development Trust — Yukon Entrepreneur Support Program in the amount of \$205,000 agreed to

On Community Adjustment Fund — Yukon Film Industry Commercial Development Project

Ms. Moorcroft: Again, I would like to ask if we could get an explanation of why there were no funds in the main estimates for this and what this project is for?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: This too is a revote, so it's money from 2010-11 that wasn't expended within the period. It's now being revoted to support Yukon's commitment toward this project, which is the Yukon film industry's commercial development project, to create 13 one-minute film commercials — the *Yukonic* webisodes, as they're called. I would note that 80 per cent of this funding is from the federal government.

Ms. Moorcroft: Well, can the minister explain why there was no provision for a revote in the main estimates and the re-vote is now coming forward in the supplementary budget?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: As I said, this is 2010-11 money that wasn't expended, so it's required to have a revote. Revotes typically come in a supplementary budget, and I believe it's quite standard procedure.

Community Adjustment Fund — Yukon Film Industry Commercial Development Project in the amount of nil cleared

Total Capital Expenditures in the amount of \$373,000 agreed to

Department of Economic Development agreed to

Chair: We're moving on to Vote 51, Department of Community Services. The minister has requested a five-minute recess.

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

Recess

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

Department of Community Services

Chair: The matter before the Committee is general debate on Vote 51, Community Services.

Hon. Ms. Taylor: I'd first like to thank the House for the opportunity to provide an update on our department's supplementary budget for 2011-12. The supplementary estimates that are before us consist of a \$4.2-million increase in operation and maintenance expenditures and a reduction of just under \$10 million in capital expenditures. The department's overall revenue and recovery target has decreased, as well, in this supplementary budget by some \$6 million, as well. The department continues to work to achieve goals set out in our 2011-12 departmental plan. We look forward to carrying forward our success into the next fiscal year.

Community Services is a department that works hard to deliver programs and services to Yukon and its communities. I would like to extend a heartfelt thanks to each of our employees and to the many volunteers from all across the territory for their ongoing commitment to service excellence. The department believes in vibrant, healthy and sustainable Yukon communities. I can say wholeheartedly that I'm very proud to represent the department as we strive to bring long-term benefits to our territory.

Community Services promotes sustainable and healthy communities by supporting local governments, community organizations and the volunteer sector. Housed within this supplementary is just over \$300,000 in support of the implementation of recommendations that have come forward under the "Our Towns, Our Future" review process. Of course, our government remains very much committed to carrying through with the initiatives within that particular review and believes in strengthening local governments and long-term municipal sustainability. \$113,000 is also included under this supplementary budget to follow through with the recommendation from "Our Towns, Our Future" to develop an asset management system, for example, for each of the unincorporated Yukon communities as well as municipal governments throughout the territory.

Community Services, as we have already heard, is committed to protecting public safety through emergency medical services, wildland fire management, emergency measures and structural fire protection. Housed within this supplementary budget is approximately just over \$1 million in supplementary funding for flood preparation, prevention and mitigation measures in response to the Mayo flooding. A large portion of these dollars is expected to be recoverable from Canada's disaster relief funding. Specifically, approximately \$250,000 is identified for flood prevention measures, including sandbags, super

bags, pumps, other appropriate preparedness measures and so forth.

Of course, we also have dollars, which accounts for costs associated with remediation after flooding in order to minimize environmental effects. Flood events are unforeseen and extraordinary in winter in the Yukon; however, this additional funding ensures that we are able to respond to winter flooding to the best of our ability so that impacts to our respective towns and citizens throughout the territory are minimal.

Within this supplementary budget, we are also seeking \$186,000 for reviewing Yukon's search and rescue program. This investment in our volunteers brings a peace of mind and is also 100 percent recoverable from Canada. \$100,000 is also identified under the fire marshal's office for equipment repairs, certifications and safety inspections.

In recent years, the department has undertaken to improve Yukon's emergency medical services. With challenges come great opportunities. The Department of Community Services is striving for service excellence and remains committed to patient care.

If a person requires medical help, our professional paramedics, nurses and personnel will be there to assist and provide the best care possible. A comprehensive business plan is helping to provide a renewed strategic direction, and we're very confident in the entire team as we move to enhance the service in a cost-effective manner.

At an operational level, EMS has implemented new performance indicators. We're moving on the recommendations stemming from the 2010-11 audit report that took place. We're refining budget planning and accountability processes, while also balancing operational efficiencies.

The service is directing efforts toward staffing and recruitment plans and aims to position our emergency medical services for long-term success and service excellence. The caring men and women in the service do a tremendous job in protecting our communities, and I am very confident that we are on the right track and that we are moving forward together in this regard.

Our supplementary budget identifies \$238,000 toward enhancing 24/7 emergency medical services coverage in two of our largest communities outside of Whitehorse: Watson Lake and Dawson City.

