

Yukon Legislative Assembly
Whitehorse, Yukon
Monday, March 26, 2012 — 1:00 p.m.

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

Prayers

DAILY ROUTINE

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

Tributes.

TRIBUTES

In recognition of National Epilepsy Awareness Month

Hon. Mr. Graham: Today another 42 Canadians will learn that they have epilepsy, adding to the 300,000 citizens — I'm sorry, Mr. Speaker, I should indicate that I'm doing the tribute to National Epilepsy Awareness Month on behalf of all members of the Legislature — who now live with this neurological disorder, also known as the "silent disorder". More than twice as many Canadians are living with epilepsy as with cerebral palsy, muscular dystrophy, and multiple sclerosis combined.

Epilepsy is not a disease. It's a symptom of a neurological disorder, a physical condition that from time to time produces brief disturbances in the normal electrical functions of the brain. Epilepsy is characterized by sudden, brief seizures, whose nature and intensity vary from person to person. It affects children, teens and adults and many are reluctant to speak out about it, which is why it is referred to as the silent disorder. That's why today I'm asking my colleagues here to recognize March as Epilepsy Awareness Month. I want their help in breaking the silence around this disorder.

There is hope for sufferers of this disorder. Canada is the leader in the fight to find the cure for epilepsy. Research efforts are showing promise for new ways to treat and manage the condition, from new anticonvulsant drugs that are proving successful, to dietary supplements that are also assisting. Strides are being made through the use of deep brain stimulation as well.

This month is dedicated to increasing public and professional awareness of the disorder as a universal, treatable brain disorder, to change attitudes, dispel myths and raise epilepsy to a new level of visibility, especially in the public domain, and to help meet the education awareness, prevention and service needs of individuals suffering from this disorder.

Some Yukoners live with epilepsy.

We acknowledge them. We acknowledge the Epilepsy Awareness Month on behalf of them and all Canadians.

Speaker: Introduction of visitors.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Mr. Kent: Mr. Speaker, I would like members of this House to join me in welcoming to the Legislature Mr.

Deuling's grade 11 social studies class from Vanier Catholic Secondary School today. I invite members to join me after Question Period in the members' lounge to answer any questions the students may have.

Applause

Speaker: Are there any returns or documents for tabling?

TABLING RETURNS AND DOCUMENTS

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: Mr. Speaker, I have for tabling the Fleet Vehicle Agency 2012-13 business plan.

Speaker: Are there any reports of committees?

Are there any petitions?

Are there any bills to be introduced?

Are there any notices of motion?

NOTICES OF MOTION

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

THAT this House urges the Yukon government to use the 2012-13 budget to continue to work toward the modernization of the land titles system.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to use the 2012-13 budget to provide \$561,000 in increased funding to non-governmental organizations.

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

THAT the Yukon Legislative Assembly, pursuant to section 2 of the *Ombudsman Act*, recommends that the Commissioner and Executive Council Office appoint Timothy E. Koepke as the Ombudsman of the Yukon for a term of five years effective May 1, 2012.

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

THAT this House urges the Yukon government to work with public schools, the private sector, the mining community, First Nations, Skills Canada and other NGOs, and Yukon College, to develop a comprehensive plan to offer quality training in skills, trades and technology in the Yukon that will:

(1) enable Yukoners to gain valuable skills that will allow them to be eligible for opportunities that are being offered throughout the territory;

(2) encourage Yukon youth who wish to pursue careers in skills, trades and technologies;

(3) potentially include inter-provincial accreditation which recognizes journeypersons throughout Canada;

(4) address the need for the unique skills that are necessary for working in Arctic climates;

(5) create short-term, immediate solutions using cooperative learning to address the current need for training and a long-term vision with defined achievable timelines; and

(6) recognize the high level of academic ability required to enter fields connected with skills, trades and technologies.

Speaker: This brings us to Question Period.

QUESTION PERIOD

Question re: Wetland protection

Ms. White: Mr. Speaker, can the Minister of Environment give us an update on the development of baseline data for both the headwaters of the Yukon River and the identified wetlands in the Whitehorse Trough area?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: When it comes to identifying wetlands for protection, we typically do that through the land claims process, as well as the land use planning process. I would remind the member opposite that through the North Yukon land use planning process, we identified some of the biggest wetlands complexes in North America for protection. They were identified through that process and that's the way we will continue to do that.

Ms. White: We all know that baseline data is critical to measuring impacts of developments. Our water and wetlands are essential. Water is life, and without water there is no life. The Yukon Party government has said it is focused on developing best practices for environmentally sound development. Where is the Department of Environment at in this process of developing best practices to protect wetlands and headwaters of the Yukon River watershed?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: The member opposite can look to our budget this sitting to see the commitment we have to water resources and monitoring. We've increased water resource monitoring in areas that are specifically affected by development, including the White Gold region, where we've identified two additional water monitoring systems, both on Thistle Creek and Scroggie Creek. Additionally, I would say on the general topic of water, we are committed to developing a water strategy for Yukon. It's something we identified in our platform and we'll look forward to moving forward on expeditiously.

Ms. White: My question is for the Minister of Environment again. Which needs drive the development of best practices — the needs of the ecosystems and watersheds or the needs of industries that are applying for licences to develop our natural resources?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Of course, as we look around the Yukon at specific areas for protection, we identify areas through the land use planning process, as well as the implementation of First Nation final agreements.

In the case of the White Gold region, we've identified an area that is anticipated to have additional development, so we are collecting additional information to provide the most sound environmental data and science that we can for that region. Of course, there are a number of ways we identify specific areas for protection and, as I said, the land use planning process and the First Nation final agreements are at the head of that list.

Question re: School attendance

Mr. Tredger: We have recently been made aware again of the serious problem of school attendance in the

Yukon. While it is a very serious issue at F.H. Collins, poor attendance is also an issue at other schools, especially in rural Yukon. It would be interesting to know from the minister if the problem is getting worse. Our students are walking out of school in frightening numbers. Fewer than 60 percent of rural students finish high school. Research has shown that students need to become engaged in the process of education. This is done through the building of relationships.

What is the minister doing to bring students back into the classroom?

Hon. Mr. Kent: I'm sure all members in this House will recognize that attendance continues to be a challenge for Yukon students, with rural and First Nation students having the highest rates of absenteeism. The pattern, as we know, starts in elementary school and some students will miss as much as two years of school by the time they enter high school. It's something that I know we on this side of the House and all members of this House take very seriously.

We as a department need to provide programming that will engage these students. We are doing so through our First Nation curriculum, but we also have to engage the entire school community — the students, the parents and the teachers. We need to get to the root of the problem and come up with solutions that make sense so we can improve the attendance numbers for students in the Yukon.

Mr. Tredger: The relationship of school staff with students and parents is critical to the process of engaging students. Principals are a critical link for building responsive and engaging school communities. This is especially true in First Nation communities. Just this week we heard once again that school communities and First Nation partnerships leave much to be desired. Principals tell me that the actual time they have for this important function has been reduced. Teaching staff, and particularly principals, are extremely busy with the work they have to do now. Bureaucratic functions have dramatically increased, and a new staffing formula has resulted in principals having even less time for community involvement. Many of our rural schools have only part-time principals.

Will the minister commit to increasing principals' time to ensure they can build the partnerships and relationships necessary to improve attendance in our communities?

Hon. Mr. Kent: There are a number of initiatives that the Department of Education has undertaken to improve school attendance: more experiential programming to engage students, more First Nation cultural and language content in the curriculum to make school more meaningful for this target group, as well as the establishment of the Individual Learning Centre that we have seen happen in Whitehorse a number of years ago under the then Minister of Education, the Hon. John Edzerza. So there are a number of things that the department is working on to engage students and improve their attendance.

There is also the aspect of working with parents, working with staff, working with students — really engaging that entire school community, and it's something that I noticed first-hand on my travels throughout the territory over the past couple of months to visit each school. Each school is unique; each school requires special attention and that's the way that I would like to

address this, Mr. Speaker — really, on a school-by-school basis to ensure that the school community is engaged in improving the attendance numbers and really improving the success of those students graduating from our public schools.

Mr. Tredger: Thank you for that answer, and I would stress that it's important that our teachers and principals have time to engage the community.

Mr. Speaker, lack of attendance is a complex problem of community support, of group pressures and of government as a whole.

Schools are a reflection of their community, and it takes the whole community to respond to educational problems. In the past, superintendents of education were much more involved in local schools — visiting classrooms, meeting with students, parents and teachers. There was a superintendent in Dawson City who had first-hand knowledge of the history and current situation and with the opportunity to visit other rural schools. Our superintendents were able to effectively act as a conduit — a window for the school into the department and a window from the department into the schools. There was a direct link from schools and their communities to the department concerning local issues. Will the Minister of Education consider locating superintendents in the regions, or, at the very least, direct them to schedule regular visits to all schools —

Speaker: Order please. The member's time has elapsed.

Hon. Mr. Kent: Again, during my travels in January and February of this year, I had the opportunity to visit a number of rural schools, including Teslin, Watson Lake, Carmacks, Faro, Ross River, Dawson City, Mayo and Pelly Crossing. One of the discussion points I had with administrators, teachers and school councils when I was visiting there is the good work and the fact that they appreciate the work of the superintendents, as far as their role goes. Superintendents have different responsibilities. One is assigned to northern schools and is based here in Whitehorse.

From the indications that I have had, he is doing a fantastic job. I want to encourage the superintendents to continue to do that good work on behalf of our department and engage the school communities when it comes to addressing issues, such as attendance and student success rates. Trades and technology in the schools is another thing that one of the superintendents has been talking about to Robert Service School. Making sure that they have the necessary time and are able to visit those schools is something that is very important to me as minister — and again, important to my caucus and Cabinet colleagues on this side of the House.

Speaker's statement

Speaker: Before the next member speaks, I just want to remind all members that in the back of the Standing Orders, there is a section here, "Guidelines for Oral Question Period". Number 7 states: "A brief preamble will be allowed in the case of the main question, and a one-sentence preamble will be allowed in the case of each supplementary question."

You have one minute to ask your questions and a minute and a half to respond. I would like you to work a little closer to keep within those time frames.

Question re: Land development

Mr. Silver: Mr. Speaker, we have established that this government adds to the Yukon's housing crisis when it drives up lot prices. For example, the government spent \$5 million to get 30 lots in the new Grizzly Valley subdivision ready for market. This includes building roads and putting in electrical lines. Those costs become part of the lot prices. That includes also the incredible \$1 million spent on two culverts to keep wildlife off the road. That boondoggle landed Yukon on *Maclean's* magazine's list of "99 stupid things the government spent your money on". It actually cracked the top 50. I'm sure the minister has something to say about the magazine's finding. Does the minister think that it is wrong to be criticized for blowing \$1 million on moose diversion?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: As the member opposite has pointed out, this government, in fact, does believe that land availability and land affordability is in fact a priority of this government. That is why this government continues to work to make land available throughout the Yukon. Just recently, when the budget was tabled by the Minister of Finance — it contains about \$35-million worth of land development expenses to go toward the land development throughout rural Yukon, whether it's in Haines Junction, whether it's in Dawson City, whether it's in Whitehorse, or other. Again, there is a significant amount of work that goes toward developing properties, whether it is off-site infrastructure or on-site infrastructure. This government does remain committed to making land available, and that includes the Grizzly Valley subdivision.

Mr. Silver: Those wildlife culverts added about \$35,000 to the price of each of those lots in Grizzly Valley. When I read the reports that not a single animal has used these deluxe private wildlife corridors, I went out to see for myself, and sure enough, the tracks show wildlife is pointedly avoiding these culverts. I would be happy to share with the minister the video that I took of the moose tracks. The ungulates walked down the cutline toward the culverts and then deviated from the line and walked across the road. To compare, the City of Ottawa spent about the same amount of money to design a pedestrian bridge over a highway, except there were actually no plans to ever actually build the bridge, and they didn't even know if it was needed. Does the minister think that the \$1 million spent on moose culverts that no moose have used should put their government on the same list as \$1 million spent on designing pedestrian bridges no one is going to build?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Well, as I was just trying to point out for the members opposite, the Government of Yukon is working toward bringing upwards of 300 developed residential lots to market between now and the end of 2013. Those particular lots will be found throughout the Yukon, whether it's in Carmacks, Dawson City, Mayo, Watson Lake and Whitehorse. As I spoke about at great length in last week's Question Period, there is a significant amount of work that goes toward the development of any particular land development subdivision, including Grizzly Valley.

Mr. Speaker, when it comes to that, we do value responsible land development practices, and we believe it is very important to minimize adverse environmental impacts while

working to meet the demand for a wide variety of new residential lot options. That will continue to be the case from here on out.

Mr. Silver: Mr. Speaker, the minister's government wasn't the only one to get their hands slapped for irresponsible spending out of doors. A glamour camping park in Quebec got \$354,000 for yurts and teepees. The government funding this called it "glamping". Seven new ice skating shacks were built along the Rideau Canal at a cost of \$750,000 each, and about 115 new Canadians were taken on a taxpayer-funded camping trip to set up tents, build fires and eat S'mores. Does the government think that the million-dollar moose culvert deserves to be on the same list of mismanaged government projects as glamour-camping yurts and taxpayer-funded S'mores?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Mr. Speaker, when it comes to land development in the territory, this is no laughing matter. In fact that is why this Government of Yukon continues to invest heavily in land development so we can have affordable housing options available, from emergency shelter all the way through to making land available for residential homes.

It is a serious matter and this government will continue to pay great attention to the level and to the amount of land inventory that is made available throughout the Yukon in every community. I have just said that we are planning to bring upward of 300 developed residential lots by the end of 2013. That is in fact why we are investing over \$35 million in land development to be charged toward making land available in every single community. We look forward to working with members opposite on making more land available throughout the mandate of our government. Again, we certainly take with great seriousness making land available.

Question re: Land development

Mr. Silver: Mr. Speaker, I am sure I'm not the only one listening today who would like to learn about how Grizzly Valley's deluxe wildlife corridors stack up to the spending in other jurisdictions.

We share the opinion that it is commendable to make accommodations for wildlife. We also share the opinion that \$1 million in moose culverts does not do much for housing in the Yukon. Maybe this is why one-third of those pricey lots didn't sell when they came to market. Does the minister think that a \$35,000 increase in lot prices has an effect on how much Yukoners want to buy them?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Phase 1 of the Grizzly Valley subdivision, which is located just north of Whitehorse. I am sure the member opposite is very familiar with it, as he was out there filming the particular subdivision. It consists of 30 lots, which have been released for sale. They were put out for sale in December, and we look forward to receiving interest and uptake from Yukoners at large in the year to come.

There is a substantive interest in land, as we have heard from the members of the opposition, and it is really interesting that if in fact land development was of sincere interest, and if this remains of utmost importance to the members opposite, then why did the MLA for Klondike in fact vote against the \$35-million expenditure available for land development, which actually goes toward planning developments in his own home

riding? Again, people should be asking the member opposite why in fact he and all of his opposition colleagues continue to vote against land development that will assist Yukoners from here on out.

Mr. Silver: I and everyone else in my caucus did not vote against certain spending. They voted against decreases in those departments' spending.

The Yukon government is in good company on the "99 stupid things the government spent your money on" list. It wasn't the only government criticized for nonsensical transportation spending. Montreal spent \$200,000 on bus station escalators that ran straight into a wall. Ottawa spent \$21,000 on a five-minute, how-to video on how to use bike lanes. Manitoba's public insurers paid out \$41,000 to car thieves who got hurt while committing their crimes. Where does the minister rank her party's moose culverts — better than escalators to nowhere, or worse than paying car thieves?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Again, why is it that the MLA for Klondike voted against \$34.8 million for land development initiatives throughout the Yukon, including planning and construction of residential lots in Carmacks, in his own home community of Dawson City, Mayo, Watson Lake, Whitehorse? Why is it that the MLA for Klondike voted against more than \$25 million toward the new Whistle Bend lot development, phase 1, where 112 lots will be made available this fall, that will, in fact, result in 199 single-family lots — 32 duplexes, 17 multi-family lots and 48 townhome lots? Planning, of course, will also continue this year to advance phases 3 to 5 in Whistle Bend subdivision.

Again, the question really does remain. Why is the member opposite voting against all these initiatives that will go toward making more housing readily available?

