

**Yukon Legislative Assembly  
Whitehorse, Yukon  
Thursday, March 15, 2012 — 1:00 p.m.**

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

*Prayers*

**Speaker's statement**

**Speaker:** Premier Pasloski, leaders of the opposition, esteemed members, visitors young and old, fellow Yukoners, this is the start of the 2012 spring sitting of the 33<sup>rd</sup> Legislative Assembly. We've had some time to get to know one another, having first convened as newly elected members in December of last year. I stood then, as I stand now, to remind you about the trust you carry on behalf of every Yukon resident, no matter their political preferences or their fundamental beliefs.

As I look to the gallery and the visitors here, I know you folks want us — despite our innermost passion — to act with dignity, fairness and respect. This is not to say that we cannot press home our points with vigour and confidence. We were, after all, elected on particular platforms and every member must be true to their platform, but it is vital in pressing these points that we always recognize our larger constituency in each deliberation. I want every Yukoner and every visitor to be especially proud of this Assembly, to know that the public trust is in good hands. That's why I'm looking directly at you the gallery, because you are the folks who will — at any given time — determine our value and, ultimately, our relevance.

It bears saying that I am honoured to be the Speaker of this Legislative Assembly and I know that every member in this Chamber feels a distinct pride that comes with the responsibility that you have invested in us not so very long ago. That's why I again pledge my utmost to ensure that you will be well-served by members and Speaker alike. I look forward to my fellow colleagues on both sides of me. I note the scene is set, that you're ready to discharge that trust. I said in my inaugural address that I take you to be both decent and honest. Now, with a sitting behind us and a second as yet untouched, I would add that you have proved steadfast in purpose and tenacious in approach. This is the way it should be.

No one needs to tell you that you're in the highest place of debate that Yukon can provide. You are entitled to your agendas, but others will watch how you conduct yourselves in pursuit of those agendas. They will be poised to dismiss the best of intentions and the noblest of sentiments if you and I fail to live up to the decorum that we so carefully promised, yet can so easily lose.

Fight the good fight. But when the hour is done, look around to members on all sides and indicate — however subtly — well fought; together we have put forward the day. Most importantly, we have kept the public trust, all the while knowing that we must earn it again tomorrow.

In closing, in December I said — and I say again now — that it's the duty of the Speaker to be impartial, to treat each member equally and to make rulings that are both decisive and sound. In exchange, I look forward to this spring sitting that

begins with promise and ends with a courage matched only by dignity. Yukoners, whether in the gallery or in their homes, deserve nothing less.

And so, to the business that awaits the day.

**INTRODUCTION OF PAGES**

**Speaker:** It gives me great pleasure to announce that the following students will be serving the House as legislative pages for the 2012 spring sitting: Deanna Klubi from F.H. Collins Secondary School; Zane Hansell and Katie Doerksen from Porter Creek Secondary School; Sruthee Govindaraj, Midhula Kalpak and Liam Finnegan from Vanier Catholic Secondary School.

Today we have with us Sruthee. I ask the members to welcome her to the House at this time.

*Applause*

**Withdrawal of motions**

**Speaker:** The Chair wishes to inform the House of a change that has been made to the Order Paper. Motion No. 27, standing in the name of the Member for Copperbelt South, has been removed from the Order Paper. Motion No. 27 refers to a bill that was before the Parliament of Canada when notice of Motion No. 27 was given; however, the Governor General has granted royal assent to that bill.

**DAILY ROUTINE**

**Speaker:** We will now proceed with the Order Paper. Are there any tributes?

**TRIBUTES**

**In remembrance of John James Van Bibber**

**Mr. Silver:** Mr. Speaker, I rise today on behalf of the Legislative Assembly to pay tribute to the life of respected elder, John James Van Bibber, or "J.J.", as he was affectionately known.

J.J. was born under a spruce tree along the Pelly River in 1920, one of 14 children of Ira and Eliza Van Bibber. He grew up in the Pelly Crossing area and has lived in Mayo, Whitehorse and Dawson during his long life.

He lived on the land in his earlier years, as his family lived the traditional lifestyle. He spent many happy years hunting and trapping with his brothers.

J.J. loved taking pictures and began, at the age of 13, with a Jiffy Kodak Six-16 camera that he bought in a shop in Dawson City. Throughout his lifetime, he had a camera with him wherever he went. He has left a significant visual history by capturing his friends and family and their way of life — their adventures, their jobs and their Yukon. The photographs and oral history transcripts have been preserved in the J.J. and Clara Van Bibber collection in the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in government archives. In addition, very recently, J.J. recounted many of his memories and adventures, which, along with his photographs, have been compiled in a book entitled, *I Was Born Under a Spruce Tree*, that his family is working to have published. We look forward to seeing his wonderful life portrayed in pictures and stories in the very near future.

J.J. led a diverse and interesting life. He was a trapper, a homesteader and a store owner. He piloted riverboats on the Yukon and ran heavy equipment, putting in roads throughout the northern Yukon. J.J. also tried his hand at placer mining. J.J. was an honorary Canadian Ranger. During the Second World War, J.J. joined the Northern Pacific Rangers 38<sup>th</sup> Company, which later evolved into the Canadian Rangers. J.J. was made an honorary member of the Canadian Rangers but, first and foremost, J.J. was a family man.

Known as a great storyteller, J.J. loved to tell tales of adventures from his younger years. It was a privilege to listen to J.J. share his remarkable stories, adventures and life lessons. During the summer, he could be found telling his stories at the cultural centre and at the Tombstone Territorial Park visitors centre. Visitors were treated to Labrador tea and a history lesson on what the life of a trapper was like in the Tombstone Mountains 60 years ago.

One of his favourite stories, and mine, that he loved to tell was how he and his siblings came to school in Dawson City. His father and mother put them on a log raft in Pelly and they floated downriver with the oldest child in charge. Ira and Eliza reasoned that there was no point in paying for boat passage when the river was running in that direction anyway.

J.J. was part of one of the Yukon's largest aboriginal families — a family known for their longevity. Five of his siblings are still living. J.J. and Clara, his wife of 62 years, had four children. He was a good family man and took a great deal of pride in his family. J.J. lived a very full life. He had a great spirit for life and he was always a happy, kind and caring man with a great sense of humour and a positive outlook on life.

The Yukon has lost a great man and mentor. J.J. has left an indelible mark and we're all better for having known him. He will be greatly missed.

To his son and daughter, grandchildren, great-grandchildren and his siblings, we wish to extend our deepest sympathy for your loss. In time, may the love that you share as a family and your special memories help to bring comfort through these difficult times.

Mahsi' cho. Günilshish, J.J. Van Bibber.

### **In tribute to First Nation relationships with governments**

**Ms. Hanson:** It is with great pleasure that I rise on behalf of the New Democrat Official Opposition to pay tribute to the wisdom of the many people who dedicated their lives to creating the basis for a new relationship between Yukon First Nation people and their governments and the governments of Yukon and Canada.

One of the cornerstones of that new relationship is how we together have come to understand that, by the virtue of our common luck to live in this beautiful part of the world, we are truly part of the land, part of the water. In particular, we pay tribute to those Yukoners who have risen to the challenge and accepted the responsibility placed on them to complete the *Peel Watershed Regional Land Use Plan*.

Mr. Speaker, it is useful to recall that the Peel Watershed Planning Commission was made up of people appointed by us — by the governments of Yukon and the First Nations. In pay-

ing tribute to those who have dedicated over a half-decade of their lives to working on the Final Recommended *Peel Watershed Regional Land Use Plan* — it is the voice of the people who took on the task on our behalf that should be paramount. It is out of respect for them that this tribute relies on their words and their message.

The planning commission acknowledged in their final submission that no plan will please all people because not all water resource conflicts can be resolved to everyone's satisfaction. This has clearly not changed. No Yukon landscape or Yukon planning exercise has received as much public notice as the Peel watershed.

To understand why we, as citizens of this territory, owe such a debt of gratitude to our fellow citizens, it is useful to revisit the path that the commission followed to create the final recommended plan. The mandate of the *Peel Watershed Regional Land Use Plan* is established by the *Umbrella Final Agreement*. As individuals and as a body, they understood their overall responsibility was to further the public good in a way consistent with the settlement agreements and not as representatives of the parties involved.

Mr. Speaker, chapter 11 of the *Umbrella Final Agreement*, along with other chapters of the *Umbrella Final Agreement*, helped the commission to understand that sustainable development and integrated management are the basis of Yukon land use planning.

The *Umbrella Final Agreement* and the commission's general terms of reference were their foundation documents — their constitution. You know, Mr. Speaker, the general terms of reference for the plan set out a number of goals, and they said that this group of people — our neighbours, our friends — was to establish a plan that would promote the public good — that is, promote the well-being of all Yukon citizens. It was to minimize actual or potential land use conflicts. The plan was to promote the cultural values of the First Nation citizens. It was also to promote sustainable development, in part through integrated resource management, and it was to recognize all economic potential in the planning region.

Mr. Speaker, sustainable development is the overarching goal of this plan. It is defined by the *Umbrella Final Agreement* as beneficial socio-economic change that does not undermine the ecological and social systems upon which communities and societies are dependent. Sustainable development is often portrayed as a balance among environmental, social and economic interests.

I know, Mr. Speaker, the commissioners to whom I referred are appointed by all of us. They recognize three kinds of economic activity. They recognize that there is activity that is sustainable indefinitely, if properly managed — for example, trapping, fishing, hunting, tourism.

There are some economic activities that are not sustainable, but from which ecosystems can tolerate or recover. Some kinds of mining and oil and gas development are examples of this. Best management practices and effective restoration make this possible in some, but not all areas. They also recognize that there are some economic activities that are not sustainable and

can cause irreparable and unacceptable impacts on ecosystem integrity — or on communities.

Much has been discussed in the past weeks about the language used to describe what guides the consultation process. The commission's first effort, when they were established by us — by the Government of Yukon and by the First Nation governments — was to learn about the issues and interests in the planning area — in short, what mattered to us all and what was at stake. Based on this, they wrote their statement of intent, which set out how they understood their task — what they were trying to accomplish in achieving the general goals. The statement of intent was made public in the fall of 2005 and is accepted by the governments, by the parties — that is, the Government of Yukon and the four First Nation governments — with no reservations.

The statement of intent makes plain that wilderness characteristics, wildlife and their habitats, cultural resources and waters are to be maintained over time. It is fundamentally important to preserve these qualities, they said, in the Peel watershed.

The commission did not make this up. They did not insert these values into the process; they heard it clearly from people experienced in the area. They heard it from the affected First Nations, they heard it from nearby communities, and they heard it from Yukon people in general. The commission also heard that the planning area has significant interests and potential for minerals and for oil and gas. These facts framed the values and intentions that this plan had to address as it sought to promote sustainable development.

The commission determined to take a cautious, conservative approach. It recommended preserving much of the Peel landscape, with the understanding that society could always choose to develop in the future, if there was agreement on this. Mr. Speaker, the final recommended plan embodies this conservative approach. It emphasizes landscape conservation and leaves an option open for development through changes over time. This is not fixed. This allows for amendments in the future.

