

**Yukon Legislative Assembly  
Whitehorse, Yukon  
Tuesday, April 3, 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 Yukon Biodiversity Awareness Month**

**Hon. Mr. Dixon:** I rise in the House today to ask my colleagues to join with me in recognizing April as Yukon's Biodiversity Awareness Month. Yukon is home to tens of thousands of plant and animal species, many found nowhere else in Canada and several nowhere else in the world. Many of these we are all familiar with, such as moose, caribou, ground squirrels and beaver, but there are also more unique species such as Baikal sedge, a grass-like perennial that is also found in eastern Asia, and Yukon draba, which is a relict from the Beringia. People might wonder where those come from. These two rare species do reside in Yukon and they are part of our biodiversity.

We have Squanga whitefish, which evolved from lake whitefish following the last ice age. These fish feed on plankton in open water in contrast with mature lake whitefish elsewhere, which are bottom-feeders. The collared pika is a small relative of rabbits. Its distinctive calls are familiar to hikers who venture into rocky alpine country in the Yukon. The collared pika is a species that evolved in unglaciated Beringia and is now restricted to Alaska, Yukon, western Northwest Territories and northwestern British Columbia.

The Yukon is also home to the woodchuck, also known as the groundhog. Though they are more commonly found east of the Canol Road, the first Yukon groundhog recorded to modern science was found near Dawson City just before the gold rush. Yukon is the year-round home of two types of seals — the ringed seal and the bearded seal. The bearded seal is the largest in Canada and can weigh up to 400 kilograms. The ringed seal is almost the smallest with adults weighing up to 70 kilograms. Yukon seals feed in complete darkness for four months of the year.

Biodiversity is the variety of all living things, from the tiniest soil organism to the biggest mammal. Every species has a part to play. All life on earth is incredibly interdependent. Yukon's biodiversity has four amphibian species, 38 fish species, 66 mammal species, 227 bird species, more than 1,600 types of plants and well over 6,000 insect species. We are lucky to have 91 different butterfly species in the Yukon — many colours, sizes and names. Before I attempt to name some of these rather humorous and difficult-to-pronounce species of butterfly, I should offer to any lepidopterologist out there my

apologies in advance: the Persius Duskywing; the Polaris Fritillary; and the Anicia Checkerspot. Butterflies are pollinators, which are an important part of the ecosystem.

Biodiversity Awareness Month is a time to celebrate the pollinators — the insects, birds and other species that help transfer pollen from one plant to another and help ensure healthy ecosystems. Without pollinators, most of our food crops would die and forests would wither. Without pollinators, our world would be a very hungry place. Biodiversity is under threat in many parts of this planet, and we all need to work together to make sure that the precious biodiversity that we have here today is with us for years to come. Thank you.

**Ms. White:** I rise on behalf of the Official Opposition to pay tribute to biodiversity. Biodiversity is a concept that expresses the interaction of every species of animal and plant life on earth. We live in a fragile environment, in which this interdependence of species plays a vital part in the survival of all life on the planet, including our own. Drawing attention to biodiversity helps make us aware of our greatest resource, our natural world.

We must understand that two-thirds of natural processes that support life are being degraded by human pressure. In effect, one species, human beings, are now considered a danger to the other 10 million species on our planet; that is of grave concern. Human activity is putting such a strain on the natural functions of earth that the ability of the planet's ecosystems to sustain future generations can no longer be taken for granted. For instance, humans now use between 40 and 50 percent of all available fresh water. Fish stocks are over-harvested. Forests are receding at alarming rates. Deforestation decreases our capacity to balance our carbon emissions.

These facts are shocking, and they are of extreme importance to us in the Yukon. We are too complacent about our vast wilderness and our many lakes and rivers. We take it for granted that we can shoot our moose every year and go fishing all summer long, but when will that end? We are more horrified about the natural process of wildfires than we are about allowing old and new mine sites to leach toxic chemicals into our waterways. We are living now on borrowed time, depleting natural assets as if there were no tomorrow.

We must understand and act upon these devastating facts. We cannot continue our disinterest in conservation and preservation. We cannot let global warming and climate change go unchallenged. The loss of wetlands is catastrophic. Selling our precious water as a commodity is wrong and irresponsible. Biodiversity is not just an interesting concept. Conservation is not a luxury. We cannot ignore them. It's at our peril.

**Mr. Silver:** I rise today on behalf of the Liberal caucus to pay tribute to Yukon Biodiversity Awareness Month. Biodiversity has been described as the "web of life" — the variety of living things or the different plants, animals and microorganisms, their genes, the ecosystem, of which they are a part. Biodiversity encompasses every living thing that can exist in our planet and in the environment in which they live.

Human beings depend on biodiversity for our sustenance, health and well-being, and enjoyment of life. We derive all of our food and many medicines and industrial products from the wild and domesticated components of biological diversity. Biodiversity is the basis for much of our recreation and tourism and includes the ecosystems, which help provide us with clean water. If the Earth's ecosystems are to remain healthy, they require many different species of animals and plants. All life is linked together, and every living organism has a role to play in our environment.

The survival of an endangered species is linked to the survival of its habitat, which is linked to the ecosystem that surrounds it. Our biodiversity is sensitive to the Earth's climate and environmental changes. Biodiversity is very important for the future of the planet, and we need to know more about our species and ecosystems to be able to manage, conserve and protect them.

In the Yukon, we are fortunate to live in an area of incredible landscape and diversity, including wetlands, meadows, boreal forests, alpine, and Arctic areas. Yukon's unique biodiversity is also home to numerous species of plants, many of which are not found anywhere else in Canada, and no other place in Canada is home to both Arctic species and southern species of animals.

There are many unique events planned throughout the Yukon in celebration of Biodiversity Awareness Month. It is a great time to join in events such as the Celebration of Swans, National Wildlife Week and Earth Day, as all of these activities are now part of the Yukon's Biodiversity Awareness Month.

In celebration of Biodiversity Awareness Month, we have an opportunity to pay tribute to our environment, the support of life itself here in Yukon. Let us pause and take a moment to reflect and recognize our fragile, unique ecosystems, our flora and fauna, our wildlife and natural beauty.

We would like to thank the many Yukoners who recognize the importance of our ecosystem and are working hard to ensure habitats are sustainable and protected for a wide variety of species. Nature cannot fight for itself; it needs our help.

**Speaker:** Introduction of visitors.

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Mr. Silver:** With your indulgence, Mr. Speaker, I would ask the members of the House to join me in welcoming ex-Dawsonite and long-time Yukoner, Adam Morrison.

*Applause*

**Speaker:** Are there any returns or documents for tabling?

## TABLING RETURNS AND DOCUMENTS

**Mr. Barr:** I have for tabling a letter from the Employment Standards Board regarding its review of the Yukon's minimum wage and recommendations sent to the Minister of Community Services on January 30, 2012.

**Speaker:** Are there any other returns or documents for tabling?

Are there any reports of committees?

Are there any petitions?

Are there any bills to be introduced?

## PRIVATE MEMBERS' BILLS

### Bill No. 102: Introduction and First Reading

**Ms. Stick:** I move that a bill, entitled *Act to Amend the Ombudsman Act*, be now introduced and read a first time.

**Speaker:** It has been moved by the Member for Riverdale South that a bill, entitled *Act to Amend the Ombudsman Act*, be now introduced and read a first time.

*Motion for introduction and first reading of Bill No. 102 agreed to*

**Speaker:** Are there any further bills for introduction?

Are there any notices of motion?

## NOTICES OF MOTION

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to work in partnership with First Nations to help them make their land available for residential development.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to enhance the home care program, including providing more help for respite care of children and dependent relatives.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to continue to provide assistance to Yukoners with disabilities to help them modify their homes to accommodate their disability.

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

THAT this House urges the Yukon government to introduce legislation to govern lobbying activities that would implement the Conflict Commissioner's recommendation in his annual report of July 2010 by:

- (1) requiring the registration of lobbyists;
- (2) setting out a code of conduct; and
- (3) imposing penalties for violations.

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

THAT this House urges the Minister of Community Services to lend her department's expertise and personnel to the urgent task of residential land development in Dawson City, building on the findings of the Klondike Development Organization's housing strategy dated March 2011, with respect to getting vacant Yukon government-owned lots to market at an affordable cost.

**Speaker:** Is there a statement by a minister?

**Speaker's ruling**

**Speaker:** Yesterday, during oral Question Period, the Member for Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes questioned the Minister of Community Services with regard to the minimum wage in Yukon. During the course of his final supplementary question, the member asked the minister, "Why did she mislead this House?" The Government House Leader then rose on a point of order, and said, "For the member to accuse another member of this House of 'misleading' this House is a very serious accusation under our Standing Orders. I believe past practice is such that such an accusation should not be made lightly."

The Chair believes that such an accusation should not be made at all. Standing Order 19(h) says, "A member shall be called to order by the Speaker if that member...charges another member with uttering a deliberate falsehood." The Chair believes that the words used by the Member for Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes, in the context in which they were used yesterday, violated Standing Order 19(h).

As annotation 494 in the sixth edition of *Beauchesne's Parliamentary Rules and Forms* says, "It has been formally ruled by Speakers that statements by Members respecting themselves and particularly within their own knowledge must be accepted. It is not unparliamentarily temperately to criticize statements made by Members as being contrary to the facts; but no imputation of intentional falsehood is permissible. On rare occasions this may result in the House having to accept two contradictory accounts of the same incident."

On a related point, the Member for Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes said, in his defence, "Mr. Speaker, I respectfully request that you review *Hansard* from Tuesday, March 27, to determine whether 'misled' is out of order."

Members should appreciate that the Speaker's role in presiding over Question Period is to ensure members follow the established rules and practices. The Speaker is not empowered to determine the truth or accuracy of statements made by members. Neither can the Speaker determine if an inaccuracy in a statement made by a member has been offered deliberately or not.

The Chair appreciates that all members of this House hold their views with some conviction and disagree, sometimes quite strongly, with views expressed by other members. Members are free to present their own version of the facts and to question the facts presented by others. However, members should at all times treat each other with respect. Accusing another member of deliberately misleading the House does not meet the standard.

We will now proceed with Question Period.

**QUESTION PERIOD****Question re: Minimum wage**

**Mr. Barr:** Mr. Speaker, I want to give the minister responsible for the country's lowest minimum wage, at \$9.27 per hour, the opportunity to set the record straight.

Why did the minister state in the House on March 27 that, "...we are very much committed to adhering to the recommendation of the board," and, "We look forward to receiving the

outcome of those deliberations", when the Employment Standards Board gave her its recommendations on January 30?

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

**Point of order**

**Speaker:** Government House Leader, on a point of order.

**Hon. Mr. Cathers:** I believe that in the past it has been ruled out of order for the members to invent titles for ministers such as the Member for Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes did in referring to the Minister for Community Services as the minister responsible for the verbiage that he inserted.

**Speaker:** Member for Copperbelt South, on the point of order.

**Ms. Moorcroft:** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Community Services is responsible for the Employment Standards Board and for the determination of the minimum wage, pursuant to the *Employment Standards Act*. She does hold that responsibility.

**Speaker's ruling**

**Speaker:** I don't believe there is a point of order. The member was referring to the minister's role and responsibilities and not necessarily giving her a new title.

**Hon. Ms. Taylor:** In trying to be very respectful to the debate here today and to raise the level of debate, I will indeed respond to the member opposite's question. I would like to just reiterate what I had mentioned yesterday. In fact, our government will be proceeding to Cabinet with the recommendations of the board with respect to Yukon's minimum wage. That will in fact result in the wage rate rising to \$10.30 an hour for the current year, which will in fact bring Yukon's minimum wage rate to the second highest in the country.

With respect to the member opposite's subsequent question, our government places great emphasis on the need for public consultation on important issues such as raising the minimum wage. In fact, we did ask the board to conduct those consultations. Subsequent to that, the board has in fact made it very clear that it feels it is within its mandate to set the minimum wage. We respect their ruling and accordingly we will be going to Cabinet with those subsequent recommendations.

**Mr. Barr:** On January 30, 2012, the legislative authority on minimum wage rates, the Employment Standards Board, wrote to the minister and provided the following recommendations: (1) the Yukon hourly minimum wage rate shall be increased to \$10 per hour; (2) the minimum wage rate shall continue to be adjusted to reflect the consumer price index adjustment on April 1, which would increase the rate from \$10 to \$10.30 per hour; and (3) after making the immediate adjustment, the board will conduct a full public consultation the fall of 2012 to determine whether further adjustments to the rate are required.

My question: Why did the minister not follow the legislative authority's recommendation on minimum wage on January 30 and wait until April 2?

**Hon. Ms. Taylor:** Mr. Speaker, again, for the member opposite, we are proceeding to Cabinet with the proposed recommended changes, which include increasing the current

ommended changes, which include increasing the current minimum wage rate of \$9 per hour to \$10 per hour, effective May 1, 2012. This includes making an annual adjustment beginning on May 1, 2012, to the \$10 rate to reflect the previous calendar year's consumer price index, which is three percent or \$10.30 per hour for the current year, and subsequently holding a public review in the fall of 2012, seeking feedback as to the sufficiency of this revised rate of \$10.30 per hour.

So, in fact, the government is moving forward with the proposed recommendations. We're going to Cabinet. We'll be able to follow up with a more formal announcement in the days to come. We thank the board for their good work and we certainly look forward to moving forward.

**Mr. Barr:** We also thank the board for its good work. My question might be this: Would there be a retroactive amount allotted to minimum wage workers so they could receive this money sooner?

**Hon. Ms. Taylor:** We're actually holding true to the Employment Standards Board's determination regarding the minimum wage, which has to do with the actual minimum wage rate being increased to reflect the new rate of \$10.30 an hour, effective May 1, 2012. So I'm not sure what the retroactivity rate is that the member opposite is referring to, but we are adhering to the board's recommendations on all fronts.

#### **Question re: Federal budget**

**Ms. Hanson:** Working people across the country and the territory are still digesting the impacts of the Harper-Flaherty budget. The impact of raising old age security to age 67 will affect every Canadian family in some way.

On top of this, thousands of public servants who work for the Yukon government got a rude awakening in the federal budget. They are now expected to make larger contributions to their pensions. With the stroke of a pen, Yukon public sector workers will be paying an average of \$1,100 more each year for their pension out of their household budget.

Does the Premier endorse this change that will mean our Yukon public servants will have \$1,100 less in their pockets?

**Hon. Mr. Pasloski:** As the member opposite is aware, the budget was the federal budget that just came down last Thursday. Yukon government employees are members of the federal government superannuation plan and therefore are subject to changes to that plan. What was announced was that there will be changes to that plan that will occur over time. We are not sure exactly what those timelines will be at this point. We are waiting for more information to find out exactly what the timelines and the specifics are going to be to the changes to the plan.

**Ms. Hanson:** Quite frankly, this government is completely disconnected with the everyday struggles of ordinary Yukoners trying to pay their bills. We need look no further than their handling of our shamefully low minimum wage. We are pleased to hear it is going to \$10.30. If we had actually acted when the Employment Standards Board said we should, it would have started on April 1<sup>st</sup>.