Mr. Silver: I guess the onus is on the Liberal Party to make answers in Question Period, and the answer is that we are voting against the decrease in spending, not the particular spending the minister is speaking of.

The Government of Yukon said it wanted to fix the housing crisis, and then it rolled out \$1-million worth of wildlife culvert expenses into the prices of 30 new lots. That is 80 percent of your lot price for roads, electrical infrastructure and the like, and then 20 percent for moose diversion. Perhaps it is not as bad as the City of Ottawa spending \$1.8 million for land that it is going to eventually get for free just so they could hurry up and qualify for federal stimulus dollars. That ridiculous expenditure also landed that government on the *Maclean's* magazine's list of "99 stupid things the government spent your money on".

Does the minister think \$1 million for moose culverts was a better deal than Ottawa's spending of \$1.8 million for free land?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: I'm not sure where the member opposite is coming from when he talks about cuts. When it comes to cuts, there have been no cuts. In fact, there have just been enhancements and larger investments than ever before, when it comes to expenditures all over the Government of Yukon.

We are currently debating the largest budget that has ever been tabled in Yukon's history. Again, for the member oppo-

site and for all of his constituents' information, the MLA for Klondike has just voted against — in second reading — 20 industrial lots in Dawson City, 49 single-family lots, three multi-family lots in Haines Junction, the country residential lots in Destruction Bay, the 30 rural residential lots in Grizzly Valley — which he loves to discuss — and he has also voted against working with municipal and First Nation governments in making land available in Dawson City, Mayo and Carmacks.

Again, we are very much committed to making more land available. We are committed to working with the respective governments in making land available and ensuring that it is affordable.

Question re: NGOs funding

Ms. Stick: It was a pleasure on Saturday to attend the 10th annual disABILITY Expo at the Canada Games Centre and to see so many exhibitors who provide services to persons with disabilities across the Yukon. It was also great to see so many MLAs from both sides of the House attending and participating. Kudos to the organizers of this exposition.

What some of us heard, though, when discussing concerns from many of the NGOs, were their feelings of insecurity around long-term funding. Some, but not all, NGOs have three-year agreements with this government.

Can the Minister of Health and Social Services tell us what he is doing to help ensure that the many NGOs providing services to persons with disabilities will have longer term funding security?

Hon. Mr. Graham: I appreciate the question from the member opposite, and I also would like to thank the five members of our Cabinet who showed up there as well. They were well-received and I know they enjoyed meeting the public at the door. We enjoyed ourselves immensely and I am sure we all learned something as well from this expo.

I'd like to remind the member opposite that we have included in this budget \$561,000 extra funding for NGOs in the upcoming year. Some of the NGOs have longer terms than three years, but each time we need funding for longer than three years, it has to be because of our regulations. We have to bring it to Cabinet and have it approved. Three years is the maximum length of funding that we will do for most NGOs under the present circumstances. When warranted, we will go longer, but three years is the norm. To date, we haven't had a lot of feedback on that.

Ms. Stick: As I did mention in the previous question, some, but not all, do have the three-year funding agreement. Another issue that many of the NGOs spoke to us about was increased rental rates and the difficulty in finding available, affordable and accessible office space, particularly in Whitehorse.

Can the Minister of Health and Social Services tell us if there has been any discussion about increases of core funding to these organizations, recognizing that rent is increasingly becoming a larger portion of their budgets?

Hon. Mr. Graham: That's part of the funding increase of the \$561,000. It was not only to fund their core operations, which usually meant an executive director and a clerical staff member or associated persons, but it also was intended to

reflect that rents were increasing and that we were aware of that and we increased the funds for rental. We are also looking at a number of different options so that we can possibly combine some NGOs or make some alternative arrangements so that we get away from this paying rent and I would say possibly common uses, facilities or people used by all NGOs.

It would be nice to have a centrally located resource for them that all of them can use and perhaps do it at a much lower cost.

Ms. Stick: I'm happy to hear about this planning and would be interested in hearing more.

We recognize that besides core funding many of these organizations receive, it's the in-kind contributions of volunteers that keep these groups running their programs. The Yukon Volunteer Bureau was initially funded by the federal government. That funding ended three years ago and the Department of Community Services currently provides some core funding. Unfortunately, this group has gone down to one part-time staff person.

Will the minister consider increasing the core funding to this group which would then allow them to provide the important training and support that all other volunteer groups in the Yukon use?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: I just wanted to talk for a minute about the importance of the relationship that the government has with NGOs.

To reiterate what the minister was talking about, it's an additional \$561,000 over and above what has already been given to NGOs in recognition of the fact that there are rising costs. In the attempt to ensure that they don't have to cut into programming dollars to meet their expenses, we're going forward with providing additional funding to meet those rising-cost needs. We continue to look at and foster development relationships with NGOs on many fronts. It's something that we spoke about in our platform and will continue to do moving forward to ensure that we have the right people in place to meet the needs of all Yukoners.

Question re: Child and Family Services Act

Ms. Stick: The *Child and Family Services Act* is now two years old and policies are in place at this time, but there are no regulations. Policy, unfortunately, is readily changed and, more importantly, generally inaccessible to the public. Can the minister please tell us why there are no regulations to implement such a sensitive, far-reaching act, two years later?

Hon. Mr. Graham: I'm not certain, to tell you the truth. I'll have to get you an answer and come back with it.

Ms. Stick: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the answer from the minister.

While he is looking for answers to that, I have a few more questions that he might also be able to research and get back to me on.

With the many changes and new ideas in the act that affect individuals, families and First Nations, cooperative planning process for children taken into care and alternative dispute mechanisms are just part of the act.

What I would like to know is whether the minister will also be able to explain how the public is supposed to be aware

of these mechanisms and program areas if there are no regulations available to them?

Hon. Mr. Graham: Mr. Speaker, I'm not certain we are talking about the same act, because what we are looking at with *Child and Family Services Act* — it's implemented at the present time. It was enacted two years ago, in 2010. Since that time, we have put a number of contribution agreements in place, one with the Ta'an Kwach'in Council. That's a three-year contribution agreement for \$75,000 a year. There's another with the Kwanlin Dun First Nation, with Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation, with the Liard First Nation and the Ross River First Nation, all with varying levels of funding.

As far as regulations go, I'm not certain what changes are going to be impacted by regulations, so I will look into that.

Another part of the answer, I guess, is that there was also a child and youth advocate put in place by this government, and all of that information is available at that office.

Ms. Stick: Yes, the *Child and Family Services Act* is now two years old. Yes, there are policies in place. But the regulations are what guide policy and are usually what the public can be looking at when they're looking for information about this act. Some of the areas that people are not aware of because of lack of some public awareness would be transition planning for children coming out of care at 18 years old or family conferencing programs that are available. Both programs are critical, but will be underused if no one's aware of them. Is there a plan for a public awareness campaign, and if so, when can this start?

Hon. Mr. Graham: I'll get back to the member opposite.

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

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

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

Motion agreed to

Speaker leaves the Chair

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

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

The matter before the Committee is Bill No. 4, *Interim Supply Appropriation Act, 2012-13*.

Do members wish to take a brief recess?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

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

Recess

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

Bill No. 4: *Interim Supply Appropriation Act, 2012-13*

Chair: The matter before the Committee is Bill No. 4, *Interim Supply Appropriation Act, 2012-13*.

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: Everyone has had an opportunity to speak to this, then?

For the interim supply bill, what we're doing is looking at deferring the various charges and expenses to the public service of Yukon for a two-month period of April 1, 2012 until May 31, 2012.

Of this total, \$240,977,000 is provided for operation and maintenance and \$71,314,000 is provided for capital. The full details of these estimates are included in the main estimates and will be fully discussed and debated during general and departmental debate of the 2012-13 main estimates.

Ms. Moorcroft: As I stated in the debate on second reading of this bill, the Official Opposition will support the interim supply bill, which allows money to flow to cover the expenses of the public service. I note that the government has asked for close to 27 percent — so more than a quarter of the total budget — to cover those expenses for April and May, and that there are a number of capital projects in that amount.

Further to an agreement this morning, I understand, between House leaders, and pursuant to Standing Order 14.3, I request the unanimous consent of Committee of the Whole to deem all clauses, schedules and the title of Bill No. 4, entitled *Interim Supply Appropriation Act, 2012-13*, read and agreed to.

Unanimous consent re deeming all clauses, schedules and title of Bill No. 4 read and agreed to

Chair: Pursuant to Standing Order 14.3, Ms. Moorcroft has requested the unanimous consent of Committee of the Whole to deem all schedules, clauses and the title of Bill No. 4, entitled *Interim Supply Appropriation Act, 2012-13*, read and agreed to. Are you agreed?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

Chair: Unanimous consent has been granted. *Clauses 1 and 2, and Schedules A and B, deemed read and agreed to*

On Title

Title agreed to

Hon. Mr. Cathers: I move that Bill No. 4, entitled *Interim Supply Appropriation Act, 2012-13*, be reported without amendment.

Chair: It has been moved by Mr. Cathers that Bill No. 4, entitled *Interim Supply Appropriation Act, 2012-13*, be reported without amendment.

Motion agreed to

Chair: We will take a brief recess for two minutes.

Recess

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

Bill No. 6: *First Appropriation Act, 2012-13* — continued

Chair: We will now continue with general debate of Bill No. 6, *First Appropriation Act, 2012-13*. Mr. Tredger, you have the floor, with 11 minutes and 15 seconds remaining.

Mr. Tredger: Madam Chair, it's a pleasure to address the Assembly again. I just want to start by saying what a wonderful area the Mayo-Tatchun area is, and it's integral to the Yukon. Right now we are in a position where much of the industrialization that is driving the Yukon is occurring in Mayo-Tatchun. We're seeing the juxtaposition of both the industry and the citizens of that area and how they relate one to another and how they look after each other, and how it interacts. What happens there is critical to the rest of the Yukon and the decisions we make there will be critical.

The First Nations there want their land, their water and rights protected. The people who live in the area want their lifestyle maintained. They also are sitting on some of the most valuable resources in the world. How we go about extracting those resources and the income we receive from them, and how much that income is used to the benefits of all Yukoners — those are the questions we're dealing with today, and you have dealt with in your budget, and we'll be debating over the next few years. It's critical to the future of the Yukon. We need to do it in a way that protects our environment, that sustains our economy and that builds a strong infrastructure that supports future generations.

These are the kinds of things that will guide our discussions. As we all know, there are no easy answers. It's not one way or the other way. It's going to take — as our Commissioner mentioned to us earlier in the year — compromise. It's going to take us sitting down and working with the people in the area to develop what our future will look like.

I want to begin by looking at the Finance minister's deferring of responses to departmental debate. From *Hansard* on Thursday, Ms. Moorcroft said, "Can the minister tell us how that —

Point of order

Chair: Hon. Mr. Cathers, on the point of order.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Madam Chair, I know the member is new to the House, but I'd urge you to remind him to not refer to members of this House by name.

Mr. Tredger: I'll just say the Member for Copperbelt South.

"Can the minister tell us how that \$420-million production value is broken down between the three operating mines? The minister spoke about Capstone's Minto mine and that Selkirk First Nation had received approximately \$10 million in royalties on that. Can the minister tell us what the breakdown is of the \$420 million in production value between the three mines — Capstone, Alexco's Keno Hill Mines property and Yukon Zinc's Wolverine mine?"

The Premier replied, "I will defer that question to the department, so they can more accurately respond to that question."

One of the problems over the past three years is that more than \$1 billion in government spending has been approved without any debate by MLAs. For the 2010-11 budget year, approximately \$490 million or 46 percent of the total budget was approved without debate. The number was lower for the 2011-12 budget year, with approximately \$293 million or 27 percent not debated. But according to Hanson, there is still too little financial oversight. According to —

Chair's statement

Chair: Order. I would ask you not to refer to people by name.

Mr. Tredger: Thank you. Here's a partial list of whole departments for which no time was allocated by the Yukon Party government for the debate of the main estimates in the recent past: 2011-12 — Executive Council Office, Finance, Public Service Commission, Yukon Housing, Yukon Liquor, Highways and Public Works, and more, smaller, departments; 2010-11 — Justice, Finance, Public Service Commission, Yukon Housing, Yukon Liquor, Highways and Public Works, Environment and Energy, Mines and Resources; 2009-10 — Executive Council Office, Justice, Yukon Housing Corporation, Yukon Liquor Corporation, Community Services.

That's why we're trying to get answers in general debate, because of the Yukon Party's practice of not calling all departments. This practice needs to stop. We need adequate time to fully debate the budget. We need the government to cooperate, to be committed to ensuring all departments come up for debate. But in the meantime, the opposition will use general debate to ask questions that we fear we may not have a chance to ask later on. That is how we've adapted to the reality. So we really hope the Finance minister has come prepared to answer some questions, not just defer questions. He was signalled our interest by my colleague, the Member for Copperbelt South, in obtaining more detailed financial information about the contributions of the mining sector to the Yukon economy.

Western Canada has not overtaken eastern Canada in population. The new west is the site of increased economic development driven by natural resources, particularly in the mineral resources and energy sectors. Voices are emerging, like former Alberta Premier Peter Lougheed, saying we must take a more managed, measured approach, that we must save for rainy days, that we must not take from future generations and leave them a huge mess.

I will start with a general question. How much of the \$420 million of mineral production value — the value of minerals mined, processed and sold — does the Yukon public receive?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: I guess — directly to the point of the question is that it really didn't make a lot of sense, and I think he needs to rephrase it. \$420 million is the amount that was generated through the extraction of minerals. Yukoners don't get a direct piece of that. What Yukoners get will be royalties generated, income taxes paid, hundreds of direct jobs now, thousands of indirect jobs. Right now, that is the immediate impact of the resource extraction industry.

You know, as I have said now on more than one occasion, if the NDP want to get through and debate the entire budget,

then they need to be able to budget their time. Certainly, to this point, it looks like they are budgeting their time just like they budgeted when they were in government — for example, the \$64-million deficit back in the 1990s.

In order to get to the answers to those questions, the opposition needs to decide whether they want to ask a question or whether they want to give a speech first in order to be able to facilitate the opportunity to give an answer. So, really, I think what we are seeing is that there is this lack of understanding of what the impact is for mining, but that is understandable, because the only time people have left this Yukon is when the NDP were in power. The statistics are there to show what the mass exodus of people was from the Yukon during the time the NDP were in power — thousands of people leaving, mostly our young adults, 25 to 35 or 40 years of age left because they had to get jobs somewhere else. They had to leave their homes, leave their families, leave their friends because there was no work here in the Yukon.

So if the NDP wants to get through the budget, then I recommend that they look at the time they have and that they budget their time accordingly, and we will get through.

Mr. Tredger: I'd like to thank the Premier for that advice and remind him that there are two sides of the House and it is going to take the cooperation of everyone.

Referring to 10 or 15 years ago is not helpful for proceeding through the debate. The value of the industry shouldn't be a mystery that, as it goes — to quote the Finance minister: "...so goes Yukon." However, the Alaskans produce detailed economic information on their mineral resource sector with mine-by-mine breakdowns on jobs, taxes paid, contribution to community infrastructure, royalties, et cetera. It's important that we have that information in order that we can assess the value of mining and make informed decisions.

Can the Finance minister tell the House the anticipated mineral royalties that Yukoners will receive in the 2012-13 fiscal year from the placer mining industry and from the three existing mines?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: That is a question that should be directed to the appropriate minister and asked in the departmental debate.

Mr. Tredger: I appreciate that. Let's hope we get there. I hope that I can count on the Premier and members on the opposite side to ensure the department is called.

Can the Finance minister tell the House the anticipated corporate tax revenues that Yukoners will receive in the 2012-13 fiscal year from mining companies?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: We've talked about this already. I'm just looking for my notes on it. We talked about the fact that we're seeing an increase, not only in personal taxes, but also in corporate taxes. The corporate tax estimate for 2012-13 is \$20,702,000. The actual number audited by the Auditor General for 2010-11 was \$9,028,000, which is a 129-percent increase in corporate taxes.

Personal taxes for 2010-11 was \$52,793,000. Estimated personal income tax for 2012-13 is \$60,602,000 — a 15-percent increase.