An additional \$402,000 is identified for personnel expenses necessary for the delivery of this particular service. In terms of capital expenditures we have within the supplementary budget identified a \$285,000 revote for the completion of the conceptual design for the second ambulance station in Whitehorse. The detailed design for the facility has been completed, and we're expecting to go out for a construction tender shortly. In fact, I believe it already has, if I'm not mistaken. What this means is that progress continues toward a new ambulance station at the top of the Two Mile Hill, of which the department anticipates completion next year, or in 2012-13.

The second ambulance station will provide a much-needed expansion space for EMS in Whitehorse, and is strategically located to reduce response times across the city. The project demonstrates our commitment to excellence in EMS to enhance

services provided to all respective communities, particularly Copper Ridge, Granger, McIntyre, Ingram, Arkell, and neighbourhoods along the Alaska Highway, while also looking to meet our future needs of an expanding population and new developments, such as Whistle Bend.

Community Services is committed to providing emergency responders with the facilities, infrastructure, equipment and training they need to do their jobs to the best of their abilities and provide care for Yukoners. Community Services is very committed to health and safety measures for citizens, and also for our staff. We are requesting additional monies to complete external safety audits for the remaining programs under the Department of Community Services, a department that is fully committed to occupational health and safety and providing safe and healthy workplaces.

Under wildland fire management, we are looking for \$200,000 in additional funds to offset increases in aviation fuel system planning. Additional dollars are identified for septic tank and water system installation at a new fire operations trailer in Carmacks and, given the rising cost of fuel in general, a total of \$113,000 has been added to this supplementary budget to offset costs across the department for vehicle, aircraft and heating fuel.

2012 is looking to be yet another exciting year for sport and recreation in the territory. Not only is our government continuing to support sport governing bodies, athletes, recreation leaders and programs and more, but we're also very proud to support Yukon's participation in the year's major games. The budget identifies \$61,000 for participant costs for the western Canada summer games, which is fully recoverable, and an additional \$150,000 to support Team Yukon's participation in the 2012 Arctic Winter Games.

The supplementary budget shows Yukon's final installment of \$500,000 for the Arctic Winter Games Host Society. Our overall contribution of just \$1.4 million enables the operations to get up and running and set the stage for their very successful fundraising efforts.

Yukon is very proud to be a major partner in the games and we're playing our part, not only by providing financial support but also by encouraging employees to volunteer and promote the games through their participation in gameswear Fridays. We take great pride in showcasing our home territory at every front during sport and cultural events and I'm confident that the 2012 games will be no exception.

Before I carry on with the remainder of the supplementary budget, I just also want to take the opportunity to acknowledge the hard work of the organizers and members of the host society, all of the many volunteers, the local governments and businesses within our communities, and everyone who is coming together in the spirit of the games leading up to the launch on March 4 next year.

The supplementary budget also identifies dollars — \$88,000 to construct a temporary arena in Ross River and \$7,000 under the recreation infrastructure fund for construction of a basketball court with fencing for the community; \$249,000 is also identified for facility maintenance, renovations and re-

pairs for community recreation centres, fire halls and also includes a new municipal alarm system in Old Crow.

We bring benefit to our communities through strategic investment within our community infrastructure. Infrastructure development in the operations of community infrastructure remains a high priority for the Department of Community Services.

This supplementary budget includes expenditures for the Town of Watson Lake to repair and replace sections of the town's water and sewer system; dollars for planning and design of the Ross River suspension bridge; dollars toward the completion of the Whitehorse wharf, which is now open to the public. I might add that this is shared 50/50 with Canada under the Canada strategic infrastructure fund. Most of the work is now complete along the waterfront, having recently opened the new library in the Kwanlin Dun Cultural Centre and the new wharf. Of course these investments in the community will have significant long-term benefits. We have \$3.3 million identified for completion of the Kwanlin Dun Cultural Centre. The project is ahead of schedule and funds are required in this fiscal year, half of which is recoverable from Canada. We have dollars for improvements to the Hamilton Boulevard extension, dollars available for a waste-heat recovery project for the Canada Games Centre under the municipal rural infrastructure fund — again, half of which is recoverable from Canada.

We also have, I believe, just over \$1 million for funding construction of the Na Cho Nyäk Dun First Nation geothermal project, also under the MRIF program, half of which is recoverable from Canada.

We remain committed to improving the supply of safe drinking water. The Department of Community Services oversees drinking water infrastructure treatment and distribution in unincorporated Yukon, and ensures that the water quality meets or exceeds Canadian drinking water guidelines. The department manages waste-water systems and treatment facilities in unincorporated Yukon, and undertakes hydro-geological assessment of Yukon landfills with twice-year sampling at monitoring wells.

Through the Building Canada fund, municipal rural infrastructure fund and the gas tax fund, we are prioritizing investments to ensure high-quality drinking water through construction and upgrades to treatment facilities and distribution systems across our territory.

The Department of Community Services has a very important role to play with Yukon's water and we're committed to providing access to safe, clean drinking water; reducing groundwater contamination through proper handling of waste; and to assisting municipalities with management of local infrastructure.