When the federal budget came down last week, immediately sucking an average of \$1,100 out of the pockets of Yukon public sector workers, this is what our Premier had to say in

endorsing the move: "This change the federal government says will bring it into line with other public and private sector plans." Why the ho-hum response? Does the Premier not care that thousands of Yukoners are all of a sudden thousands of dollars out of pocket?

**Hon. Mr. Pasloski:** As I mentioned, we will be waiting for more details that will come out in terms of the specifics to the changes to the plan. As was described by the federal Minister of Finance — what they're looking at is moving this plan to be more in line with similar — not only private plans, but other public plans, as well. So, we will be waiting to find out the exact details in terms of the timeline that they'll be looking at to make the transition from the current ratio of 60-percent employer, 40-percent employee to a 50:50 split in terms of contributions to their benefit plan.

**Ms. Hanson:** It would be nice if Yukoners could count on their Premier to speak on their behalf, and not on behalf of the federal government — 4,000 workers at \$1,100 each equals \$4.4 million additional that public servants will now pay.

That's \$4.4 million not being spent in the local economy. One of the most pressing social policy debates going on is the growing gap between rich and poor. The middle class is shrinking. This government's actions suggest that it just doesn't care about this debate. How else can you explain their disconnection on minimum wage and public sector pensions?

Now that this government will be saving \$4.4 million in pension contributions, can they tell us their plan to spend this windfall earned on the backs of Yukon public sector workers?

**Hon. Mr. Pasloski:** As I have mentioned, we're waiting to see what the details are to find out exactly what's rolling out. Any time there are people in this economy who have less disposable income in their pocket to spend in this economy concerns me and this government, and we are conscious of that. We're waiting to find out what the details are going to be and what exactly is the timeline for the rollout of this change in that plan.

#### **Question re: Korbo Apartments rebuild**

**Mr. Silver:** Last November, the John Korbo Apartments building in Dawson City was demolished. Before the site was badly contaminated by an oil spill, Korbo added 13 apartments to a very limited rental market. Dawsonites have been developing solutions to the local housing crunch. One interesting idea involved the community and a First Nations' development corporation partnership to build new, mixed-use rental housing at the Korbo site.

Does the minister currently have any plans for rebuilding on that specific site, or for working with the interested parties in Dawson who would like to do so?

**Hon. Mr. Kent:** As the Member for Klondike noted, there was a fuel spill at the old Korbo Apartments building site in Dawson City. The existing building has since been torn down, but the fuel spill has not been remediated yet. I understand, in talking to officials and dealing with the board, that that work will be underway this summer. I did have the chance to meet with members of the Klondike Development Organization in Dawson City on a recent visit. I think when we start to

come up with ideas for the Korbo site, we'll certainly consider those ideas and other ideas from the private sector, as well as potential solutions that will be brought forward through the Yukon Housing Corporation Board of Directors.

**Mr. Silver:** I appreciate the minister's answers to that question. The Klondike Development Organization has been looking for solutions to Dawson City's lack of housing for some time. I'll draw the minister's attention to their 2011 housing strategy report, which includes an excellent survey of local housing issues and it outlines some potential responses. As well, they just pulled off a very successful community forum, entitled "Forward Minded Housing Solutions — Imagine a Community-Based Rental Development".

New rental housing could be built by the private sector on the Korbo site. There are construction companies already engaged with the community partners on this. But to be ultimately affordable, the community-designed housing project would have to be built on a low-cost lot. Will the minister consider transferring the cleaned-up Korbo site to the community at below market cost, so that private industry can build this much needed rental housing?

**Hon. Mr. Kent:** I do not think that the Housing Corporation will rule out any potential future options regarding the old Korbo Apartments site in Dawson. I am sure there will be a number of proposals put forward, not only by the Klondike Development Organization, but there may be some options included that come through the Yukon Housing Corporation and its board of directors.

The first order of business is to get the old apartment site remediated. I understand Yukon Housing officials were at the recent forum the member opposite spoke about. Although I have not had a chance to speak with them about that yet, I look forward to their report back from that. Again, I mention that when it comes to redeveloping the Korbo site, we do need to complete the remediation and go through the YESAA process.

I believe we haven't completed that part of it yet, and then look for options to develop that in the future, including some of the options that are being put forward by the KDO.

**Mr. Silver:** The community has already come together to propose solutions to the Dawson City housing shortage. Residents envision a mixed-use rental complex designed specifically for the community's needs. This would include SOVA student accommodations in the winter and transient-worker accommodations in the summer. Both are in very short supply. It would also include some higher end rental units for longer term residents. Rebuilding on the Korbo site is one option. There may be others, in addition to this site.

In light of recent successes in the Dawson community collaborating to relieve the housing crisis, will the minister commit to meeting with the Klondike Development Organization and their partners to discuss their proposed solutions in the future?

**Hon. Mr. Kent:** As mentioned, I did meet with two representatives, I believe, of the Klondike Development Organization, — and the Member for Klondike was present at that meeting as well — when I recently travelled to Dawson City. Meeting with Yukoners about solutions to housing and solu-

tions to any of the problems is important not only to me, but to all the Cabinet ministers on this side of the House and, indeed, all the members. That is certainly something that I am willing to do.

Again, I should mention also that over the last number of years there has been significant investment in housing in Dawson City. A new 20-unit structure was constructed to replace the old Korbo Apartments. I also know that there are dollars allocated in this current budget to address staff housing issues in Dawson City, as well as a number of other things, not to mention the work of the Minister of Community Services and other ministers on this side of the House in addressing the housing needs, not only of the people of Dawson, but indeed the people across the Yukon Territory.

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

**Mr. Tredger:** According to the original schedule and timelines agreed to, the Peel Watershed Planning Commission's open and transparent process was to have its land use plan completed and implemented by now. The outfitting, tourism and extractive industries, as well as the public, all need clarity about the proposed next round of consultation that the government launched with an advertising campaign. Now is the time people are making plans for the upcoming season.

Can the minister let all stakeholders know an exact timeline for government's final round of consultation on the Peel watershed land use plan?

**Hon. Mr. Cathers:** At this point in time, we need to have further discussions through the senior liaison committee — yes, that's the proper term for it — which involves the other parties — that being First Nations. As far as determining the consultation timelines, the short answer to the member's question is that we will shortly be in a position to lay out timelines for the consultation, but until that discussion with First Nations' representatives has occurred, no, I can't give the member precise timelines.

**Mr. Tredger:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the minister for that answer. It is fair to say that the government's recent messaging about the Peel plan has created a lot of uncertainty for all Yukoners — all stakeholders. Yukoners hope that we might be close to a land use plan for the Peel watershed, but those hopes have been dashed. Apparently, a legal opinion with respect to the Peel land use plan was created by a pre-eminent jurist. Apparently, this opinion has been provided to the government and they have it in their possession. We are all stakeholders in the Peel.

Will the government agree to table any legal opinions they receive that pertain to the Peel watershed land use plan?

**Hon. Mr. Cathers:** Actually, Mr. Speaker, as I've informed the member opposite, first of all, the rumour that he has heard — what he's referring to — does not sound correct to me. So again, we don't comment on rumours and speculation here.

What we will do is respond to matters and concerns related to this. As far as legal opinions that other people, other parties, other individuals or groups commission, it is not standard practice in this Assembly to get into releasing other people's legal opinions. Again, what I would indicate to the member is that, in

fact, throughout the remaining stages of the process, as we indicated in the election, we believe that there should be modifications made to the proposed plan. We have given an indication of some of the ways we think it should be modified. During the final stages of the consultation with the public, with stakeholders, with communities and with First Nations, there will be further details and discussion about potential modifications to the proposed plan.

**Mr. Tredger:** I would remind the minister opposite that the strength of democracy depends on the free flow of information. Yukon citizens deserve to have all the information they need in order to contribute to consultations.

Mr. Speaker, cooperation often proves to be the most efficient and harmonious method to develop community resources. Trusting relationships are some of the best assets any group of people can have. Delays, including things like advertising, staff hours and legal challenges can be very costly financially, but also in terms of relationships.

What extra legal, advertising and staff costs is the government paying out since rejecting the recommended Peel land use plan, and where are those funds coming from?

**Hon. Mr. Cathers:** It's very challenging to try to attempt to have a positive discourse in this Assembly when the member brings forward matters that, as has been pointed out to him in the past, are not factual. The member should be well-aware by now of the fact that the government has not rejected the proposed plan presented by the Peel Watershed Planning Commission. The member's colleague, the Member for Copperbelt South, acknowledged last fall that government has the ability, under the process and under the *Umbrella Final Agreement*, to accept the plan, reject the plan or modify the plan. We have indicated that we believe the plan should be modified. We've given some indication of the basis upon which we believe those modifications should be made.

Again, what I would point out to the members is, in fact, as I've noted before in the past, one of the things that we've said is we believe that in some ways, some of the elements within the *North Yukon Regional Land Use Plan* should be looked to as maybe a better model for protecting the land while allowing responsible use within the Peel watershed planning area.

So, again, these potential modifications will be presented to the public for public discussion and discussion with communities and First Nations during the remaining stages of the Peel watershed planning process.

**Question re: Mineral staking within municipal boundaries**

**Ms. Stick:** Our office has received numerous calls from Yukoners concerned that free-entry mineral staking has infringed on the reasonable enjoyment of their property. There are notable locations within the municipal boundaries of the City of Whitehorse where this staking has occurred. The residents of Spruce Hill, Mary Lake, and Golden Horn have had significant staking going on in their backyards. Of course, we all know about the free-entry staking at the Whitehorse Cross Country Ski Club. We know the City of Whitehorse has been in discussions with the Yukon government about the conflict between municipal rules and the pre-eminence of mineral staking.

Can the minister give us an update on discussions with municipalities in resolving these land-use conflicts?

**Hon. Mr. Cathers:** In answer to the Member for Riverdale South, the member is correct. The Yukon government, through the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources, has been in discussions with the City of Whitehorse regarding quartz staking within city limits. There are discussions that are ongoing and future discussions are scheduled. I hope to be in a position shortly to be able to give the member more information about this.

But simply put, we are having some discussions about the manner in which, through the official community plan and the structure that exists within municipality, we may be able to reduce conflicts and have certain areas where staking does not occur. Those discussions are ongoing, but that's about all I can say to the member about the status at this point.

**Ms. Stick:** The issue of free-entry mineral staking within municipalities is really about a municipality government's right to defend its citizens' rights to reasonable enjoyment of their properties.

Under the *Quartz Mining Act*, there are a number of activities that do not require any type of environmental assessment: a camp of up to 10 people for 250 days, storage of 5,000 litres of fuel — these are but a few. These activities can happen on private land, except land falling under a building and within its curtilage.

Does the government believe that the right to extract natural resources should trump the rights of Yukoners to enjoy their homes and their property?

**Hon. Mr. Cathers:** What the government believes is that there needs to be a proper balance and a respectful balance between the rights of different individuals and the opportunities of other individuals.

Again, within the City of Whitehorse, as I indicated to the member, we are in discussions with the City of Whitehorse regarding restricting staking within the City of Whitehorse, and particularly quartz staking, since placer claims cannot be staked on land within municipal boundaries. Again, we are having discussions right now respecting existing claim rights that are within the City of Whitehorse, but looking at opportunities between the Yukon government and the City of Whitehorse. Land activities within municipal boundaries are subject to municipal zoning regulations, so contrary to what the member described, the municipality does have some ability to restrict and manage those activities, but we are talking about taking further steps to prevent conflicts or future conflicts within the City of Whitehorse.

**Ms. Stick:** The Official Opposition is listening to Yukoners who are legitimately concerned that their rights to reasonable enjoyment of their homes can be eliminated overnight. As it stands, mining companies can do a lot of work without an environmental assessment and there is no requirement on the part of home sellers to disclose to prospective homebuyers that land has been staked.

We think it is high time to change our rules to make mining more compatible with land use values like residential. Will this government consult with the public on how we can amend

the *Quartz Mining Act*, the *Municipal Act* and other laws and regulations so that the public's right to reasonable enjoyment of their property is enshrined in law?

**Hon. Mr. Cathers:** As I pointed out to the member, the city has measures in place. One example is of the Spruce Hill staking — I believe the member mentioned that situation and in fact — where a company had begun a drilling program and the City of Whitehorse subsequently informed them they were not able to continue with that because the city believed the area was not appropriately designated for that use. So that program did not proceed.

Some of the activities which the member referred to do require a land use permit from the City of Whitehorse. Again, as I indicated to the member, in fact, the Yukon government, through the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources, is in discussions with the City of Whitehorse about taking additional steps to designate areas within the City of Whitehorse where new quartz mining claims will not be allowed. This, of course, is in an effort to avoid those conflicts between property rights. Through the Surface Rights Board and through zoning put forth under the municipality, there are a number of measures already in place, not to mention the YESAB process for further development and the regulatory authority under the *Quartz Mining Act*, but we are taking additional steps right now to prevent further conflicts within the City of Whitehorse.

#### Question re: Wetland protection

**Ms. White:** I have a question for the Minister of Environment regarding wetland protection. On March 26, the minister informed the Legislature that, "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." To be clear, does this mean that wetlands can only be considered for protection after land use planning?

**Hon. Mr. Dixon:** In response to the member opposite's question I was indicating that both the land use planning process, as well as the implementation of the final agreements, are two possible methods through which we can identify lands for wetland protection. Those aren't the only two methods, but those are the two that I chose to highlight.

**Ms. White:** Yukoners are concerned about their water. This was reflected in the number of references to water in the public comments regarding the oil and gas dispositions in the Whitehorse Trough. Indeed, the government recognizes the link between water management and development. Again, I quote the Minister of Environment: "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."

This is great, but we think it makes sense to understand the wetlands and water of an area before development. Will the minister commit to water resource monitoring and the gathering of baseline data in all areas prior to development?

**Hon. Mr. Dixon:** When it comes to identifying areas to do additional monitoring, when it comes to cumulative effects data and water quality data, I rely on the advice of the biologists and hydrologists in the Department of Environment

to indicate where they think it is appropriate for additional attention. In the case of both Thistle Creek and Scroggie Creek, those were two areas that were identified by the department as areas that we would benefit from having additional information. That is why they were selected. We can't possibly assess the entire territory before any development occurs. That is simply not possible, so we identify areas that we anticipate will experience development at some point in the future. There is a needs assessment that is done, and based on that needs assessment, we allocate the resources and do the work to ensure the government is in a position to make the best possible decision about development going forward.

**Ms. White:** The Yukon Party seems to urgently want to expedite industrial development in the Yukon. Yet Yukoners have no idea if and when land use planning, as mandated under the *Umbrella Final Agreement*, will be complete.

The Minister of Environment has referenced the water strategy that the government is developing. Can the minister confirm that the water strategy will include an inventory of, and baseline data about, Yukon's ground and surface waters, including the very precious wetlands?

**Hon. Mr. Dixon:** Of course, the water strategy is something we have committed to in our platform and something we look forward to moving forward with expeditiously. I do anticipate that it will include additional attention to groundwater and understanding our groundwater regime in the territory. Of course, we will be working with our partners, the municipalities and other stakeholders, as well as First Nations and each different department of the Yukon government, to develop that water strategy. As well, we will be doing public consultation. That will inform what exactly goes into the water strategy. We'll be responding to the needs of Yukoners, in terms of the public — their public municipal governments — as well as First Nations governments.