Mr. Tredger: Can the Finance minister tell the House the number of Yukoners who pay tax in the Yukon who are employed by the mining and exploration companies and the value in income tax that Yukoners can expect to receive in the 2012-13 year from those people who are employed in the mining sector?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: I think, again, the NDP fails to realize what we get out of this industry, and that is thousands of jobs. The mining industry has 600 direct jobs right now. We talked about the fact that Victoria Gold had almost 400 jobs during construction phase — almost 400 — 384 jobs, I believe it was. That occurred during operational phase and then, literally, created thousands of jobs across many sectors of the Yukon economy.

All of these people are paying taxes — taxes to the government, which gives us the revenues to be able to provide services and programs for Yukoners and to invest in more infrastructure and to meet the needs that Yukoners have. That's how it works. We cannot and would not disclose taxes paid for individual companies, because that would be a violation of privacy, and we wouldn't be doing that.

Really, for me, it's again to try to explain to the NDP where the value is in this. If we didn't create the incentives on the front end, we wouldn't have the jobs. So, you know we try to have the expenses loaded on the front end to be able to create the mining industry that creates all these jobs. If companies, no matter what they are doing, don't make any money, they don't pay any taxes. It's the same for personal; it's the same for corporate, so once they start earning a profit, they pay taxes. That's how that works and the same will be the case on the royalty side as well. Capstone Mining, as I said, has paid approximately \$10 million to Selkirk First Nation in the last two years in investments in the community or in direct royalties. I like to include the good people of the Selkirk First Nation as part of Yukon as well.

Truly, the financial impact that this has is almost immeasurable, not just in direct jobs but also the indirect jobs that this industry has for Yukon, for now and into the future.

Mr. Tredger: I would let the Premier know that the NDP is very aware of the economic benefits and spinoffs from mining companies and from industry in the Yukon. That's why we are continually looking and suggesting ways that money can be helped to stick in the Yukon. We look for value added — means and ways Yukoners can benefit. One of the concerns that has been raised by my constituents is the number of people who fly in and fly out of the Yukon and end up paying their taxes in other jurisdictions.

But to move on, what is the data on economic spinoff benefits from mining? What number of jobs do we get from it? What tax revenues are derived? What expediting companies are formed and moving into the Yukon? Which hotels are benefiting? How much are we benefiting in transportation and construction?

In good fiscal management, it's important to consider this and to do a study of all the benefits — and I'm sure the government has done this — so that we can make informed decisions when we are spending money and putting money up front

to help mining companies. I do know that that kind of study has been done for a dollar invested in education. What kind of things do we have for a dollar invested in mining?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: The member opposite just asked me about job numbers. I just actually just finished repeating those job numbers. Currently there are 600 direct jobs in the mining industry, 2,500 jobs in placer and exploration and literally thousands of indirect jobs. You can't count the indirect jobs that are solely attributable to the mining industry, because that's really the large bucket where everything feeds into in terms of the indirect jobs.

You know, to the point of looking for some specific answer to that, I will defer to the Department of Economic Development when we get into departments. I believe that is the first department that will be up, and I am sure that the minister will be willing to discuss some of those answers in some more detail with the member.

Has Yukon benefited from the economic activity that has taken place since the Yukon Party has come into power in November 2002? The answer is yes. Let's look at some of the facts. According to the Yukon Bureau of Statistics, in the time period between 2002 through 2010, the real GDP of Yukon in constant 2002 dollars grew by 41 percent. The mining and oil and gas extractions sector accounted for 24 percent of that growth. This sector's share of the territory's GDP changed from 2.7 percent in 2003 to 9.2 percent in 2010 after growing 374 percent during this period.

The portion of GDP attributed to public administration, health care, social services and educational services fell from 39 percent to 37 percent of GDP in this period — less reliance on the government in production of the total GDP for the Yukon.

The labour force grew from 16,900 to 20,900 by the end of 2011 — more than 3,000 additional Yukoners in the labour force.

Clearly, the growth of the last decade has benefited Yukon citizens. How has this impacted the financial health of the Yukon government?

In the time period March 2003 to March 2011, the Yukon population changed from 29,880 to 35,388 — an increase of 18.3 percent. As the number of citizens is a key cost driver for governments, it's interesting to look at per capita spending to see if the Government of Yukon's service to its citizens has benefited from this economic development. In the fiscal year 2002-03, government revenue and expenditures per capita were approximately \$18,000. By fiscal year 2010-11, the government revenue and expenditures per capita were approximately \$26,900 — a 49-percent increase. This compares very favourably to approximately 19 percent consumer price index inflation during that period. Inflation went up 39 percent; here's a 49-percent increase. In other words, real spending for each and every Yukoner has increased substantially since the Yukon Party has come into power.

How was this achieved? Increases in primary industries have tremendous secondary and tertiary impacts on all sectors of the economy, which are often hard to quantify. Put simply, economic growth is the best way for governments to increase

revenue. In the period from March 2003 to March 2011, which saw an 18-percent increase in population, government tax revenues grew by 62 percent.

All tax sources increased, with corporate tax revenue increasing the most, showing a 101-percent increase — 18 percent increase in population, government tax revenues plus 62 percent, all-source increase with corporate tax increased 101 percent. Madam Chair, I think the numbers speak for themselves.

Mr. Tredger: Well, I would be very surprised if our GDP and our income hadn't grown. We are currently riding the biggest commodity boom in recent history. Commodities have gained hugely. There's a huge demand for them. It's not so much the fact that we are increasing our spending, it's how well we are prepared for the next bust. How much of what we spend will stick? The concern of my constituents is we're on a sugar high. Sooner or later, it's going to burn out and we're going to be left with a sick feeling in our stomach.

There are 600 direct jobs in the Yukon. How many of those are tax-paying Yukoners and how many are flying in from Outside?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: You know, I think that again I'll speak to the record of the New Democratic Party. When they were in power, they created the largest exodus of people. There was a significant decrease in population when the NDP was in power last, mostly of young, working people who had to leave their homes. They had to leave Yukon to go somewhere else, to leave their families. They had to leave their friends to go to find a job somewhere else because there were no jobs.

I think what the NDP are saying is, you know, if something is cyclical, why should we even do it? I am mystified by that sort of philosophy, because we are here working hard, creating an industry that has been a part of this Yukon for more than a century. Since the Yukon has existed, this has been a primary industry for this territory.

We will work during this, investing in other areas like education and like the Yukon Cold Climate Innovation Centre, to create diversity, to help us better sustain those times when we do have cyclical drops in our key industry. This isn't just about commodity prices. I think of the time when the NDP were in power. We had significant mining going on all the way around us — Northwest Territories, British Columbia, Alaska. All had considerable mining industries occurring, but it just wasn't happening here. So it had nothing to do with commodity prices at all.

I've spoken to a number of factors. Devolution has come along, creation of YESAA — in terms of the ability to have a window that has really become the envy of the rest of this country, in terms of environment and socio-economic assessment of all projects, and land claims as well — having the finalization of land claim agreements with 11 of 14 First Nations — and a government that has put in place the policies and the environment to create economic investment of the private sector in the Yukon, to allow us to move ahead, creating more jobs, more people and more corporations paying tax, creating wealth for the Yukon.

As I have stated now repeatedly, our dependence on the TFF — the territorial formula financing — has gone down from 69 percent in 2003 to 63 percent. Our own-source revenues have increased by 68 percent during the same period. I've spoken to the dramatic increase in corporate and personal income taxes. I think that, again, the record speaks for itself. As to the specifics of the question, I will then instruct the member opposite that I will defer that to departmental debate.

Mr. Tredger: I'll repeat again — the NDP is not against the extractive industry, but we are in favour of mining with integrity, mining and development in a measured way — one that takes into account all Yukoners. I've asked some questions about the economic benefits of the mining sector, and I really expected a few more direct answers, but I look forward to getting them when we get into Economic Development. I'll also remind the minister that the NDP haven't been in power for 15 years. A lot has happened since then.

We will get our turn, but without accurate and up-to-date information, the task of crafting policy to maximize public benefit is nearly impossible. Maximizing public benefit is what we are here for. It makes it harder to debate the issues when we don't have that information. Other jurisdictions are able to do economic studies that analyze the benefits in many different ways to the community. It's important that we begin to do that.

I want to move to the other side of the ledger, to the public's contribution to the mining sector, for we do make a huge investment. We are a partner, through providing infrastructure and regulating the industry with public servants who work through the permitting, inspections and enforcement process. I want to start with a general question and move on to some more specifics.

What is the total breakdown of the Yukon government's contribution to the mining sector?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: Again, on the specifics, we will defer that to departmental debate where we can look for specifics with an impact. Again, I would urge the member opposite to understand that economics isn't black and white: this is mining; this is tourism. A lot of the economy isn't clearly defined in that way. Let's talk about a store that sells clothing or sells furniture. How do you decide what part of that economy is directly related to mining and what part of the business they do is related to tourism or any other industry in the Yukon? You're looking for specific numbers in an area where it really becomes almost impossible to quantify those numbers, especially when you get into tertiary industries within the economy — very difficult thing to do. But I will defer the question to the department.

Mr. Tredger: It is just because the NDP believes in all the spin-offs and the benefits of industry that we are asking these questions. It's important that we get up-to-date information, and there are economic studies that analyze the benefits from various industries and how that plays out through the economy. A dollar spent now in the community of Mayo may get spent again in Mayo, and then it maybe gets spent in Pelly Crossing buying gas, and then it gets spent in Whitehorse. We understand that there are a lot of benefits. It isn't black and white.

We're trying to move into the grey area so that we can make some informed decisions. Does the Premier know what we will be spending in 2012 and 2013 on roads, infrastructure, inspections, permitting, et cetera, on tax credits, on oversight and enforcement? In the coming year, what is anticipated that we will be spending to be able to support the industry?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: I guess I'll again repeat that the purpose of general debate is to have general debate on the budget. And when you want specific answers relating to specific departments, such as Highways and Public Works, when we get into the departmental debate, that is your time to be able to ask those specific questions. Again, if the opposition decides to look at everything and where their parties are and decide to budget their time accordingly, then they will have the opportunity to get through the budget instead of trying to blame the government for various departments that don't get debated before their appropriation is approved or voted upon by the Legislative Assembly. If the members opposite are very keen to see that all parts of this budget get debated, then the specifics will be in the departmental debate.

We will be able to talk about details when we have the officials and the appropriate minister. As I have said in this House many times, from my perspective, I have an incredible team — caucus and Cabinet — who all work together. I have talked about the fact that this is a government that works together. We have vast experiences from different sectors of this Yukon economy on this side of the House. We will work together and when we make decisions collectively, then those are the best decisions for Yukoners.

As such, I certainly have the respect and the confidence of my ministers and that's why during Question Period, when the question is asked of the Minister of Education or the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, you see that respective minister standing up and fulfilling their obligations and their responsibilities as that minister.

I'm more than willing to stand here and discuss, in general terms, the budget. If you want to get into specifics, to departments, I suggest that we move to the next step and we go to departmental budget debate.

Mr. Tredger: I am concerned about the infrastructure, particularly the road infrastructure plan going forward, to facilitate these developments and mitigate the risks to public safety.

Can the minister tell me what plans are being made to improve the highways, to work together with the mining companies, to build roads into places like Freegold, Casino and those other places? Are there any plans or will there be plans to do so?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: We have announced major investments in Yukon's transportation infrastructure, including: \$15 million under the Shakwak project for the Haines Road and north Alaska Highway and a further \$1 million from the Yukon government for the north Alaska Highway; \$7.25 million for the reconstruction of the Campbell highway from kilometre 10 to 190, and a further \$1.5 million for surfacing; \$1.6 million to replace culverts at Too Much Gold and Allgold creeks on the Klondike Highway; \$1.45 million to improve safety and road

conditions on the North Canol Road; \$2.6 million for reconstruction BST and re-vegetation work on the Atlin Road; \$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 the resource access road program; \$1 million for surfacing and safety improvement on various secondary roads throughout the territory; \$1.875 million for improvement projects for the Erik Nielsen Whitehorse International Airport, including taxiway improvements, rehabilitation and the installation of a second bridge or jetway; and \$7.406 million over two years to extend water and sewer services at the south commercial area of the Erik Nielsen Whitehorse International Airport; \$1.82 million to address deficiencies at other aerodromes; \$6 million for the major rehabilitation, including substructure improvements and deck repairs on the Upper Liard bridge; \$1.56 million for the rehabilitation work at Aishihik River, Jarvis Creek, Stewart River and Haldane Creek bridges. The list goes on. I know that when we get to departmental debate, the Minister of Highways and Public Works will be more than willing to provide you more details.

As I mentioned, we commit to secondary roads with a major increase of \$1 million for secondary roads. We also have a rural road program and the resource road program.

We're also looking at working with the private sector to come forward with a policy on working with them on resource roads and the responsibilities and roles in terms of how we move forward with some of the opportunities that exist for economic activity — responsible economic activity. Just to put it together, we have our total expenditures of \$38,246,000, Highways and Public Works.

Mr. Tredger: In his Budget Address, the Finance minister, despite his concerns about not having a crystal ball, painted a picture of 12 major mining projects in the Yukon. I would like to know how the 2012-13 main estimates reflect this in terms of providing for increased staffing needs for data collection, inspections, monitoring, enforcement, mine safety and regulatory development. This is the oversight piece that will help ensure that development is conducted properly without risk of generating huge environmental liabilities for future generations.

How many more dollars are being put into the oversight of increased development and what is the long-term plan?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: Thank you for that question from the member opposite. I think that's a very important question. I will again defer most of that to the departments that can give you the specifics. I think you're aware that we have announced significant increases in funding for inspectors. We've also talked about purchasing special water-testing equipment as well. But I will defer to the departments to speak of that. I did mention in my speech about all these projects that nobody knows for sure because I don't have a crystal ball to know exactly how many of those projects are going to go forward. But there is a process that has to go forward. There are no surprises. We won't wake up tomorrow and find out we have a new mine. It doesn't happen that way. So we have a process and will en-

sure that we are investing responsibly to meet the needs of all Yukoners and also to ensure that we are out there doing our job, either through inspections — through Energy, Mines and Resources and through the Minister of Environment as well.

Mr. Tredger: What is the responsibility of the Yukon government to supply power to mining development?

Can the Finance minister explain what he perceives Yukon's obligation is in supplying mines with electrical power?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: I think what we're going to do is ensure that whatever we do is in the interest of all Yukoners. That's what we're going to do. We've spoken about where we are in terms of our energy strategy. We're looking at some short-term, medium-term, long-term solutions to meet those needs. On the short-term, we've just completed the Mayo B project on budget — that's creating more green energy — and a third wheel at Aishihik Lake as well. We're moving forward with the creation of an independent power producing policy and also with net metering. We're looking at natural gas as a transition fuel and the ability for creating energy. We're looking at the legislation and regulations for this industry and in particular for liquefied natural gas. Then we're all looking at the big picture as well — if there is a possibility of creating more hydroelectricity as well. With that would be connecting our grid with the grid — either west to Alaska or south to British Columbia — to ensure that at times when we have more power than we need, that we have the ability to sell that power to ensure that we sustain the economics that are there.

We're not going to build a connection to buy power because there aren't a lot of customers here to pay for that. But if there is the opportunity to create a connection where we can sell power, then those are the things we're interested in doing.

Mr. Tredger: I guess my concern arises over that because a number of the mining companies have access to the grid on their investor page and I wondered whether there had been any plans — or, I should say, the possible access to grid and the proximity of the grid to their mines.

Many of the things that you outlined for energy are, at the earliest, five years, and most likely, 10 years to 20 years down the road. We are in a situation where our energy needs are very, very close to being maxed out. Mayo B went very well and it is coming on stream and it may help us a bit. But there will be mines coming on stream before any of the other projects come to fruition. Is there a plan for the interim four or five years or plans to make sure that in five years or 10 years, we do have a reliable source of energy?

We do need to make the plans now if we're going to have it in 10 to 20 years.

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: We certainly have an energy strategy. I'm not going to put hard numbers on something — we need to make sure that when we do this, we do it right and for positive impact for all Yukoners. That's how we have proceeded. That's how we will continue to proceed.