So, Mr. Speaker, after much deliberation, the commission concluded that its rationale for protecting areas was sound in view of its determination to preserve society's future options. The commission also considered its recommendations on surface access. It decided that surface access is typically a permanent development and they made the choice to deny that surface access until we're clear on how we can do it in a better way.

With this final recommended plan, the Peel Watershed Planning Commission concluded its carefully considered work. The plan achieves the goals set out for it in a way consistent with the spirit and intent of the *Umbrella Final Agreement*. It upholds the principles of sustainable development. The commission emphasized this plan is not a template for future planning in other regions of the Yukon — it is for the Peel and, as such, it is a responsible approach that enables Yukoners to serve as stewards of this extraordinary landscape. When this plan is accepted, future generations will salute our foresight.

At the outset, Mr. Speaker, I said we offer this tribute to those Yukoners who took on the task of completing the *Peel Watershed Regional Land Use Plan*, people who are, as they reminded us, our fellow Yukoners, parents, grandparents, your friends and your neighbours. Although they relied upon experts in many fields — mining, environment, tourism and traditional knowledge — the final recommendations were made with the commitment to a basic, common-sense approach that is profound.

The commission worked hard to avoid setting up confrontations between conflicting interests. They were asked not to respond based on our labels as miners, as environmentalists, tourism operators or politicians, but as caretakers. It will be up to the political decision-makers of the Yukon Territory to reflect carefully on the whole of this land use plan, to appreciate the balanced approach it provides.

The commission has offered the Yukon an opportunity that few places in the world or Canada have had. The plan they have put before the respective governments is intended to help us visualize and achieve the kind of future we want. As the commission has said, we must consider our response to what they have proposed by asking ourselves how we will explain the decisions we make to our grandchildren. We owe them the honour of our gratitude.

#### **In recognition of International Women's Day**

**Mr. Silver:** I rise on behalf of the whole Legislative Assembly to pay tribute to International Women's Day 2012. In 1977, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution, calling on member states to proclaim a day for women's rights and international peace. Following the UN lead Canada chose March 8 as International Women's Day.

This year's theme for International Women's Day celebrates the role of women in economic prosperity in rural, remote and northern regions. We celebrate the millions of Canadian women and girls across every province and territory who are integral to life in our rural, remote and northern communities.

These women and girls are contributing to the economic prosperity in these regions through their innovative projects, such as business networks and training in non-traditional occupations.

What a great week for Dawson City's own Meg Walker, to be recognized at Vancouver's Women in Film Festival in the category of best short documentary by the National Film Board for her film, *Ice Road to Tuk*. To quote another extremely talented and nationally recognized Dawsonite in the film industry, Lulu Keating: "There will be nobody who attended the festival who wasn't aware of the Yukon invasion." The Yukon is very proud of all the contributions of all the Yukoners who went to this event.

Women are an integral part of our society and have played a very important role in our history and in the development of our territory. We recognize the critical role that women continue to play in the prosperity of Canada's diverse communities. We celebrate the achievements of the women past, present and future. We appreciate all that you do, all that you have done and the challenges that you face in your struggles for

equality. I would like to commend all women. Your role and your journey has not been an easy one, but you have been strong. We have a strong Canada thanks to the strength of our women.

### INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Speaker:** Before I turn the floor over for introduction of visitors, I have two visitors I would like to introduce. Leslie Goring — many of you recognize her from the 25-plus years she has been at the front counter of Plantation Flowers & Gifts putting smiles on people's faces, and her stepfather, Roger Voisine, who is a long-time Yukoner. He came here in 1967, cut line all the way across Canada and ended up working for New Imperial mines and just a few years ago was inducted into the Prospectors Hall of Fame as an honorary member.

It is a pleasure to have both of you here today.

*Applause*

**Ms. White:** I would invite the House to join me in welcoming the many citizens, both inside and outside of the gallery, to their Legislative Assembly. I want to thank them for taking time out of their schedules to witness and participate in our democracy.

*Applause*

**Ms. Hanson:** Mr. Speaker, in addition to the many normal — not “normal” — the citizens and the residents of the Yukon, I want to specifically invite the House to welcome Donovan Allum. Donovan is a member of the Katimavik volunteers who have been in the Yukon for about two months. They have been working in Dawson, and currently Donovan is working with the food bank. His father is a Member of the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba. Donovan, welcome.

*Applause*

**Mr. Silver:** Mr. Speaker, with your indulgence I ask all the members of this House to join me in welcoming the family and friends of the late J.J. Van Bibber. Today we have: Andrew Van Bibber, grandson; Shannon Van Bibber, granddaughter; J.J. Van Bibber, great-grandson; Pat Van Bibber, Sr., brother; Alex Van Bibber, brother; Shirley Ellis, niece; Carol Van Bibber, niece; Karen Van Bibber, niece; Sherri Lafernier, niece; Geraldine Van Bibber, niece; Kathy Van Bibber, niece; and we also have friends Tim Piironen and friend Laurel Parry.

*Applause*

**Mr. Elias:** Mr. Speaker, with your indulgence, I ask all members to join me in welcoming my two sons to the gallery — Bohdi Elias and Johnny Elias — also relatives of J.J.

*Applause*

**Mr. Elias:** With your indulgence as well, I would also ask all members to join me in welcoming a former MLA of this Legislature and former Liberal leader: Mr. Arthur Mitchell in the gallery today.

*Applause*

**Mr. Elias:** Also with your indulgence, Mr. Speaker — I came into the gallery today noticing that I have several elementary school and high school teachers — too many to name and you know who you are. I would just like all members to join me in welcoming them as well.

*Applause*

### TABLING RETURNS AND DOCUMENTS

**Speaker:** The Chair has for tabling the *Yukon Human Rights Panel of Adjudicators 2010-11 Annual Report*, which is being tabled pursuant to subsection 22(8) of the *Human Rights Act*.

Are there any further returns or documents for tabling?

Are there any committee reports?

Petitions.

### PETITIONS

#### Petition No. 2 — received

**Clerk:** I have had the honour to review a petition, being Petition No. 2 of the First Session of the 33<sup>rd</sup> Legislative Assembly, as presented by the Member for Takhini-Kopper King on December 15, 2011.

This petition meets the requirements as to form of the Standing Orders of the Yukon Legislative Assembly.

**Speaker:** Petition No. 2, accordingly, is deemed to be read and received.

Are there any other petitions for presentation?

Are there any bills to be introduced?

### INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

#### Bill No. 4: Introduction and First Reading

**Hon. Mr. Pasloski:** I move that Bill No. 4, entitled *Interim Supply Appropriation Act, 2012-13*, be now introduced and read a first time.

**Speaker:** It has been moved by the Hon. Premier that Bill No. 4, entitled *Interim Supply Appropriation Act, 2012-13*, be now introduced and read a first time.

*Motion for introduction and first reading of Bill No. 4 agreed to*

#### Bill No. 5: Introduction and First Reading

**Hon. Mr. Pasloski:** I move that Bill No. 5, entitled *Third Appropriation Act, 2011-12*, be now introduced and read a first time.

**Speaker:** It has been moved by the Hon. Premier that Bill No. 5, entitled *Third Appropriation Act, 2011-12*, be now introduced and read a first time.

*Motion for introduction and first reading of Bill No. 5 agreed to*

#### Bill No. 6: Introduction and First Reading

**Hon. Mr. Pasloski:** I move that Bill No. 6, entitled *First Appropriation Act, 2012-13*, be now introduced and read a first time.

**Speaker:** It has been moved by the Hon. Premier that Bill No. 6, entitled *First Appropriation Act, 2012-13*, be now introduced and read a first time.

*Motion for introduction and first reading of Bill No. 6 agreed to*

**Speaker:** Are there any further bills for introduction? Are there any notices of motion?

## NOTICES OF MOTION

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to strengthen and diversify the Yukon economy by investing in the research, innovation, and commercialization of cold climate technology.

I further give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to enhance the availability of job training opportunities by working with Yukon College, industry associations, and the Government of Canada.

Further, I give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to support the Yukon Wildlife Preserve in their application for accreditation by the Canadian Association of Zoos and Aquariums.

Finally, I give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges Air Canada and WestJet, in pursuing their competitive corporate objectives in Yukon, to ensure the ongoing viability of Air North, Yukon's airline, is not compromised and to negotiate interline and code-share agreements with Air North.

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

THAT this House urges the Yukon government to initiate a public inquiry into the recent carbon monoxide poisoning deaths of five Yukon residents to provide the opportunity to review information and report recommendations on matters of public concern, such as:

- (1) fuel oil heating equipment installations and maintenance;
- (2) compliance with national minimum oil burner code requirements for safety and environmental protection;
- (3) oil burner mechanics training, certification standards and licensing;
- (4) industry self-regulation;
- (5) Yukon's building safety inspections regime;
- (6) landlord and tenant legislation and other matters; and
- (7) improving community safety and preventing future death and injury to persons and harm to property in Yukon.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to:

- (1) live up to the principles of the Peel land use planning process that were jointly agreed to by the Yukon government and the First Nation of Na Cho Nyäk Dun, the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation, the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in, and the Gwich'in Tribal Council; and

(2) reject any initiative that undermines the principles that are the foundation of the *Final Recommended Plan of the Peel Watershed Planning Commission*.

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

THAT this House urges the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources to delay approvals for exploration and development of oil and gas in the Whitehorse Trough until:

- (1) land use planning, as mandated by the *Umbrella Final Agreement*, has been completed;
- (2) there has been full disclosure and discussion of the *Yukon Oil and Gas Act* amendments, including all regulations and guidelines;
- (3) a moratorium has been placed on fracking and coal-bed methane extraction; and
- (4) the government has directed that local energy needs be prioritized before export as per Yukon's Energy Strategy.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to acknowledge and act on government's public safety responsibilities with respect to oil furnace installation and maintenance through education, regulation and industry training.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to show leadership in green energy by:

- (1) investigating opportunities for geothermal energy projects in the Yukon;
- (2) developing a Yukon-wide business plan to implement such geothermal project opportunities;
- (3) leveraging federal green energy funding to maximize efforts to move Yukon to cleaner, more sustainable energy through geothermal projects; and
- (4) allocating sufficient engineering and development time and resources to new government, and government-built, facilities so that geothermal energy projects, where appropriate, may be included.

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

## QUESTION PERIOD

### Question re: Peel watershed land use plan

**Ms. Hanson:** Mr. Speaker, in the last election the Premier repeatedly stated that it would be irresponsible to make his position on the Peel land use plan known until the final round of public consultation had concluded. Now, before the last round of public consultation has even begun, the Yukon Party has reversed itself. It is now telling Yukoners what it plans for the Peel River watershed through their unilateral imposition of eight new conditions for finalization of the Peel land use plan.

The Yukon Party government said one thing to get elected and then did another. This is another in a long line of broken

promises. Why did the Premier hide his party's agenda from the public?

**Hon. Mr. Cathers:** Let me remind the Leader of the Official Opposition of the facts. During the 2011 election campaign we said that the cost of implementing the commission's proposed plan could bankrupt the territory. We called the leaders of the other political parties — including the member — irresponsible for committing to accept the commission's proposed plan and we committed to seeking a final plan for the Peel that protects the environment and respects all sectors of the economy.