**Speaker:** The time for Question Period has now elapsed.

#### Notice of government private members' business

**Hon. Mr. Cathers:** Pursuant to Standing Order 14.2(7), I would like to identify the items standing in the name of the government private members to be called on Wednesday, April 4, 2012: Motion No. 24, standing in the name of the Member for Watson Lake; and Motion No. 115, standing in the name of the Member for Watson Lake.

**Speaker:** We will 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):** I will now call Committee of the Whole to order.

The matter before the Committee is Bill No. 6, *First Appropriation Act, 2012-13*. Today we will be discussing Vote 51, Community Services. Do the members wish to take a brief recess?

**All Hon. Members:** Agreed.

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

*Recess*

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

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

**Chair:** The matter before the Committee is Bill No. 6, *First Appropriation Act, 2012-13*. Today we will be starting discussions on Vote 51, Department of Community Services.

#### Department of Community Services

**Hon. Ms. Taylor:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I would like to thank all members of the Legislature for this opportunity to provide our department's budget, the Department of Community Services, for 2012-13.

First of all, I just want to extend my appreciation to each and every employee within the Department of Community Services for their hard work and for their professionalism and expertise in assisting to put this budget together. I think it is a very good budget and it certainly builds upon this government's investments in previous years in building vibrant, healthy and sustainable communities.

First of all, I would just like to say that our main estimates include just over \$116 million in capital expenditures, approximately \$43 million of which is recoverable, and an additional \$70.36 million in operation and maintenance expenditures, just over \$2 million of which is recoverable. The department is anticipating just under \$7 million in terms of revenues for the upcoming fiscal year.

As I mentioned, the Department of Community Services continues to play a key role in assisting this government to achieve its vision of moving forward together by investing in programs and services that will lead to vibrant, healthy and sustainable Yukon communities.

The department's budget includes strategies to address key challenges and priorities important to Yukoners as we strive to bring about long-term benefits to our territory. This budget includes some very good news for Yukon people and our respective communities as we continue to work to achieve a better quality of life, to grow the economy, protect the environment and promote good government.

I am pleased to introduce the 2012-13 main estimates for the Department of Community Services. In the upcoming fiscal year, Community Services will continue to address some of the ongoing challenges associated with housing. Specifically,

we're committed to introducing a new *Landlord and Tenant Act* and to increasing the inventory of available residential lots. Our government, as I have stated on the floor of the Legislature a number of times, recognizes that adequate, available and affordable housing is fundamental. It's fundamental in building and maintaining our strong economy, but also in building strong Yukon communities and our families. Affordable housing and land availability are complex issues that challenge us as a government and as a territory and also inspire us to work collaboratively to find innovative solutions and actions.

We believe that a new *Landlord and Tenant Act* will provide a clear legal framework that works for Yukon tenants and landlords to promote a healthy rental market that is in line with best practices from across this country.

Building on the work of the select committee that it had tabled in recent years, we will be building on those recommendations. From that work, we are committed to finding a range of solutions guided by public participation.

A *Landlord and Tenant Act* is an important piece of work as the Yukon government strives to address housing issues that are fundamental to Yukoners. The department is also continuing to work to bring new residential lots to the market and to strive to keep costs as low as possible. We're committed to making land available to Yukon communities, contractors and homeowners and anticipate upwards of 100 and some residential lots coming to the market this fall and an additional 200 lots in 2013.

We believe that bringing these 300 some lots on to the market over the next two years will help to overcome some of today's challenges.

Enhancing supply will result in more housing options down the road, as contractors and individuals build and develop growing subdivisions.

In 2012-13, just under \$35 million is budgeted for land development projects throughout the Yukon, including planning for country residential lots in Dawson City and Mayo, and residential land development in Carmacks, Mayo and Whitehorse. In Whitehorse, more than \$25 million is budgeted to continue with the Whistle Bend phases 1 and 2 development to bring just under 200 single family lots, 58 duplexes, 17 multi-family and 48 town home lots to the market in 2012-13 respectively; also \$5 million is identified for continuing with planning and design for Whistle Bend phases 3 to 5 for completion in future years.

The department continues to work with municipal governments and all governments to facilitate and expedite land development projects in the territory and identify areas for future development over the long-term through official community plans and land development protocols. Also, \$300,000 is identified to continue a Yukon-wide land development needs assessment, looking at changes in the market and anticipating future demand.

There is \$100,000 identified for planning for industrial lots in Carmacks, looking for a subdivision to be constructed in 2013-14. As I referenced earlier throughout the sitting, we also have dollars available for residential development and planning in rural Yukon, including lots in Carmacks, subdivisions in



Klondike Valley, Mayo country residential, Mayo urban residential and Watson Lake residential lots.

The Department of Community Services continues to develop and maintain the supply of building lots and I'm confident that our planned investment under this budget will certainly help to address the wider issues of supply and affordability of housing. Community Services has a significant role when it comes to improving and modernizing community-based infrastructure in Yukon. Providing infrastructure that improves the quality of life for Yukoners and supports our economic growth will help ensure that we are able to meet community needs as our territory continues to grow.

Our ongoing work with Canada, municipalities and First Nations is helping us build and improve vibrant, healthy and sustainable communities, and we remain committed to continuing on this path. Upwards of \$59 million is identified in the 2012-13 departmental budget for infrastructure projects aimed at providing safe drinking water, green energy, modern solid-waste management, community roads and wastewater. \$3 million of this is identified for the final year of investment under the Canadian strategic infrastructure fund, which is a 50:50 fund between Canada and the Yukon government.

This year's investment will result in the completion of the Whitehorse waterfront project that has brought about the revitalization of the waterfront from Shipyards to Rotary Peace Park.

The Kwanlin Dun Cultural Centre and Whitehorse Public Library are key features of the new waterfront and help tie together the various components, which include reconstruction of First Avenue, trail development, reclamation work, landscaping, lighting, riverbank stabilization and more. We were given a preview of the Kwanlin Dun Cultural Centre during the 2012 Arctic Winter Games, and we certainly look forward to the grand opening of this fine facility later this year. Together with the Whitehorse Public Library, the facility is truly an inspiration. It is an amazing cultural venue, in a natural gathering place, that will benefit the entire community for years to come.

With the Canadian strategic infrastructure fund and municipal rural infrastructure funds nearing an end, Yukon is focusing on maximizing benefits from the Building Canada plan. While Building Canada remains the focus, we are also looking to the future where Yukon will continue to play a key role in the nationwide effort to develop a new, long-term infrastructure plan for Canada. Yukon has experienced significant economic prosperity over the past several years, and it's essential that we continue to build momentum into the future. Predictable and sustainable, long-term infrastructure support is absolutely essential for the Yukon and Canada's northern territories. We have benefited from our joint funding arrangements with Canada, and we look forward to building upon the success as we move forward together.

Since 2008, we have identified more than 60 infrastructure projects under the 75:25 split between Canada and Yukon, and projects continue to progress.

In this fiscal year, more than \$50 million is identified for projects which include the following: a geothermal heat recovery project in Burwash Landing and phase 1 of a district heat-

recovery system in Dawson City as part of the new sewage treatment facility; drinking water supplies and treatment facility upgrades in Carcross, Rock Creek, Faro, Burwash Landing, Haines Junction, Mayo, Old Crow, Ross River, Teslin, Tagish, Watson Lake, the Marwell Industrial Area of Whitehorse, Deep Creek and Mendenhall; waste-water improvements including replacement of sewer mains and related infrastructure in Carmacks, Teslin, Dawson City, Destruction Bay, Faro, Mayo and Watson Lake; community road improvements in Burwash Landing, Old Crow, Whitehorse, Ross River, Carcross and Teslin; and public works building improvements in Pelly Crossing and Ross River.

Looking forward, Yukon's 2012-13 annual capital plan under the Building Canada fund includes a number of other projects across Yukon for local road, water, waste water, green energy and highway infrastructure. Modernizing Yukon's solid-waste management system is an area that Community Services has made real progress toward. Since 2009, Yukon has met a number of strategic goals within the *Yukon Solid Waste Action Plan* including an end to open burning of domestic waste in January of this year at all 20 unincorporated solid-waste facilities.

In this year's budget we have included a \$766,000 increase in the operation and maintenance budget for solid-waste management, together with almost \$3.5 million in additional capital dollars, including projects identified under the gas tax fund and the Building Canada fund. This also includes just under \$2.5 million for improvements to recycling at all unincorporated facilities and continuing to set up transfer stations at all remaining sites, installation of groundwater monitoring stations, improvements to household hazardous waste management and other composting and waste-diversion initiatives.

We believe in innovative approaches to managing solid waste in remote communities and will continue to implement the *Yukon Solid Waste Action Plan*. In addition to managing unincorporated solid-waste facilities, the Community Operations branch also manages the animal welfare program, waste water, drinking water systems, unincorporated community streets and mosquito control, to name but a few. In all, there is just under \$4.3 million identified to support community operations. This includes transfer payments for the Mae Bachur Animal Shelter, Dawson City Humane Society, waste-water operator program and also the recycling fund.

Also included is \$250,000 for a new water delivery truck in Ross River, \$75,000 for various improvements for water and sewer systems in unincorporated Yukon, and \$100,000 for road and street upgrades in various communities.

In addition to improving base infrastructure across Yukon, we're investing in recreation facilities. \$7.5 million is identified for recreation facility upgrades, including a new \$7-million arena in Ross River to replace the one lost to fire a year ago. The new recreation centre in Ross River will be an important gathering place for youth and community members that will promote active and healthy living.

In Dawson City, approximately \$500,000 is earmarked for continued improvements to recreation infrastructure in the city of Dawson. Other recreation infrastructure investment for this

fiscal year includes \$110,000 to undertake general repairs and upgrades to existing recreation facilities in the various unincorporated Yukon communities.

The department's support for sport and recreation in the Yukon also includes support for athletes and ambassadors in major games and at local levels.

There is \$2.375 million identified for sport and recreation contributions, including the Volunteer Bureau, Yukon recreation support groups, sport authorities, and governing bodies, Sport Yukon, Yukon Special Olympics, Team Yukon's participation at the Canada Senior Games coming up and the Canada Summer Games, aboriginal sport circle funding, support for elite athletes, coaches and officials and the Sport for Life program.

One of the highlights of this funding is that we are providing \$130,000 to help Whitehorse host the Women's World Fast Pitch Championship coming up. Whitehorse's track record in hosting a successful 2008 Junior Men's World Fast Pitch tournament helped in the city's bid, not to mention a proven record when it comes to hosting large sporting and cultural events such as this.

Yukon's long daylight hours mean that the International Softball Federation will be looking to hold more than 60 games over a 10-day period. We expect 16 teams from different countries to compete in Whitehorse in 2012 and I know that Softball Yukon will do a fantastic job in hosting the event.

The benefits of investment in sport and recreation are very clear. We only have to reflect upon the recent 2012 Arctic Winter Games to see the very positive impacts for our athletes, our cultural performers and the community at large. Again, I would like to extend our government's congratulations and many thanks to the 300 members plus of Team Yukon and the 2,000 volunteers plus who helped contribute to what I would coin as the best games that have been held yet.

Community Services supports communities in a variety of ways: from infrastructure development and, as I have touched upon, to our commitment to public safety and emergency response; through the delivery of emergency medical services; Wildland Fire Management; emergency measures and structural fire protection under the Fire Marshall's Office.

With the 2012 forest fire season upon us, I would like to take this opportunity to also thank and acknowledge our entire Wildland Fire Management team, who are starting to prepare for the season ahead. To support their work, we have allocated \$1.35 million to upgrade fuel and retardant systems to accommodate new aircraft; replace equipment; construct fire camp staging areas; upgrade communication technology and replace weather stations where required. Just over \$14 million is identified to support operations of the wildland fire program to cover salaries, wages, repairs, maintenance, fuel costs, training and other supports that enable our team to protect our communities from the disastrous effects of wildland fire.

It's always a challenge to manage forest fires in Yukon's boreal forest, but we remain confident that we have the right people, equipment and protections in place to safeguard our communities. While it's the wildland fire program that manages forest fires, it's the Fire Marshal's Office that oversees

volunteer fire departments in rural Yukon and provides support to municipal fire departments to provide structural fire protection in our communities. There is \$930,000 allocated for the operation and maintenance of the Fire Marshal's Office, including salaries, repair and maintenance on fire halls, heating fuel for the fire halls and other related items.

I'm pleased to announce that planning and design will also commence in this year's budget for a new \$3.5-million fire hall in Beaver Creek. The new fire hall will house the Beaver Creek fire department and the volunteer emergency medical services in the community. This has been a project that has been long in the making, and we certainly look forward to it coming to fruition. In this fiscal year, \$300,000 is allocated for the planning of this very project.

Unfortunately, I've run out of time, but I would again just like to thank the Department of Community Services and congratulate them for their ongoing hard work on behalf of Yukon citizens, and we look forward to receiving constructive debate from the members opposite.

**Mr. Barr:** It gives me great pleasure to rise in general debate on the Department of Community Services on behalf of the NDP Official Opposition caucus.

First of all, I'm glad to hear the minister is taking Employment Standards Board recommendations to Cabinet. This would place Yukon second in the country, just ahead of Ontario, but below Nunavut's \$11-an-hour minimum wage. It is great that the minister has come around to addressing our shamefully low minimum wage. Aside from some notable opponents who favour keeping the minimum wage as low as possible, I believe the majority of the Yukon public will be onside with these changes that reflect national standards.

There are still some unanswered questions about the process of how we got from the board reviewing the minimum wage in November to yesterday, when the minister finally said she would support their recommendations. I won't spend any more time on the minimum wage rate today. I want to move to other areas of Community Services.

It was just over a year ago, on March 11, that the world learned of the Fukushima nuclear disaster. At the time, there was a lot of concern among Yukoners about radioactive fallout landing on the Yukon, given prevailing trade winds.

Can the minister report any findings of radioactive fallout in the Yukon? Also, what have we learned from Fukushima in terms of our emergency response? Have officials looked into what can be done in the event of a large amount of radioactive fallout falling on Yukon lands? What advice should people follow to increase their safety? What about the availability of medicine?

**Hon. Ms. Taylor:** I would first like to touch upon the Yukon's minimum wage and just reiterate the government's recognition of the inadequacy of the minimum wage as it stands today. That is why in fact the government, back in November, requested the board to seek the input from stakeholders and conduct the review of the Yukon's minimum wage. As I articulated on the floor of the Legislature earlier today during Question Period, and yesterday, we are proceeding to Cabinet with the recommended changes to Yukon's minimum

wage rate that will actually result in the rate becoming the second highest in the country, just below that of Nunavut, as I understand.

So, again, just for the record, it was this government that had requested that input be sought from respective stakeholders, whether it be employers, employees or the public in this regard, and that we wanted that to fold into the review. As I stated, however, the Employment Standards Board remains of the opinion that its recommendations remain within their legislative authority, and we very much respect that mandate, and we respect the work of the committee and hence moving forward with recommendations.