Looking to the last five years alone, the Department of Community Services has really reduced the potential for groundwater contamination significantly by a number of measures undertaken, including installing monitoring wells at solid-waste facilities, enabling us to protect nearby watersheds; removing metal and tires from landfills; increasing supervision at landfills to reduce contaminants from entering the site; enhancing collection of hazardous waste; increasing physical barriers

against contamination of water wells; installing monitoring wells at septic pits and increasing monitoring at lagoons.

In recent years, the department has also improved the safety and access of drinking water by installing state-of-the-art filtration systems, such as at Army Beach, Marsh Lake; upgrading arsenic treatment processes in a number of communities, including Haines Junction, Carcross-Tagish First Nation fill point in Tagish, Teslin and the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations fill point in the Takhini River subdivision. Upgrading of existing water treatment systems, which includes arsenic treatment, is also underway in Ross River, Old Crow and Carcross; ensuring that appropriate testing is completed in accordance with the new water regulations, and protective material is also being placed around a number of community wells in order to prevent surface contamination, a standard practice when Yukon government retrofits existing wells or installs new ones.

In the coming years, upgrades are planned for Klondike Valley and Tagish fill locations, and new system installations in Deep Creek and Mendenhall.

The Yukon government is committed to ensuring that Yukoners have access to safe and sustainable drinking water, as I referenced earlier, and to providing waste-water treatment that will meet national standards. As a government, we have seen many accomplishments over recent years, and Yukon is currently in the final stages of developing a web-based water information tool that will provide water data and information to both decision-makers and the public. We've adopted the Canada-wide strategy for municipal waste-water effluent and will be 100-percent compliant once the Carmacks and Dawson City treatment facilities are completed.

We have also signed on to the Council of Federation's *Water Charter*, and Yukon is an active member on the Council of Federation's Water Stewardship Council.

In this supplementary budget, we see our ongoing commitment through a number of investments under the Building Canada fund and municipal rural infrastructure fund marked for drinking-water projects in Haines Junction, Dawson City, Carmacks, Ross River, Carcross, Faro, Watson Lake, Teslin, Rock Creek, Deep Creek, Burwash Landing, Beaver Creek and Old Crow. The Department of Community Services will continue to work with municipal governments and First Nation governments to invest, protect and manage this valuable shared resource.

One of the department's accomplishments over the past year is seen in the strides we are making toward developing and supplying residential, commercial and industrial lots in Yukon communities. We very much recognize that land affordability and availability remains a challenge in the territory and we very much remain committed to finding solutions by working closely with municipal governments, the private sector and others.

Recently we saw —

Chair: The minister's 20 minutes is over. Thank you.

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Mr. Barr: First, I would like to congratulate the minister on her appointment to Community Services. I look forward

to working with her and all the members opposite in the future. It gives me great pleasure to get some more information about what's going on in Community Services.

Community Services has a lot going on in my riding of Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes. We have protective services working with our volunteer fire departments in Tagish, Marsh Lake, Mount Lorne, Carcross and Golden Horn. We have EMS responders in nearly all the communities. We have a community library in Carcross and plans in Marsh Lake to be part of the library network. We have community centres in Carcross, Tagish, Mount Lorne and Marsh Lake. We have solid-waste facilities. Under the *Municipal Act*, we have local advisory councils — LACs — that operate in Tagish, Marsh Lake, South Klondike, Carcross and the Hamlet of Mount Lorne.

In respect to the community centre in Mount Lorne — the constituents in Mount Lorne built their community centre with their own labour, and they're responsible for maintenance costs, unlike other communities that have Yukon government-built and maintained facilities. This is an inequity and it is a source of frustration that Mount Lorne community volunteers have to fundraise or write proposals to deal with their building maintenance.

Within that community, such great programs are run for the youth. They have craft sales, great skating facilities, the ski trails — they get used by not only the people of Mount Lorne, but people come from Whitehorse, they come from Carcross, Marsh Lake, Tagish and other areas of Mount Lorne. So the monies that they are allotted, they find themselves short in many instances in keeping up. I don't know how you would say it — they do so well and yet it is to their demise, we would say. The money that is given to them is based on the number of people in their riding, so the families who actually live there, the costs that they receive don't reflect the actual number of people who utilize that service and who also live in the Mount Lorne region — that's on top of the fact that there are so many other users. Many of the mailboxes of people would show that there are more people living in Mount Lorne.

It doesn't represent the actual numbers, because the people receive their mail at the Carcross Cutoff. I know it has been an ongoing issue for that community to keep ahead of the great things that are going on there. They don't want to stop what they're doing and they don't want to say, "Sorry" — you can't just deal with all these people who are coming there.

I would ask the minister if she has met with the Lorne Mountain Community Association about this issue and what the government is doing to address this inequity.

Hon. Ms. Taylor: First of all, I would like to thank the member opposite, and I also look forward to working with the member on issues of importance to his community and throughout the territory.

With respect to the question that was raised, when it comes to meeting with the community, I have not yet had the opportunity to meet. I received an invitation to one of the recent fundraisers that was held about a week ago, if I'm not mistaken. Unfortunately, it happened to coincide with the service that took place for one of our late members, so I was unable to attend.