The Yukon government has followed and will continue to follow the process outlined in the First Nation final agreements. During the final stages of consultation with First Nations and the public, we will suggest modifications aimed at reaching our publicly stated goal of a final plan for the Peel that protects the environment and respects all sectors of the economy.

We will continue to fulfill our obligations under the First Nation final agreements.

**Ms. Hanson:** The Premier is avoiding the question. He's avoiding answering the question. This government's approach completely rewrites the objectives of the recommended plan that were negotiated by the parties to the *Umbrella Final Agreement*. Prior to beginning the planning process, all parties to the land use plan signed a statement of intent that established guiding principles to achieve sustainable development. The Yukon government signed on to those principles.

In chapter 11 of the First Nation final agreements, all governments agreed to ensure that the use of Yukon land, water and resources is done in a coordinated and integrated manner so as to ensure sustainable development. The question is, does the Premier believe in the statement of intent signed by all parties and the objectives as set out in chapter 11 of the *Umbrella Final Agreement*?

**Hon. Mr. Cathers:** Again, I'm compelled to remind the member of the facts and what was actually said during the election campaign. The Yukon government has followed and will continue to follow the process outlined in the First Nation final agreements. During the 2011 election campaign, we publicly stated that the cost of implementing the commission's proposed plan could bankrupt the territory. We called the other political parties irresponsible for committing to accept the commission's proposed plan and we committed to seeking a final plan for the Peel that protects the environment and respects all sectors of the economy.

During the final stages of consultations with First Nations and the public, we will suggest modifications aimed at reaching our stated goal of a final plan for the Peel that protects the environment and respects all sectors of the economy. Again, I emphasize we will continue to fulfill our obligations under the First Nation final agreements.

**Ms. Hanson:** I would remind the member opposite it was not the responsibility of the land use planning commission to determine public policy with respect to other uses or dispositions. This government is choosing to make this fear-mongering, which I suggest is inappropriate.

The Peel is one of the last intact boreal ecosystems on the continent and the Premier's reversal of the plan will open the Peel to new roads, to uranium and coal mining and to oil and gas development. The Yukon Party promised to fully honour the commitments the Government of Yukon agreed to in the land claims agreements. Yet despite that promise, the Yukon Party government has, at the eleventh hour, reversed the entire intent of the recommended plan.

I'll ask again for the Premier to speak — to say — given his government's statements and rejection of the recommended plan, how will his government honour land claims agreements and restore the public trust in the land use planning process?

#### Speaker's statement

**Speaker:** Order. Order please. I would remind the gallery — you are not to participate. Another outburst like that and I may have to resort to clearing the gallery. Keep that in mind, please.

**Hon. Mr. Cathers:** One thing I must again remind the Leader of the NDP about — the member characterized the government's actions as "fear-mongering." It is the Leader of the NDP who is engaged in fear-mongering and painting outlandish pictures and predictions.

Mr. Speaker, again let me remind the member of the facts and what we said in the 2011 election campaign. During the 2011 election campaign, we said that the cost of implementing the commission's proposed plan could bankrupt the territory. We called the leaders of the other political parties irresponsible for committing to accept the commission's plan.

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

#### Point of order

**Speaker:** The Member for Takhini-Kopper King, on the point of order.

**Ms. White:** I think it's Standing Order 19(c) — it's repetition. This is the third time we've heard that — I think it's Standing Order 19(c).

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

**Hon. Mr. Cathers:** On the point of order, I am expressing the government's position in answering the question.

#### Speaker's ruling

**Speaker:** There is no point of order. The minister is responding to the question. The member may continue to ask the same question, if she so desires.

The minister has the floor.

**Hon. Mr. Cathers:** In conclusion, I have to remind the members opposite that what we said in the election — what we committed to — is seeking a final plan for the Peel that protects the environment and respects all sectors of the economy. We have fulfilled our obligations under the First Nation final agreements, and we will continue to do so. During the final stages of consultations with the public, with communities and with First Nations, we will suggest modifications aimed at

reaching our stated goal of a final plan for the Peel that protects the environment and respects all sectors of the economy.

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

**Mr. Tredger:** Mr. Speaker, at a cost of over \$1 million and seven years' hard work, hundreds of Yukoners exercised their democratic rights to participate in the Peel land use planning process through public meetings and providing comments. The Yukon government, its departments and representatives of the extractive industries were included in this process. During the election, the Yukon Party said it wouldn't prejudice the process. Now they have abandoned the process, slid their agenda in the back door, and are using the public purse to pay for an ongoing wave of full-page newspaper ads. How much has the government's Peel ad campaign cost Yukon taxpayers so far?

**Hon. Mr. Cathers:** Again, I have to begin by reminding the member that, in fact, he himself stood in this House last fall and asked the government to do more to explain our position and communicate it to Yukoners. That's what we're doing, as government does on many initiatives on an ongoing basis.

Again, I remind the member of the facts of what we actually said during the 2011 election campaign. We said the cost of implementing the commission's proposed plan could bankrupt the territory. We called the leaders of the other political parties irresponsible for committing to accepting the commission's proposed plan, and we publicly committed during the election campaign to seek a final plan for the Peel that protects the environment and respects all sectors of the economy. The Yukon government has followed, and will continue to follow, the process outlined by the First Nation final agreements. During the final stages of consultations with First Nations and the public, we will suggest modifications aimed at reaching our stated goal of a final plan for the Peel that protects the environment and respects all sectors of the economy. We have and will continue to fulfill our obligations under the First Nation final agreements.

**Mr. Tredger:** There is a difference between information and propaganda.

In the words of the chairman of the Peel Watershed Planning Commission, the plan is good public policy as it is written because it has the result of honest inquiry — science spoke, the people spoke, the issues were analyzed and the plan is the outcome. I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, I have talked to so many Yukoners who have said they felt betrayed when they found out the Peel plan had been dumped by this government. People's trust is broken because, rather than respect an inclusive and democratically created plan, the Yukon Party is spending tax dollars to sell us a whole new approach.

How long can we expect this reckless advertising campaign to take the place of good governance?

**Hon. Mr. Cathers:** I have to again remind the member for Mayo-Tatchun that, last fall, he asked the government to do more to communicate our views on the Peel plan to the public. That is what we're doing, as we advertise in many areas on an ongoing basis.

I have to point out to the member that we have not rejected the plan, as he said, but have indicated our views on the plan

and our intention to suggest modifications aimed at reaching our publicly stated goal of a final plan for the Peel that protects the environment and respects all sectors of the economy.

During the 2011 election campaign, we said the cost of implementing the commission's proposed plan could bankrupt the territory. We called the other political parties irresponsible for committing to accepting the commission's proposed plan, and we committed to seek a final plan for the Peel that protects the environment and respects all sectors of the economy.

We have followed the process; we will continue to follow the process; we will continue to fulfill our obligations under the First Nation final agreements.

**Mr. Tredger:** I'll again mention to the minister there is a difference between information and propaganda. As well, perhaps he has been beating a dead horse long enough and it's time to give us a different answer. Seven years of transparent and earnest work created a balanced plan.

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

**Point of order**

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

**Hon. Mr. Cathers:** I believe that the use of violent terminology has been ruled out of order in the past, even as it applies to animals.

**Speaker's ruling**

**Speaker:** Watch the use of violent language. Would the member like to rephrase that?

**Mr. Tredger:** That's fine.

The Yukon Party's rejection of this work, this process and this plan is polarizing people. It's dividing communities. It's dividing my friends. It's creating economic uncertainty for all industries, compromising all partners and stakeholders and may even be creating the need for litigation, where parties have no other recourse.

Mr. Speaker, as you can see, Yukoners won't be silenced. Will the minister do the right thing: drop the ad campaign and accept the Peel watershed plan as good public policy?

**Hon. Mr. Cathers:** Again, I point out, the member knows — or the member ought to know — that the government has not rejected the plan. The member's own colleague, the Member for Copperbelt South, indicated last fall that the government has the ability to approve the plan, modify the plan or reject the plan. The member's colleague is correct on that. As we have indicated, we have followed the process; we will continue to do so. During the final stages of consultations with First Nations and the public, we will suggest modifications aimed at reaching our stated goal of a final plan for the Peel that protects the environment and respects all sectors of the economy.

Again I have to remind the member of what we said during the 2011 election campaign: we said the cost of implementing the commission's proposed plan could bankrupt the territory. We called the other political parties irresponsible for committing to accept the commission's proposed plan. We committed to seek a final plan for the Peel that protects the environment

and respects all sectors of the economy. The Yukon government has followed and will continue to follow the process outlined in the First Nation final agreements. We have fulfilled our obligations; we will continue to do so.

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

**Mr. Silver:** Since the release of its Peel principles, a large portion of the Yukon public has expressed outrage at this Yukon Party government. Every day there are new letters in our local newspapers condemning the government's decision to derail the Peel planning process. There are NGOs and businesses that have expressed their anger and satirical ads highlighting the government's attempt to manipulate Yukoners through an inappropriate Peel principles advertisement campaign. Every day the government continues to waste taxpayers' money on a message that the majority of Yukoners doesn't want to hear and certainly doesn't want to pay for. All of the ads direct inquiries to the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources, so I direct my questions to the minister responsible.

How can the minister justify using taxpayers' dollars to pay for a campaign designed to convince the people of the Yukon to support something that many of them fervently oppose?

**Hon. Mr. Cathers:** I thank the Member for Klondike for the question. I point out to the member that government — every department of the government runs ad campaigns aimed at informing the public of things, including items that the government is proposing and the rationale behind why the government is proposing it. Again, I would remind the member of his own words last fall when he said that we need to stop talking in extremes when it comes to land use planning — that it's either environment or mining — that's where the political issues were and it can't be that simple. I agree and this government agrees with the statement the member made last fall.

Again, during the 2011 election campaign, we committed to seek a final plan for the Peel that protects the environment and respects all sectors of the economy. We also said the cost of implementing the commission's proposed plan could bankrupt the territory. We called the other political parties irresponsible for committing to accept the commission's plan.

The Yukon government has followed and will continue to follow the process outlined in the First Nation final agreements. During the final stages of consultations with First Nations and the public, we will suggest modifications aimed at reaching our stated goal of a final plan for the Peel that protects the environment and respects all sectors of the economy.

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

**Speaker:** I'd like to remind the people in the gallery once again: your comments are not invited. You're here to listen and not participate in the questions or debate. Your applause I appreciate, but keep it to a minimum. If it continues or gets out of hand, I will have no choice but to ask you to leave.

**Mr. Silver:** If the Yukon Party wants to spend its own money on a Peel principle ad campaign to promote its own agenda, that's one thing, but borrowing from the public purse to finance this smoke-and-mirrors show is just wrong. If the

government truly wants to inform the public of major issues through a series of professional ad campaigns, why not target the delays of the new F.H. Collins build? The question is not whether or not to build a rec centre in Dawson, but how to build a rec centre in Dawson.

I've counted the number of ads placed so far. At the government rate for advertising, this amount is thousands of dollars to the taxpayers, and this is just on ad placement and this is just so far. This is obscene and it needs to stop immediately.

Tallying up the cost of ad development, ad placement and any other costs related to this propaganda, how much in total has the government spent on this Peel principles advertising campaign?

**Hon. Mr. Cathers:** Again I have to point out to the Member for Klondike that part of what government does, what every department does, is inform the public, including providing the public information about what the government is proposing and the rationale behind it.