Again, I'll just say that it was this government — the previous Yukon Party government — that also reviewed the previous wage rate and also enhanced that rate as well, and tied it to the CPI, which kicks in on an annual basis, as we just saw with the Yukon's minimum wage rate. So when it comes to the issue the member opposite just raised — in this regard, I recall that there was quite a bit of debate on the floor of the Legislature about a year ago.

EMO is the central body for emergency planning throughout the territory. EMO continues to work with the Government of Canada. Likewise, the Government of Canada continues to work with the United States on this very front, as we have from the very beginning. They are the international lead when it comes to ongoing monitoring and detection of contamination, as the member opposite just referred to.

When it comes to the tragedy in Japan, certainly our thoughts go to the many people who were affected and continue to be affected. As I mentioned, EMO officials continue to be in touch with our respective response agencies across the country and across the border. We continue to monitor world events through those respective channels, as I just mentioned.

When it comes to the Emergency Measures Organization, I didn't have an opportunity to actually touch upon it, but in this year's budget that we are currently debating, it includes the following: approximately \$203,000 in support of search and rescue, with a new rescue boat; upgrades to emergency communications equipment; and upgrades to the joint emergency operation coordination centre, which also serves as the incident command centre in event of emergency events.

Also in this fiscal year's budget, Yukon Emergency Measures Organization's operation and maintenance budget includes just under \$600,000 for personnel, training, communications equipment, contributions for marine radio distress systems, and search and rescue support. Again, Yukon EMO will continue to lead by way of its actions when it comes to flooding, when it comes to disasters, such as what the member opposite just made reference to, and I certainly appreciate the work that each and every member contributes to Yukon EMO.

I had the opportunity to tour the Department of Community Services. As one can appreciate, it is one of the larger departments in the Government of Yukon. It has taken some time to go around the entire department, but I very much recognized many of the individuals working in EMO — some new faces and some older faces, some familiar faces. Actually, it reminded me that when we were busy sandbagging during the

Marsh Lake flood how integral their services were in coordinating and implementing the emergency response plan in collaboration with many other entities that are housed under our Protective Services branch. Whether it be Wildland Fire Management, whether it be Emergency Medical Services, or other, we work collaboratively with other governments. We work very collaboratively with other provinces and territories, as well, in ensuring that our response is timely and efficient.

I just want to thank the members of EMO for their continued hard work and for their expertise. The corporate memory housed in this particular organization is very integral to the successful implementation of plans. I also just want to recognize the many volunteer search and rescue teams throughout the Yukon.

In fact, thanks to the good work of EMO in last year's budget, we were actually able to not only to support the volunteer search and rescue teams across the territory, but also able to help train over 50 government community members in emergency management in the incident command system. So indeed, it's a very busy shop and we recognize them and appreciate their ongoing work in terms of guidance, coordination, mitigating risks, protection of our properties, providing public information, public education, and also working throughout the Government of Yukon and with other entities in the event of disasters or emergencies in collaboration with others.

**Mr. Barr:** I, too, recognize the efforts of all the folks at EMO and the volunteer fire departments. They do a great job and I think without them, I know out in the area I live — out in the rural parts — I do feel a lot better, knowing of their abilities and their dedication.

However, I had asked the minister specifically about a report on any findings of radioactive fallout in the Yukon. I recall, if my memory serves me correctly, the member from Old Crow speaking of salmon — finding traces of radioactive or something going on there, as close as Prince Rupert, in the House not that long ago.

I would ask again if there have been any findings of radioactive fallout in the Yukon and have officials looked at what can be done in the event of a large amount of radioactive fallout? What advice should people follow? What's the availability of any medicines due to any incident of that kind?

**Hon. Ms. Taylor:** Certainly, according to our Department of Community Services, and as I just tried to articulate for the member opposite, our work in collaboration with Canada and the United States — of course, a very important entity at that, given our location — there is no detection here, to the best of our reporting mechanisms.

As I mentioned, though, we continue to monitor events as they may unfold in this particular event with respect to working with the Government of Canada. Of course, the Government of Canada will be working with its connections with the Government of the United States, as well. When it comes to the federal government — Canada, I speak of — that would be the Department of Health, so Health Canada would be taking the lead on this front as well.

Should there be anything of alarm, or anything of risk to our health, certainly the appropriate channels would be em-

ployed and would be working with our Department of Health and Social Services, working with our EMO, working with our respective channels to ensure that the public is very much informed of those risks and what measures to take. In this particular response, it's Health Canada that would be triggering any health orders, similar to what our chief medical officer here in the Yukon government would be issuing. We also would be working through Public Safety Canada, as they are also responsible for national emergency planning, coordinated through all of our bodies, including our own EMO shops.

We'll continue to put great importance on this particular matter and many others as they may unfold.

**Mr. Barr:** I realize that until Outside folks would arrive, we would still have to attend to some of these things here, until such time as we receive more support. I realize that in the Yukon — you could clarify for me the type of suit that would be required for any heavy chemical that would protect our volunteers working in a very hazardous situation. I believe, it's a hazard suit — maybe you could correct me if I'm wrong — but there aren't any in the territory. Would we be looking at obtaining these? There are none in the communities and there are none in Whitehorse, so in the event of a spill coming up through here, there is no protection for somebody attending to that service here in the Yukon. Can you comment on that?

**Hon. Ms. Taylor:** I just want to point out for the member opposite that, as I just tried to explain for the member opposite, we are very much blessed to have great resources in our own territory. I just speak to our Department of Community Services and our own Protective Services branch, which is comprised of EMO, EMS and Wildland Fire Management and the Fire Marshal's Office working in collaboration with many organizations — search and rescue organizations, and so forth. Of course, we offer training, we offer equipment, we offer various facilities to ensure that these individuals have the resources and wherewithal to conduct their jobs appropriately. When it comes to disasters or matters pertaining to chemical- or biological-related — radioactive, as the member opposite just mentioned — again, there is an emergency response strategy in place. Of course, that is developed under the leadership of Public Safety Canada.

We are very much engaged with the Government of Canada, as we are with many other entities throughout the country, provincial and territorial as well. As I mentioned, through Health Canada, and through working with Public Safety Canada as well — those are really the two contact leads and there are strategies in place. Provided there was a particular spill, or if there was a particular mishap, we would, in fact, be very much coordinating our efforts on an ongoing basis and utilizing the expertise and the resources that come forthwith through the Government of Canada. It is very much all about being prepared, and we have ongoing confidence in our folks' ability to respond to emergencies — whether it be on the local, or the national, or the international front — and that is why this budget does contain financial resources in support of our emergency responders — again, as I mentioned, whether it be the equipment or the facilities or the training or the other resources needed to do their respective jobs in the territory.

In this year's budget, we have resources allotted for fire trucks. As I just mentioned, the Beaver Creek fire hall — we have dollars allotted for search and rescue equipment and wildland management resources, as I believe I outlined in my second reading address. I also just wanted to touch upon the new EMS facility we are also moving forward in this year's budget. I know there has been a lot of interesting debate and comments made available by members opposite, but this is a really integral piece — a facility — for the territory, and especially for the City of Whitehorse. We have a very fast-growing population. Over the last six years alone, we have seen about an 11-percent increase in our population growth. As a result, there have been many more emergency calls, more demand for services in the centralized part of the City of Whitehorse. The City of Whitehorse has been shifting. There has been more growth — certainly up along the Hamilton Boulevard corridor in my own constituency of Whitehorse West.

This facility, the new emergency response centre, will certainly go a long way in enhancing the response times to meet the national response requirements and just be more responsive to those calls coming in. That's why we're very appreciative of the resources housed in this year's budget that we're debating for this new emergency response centre. Of course, I should also be very clear that it doesn't replace the existing facility we have in place, but it in fact will be in addition to the facility that is housed up at the Whitehorse General Hospital. It's going to also help integrate the way we respond to emergencies, like the member opposite was just referring to. It provides us with a more integrated response to emergencies, whether it's EMS or EMO, wildland fire protection, the Fire Marshal's Office — all of these entities will certainly be very much tied to this response centre. Coordination and planning are key to any response to any emergency event and again, we're really pleased to see that this facility is moving forward.

The tender was just recently awarded to a local contractor in the Yukon. We're really pleased to see it moving forward. In fact, it is TSL Contractors who was awarded; it was just under a \$5-million contract for the construction of the new facility. So that work is currently underway and we're very appreciative.

All told, we're looking at \$7.3 million for the response centre. It will include three bays, a drive-through ambulance station to accommodate up to six vehicles, and it will also be able to meet efficiency standards at the national level in terms of meeting leadership in energy and environmental design-based standards, as well as the post-disaster requirements of many of our commercial buildings. So again, this supports our ability to continuously support ongoing operations during a wide variety of large-scale emergencies and/or disasters, as the member opposite raised.

So we're looking forward to opening that facility — and we're looking at next year for that opening. As I mentioned, it will operate in addition to the current facility that's operating up at the Whitehorse General Hospital.

As I also mentioned, this builds on a new fire hall that we will be proceeding with in the community of Beaver Creek. It also builds on many other investments, whether it's in training

or equipment, housed within the budget. Again, I thank the member opposite for the questions coming forward and his interest in the EMO and Yukon's ability to respond to emergency disasters and taking a very good interest and a very important interest in this particular area.

**Mr. Barr:** I would like to continue with this for a little bit because I don't feel safe here if there were a toxic spill. Understanding that we may be moving toward hydraulic fracturing in the territory, the chemicals that could be brought here to be used which — at this point in time, my understanding is what is going to be put into the ground does not even have to be declared. The name of the suit is "hazmat suit". I am aware that there is not one in the territory.

If we did have a situation where we had to wait for the response — and I would like to know the response time for Canada to be on the ground here due to a toxic spill or any other catastrophe that we can't deal with. For example, if I'm coming from Marsh Lake and something goes over, what time does help from Canada get here? Having no hazmat suits to be able to enter the scene, what are we doing about these kinds of things? That's a serious possibility in the future.

**Hon. Ms. Taylor:** Well, I guess I'm quite alarmed with the member opposite's statements that he doesn't feel safe. He doesn't have the confidence in our officials' ability to do their jobs. He doesn't have confidence in the Government of Yukon, the Government of Canada and our respective communities working in collaboration with volunteer organizations. That's truly unfortunate, because I do feel safe. I feel confident in our members' abilities. I very much appreciate many hundreds of individuals, volunteer and paid, throughout the Yukon putting their lives on the line on behalf of Yukon citizens. Unfortunately, I feel to the contrary of the member opposite. I feel very confident in the planning exercises that continue to be taken on a yearly basis. Each year, for example — I will just raise an example — each year as part of Emergency Preparedness Week, there are exercises held throughout the territory in many of our communities to prepare and to ensure that our agencies are in fact prepared. They are working in collaboration with not only each other within our own shops, but effectively integrating our services, our programs and our resources available, whether it is through EMO, through Emergency Medical Services, through Wildland Fire Management, or whether it is through the Fire Marshal's Office. Again, I feel very comfortable in those exercises. Emergency planning is an ongoing . There is a great deal of planning and a great deal of expertise that is not owned in one particular shop. That is in fact why we do work in an integrated manner on a regular basis.

Just recently I spoke with a member of one of the fire departments in one of the communities. They were just saying that, thanks to public education and people being more prepared and more aware of fire, their community hasn't seen fire-related activities in quite some time, which is a great thing. However, that does not certainly lend itself to the end of ongoing operations and planning among our fire departments. In fact, it's a routine occurrence and one that we very much support in our communities, whether it's through training made

available through the Fire Marshal's Office — and that office alone oversees some 16 various fire departments throughout the territory. In addition to that, we work in an integrated way with RCMP and our nursing stations. We work as a collaborative unit under the Protective Services branch.

When it comes to situations such as what the member just raised — ongoing planning, integrated response with the federal government, whether it's through the Department of National Defence, Health Canada, whether it's through Public Safety branch — there is always and there will continue to be a very close link to all of our response agencies. That's very important. Again, that's an ongoing .

I should also mention that when it comes to emergency response, our municipal governments also have a very important role to play. They have plans. We have plans, through the Yukon government. Likewise, as I just referenced in my earlier remarks, Government of Canada also has federal response and a fiduciary obligation to respond as well. Those plans, which are intertwined — inextricably intertwined — we all collaborate on and exercise at the various levels. That is really the key to success and, again, I applaud all of the many entities and individuals who are involved in those responses.

**Mr. Barr:** Just for clarification, I would like to say that I do not feel safe, given a toxic spill. I think that knowing that we are asking volunteers to come and look after us, we would be remiss — and I must say that, given the training, given the equipment available to them, I applaud their efforts and their abilities. How successful and great that our volunteers and our people in these services are able to fulfill their jobs. That's not the question. I must reiterate that the question was about how we don't have a hazmat suit here and if we want to honour our volunteers, as the member opposite suggests and praise their glories, why would we not give them the equipment that they would need for them to feel safe — to enter into a situation where they wouldn't be safe if they did not have a hazmat suit?

That is the question I am asking. I could not possibly ask — it's like sending someone into a gunfight with a knife. It's foolish; it's unsafe. The other question was this: What would be the response time of Canada — even if we had a B-train truck come down and there was an oil spill — to assist in something like this?

**Hon. Ms. Taylor:** I just wanted to go back to the budget. We look at the Protective Services branch, and in fact that is why we are here today: to reflect upon the budget. When we talk about emergency response — and the member opposite unfortunately finds it humorous. Actually, this is a very serious role for us, as Members of the Legislative Assembly. Certainly, as a member for the last nine years, I take my job very seriously. So, when it comes to the Government of Yukon and the Department of Community Services, the Protective Services branch — there is actually \$8.59 million housed within this year's budget, 2012-13.

In Protective Services branch, we have allotted dollars for ambulance purchase; we have \$273,000 for the pumper tanker truck purchase; we have \$300,000 for pre-construction planning of a new Beaver Creek fire hall; we have \$1.1 million for

wildland fire fuel and retardant system upgrades throughout the territory. As I mentioned, there is just over \$5.8 million housed in this year's budget for the construction of a new Whitehorse emergency response centre.

There is just under \$900,000 for other miscellaneous equipment. When it comes to equipment, as I mentioned, we have continued investments in equipment, facilities, training — whether it is through Wildland Fire Management or whether it is through the Fire Marshal's Office.

In fact, there are a number of various initiatives that I can point to. Under Wildland Fire Management, we have a fire operations unit in Carmacks purchased to provide a duty room, a briefing room, which is helping to certainly enhance the delivery of service in collaboration with Energy, Mines and Resources and Wildland Fire Management.

We have also moved toward installation of new aviation fuelling systems, again, for enabling efficient service and delivery of Wildland Fire Management in terms of air tanker bases. As I mentioned, we have dollars available for the upgrading of our fuel and our wildland retardant systems at all bases. Of course, we continue to adopt new standards, whether it's new national fitness tests for wildland firefighters or purchasing required testing equipment. We have received recertification proficiency training in all our functional areas — first aid at the regional level — we have participated in various advanced courses put on by a number of entities outside of the territory, as well.