I find this question intriguing, though, because we heard the Leader of the NDP talking about how the transportation of goods is the major emitter that we have here in the Yukon. However, the NDP has no interest in using Yukon energy re-

sources for Yukoners. They don't want to see us doing anything here in the Yukon — "not in my backyard." I think that's how I'd phrase that. But they're concerned about all those super Bs that are hauling fuel oil and diesel up here — and you know, quite honestly, I'm not sure where that stuff comes from, and I'm not sure whether they do either. Does it come from Venezuela? Does it come from Saudi Arabia? Where does that energy come from?

I mean, they are not concerned about where it comes from, nor are they concerned about how it is extracted, wherever it comes from, but they are concerned about the fact that we have to bring it up here. They are also concerned and want to ensure that we are not interested — the NDP is not interested — in an energy resource industry here in the Yukon.

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Point of order

Chair: Ms. White, on a point of order.

Ms. White: I'm going to go for Standing Order 19(g): imputes false or unavowed motives to another member.

Chair: Mr. Cathers, on the point of order.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: I believe there is no point of order. It is simply a dispute between members. The Premier, I believe, is reflecting his understanding of what he understood other members of the NDP to be referring to in debate.

Chair's ruling

Chair: I think it was just different members voicing their own opinions, and I'll say there is no point of order. The Premier has the floor.

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Maybe to the member opposite's direct point: we do not have an obligation to provide electricity to mines.

Mr. Tredger: I would like to say that the NDP is on record for supporting energy and renewable energy, sustainable energy and a Yukon-first energy policy, and we will continue to support energy in the Yukon. We know the importance of it. Because we want it done responsibly and in a manner with integrity that does not jeopardize our citizens or citizens anywhere else in the world does not mean we're against it. We are in favour of using energy.

I, myself, drive a car, but I want to know when I drive that car that what makes it go has been mined responsibly, that the world has been looked after while it has been mined and that we're doing the best that we can to ensure that we leave something for our children.

I'll move on to land use planning, which I think is integral to the development of the Yukon. The Yukon public is wondering about this government's commitment to land use planning with their rejection of the Peel plan. The public also looks at the current oil and gas disposition process and wonders why it is happening prior to land use planning, given the Whitehorse Trough is home to the headwaters of the Yukon River and the bulk of our population.

We have dragged our feet long enough on land use planning. Now the resource industry is looking to the land, and we are getting land use planning by default.

Residents of my constituency question what the point of land use planning in the future will be if much of the land is tied up for oil and gas exploration and development. What's this government's plan to re-establish the public's faith in land use planning?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: Madam Chair, first, I'm going to be looking forward, because the NDP have said that they will come forward with ideas and solutions; however, to this point, we unfortunately have not heard any yet. The member opposite talked about a Yukon-first energy policy, so I'm very interested to see what that is and what that is going to look like.

The member opposite is talking about responsible mining. I can tell you, if they are worried about responsibility — when that super B comes up the road, you don't know where that came from or how it was extracted.

I feel very confident in the ability and the process that we have in place through our Water Board, through our *Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Act*, that we do deliver on responsible mining here and we have the benefits stay here for Yukoners. I'm not sure exactly what the member is trying to say — that he's all in favour and it should be responsible, but if it's done in some other country, I don't know how he, in fact, proposes to enforce our high standards in terms of what's being done in those countries.

Again, it's that contradiction, it's that painting a picture with only half a story. Again, there was the misleading statement by the member that this government has rejected the Peel commission. We have not done that, for the record. We had three options under the final agreement — to accept, to modify or to reject. We have clearly not rejected the Peel land use plan. We intend, as we have stated, to modify that plan. We will continue moving forward with the process, as has been defined and agreed upon with the four affected First Nations, working through the senior liaison committee to move forward with the final round of consultations.

I will again remind that the New Democratic Party and the Liberal Party have failed to get any land use plans done at all during their times in government. Here since 1993, we have completed one; we're at the final stages of the second one and we have already initiated the third plan.

Mr. Tredger: I'll move on to a different topic. I will refer to schools because my experience has been in schools, but I suspect it is prevalent throughout the territory.

If we look at schools, there are some 30 schools. A number of them are starting to age. In the past, the Department of Education would go through a process with the school councils to establish what order schools would be built in. That's the way we built Mayo, Tantalus, Pelly Crossing, Robert Service and a number of other schools.

Right now, we have Johnson Elementary with \$500,000 slated for the destruction of a condemned wing. That wing, Madam Chair, was condemned three years ago.

Three years later, we're repairing it. Has any inclination been given to rebuilding the school? The way I see it, it has taken seven years to get where we are with F.H. Collins. We have 30 schools. Doing the math, we may have some of our schools being replaced in 210 years. I don't think our schools

are going to last that long, so where is the planning for the development of the next schools? When will we begin to see in the budget some money being set aside for just that? And how soon will school councils be involved in coming up with an overall plan?

I realize that that is probably best answered by the Department of Education, but the reason I'm asking it here is that I assume we have buildings in other departments as well. Those will be aging, so what I'm looking for is an overall plan from the government to look at how do we replace our buildings, how do we ensure that in 10 or 15 years schools are being built, buildings are being replaced in a responsible and timely manner.

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: First off, I guess I'll mention the fact that we do have in our budget a multi-year capital plan which includes a minimum of \$12.5 million annually for a building maintenance program. I have to say that what you are talking about is something that goes on in terms of planning and looking ahead. You know, 210 years or 212 years — maybe that is NDP math, but I do know that the department — specifically within their department — is reviewing this on an ongoing basis. They are looking at projections for kids, where the pressures are going to be, what kind of work needs to be done, which schools need to have work done. It's a process that this laid out and it is a living document that needs to be adjusted as we go through. As the member is aware, we have spoken about our commitment to F.H. Collins.

We have also said that in actuality we may have to look at one or perhaps even two more schools in the Whitehorse area within this mandate because of the growing population in areas such as Copper Ridge.

In the 2010-11 annual report from the Department of Education, "Recommendation: Long-term facility plan. The department is developing a facilities plan that can be used to inform long-term maintenance and facility replacement. The Department of Education is also working with the Department of Highways and Public Works to develop a service-level agreement that will clearly define the roles and responsibilities of the two departments regarding the ongoing maintenance of education facilities. Education will be the first of several government departments to enter such a service-level agreement with Highways and Public Works."

What we are talking about is in concert with Highways and Public Works, which has the responsibility for the care and maintenance of all the buildings. We continue to address that as I described, with a commitment of over \$12.5 million annually.

Ms. White: This is my first and a half time trying general debate so I'm going to take it a completely different way. I'm going to try to ask so I can learn how to read budgets.

I'm not sure if the House is aware, but in my previous life, I worked in quite a few mining camps all over the territory. I'm really excited to see the money for the rec centre in Ross River, because the last mining camp I worked in was Yukon Zinc, and a huge number of people from Ross River worked there, and I'm sure they're over the moon with the idea that they'll have a place to go and gather and do things. So thank you very much for the rec centre in Ross River. That's excellent.

When we talk about the money that's coming in from mining camps, and understanding that exploration camps are a lot more profitable to the territory, actually, than are operational mines — when you have an exploration camp, you have local purveyors. So you get groceries from places like G-P Distributing Inc and you have lots of expediting companies that help you. When a mine goes into construction or operation, all their groceries come directly from down south. Right now, when we talk about Yukon Zinc, this is a company that has planes flying directly from Vancouver to camp; whereas, when we were in the exploration or the care and maintenance, everything flowed through Whitehorse first. So there is a bit of a difference there.

With the money that people are earning now coming out of mining camps and stuff, there is an increase in drug and alcohol problems and the issues associated with that. Are there any programs being looked into for awareness of gambling, alcohol or drug issues with this new money that's coming into the territory?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: I thank the member for the question. I will remind the member opposite that she, in fact, voted against the Ross River rec centre just the other day.

I also want to make a comment on the assumption that the exploration industry has a greater impact than the mining industry does in the Yukon because I don't know the answer to that. I don't think that was a fair assumption as to the economic impacts. But I do appreciate the fact that the member opposite is aware of the "trickle-down effect" — the indirect jobs that are a result of industries, such as the exploration industry, in terms of the grocery business, the lumber business, the airlines, the helicopters, the tire shops, the expeditors and everybody else who is involved in ensuring the success of Yukon as a result of that.

As for your question on Health and Social Services, I am going to defer that specific topic to the Department of Health and Social Services.

Ms. White: With the \$35 million we have been told is set aside for land development, can you give us an overview of where and what kinds of lots we're expecting and in what places in the territory?

Can you give us a time frame? And just a question regarding the lots not sold in Dawson: will they be reposted for a lesser value at a later date?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: Again, that's a very specific question to a specific department and so I will defer that. Other than the fact that I think just today Community Services was talking about how many lots were going to be coming out of Whistle Bend this year. She talked about Dawson, she talked about Destruction Bay, Haines Junction, I believe there are lots in Watson Lake, Whitehorse. You know, it is part of the whole strategy. I think we announced today about Lot 262 for 10.4 acres. We're very excited, again, about working with the private sector to be coming forward with opportunities for affordable housing, but I will defer the specifics to the departmental debate.

Ms. White: Also, in my previous life, I was a life skills coach up at corrections and I always thought I'd have a teaching kitchen in the future and that one of the things I would

do is I would take people from the very beginning without skills and by the time they left my care, they would have skills.

We have a fabulous program in town with Bridges Café. It is just in direct relation to that. Are any other programs similar to this being developed and is there any thought put into the aftercare after someone has finished this program? Is there any chance of incorporating continuing education into these similar programs?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: I appreciate the acknowledgement of Bridges Café. Again, we committed \$65,000 this year for the budget. Unfortunately, the members opposite voted against that as well. Again, in context of the rest of the question, it is very specific to the department and I will defer department-specific questions to the departmental debate.

Ms. White: I am going to keep trying — I am. With the Whistle Bend lots that we expect to be coming out in the fall of 2012, is there any idea of the cost of those lots or the ballpark figure of the costs? Will the cost of the settlement that happened with Norcope be included in the cost of those lots?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: The prices of the lots will be as — they are going to be available this year and those prices will be forthcoming. As per the agreement that you've heard, I have nothing further to comment on the litigation that there was with Norcope.

Ms. White: The next question is about the social-inclusion strategy and the wellness strategy. Can you tell me up to date how much that has cost taxpayers and can you tell me what their mandate is in the Cabinet?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: Again, I'm going to — just to emphasize to the members opposite that the time for specific departmental questions dealing with specific issues, programs, services described and provided within the department will be for departmental debate. This is to be general debate. If the members opposite are ready to move forward with departmental debate, we are ready to move forward with that at any time.

Ms. White: It has been referenced several times — the deal that has been set up between Selkirk First Nation and Capstone Mining. Can we hope to see a similar deal between other mines and the Yukon public?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: I mean, this is already described. It's within the *Quartz Mining Act*. It clearly defines what the royalties are to be paid.

We don't have to make one-off deals; it's out there. In fact, as I have described in this House as well, the royalties that are paid by Capstone to Selkirk First Nation are actually collected by the government on behalf of the Selkirk First Nation because the process is identical and everybody will be treated the same way in terms of the context of what's defined by the act.

Ms. White: Can we expect similar deals throughout the Yukon as the one that you're the middleman for, between Selkirk First Nation and Capstone?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: I think what you're talking about is really the fact that the Capstone mine occurs on category A settlement land. As a result of that, Selkirk First Nation is the sole beneficiary of the royalties. If there is another mine that is created on another category A land of a First Nation, the same deal would apply to them. All First Nations that have treaties

and land claim settlements have category A and category B lands that they have selected and agreed upon — governance and mining in lieu of rescinding obligations or rights and privileges in other areas.

Yes, in fact, if there is another mine — and certainly if First Nations are looking at some of the economic benefits that have been accrued to Selkirk First Nation as a result of this, they might be so inclined to look at those possibilities of developing relationships with the mining industry in hopes of perhaps seeing whether something might apply for them. There are no deals here. This is all clearly defined. What's happening with Capstone and Selkirk First Nation is a result of fact that the mine exists on their category A land.

Ms. White: Can we, as Yukoners, expect similar things on land that is not settlement land? Can we expect that on Yukoner-owned land? A similar deal, a similar quartz mining trickledown, as is being experienced there?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: There are no deals to be made. This is clearly defined under the *Quartz Mining Act* as to what happens when mines come to the point where they're profitable. As we have described, there is some front-end loading of expenses to help create the feasibility to be able to move forward with the creation of the mine.

We have also stated in this House that there is an allowable community development expense that the mining companies — once they go into production and are moving toward profitability — can apply to the government to be able to use this expense to make an investment within the community that surrounds or supports the mine and that there is a direct offset off of royalties when that happens, which really allows that mine to continue to reinvest with that community in the area.

There are no negotiating deals with mining companies as they come in as to what's going to happen. It's all clearly defined in the act. The act shows that, in fact, when you look at base-metal mining, if you look at the corporate tax and the royalties combined, the highest taxed jurisdiction in Canada is right here in the Yukon. But if you look straight at royalties across the board, the Yukon is situated around the middle. We don't have the lowest royalties, we don't have the highest royalties, but we're somewhat situated in the middle.

Mr. Silver: A few days ago, my colleague rose and offered his reply to the Premier's 2012-13 Yukon government Budget Address. Today I have a few more points that I would like to bring forward with respect to this budget. We have a very busy sitting ahead of us. In addition to the budget we are discussing today and last year's supplementary, the government has brought forward amendments to six other pieces of legislation. That legislation requires our due attention, and I look forward to discussing that in the House. I also look forward to the departmental debates and working with the ministers responsible to ensure that the government spending is aligned with what Yukoners want and with what the Yukon can actually afford. Accordingly, I will reserve my detailed questions and concerns for departmental debates.

As I am researching and learning, the departments never receive the attention that they deserve in the legislative debates. To help us get going on these departmental sittings, I will keep

my comments brief today. As well, in the interest of expediency, I will provide my comments on behalf of the Liberal caucus, and I will be the only speaker.

A budget is not just dollars and cents, revenues and expenditures; it is a statement of intent and an expression of a government's priorities. This year, Ottawa placed \$65 million more in transfers into the government's hands than it did last year.

How the government spends that money shows what it values. Who gets that money and who doesn't shows what this government thinks is best for Yukoners. Clearly, the government believes mining is best for Yukoners. My caucus is fully supportive of a vibrant, engaged and responsible mining industry. It is part of our heritage; it is part of our future; and it is a big part of our economy. It is an integral part of my community and, as a teacher in the rural communities, I can attest to that fact that without a healthy mining industry — placer mining, in my case — I wouldn't have had a job, and I wouldn't be here in the Yukon without it.

Energy, Mines and Resources will get an increase of almost \$26 million over last year's budget. Now, that's an increase of 40 percent. No other department enjoys that kind of generosity. Overall, budgeting expenditures are increased by only 5 percent from last year's budget. When overall expenditures increase by 5 percent, but Energy, Mines and Resources expenditures increase by 40 percent, the differences come out of other government programs and services. In this budget, that difference comes out of services that Yukoners and Yukon families — beyond those directly involved in the mining industry — need and use.

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Point of order

Chair: Hon. Mr. Cathers, on a point of order.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: I'd like to correct the Member for Klondike. That money is actually an increase in money. It's money directly funded by the federal government, all related to an increase in money for assessment at abandoned mines.

Chair: Mr. Silver, on the point of order.

Mr. Silver: I am making general statements on the content of the budget right now and leaving the actual debate for line items to the departmental briefings.

Chair's ruling

Chair: I think that Mr. Silver is stating his opinion on what he understands the budget to say, so there is no point of order.

Mr. Silver: Thank you, Madam Chair.

A budget shows the government's priorities. I draw attention to a few areas that the government seems to prioritize less than boosting EMR. The Public Schools branch has a very important job of preparing our children for higher education, for careers and to take part as active citizens in our community. It will serve over 5,000 kindergarten, elementary and secondary students this year. Unlike EMR, the Public Schools branch does not get 40 percent more this year. In fact, it will get less money than last year. In real terms, the loss is greater. As we all know, a dollar today is worth less than a dollar yesterday or

a dollar in the year before, and the Public Schools branch is being asked to do more with fewer resources, when you take into consideration inflationary terms.

In the Yukon, we should be able to both educate our children and support the mining industry. I will remind the government that this budget does not prioritize education the way it does prioritize mining.