But I look forward to coming out and meeting with the community association and the members of the community and hearing and seeing their facilities directly and learning more about their priorities. As I understand it, when it comes to operation and maintenance contribution levels, they're based on a specific formula that's population-driven. That's outlined within the *Yukon Recreation Act*. So it is something we're definitely willing and looking forward to sitting down and meeting with the community, to discuss some of these challenges the member opposite put forward that are faced by the community — and other communities, I might add.

There has been an influx of new individuals to this territory and that's a particular area that's becoming ever more popular for individuals utilizing some of the services and programs and facilities being used by that area.

I hope that sheds a bit of light on the request put forward.

Mr. Barr: I do realize the cost for the Marsh Lake Community Centre is covered, but not Mount Lorne. I wonder if the minister would be looking at fixing that in the future.

Hon. Ms. Taylor: The operation and maintenance for Marsh Lake and other communities, such as Ross River, for example, are covered by the Government of Yukon — they're Yukon government owned facilities. So, again, getting back to the member opposite's question and some of the concerns that are being raised by the community, I think it will precipitate taking a look at the formula that is prescribed under the act and the associated regulations as well. We're very much willing and look forward to sitting down with the community to address some of these issues and look at perhaps a broader review of that.

Mr. Barr: Yes, I'm happy to hear that. I do know that, as the minister said, this — not unlike some of the other areas in the Yukon — definitely — long before the population increase, this area has been more than over utilized. So it's great to hear that.

I guess on to the community of Carcross. Within that area, the community has really outgrown that community centre. It's old. It's cold. The last wedding I was at — the numbers of the people who had to sit in the bar area — it's just kind of small. Again, I know there have been talks over several years now of the community coming together for a community centre. I hear more recently of a cultural centre similar to what we're seeing with Kwanlin Dun and Champagne and Aishihik, which would facilitate the needs of this community.

There are situations when — and it has been for years — for example, if there's a potlatch, someone's aunt, uncle or dad passes, the only place big enough to have a potlatch is in the school gym. It is then very difficult for the youth to go to that service on the weekend and then come back into that gym and play basketball. As the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin was saying earlier, because of the compounded grieving process that has continued in Carcross for years, we really do need a place where the community can gather. We really do not have a youth centre. There is a curling rink that you can curl on only if the temperature gets below freezing; as we have seen this last year especially, there is no rink. There is no place for people to be able to come together. I know that things have been happen-

ing in Carcross, but I was wondering if the minister was willing to sit down and meet with the community and stakeholders involved to see how we could proceed with a cultural centre.

Hon. Ms. Taylor: First, I want to just say that when it comes to the community of Carcross, I think this is an area where I would be remiss if I didn't mention the level of investment that has been made, notwithstanding there are other priorities and other needs in Carcross as there are throughout the territory. That will always be the case, and we will continue to work with them. When it comes to the Carcross waterfront, for example, we have invested almost \$7 million, thanks to infrastructure funding being made available under the Canadian strategic infrastructure fund. It's an example that I raise, which is really important because we talk about partnerships and talk about shared funding opportunities.

Those were a couple of large questions, and I'll do my best. Starting off with infrastructure in our communities, you know we do work with our communities, incorporated and unincorporated, on infrastructure needs. Working with the Building Canada fund, for example — it's a significant level of dollars. We do work with the federal government each and every year in identifying priorities based on what we have heard from communities, and then prioritize them as such. As you can appreciate, there are pressures and demands on resources on every single level. Although I would have to say that even though Yukon has its unique challenges, there are also great opportunities for our territory to be able to partner and work with our communities in delivering a lot of infrastructure that we wouldn't necessarily be able to see. When it comes to working with the volunteers, you know we are committed to providing safe, effective services and programs.

When it comes to EMS, for example, you know whether that is working with all of our volunteers in their respective rural communities — 15 to be exact — or working within our rural incorporated communities, there is a significant amount of work that has been done by the branch within the Department of Community Services. I know that — and, of course, it is broad ranging as well. From Whitehorse, you have the ambulance station that is staffed 24/7, 365 days a year. We have within our 15 communities outside of Whitehorse services that are provided by volunteers. We also have made moves to incorporating full-time primary care paramedics, for example, in the communities of Dawson City and Watson Lake. It is very wide ranging in how we deliver services and we very much appreciate, like I said, that these are challenging issues. It is something that we have been working with the communities in making training available, education available — call it what you will — professional development opportunities, enhancing, like you said, state-of-the-art facilities throughout the Yukon when it comes to providing the equipment, as well, that's necessary to meet our occupational health and safety standards.

So there are a number of things that we need to continue to work on. It is a work-in-progress. But, again, I just want to recognize and acknowledge and give thanks for the work that is provided by our volunteers throughout the territory and just say how much we do appreciate and thank them for their diligence

and their professionalism that they bring to the territory on our behalf.