We've had initial attack crew member courses that have been hosted at Yukon College in the last year. A multi-year communication network upgrade plan has been designed, and implementation is soon to start when it comes to Wildland Fire Management. In terms of telecommunications personnel, we continue to host various conferences, workshops and training courses. We have helped develop and sign off on the national public safety communications strategy — the action plan, as I mentioned earlier. When it comes to EMS, I mentioned moving forward with a new emergency response centre in the City of Whitehorse, one which we are very proud of and moving forward with that will continue to help integrate the emergency services that are delivered by Community Services.

When it comes to EMS, over the last couple of years, some 150 volunteer staff who make up the EMS team took a total of some 925 individual certification continuing medical education training sessions, 114 volunteers certified as emergency medical responders, 75 participated in standard first-aid CPR recertification programs, while others attended oxygen administration courses.

Likewise, we've also had over 115 staff certified in the International Academy of Professional Driving program. Just the cost of these particular certification courses alone was over \$60,000.

Since 2010, fifty members of the ground and air components of Whitehorse EMS base have taken those certifications. We've had staff who have recertified in CPR, staff who have certified in ECG, lead interpretation, advanced cardiac life support, pediatric advanced life support, intermediate trauma life support, and emergency response communications. We have

also had individuals who have obtained certification with the International Academy of Emergency Dispatch. We also provide on-line educational programs for clinical staff members.

Again, when one looks at tuition, we reimburse for those certification/recertification programs made available to the members of our team. When it comes to the Fire Marshal's Office, we hosted just over 78 firefighter training sessions that were delivered to all of the various fire departments and the municipal fire departments throughout the territory. Firefighter training programs delivered in 2010 represented over 223 person days of investment. Again, this included a firefighter basic module, safe response and exposure protection delivered to many of our communities, including Carcross, Keno City, Mendenhall and Old Crow. We offered a firefighter advanced module delivered to communities such as Faro, Golden Horn, Upper Liard and Watson Lake — as well as other modules when it comes to interior. Again, delivery was facilitated at Golden Horn, for example. Specialized training for Beaver Creek, Burwash Landing, Klondike Valley included: an introduction to hazardous materials response; urban interface courses through Wildland Fire Management, through the Fire Marshal's Office, and volunteer fire departments; mutual response; standard operating procedures; orientation; and safety training.

We have also invested in equipment. As I mentioned, when it comes to the Ross River fire hall — whether it is through infrastructure, investments, or Build Canada or other — this includes breathing apparatuses, a fill station in the fire hall itself, a pumper-tanker for Ibex Valley. As I just referenced in my earlier remarks, we have also placed investments toward fire equipment, pumps, hose portal tanks, and the list goes on, firefighter personal protective equipment and so forth.

Facility investments include a new vehicle exhaust system installation at Ibex Valley fire hall. We are upgrading the Old Crow fire department alarm system and new fuel tanks in Carcross. As I mentioned earlier, we are also investing in a new fire hall in Beaver Creek and of course the list goes on.

There have been a tremendous amount of investments made throughout all of our communities, whether its investments in training or equipment or in the facilities themselves. We do remain committed to working in collaboration with our many various departments and also remain committed to working with other governments — as I tried to articulate — Government of Canada, United States, provinces and territories. It's very important that we do work with other entities, because, at the end of the day, there are so many resources available to the territory. That's where emergency planning and responses are very much seen to be the most effective — when they are done in collaboration with others. The same can be said of Manitoba. The same can be said of Alberta and every other province and territory. We certainly don't have every single answer. We don't have every single piece of equipment or resource, but, again, we are working in collaboration with many other entities, working within the confines of our own planning mechanisms and working in collaboration with municipal governments — I'm not too sure how else to put that.

I spoke of Emergency Preparedness Week and the various programs that we have in place across the territory. Again, we work toward coordinating, maintaining our capacities and capabilities within the network of the national emergency management framework. We're working to ensure adequate facilities, and continue to work toward maintaining what we have in place today and enhancing our capacity at every turn for the purposes of coordinating our response to incidents, emergencies and disasters. I think that there has been an enhanced movement afoot even within our own shop. I take a look at the emergency response centre. That's but one key example of how the government is working to further integrate its emergency response.

Through that particular facility, we will be able to help further strengthen and integrate what we have to deliver, from EMO to EMS, to Wildland Fire Management, to the Fire Marshal's Office, whether it's communications, integrating our sharing of practices and being able to communicate with one another in a very close manner, as well.

As I mentioned, organizing and equipping EMO territory-wide really requires continuous commitment by not only the Yukon government, but by all communities, First Nations and volunteers. Unfortunately the member opposite has chosen to vote against the budget, so when I speak to the \$8.6 million housed in this year's budget for Protective Services, the member opposite has already made his views known and has voted against that particular budget at second reading. It's truly unfortunate because I think we are doing good things and we are making progress on a number of fronts. Rest assured, there is more work to be done.

**Mr. Barr:** Madam Chair, I would like to reiterate what a number of my colleagues have already stated, which is that we did not vote against the budget; we voted for what is not in the budget.

I would also like to move on, seeing as my specific questions are not being answered. In regard to community clubs, I know that Carcross has been long awaiting one. I would like to put forward today, again, that we would love to see a new community centre in Carcross. It has outgrown the community. Moving into Mount Lorne: the recreation funding that the government pays — would the minister explain if there is going to be funding formula changes? Could she explain to us how the funding pertains to maintenance and operations for Marsh Lake, Carcross, and other communities clubs in the Yukon?

Speaking in regard to Mount Lorne, I do know that in that particular one that the population is part of the formula that says how much money the community club is going to receive. Knowing that it has been an ongoing question and the problem to try to resolve is that much of the funding is issued to the mailbox, which then doesn't reflect the members who are actually in Mount Lorne. So they continue to operate in kind of an unbalanced way.

Also, in that particular community club, being that it is so energized by the folks who offer programs there — the innovative programs that are there — it attracts people from Marsh Lake, from Whitehorse, from Carcross, from Tagish — so the number of people who actually use that one particular club —

it's difficult for them. I understand that as they run out, they'll just have to close their doors until the funding restarts again because it doesn't reflect the usage that it gets, nor honestly, the population, given that many of the members, although living in that area, get their mail outside. So there are a few questions there.

**Hon. Ms. Taylor:** Well, when it comes to recreation in our territory, I can say with great confidence that the Government of Yukon has been working with all of the communities to address recreation improvements and enhancements to our infrastructure throughout the communities. I could go on at great length about this very issue. One of the things that we have, I think, done a very good job of — and I'll give 100 percent credit to our officials in the Department of Community Services — is working to leverage funding from other funding resources. When those two infrastructure funds came to fruition — the Canadian strategic infrastructure fund and the municipal rural infrastructure fund — those are two great mechanisms that really leveraged the Government of Canada funding and funding from other partners, whether First Nation governments or community governments.

One of the great investments resulting from CSIF, which is the acronym for the strategic infrastructure fund, was that of the investments in the Carcross waterfront and also the Whitehorse waterfront. There have been a number of significant improvements made to both respective areas. Of course, that contributes to recreation, not only for our own residents, but visitors as well. Throughout Whitehorse, I just take a look at significant enhancements along the waterfront in support of healthy, active lifestyles; attraction of cultural events; a revitalization of our history and heritage through the refurbishment of heritage buildings along the waterfront. It has also helped leverage other investments made — investments in the expansion of the MacBride Museum and refurbishment of the Old Fire Hall to enable cultural venues to take place as a means of revitalizing the waterfront.

Likewise, in Carcross, significant investments have been made within the Carcross downtown core and the waterfront itself. Just over \$7 million has been invested in the community of Carcross, and it has gone towards new infrastructure. The Carcross carving centre — I had the privilege of being able to take part in the cultural ceremony that opened that facility a number of years ago, in collaboration with the community and the Carcross Tagish First Nation. That lends itself to a number of opportunities, recreation and capacity building, and yet another fantastic venue to be able to facilitate the growth of many other sectors. We have also implemented a visitor pavilion within the heart of Carcross as well, lending itself to the growth of the visitor population, and also facilitating access to the use of visitor services, but also those in the community itself.

Other investments we've been able to make is in interpretive signage. I think it was the Leader of the Official Opposition who raised issues with some of the interpretive signage at some of the visitor facilities that we had implemented at the Carcross Desert. Working in collaboration with the Department of Tourism and Culture and many other entities, I think that a number of these improvements have been a long time in the

making and have helped facilitate additional investment made by the Carcross-Tagish First Nation and the community itself.

In terms of the government's vision for providing infrastructure that helps further leverage additional investments, I think that's something that the government has done very well in working in collaboration with the community on their downtown plan and bringing many of those elements to fruition — the new pedestrian bridge, for example, the Bennett viewing deck, restroom facilities made available, a new boat launch and dock, parking facilities. Again, when it comes to celebrating our history as well, the *SS Tutshi* memorial is another good example of departments working together with the community in seeing this come to fruition.

Landscaping — there have been investments in the Heritage Park just outside of the White Pass building. Those, too, have helped facilitate investments made by White Pass and Yukon Route, and companies such as Holland America in continuing to see many more individuals coming to the community. The list goes on, but it's very important that we continue to invest in communities as such. I think it's making a tremendous difference.

Likewise, our continued investments — whether it be in solid-waste or drinking water upgrades — those, too, are helping facilitate the added growth in our population in all of our communities. When it comes to additional investments — just on the operation side — when it comes to recreation, I can say that we do provide community recreation assistance grants to a number of communities throughout the territory.

I believe that in this year's budget there is a total of just under \$420,000 available for a number of the unincorporated communities. That continues to be administered on a formula-based provision, as I have referenced in months past on the floor of the Legislative Assembly. I'm just looking at the community of Carcross, for example — just under \$55,000 is allotted for the community of Carcross. Likewise, it's just over \$39,000 for the Hamlet of Mount Lorne. This goes toward support of operating recreation facilities and certainly uses those dollars to help leverage additional funds as well to enhance recreation opportunities in their respective communities.

That doesn't include other communities — Beaver Creek, Burwash Landing, Upper Liard, Tagish, Ross River, Pelly Crossing, Old Crow and Marsh Lake. Marsh Lake, I believe, is receiving just under \$40,000, so alone in the Southern Lakes area we continue to invest in community recreation. Of course, that doesn't include other grants based on the community development fund, through the lotteries fund, and many others.

As I referenced earlier in my second reading address, which I did not actually get to conclude — I will do that a little bit later on — but just within sport and recreation contributions alone in this year's budget, there is just shy of \$2.4 million allotted for that. That includes dollars for Yukon recreation groups. That is in addition to the recreation assistance grants that I have just made reference to. It also consists of dollars for organizations and sport governing bodies, dollars for Special Olympics, funding for Sport Yukon, and for our ongoing participation of individuals to facilitate their contributions to the Canada Senior Games coming up — support for elite athletes,

coaches, officials, aboriginal sport and recreation circles; support for the Sport for Life program, and as I mentioned earlier, support for our Team Yukon to participate in other national events — whether it be the Canada Summer Games or the Canada Winter Games, and the list goes on.

As a result, we just have to take a look at the recent Arctic Winter Games and the great success that our Team Yukon saw at the podium, not to mention the successful hosting of the best ever games to be held, the success and the number of ulus that were presented on many different levels. Again, we congratulate them in that regard. As I mentioned, when it comes to the communities, there are dollars allotted in support of recreation. Likewise, there are dollars that continue to be funded through our local advisory councils, through our municipal grant process, which of course is also housed within the "Our Towns, Our Future" review that is currently underway — the comprehensive municipal grant process. All of these funding mechanisms are in support of our communities, ensuring that we have vibrant, healthy and sustainable communities.

That said, we recognize that there are increasing costs and pressures experienced by our communities, both unincorporated and incorporated. That's why we remain very committed to working with our communities and to continue to partner with a number of funding agencies to identify those priorities and address those associated operations and maintenance costs of rural recreation infrastructure.

**Mr. Barr:** The minister spoke for 12 minutes and didn't answer my question. So, just, right off the cuff, Community Services pays O&M at Marsh Lake, I understand. Why not for all the community clubs and be fair to them all?

**Hon. Ms. Taylor:** I'm not sure if I was clear enough in my response, but I'll just give a few more examples of how we fund community recreation. I just referenced the community recreation assistance grants, and in the member's own riding itself — \$54,790 for Carcross alone, as I believe I already mentioned. Mount Lorne — there is also an additional \$39,390 allotted in support of recreation in Mount Lorne. Also available for Marsh Lake is \$39,600. Likewise, dollars are also allotted for many other communities, including Beaver Creek, Burwash Landing, Destruction Bay, Keno City, Old Crow, Pelly Crossing, Ross River, Tagish, Upper Liard — so I could go on at greater length on the greater amount of assistance for recreation groups — YRAC, as I referenced earlier. We also have specific grants available for administration of many sports governing bodies and activities alone under that program.

I'm not going to go into greater detail — in support of the elite athletes, in support of our participation at respective games. I know that when it comes to Mount Lorne, for example — and we certainly appreciate the good work of the residents of that particular community — I know that last year, I think they celebrated some 25 years and the opening of their new Zamboni building, and that was funded through Sport and Recreation. We congratulate them for that particular accomplishment. We also congratulate ongoing contributions made by all communities and community associations, in support of recreation and in support of many other entities associated with our municipal governments and unincorporated areas.



I don't want to sound too repetitive, so I'll just perhaps conclude my comments from there.

**Mr. Barr:** Legible numbers for driveways is a safety issue for firefighters and ambulances getting to places in rural communities. When can we expect that we will see this happening?

**Hon. Ms. Taylor:** Thank you to the member opposite for his question. We know that this continues to be of ongoing importance to the community and, in fact, that's why, under the leadership of the Fire Marshal's Office it has been working with the Tagish advisory council. Of course, as one can appreciate, one has to comply with national conventions and obligations, but we very much remain committed to working with the council. I believe there is a meeting set up in the not-too-distant future.

I'm sorry — a lot of correspondence has been coming our way on many different fronts, but it seems to me a meeting is to be set up so that we can seek the views and input from the members of the council to address this very important issue.

**Mr. Barr:** I believe that Tagish for one has been ready to go for a few years now. Actually, there is correspondence, but I do not have it with me to confirm that. I understand that Marsh Lake is going ahead with a pilot project. I do not understand why one has been ready to go for a few years, another is going forward with a pilot project, and not just to implement or number streets and houses. I would just comment on that and I'm going turn it over to my colleague here.

**Hon. Ms. Taylor:** Thank you to the members of the communities — our Department of Community Services — of course, the fundamental mandate of the department is to work in collaboration with communities to be responsive to their priorities and their concerns and ideas, and this is one of those priorities, and a very important issue at that.

We continue to work with those communities and, as the member opposite made reference, the pilot project is underway. When it comes to Tagish, we are working with that respective community and we look forward to further progress.

**Ms. Stick:** I was interested to hear from the minister that there are plans to bring forward *Landlord and Tenant Act* legislation. There has been a lot of hard work done by landlord groups, tenant groups and information gathered from other stakeholders and the public.