Family and Children's Services provides an essential support, education and intervention for the health and well-being of all of our young people and their families. Over 100 families will receive counselling, prevention and support this year. Child protective services will engage with almost 500 families where children are in unsafe circumstances. Almost 150 newborns and their families will benefit from the healthy families program. These are very important services to Yukoners, whether or not they are directly involved in the mining industry.

This budget provides Family and Children's Services with a 3.5-percent increase in funds. In the Yukon, we should be able to both support and protect our children and boost the mining industry. I will remind the government that this budget does not prioritize children and families the way that it prioritizes mining. Energy, Mines and Resources got a 40-percent increase this year. Children and families did not get that much. Neither did other sectors of the economy. Tourism and Culture is getting less money than it spent last year. The department's marketing operations office is getting less money than was spent last year, which will do nothing to increase the Yukon's presence in the global tourism market.

Economic Development is getting less money than last year. The government is cutting several branches that are key to economic diversification. Business and Industry Development is tasked with promoting Yukon for business investment and enhancing our medium- and small-sized businesses. This year they will have to do that with 20 percent less money. Regional Economic Development works on a large scale to advance regional, community and First Nations economic development. This year, they will have to do that with 12 percent less money. In the Yukon, we should be able to both diversify our economy and support the mining industry. I will remind this government that the budget does not prioritize economic diversification the way it prioritizes mining. At the same time, Energy, Mines and Resources is getting 40 percent more money, much of it to clean up old mining disasters.

Funding is being cut to the Department of Environment, which helps us prevent new mining disasters. That department isn't enjoying a 40-percent increase, but in fact is getting far less cash than it did last year. In the Yukon we should be able to both protect our environment and enjoy a healthy mining industry. I would comment to the government that this budget does not give equal weight to both concerns. I am sure my point is coming clear. As I said, a budget isn't just a financial document; it is the government's declaration about what it feels is important for Yukon and what is important for Yukoners.

It is the government party's priorities. These may not be the same priorities as all Yukoners hold. They may not be the same priorities as Yukoners who have children in the school

system, or Yukoners welcoming new additions to the family, or Yukoners working in industries other than mineral development. I urge the government to remember the varied needs of the territory's residents. I further remind the department ministers that the Liberal caucus looks forward to discussing these needs and the resources that are required in detail in departmental debate.

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: I guess it looks like it might be the role or the strategy of the Liberal Party to paint pictures with only half a story, as well, and I guess that's bit disappointing. When you look at it, the best way to do a comparison is to look at comparing mains to mains. Compare last year's mains to this year's mains and, Madam Chair, every department except for Elections Yukon had increases this year over last year.

As the member opposite is well aware of, but tried to just paint that half a picture with Energy, Mines and Resources — the member is fully aware that most of that increase is a result of flow-through funding from the federal government for assessment and abandonment plans for Mount Nansen and the Faro mine site.

We have, as I mentioned earlier, a significant increase in inspectors through Energy, Mines and Resources in light of the economic activity we have in the resource sector of our economy.

Public schools — again, I look to see the expenditures per student. In 1998-99, that was \$8,362. In 2002-03, it was \$11,157. It is now, for 2010-11, \$16,197 per student.

Madam Chair, that is a continued investment in our students by this government acknowledging that truly our future lies in the hands of our students and we are committed to ensuring we do everything possible for the success of our students. It's spoken to in our investment per student; it's spoken to in many other areas I know our Minister of Education will move forward with.

In fact, if we look at the estimates for 2012-13 compared to last year for Public Schools — last year's number was \$92,632,000. The number for 2012-13 is \$95,239,000 — over a \$2.5-million increase. I don't know what the Liberal math is, but when this year's number is bigger than last year's number, I think that's called an increase.

As the member opposite says, they're interested in moving forward with the debate at the departmental level. We, too, are willing to move forward and excited to be able to have engagement and debate with the departments, with the ministers and their staff. We are hopeful that we can ensure that when we are out there describing the playing field that we, in fact, look at that whole picture and not make an attempt to create misleading information for Yukoners.

Mr. Silver: I'm not trying to paint any picture at all, actually. I'm merely pulling back a veil to expose a reality that seems to not have been considered by this government, and that is the inflation rate. When talking about a billion-dollar budget — and this is the Liberal math, here, by the way. When talking about a billion-dollar budget, an inflation rate is extremely important. Does the Premier acknowledge that the rate of inflation, when he references this, increases to his ministries?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: I guess the very simple answer to that is yes, because I've been involved in business for a long time, and I certainly understand what inflation means. What we're talking about and what you're looking at are increases in departments that certainly exceed that inflationary rate.

Ms. Moorcroft: The Minister of Finance, the Premier has been standing and criticizing the opposition and indicating that he doesn't believe that we understand budgets or finances. I'd just like to put clearly on the record here that the 2009-10 consolidated Yukon government and government corporations public accounts show that the Yukon Party government projected an \$18-million surplus and then posted, in fact, a \$60-million deficit. Those are the facts and I think they underline that the government claims to be sound financial managers when there are such wide variances between what they project and what the public accounts at the end of the day will show — that they're inaccurate, or show that they're not really on top of things.

The Minister of Finance has stood here and refused to answer a number of questions from a number of members in the opposition. I would like to point out that as the Premier, the Minister of Finance has a leadership role for the government and as the Minister of Finance he needs to have oversight of government spending in every department. We expect that the Minister of Finance will have information available to answer us. I would expect that the Minister of Finance will have in particular this information at his fingertips.

How many full-time equivalencies are there across all government departments? How many employees are there working for the government and how many casuals and auxiliaries?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: I guess I will just make a brief comment that while the vast majority of our caucus and I were not here during the deficit of 2009-10 — first off that was on the unconsolidated, not the consolidated — I know that we have explained that before. But I do know that the member opposite was here during those times of some pretty outstanding fiscal management of the previous NDP government. I don't think I need to go into describing some of those wise and prudent investments and those cases where they were funding one private company to compete against others and the triage of other stories that were out there.

As for the question, I will defer that to the Public Service Commission. That is a detailed question that should be asked during that time of the debate. This is time for general debate, and I'm sure that when we get to that point, if, in fact, they choose to use their time wisely, we'll be able to answer all those questions.

Ms. Moorcroft: Am I to understand that the Premier has no idea and is unable to tell us how many employees there are working for the Government of Yukon and that that is not a general question that he, as the Premier and Minister of Finance, should have an answer to?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: I think what you'll take from my answer is my commitment and my support and my confidence in my ministers to be able to fulfill their responsibilities and

their obligations as ministers of their portfolios to deliver to Yukoners as we had committed to do, Madam Chair.

Ms. Moorcroft: Madam Chair, the minister is not answering the questions. I'm confident that the officials have prepared answers to those questions. I'll ask it again. Can the minister tell us how many employees there are working for the Government of Yukon across all departments and, as well, how many there are working as casuals and auxiliaries?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: I guess, for the sake of redundancy, for the record, to again reiterate what I have said: we have an incredible team of individuals on this side of the House — our caucus and excellent Cabinet, I believe — and I have the full confidence in all of the ministers to perform their duties and their responsibilities for the portfolios. I'm not going to upstage them. We work together as a team and, as is expected, when we get to detailed questions, they should be answered in departmental debate where the opportunity will then be there for the minister to answer those questions. That's how we do things.

Ms. Moorcroft: It would appear that this exchange is not going to result in any answers being forthcoming from the Minister of Finance. I will try, though; I will put another question on the record and we could either have an answer or not.

I would like to have from the minister information telling us how many full-time equivalency positions there are in the Government of Yukon devoted to communications.

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: Again, I will say to the members opposite that this is a question that should be asked to the ministers. They can give you the specifics about their departments, which is what departmental debate is about. We are here now doing general debate about the budget. If the members opposite are ready to go to departmental debate, this side of the House is ready to do so as well.

Ms. Moorcroft: I will try another general question for the minister then and this has to do with project planning. The previous Yukon Party government did not demonstrate good project management and this was one factor that led to surpluses turning into deficits. I would point in their area of poor project planning to the announcement prior to the election of the government building F.H. Collins and then following the election, determining, in fact, they weren't able to proceed with that now.

I would point also to using design/build practices on the Whitehorse Correctional Centre, which contributed to a major escalation of cost. The initial \$20-million announcement from the short-lived Liberal government was for the new Correctional Centre, and then the Yukon Party government, when they brought in their estimates, started out estimating a new Correctional Centre would be in the neighbourhood of \$30 million. We're now at \$70 million and counting.

Can the Finance minister speak to us about how he is going to work to improve financial management with respect to project planning?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: I'd like to talk for a minute about financial management of the NDP. Record history of the biggest deficit in the history of the Yukon — \$64 million produced by the NDP. During that time, when they were in power,

Yukon Development Corporation financed a failed sawmill in Watson Lake and Totem Oil's presence to compete with local businesses.

The NDP lent money to a private company to compete with other businesses, and you know what, that is not how we are going to run business. Other examples of financial management by the NDP include: building a 25-person correctional centre in Teslin that mainly sat empty, except for the 20 staff members who cost the taxpayers in 1993 over \$700,000. The Taga Ku convention centre was another NDP disaster — one where they avoided the scrutiny of the Legislature and used and lost taxpayer dollars to fund a commercial venture that does not even exist. Of course, there was the creation of the visitor reception centre on the Alaska Highway that did nothing to encourage tourists to come into downtown Whitehorse. It was the Yukon Party that built the current facility downtown only a few short years after this great investment by the NDP. We can call it a boondoggle as well. Compare that with investments that we're making in terms of building hospitals and power plants and creating infrastructure and jobs for Yukoners.

As I have stated, we are committed to F.H. Collins. Like all projects now, we want to ensure that the diligence is done. We make sure that when we make an investment, when we are using taxpayers' dollars, we ensure that this is done wisely and that our diligence is done to ensure the investments meet scrutiny and we meet expectations of taxpayers and that we're spending their money wisely.

Ms. Hanson: I just came into this conversation and I'm sort of reminded of "we will, we will." Actually, I would like to hear "we will, we will" with some actual, concrete, demonstrated action, as opposed to saying, yet again, promises and reading, quite frankly, tired remarks from the Blues from last week. Really, must we repeat the same kinds of comments that were made that were largely not based on fact or history, but just repeated over and over again?

Madam Chair, the Minister of Finance is ignoring history. He is ignoring the fact that the Auditor General, not once, but many times, has pointed to that abject failure of the Yukon Party as government to be able to actually plan. So what we're talking about here is the ability of this government — as identified most recently by the Auditor General last year when she did her scathing, scathing report on health — that this government has an inability or has chosen to proceed without proper business cases and without proper planning.

My colleague here has been asking, attempting to get, in a general way — because we do appreciate that the real conversation about budgets for each department should occur when we have an opportunity to debate each department with those ministers, but we also know — and we have learned from history with Yukon Party governments — that they do not allow the Official Opposition to actually engage in those conversations. We would like to ensure that we have at least an understanding that the Minister of Finance, as the overall steward of the financial resources of this territory — of all Yukon citizens — is able to demonstrate that he understands the scope, the depth and the breadth of what he is charged with in terms of the responsibilities for the territorial finances.

When we ask these questions, we are not asking them to be vexatious; we are asking them because we seek from him an understanding that he understands what his role is and that he will treat the questions we are giving him with the respect that they are due. So when we ask him, in terms of having an overall comprehension, he says he's a businessman. He ran businesses. Well then he would know how many staff he had working for those establishments. He is the overall boss of the Yukon in terms of public service. He should know how many people are in his employ. It's one thing for him to say that he lauds the work of the public service, but then he should respect them by acknowledging how many there are. That's an important piece. If he doesn't know the person who works on his workforce and he doesn't know how many there are, then how can he say he respects them? That's a simple question.

I'd really like them to come back to that. He says, "We will, we will." I'd like some assurance, and can he demonstrate how he, as Minister of Finance, is ensuring that we're doing proper planning and that we have business cases for all capital projects going forward? I've heard various references from this government about doing this in housing. "We're going to do that in housing, but we haven't heard the business case for OFI..." or for this or that.

"We'll go into those in detail when we get them, minister-by-minister," but I want to know what principles this Finance minister has set in place and what conditions there will be in terms of ensuring business case plans for all expenditures.

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: I know that the NDP don't like to hear it, but I think it's important to be reminding them of their history, of their record. I know that the Leader of the Official Opposition has been away, but we also reminded them of the mass exodus of people and the devastation of the private sector economy that occurred the last time the NDP took the helm of government here. I will again reiterate my commitment and my support and my confidence in my ministers to be able to accurately and completely live up to their obligations and their responsibilities in their portfolios. They will answer those questions if the people on the opposite side decide to budget their time accordingly to be able to get through all of it.

I will just reserve, again, my last comment regarding this history that the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources has spoken to and I have spoken to, and that is the respect — or the lack of respect — that occurs from the members opposite to the fine men and women who work in our public service. Describing the report as a "scathing report" is an indictment of the work of the people who work for this government every day. We respect their work and their effort and their professionalism. We, again, hear this coming from the members opposite — their lack of regard and respect for the people who work for the people of Yukon.

Ms. Hanson: Unfortunately, it's very clear that the Minister of Finance, and in his role as Premier, does not understand, in a parliamentary democracy, it's the minister who's accountable and responsible, and it's inappropriate for the Minister of Finance or the Premier to even reference those public servants.

He is accountable; he is responsible, as the ultimate minister in this government. So he should perhaps check out the roles and responsibilities of the elected official and those who carry the high regard and incredible responsibility of ministers in a parliamentary democracy. It is not appropriate to be talking about and trying to deflect the discussion with respect to public servants. They serve us; they are public servants; they are not politically appointed; they are not political tools of government. I know this, you know this, and the people in this room know this, so we should not confuse the two.

Over the course of the last week or so and in the brief session that we had in December, the Minister of Finance, in response to questions that we have raised, in terms of responsible governance and most recently in his Budget Address, touted with great fanfare — in advance, of course, to the surplus — when we talked about the need to plan for the future, given as I think he acknowledged in his Budget Address the boom-and-bust cycle of any resource-based economy, here in the territory or any place else in the world — and in this country we have seen the same thing.

He has acknowledged that many other jurisdictions have established funds for tough economic times. What we have seen in this government, with this Minister of Finance, is no appreciation of the need to actually establish anything close to a rainy-day fund. We have also heard him acknowledge earlier this afternoon that it is, in fact, the history of these Yukon Party governments since 2006 to have incurred deficits. If we expect that there could be a cycle of more demand placed on government, what is this government's plan in this respect? This is the Finance minister's question; this is not a departmental question. I'm not asking the Minister of Health or the Minister of Justice this; I'm asking the Minister of Finance and the Premier, who has the overall responsibility for setting that vision for his Cabinet colleagues. What is his vision with respect to establishing and building — what in some places have been called "rainy-day funds," "heritage funds" — other mechanisms to ensure that the citizens of the future are not left with long-term debts that our children and their children will be paying off? So could the Minister of Finance please respond?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: I will answer that question — straightforward. But first, I guess, I need to remind, Madam Chair, that in response — the Leader of the Official Opposition, in response to the Auditor General's report — her comments were that the Department of Health and Social Services has no idea what it's doing. I think that's another example of respect or the lack thereof.

As for the answer to the question, it's pretty straightforward, and it is inclusive in our budget. The member is asking about a fund. This is one of only two jurisdictions in the country that have net financial resources. That is a fund, and it grows every year. We're projecting surpluses and moving forward. We're projecting to have an excess of \$101 million of net financial resources. I'll explain it to you that "net financial resources" means that if you take all our assets, our capital investments, and you subtract our liabilities, accounts payable and environmental liabilities, we still have money left over. We're not using tomorrow's money to fund operations today.

Only Alberta and Yukon have net financial resources. We are now ready to be able to not only react to risks, react to issues, but also to react to opportunities as they arise and have the wherewithal to do that. I'm not quite sure whether the Leader of the NDP — I guess she's looking for a different name on the piggy bank or something, but certainly what this shows all Yukoners — and really all Canadians — is this is one of two jurisdictions that has no net debt. This is the best indicator there is of a financial strength of this government and its ability to be able to react going forward simply because we do have money in the bank.