Mr. Barr: I am aware that in Mount Lorne, for example, they're adding a third bay to the fire hall there. I was hoping to hear about some more areas throughout the Yukon — about which fire halls do need major upgrades. One in particular, I understand — and in the comment of working with the communities in consultation with how things are moving on, I might note that — I'm not sure if the minister is aware, but in Carcross, the water transfer station — the crew — the company — that came to rebuild that station which would normally house a fire truck — it can't fit in there.

But regardless, the communication — the fire chief didn't even know that they were starting the building on that water station or the ambulance. They had no idea. I actually drove by and saw them tearing off the siding and said, "Did you know that they're working on this?" and they had no idea. So they got in touch with the water delivery guy and he started driving to Whitehorse to fill the water truck, to service Carcross people with drinking water. Then that proved to be kind of cumbersome so they brought a double tanker down and parked it by Montana Services so that they could fill the water truck if need be and continue to supply the community.

I do know that the community itself — there are issues with the old tank that could go into where the fire truck is being housed at this time in the search and rescue building, but there was some indication that it would be too costly to move this tank over there.

Could the minister look into some of the inefficiencies in Carcross and the communication — or lack of communication — between EMS and the fire department on when there is going to be work done in the community?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: I'm just going back to the Mount Lorne fire hall. As I understand it, the third bay, the expansion of the fire hall is proceeding.

When it comes to Carcross, as I understand, the water station is a separate building beside the EMS bay. Of course, that is a Building Canada project that has been funded. When it comes to the fire hall, it is also presently located in the old grader station, so there are two separate projects that we are talking about in that regard, if that assists the member opposite.

Mr. Barr: I understand at one time it was a government building. It did evolve into the search and rescue. That's where they do house the boat. It sits outside now because the fire truck is in there. I guess the confusion with the EMS — the ambulance folks — although the water spout, which I also indicated hadn't worked for the last couple of years — they couldn't fill it from the outside. So the fire chief didn't know where the water would come from to fill that truck. On the day when this construction started, they didn't know that this work would be going on. It was disruptive to the community people — the volunteers whom we do highly want to recognize — and I can't begin to say enough about the volunteers in Carcross, Tagish, Mount Lorne — all over the Yukon. This isn't in dispute at all. It's only in honouring them that they be given this information ahead of time so that they can better plan to do their work. They certainly were not in this situation.

There are ongoing issues with the building that houses the fire truck, and we in the community would like to meet with those folks and maybe come together and look at how those things could be advanced in that community in particular.

Hon. Ms. Taylor: I would like to thank the member opposite for the comments he brought forward. I appreciate what the member opposite is saying. I think there is always room for improvement when we can communicate and when we sit down and plan infrastructure accordingly. I was just looking, for example, under Building Canada, just the water treatment — the upgrade that we were talking about earlier — just phase 1 is \$1.5 million. The upgrade on the second phase — again we are looking at an additional \$2.8 million, so there are substantial investments being made.

Just to reassure the members opposite that there are defined needs and there are needs defined throughout every single community. Rest assured that the government is committed to working with the community and sitting down with the community and working with those who utilize those particular facilities — those who rely on those facilities to do their job, whether it be volunteer, whether it be other.

I just wanted to point that out and to articulate again our government's commitment with the millions of dollars' of investment that is being made, whether it is in water treatment, fire hall upgrades or replacements.

Mr. Barr: I am happy to hear that we can do better, and that we will work toward doing better. I know in Carcross, with that lack of communication, it can be frustrating. I know it was very frustrating for the fire chief and some of the ambulance workers — and not discounting the work that has been done. Part of my reason for standing here is also to look forward to what we can do better and to move forward with the rest of the plans.

I thank the minister for acting on removing some of the signage and the one-way street stuff, which is left unresolved. I might say that the community and the LAC had no understanding. It was not in their minds what the final outcome would look like. So I guess it goes back to some of the miscommunication that has been going on in Carcross. I would hope that as we rectify the issues that are in downtown Carcross, with the high curbs, the crossing places for pedestrians from Matthew Watson Store over to the White Pass station, and eliminating the one-way street — things like that that we can come together on and work to have a favourable outcome for all.

Hon. Ms. Taylor: When it comes to Carcross — I think I alluded to this before — I am really proud of the government's investments on the Carcross waterfront, which also incorporates the downtown core.

Some of those issues pertain to, as you said, signage and so forth. I know that there have been recent discussions in the Community Services department, as well as between the community officials. I know that, as the member opposite may have alluded to already, we have made immediate changes to some of the signage provided. I do want to say, though, that there have been discussions all along, throughout the years. Perhaps seeing one thing in a proposed plan may be different from actually seeing it on the ground, in the works.

We strive to do a couple of things. One is to — I believe that it has dramatically enhanced the community, in terms of even the “Welcome to Carcross” signage. It’s a beautiful sign, done by one of the local artists — very creative — and something that has been in the works for many, many years, I might add. Likewise, the boat launch, the dock, and the parking lot in Carcross — those have been works-in-progress for some time as well.