While waiting on this legislation, the Official Opposition is hearing from citizens that rents are going up by unreasonable amounts, and this is forcing tenants out of their current rental accommodations. Because of low rental vacancy rates, many families are being forced into crowded and inadequate housing. We have heard too many of these stories. I took a look at the local papers and available rentals: three-bedroom apartment for \$2,500 a month; a furnished room, \$600 a month; three-bedroom house, \$1,900 a month, plus all utilities. Some days it seems there are more ads for "wanted to rent" than "for rent". I even called a few of these, but they were already taken.

I'm also aware from citizens of the substandard rental accommodation across the territory. People are renting units with poor heating, safety issues and black mould. They have no recourse because they fear being homeless. I'm also aware of

good landlords who face difficulties and unexpected costs with irresponsible tenants. I'm not suggesting that landlords or tenants should be given more favourable protections, but I do believe that tenants and landlords need clear legislation that protects and clarifies their rights, outlines their responsibilities and protects everyone with clear and fair rules and regulations.

Can the minister tell us when this legislation will come forward, or are we looking at another round of consultations? I would also like the minister to identify costs in this budget associated with changes to the act or its implementation, i.e. new programs or positions.

**Hon. Ms. Taylor:** I'd like to thank the member opposite for raising this important issue. As I referenced in my opening comments and as outlined in our recent platform, "Moving Forward Together", it remains a priority of the Government of Yukon, and that is working toward implementing the recommendations of the select committee. We congratulate the work of the committee of years past and look forward to moving forward on this initiative. I'm glad to hear that the member opposite, and hopefully her colleague as well, find it very important to balance the interest of both tenants and landlords. That is a key principle housed within the recommendation and one we will be taking very seriously as we move on this initiative.

We are working on moving forward to take something out to the public. We believe that even though a number of meetings were held throughout the review of the *Landlord and Tenant Act*, a number of provisions were made on a broader scale — so looking for more finite information on key pieces of information when it come to landlord-tenant. Again, it's really of great importance to all Yukoners that we move forward with a new act. We're committed to doing just that.

We want to move in an expeditious manner because we know this is important, both to the tenants for the reasons that the member opposite has just outlined, but also for the purposes of moving forward from the landlord's perspective in terms of wanting to make additional investments in the housing market.

I have said all along that when it comes to housing, I don't think there was one individual in this territory who didn't state the importance of housing in the territory during the last election. That's why our government continues to recognize that adequate, available and affordable housing is absolutely fundamental in maintaining and building our economy, but also for building strong communities and strong families. We're doing a significant amount of work to tackle housing pressures and issues throughout all of our communities in the territory. When we talk about housing, we talk about the continuum of housing throughout the territory, from ensuring everyone who needs shelter and support has that, to helping those who already have homes through programs for renovations, repairs and upgrading programs.

We're working with our partners in the community to assist those particularly vulnerable and at-risk individuals who require those services and supports to live independently. That goes right from one side of the spectrum from emergency shelters to transitional housing, such as second-stage housing that is housed within this year's budget, and through to Kaushee's

women's transition home. For supportive housing, a number of key pieces were outlined in our platform, some of which were envisioned and included in this year's budget, and some that remain as works in progress in collaboration with many stakeholders, including the Salvation Army.

Providing social housing — I know the minister responsible for Yukon Housing Corporation has spoken to this at great length, as I have as well. Our government has invested well over \$100-million worth of affordable housing initiatives throughout the territory. Is that enough? When it comes to housing, there is always going to be more to be done in the territory to address the ongoing needs and priorities. What I can say is that it wasn't that long ago that our population was dwindling, that people were leaving the territory, that in fact it was labelled as a "U-Haul economy".

That's not the case now and now we have the opposite side of the spectrum — we have challenges associated with maintaining and sustaining that growth within our population and our economy and that's, in fact, why we have dollars allotted for land development in the territory. We have dollars available for a number of different housing initiatives from second-stage to continuing care. I know this is an issue of importance to the member opposite — additional beds opening up at the Whitehorse General Hospital, to additional beds opening up at the Thomson Centre for continuing care, to the replacement of McDonald Lodge in Dawson City. We're looking at new hospital facilities in Watson Lake and Dawson City, in addition to the ongoing expansion of our Whitehorse General Hospital, all out of meeting the demand for more options.

When it comes to the *Landlord and Tenant Act*, we do remain committed to adhering to the recommendations, and we do hope to be going through some consultation in the near future to provide that added direction on a number of different fronts, as outlined within the recommendations themselves.

We feel that is very important. I am sure the members opposite would appreciate the importance of consultation. Again, we look forward to utilizing the resources we have within our Department of Community Services: in just the policy branch alone, under operations and maintenance, we have over \$700,000 available. We will be utilizing, and we are utilizing, many of those resources to address reviews such as the *Landlord and Tenant Act* review with the ultimate goal of bringing in new legislation.

As I mentioned, we're working expeditiously, and we've recognized the very importance of this issue to all Yukoners, from both sides of the spectrum, in moving forward. I hope that that helps address some of the questions that the member opposite has raised.

**Mr. Barr:** Eighty percent of Yukoners heat their homes with oil-burning furnaces of some kind. We know that Mr. Corea studied how these units were installed and maintained and he authored five very damning reports detailing major code violations that posed a serious risk to life and property.

We know what happened in Porter Creek — five Yukoners lost their lives from carbon monoxide poisoning. The recent fire at the Stratford Motel pointed to an improperly installed or maintained furnace. We know that the Yukon is one of the last

jurisdictions in Canada not to regulate the oil-fired appliance industry. It's time for new rules to protect public safety.

When will this government be introducing oil-burner legislation or regulations to prevent injury, death and loss of property?

**Hon. Ms. Taylor:** There are a number of different factors when we talk about oil burner safety. I believe there has been a lot stated on the floor of the Legislature — and more to come, to be sure. As has already been stated by the minister responsible for Yukon Housing and me, as Community Services minister, we have committed to tasking our respective officials with coming up with a working group.

The working group is for the purpose of bringing industry and government representatives together — and community representatives, to be sure — to come up with a made-in-Yukon solution that enhances public safety as it pertains to the installation as well as the maintenance of oil burner appliances as well as tanks, as was outlined in those reports. That group, as I understand, is to be chaired by the vice-president of the Yukon Housing Corporation, who also happens to be a certified oil burner mechanic. I know that he is working expeditiously in collaboration with representatives from the oil burner industry itself, ensuring that we have representation from communities, as well, because as the minister responsible for housing had stated not long ago, the solutions that we come up with have to work for all of our communities, from Old Crow, to Whitehorse, to Watson Lake, to Carcross and everything in between. That's not to say that it can't be done, because it will be done. We're very much committed to coming up with solutions, but they have to be realistic and they have to be viable and have to be something that we can act on in a timely basis. That work is underway and in fact the member opposite may have noticed there were advertisements that have been placed in many of the papers asking for suggestions, feedback, input from Yukoners at large — whether it be from industry or the public at large — on this very issue.

We very much applaud the work of this group. It also includes the City of Whitehorse, which is very important, because the City of Whitehorse also has jurisdiction when it comes to its role in adhering to the standards that we have today, for inspections and so forth. In addition to that, I just referenced that there is a *Landlord and Tenant Act* review with the focus of bringing forth new statutes — new legislation.

That will also fold in elements such as carbon monoxide safety, for example, when it comes to minimum standard rentals. Likewise, when it comes to the tragic incident that occurred in Porter Creek, that is before the coroner, and, in fact, the coroner has yet to conclude her investigation. In fact, she was referenced through one of the media outlets — I think it was yesterday, if I'm not mistaken — outlining how the fire marshal's findings have been submitted officially to the coroner. That is but one of the findings and investigations underway. As I stated here on the floor yesterday and I'll continue to state, it's very important to let that work unfold and be completed in an objective manner before any other steps can be taken in that regard. I think it's very important to respect the objectivity of her work and to let her work conclude in that regard.

There is a significant amount of work that is underway. I also wanted to say that there has been work that has been underway since those reports have been published, whether it be public education, whether it be training for mechanics themselves in collaboration with the Housing Corporation, Yukon College and again, through the Fire Marshal's Office — raising awareness about public safety, fire prevention. We'll continue to invest in training and education while we look to these other ways that we can make further enhancements, whether it be any new regulations, or whether it be legislative improvements to ensure the safe use and maintenance of appliances such as this.

Back in 2010, the government also introduced new regulations under the *Building Standards Act* requiring permits and inspections for all new oil-burner appliance installations, which also pertains to the modifications — major renovations to systems, as well, that we have in place.

So some work has been undertaken as a result of those recommendations that have come forward and, as I mentioned, there have been ongoing initiatives through our own Fire Marshal's Office. I won't go on at greater length about the work in the Yukon Housing Corporation, but we have been providing information and will continue to make available information on carbon monoxide safety and, of course, regular messaging on fire and safety prevention. That will continue to be distributed territory-wide. Again, it's an important issue, and we look forward to the outcome of the work as it unfolds today.

**Mr. Barr:** The minister has mentioned the formation of a new oil-burning appliance working group as part of this government's response to the Porter Creek tragedy. In 2008, the Yukon Party government announced the creation of an Oil Fired Appliances Advisory Committee. This committee reported in 2009 and gave both Community Services and the Yukon Housing Corporation a list of recommendations.

One of this committee's recommendations back in 2009 was for the government to implement a new act and regulations specific to oil-fired appliances. The government did not act on this recommendation. One of the recommendations was that Community Services hire certified oil burner inspectors. Can the minister report on the status of this recommendation and other matters recommended by the Oil Fired Appliances Advisory Committee? How is the new committee different from the old committee, and what assurances can the minister give that it will follow this new committee's advice?

**Hon. Ms. Taylor:** As I just tried to articulate for the member opposite, we did, in fact, announce back on March 21 of this year our commitment to form a working group on oil-fired appliances. Again, my colleague from the Yukon Housing Corporation and I — we did task our officials to work on this working group.

As I mentioned, we're very pleased that the acting vice-president of the Yukon Housing Corporation has agreed to chair this working group. I believe that he has a great amount of expertise and professionalism in this industry so we thank him for his work on this working group. As I mentioned earlier, it will include representatives from the oil burning industry itself. As to who is actually sitting on that particular committee,

I can't give specific names. There is also a City of Whitehorse representative sitting on the committee. We also want to have representation from Yukon First Nations, given their role in terms of settlement lands and properties on their respective lands. So again, any changes would also be put into effect and we wanted to ensure that they have a voice. We have the Department of Community Services and the Department of Education that also will be contributing — and Yukon College, which will also be sitting on the committee. Again, this differs from the entity that the member opposite raised earlier. One of the mandates that we wanted to really focus on was to come up with a made-in-the-Yukon solution.

That is why we chose to broaden the makeup of the committee: to ensure there is First Nations representation on the committee; that we have rural perspectives on the committee so that recommendations that were — or I should say, so that the action plan that comes out of the working group will in fact reflect the realities of rural Yukon as we see them today. There are significant differences from community to community and we have to respect those differences. So whatever action plan does come out of this particular working group, we need to make sure that it is reasonable, realistic and that it does enhance the safety of these appliances as well as tanks.

I certainly respect community input. I'm not so sure if the members opposite respect that community input, but we do and we think that it's very important to have not only the City of Whitehorse sitting on the committee, but to have that rural representation; likewise to have industry representation as well. As I mentioned, having Yukon College as an entity that continues to deliver training in this regard — it's very important that they be at the table as well.

Broadening the input or broadening the makeup of the committee is absolutely essential to come up with that made-in-Yukon action plan that will be responsive and that will be effective in delivering effective action. We recognize that there is work to be done and, of course, work that has been done in the past will also fold into the work of the committee.

Again, just thanks to the members who have chosen to sit on the working group, for their work, for their time and for putting their best foot forward in addressing this very important issue.

When it comes to our own government inspectors, I, too, would like to thank them for their professionalism and for their credentials that they bring to the job. I had an opportunity to see and meet many of our inspectors and they have a very difficult job. It's not a job for everyone, and it requires specific skill sets, expertise and professionalism. I know that they work hard on a daily basis to assist and educate members of the public in the building industry to ensure that our buildings and our mechanical systems are built to national standards, complying to our statutes in place. We're very appreciative to have those individuals in that area. Our own branch regulates not only the construction of new buildings, installation of electrical, gas, wood and oil heating systems, installation and operation of elevators, lifts, and pressure vessels, to amusement rides — very all-encompassing expertise. We have some eight inspectors for all of these respective inspections, all of whom are

qualified to do inspections in their respective fields. This particular shop will also be reflected in the working group as they move forward to proceed with an action plan to address this very important issue.

As I referenced earlier, the City of Whitehorse plays a very important role. They have jurisdiction over the *Building Standards Act* and the National Building Code, and the B139 Code within the city limits itself, unlike any other municipality in the territory. So they have a very important role to play. The Yukon government oversees all of the other communities other than the City of Whitehorse. So, again, it is very important that they, too, be involved in this working group coming forward with an effective and timely action plan.

**Chair:** Would the members care for a recess?

**All Hon. Members:** Agreed.

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

#### *Recess*

**Chair:** Committee of the Whole will now come to order. We will continue debate on Vote 51, Department of Community Services.

**Mr. Barr:** The NDP caucus, and particularly Steve Cardiff, the late Member for Mount Lorne, fought hard in this House for rules to protect young workers. He tabled the *Young Worker Protection Act*, which didn't pass, but led to a consultation and identified issues. It has been over two years since Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board came up with a code of practice for young workers. This appears to be the only tangible outcome so far from all of this work.

There was an expectation that the Employment Standards Board would be coming up with minimum age restrictions on certain industries. Why has there been no movement on minimum age restrictions? Does this government have an appetite to develop minimum age restrictions in certain industries? When will we see new rules to protect young workers?

**Hon. Ms. Taylor:** I would like to thank the member opposite for his question. When it comes to young worker safety, of course, this government has been working on a number of different fronts to ensure that all workers remain safe in the workplace. When it comes to this particular issue, we have been working with the Employment Standards Board and with the Yukon Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board on the very important issue of young workers.

I know that within our own Employment Standards branch, we have produced some public education material in recent years — the last couple of years, as I seem to recall, including a student and parent guide called *You need more than a job to start work*. The guide is very comprehensive. I recall looking at it, reviewing it, and going over it at great length. It's very impressive indeed. It talks about all that you need more than a job to start work. It deals with the rights and responsibilities of young workers with respect to employment and maintaining safe standards.

We have worked to distribute it, and continue to distribute it, to all of our high schools throughout the territory, and there

is also an on-line version of it on the website. We continue to partner with the Department of Education to deliver employment standards training presentations to all grade 10 students throughout the Yukon as well. So there are a number of various initiatives that we have been providing on the public education front.

With respect to ongoing work, in terms of additional standards for young worker protection in the territory, as the member opposite may recall, there was consultation regarding young worker protection, which resulted in a report that was tabled in the Legislature back in 2009.

The consultation undertaken by the Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board and the Employment Standards Board revealed that there was no particular, clear consensus on developing an overall minimum working age in the territory. However, there is a very strong appetite for proceeding with industry-specific age restrictions under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*. That is being led through the Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board. That work is continuing, as I understand — without having received an update in the recent couple of weeks on that particular matter, I will certainly endeavour to speak about it with the minister responsible. I know that a significant amount of work has been done on coming up with regulations in this regard.