I have to draw the member's attention to what we said during the 2011 election campaign. We said the cost of implementing the commission's proposed plan could bankrupt the territory. We called the leaders of the other political parties irresponsible for committing to accept the commission's proposed plan and we committed to seeking a final plan for the Peel that protects the environment and respects all sectors of the economy.

The Yukon government has followed and will continue to follow the process outlined in the First Nation final agreements. During the final stages of consultations with First Nations and the public, we will suggest modifications aimed at reaching our stated goal of a final plan for the Peel that protects the environment and respects all sectors of the economy. Part of that will require the government to explain to people the rationale behind those proposed modifications.

Mr. Speaker, we have fulfilled and will continue to fulfill our obligations under the First Nation final agreements and to follow the process.

**Mr. Silver:** Mr. Speaker, the Yukon Party government and its supporters are on one side of this issue, and on the other are the First Nations, the Peel Watershed Planning Commission, several NGOs, many outfitting businesses, many placer miners and the tourism industry.

Finding a balance to protect the Peel is a slogan that has lost touch with reality. Compliance with the final agreement is a balanced approach, Mr. Speaker. The Yukon First Nations believe that the Yukon government's introduction of these principles at this point in the process — after the Peel commission has been effectively decommissioned — is nothing less than a breach of the final agreement.

Through propaganda, the Yukon Party government is telling people that the question has changed from whether to protect the Peel to how to protect the Peel. No democratic government has the right to impose its will on its citizens. What gives this Yukon Party government the right to tell Yukoners how they should feel and think about one of the territory's most important legacy issues?



**Hon. Mr. Cathers:** Mr. Speaker, I have to begin by reminding the Member for Klondike of the statement made by the interim Leader of the Liberal Party last month when the member announced he wanted to revisit the Liberal Party's position on the Peel watershed and characterized the Peel plan as a "locking it up and throwing away the key."

Mr. Speaker, I also point out to the member his own comments about the need to stop talking in extremes when it comes to land use planning.

The Yukon government has followed the process. We will follow the process. Part of proposing modifications requires communicating to the public the rationale behind those proposed modifications. As I indicated during the final stages of consultations with First Nations and the public, we will suggest modifications aimed at reaching our stated goal of a final plan for the Peel that protects the environment and respects all sectors of the economy.

Again I reiterate: during the 2011 election campaign, what we said was that the cost of implementing the commission's proposed plan could bankrupt the territory. We called the leaders of the other political parties irresponsible for committing to accept the commission's proposed plan. We committed to seek a final plan for the Peel that protects the environment and respects all sectors of the economy.

During the final stages of consultations with First Nations and the public, we will suggest modifications aimed at reaching our stated goal of a final plan for the Peel that protects the environment and respects all sectors of the economy. Part of that will include communicating to the public what those proposed modifications are and why government is proposing them.

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

**Mr. Elias:** On February 14, this Yukon Party government revealed its highly controversial plan for the Peel watershed. The government's eight Peel principles completely dismissed the recommendations of the Peel Watershed Planning Commission, undermined the years of hard work from Yukoners, and disregarded the millions of taxpayers' dollars and goodwill invested in the consultation process.

The Yukon Party's Peel principles didn't come from the planning commission, and they didn't come from the affected Yukon First Nations, and they sure as heck didn't come from the public. Yukoners would like to know from where these principles originated. So I have a simple question for the Premier: were these principles designed solely by the Yukon Party Cabinet for political messaging? Yes or no?

**Hon. Mr. Cathers:** Again, I have to remind the interim Leader of the Liberal Party of the fact that he announced publicly last night he wanted to revisit the Liberal Party position in supporting the Peel Watershed Planning Commission's report. The member characterized the proposed plan as "locking it up and throwing away the key."

Mr. Speaker, again, what we committed to during the 2011 election campaign was seeking a final plan for the Peel that protects the environment and respects all sectors of the economy. The Yukon government has followed, and we will continue to follow, the process outlined in First Nation final agreements. During the final stages of consultations with First Na-

tions and the public, we will suggest modifications aimed at reaching our stated goal of a final plan for the Peel that protects the environment and respects all sectors of the economy. Part of that requires explaining on what basis we believe modifications should be made — which is what we have done.

We have fulfilled and will continue to fulfill our obligations under the First Nation final agreements and follow the process.

**Mr. Elias:** First of all, the minister opposite should know better than to believe everything he reads in the local press. Secondly, Yukoners are here to hear from the Premier. We already know what the mining minister wants to do in the Peel River watershed — they want to hear from our Premier. Being it's the Ides of March, the gallery is full of soothsayers today with a warning to this Yukon Party government: beware of a deficit in democracy, especially when it comes to neglecting the land use planning processes of constitutionally protected agreements in this territory.

The Yukon Party government signed a joint letter of understanding with four First Nations involved in the Peel process. It was signed with good faith and without prejudice. It said "to achieve consensus on a coordinated response to the Peel Watershed Planning Commission on the Recommended Plan ..." Why did the Premier breach — I challenge him to get on his feet and talk to his citizens. Why did the Premier breach the planning process agreement the Yukon Party government signed on behalf of its citizens on January 20, 2011?

**Hon. Mr. Cathers:** I reiterate to the interim Leader of the Liberal Party that the Yukon government has followed and will continue to follow the process outlined in the First Nation final agreements. I have to again remind the member that last month he publicly declared his desire to revisit the Liberal Party position on supporting this document and the Peel planning commission's proposed plan for the area. The member said there are lots of ways you can protect an ecological region without locking it up and throwing away the key. Those are the member's words, as repeated in the press. If he feels that was inaccurate, that's an issue between him and the reporter. The member publicly told media he wanted to revisit the Liberal Party position.

I have to reiterate the fact of what we said in the 2011 election campaign. We committed to seek a final plan for the Peel that protects the environment and respects all sectors of the economy. We said the cost of implementing the commission's proposed plan could bankrupt the territory and we called the other political parties irresponsible for committing to accept the commission's proposed plan. During the final stages of consultation with First Nations and the public, we will suggest modifications aimed at reaching our stated goal of a final plan for the Peel that protects the environment and respects all sectors of the economy. We will continue to fulfill our obligations under the First Nation final agreements and the process, as we have continuously and consistently done through this process.

**Mr. Elias:** Yukoners want to hear from the Premier. He's the leader of this Yukon Party government. He's the only one who can stop this fiasco, because there are serious flaws in

the process here and I'm concerned about the public and their faith in the process.

That's why we're asking these questions today. Because 100 years from now, I don't want the citizens of this territory hanging their heads in shame and having to clean up the mess we have created. I want them to be proud of the decisions we make during our time regarding the number one environmental concern in our territory today. That's why we're here. We want to hear from the Premier. I challenge him to get on his feet and say something of value to Yukoners today.

Mr. Speaker, this public advertising campaign is nothing short of an undisguised attempt to skew public opinion with taxpayers' dollars. Again, I'm worried about the public and their faith in the process, because many Yukoners have been asking themselves, "Why should I even participate in these processes in the first place, if the Yukon Party government isn't going to bother to play by the rules and listen to me?"

This is about protecting the process. How is the Premier planning to restore the public faith and the constitutionally protected land use planning processes in our territory?

**Hon. Mr. Cathers:** Again, I remind the member that last month the interim Leader of the Liberal Party publicly declared he wanted to revisit the Liberal Party's position on the Peel watershed plan and reconsider and pull away from their previous support for that planning document.

The member said that there are a lot of ways you can protect an ecological region without locking it up and throwing away the key. He also said, "I'm going to keep the canoe on the right side of the river and keep that canoe steady." Well, apparently the Liberal canoe is rocking and he's not sure what side of the river he's on.

What we said — our position has been consistent. During the 2011 election campaign we said the cost of implementing the commission's proposed plan could bankrupt the territory. We called the other political parties irresponsible for committing to accept the commission's proposed plan and we committed to seek a final plan for the Peel that protects the environment and respects all sectors of the economy. The Yukon government has followed and will continue to follow the process outlined in the First Nation final agreements. During the final stages of consultations with First Nations and the public, we will suggest modifications aimed at reaching our stated goal of a final plan for the Peel that protects the environment and respects all sectors of the economy. We will continue to fulfill our obligations under the First Nation final agreements.

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

**Mr. Barr:** The minister's Tourism Yukon website promotes amazing outdoor adventures as one of Yukon's main attractions. The website asks, "If you have never paddled the Wind, the Snake or the historic Yukon — what are you waiting for?" This promotion attracts visitors from Europe, Asia and other countries around the globe to support our economy. They come to see our pristine wilderness, to enjoy what the website calls natural highs of a Yukon adventure in an unparalleled wilderness.

But the wilderness tourism industry cannot rely on a government website alone to allow them to contribute to a diverse,

productive, sustainable Yukon economy. The Yukon tourism industry needs the support of the minister and the minister needs the support of his colleagues in the Cabinet to fulfill his mandate.

Why has the Minister of Tourism and Culture allowed his colleagues to reverse a land use plan for the Peel watershed that allows the continuing productive use of the area by the industry he represents?

**Hon. Mr. Cathers:** Again I have to remind the member that we have indicated that we believe the plan should be modified. The member's own colleague, the Member for Copperbelt South, indicated last fall in this House that the government has the ability to approve the plan, modify the plan or reject the plan and the member was correct in that statement.

We have committed to seek a final plan for the Peel watershed area that protects the environment and respects all sectors of the economy — that is what we said; that is what we committed to during the territory's 2011 election campaign. During the 2011 election campaign — again, I reiterate what we said: we said the costs of implementing the commission's proposed plan could bankrupt the territory. We called the leaders of the other political parties irresponsible for committing to accept the commission's proposed plan. We committed to seeking a final plan for the Peel that protects the environment and respects all sectors of the economy. The Yukon government has followed and will continue to follow the process outlined in the First Nation final agreements.

During the final stages of consultations with First Nations and the public, we will suggest modifications aimed at reaching our stated goal of a final plan for the Peel that protects the environment and respects all sectors of the economy.

Mr. Speaker, we will continue to fulfill our obligations under the First Nation final agreements.

**Mr. Barr:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the minister for his 13 responses.

All Yukoners want a prosperous and dynamic economy. Not many people want to go back to the bad old days of the boom and bust, yet that is what this government is promoting in its rejection of the thoughtful and supportive land use plan for the Peel watershed. A sustainable economy is a diverse one — one that includes a wide range of activity, resource extraction included, but a sustainable economy is also one that supports the renewal of the source of its product. It does not endanger its source.

The mountains, wetlands and waters of the Peel are Yukon's larger-than-life resources. Will the Minister of Tourism and Culture commit to preserving the precious, untouched resources in the Peel watershed by demonstrating support for the current land use plan for the area?

**Hon. Mr. Cathers:** Mr. Speaker, again, I have to remind the member of the fact that the government has the ability to approve the plan, modify the plan or reject the plan. Those are the member's colleague's own words from the last fall.

We have indicated we believe the plan should be modified and, during the final stages of consultations with First Nations and the public, we will suggest modifications aimed at reaching our stated goal of a final plan for the Peel that protects the envi-

ronment and respects all sectors of the economy. During the 2011 election campaign, what we said was that the cost of implementing the commission's proposed plan could bankrupt the territory. We called the leaders of the other political parties irresponsible for committing to accept the commission's proposed plan.