Ms. Hanson: I guess the Premier doesn't understand the difference between a "fund" and sort of "fun" and the idea that he has a \$80-million projected surplus at this stage is predicated on his notion that in fact that will be there. The challenge that he faces is no trust in that. There is no trust because it has not been earned.

In the past we have seen repeated premiers, the Premier preceding this one and the Minister of Finance preceding, reiterate many times: no, this is the Yukon and we have this and this and this and we are second to only Alberta in how we manage our resources. I will remind you that Alberta in fact has a heritage trust fund. Unfortunately, it too has been looted by Conservative governments, but there is at least a base heritage trust fund. There is no trust fund in this territory, and I would suggest that there won't be under this government because there is no trust in their ability to finance that way.

I am going to ask one more time: does the Minister of Finance understand the difference between a trust, a heritage fund, a rainy-day fund and the potential of a surplus that in fact — the surplus that changes time after time — changes at the end of this fiscal year will be different from it was last year? I would warrant that it will not be \$80 million, but that we will leave to the future. We saw in the past that what was predicted by the Minister of Finance and the Premier didn't prove out. So I am asking the Minister of Finance if he would confirm for this House if he sees a distinction between what he is putting forward in his response to my question, which is a serious question — the difference between a trust fund that is there for the future so that when unforeseen circumstances occur, and a budgetary exercise of a fiscal surplus that may or may not be there.

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: She wants to know if I know the difference between a fund and fund, I guess. You know, right now, as we have stated, we're projecting a \$29-million surplus in 2011-12. We are budgeting an \$80-million surplus in 2012-13 and budgeting net financial resources of \$101 million for this year. Will it work out to be exactly that? No, it won't. That's not a secret. Because, you know what? Plans are plans. This government, as it is in people's personal lives, is not static. Things happen and you need — we are one of two places in this country that have the ability to adjust without using tomorrow's money to pay for things today. So we have the ability to do that. We are ready to be able to adjust, to react. If we have a major forest fire season or we have an opportunity to invest strategically that might help health or create an econ-

omy, or whatever reason, we have the money now to do it without mortgaging the future.

We do continue to invest in capital, to invest in things like bridges, in schools, and in hospitals, which creates jobs.

I used some examples when the NDP were in power. They used money to have one private company working against another private company. Madam Chair, the Leader of the NDP talked about trust. Trust was given. We talked about trust. October 11. We had an election and Yukoners came forward to trust this government to continue on the record of the previous two Yukon Party governments down the pathway of prosperity, to continue moving forward.

Ms. Hanson: Madam Chair, trust is earned and it's also lost very easily. I would wager that the trust of the Yukon people is teetering at this very stage when we see the kind of repetitive and non-responsive answers from the Premier.

I would move that we clear general debate; this is non-productive.

Actually, before I move that, I would like to step back and get a commitment from the Premier that we will see a responsible interaction from the government side in terms of working with the Official Opposition and the Third Party so that this time, in this important year, in 2011-12, and 2012 going forward, we will not leave, un-discussed and un-debated, 46 percent, 23 percent or 27 percent of the total budget. I'm not going to accept that it's our responsibility as the Official Opposition in terms of budgeting time, because my experience, Madam Chair, in this room and in this Legislative Assembly is that when we ask a question, we get a 20-minute rambling answer. I'm committing that we will ask questions that are to the point, on the point and focused. What I'm seeking from the Premier is a commitment that he and his Cabinet colleagues will respond in kind, so that when he talks about the trust of Yukoners, we will all be able to deliver on it this time and that we can ensure that, through the life of the spring sitting, we will debate every single department and all billion dollars plus that we are managing and for which we are holding this government accountable. That is our responsibility, and we owe Yukoners no less. I'm seeking from the Premier a commitment that he will work effectively with us. We are committed to working with him and his Cabinet colleagues to see that the travesty of the past couple years is not repeated. Madam Chair, I would leave it to the Premier to respond to that and then I will stand and move clearance.

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: I think the record will show clearly that there haven't been any 20-minute answers to any questions as we have gone forward here. I'm not talking about what has happened in the past. I can tell you that we've certainly heard some speeches and some stories from that side of the House that have come close to that length — really, through the process of which, wasn't asking or articulating much of a question but perhaps just making a statement — whether it's political or whether it's factual. So, again, I will say to the members opposite that the opportunity is there. The House leaders will be meeting to conclude on how long the session will be based on that. Everybody here knows what legislation

has been tabled. Everybody knows how many days there are. There will be —

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Chair: Mr. Pasloski has the floor.

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: I said that the House leaders are meeting, and they know how much time that they will have to be able to ask the questions. Again, I know budgets are difficult for the members opposite. We have a lot of examples that show that they're not obligated or don't feel obligated to live within those budgets — something that we intend to do. But if they can find a way to be able to budget their time accordingly, I'm sure there will be a way to get through as much of this as is possible.

I encourage the members opposite to focus on the areas where they want to have debate, and our ministers and their staff will be here to answer those questions.

Ms. Hanson: I would seek one point of information from the Minister of Finance. In fact, the members on this side do not know how long this session will be. The public asks the question all the time. We do not know. They expect that we will, as elected representatives — all of us in this room — be here until we have debated every single department. They are shocked to find the history of this Yukon Party government over the last six years — to see that they have prevented the debate of every single department and agency in this government. I simply say that we, of course, will agree to have our House leaders come to an agreement. I am hopeful that they will agree and it will not be an imposition, but that it will be a three-party agreement as to the appropriate length of time to complete that review. My question was to the Premier and it remains: yes or no? Do you agree that it is important that we review all departments, and will you ensure that your Cabinet colleagues work with us to make sure that we do that? That is what I think Yukoners expect of us.

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: I think I have already answered that question. I will again reiterate that the House leaders will get together and will establish the number of days. If they can't do that, Madam Chair, then the Speaker will do it for them.

Once we know how many days it is, then the opportunity will be there for the opposition to be able to look at what needs to be discussed and budget their time accordingly to ensure that we can get through everything that needs to be discussed and debated before we finish this session.

Ms. Hanson: Madam Chair, I will assume, by that roundabout answer and the indirect response to my question, that the Premier is in fact agreeing with me — that he is now confirming that his colleagues will work and they will budget their time accordingly so that we can achieve completion of all departments and all agencies, so that we can then say to Yukoners that, in fact, in 2012-13, they can rest assured that though we may not have agreed to every answer we got — that we didn't like some of the things that were said — but that we fulfilled our collective obligations to review the budgets of all departments and agencies. With that, I will move to conclude general debate, and let's get on with the business that we are here for.

Unanimous consent re concluding general debate on Bill No. 6, *First Appropriation Act, 2012-13*

Chair: Ms. Hanson has requested unanimous consent to conclude general debate on Bill No. 6, *First Appropriation Act, 2012-13*. Are you agreed?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

Chair: Unanimous consent has been granted.

Having concluded general debate on Bill No. 6, Committee of the Whole will now proceed to general debate on Vote 7, Department of Economic Development.

Would the members care for a 15-minute break?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

Recess

Chair: Order please. Committee of the Whole will now come to order. The matter before the Committee is Bill No. 6, *First Appropriation Act, 2012-13*. We will now proceed with general debate on Vote 7, Department of Economic Development.

Department of Economic Development

Hon. Mr. Dixon: I'd like to make some opening remarks about the Department of Economic Development's budget for this year. Of course, before I do that though, I did want to make a few general comments about some of the debate we've heard today and throughout the previous days in this House. One of the points I wanted to make was about the contribution of the resource sector to the economy. Oftentimes members will ask questions. Where is the contribution to the economy from the mining sector in this budget? We look to the revenues and where do we see this contribution? I think there is a benefit, of course, to that. There are taxes and royalties. Those are all positive, but the true benefit of the resource sector is to the private sector economy. If you want to assess the health of the private sector economy, you don't look to the revenues of the government. You look to the private sector economy. The private sector economy has increased its contribution to the overall economy of the Yukon significantly over the years and we anticipate that it'll continue to grow. The true measure of how successful we have been at growing the private sector economy is looking at its contribution to the overall economy. I would venture an estimate at about 50:50 in terms of the contribution compared to government — I would say the government, given the GDP, is about \$2 billion, give or take a little bit.

The government's budget, of course, is just over \$1 billion. I would posit that the private sector economy is roughly half of our overarching economy, which is good. It has come a long way, but it has a long way to go. That's what we envision. We envision developing a strong, healthy, sustainable private sector economy. That's at the top of our list, Madam Chair. With that, I'll delve into the actual budget itself.

It gives me great pleasure to table the Department of Economic Development's O&M and capital budgets for the 2012-13 fiscal year. To begin, I will give you a picture of Yukon's current economic landscape. The Yukon's economic position

remains strong. Mining development spending for 2011 is estimated at up to \$150 million, similar spending in 2010. Mineral exploration expenditure for 2011 is estimated at a record level at over \$300 million, up substantially from the \$157 million record level in 2010. The high level of interest in mineral exploration in Yukon is being reflected in the record level of claim staking occurring in the territory, with near to 115,000 claims being staked in 2011. While exploration expenditures are not expected to set another record in 2012, they are expected to remain strong.

With respect to tourism, visitation to Yukon in 2011 was on par with 2010, with almost 310,000 border crossings. Construction activity in 2011 remains strong, with the total value of building permits totalling \$170 million, a 29-percent increase from the \$132 million reported in 2010.

Strong growth in residential permit value and institutional permit value contributed to the overall growth in 2011. Preliminary data for 2011 shows that seasonally unadjusted retail sales in Yukon totalled over \$669 million, up 15.7 percent from \$578 million recorded in 2010. The Department of Economic Development is estimating GDP growth for 2011 in the 3- to 4-percent range. This represents the eighth consecutive year of growth for Yukon's economy. The Conference Board of Canada's Centre for the North is currently estimating an even higher real GDP growth of 8.6 percent for 2011 and forecasting growth of 2.9 percent for 2012.

As of December 2011, the population of Yukon was estimated at 35,800, up 3.3 percent from the December 2010 population estimate. This marks the ninth consecutive December that recorded an increase in population. 2011 was another positive year for Yukon's labour market, with strong growth recorded in both Yukon's labour force, up almost seven percent to 20,200, and the average annual number of people employed in Yukon is up 9.1 percent, to 19,100.

At 5.4 percent, Yukon's unemployment rate in 2011 was down from 6.9 percent in 2010, and is among the lowest in Canada.

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

The Department of Economic Development is a valued partner in the building of a sustainable and diversified economy focusing on prosperity for all Yukoners while remaining cognizant of social and environmental needs. The department's mission is to assist our partners — the private sector, First Nation governments, and development corporations, industry associations, non-governmental organizations — and other Yukon government departments and other levels of government in building a prosperous, private sector Yukon economy by creating and fostering responsible development opportunities. Economic Development's goals are to enable strategic and responsible economic projects, to increase the benefit Yukoners' businesses, First Nations and communities receive from economic projects and activities, and to enhance the competitiveness of Yukon's business environment. The department recognizes that wealth-generating industries are the pillars of a thriving Yukon economy. We will support the growth of the tradi-

tional economic drivers of mining and tourism, while facilitating the development of a diversified, knowledge-based economy.

To enable strategic and responsible economic projects, we are focused on facilitating the development of mining and other resource development projects, tourism-related projects, research, innovation, and commercialization and opportunities for filmmakers and sound recording artists.

To increase the benefits Yukoners, businesses, First Nations and communities receive in economic projects and activities, we are supporting the growth of Yukon's small- and medium-sized enterprises, increasing Yukon's share of benefits generated from proposed large industry developments, supporting First Nations economic development and creating and enhancing economic and community opportunities.

To enhance the competitiveness of Yukon's business environment, we are supporting the development of strategic infrastructure required for economic development, marketing Yukon as a place to live, work and invest, advancing Yukon's economic development interests through intergovernmental forums, developing policies and strategies to guide the Government of Yukon's economic development activities and supporting capacity and workforce development.

To support the ongoing work of the Department of Economic Development, we are including a total capital budget of \$1.127 million and a total operation and maintenance budget of \$14.613 million for 2012-13.

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

Yukon is strategically located and has resources that fit the type of global demand generated by foreign markets. Our mineral deposits of copper, lead, zinc, tungsten and iron ore are some of the largest in the world. The continuance of our work in relationship building through travel to Asia, hosting inbound investors in Yukon, and attending trade shows has led to significant investments by Chinese companies in Yukon-based projects. This relationship building has taken place over time and we are now beginning to see the results. Seven significant deals between Yukon-based companies and Asian investors have been announced since October 2007, including Yukon Nevada Gold Corporation and China-based Northwest Non-Ferrous International Investment Co. Ltd., completing a \$3-million agreement to form Yukon-Shaanxi Mining Company, a new Canadian company that will explore for and develop mineral resources in Yukon.

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

Mining Resources Group Ltd., purchased approximately 14.6 percent of the shares of Selwyn Resources, representing an investment of over \$6 million in the company. In December 2010, New Pacific Metals Corporation completed the acquisition of the 100-percent interest in Tagish Lake Gold Corporation, which is operating as a wholly-owned subsidiary of New Pacific.

Selwyn Resources and Yunnan Chihong Zinc & Germanium Co. Ltd. completed a \$100-million joint venture transaction to advance Yukon's Selwyn project to bankable feasibility, and, if warranted, to production, with Yunnan and Selwyn each holding 50 percent of the new company. The details of this transaction were previously announced on December 14, 2009 and March 2, 2010.

The Selwyn project in eastern Yukon is one of the largest undeveloped zinc and lead deposits in the world. Yukon Zinc's Wolverine project is being purchased by Jinduicheng Molybdenum Group and Northwest Non-Ferrous International Investment Company for approximately \$101 million. Since 2009, Yukon Zinc's Wolverine project construction expenditures are estimated to be in excess of \$280 million. The company's 2011 capital and operation costs are expected to be approximately \$100 million, making this investment alone nearly \$400 million. Current plans have the mill ramping up to the design capacity of 1,700 tonnes per day in early 2012. Current direct employment is estimated at 104 employees for operations. Additionally, employment via contractors who are associated with this project is estimated at 179 persons; approximately 32 percent of those are hired Yukoners.

In June 2011, Northern Cross Ltd. announced that an affiliate of the China National Offshore Oil Corporation made an investment in Northern Cross toward exploration activities at Eagle Plains. CNOOC, as it is known, International Limited is China's largest producer of offshore crude oil and natural gas and one of the largest independent oil and gas exploration production companies in the world. Northern Cross is hopeful that the initial investment in exploration activities at Eagle Plains will lead to the development of energy resources meeting the growing demand in Yukon and export markets.

The department invests annually toward attracting Asian investors to Yukon. This investment has assisted in facilitating over \$550 million in investment in Yukon companies to date.

Economic Development plays a key role in investment attraction by making introductions to potential investors and facilitating the development of business relationships. Yukon is focused on ensuring Yukoners and Yukon businesses share the secondary benefits generated by the development in mining and other industries. By ensuring this, we are helping to strengthen the private sector economy, especially in rural Yukon. Increasing Yukon's share of benefits generated from these industry developments, as well as supporting First Nation economic development, is an important step toward diversifying Yukon's economy. The department seeks to optimize industrial benefits through supplier development initiatives to increase the number of local suppliers, procurement initiatives to increase their success in bidding on work, and working with stakeholders and

partners on education and training initiatives to increase the number of local employees.

We are also working with the Whitehorse Chamber of Commerce on business retention and expansion to determine the needs and priorities of small- and medium-sized enterprises. Another priority is to support the development of strategic infrastructure required for economic development in Yukon. Demands on Yukon's infrastructure base are set to intensify because of the development of the natural resources sector and increased interest in infrastructure developments from companies considering development in the Yukon and growth in the research, innovation and commercialization sector. Improvements are necessary to all economic infrastructure areas including energy, transportation, telecommunications and municipal infrastructure. Infrastructure enables social and industrial capacity and lays the foundation for economic growth.

Access to cost-effective port infrastructure is an important strategic consideration as Yukon's economy continues to grow. We are facilitating partnerships and raising awareness of the potential benefits to the Yukon as partners in the further development of this critical piece of infrastructure. The Department of Economic Development will continue to work with our Skagway port partners to assist the development of the Skagway port as a strategic transportation option for Yukon commodities.