The visitor pavilion — that’s yet another fantastic piece of tourism-related infrastructure that has been another anchor point for the community as well. The pedestrian bridge — I’ve been on that bridge many times, and it’s just another piece of infrastructure that continues to draw visitors to stay longer in the community and serves the clients of Holland America, the visitors getting off the White Pass & Yukon Route train, and is just another valued piece of infrastructure within the community that is enjoyed by the community and visitors as well.

The Bennett viewing deck, restroom facilities on the deck, the *SS Tutshi* memorial that we were able to officially open — I believe it was last fall — the landscaping. I know work has been done by others, as I referenced — Carcross-Tagish First Nation — over the years and, of course, by some of the companies as well. They have also enhanced some of the infrastructure there.

I have to say that over \$7 million in investments in that alone speaks of the very importance of this area to the community and to the territory at large. I just want to say that we do recognize the importance of strong relationships, ongoing relationships with all levels of government, all orders of government, Yukoners, other community partners and clients. We will continue to invest in all of our communities, including the community of Carcross. Again, when one looks at the supplementary budget, it just reinforces our commitment, through the many projects we have underway in the Yukon, throughout every community.

Again, I just want to commend the community for being true to their community and placing such value on their community. I also want to say thank you to the employees of our Department of Community Services and acknowledge them for working with the community. It is a work-in-progress, but their ongoing work has to be recognized and celebrated for delivering the broad range of programs and the infrastructure that is so very important to be able to make us all very proud to call Yukon our home.

Again, our department is working to create our vibrant, healthy, sustainable Yukon communities through our ongoing work — whether it is on the capital side or the operations side — through our planned investment, working with the communities — and working with our communities, ensuring that it is community focused, it’s community driven. We just referenced some of those examples in the community.

Mr. Barr: I do appreciate the comments of the minister, and especially the ones at the end about how it is community driven. It was really driven home at the last meeting that the community doesn’t want a one-way street. The community is the people who actually live there year-round, and that we just continue when we are working with all communities —

that we cannot undervalue all the hard work that does occur with people coming from outside to sit down with people who live there.

It has been a long time planning and the things that have happened have been great. We do look forward to ironing out some of the difficulties and moving forward, to not belabour this any further.

I would like to mention that on page 2-3, under Community Development, Sport and Recreation, as far as in working with communities, as my colleague, the Member for Klondike had noted in his response to the throne speech, the Dawson City recreation centre needed upgrades or new — there was a conversation around it being replaced. I notice here that there was \$623,000 that was removed from the line “Dawson City Recreation Centre”. I wonder why that is so when there were promises to do more in Dawson.

Hon. Ms. Taylor: I would like to thank the member opposite and also the Member for Klondike for raising this issue on the floor of the Legislature.

As I referred to in Question Period not long ago in response to the Member for Klondike, we are committed to working with the community of Dawson on improvements to their recreation facilities. In fact, we have had an agreement in place over the years. I believe it is a \$4-million contribution agreement between the Government of Yukon and the City of Dawson for repairs and upgrades to the current recreation facility that has been in place. It has been a contribution agreement that has been in place since 2009.

I think the expenditure the member opposite is referring to is as a result of those dollars not being expended for that very purpose, which has happened from time to time. Money isn’t spent, and of course we are looking at a revote in future years. It has been in place; we are committed to that contribution agreement. It’s a matter of just simply not having it required up front for this particular year.

Mr. Barr: I’d like to move to payday loans. The minister is responsible for consumer protection. The NDP raised the issue of payday loans and the high rate of interest taken by these loan companies, often from the poor or from transient workers who have difficulty getting a bank account.

I believe at the time it was raised two years ago, the then Community Services minister said he was looking at what Manitoba was doing. Are there any reports to this House or any regulations planned to prevent these rates?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: As I seem to recall, yes, there has been significant dialogue and debate on the floor of the Legislature over the years. Within the Department of Community Services, there has been movement afoot on various levels, whether it be the provincial front or on the national front. I think there is a movement afoot on the federal stage, if I’m not mistaken, to move toward regulation on a national level; whereas some of the provinces have chosen to opt for a provincial level to regulate. We are monitoring that debate going on right now and will continue to do so.

Mr. Barr: I would like to talk about credit unions, which I think would be the minister’s responsibility as the minister responsible for consumer services.

On December 9, 2009, the Yukon Legislative Assembly unanimously passed an amended motion establishing a committee to study and report on introducing legislation to establish credit unions, or allowing credit unions incorporated in a province to operate in Yukon. The motion mandated the committee, made up of representatives of the government, the Official Opposition, the third party, labour, business and Credit Union Yukon, to report to the Legislative Assembly by November 30, 2010.

In order to clear up any confusion, I must remind the minister that the NDP caucus, when asked to name its member to the committee, said it would be an MLA selected from our caucus. Members of Credit Union Yukon are wondering why there is yet to be a meeting. In the interest of providing accurate information and not wanting to alienate the community members who have been interested in this issue, put time into a petition drive and are ready to serve or assist this community, I am looking for some information from the minister. What is the government's plan to get this committee up and running? Have all the stakeholders put forward their representatives? What is the time frame for a first meeting? What is the revised plan for reporting to the Legislative Assembly on options?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Since the actual motion was debated — and it was back in 2009, maybe two years ago — since that time, as I understand, a couple of things have occurred.