We committed to seek a final plan for the Peel that protects the environment and respects all sectors of the economy. We remain committed to that goal. During the final stages of consultations with First Nations and the public, we will suggest modifications aimed at reaching our stated goal of a final plan for the Peel that protects the environment and respects all sectors of the economy. We will continue to fulfill our obligations under the First Nation final agreements.

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

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### GOVERNMENT BILLS

#### Bill No. 6: *First Appropriation Act, 2012-13* — Second Reading

**Clerk:** Second reading, Bill No. 6, standing in the name of the Hon. Mr. Pasloski.

**Hon. Mr. Pasloski:** I move that Bill No. 6, entitled *First Appropriation Act, 2012-13*, be now read a second time.

**Speaker:** It has been moved by the Hon. Premier that Bill No. 6, entitled *First Appropriation Act, 2012-13*, be now read a second time.

#### Budget speech

**Hon. Mr. Pasloski:** Mr. Speaker, honourable members, it is my honour and privilege today to table the 2012-13 budget — a surplus budget, and the first budget of the 33<sup>rd</sup> Yukon Legislative Assembly.

The nine budgets tabled previously by the two successive Yukon Party governments have put Yukon on the pathway to prosperity. The 2012-13 budget will help the territory continue on that journey.

The Government of Yukon's budget for 2012-13 is \$1,156,700,000 — the largest budget to date of the Yukon government. The operation and maintenance budget totals \$925.1 million, of which \$110.8 million is recoverable. The capital budget is \$231.6 million, of which \$70.2 million is recoverable.

This is the fourth Yukon government budget to exceed the \$1-billion threshold. By way of comparison, the first Yukon Party government budget for the 2003-04 year was only \$550 million. The Government of Yukon has one of the healthiest financial positions of all jurisdictions in Canada today. Only Yukon and Alberta have the financial resources available to fund future government operations without creating net debt. This 2012-13 budget, like its predecessors, includes a multi-year capital plan that allows Yukon's private sector contractors to plan ahead in relation to our coming into stable, predictable investments in key sectors of our economy. The nine previous

Yukon Party government budgets were utilized to help stimulate the Yukon's private sector economy.

Today, the Yukon's private sector economy is approaching parity with the government in contributing to the growth of the territorial economy. While our 2012-13 budget will continue to promote economic stimulation, it will also focus on initiatives to manage prosperity to address the challenges that accompany a growing, prosperous economy.

The 2012-13 budget has a healthy \$80.009 million-dollar surplus. This surplus demonstrates a forward-looking financial plan. There are a number of funding pressures on the horizon that the Yukon government must take into account in its long-term planning, such as that: the Building Canada plan expires in 2014 and no replacement fund has been announced by Canada. The territorial health system sustainability initiative expires in 2014 and, as of yet, there is no federal commitment to extend the initiative beyond that date.

Funding by the Government of the United States for the Shakwak agreement signed in 1977 to upgrade and maintain the north Alaska Highway and the Haines Road expired in 2009 and has continued on a year-to-year basis with no longer term funding agreement in place.

The Government of Yukon is appealing a Supreme Court ruling to build a multi-million-dollar school for French-speaking high school students. Yukon's growing population will require the construction of one or perhaps two new schools in Whitehorse over the next five years, in addition to the construction of the new F.H. Collins high school.

Yukon's growing population will require the expansion of the Whitehorse General Hospital, and the expanding economy will require more Yukon government investment in energy, transportation and community infrastructure.

In view of this surplus, our government will be in a better position to respond to these potential emerging priorities and pressures.

Mr. Speaker, for the first time, the budget includes a summary of the consolidated financials for the Yukon government reporting entity. This is a significant step forward in our efforts to improve transparency and accountability.

Yukon today enjoys one of the most prosperous economies in all of Canada. Our economy is growing, and so is our population. Between 2006 and 2011, Yukon experienced an 11.7 percent population growth rate — the highest growth rate in the country. Yukon's economic growth rate, similarly, has been strong, recording seven consecutive years of gross domestic product gains.

Our growth rate was the highest in the country in 2009. The current conservative Yukon forecast is a 3.9 percent real GDP growth for 2011. The Conference Board of Canada, however, has an even more optimistic projection, forecasting an 8.6 percent real GDP growth rate for the Yukon for 2011.

Yukon's mining sector is primarily responsible for this growth and 90 percent of exploration in Yukon is conducted by junior exploration companies that contribute significantly to the Yukon's economic development. Between 2004 and 2006, total exploration expenditures increased from \$22 million in 2004 to

just over \$100 million in 2006. Expenditures in 2007 were \$140 million, \$110 million in 2008 and \$100 million in 2009.

Exploration expenditures for 2011 are estimated to be over \$300 million, almost twice the previous record of \$157 million, set in 2010. There are 107 active mining companies in the territory, which staked 83,161 quartz claims in 2010 and a record 114,587 claims in 2011. With three operating mines, the current mineral production value is estimated to be approximately \$420 million.

Tourism, another key economic driver, is holding its own despite the economic problems in the United States and in Europe. Annual tourism visitation for 2011 is estimated to be around 320,000, following strong growth in international border crossings in 2010.

While Yukon's labour force continues to grow, the territory continues to have one of the lowest unemployment rates in Canada, with an unemployment rate for 2011 expected to be under six percent for the year. Based on the strong year-to-date numbers for building permits, the 2011 forecast has been revised upward to \$180 million, which would represent a record value for Yukon.

Given the growth in retail sales posted for the first nine months of 2011, it appears the 2011 total will likely exceed the May forecast of \$630 million and total over \$660 million. Most of these indicators are from 2011.

We are now in the first quarter of 2012 and the population and economy are continuing to grow. The question has to be asked: where will the territory be five to 10 years from now, should these trends continue?

Yukon has a rich mining history. So goes mining, so goes Yukon. Mining has continued to be the cornerstone of the Yukon economy from the days of the Klondike Gold Rush of 1898 to the present day. The territory has experienced several boom-and-bust cycles over these years.

Placer gold mining was the backbone of the Yukon economy from the time of the gold rush until the early 1920s. It rose in prominence again from the 1940s to the 1960s and remains an economic mainstay to this very day.

High-grade silver/lead veins were first discovered in the Keno Hill area in 1906. The first mill was constructed in 1925 with intermittent development and production until 1941. The Keno Hill mine was reactivated in 1945 and operated, more or less continuously, until production was suspended in January 1989 due to low silver prices. During this time, the Keno Hill area was the second largest silver-producing district in all of Canada.

Skarn copper mineralization was first discovered in the Whitehorse area in 1897 with shipments of high-grade ore totalling 150,000 tonnes prior to 1930. In 1966, a 1,800-tonnes-per-day mill was constructed followed by an open-pit mining operation that lasted until 1982. Massive sulfide zinc, lead, silver mineralization was first discovered near Vangorda Creek in the Anvil Range in 1953.

The huge Faro ore body was discovered in 1965. Mine production commenced in 1970 and continued intermittently until it finally closed in 1997. When the Yukon Party took office in 2002, Yukon's mining industry was almost defunct with

annual mining exploration and development spending in the territory being less than \$10 million.

There were several factors causing the decline irrespective of world mineral prices. There was a lack of confidence in the Yukon mining industry due in large measure to an improper balance in government policy, regulation and legislation between the economy and the environment. Unsettled land claims, a cumbersome, time-consuming Ottawa-based permitting regime and implementation of policies such as the Yukon protected areas strategy at the territorial level and the placer mining policies at the federal level impeded Yukon's mining and other resource industries. Yukon experienced seven years of economic recession and Yukon's population had been in decline for six consecutive years following the closure of the Faro mine in 1997.

I ask all members to compare where Yukon stands today in stark contrast to where it stood in 2002. Yukon now has three operating mines: Capstone's Minto mine, Alexco's Keno Hill Mines properties and Yukon Zinc's Wolverine mine. Together these three mines directly employ more than 600 workers. Four major mining projects are in the permitting stage. These projects could employ an additional 1,000 workers, providing an additional economic growth and opportunity for Yukon people and Yukon businesses.

Over 2,500 direct jobs are currently working in placer mining operations and mineral exploration throughout Yukon. The Yukon Chamber of Mines attributes the success of the mining industry in Yukon today to three key factors: (1) the devolution of land and resource management to the Government of Yukon by the Government of Canada in 2003; (2) the comprehensive land claims agreements reached with 11 of 14 Yukon First Nations; and (3) the establishment of a single assessment authority on behalf of all responsible authorities — that's Yukon, Canada and First Nations — that has greatly simplified the assessment process and provides more certainty and transparency in all the permitting processes.

Ten days ago the Fraser Institute's survey of mining companies announced that the Yukon is the tenth most attractive jurisdiction for mineral exploration and development in the world and the first Canadian territory to ever reach the top 10. The survey assessed 93 jurisdictions around the world.

I asked the question earlier — where the Yukon would be five to 10 years from now should this positive trend continue. In a recent report by Deloitte, *Extracting value — Yukon mining 2011 — A core opportunity*, it states "...8 companies anticipate having a newly producing mine by 2015; an additional 4 have planned production no later than 2018 ..."; "... \$5,242,000,000 in capital expenditures, associated with mine construction, is anticipated by 2018 ..." Even if a quarter of this prediction proves true, there will be a significant impact on Yukon.

We have been advised that Victoria Gold Corporation's Eagle property near Mayo will be in production by 2014-15. During construction there will be 415 direct jobs created and 384 jobs for the operations phase. North American Tungsten reopened its Cantung mine in October 2010. The latest esti-

mates have the mine with enough mineral reserves to support mine life for four years, ending in the fourth quarter of 2014.

The company's Mactung deposit has been identified as one of the largest high-grade tungsten deposits in the world. North American tungsten is ramping up mine development activity at Mactung and anticipates major construction to begin in 2013-14.

Selwyn Chihong Mining Ltd.'s Selwyn project, located at Howard's Pass on the Yukon-Northwest Territories border, is one of the largest undeveloped lead-zinc deposits in the world. The mineral resources are contained in more than 12 zones, or sub-deposits, collectively part of one giant mineral deposit that is at least 38 kilometres in length. The Selwyn lead-zinc deposit has the potential to be defined as the largest in the world. The company is planning to submit its project proposal to YESSAB by early spring of 2012.

Western Copper and Gold Corp.'s Casino property, due west of Pelly Crossing, is another massive deposit containing gold, copper, molybdenum and silver and has a 23- to 50-year mining life. Should it proceed to construction, it would create 17,691 jobs in Canada with 3,340 jobs being in the Yukon during the four-year construction phase and 1,610 jobs in Canada with 1,054 being in the Yukon for the operations phase. It would require 120 megawatts of power, almost equivalent to the territory's current energy supply. Heap-leach gold production has been targeted for 2017 with milling operation production being slated for 2019.

I won't take the time to describe the other 12 major mining projects in Yukon today, nor do I have a crystal ball to foretell the future of which of these ventures will ultimately turn into operating mines. If I did have that ability, I would likely not be standing here in front of you today. Suffice to say that should one of these large mines come into production, Yukon would achieve a new plateau of providing a stable foundation for economic growth and prosperity in the territory for decades to come.