I know that Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board are the lead in developing regulations, coming up with options and in developing regulations. As I seem to recall, there is a stakeholder group that was formed to help guide those decisions and inform the debate on a going-forward basis. I know that they plan on bringing forward a regulatory proposal to the Government of Yukon for review and for bringing it forward within, I'm taking it, this year, within the months to come, if not sooner. It does remain very important to the Government of Yukon, but again, that is work that is being led by the Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board. We look forward to receiving the outcome of that work. I know that the minister responsible will be leading that as he brings forward the new regulations coming forward when it comes to specific age restrictions pertaining to those various entities.

**Mr. Silver:** The Department of Community Services provides and facilitates many of the government services Yukoners enjoy on a regular basis. We appreciate the opportunity to discuss the department's activities and resources, and I thank the department officials for their briefings and I thank my colleagues as well here for their comments today.

As is our practice, we will keep our comments today brief and I will reserve my more detailed questions for line by line.

Community Services aids in the provision of important ground search and rescue services in our territory. There have been recent changes to how the department provides services to eight community ground search and rescue teams in the Yukon. In the past, Protective Services has provided operational support to these teams. However, this support relationship is now being transferred to the Wildland Fire Management branch. I understand from conversations with local Wildland Fire personnel that they are already under very tight fiscal and operational constraints. They cannot be expected to take on addi-

tional responsibilities without additional resources, Madam Chair. I gave advance notice of this concern in my general response to this budget and advised the minister that I will bring up this issue in the departmental debate.

When we move to line-by-line debate, I look forward to an update on this proposed transfer of responsibilities and to learn what financial resources will be provided, along with the transfer to ensure high levels of support to our ground search and rescue teams. In addition to having a very effective and active search and rescue team, Dawson City is also home to a volunteer fire department that has been in operation for almost 115 years. Despite its long and successful history, the Dawson City fire department, like volunteer fire departments throughout the territory, was not consulted or informed ahead of time that the government was assuming control of rural firefighting; instead, they found out last year at the Association of Yukon Communities AGM. Needless to say, the heavy-handed centralization of power is neither respectful of the department's hard work nor thoughtfully informed by their output. Matters of etiquette aside, not everyone is convinced that this step is in the right direction.

As I mentioned before, the Dawson City volunteer fire department has a very long history of successful operations. I hope to hear the minister's assurance that this administrative change will not impede the department's operations or those of other fire departments throughout the Yukon. I also hope to hear from the minister that this department and others will be adequately resourced so that our volunteers are as safe and prepared as possible going into dangerous situations.

I would like to turn my attention to some of the excellent initiatives and work that I have seen through this department. I would never want to be accused of not giving credit where credit is due, and I reiterate that I feel my role in the Legislative Assembly is to lend a hand to progress. Therefore, I shall acknowledge the progression where I perceive it.

The "Our Towns, Our Future" initiative is an excellent response to rural concerns. I commend the minister's continuing support to such an important committee. From the committee visits summary, I quote: "The idea of Our Towns, Our Future emerged as a response by the Minister of Community Services to concerns raised by Yukon's municipal officials over the past several years. It is a way to answer the questions of how municipalities can increase their resilience and ensure their stability in the face of current-day pressures. The review is meant to address urgent challenges upon aging infrastructure, the recruitment and retention of municipal employees, provisions of local services, rising operational costs and changing regulatory requirements. Our Towns, Our Future has given municipalities, the Association of Yukon Communities and the Yukon government an opportunity to work together to explore new ways to address old and emerging problems."

The committee, as established by the minister, consists of three Yukon government members and three members from the Association of Yukon Communities. This initiative clearly demonstrates that both the Yukon government and the Association of Yukon Communities recognize the mutual value of

working together to find solutions to ensure that our towns and communities are resilient and sustainable for years to come.

I would like to list the main themes, Madam Chair, the "Our Towns, Our Future" committee heard in Dawson: (1) a desire to keep current residents and attract new or former residents, particularly by having recreation facilities and educational programs that appeal to families; (2) develop more residential lots and make more affordable housing available; (3) concerns related to the transfer of responsibilities to municipalities from senior governments without enough money to cover the costs; and (4) the use of municipal landfill, including a need for a better way to transfer non-recyclable waste to recover the cost of operating the facility and to address the direction given in mining permits to use of the landfill for their waste.

I would like the minister to comment, obviously, on these themes in general, but I also have some specific examples of these themes that I would like to comment on.

Theme (1): a desire to keep current residents and attract new or former residents, particularly by having recreational facilities and educational programs that appeal to families — I'm sorry if I'm beginning to sound like a broken record. Dawson City was promised a recreation centre from this government. I presented to this House the quotes, the news announcements, the campaign promises already, so I won't waste any more time here in the general debate, but I want to be on the record again stating that this is a huge dollar value promise that doesn't seem to have any current momentum.

Theme (2): develop more residential lots and make more affordable housing available — the issue here is that the City of Dawson is struggling to meet the requirements with regard to property development. They are doing their best with limited resources, and they are considering creative solutions where they can — for example, tax rates on vacant lot increases. They have also been very cooperative with the private sector proposals for low income housing on Lot 20. The city is also addressing the concerns of the Klondike Development Organization, but the concept here is that Yukon government is the real land developer. They have the city planners and the city needs their help, but getting their attention is near impossible. These are not my words; these are the words from a variety of sources from within the municipal system in Dawson.

I put forward today a motion urging this government to lend its expertise and resources in this area to the City of Dawson, and I look forward to progress in these identified issues.

Theme (3) regards the concerns related to the transfer of responsibility to municipalities from senior governments without enough money to cover the costs. Properly supporting our ground search and rescue teams also means that they have the training they need and are asked to have for their jobs. These are volunteers on-call in their communities when they need them, and they must have the training to do so effectively and safely. Ground search and rescue teams have identified a lack of steep-embankment response, and are calling for training to bridge that gap. Ground search and rescue teams have received this training in the past, but the government seems to have no appetite for offering it again. While this issue is not limited to

Klondike, it is particularly relevant to the areas around Dawson.

The larger-than-life topology we enjoy encourages hikers and rock climbers. Steep-embankment search and rescue incidents have occurred and are likely to occur again at Moosehide Slide, the Crocus Bluff, Tombstone Park and in areas accessed through municipal and Trans Canada Trail systems. While these areas should be enjoyed responsibly by people who go out and explore them, search and rescue incidents will occur and we must ensure that our search and rescue teams are trained to handle them when they do.

The community has been relying on ad-hoc responses when somebody needs help in this kind of situation, but it's only a matter of time before a tragedy occurs. We cannot call in Outside expertise when somebody is trapped in dangerous situations; we must have our own people trained and ready to respond. Representatives from ground search and rescue teams have brought this up with the department without response. I strongly encourage the minister to meet with these teams as soon as possible and implement the steep-embankment rescue training that they are asking for.

Theme (4) regards the use of municipal landfill, including a need for a better way to transfer non-recyclable waste to recover the cost of operating the facility and address the direction given in mining permits to use of the landfill for their waste.

Quigley landfill — the municipality is knocking their heads against the wall on this one. Suggestions have already come forward from the municipality to the Minister of Community Services and her office — suggestions of capital money to upgrade the landfill, monitoring systems and/or weigh-in stations, charging for garbage coming in from other communities, tags for bags, et cetera. This is in the solid-waste management plan. We are in an environmental crisis with waste oil currently and we await direction on implementation of a solid-waste management plan that works for Klondikers.

I would like to end with a thank you, actually, to the Minister of Community Services for her staff and her work on the Top of the World golf course transfer of title to the City of Dawson. The lawyers are still busy with paperwork, but it is looking like the Dawson Golf Association will be running the course into the future. The minister has been extremely cooperative in this process. Her office has been forthright and informative and they will share a large portion of the credit if and when the course opens this summer.

I would also like to thank the Premier and his office for their direction and their expedience and support on this file. Sometimes we don't know what we have until it's gone, and this close call has had a positive effect on the volunteer corps of my community.

I would also like to thank the City of Dawson, the Klondike Visitors Association, Greg Hakonson and the Dawson Golf Association for rallying to support and promote one of the most unique golf courses that I've ever played at. I challenge all ministers and members of this House to a round of golf in Dawson this summer.

I will finish here and I will look forward to the minister's response and to the line-by-line debate process.

**Hon. Ms. Taylor:** I would like to thank the MLA for Klondike for his remarks. I very much enjoy the game of golf. I'm not very good at it, but I give it my best and I have a lot of spirit, so if and when, I look forward to the opportunity. I'm not sure if I would play on the member's team — but to be sure I'm sure the government caucus would certainly love to put in a team, and I'm sure a couple of my colleagues actually have access to golf carts. I'm not going to get into that, but anyhow, I will just leave it at that.

Again, I just want to start by saying thank you to the Member for Klondike for his recognition of the good work the Department of Community Services does. I very much appreciate hearing those constructive comments and positive comments, because there is a lot of good work that is done on a daily basis by the department. If there's one thing that never ceases to amaze me, it's how large this department is and how encompassing the responsibilities are in this department. I think it's safe to say that I didn't have, perhaps, as great an appreciation as I do today for the work that is conducted by every official in the department and how comprehensive the work is. It has been a very steep learning curve for me as a minister, but I have very much enjoyed — my tenure as minister has been a privilege. I look forward to learning more and continuing to work on issues of importance to our communities, including the Member for Klondike's community as well.

The member opposite touched on many different items. I'll do my best to address some of these issues.

He has raised some good discussion points. One — I'm not even too sure where to start; there are a lot of various items. I suppose one is — really, I'll start with the "Our Towns, Our Future" review, because in all of my community visits thus far, I continue to hear some great feedback about that review and how it was launched and the inclusive nature of that approach to tackling issues of importance to our municipal governments.

Now if there is one thing that I have learned over the years, it is how much responsibility the Government of Yukon has assumed. The reason why I say that is that I also know how much added responsibility our municipal governments have had to assume as well: changing regulations; changing legislation; changing our expectations; and health and safety matters. The member opposite talked about fire protection; how we deliver fire protection in our communities. All of these and more are changing and, as a result, we have to change how we deliver governance. When it comes to "Our Towns, Our Future", it is a great example of how the Yukon government has been and continues to work collaboratively with the Yukon municipalities to ensure that municipalities operate in a sustainable manner.

So we have been working through the Association of Yukon Communities to address the themes — and I believe there are some 18 different themes raised throughout the review. I can say that progress is being made on the findings, when it comes to land development and energy and asset management, the comprehensive municipal grant — as I have spoken to earlier — and the *Municipal Act* as well. The grant itself — we are in the final year of a five-year funding agreement

that had come into play under the previous Yukon Party government.

Interestingly enough, when one takes a look at the fiscal capacity of municipal governments, it really wasn't until about five years ago, when we launched the previous review of that funding formula, that we were able to incorporate a funding increase that saw — I think it was \$800,000 a year in additional funding each and every year — that is consequential increases. We recognize there are many pressures and there are many areas of importance that remain to be addressed, one of them being fire.

I would say this about "Our Towns, Our Future": It's an ongoing work of collaboration, and one that was really launched about a year ago officially at the last Association of Yukon Communities AGM. A lot of work and a lot of working groups have been formed since then to oversee progress on the *Municipal Act* and the formula itself. Of course, from there, there are a number of other tables and discussions surrounding land development, energy, fire protection and so forth. I just wanted to recognize — with the good work of our own officials in continuing those tables of dialogue — that it is being well received, and I continue to hear that throughout the communities. So I just want to say thank you to our officials and thank you to the municipal officials and the elected members themselves.

We heard during the "Our Town, Our Future" sustainability review and we continue to hear about the challenges municipalities face in meeting new standards when it comes to fire protection in our communities, Occupational Health and Safety regulations that were brought into effect in 2006, the national firefighting standards and, of course, with presumptive legislation, there are these and there are more regulations as well, which we have to continue to adhere to, not only within municipal governments, but also within the Government of Yukon itself.

I refer to working collaboratively and making the most efficient use of our resources to be able to accomplish many different needs. We recognize that there is a role to play for the Yukon government — a very important role — when it comes to addressing deficiencies in how we administer fire protection services. I also want to make it abundantly clear that when it comes to the City of Dawson and the Town of Watson Lake or the Village of Mayo, those municipal governments have responsibility for administering fire protection. I very much appreciate, and I applaud and respect that autonomy and that relationship between the city and their fire department.

That said, we also recognize, though, that we have obligations to be able to assist our municipal governments in meeting these new standards and these new pressures that we are receiving on that end. That is why we are working with our governments; we are working with all the fire departments in coming up with a solution that is able to help address some of these shortfalls. I think those discussions will continue to unfold in the months to come. It is an important issue and it is one that I know the previous minister, the previous Premier, and the previous government paid great attention to, hence bringing in presumptive legislation, for example. It is one that we remain

very much committed to, and we know there will be costs associated with training, equipment, and infrastructure. We recognize that. We recognize that we need to address our own shortfalls as well within the Government of Yukon. It is a work-in-progress, but what I can communicate is that it is very important to me as Minister of Community Services. I know it remains of utmost importance to mayors and councils throughout this good territory. When it comes to search and rescue, what I can communicate there is that when it comes to Protective Services, we talked at great length about Emergency Measures Organization, Emergency Medical Services, Wildland Fire Management, the Fire Marshal's Office and so forth.

So, more and more, we're trying to integrate our services and how we deliver all emergency services, including search and rescue. What I can say is that there have not been any changes as to who is responsible for search and rescue. It is part of the ongoing discussions right now and will continue to be, as to how we can efficiently deliver services on behalf of Yukoners and how we can work with our organizations and our volunteer teams throughout the Yukon in delivering effective search and rescue. So it's part and parcel of looking toward different models of delivery when it comes to emergency services, but again, according to the department, there haven't been any decisions made in that regard. So I appreciate the question from the member opposite.

The member opposite also made reference to, as part and parcel of "Our Towns, Our Future", the desire of the City of Dawson — and all municipalities, I might add — and the willingness in wanting to attract residents to their respective communities, and we all want that. I was born and raised in Watson Lake. I very much appreciate the challenges and the opportunities and the privilege of living in rural Yukon outside of the City of Whitehorse. I very much appreciate the willingness of many individuals, whether you're elected or not, in holding many different hats and responsibilities and always putting your best foot forward in making your community a viable, a sustainable and an attractive place to live and to invest and to raise your family.

When it comes to the City of Dawson, I know that's why the Government of Yukon continues to invest in initiatives and infrastructure, such as the new hospital that is underway at this time. Investments in Tombstone Territorial Park, which is in the vicinity of the Klondike region — there is the new Tombstone Interpretive Centre and new trails and just investments in people all around.

All of these are assisting in making the region and our territory a better place to live and much more attractive.

Likewise, every time I go to Dawson — I was just saying that last year, during the summer months, the City of Dawson had never looked greater. I commend the City of Dawson for all of the investments that they have made in their riverfront and again, that's in collaboration working with our organizations, working with the City of Dawson and working with funding mechanisms such as the community development fund as well. We recognize that good work.

When it comes to other investments, I won't go on at great length about the museum and the cultural centre, but we have

enhanced funding to the operations of our museums and a new funding program for the cultural centre, which is also helping address the sustainable operation of those very important heritage institutions.