Primarily, and most importantly, there have been some changes made to the federal *Bank Act* to provide for the establishment of a federal credit union model in Canada. I am not sure what the time frame was, but I do know that since the actual time that the motion took place there was some discussion that transpired which resulted in these changes to the *Bank Act*.

That said, we are looking to investigate our options that may or may not allow the operation of credit unions in the Yukon right now, because of these very changes to the federal *Bank Act* that were not considered back in the day, or back at the time of this particular discussion. As I understand, Canada is currently developing regulations which are also required before the bill can be proclaimed. Given these recent developments in this legislation, we are still looking at it. We are still interested, but I think that it is very important to see what happens on the federal front first and foremost.

Mr. Barr: I understand that the federal changes do support this happening, and I'm wondering if this minister would support credit unions in the Yukon?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: How do I put this? It's not a matter of whether or not we are interested; it is a matter of how the regulations are crafted and adopted when they are proclaimed by the Government of Canada, which will help define what transpires thereafter.

Mr. Barr: I understand that there has been a lot of work done toward this, and it would be great if the stakeholders who have put forward representatives — or if they have, if we could hear a revised plan for what's going to be coming from here.

Hon. Ms. Taylor: As I tried to reference in my remarks earlier, regarding what is transpiring on the national front, it will be a matter of the federal government occupying

that particular field versus the actual territories and provinces, making it a moot point, if that makes sense for the member opposite.

Mr. Barr: Okay. There is an increase of \$2.2 million for O&M in Protective Services. Is this taking into account the transfer of municipal fire services to Protective Services, from the "Our Towns, Our Future" process? Can we get an update how this transfer is going? I believe I had asked this. I understand firefighters are not considered an essential service. Why is this?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: I'm not entirely sure what the member opposite is referring to by firefighters not being referred to as an "essential service." Perhaps the member opposite could clarify. In terms of the fire protection — the transition thereof — that was a commitment that was made by a former minister responsible for Community Services. I believe in recent months — earlier this spring, if I'm not mistaken — as the member opposite may or may not appreciate or may not be aware, fire service throughout the territory and throughout the country, I might add, has become a very highly regulated industry, especially where safety is concerned. When one looks at the legislation that was tabled and was debated on the floor of the Legislature only some short months ago — presumptive legislation — presumptive liability — when you take a look at that statute, as well as there was also the occupational health and safety regulations that took effect as well, back some years ago, and so forth — there are ever-increasing pressures on how we deliver fire protection services within our communities.

So we have offered to work with each of our municipal fire departments — working with all communities, at that — to look at how we can provide some relief.

I see the Leader of the Official Opposition may perhaps not agree with that approach, but this government has offered to work with the respective communities on looking at how we can provide — work together — on identifying some of these pressures that are being experienced by municipal governments. That is one of many issues that were identified in the "Our Towns, Our Future" review that took place and was recently tabled with some 18 recommended findings within the report itself.

There are ever-increasing costs associated with new regulations and with legislation. We want to take a measured and step-by-step approach that is inclusive and respectful in looking at assuming responsibility for fire protection in the territory. The fire marshal's office has established an advisory group made up of the affected fire chiefs and the vice-president of the Association of Yukon Fire Chiefs.

I just wanted to say that we want to make a difference with Yukon fire services. We are committed to providing, as I mentioned earlier — not to sound redundant — ongoing resources in terms of making equipment and training available to our departments so they can protect our Yukon communities and our homes within those communities.

As I mentioned, it is at a fairly operational level at this particular time, identifying what is in place, what is not in place, finding the differences in how we deliver fire services in our respective communities. It's a discussion item that will con-

tinue to evolve, and we will continue to learn from one another, but it is an important discussion.

Mr. Barr: This has come up twice this afternoon in the time I have been asking these questions. I do recall in my response to the Speech from the Throne that, as an essential service, the ambulance service does fall under the term “essential service”, because they deal with people and the well-being of people. The volunteer fire department does not fall under essential services because they deal with property.

I recall in my response to the Speech from the Throne that, if it were our daughter or a disabled person who wasn't able to get out of the house, we would all think that our volunteer firefighters would be pretty essential in getting that person out of the house — it definitely crosses over.

I understand that we're looking at training and more training — it begs me to ask then why we would not consider firefighters an essential service. Why can we not go that extra mile to include them? With the age of our volunteers in the communities and the training for them — as I understand it, in Tagish, if they had the numbers, they would not even legally enter a building because of the lack of training. So I would ask the minister if we could move forward much quicker with regard to the volunteers and the training necessary to enter a house.

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Well, I suppose that's exactly why we're having these discussions. If the member is asking whether fire service personnel are essential for safeguarding our communities, our properties, our livelihoods, the answer is absolutely yes. As I mentioned before, we do value our volunteers. It is a shared responsibility, I might add, between the communities and Yukon government. As I mentioned, we do support 16 volunteer fire departments throughout the territory through the provision of emergency facilities, specialized equipment, training of community firefighting in the Yukon. As I mentioned earlier, those requirements are changing and will continue to evolve. That's not a bad thing. That's a good thing — how we can better deliver efficiently, but in a safe and measured response.