Mr. Speaker, the Yukon Party's 2011 election platform, "Moving Forward Together," continues to build on the four pillars of the previous nine Yukon Party government budgets: a better quality of life, environment, economy and good governance. Our platform deals with the challenges that a growing, prosperous economy creates: the increasing demand for clean, affordable energy; the increasing demand for improved transportation and communication infrastructure; housing and land availability; increased pressures on our land and resource management systems designed to protect Yukon's environment; achieving a final plan for the Peel watershed region that protects the environment and respects all sectors of the economy by following the processes set out in the *Umbrella Final Agreement*; increasing pressures on our health and social services safety net; and, the increasing demand for more education and training facilities and programs to develop a skilled Yukon labour force.

Mr. Speaker, we welcome these challenges. I will address how we are going about meeting these challenges under the four pillars.

One of the greatest challenges facing the Yukon in terms of promoting a strong, diversified private sector economy is the provision of affordable, clean energy. The total hydro generating capacity of the Yukon Energy Corporation, inclusive of the dams at Whitehorse, Aishihik, Mayo, Mayo B and the third turbine at Aishihik, is 92 megawatts.

The total electrical generation capacity combining that generated by the Yukon Energy Corporation and Yukon Electrical Company Ltd. and including hydro, diesel and wind is 149.5 megawatts. As stated earlier, the Casino mine alone will require 120 megawatts of power.

In the 2011 election campaign, the Yukon Party committed our government to meet the territory's energy needs by investing in short-, medium- and long-term solutions. In the short term, we have completed the Mayo B hydro project that will provide an additional 10 megawatts, the development of an independent power producer policy and net metering.

In the near- to medium-term, we believe the development of the natural gas industry and in particular, liquefied natural gas — LNG — is the best alternative. It is cleaner than diesel and is about half the cost.

Further, Northern Cross, in partnership with the China National Offshore Oil Company Ltd., is in the process of developing its natural gas reserves out of the Eagle Plains basin. Accordingly, natural gas is going to be our primary focus for the development to meet Yukon's near- to medium-term energy needs.

For the longer term, we would like to focus on larger scale hydroelectric projects. However, the development of such projects would be dependent upon connecting the territory's power grid west to Alaska and/or south to British Columbia in order to sell excess power to other jurisdictions. The estimated cost for connecting the Yukon grid to the British Columbia grid is between \$1.5 billion and \$2 billion. Yukon simply doesn't have the financial capacity to undertake large hydroelectric projects or to connect the territory's grids to British Columbia or Alaska at the present time or the foreseeable future.

Increasing Yukon's energy capacity, even for the short- to medium-term, is going to require partnerships — partnerships with the mining and oil and gas industries, partnerships with Yukon First Nations, Yukon Electrical Company Limited, the private sector as well as, hopefully, the Government of Canada.

In a recent survey of chief executive officers, one CEO was quoted as saying, "Power and transportation needs a significant upgrade to allow Yukon's mineral potential to be realized." The comments of other CEOs in the survey echoed this remark.

Our government, like the two previous Yukon Party governments, continues to invest heavily in transportation infrastructure, primary roads, secondary roads, rural roads, resource roads, bridges and airports. Under the Shakwak project, \$7 million has been allocated to stabilize and upgrade the Haines Road and \$8 million for the Alaska Highway. A further \$1 million from the Yukon government will be spent to rehabilitate areas impacted by permafrost degradation on the north Alaska Highway. The Campbell Highway will undergo reconstruction from kilometre 10 to 190 with an allocation of \$7.25 million,

and a further \$1.5 million will be utilized for surfacing to minimize road degradation under current industrial traffic loads.

The 2012-13 budget is providing \$1.6 million to replace failing culverts at Too Much Gold and Allgold creeks on the Klondike Highway, as well as \$1.45 million to improve safety and road conditions on the North Canol Road. The Atlin Road will be reconstructed from kilometre 32 to 36 and will see BST work and re-vegetation from kilometre 17 to 22 and kilometre 36 to 41, at a cost of \$2.6 million.

Other highway improvements include \$2 million for the Takhini Hot Springs Road reconstruction, \$500,000 for rehabilitation and surfacing of the Silver Trail, \$900,000 for surfacing, spot repairs and erosion control for the Dempster Highway, \$500,000 for resource access roads program, \$200,000 for the rural roads upgrading program and \$1 million for surfacing and safety improvements on various secondary roads throughout the Yukon.

The Erik Nielsen Whitehorse International Airport will also see improvement projects to support airside activities, including taxiway improvements, hangar rehabilitation and the installation of a second bridge, or jetway. The 2012-13 budget is providing \$1.875 million for these improvements.

A further \$7.406 million over two years — and that's roughly over \$3.3 million in 2012-13 and just over \$4 million in 2013-14 — is being provided to extend water and sewer services to the south commercial area at the Erik Nielsen Whitehorse International Airport.

Water and sewer service currently ends at the air terminal building. Lack of water is hindering development in the area, as the City of Whitehorse will not issue development permits for new construction without a commitment to provide sufficient water for structural firefighting purposes. This is directly affecting Air North and Alkan Air expansion plans.

In addition, Yukon government's wildlife fire management — WFM — needs upgrades to their current water supply system for the air tanker base. This is an above-ground system that does not meet Transport Canada requirements, so any replacement will need to be buried, even one undertaken by WFM in the absence of any water or sewer extension.

Extensions of water and sewer will also enhance the development potential of currently unoccupied lease parcels in the area. The budget is also providing \$1.82 million to address airside deficiencies at Yukon aerodromes. Projects include airfield levelling, brushing, safety and security improvements, lighting, navigational aid upgrades, installation of run-up pads, and an application of EK-35 runway enhancement at Burwash, Dawson and Mayo.

Bridge work includes \$6 million for major rehabilitation, including substructure improvements and deck repairs for the Upper Liard Bridge. A further \$1.56 million is being allocated for rehabilitation work on the Aishihik River, Jarvis Creek, Stewart River and Haldane Creek bridges.

Communication infrastructure is also important for a growing and expanding economy. By working with Northwestel over the years, every community in Yukon now has a cellphone and high-speed Internet connectivity.

By working with Northwestel over the years, every community in Yukon now has a cellphone and high-speed Internet connectivity. However, broadband capacity could be improved and there is no redundancy. If the sole fibre optic cable is damaged, broadband traffic is re-routed through a slower and older microwave system. There may be opportunities to address the redundancy issue. One option would be for a fiber optic cable to run from Carcross to Skagway, connecting with Juneau and Seattle. There may also be opportunities to work with Northwestel and the Canadian Space Agency to extend a fiber optic cable up the Dempster Highway to Eagle Plains to set up a system that retrieves information from foreign satellites.

The more diversified the economy is, the stronger it is. Successive Yukon Party governments have championed diversification by promoting natural resource development, research and development, information technology, agriculture, forestry, tourism, trade, arts and culture, film and sound, manufacturing, trapping, outfitting, wilderness tourism and small business.

Of interest here — Yukon is set to host federal, provincial and territorial agricultural ministers in September 2012. This will allow for the subsequent bilateral agreement negotiations between the Yukon government and the Government of Canada to take place.

The bilateral agreement provides funding for Yukon agricultural projects within the framework of the Growing Forward multilateral agreement and is mainly targeted toward producers and processors. Farm groups, non-profit organizations and territorial, municipal and First Nations governments are also eligible.

Tourism and Culture has always been and remains an economic mainstay. Yukon Party governments have invested heavily in tourism marketing campaigns over the years with considerable success. In February 2011, Yukon and Canada jointly announced funding toward Yukon's overseas travel destination awareness marketing campaign aimed at Europe, Australia, Japan and South Korea.

The joint partnership with the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency — or CanNor — has identified \$3.4 million over four years with \$490,000 being allocated in 2012-2013 to continue the campaign to promote and strengthen the awareness of Yukon to overseas international travel trade, media and consumer markets.

Currently, Yukon is benefiting from a dramatic increase in the number of Japanese travellers visiting the territory this winter to experience the aurora borealis.

CanNor is also providing \$800,000 in 2012-13 to fund Canada's north marketing campaign aimed at promoting the Yukon, the Northwest Territories and Nunavut as travel destinations to southern Canadians.

This May, Yukon will host the 2012 Canadian Tourism Commission's Go Media Marketplace in Whitehorse that will bring in approximately 150 of the top travel media from around the world. This is the first time that Go Media has been held north of the 60th parallel and is an opportunity to showcase our world-class destination to important media influences.

Yukon Party governments have also invested heavily in tourism, arts and cultural infrastructure; namely, the Old Fire-

hall and roundhouse in downtown Whitehorse, the Kwanlin Dün Cultural Centre and Whitehorse Public Library, as well as the new Champagne and Aishihik First Nations Da Ku Cultural Centre in Haines Junction scheduled to open this fall.

We are providing five years of funding certainty for the Yukon Cold Climate Innovation Centre. The commercialization of cold climate technologies will provide important economic opportunities for Yukoners and contribute to the diversification of the Yukon economy.

Housing and land availability have emerged as a major challenge as a result of Yukon's growing, prosperous economy.

Our government is working with the City of Whitehorse, rural municipalities, First Nations and private developers to make land available for community, residential, agricultural, commercial and industrial purposes.

A request for expressions of interest on potential approaches to private sector development of affordable rental units was issued in November 2011. Opportunities to incorporate the concepts and recommendations received into future projects and land offerings are being explored and options for the release of lot 262 are being developed for this spring.

The Yukon government has a considerable number of lots in downtown Whitehorse that could also be developed. A lottery and tender for 57 residential and 20 industrial lots and an evaluative process for release of three agricultural parcels is underway. Four of the residential lots are in Whitehorse and 53 are in Haines Junction. The 20 industrial lots are in Dawson City and the three agricultural lots are in Haines Junction.

Whistle Bend phase 1 is scheduled for the fall of 2012 and will include 93 single family, eight duplex and nine multi-family lots plus one commercial and one school site.

Our government and the Kwanlin Dün First Nation signed a letter of understanding that enables Yukon and the First Nation to work together on potential residential land opportunities on Kwanlin Dün settlement land in the Whitehorse area.

Mr. Speaker, I recently met with the mayor and council of the City of Whitehorse and offered assistance to help expedite the development of phases 3, 4 and 5 of Whistle Bend. The 2012-13 budget provides \$5 million to start the detailed engineering and construction for these future phases to ensure that additional building lots are available in 2014.

While Whistle Bend will accommodate 8,000 people, it is our belief and conviction that planning new areas for residential expansion should begin now. Land development on the east side of the Yukon River and to the north would require the construction of another bridge and collaboration with Kwanlin Dün and Ta'an Kwäch'än First Nations.

Our government has offered financial support to the City of Whitehorse to begin planning future developments.

Our government is committed to modernizing the land titles system. A land titles inspector will prepare a report with recommendations for immediate improvements to business processes as well as identify specific areas for legislative and systems modernization.

The value and number of transactions processed by the Land Titles Office continues to reach historically high levels. The value of real estate transactions for 2010-11 was just over

\$228 million, a 24-percent increase from the year before. The 2012-13 budget is providing \$34.984 million for land development this year.