Likewise, the School of Visual Arts — again, a great partnership between the Klondike Institute of Art and Culture, the college and the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nation. It has been a huge success and those are some of the investments that continue to make the City of Dawson and other communities very attractive places to work and to live.

The member opposite raised a question with respect to land availability. During my recent visit to Dawson, earlier this year, we did have a discussion about land availability and, rest assured, we very much appreciate the pressures being experienced by the City of Dawson and all communities when it comes to meeting land demand as a result of growing communities. What I can say is that we have been working with Dawson, and I know that staff from our Land Development branch have committed to continue to work with the City of Dawson — to meet and to work with Dawson's planner to advance the planning process for the next potential land development projects in Dawson. In fact, there are monies housed within this fiscal year's budget that we are debating currently in this regard. We are working with the community to advance land development projects in an expeditious manner.

I know that last year alone, there were residential lots — a number of them — that were sold by way of Yukon Housing Corporation. I believe they released some downtown residential lots this summer. They were all sold. Likewise, I think there were some 10 or 13 lots that were also made available in Dawson on the north end. They, too, sold. So some land and properties have been freed up, but we recognize there is an ongoing demand for land.

I should also refer to Dawson's official community planning process, which was really kick-started last fall, and how that's a really important and positive step in enabling land development in Dawson. I know that there is a great emphasis up the Klondike Valley, looking at lots to be made available in that area. Both Community Services and Energy, Mines and Resources continue to work on that particular development, looking at opportunities in the Klondike Valley.

One thing I should also mention is the industrial lots in the Callison subdivision that were recently released. Likewise, I'm pretty sure that Energy, Mines and Resources also had turned over some land to the City of Dawson, as well, for country residential development along the Dome Road. A number of moves or a number of steps have been in play to help address Dawson's ongoing land demand. As I mentioned in my opening remarks, monies are also available in this year's budget with which we continue to help develop the land development assessment initiative that is currently underway by the Government of Yukon that is working in collaboration with all communities — First Nation governments included — to really assess and define what the land challenges are by coming up with solutions as well. That work is also underway.

When it comes to the municipal landfill, I will say that, as I mentioned before, a significant amount of work has been done.

First off, coming up with the *Yukon Solid Waste Action Plan* — so a very concerted effort in addressing challenges associated with waste in our territory. In this year's budget, as I referenced earlier, we do have new dollars — just under \$800,000 for solid-waste management, which will go toward composting, recycling, waste diversion, enhancing our waste-handling systems, site safety, installing groundwater monitoring stations and improving household hazardous waste management at our respective facilities.

Likewise, we're also looking to embark on a territory-wide education campaign and are encouraging all Yukon citizens to shift their focus to addressing waste in our respective communities.

**Chair:** Is there any further debate?

**Mr. Tredger:** I, too, would like to begin by congratulating the minister and her department. It is a large department. It affects the life of virtually every Yukoner. In communities, it is of particular importance. It is important that the communication between the department — which is largely situated in Whitehorse — and the communities be maintained and enhanced.

I can point to one project that the department did this winter that worked very well for the citizens of Mayo, and I want to congratulate them on it — the work done around the flooding of the Mayo River and the preparations for that; the assessment and weekly reporting that was done in conjunction with the Village of Mayo, the Department of Community Services, Emergency Measures, and the Na Cho Nyäk Dun, as well as Yukon Energy. This is an example of a very successful story, and I wish to thank the minister and her department for that. As I was saying, the communication is very important, and it is critical to the communities.

There is no substitute for face-to-face communication, and I would encourage the department — in fact, all of the departments — to look at putting personnel into the communities. I think that's critical to the life and the well-being of the communities, and it certainly will get information flowing to and from Whitehorse. I think I can speak for all members of this Assembly who live in rural communities that having professionals, people with full-time jobs in the communities, adds much to them. I would encourage the department to look at ways to move people and decentralize to build up strong and vibrant communities.

You had mentioned the solid-waste program. Again, that is a great program. It's working very well in many of the communities as it's rolled out. I am hearing concerns about the ongoing costs of that — not just the capital cost, but the cost to maintain the program over the coming years. There is also a need for personnel to run and manage the landfill or the solid-waste sites and that personnel can be developed and trained around that.

As we move into the 21st century in the way that we handle our waste, it's critical that the people doing it have the



training and the expertise to make sure the job is well done and in a manner that doesn't create problems down the line.

The final part on solid waste that has been brought to me is liability issues and that's something that needs to be negotiated between Community Services, Government of Yukon, and the various village councils or those who are taking over responsibility for the landfill sites.

There is increasing industrialization in the Yukon and with the industrialization comes increasing dangers. Sooner or later we will be looking at a major accident. The transportation of dangerous goods up and down our highways is growing at an astronomical rate. As mines come on stream, the shipment of toxic substances like cyanide and various other substances that are used in the mining industry are coming up and down our highways. They're driving through Watson Lake, Teslin, Whitehorse, Dawson City, Mayo, Stewart, Burwash, Braeburn, Carmacks and Pelly Crossing.

The chances of — actually, I should say it's not "if" we have an accident; it's "when" we have an accident, and it's critical that we are prepared for that.

I would ask the minister this: Do we have a strategic plan in place for handling an emergency that would include the training of people in each of our local areas; that would include timelines for that training; that would have a strategy for ongoing training; that would have a plan that would include the types and amount of hazardous material that's passing through the communities and the effect of increased traffic? I guess I'm just looking for a strategy from the minister on that, Madam Chair.

**Hon. Ms. Taylor:** Madam Chair, I would like to thank the Member for Mayo-Tatchun for his comments. I recently had the opportunity to visit the Village of Mayo and had a great opportunity to sit down with the mayor and council and to meet with some of our major stakeholders as well.

I, too, would like to commend the good work of our respective officials working in collaboration with the local community in response to the Mayo River flooding. I had the opportunity to see first-hand some of the shifts in the flow of ice and some of the work that has been done in the past year and a half on this very front. Again, when it comes to events such as this, the Emergency Measures Organization plays a very important role, working in collaboration with the necessary agencies and departments in planning and responding to events such as this, which can, at times, overwhelm local capacity. That is why I think that by working together with the community and the resources in the community, working with many other entities — Yukon Energy Corporation, the Village of Mayo and our own team in the area — we have been able to help minimize both the threat of and the impact of flooding on the local residents and their properties.

Again, I'm appreciative of the remarks coming forward from the member opposite, and I know too that those same sentiments have been reflected by the mayor and council from the Village of Mayo. We've had a number of discussions over the last number of months regarding this particular issue and some of the ways that we can help further mitigate any further

threat to individuals' properties and homes and, of course, their families.

So, again, I would also like to congratulate the Village of Mayo on many different improvements. It's a very unique area and I very much enjoy having the ability to visit Mayo. Each year, they have their arts fest along the riverfront. It continues to grow with local artists and cultural performers. They do a great job with the beautification of the riverfront, making it more attractive for families to go to the community and to raise their families. I think they're doing a great job. Recently, when I was there, as well, I was able to see, first-hand, their recycling facilities and I congratulated them for taking the lead and making that a priority within their municipality.

I think that it's a tremendous venue. Having that there front and centre entices and encourages individuals to participate in recycling, composting and reducing waste overall. I just hold high regard for the Village of Mayo and likewise all our communities. They've done some very collaborative work. I just very much appreciate their feedback any time we can sit down and have discussions about some of their ongoing challenges.

When it comes to addressing some of these challenges, I go back to "Our Towns, Our Future" — the comprehensive review that was launched about a year ago. One of those challenges — there were some 18 different items or categories, call it what you will, talking about some of the challenges facing long-term sustainability of our communities.

Solid waste and the way we deliver services or programs is a case in point. It's something on which we continue to work with Yukon communities to garner a much greater understanding and appreciation about the options to address these challenges in reducing waste and addressing waste in these landfills. We know that the issue of liability and contamination within each of our landfills is an issue of concern for all of us. We remain very much committed to working with those communities in creating that framework for looking at ways on how we can come up with common solutions that give certainty to both of our respective governments. So it's a work-in-progress and we appreciate the concerns on behalf of municipal governments.

As I go back to solid waste, the *Yukon Solid Waste Action Plan* that we were able to develop a number of years ago — we have taken great steps in being able to address a number of items when it comes to solid waste and modernizing our management system and how that works in each of our communities — incorporated and unincorporated, by the way — bringing it in line with current environmental practices and sustainability objectives.

This sets the stage for how we work with our partners to implement key improvements — working with our communities, our municipalities, industry, stakeholders — and explore innovative, long-term approaches to improving recycling, diversion, reduction handling and all of that. I think that we have gone a long way in terms of forming those Yukon-wide partnerships with our municipal governments and our unincorporated communities.

On the Southern Lakes route, there have been a significant number of improvements with the development of a regional approach to transfer stations, and how that has helped reduce our waste by over 80 percent. We are making great use of our funding mechanisms through the gas tax fund and Building Canada fund. They have helped us support numerous solid-waste management initiatives across the territory.

Improving solid waste — how we administer it in the territory was one of those five pillars that was identified under Building Canada. I think it has been working very well. In addition to that, as I mentioned earlier, there is approximately \$4 million available in this year's budget for further improvements to how we administer waste, most of which is through capital improvements and enhancements, as well as operation and maintenance.

I think the member opposite made reference to complying with those permits that the Department of Environment administers, in terms of administering solid waste, and assisting those communities with compliance. So, again, we continue to work with the Department of Environment. We continue to work within our own shop, of course, and the communities in addressing the groundwater monitoring stations. Again, looking at monitoring those wells, in addition to the installation — but also picking up household hazardous waste management at all of our facilities. The Department of Environment does a great job in assisting in the pick-up of waste oil, for example.

I know there was a question from the Member for Klondike beforehand. There is a program available for industry to be able to contact the Department of Environment, and that is in addition to the program that is also in place that has an annual or an ongoing basis of collection of that waste as well throughout the community landfills.

There is a significant amount of work underway. I could go on at great length about the *Yukon Solid Waste Action Plan* and I could, but maybe I'll just save my comments for a little bit later on.

When it comes to attracting individuals to our respective communities, I always say how some nine or 10 years ago that wasn't necessarily the case. In fact, we had a lot of individuals leaving the territory because the employment opportunities were not there in the territory. That has changed significantly in recent years, so that is why we continue to make investments in our budget for land development purposes. Included in this year's budget is \$35 million for land development, some of which is going toward ongoing planning of land developments within the Mayo region and, of course, building upon those economic opportunities to help attract families to go to the communities and make those communities a viable place to live, and I think they're doing a great job at that.

With regard to transportation of hazardous waste, I would refer those particular questions to, perhaps, the Minister of Environment as that responsibility would lie within that purview. I'm sure the Minister of Environment is looking forward to the debate that will ensue on this particular subject and many others, which I could go on about at great length when it comes to protecting our environment and sustaining our way of life as we know it today.

I just want to thank the member opposite for his comments and I look forward to additional questions.

**Mr. Tredger:** I was under the impression that Protective Services was under Community Services and that Community Services was responsible for the training and emergency measures. I will refer my questions to the Environment minister next time he is up here.

I did have a particular question on licensing and inspections. I assume that that is part of Community Services. A number of people in the communities have talked about the difficulty of getting inspectors to come to the communities to inspect the premises when they're building. This has become particularly critical given the publicity around oil-burning furnaces and the number of woodstoves that people in communities are using. I would ask the minister this: How many personnel are involved for rural communities in building inspections, electrical inspections, plumbing inspections, boiler inspections and oil burner/woodstove inspections?

**Hon. Ms. Taylor:** I believe I've already outlined some of the information pertaining to our own government inspectors.

Within our own safety branch, we regulate construction of buildings, installation of electrical, gas, wood, oil heating systems, installation and operation of elevator lifts, pressure vessels and so forth. As I mentioned, we do have a total of eight inspectors who cover the territory and work with the respective agencies. That includes the City of Whitehorse, which has its own inspectors who oversee the *Building Standards Act* as well. I think, as I mentioned before, unlike any other community in the territory, the City of Whitehorse has drawn down that authority. We in the Yukon government administer inspections for the rest of the territory outside of those municipal boundaries. We have inspectors who cover buildings, boilers, gas and electrical inspections — all of whom do a great job. They work hard, and they not only assist industry, but they also help educate the public on expectations and what the code is and the act itself, ensuring that all of our systems are built to national standards. We very much applaud their work.

**Mr. Tredger:** They certainly do a good job and they have a big job to do. Just for clarification, you said there were eight inspectors. How many of those eight are assigned solely to the rural areas and how many would be doing building as opposed to electrical, plumbing and oil-fired burners and boilers?

**Hon. Ms. Taylor:** There are no geographic assignments, so to speak. They are more or less functional assignments, as I tried to explain before for the members opposite.

We have a number of inspectors housed within our unit. Some are designated, as I mentioned earlier, for electrical — as we talked about pressure vessels — building and such. It's more or less based on function versus geographical. I'm not sure if that's what the member opposite is looking for.

**Mr. Tredger:** Let's leave the geographical out. How many electrical inspectors are there? How many plumbing inspectors are there? How many boiler inspectors are there in the Yukon?

**Hon. Ms. Taylor:** Just getting back to the budget, because that's what we are here today to talk about — housed within the 2012-13 O&M budget, we have approximately \$1.395 million, which consists of salaries and benefits for our manager of building safety in this regard. We have 10 positions in the electrical, mechanical, building, plumbing safety areas. We certainly have a number of positions. We have plumbing inspectors — five in particular. In addition, as I mentioned, City of Whitehorse also oversees that respective jurisdiction when it comes to inspections in their region. Again, it is a responsibility that the city took on a number of years back. I'm not sure when it was, but they do have jurisdiction over that. So, we do oversee the rest of the territory.

Again, when it comes to inspections, as I mentioned before, our inspectors do a great job. They work hard and they administer responsibilities for many different functions. They are responsible for all the territory but, of course, that does not include the City of Whitehorse. I was just looking at the statistics for last fiscal year. There were some 5,200-plus inspections for building, plumbing, development, electrical, gas, boiler and pressure vessels. A number of permits were issued — over 2,800 to be exact. Of course, many other information requests were completed as well. When it comes to inspections, we have had a lot of discussion with respect to oil burning appliances, of course, and whether that is residential or whether that is on the commercial end of it. Rest assured, I do very much appreciate the work that each of our staff does within our unit to enforce all the standards that we have in place, in collaboration with reviewing development permits and maintaining building information repository.

We issue, as you can imagine, permits and licences. We perform inspections according to the *Building Standards Act* and *Electrical Protection Act*. There are a number of different statutes.

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

**Chair:** It has been moved by Ms. Taylor that we report progress on Bill No. 6, *First Appropriation Act, 2012-13*.

*Motion agreed to*

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

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

*Motion agreed to*

*Speaker resumes the Chair*

**Speaker:** I will now call the House to order.

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

#### **Chair's report**

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

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

**Some Hon. Members:** Agreed.

**Speaker:** I declare the report carried.

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

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

*Motion agreed to*

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

*The House adjourned at 5:26 p.m.*