Improving national and international transportation and trade links will lead to more business opportunities, more jobs for Yukoners, and a higher quality of life. With Yukon First Nations setting their economic priorities and playing the lead role in their economic futures, the Department of Economic Development works to support them from early planning stages through to implementation. Our activities include the following: assistance in building capable institutions of governance and capacity development; assisting with the development of strategic direction, including strategic planning and economic development planning; assisting with the development of policies that support economic development; opportunity identification and project selection; assisting with the development of high-level feasibility studies; and implementation of these plans and strategies.

The Government of Yukon has committed to expanding Yukon's economy by promoting its diversification in sectors such as film and sound, research and development, knowledge-based industries, and valued-added manufacturing. I'd like to provide you with some examples of how we are fulfilling this commitment.

From April 1, 2011 to February 1, 2012, the Yukon Film and Sound Commission approved 19 projects for funding under its film incentive programs, providing approximately \$284,000 in support to filmmakers. The Yukon sound recording program provides Yukon musicians with financial support to create professional demos and full-length CD recordings. This program provides local musicians with opportunities to develop their careers and market their Yukon music products across Canada and across the world. The Government of Yukon continues to work cooperatively with Yukon's film and sound industries to provide Yukoners with employment and training opportunities.

Another example of how we are striving to diversify Yukon's economy is our work with key partners and stakeholders to support the Yukon Cold Climate Innovation Centre as part of the Yukon Research Centre. YCCIC is a partnership between applied researchers, industry and government, dedicated to developing, commercializing and exporting sustainable cold climate technologies and is housed at Yukon College. The commercialization of cold climate and related technologies will provide important economic opportunities for Yukoners and contribute to the diversification of the economy. A prime example of past success is the quad-pane window design developed through a collaboration between YCCIC and the RAB energy group, also known as Northerm. These windows are now in production and are used in many energy-efficient residential and commercial applications.

The local manufacturing of these windows has helped reduce the delivery time compared with shipping from the south and, more importantly, ongoing energy costs.

I would like to highlight some of the many activities the department identified in our 2112-13 budget. The department will continue to administer a variety of funding programs to support the diversification of Yukon's economy. The Yukon government's continued investment in business, industry and capital projects supports long-term, sustainable economic growth.

The Department of Economic Development supports the growth of Yukon business activity by allocating \$375,000 to the enterprise trade fund. With the focus on small- and medium-sized businesses, this program is designed to stimulate and support market growth, business development and export revenues. Through this fund, eligible Yukon businesses involved in export-related operations may receive assistance to conduct activities that open new markets, develop and expand existing markets, and implement projects that develop business activities without creating unfair competition within the local Yukon market. The enterprise trade fund is available to all Yukon businesses, as well as business-related organizations and industry associations. The program supports marketing and export projects that enhance the likelihood of Yukon businesses generating increased production and sales of Yukon products. Most importantly, all of the projects funded by the enterprise trade fund require a meaningful investment by the companies and organizations, essentially doubling the investment and promoting Yukon products, services and opportunities.

The department continues its ongoing partnership with industry stakeholders and stakeholder groups to help Yukon businesses develop and maintain a competitive advantage in external markets. Stakeholders such as the Yukon Chamber of Commerce help us to raise the profile of Yukon businesses and the service and products they can offer to both inside and outside markets. The department continues its support of the business community through the business incentive program with a budget allotment of more than \$1 million. This government offers rebates to businesses that hire Yukoners, use Yukon manufactured goods and hire apprentices and Yukon youth to work on eligible Yukon government projects.

We are continuing to support the Dana Naye Ventures microloan program that provides modest but meaningful support to entrepreneurs with innovative business ideas. There are no other programs in Yukon that provide this type of support to small business. It is an innovative approach that encourages and supports Yukon entrepreneurs who are launching new businesses. From March 2000 to December 31, 2011 a total of 116 loans valued at \$338,779 have been dispersed. The department makes contributions to various business-related organizations to support small- and medium-sized business expansion and marketing initiatives.

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

The Yukon Cold Climate Innovation Centre continues to develop projects in applied research in cold climate technologies and other related technologies of interest to Yukon. The geographic realities of Yukon and the changing climate of the north make new and —

Chair: Order please.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Time? I'll look forward to the questions from the members opposite.

Ms. Stick: I'm not going on with statements but will move right into questions. One of the stated responsibilities of this department is to develop a sustainable and competitive Yukon economy. I assume that this would mean it would enrich the quality of life for all Yukoners. Too many Yukoners, though, are still relying on social assistance and services such as food banks, Salvation Army and soup kitchens. I would note that the actual total appropriations, if I'm reading this correctly on the page, are down from the 2011-12 estimates and down from the 2010-11 actuals.

In going through the website, I was looking at the Business and Economic Research branch of this department and found there a list of Yukon economic indicators.

First of all, it indicates that we have an unemployment rate of 6.3. This is up from 6.2 in January and up from 4.1 percent in February of 2011. Our labour force has increased, and that is good news. The labour force went from 19,500 in February 2011, to 20,900 in January, but we are down 200 by February of this year. The number, though, that really struck me, regardless of these increases, was the unemployment number. In February 2011, it was 800, and it is now 1,300. So, in view of all of this prosperity, new jobs and employment options that are available to Yukoners, why are we seeing an increase of 500 more unemployed Yukoners here?

Would the minister please comment on these increased numbers and perhaps offer an explanation?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: The member opposite mentioned our efforts to continue to diversify the economy. So, of course, I will continue to discuss some of the ways that we are working to diversify the economy. One of the ways we're doing that is supporting — as I was saying before — research, innovation and commercialization. Of course, the geographic realities of Yukon and the changing climate of the north make new and innovative solutions necessary.

The Yukon Cold Climate Innovation Centre's research and development fund has invested in local projects, creating innovative solutions to the challenges we face in Yukon. The Department of Economic Development is contributing over \$2.8 million in funding to the Yukon Cold Climate Innovation Centre for operational support and project leveraging over the next five years.

In addition, funding for YCCIC is provided by a contribution agreement with Yukon College through the northern strategy trust program, consisting of \$125,000 per year for three years starting in 2010-11. This will also support innovation projects. The centre is open to a variety of potential projects, specifically in the areas of cold climate, as previously mentioned; permafrost and effects of that on transportation corridors; building construction; renewable energy; climate change, and those that address geotechnical challenges. Of course, my colleague, the Minister of Education, and I had the pleasure of visiting the research centre and Cold Climate Innovation Centre — I believe it was two weeks ago — to commit to funding the Yukon Research Centre and, in the case of the Yukon Cold Climate Innovation Centre, for another five years.

That's included in this budget as well, Madam Chair.

In addition to the innovation and technology sector, Yukon's other key economic sectors include natural resources and tourism. These industries initiate strategic projects that will generate wealth, act as catalysts for development and generate secondary business opportunities. These projects support the government's stated goal to strengthen and diversify Yukon's economy. The Department of Economic Development's strategic industries development fund will continue to provide significant support to these sectors, with \$800,000 allocated in this year's O&M budget. The strategic industries development fund provides assistance to identify and assess emerging opportunities, including the preparation of scoping studies, feasibility studies and business planning.

As I stated earlier, the department's efforts to attract investment to Yukon is paying off. Recent support of outbound missions in Canada, the U.S., Europe and Hong Kong in partnership with industry has stimulated interest and investment in Yukon companies through the capital markets. We've allocated \$626,000 in this budget, which represents a variety of activities including marketing, promoting and facilitating events and conferences, websites, and consulting services in order to raise awareness of Yukon's investment opportunities and support initiatives that facilitate foreign direct investment deals.

In our efforts to assist Yukon communities and First Nations to fully benefit from economic activity in their regions, we are allocating \$405,000 to the regional economic development fund and its administration. This fund provides financial support to foster regional and community economic development. The fund was established in recognition of the need for effective coordination of planning and economic development efforts by all parties with regional economic interests. Funding activities have included support for economic development planning, capacity development, opportunity identification and associated research, needs assessments and training plans. The strength of this funding program lies in the fact that it supports

a variety of stakeholders including First Nations and municipalities.

Another avenue in which the department supports a variety of stakeholders is through the community development fund, which is a program that is widely known throughout our communities — and is very popular, I might add. The primary goal of the community development fund is to support projects that provide long-term well-being and bring social or economic benefits to Yukon communities. This fund's projects continue to create employment, generate local spending, develop usable skills and enhance Yukon's physical and social infrastructure. We have allocated \$3.3 million to the community development fund and its administration. The community development fund contributes substantially to the health of rural Yukon communities by giving community members an opportunity to network, share and participate in strengthening their neighbourhoods and organizations.

This fund fosters cooperation, partnerships and collaboration among groups and emphasizes the importance of recreation and training for Yukon people. The department continues to work to diversify Yukon's economy by expanding our cultural industry. We are very fortunate to have such an incredibly talented and vibrant film and sound recording industry here in Yukon. The Yukon Film and Sound Commission administers six different film and sound funding programs aimed at meeting the diverse needs of this industry, for which \$710,000 has been budgeted. The film industry in Yukon continues to be strong, providing Yukoners with employment and training opportunities. The Yukon sound recording industry also continues to grow, as professionals develop their talents, expand their portfolios and market their music products across Canada and around the world. As I have mentioned, the department's sound recording program provides Yukon musicians with financial support to create professional demo and CD recordings. The 2012-13 budget allocation for this program is \$50,000.

By supporting the film and sound recording industry, we are positioning Yukon and its people to be competitive in the national and international marketplace. As the economy continues to evolve and change, the department's activities will continue to meet the needs of Yukoners. Economic Development continues to promote a strong, diversified and sustainable Yukon economy. We continue to support local businesses, First Nations, municipalities and communities. Economic Development continues to build awareness internationally of Yukon's investment opportunities. We continue to send the message that Yukon is open for business, a great place to live, work and invest. We are working to ensure that Yukon's economy prospers for the benefit of all Yukoners.

With respect to some of the more specific questions the member opposite had — first of all, there have been a few comments, including the ones previous, about the overall budget for Economic Development. Of course, the operation and maintenance portion of the budget has increased from 2011-12. The capital does see a slight decrease as a result of the conclusion of the one-time project approved through the federal government's targeted investment program to host the Western Canadian Music Awards in Whitehorse. So the actual

overall decrease in the total appropriation is about \$36,000 from last year. As I said, the primary piece of that on the capital side is the result of the conclusion of the Western Canadian Music Awards in Whitehorse. Contrary to some of the comments we've heard before about there being some sort of large cut in Economic Development, that's simply not the case. Operation and maintenance has certainly increased.

In regard to the member's question about unemployment, on average, this has not been the case.

More people are looking for work, given the increase in Yukon opportunities. More people are coming to the Yukon for these opportunities. We see that in the population increases annually over the last several years. Employment in 2011 was 19,100, which was up 9.1 percent in 2010. Statistics Canada reports for 2011 an unemployment average of 1,100, which was down 15 percent from 2010. So, in fact, the unemployment rate is decreasing. Yukon unemployment in 2011 is among the lowest in Canada. I think we are tied with Alberta for the lowest in Canada, which is of course a reflection of the strong, diverse, healthy Yukon economy currently and the efforts we've been making to ensure that Yukoners see benefit from that economic growth.

Ms. Stick: I'm glad the member opposite was able to complete his speech that he didn't finish earlier. I'll try to be a little more specific. It's still very apparent when looking at these stats — and I'm not going to go back to 2009 or 2010 — that between this February 2011 and February 2012, the unemployed have gone from 800 to 1,300. That's 500 more people looking for work.

It's great the minister talked about all these programs and talked about money, promotions, awareness, investments, partnerships, but the unemployed number is still 500 more than it was a year ago. I'd like an explanation for this, please.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Part of the reason why we look at employment figures over the annual basis is because there is a degree of seasonality in the data, so when you look at a more restricted window, you may see certain changes. On the annual basis, our employment continues to go up and unemployment continues to go down, and that's simply an indicator of our strong economy and Yukoners' participation in that economy. I can't reiterate enough how important it is that we have the lowest unemployment in Canada. That's a remarkable statistic. Of course, there is a challenge associated with that, and that is attracting additional workers to the territory, as we're hearing from the industry that finding workers is indeed a challenge.

I would posit that anyone who is looking for work would indeed have work.

Ms. Stick: Seasonal change and that type of thing I understand, but I am looking at from a year ago February to February of this year. I am not looking from December or from January, I am just looking across the year, and we have gone from 800 unemployed to 1,300. That is 500 more Yukoners looking for jobs. If the jobs are there, if we are looking for more skilled workers why is this number, 1,300 people, looking for work?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Of course there are more people in the Yukon. Our population has increased significantly over the

years. I think another important statistic is the number of employed Yukoners and that has gone up as well. So, as to the members opposite's question, there are job opportunities out there for Yukoners. We have the lowest unemployment in the country — among the lowest unemployment in the country, I should say. I think we are tied with Alberta. The Yukon population continues to increase. More and more people are coming to Yukon to find work because there is work to be had here.

Ms. Stick: I don't feel like I have an answer from that, so I'm going to move on. That didn't answer the question.

Under the Business and Industry Development branch, I would like to hear what is planned for trade and investment missions. Are there more planned for this coming year? What countries are we looking at? How much funding will actually go into these missions?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: The line item for the member opposite — I'll see if I can actually find the page in the normal budget so she can follow along properly. It's the Business and Industry Development page. I don't have the page numbers precisely. But you will note the investment fraction of marketing line item is \$626,000.

Of that, \$275,000 is for consulting and other services for promoting trade missions and conferences. When we conduct these trade missions, we obviously focus on Canada, in a specific sense — mostly eastern Canada. I know the Tourism department targets Canadian markets, as well as American markets, as well as European markets. In attracting investment on a broader scale, Europe is, of course, a target market, as is Asia, and, specifically, China. We do attend China Mining later in this year, and we have done so on an annual basis — had representatives from Economic Development at that conference. The page number is 7-8 — I was looking for it before.

In terms of advertising to promote business conferences, we spend \$29,000. Program materials, such as brochures for trade missions and conferences, is \$28,000. Facility rental for meetings and seminars is \$10,000. Various conferences and collateral material is \$98,000. Maintenance of departmental websites, databases and business directories is \$25,000. Contributions to third-party organizations and trade initiatives is \$19,000.

Support costs, such as communication and travel, et cetera, is \$50,000. So that's the breakdown of the expenditure for the investment attraction marketing line there. As I said, the regions and target markets for us include particularly Canada and the United States, but also Europe and Asia — and I would say more specifically China. I would also add that we have been relatively successful in attracting Asian investment. No one can deny the fact that China is an emerging market and one that's taking an increasingly active role in the world economy, so it's certainly one we've targeted as a potential for partners in developing Yukon projects. As I listed in my opening remarks, we have got a solid foundation of history of successful partnerships developed as a result of our activities.

Ms. Stick: I had a discussion earlier with the minister and thank him for using the page numbers when discussing certain amounts of money or budget areas. It's very helpful for me to be able to follow, and I appreciate and thank him for that.

On that same page 7-8, when I'm looking at prior years' projects, this year it's budgeted at zero, but it was estimated for 2011-12 as \$335,000. I am wondering if that money has gone somewhere else, or do we not have projects that would go under this budget?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: The prior years' project amount represents three completed departmental projects undertaken in prior years with monies received through the community development fund trust program, the community adjustment fund, and the targeted investment program. These projects include the Yukon entrepreneur support and the Yukon film commercials, as well as the Western Canadian Music Awards, which I mentioned earlier.

The entrepreneur support project was a two-year project supporting potential entrepreneurs interested in or in the early stages of planning or operating a business.

The Western Canadian Music Awards were hosted in Whitehorse in November 2011 and were funded by CanNor's targeted investment program. The third project is the Film and Sound Commission's commercial project that was, as we've discussed previously in the House, the 13, one-minute webisodes — *Yukonic* is what I think they're referred to as. That was funded under the community adjustment fund. This film project was 100-percent recoverable from the federal government's new Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency and provided training for Yukon's filmmakers. Those are the three prior years' projects that have concluded and, as a result, have that zero figure. I hope that answers the member opposite's question.