Mr. Speaker, the unprecedented high level of resource activity is placing increased pressures on our land and resource management systems designed to protect Yukon's environment.

Accordingly, our government is providing additional capacity for inspections related to mines and mineral exploration.

The Client Services and Inspections branch of the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources will be expanding its capacity for conducting inspections and ensuring regulatory and environmental compliance.

The Faro and Mount Nansen projects are entering a new phase where both will be completing remediation design and planning for assessment and permitting. Due to the increased level of activity and the movement of these projects towards implementation, both projects require a significant increase in project funds of \$24.768 million for a total of \$49.985 million.

The Government of Canada, through the federal contaminated sites action plan, provides 100 percent funding for site operations and the development of remediation plans. Yukon's Department of Environment is conducting a three-year \$452,000 cumulative effects baseline study.

The Fish and Wildlife, Water Resources and Environmental Programs branches are coordinating their efforts to acquire information on the cumulative effects of quartz mining exploration in three Yukon areas. The information is to guide the long-term conservation of fish and wildlife and their habitats in order to support agencies responsible for environmental assessment and land disposition requests.

A further \$60,000 is being allocated to acquire water monitoring equipment to be used by the Water Resources branch to gather information that will provide an understanding of the industrial impacts on waterways in the remote but highly active White Gold District.

The Department of Environment has established the Yukon water website as a single-source web portal to help individuals, industry, governments, non-government organizations and regulatory agencies to get information they need on everything to do with water in the Yukon. The site lists over 1,300 locations around the territory where water is being monitored or was studied in the past, and provides details on how water is used for mining, agriculture, fisheries, forestry and oil and gas.

Information is also provided on the federal, territorial, municipal and First Nation governments and their role in water management, as well as the regulatory agencies that review water use in the territory.

Our government is committed to creating a Yukon water strategy that will ensure Yukoners have access to safe drinking water, increased data collection and information, such as the [www.yukonwater.ca](http://www.yukonwater.ca) website I just described above, and upgrading drinking water and waste-water treatment facilities in communities to meet new standards for water quality.

On February 16, 2012, our government contracted an independent consulting company to conduct a health impact as-

assessment as part of our due diligence to ensure the integrity of the water supply at Keno. Yukon Party governments in previous budgets have appropriated considerable financial resources to ensure Yukon communities have clean drinking water. The 2012-13 budget is no exception.

Under the Building Canada plan, the Department of Community Services is providing \$12.3 million in the 2012-13 budget, as part of a multi-year program to improve water and waste-water systems throughout Yukon. This work includes the replacement of in-ground piping in Faro, Haines Junction, Mayo and Watson Lake. A further \$15 million under the Building Canada plan is being provided for the construction of new wells, pumphouses and treatment plants in Burwash, Carcross, Deep Creek, Dawson, Mendenhall, Haines Junction, Mayo, Old Crow, Ross River, Tagish and Teslin to improve the quality of potable water in communities.

Our government continues to implement initiatives in keeping with the *Yukon Solid Waste Action Plan*, including composting at community solid-waste facilities, waste compaction systems, household hazardous-waste containment facilities, installation of groundwater monitoring wells in 18 Yukon landfills and installation of recycling bins and signage at all Yukon-operated solid-waste facilities, to provide the public with greater opportunity to recycle their solid waste.

The 2012-13 budget includes a \$766,000 increase in the operations and maintenance budget for solid-waste management, together with almost \$3.4 million in additional capital dollars, including projects identified under the gas tax fund and the Building Canada fund.

Since 2009, Yukon has met a number of goals with the *Solid Waste Action Plan*, including the end of open burning of domestic waste last January at all 20 unincorporated solid-waste facilities. These former open-trench burning sites had been transformed into transfer stations or full-service solid-waste facilities.

We continue to implement our government's climate change strategy and action plan, as well as support the Yukon Research Centre at Yukon College. The centre combines research, natural and social sciences and traditional knowledge to create solutions for northern climates and is receiving \$1.088 million per year for the next two years to fund its operations.

Despite the controversy over the *Peel Watershed Regional Land Use Plan*, Yukon Party governments have done more to protect and preserve Yukon's environment and wildlife than any previous Yukon government. Currently, Yukon has 12.68 percent of its land protected, second only to British Columbia. Six areas have been designated as future territorial parks and seven habitat protection areas have also been established.

Further, the previous Yukon Party government is the only Yukon government to succeed in developing a regional land use plan — the *North Yukon Regional Land Use Plan* — since the *Umbrella Final Agreement* was signed off way back in 1993.

The *Peel Watershed Regional Land Use Plan* was an issue in the 2011 territorial election campaign. The Yukon Conservation Society, the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society, the opposition political parties and the four affected First Nations

all indicated they were supporting positions of either 100-percent to 80-percent protection for the Peel watershed. During the election campaign, the Yukon Party did not indicate its support for this high level protection, but called instead for a final Peel plan that protects the environment and respects all sectors of the economy. We were severely criticized for taking this position by those supporting 100- to 80-percent protection.

There were cars driving around with bumper stickers reading, "Protect the Peel. Let's vote on it." Well, on October 11, 2011, Yukoners did exercise their vote and elected a majority Yukon Party government for a historic third term. Our government has followed the planning process set out in the *Umbrella Final Agreement* and will continue to do so. In the final stages of the planning process, we will consult with First Nations, stakeholders and the public to seek a final plan for the Peel watershed region that protects the environment and respects all sectors of the economy.

Achieving a better quality of life is one of the central pillars of our 2011 election platform, "Moving Forward Together". Another major challenge created by the territory's growing prosperous economy is the increasing demand for more education and training facilities and programs to develop a skilled labour force. Our government is committed to working toward developing Yukon College into a northern university over time. The Yukon Research Centre and the Cold Climate Innovation Centre are already located at Yukon College and there are plans to develop a centre for northern innovation in mining, to be located at the college as well.

In January 2012, Yukon's labour force saw yet another record high of 20,900 people. Of those, 19,600 were employed. Since 2004, Yukon has registered year over year in-migration and an expanding labour force, where the growth is concentrated in the 25-to-34 age group. This is the age group that has children. There will be a need for more schools and training facilities. We must train Yukoners for Yukon opportunities.

Our government has established a new \$75,000 annual business training fund to help Yukon businesses access training opportunities to further contribute to the Yukon's economic growth. The training fund will be administered by the Whitehorse Chamber of Commerce and offers training opportunities to businesses and individuals to create job opportunities for Yukon residents.

The business training fund resulted from a recommendation in the action plan for the 2011 comprehensive skills and trades training strategy, which was developed by the Government of Yukon working together with local labour market stakeholders, including business and industry, the Government of Canada, First Nation governments and non-government organizations. The work done by these groups was the result of a labour market framework that was created to ensure Yukon has the workforce it needs. The labour market framework strategy is comprised of five strategies: labour market information strategy, comprehensive skills and trades training strategy, immigration strategy, recruitment strategy and the employee retention strategy.

We recognize the Yukon will need to attract additional labour from other regions of the country and from around the



world. There will be an increasing demand for both skilled and unskilled labour. Improvements have been made to the Yukon nominee program to make it easier for applicants to apply.

Four new stakeholder committees were created in the summer of 2011 under the labour market framework. The committees oversee implementation, monitoring and evaluation of strategies and include members from the business community, industry, non-government organizations, educational institutions and First Nation governments.

The licensed practical nurse program launched by the previous Yukon Party government in 2009 at Yukon College has graduated all 11 people who were enrolled in the first intake. All of these graduates are now working in the Yukon health care field. Our government will provide \$1.86 million to extend the LPN program to 2016. This continuation will allow two more intakes of up to 15 practical nurse students per class to graduate and find work here in Yukon.

An updated construction schedule has been established for the F.H. Collins Secondary School replacement project. This new schedule will allow our government the time required to review the design and ensure that it takes into account all the objectives and input received from the education community.

The Wood Street Centre is introducing a new program this year that is open to all grade 9 and 10 students. The new program is entitled "CHAOS," the Community, Heritage, Adventure, Outdoors and Skills 9 program. It offers integration of the subject areas and develops an understanding and connections to First Nation knowledge, traditions, skills, values and beliefs. The program was developed in response to the secondary school programming review report and the Yukon First Nations Education Advisory Committee's strategic plan.

Yukon First Nation language programs are offered in 21 of 28 Yukon schools and include seven of the eight Yukon First Nation language groups. This is a significant accomplishment.

The arrest processing unit, formerly known as the secure assessment centre, will be constructed to replace the RCMP detachment cells. This \$2.385 million investment is a major step forward in providing a more humane way of processing prisoners who have access to 24-hour nursing and specially-trained correctional staff while they're being held pending processing.

The Department of Justice is moving forward with implementing another of the recommendations of the *Sharing Common Ground* report by appointing members to the Yukon Police Council. The Yukon Police Council was created in response to the review of Yukon's police force. The role of the Yukon Police Council is to ensure that a broad representation of Yukon citizens have input into the territory police service objectives, priorities and goals established by the Minister of Justice and ensure that the community needs and values are reflected in police priorities; provide advice to the Minister of Justice to consider when establishing policing objectives, priorities and goals pursuant to the territory's police services agreement, and increase the flow of information between citizens, the Department of Justice and M Division of the RCMP.

Our government is proud of the new, state-of-the-art Whitehorse Correctional Centre, one of the largest capital projects ever undertaken by any Yukon government.

Many previous governments talked and complained about the old Whitehorse Correctional Centre but it took a Yukon Party government to actually replace this aging facility.

The Yukon is a recognized leader in dealing with FASD with the establishment of the Community Wellness Court, a therapeutic court in the Yukon justice system, as well as our support for the land-based healing pilot program at Jackson Lake, administered by the Kwanlin Dun First Nation.

We have been contacting Yukon First Nation chiefs in order to ascertain if there is support for the concept of one major land-based treatment program in Yukon. Our government is committed to providing \$1 million over the course of our mandate to support a land-based treatment program which was so near and dear to the heart of our former colleague, the Hon. John Edzerza, the MLA for McIntyre-Takhini.

Dividing up \$1 million dollars 14 ways for individual First Nation land-based treatment programs will not be as effective as having one unified treatment centre. Further, if we combine our resources, we may be able to attract other funding sources and other jurisdictions. We raised this issue already with the federal minister, the Hon. Leona Aglukkaq, and she expressed an interest in the concept. Should we succeed in developing a certified treatment program that equals that found at Round Lake in British Columbia, we may attract clients from the other two territories and the provinces on a fee-for-service basis. We believe Kwanlin Dun's Jackson Lake land-based treatment program would be the natural choice because of its experience and its location. Should Yukon First Nations endorse this concept, we would like to put it on the agenda for the Yukon Forum for discussion in order to determine how to proceed. At the same time, we are also working with the Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Society Yukon to continue their good work as their funding agreement with Canada is due to expire.

Yukon's expanding population and growing economy are creating public demands for more developed lots and affordable housing. Housing and land availability are the obverse and reverse of the same coin. We are addressing both issues. Yukon Housing Corporation, through economic stimulus funding, has constructed in excess of 125 new units, along with upgrading 350 units, to better meet the housing needs of low- and moderate-income earners.