So, again, in response to enhanced pressures on our communities to deliver firefighter safety — looking at that need, like the member opposite said, for the appropriate equipment, the training, providing that oversight necessary, complying with new regulations. I mentioned before the occupational health and safety regulations — the presumptive legislation that we tabled and that the Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board is working on regulations that we'll also see evolve further.

So in response to that, and looking at all the pressures, in addition to the many other areas — pressure points — experienced by our communities, we have in fact offered to work with our communities on a go-forward basis. Again, I'll qualify that as a measured and step-by-step approach that is working inclusively and working on the operational level to begin with. I think we are off to a good start. I wholeheartedly support the fire marshal's office and the group that the office has convened that is working with our community fire departments.

Mr. Silver: I'd like to begin by just saying congratulations to the Member for Whitehorse West for her position. I

think that her expertise in this Assembly will be a great asset to this ministry. I'd also like to extend a hello and a welcome to Deputy Minister O'Farrell and Mr. King. I'd like to thank the Member for Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes for running the gamut of different Community Services concerns. Although he did speak upon some issues in the Klondike, he can bet that I'm going to continue in that vein.

Not to sound like a broken record, but it has been stated by two ministers of the previous Yukon Party government during the election that Dawson would receive a community rec centre. The current Premier is also on the record on the campaign trail promoting such a venture. Last week, the Minister of Community Services also commented that she was working with the City of Dawson, which is wonderful, because so am I.

I just wrote a speech for the Dawson Hockey and Curling Association and presented it to mayor and council at one of their community meetings, basically talking about the need for a steering committee in such regard.

Just to speak in the spirit of the continuing collaboration, I look forward to continuing that circle and working with the minister involved so that everybody is on the same page and we can move forward with this worthwhile and essential and vital project for my constituents.

That being said, I just wanted to ask a quick question of the minister to see if she could elaborate on plans to allow this important project to get the green light and maybe touch base, or maybe comment further, as to which budget we will see a line item in for such an important project.

Hon. Ms. Taylor: I would like to extend my thanks to the Member for Klondike. I look forward to working with the member opposite on issues that are important to his community and all of Yukon. I have always enjoyed spending time in the Klondike region. They have a lot of enthusiasm; they have a lot of heart and I commend them for everything that they've been able to achieve over the years.

I have to pay recognition and acknowledge the good work of the previous Member for Klondike as well, because he provided a lot of leadership in terms of providing priorities for capital initiatives going forward. There is a lot going on in the community and I think we have to be respectful of all that is transpiring in terms of projects.

Of course, when one takes a look at the community of Dawson, I was just looking at — just alone over the past number of years, just on the Building Canada fund, gas tax and there was also the municipal rural infrastructure fund — there have been significant investments and projects for the community of Dawson City. I think we need to recognize the level of investment that we have made in the Klondike area, as I mentioned the other day, to the tune of approximately \$45 million, just when it comes to infrastructure projects alone.

In terms of other investments that we have been making, they are significant — the replacement of the Korbo Apartments. There is significant work that we have done with the replacement of the Dawson campus and the School of Visual Arts. I would be very remiss if I didn't mention that, and the refurbishment of the old liquor store and all that has been achieved since that very time into the School of Visual Arts. I

do commend the City of Dawson for their forward thinking and their vision in putting forward these areas of priority.

I know there was a significant amount of discussion about the hospital, for example. It is indeed significant. There is a great deal of economic activity going on throughout. In fact, I was just looking at — just for example — the capital budget for the community of Dawson alone. I think for this fiscal year — and again these are the estimates, of course, but we are looking at, I believe it is about \$29 million if I am not mistaken.

So there is a significant amount of investment going on. When it comes to recreation infrastructure, as outlined in our platform, we are committed to enhancing the level of community recreation infrastructure within the community of Dawson. We have had a contribution agreement in place over the last number of years to the tune of \$4 million, and it was an agreed contribution between the City of Dawson and the Department of Community Services. Some of that has been drawn upon over the years for substantive upgrades and looking for renovations to the facility.

I am not going to go into the significant history behind the facility and all that went on, because we are here to talk about today and going forward. But there has been, in fact, a significant amount of work done. There is an annual workplan that has been established for this current fiscal year and is currently supporting the City of Dawson in looking at a go-forward basis. As I referenced before, there is work being conducted for upgrades and repairs to the current facility and also the work of the committee, which has also helped to establish the annual workplan.

They are also doing additional work, in collaboration with the city, on looking to explore the idea of planning for a new recreation facility.

Ms. Chair, seeing the time, I move that we report progress.

Chair: It has been moved by Ms. Taylor 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: Mr. Speaker, 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 of 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 5:31 p.m.

The following Sessional Paper was tabled on December 12, 2011

33-1-12

Yukon Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board
2010 Annual Report
(Graham)