Ms. Stick: Are there any projects planned? Because it's a zero now, I'm curious as to whether there are more projects coming up that we could hear about, or is it zero?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: There are a number of projects planned. That's just simply reflecting the projects that have concluded and providing the accounting of the fact those three projects have, in fact, concluded and that's where that comes from. All of the other programs would fall under — there are a number of projects that are ongoing on the other line items there. But, of course, there is the potential there could be revotes as a result of all the money not being expended on those projects, as I understand it.

Ms. Stick: I was looking again on the website, and I'm always amazed at how many programs and how much money is available for training, for hiring, for expanding businesses, for exporting. But the reality of the situation is that these are for larger businesses. These are not for the SMEs, the small and medium enterprises. Currently, there are 32,000 total businesses in the Yukon, 57 percent of which are home-based, meaning one or two employees. In Whitehorse, there are 2,900 business licences — again, approximately 50 percent of these are eight employees or less. These are the businesses that cut our hair, mend, alter or sell us our clothes, take care of our pets, and, yes, sell us books. But these businesses are disappearing.

These locally owned small businesses are disappearing and we seem to be becoming a more franchise market here in Whitehorse. You only have to go down Main Street to see some of that, where businesses are just not quite making it.

There are no clear programs under Economic Development that will assist these small businesses to stay in business. The businesses are the ones we talk about when we talk about buying local. It's great to do that at Christmastime when there are craft fairs and we want to buy local, buy Yukon, but it doesn't help for the rest of the year and I'm worried about that. I'm worried about the businesses that are disappearing — our neighbours, our friends, my business neighbours — people in my building I'm seeing disappear and I'm wondering if the minister could speak to this and where the small business that isn't going to expand, isn't going to grow — is happy, quite happy where they are and how they are. How do they keep business coming to their doors and not to the franchises, or not to the large box stores?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Madam Chair, I have to diverge a little bit from the member opposite. We have a number of programs. I have gone through a number of them already regarding support for small- and medium-sized enterprises. We are committed to providing programs and services to support and stimulate development and growth of Yukon's small- and medium-sized enterprises, of course appreciating some businesses are comfortable with their size and are just simply looking to expand their markets rather than expand their overall size or employee numbers.

The Department of Economic Development provides business development support and information and advisory services to Yukon's SMEs through partnerships and non-governmental organizations, industry associations and through direct assistance. As a result of several new, large resource developments, the Department of Economic Development is identifying options to further maximize benefits for SMEs in Yukon from these and other economic activities.

The department recently provided \$75,000 to support the business retention and expansion program, a Whitehorse Chamber of Commerce initiative. The program will continue to strengthen the economic growth, prosperity and cooperation throughout the Yukon Territory.

The department continues to support business initiatives — our Yukon businesses — through programming and funded third-party initiatives. Of course, my colleague, the Minister of Education, last week announced \$75,000 for an annual business training fund to help Yukon businesses access training opportunities to further contribute to Yukon's economic growth. The business incentive program promotes the hiring of Yukon residents in manufacturing and use of Yukon goods and services. The business nominee program provides support to foreign workers planning to build a business investment in and immigrate to Yukon. Canada-Yukon Business Service Centre is a partnership between Economic Development, the Yukon Chamber of Commerce and the federal government. It provides strategic advice and resources to small- and medium-sized businesses. Dana Naye Ventures' microloan program provides loans for the creation of small and home-based businesses. The Dana Naye Ventures business development program provides loans directly to Yukon businesses. The enterprise trade fund supports business development in the market expansion of Yukon businesses. The North Yukon business advisory out-

reach program provides mentorship and guidance in business planning, development of marketing strategies and other related business activities. The Yukon business development program is a program between the Whitehorse Chamber of Commerce and CanNor that provides advisory services to Yukon businesses that are trying to expand into the export market.

The entrepreneur support program provided one-time funding support to two initiatives — the business retention expansion program — as I mentioned earlier, it was just delivered by the Whitehorse Chamber of Commerce — and an entrepreneur training program delivered by Yukon College. The Yukon small business investment tax credit program encourages Yukoners to invest in small Yukon corporations and, of course, the Yukon venture loan programs are intended to encourage the provision of business financing from commercial lenders by sharing the risk associated with the loan.

For the member opposite, in this year's budget, in support of SMEs, the 2012-13 budget includes: the business incentive program that I mentioned — that's just over \$1 million; the Canada-Yukon Business Service Centre, which is provided about \$45,000; Dana Naye Ventures' business development program, \$34,000; Dana Naye Ventures' microloan program, \$73,000; the enterprise trade fund is allocated \$375,000. The north Yukon business advisory outreach is allocated \$100,000. Of course, the Yukon venture loan guarantee program is available as well. So I think this budget does a sound job of providing support for small businesses that are seeking to capitalize on the growth of our economy and capitalize on the development of other sectors of the economy by tapping into those.

So I think that adequately answers the members opposite's question.

Ms. Stick: Again, I'm not disputing that some of those are great programs. What I was just commenting on and had asked the minister about was the fact that much of this is not available to the small, locally owned business — hair dressers, dog kennels, book stores. I employ nine part-time individuals in my business. I'm doing my part to hire people and have people work. I'm not eligible for anything. I have looked into the youth funding. I hire a high-school student. I have a university student. I'm not eligible. I have even had seniors working for me and have not been eligible for any of this funding. It can go to other businesses that are bigger, that are looking to capitalize, expand and grow. But if you're happy with your business, if this is what you want to do, there is nothing. There is no support there. We can talk about buying local but if there is something more or something encouraging for the small businesses, it does not exist.

I'm going to move on. I would like to talk about the business nominee program that is located in the Department of Economic Development, and I wonder if the minister could speak to us about the number of groups or investors that have utilized the business nominee program in the last year. Have they come? Have they set up businesses here, and what is anticipated for the upcoming year?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: In response to the earlier part of the question about the member opposite's business, I can't speak about the specific business itself. I don't know which programs

it would be eligible for or which it wouldn't be. I'm not sure if that's entirely appropriate to discuss in the House right now, but I do know that, on the whole, all the statistics I've seen indicate that we've seen positive economic growth in the territory, especially in the retail trade — these are the small businesses. Preliminary data for 2011 shows that seasonally unadjusted retail sales in Yukon total over \$669 million, which is up 15.7 percent from the \$578 million recorded in 2010. We understand that the factors that contribute to those growing numbers are the economic activity related to mining development, higher household incomes, which puts more money in folks' pockets to spend locally.

There is an increased population, so more people are buying goods and services here in the territory, which should increase business for most businesses. There is higher employment, of course, so more people are working.

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

To date, 104 business applications have met the minimum processing standards; 35 of those were recommended for a two-year temporary work visa to implement their business plans; 16 were nominated for permanent residency; 13 of those were approved by Citizenship and Immigration Canada and have implemented their business plans.

Business nominee program applicants who have implemented their business plans have brought more than \$4.7 million in investment capital to Yukon since the inception of the program in 2004.

From April 1, 2011 until March 21, 2012, the business nominee program has received 12 applications that met the minimum processing standards, with three of those recommended for a two-year temporary work visa to implement their business plans. That will be going forward, Madam Chair.

The potential investment in Yukon by applicants who have not yet implemented their business plans — so the ones who will be implementing them in the future — is estimated to be about \$3.1 million. Of course, successful applicants must actively participate in a management-level position in a Yukon business, they must invest a minimum of \$150,000 and purchase a minimum of one-third of the business. The program is only for entrepreneurs who will be actively involved in the management of a Yukon business. By federal regulation, all past investment must go through Citizenship and Immigration Canada's immigrant investor program. I think that gives the member opposite a bit of an idea of what is upcoming throughout the year.

Ms. Stick: My next question concerns the Yukon apprentice and the Yukon youth funding programs.

I'm wondering if the minister could give us the number of businesses and the number of apprentices who have had the benefit of this program in the past year and what we are expecting for 2012-13.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Through the business incentive program there is a youth-hire aspect to that program and it is application-based, so I don't have a figure for it right now. It's something that is driven by application, so we would allocate funds as the applicants come in, so I don't have a number specifically for the member opposite right now.

Ms. Stick: Looking at that line there, we don't see any change in funding at all across this. It's at \$1,050,000. Is this also where the apprentice program comes out of and can you give me figures for that one, please?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: The two categories of rebates are available to contractors and Yukon manufacturers under the BIP program, or business incentive program. The Yukon government construction contracts for eligible Yukon government construction contracts — rebates are available to contractors for the following — that includes apprentices, so I assume that's what we're talking about here. The program is demand-driven, so it's allocated the same amount of funding as previous years, but it could go up or down depending on the demand. It's a demand-driven program that could, theoretically, go up or down, depending on the interest in the program in a given year. The total budget for the program in 2012-13 is, of course, as the member opposite mentioned, just over \$1 million, which includes both O&M, as well as capital expenditures. Just for the member opposite's information, as of February 10, 2012, there had been 92 rebates issued to Yukon manufacturers. That could include the labourer, the apprentice, youth — for a total of \$43,100. Like I said, it's demand-driven and will change to reflect the demand in a given year.

Ms. Stick: Sorry, Madam Chair, I didn't catch that last part — 42? If you could just clarify that piece for me because that really confused me when it's \$1 million as a budget line there.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: As of February 10, 2012, there were 92 rebates issued to Yukon manufacturers for a total of \$43,100. The reason that's so small is because these applications tend to come in at the end of the fiscal year, so we would anticipate more — a significant number more — to be included there. It's something that is simply a function of when the applications come in.

Ms. Stick: The minister keeps repeating about the increased employment and that we do have the lowest unemployment in the country. I think, just because he keeps repeating that, I'm going to keep repeating also. The unemployment rate is up from a year ago and the number of unemployed in the Yukon is up by 500 — 500.

Moving on, I would like to hear from the minister — we heard an announcement of monies being given to the Yukon Gold Mining Alliance. I would like to know what this funding was for and where it comes from out of the budget. This group is an alliance of mining companies in the Yukon whose main

purpose is to promote advanced exploration, mine development, production and reclamation of our resources. I am curious as to why we would be giving this group funding when it seems to me they probably don't need a lot of our money.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: With regard to the Yukon Gold Mining Alliance, of course we are always interested in investing to promote Yukon and promote investment in Yukon. We do it across sectors. We deal with the tourism industry; we deal with — clearly the mining industry here. I believe just last week, folks from Tourism were down at a show in Alberta promoting investment in Yukon. The Yukon Gold Mining Alliance is an example of an industry/government collaboration to promote investment in the Yukon. The majority of the funds that they expend through that program come from the companies themselves. Yukon does make a modest contribution as well.

It is an industry-led group, as I said, that's focused on attracting mining investment to Yukon. Now, in terms of raising awareness — it raises awareness of opportunities in Yukon's mining sector and it is essential to attracting investment, and the Government of Yukon welcomes the Yukon Gold Mining Alliance's efforts. Economic Development continues to work cooperatively with industry groups and the mining industry to market Yukon's precious metal and base metal properties as attract investment opportunities.

When this group travels, it goes to a number of financial capitals throughout North America and Europe to generate interest from investors in investing in Yukon projects. Investors have a broad suite in front of them. They can invest anywhere in the world. They can invest in Africa, in South America, in Asia, in any of the producing mines in the United States, or in the regions of Canada. It's a very competitive industry attracting investors. We see Yukon has been relatively successful in attracting investment, but that's always a challenge for mining companies in terms of bringing projects forward in Yukon. When it comes to this track record of the Yukon Gold Mining Alliance, it's one I'm happy to talk about. For the relatively modest investment of a couple — I think it is \$100,000 on an annual basis — the return on investment is significant.

The companies of the Yukon Gold Mining Alliance spent, I believe, between \$65 million and \$70 million in Yukon last year. They very conservatively attribute about 10 percent of that to the efforts of the Yukon Gold Mining Alliance, so that return on investment is significant. If, for about \$100,000, we can generate between \$6.5 million to \$7 million in investment in Yukon, I think that's a return on investment I am proud to stand beside.

Ms. Stick: Actually, Madam Chair, I will sit down for this moment and let someone else ask questions.

Ms. Hanson: I just want to come back to the line of questioning my colleague was raising with respect to the response from the minister on the business industry development section of Economic Development. She had asked a question with respect to apprentices. She was seeking to get clarification on the support provided, which we heartily endorse — support provided for development and training to apprenticeships in the territory.

As I understood it — and I see the clarification — that this business and industry development section is the area of the budget that does support it, so I was looking to get the statistics on — we got the number of the \$42,000 or something like that for rebates for Yukon manufacturers. What I was looking for within that overall \$1,050,000, the amount that would be attributed statistically — the numbers — for support for apprenticeships for businesses who have them working.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: As I said before, it's a program that is demand-driven. So we provide rebates to companies who are hiring youth or apprentices. So the total line item, that we have in the budget now, as I said, is just over \$1 million — that it's a number of programs that include that youth or apprentice hire. Once again — demand-driven, so as we get applications for rebates, we provide that funding. In terms of previous years' funding — I could get back to the member opposite in terms of what the breakdown has been in previous years. I don't have that here today. But I can say that the amount expended so far was roughly \$43,000, as I told the Member for Riverdale South earlier. It is a demand-driven program that is based on the needs of industry.

Ms. Hanson: I do appreciate the minister's offer to get us the information from past years. It is important because it links to — I would suggest — the questions being raised by the Member for Riverdale South with respect to the increase in the unemployment rate. The minister's comments about the attractiveness of Yukon, as a place where people want to come to be employed — but they don't want to come to be unemployed. So one of the things we have heard time and again from this minister and other ministers across the floor is the importance of ensuring that we develop a skilled workforce here in the territory. If this fund has been used in the past as a portion — I'm sure that we will hear from the minister of Advanced Education and others that there are other sources and resources available for people, in terms of support for apprentices. I understood him to say — and I am seeking his clarification: what if the \$1.05 million — again, I am looking in terms of the overall support of the workers here. We are talking about rebates to Yukon manufacturers.

That was \$43,000 so I'm interested: that \$1,050,000 — so it's \$1,003,000 that we're talking about now — would be helping support those people or industries, small businesses, medium enterprises who may be interested in engaging and working, supporting with apprenticeships, which then leads to a skilled workforce, which is exactly what we in this House are all supporting. We want a skilled workforce so that we don't have a year from now — not 500 more unemployed, but that we actually have those 500 more who were hopefully part of the labour force at some point in this last year — gainfully employed and actually in a skilled situation so they're not having to live on the shameful \$9.27-an-hour minimum wage.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: I'm not entirely clear about some of the questions there. I think I heard something referenced to the "minimum wage." I'll leave that for another time. The breakdown of the business incentive program — the \$1,050,000 that we've been discussing — I'll provide a little bit more information and hopefully that suffices.

Of that \$1 million, there is \$114,000 that goes to personnel costs. There are support costs of about \$4,000. Material rebates from made-in-Yukon projects are \$75,000 and the total rebates payable under the business incentive policy, which as I said, provides rebates to government projects that have Yukon-hire component, is \$857,000.

Developing our labour force is, of course, a priority of this government. It's something that has been identified to us by the business community as being a priority and a key aspect of our economic growth in the territory. There are a number of resources, as the member opposite indicated, that are available through a variety of departments, including the Minister of Education's department, so perhaps he'll provide additional information upon Education's debate in this House, but I would say that of course supporting the development of a strong Yukon workforce is important. The unemployment, as I said before, in 2011 was 19,100, up 9.1 percent from 2010 and Statistics Canada reports a 2011 unemployment average of 1,100, which is down 15 percent from 2010.

Seeing the time, I move that we report progress.

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

Motion agreed to

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

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

Motion agreed to

Speaker resumes the Chair

Speaker: I will now call the House to order.

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

Chair's report

Ms. McLeod: Mr. Speaker, Committee of the Whole has considered Bill No. 4, entitled *Interim Appropriation Act, 2012-13*, and directed me to report it without amendment.

Committee of the Whole has also considered Bill No. 6, entitled *First Appropriation Act, 2012-13*, and directed me to report progress on it.

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

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Speaker: I declare the report carried.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Mr. Speaker, 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 stands adjourned until 1 p.m. tomorrow.

The House adjourned at 5:28 p.m.

The following document was filed March 26, 2012:

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Fleet Vehicle Agency 2012-2013 Business Plan (Ist-chenko)