No previous government has done more and we intend to continue to address the housing needs of Yukoners. The Women's Directorate has committed a total of \$4.5 million for a second-stage housing facility here in Whitehorse. Betty's Haven will provide 10 units of supportive, secure and affordable transitional housing for 12 to 18 months for women and their children who are fleeing abuse. This is another election commitment that has been met.

Mr. Speaker, thanks to our lobbying efforts, we were able to secure a two-year extension to the territorial health system sustainability initiative, or THSSI, until 2014. This funding is used to support health care innovation and transformation and improve access to services. We plan to work with our two sister

territories to develop a business case for presentation to the federal government to justify a continuation of this funding for the longer term.

Health care costs are constantly rising. The 2012-13 budget includes \$4.048 million to deal with the increase in costs and volumes of hospital claims. Our government is providing a \$561,000 increase in funding to help NGOs keep up with the cost of living by recognizing that these organizations' costs also increase and that those costs should not be absorbed at the expense of core programs.

The Department of Health and Social Services is providing \$65,000 in this budget to continue to support the Challenge program for people with mental disabilities to learn life and job skills at the Bridges Café in Shipyards Park.

An additional nurse is being added to the roster in Mayo, and \$797,000 is being provided to provide staff for six additional beds at the Whitehorse General Hospital.

The Department of Health and Social Services is allocating \$60,000 to begin capital planning for the replacement of the Sarah Steele Building in Whitehorse.

Our government is committed to taking good care of our seniors and those with disabilities. Specific initiatives include: \$457,000 to add six full-time equivalents to meet the significant growth in the home care client numbers and the complexity of care needs; \$653,000 for planning for the replacement of McDonald Lodge in Dawson City; \$110,000 to undertake a feasibility study and functional planning for continuing care; and \$2.244 million for a 10-year lease at the Thomson Centre and operation and maintenance of an additional 10-bed care unit.

Community infrastructure plays a key role in contributing to Yukoners' quality of life. Construction is underway for the new \$7.3-million emergency response centre that will serve as the city's primary ambulance station, in addition to the Riverdale station. The addition of a centrally-located centre will bolster Yukon's vital emergency medical services and reduce response times to growing neighbourhoods along the Hamilton Boulevard, Alaska Highway and the new Whistle Bend development.

Emergency responders play a significant role in fostering safe and healthy communities. Our government also acquired a new \$147,000 state-of-the-art ambulance that will be part of a fleet of 23 ambulances that provide territory-wide emergency medical services coverage.

The 2012-13 budget is also allocating \$300,000 to commence work on the planning and design of a new Beaver Creek fire hall to replace the existing building. The new facility will house both the Beaver Creek Volunteer Fire Department and the community EMS volunteers.

Mr. Speaker, 2012-13 will see the last phase of the multiple projects that comprise the Whitehorse waterfront development under the Canada strategic infrastructure fund. This \$3-million allocation will relocate the high voltage power lines that cross the river at the Kwanlin Dün Cultural Centre. As most Yukoners now know, the Whitehorse Public Library has successfully relocated to leased space adjacent to the Kwanlin Dün Cultural Centre. The library has settled into its new home

and has been well received by the public as is demonstrated by increased use and new users. Once the cultural centre is in operation, there will be opportunities for shared programs, promotion and other initiatives.

Other potential library moves concern Beaver Creek and Carcross. The Department of Community Services is exploring options for relocating the Beaver Creek library once the fire hall space is no longer available and replacing the Carcross library location.

Mr. Speaker, sports and recreation are essential ingredients to improving the quality of life of Yukoners. Look no further than the legacy left by the 2007 Canada Winter Games. The Canada Games Centre and other facilities were put to good use last week when Whitehorse hosted the 2012 Arctic Winter Games.

Recreation facilities are equally important to rural Yukon communities. The fire in March 2011 that destroyed the Ross River Recreation Centre was a tragedy for that community. Ever since the fire, the Yukon Government has worked closely with members of the community to build a temporary ice rink and plan for a replacement facility. As an interim step, in December of 2011 our government constructed an outdoor rink and the Yukon Mine Legacy Foundation coordinated in-kind donations of material and labour and provided \$10,000 to build and install a warm-up hut.

The Yukon Party committed to constructing a new recreation centre for Ross River in its 2011 election platform. Our government is following through on that commitment. Construction will begin this summer on a new \$7-million recreation centre for Ross River. The new facility will be an important gathering place for youth and community members that will promote active and healthy living.

Practicing good governance is another pillar of the Yukon Party's 2011 election platform. Our vision for Yukon's coming of age is through effective leadership, political stability, cooperative governance and strong fiscal management. Our government supports cooperative governance and forming partnerships. We work with Yukon First Nations through bilateral accords, the Yukon Forum and the Intergovernmental Forum to advance the interest of all Yukoners based upon mutual respect of each other's jurisdiction. We fully respect and support the implementation of the treaties and work with the three non-settlement Yukon First Nations to advance their interests as well. In resource revenue-sharing discussions with Canada, we are fully committed to ensuring that resource revenues remain in Yukon for the benefit of all Yukoners. We are pursuing that goal through negotiations with Canada and in concert with Yukon self-governing First Nations.

We successfully negotiated a Yukon asset construction agreement with the Carcross-Tagish First Nation in September 2011 regarding a Yukon government water infrastructure project in Carcross. We successfully negotiated a Yukon asset construction agreement with the Kwanlin Dün First Nation regarding the F.H. Collins replacement project.

On August 31, 2011, we signed a residential land development letter of understanding with Kwanlin Dün to work col-

laboratively to investigate development opportunities in relation to Kwanlin Dün settlement land.

Mr. Speaker, our government also works cooperatively with municipal governments and the Association of Yukon Communities. We are working in partnership with communities to implement the findings of the Our Towns, Our Future review.

We are preparing to launch a multi-year review of the *Municipal Act* in partnership with the Association of Yukon Communities. We work in partnership with our two sister territories through the Northern Premiers Forum to advance pan-northern positions on matters such as the territorial health system sustainability initiative with the federal government as well as with the province through the Council of the Federation. We work in partnership with the western premiers and have bilateral accords with our neighbours: Alaska, Alberta and British Columbia. We work in partnership with the members of the Pacific NorthWest Economic Region.

We also enjoy a very constructive, good working relationship with the Government of Canada, Yukon's Member of Parliament and Yukon's Senator.

Mr. Speaker, our main task is to serve Yukoners, and we are always striving to find better ways to accomplish that task. One of the commitments we made in our 2011 election platform was to continue to explore options to utilize technology to make government services available online or to improve existing services.

The French Language Services Directorate has worked tirelessly to improve access to French content on the Yukon government's websites and has achieved substantial results in the past year. In total the Yukon government now administers 26 websites in French, compared to 18 in 2011-12. All French-speaking Yukoners benefit from this development. Yukoners are now able to access the Motor Vehicles branch registration services entirely in French.

The Department of Community Services is improving three of its current systems by laying the foundation for a future web portal that in the case of the property and assessment and taxation system will give citizens access to the assessment roll and details of their individual assessment; in the case of the corporate affairs system, it will permit businesses and lawyers to submit documents electronically; and in the case of the building safety system it will allow citizens and contractors to apply for building permits on-line, review the status of their application, request inspections and get copies of the final approval.

Mr. Speaker, part of good governance is good record keeping, storage and protection. The Department of Highways and Public Works and Public Works, through its records program improvement initiative, has allocated \$1.115 million to conduct this multi-year corporate initiative that will improve records management practices across government to a standard that will support the management of digital records.

The Yukon government corporate information systems — which are Finance, HR records, land information management system and data warehouse — are regularly upgraded and en-

hanced to remain current as well as to improve the functionality of reporting in order to better meet government needs.

Yukon Archives is undertaking a major cold storage expansion project that will bring the facility into the 21<sup>st</sup> century with much needed storage space given the amount of material Archives collects each year. In 2012-13, \$291,000 in new funding will go toward the planning and design work of the new storage vault/cold vault for archival records.

It is anticipated that construction will begin in 2013-14 at an approximate cost of \$2.6 million. This much needed work will ensure the long-term preservation of Yukon's precious archival heritage that captures not only the personal stories of Yukoners who have helped to shape this great territory, but also houses many legal records defining Yukon's economic and social growth.

Mr. Speaker, the 2012-13 budget is the first budget of our renewed mandate that will begin the process of implementing the commitments we made to Yukoners in our 2011 election platform, "Moving Forward Together".

As you can see, we are serious about meeting our commitments, about doing what we said we were going to do.

We ask for patience in that we cannot meet all our commitments in one budget. We have a five-year mandate with many more budgets yet to come. Rest assured the commitments we made will be met.

As Robert Service said, "a promise made is a debt unpaid", and we will deliver on our promises. We have the fiscal capacity to fulfill these promises. Mr. Speaker, the 2012-13 budget in large measure is designed to manage prosperity, to meet the challenges that a growing prosperous economy brings. Yukon's future indeed looks radiant.

I commend the 2012-13 budget to all members of this House.

May God bless Yukon.

May God bless Canada.

God save the Queen on the occasion of Her Diamond Jubilee. Long may she continue to reign over us.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Ms. Hanson:** Mr. Speaker, I commend the Minister of Finance for his delivery of this first Budget Address to this Legislative Assembly.

My comments this afternoon will be very brief. My initial reaction is — I recall an elementary school teacher who used to say, "If ifs and ands were pots and pans, what would we do for tinkers?" So we've heard a lot of "ifs" and "ands" and promises in this very lengthy Budget Address. We've heard promises before. One of the differences between the Official Opposition and the Yukon Party is that we believe that we are accountable to all Yukoners and when commitments are made that they are delivered.

So the Premier, as the Minister of Finance, has spoken today about spending. The Official Opposition will be focusing in the budget debate on how effectively we are — as a government, as elected representatives — in managing our fiscal resources on behalf of all Yukoners.

Our responses will reflect in debate over the next weeks, perhaps months, what we have heard from Yukoners throughout this territory, as they have spoken with us about the issues that affect them on a day-to-day basis. We will be working to ensure the potential benefits this budget reflects flow to all Yukoners, not just to a select few.

The Yukon Official Opposition looks forward to a productive debate in this Legislative Assembly. We encourage the Minister of Finance, we encourage the Premier, to encourage his caucus colleagues to ensure there is a good time set aside for preparation and for the departmental officials to be able to brief the Official Opposition and the Third Party in advance of each day's debate. We would also encourage that there be a set schedule, so this can be done effectively, so we're not doing this in an ad hoc manner. We owe it to Yukoners to ensure that, when we're talking about a budget well in excess of \$1.1 billion, we give it our due attention and all of us act with due diligence.

We look forward to a very productive, constructive engagement with the members opposite.

#### **Motion to adjourn debate**

**Ms. Hanson:** I move that debate on second reading of Bill No. 6 be now adjourned.

**Speaker:** It has been moved by the Leader of the Official Opposition that debate be now adjourned.

*Motion to adjourn debate on second reading of Bill No. 6 agreed to*

**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. Monday.

*The House adjourned at 3:13 p.m.*

#### **The following Sessional Paper was tabled March 15, 2012:**

33-1-27

Yukon Human Rights Panel of Adjudicators 2010-11 Annual Report (Speaker Laxton)