

Yukon Legislative Assembly
Whitehorse, Yukon
Thursday, November 15, 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 International Day for Tolerance

Ms. White: I rise on behalf of the Assembly to pay tribute to November 16 as the International Day for Tolerance.

In 1993, the Assembly of the United Nations proclaimed that 1995 would be the United Nations Year for Tolerance. In November 1996, the United Nations educational, scientific, and cultural organizations met together in Paris to discuss the issues of the day. It was a lofty agenda.

With ongoing world crises, the assembled members made the decision to take the spirit of tolerance one step further and invited member states to observe the International Day for Tolerance on November 16 each year.

One of the purposes of the United Nations, as set forth in the Charter, is for the achievement of "...international co-operation in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural, or humanitarian character..."

In support of that ideal, the UN is tasked with "...promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion."

The UNESCO Assembly in 1996 reconfirmed that tolerance is the sound foundation of any civil society and a cornerstone in its desire for peace. Their goal was to encourage respect, dialogue and cooperation among different cultures, civilizations and peoples. The *Declaration of Principles on Tolerance* states that: "Tolerance is the responsibility that upholds human rights...democracy and the rule of law. It...affirms the standards set out in international human rights instruments."

Tolerance fosters "...knowledge, openness, communication and freedom of thought, conscience and belief."

"Tolerance is respect, acceptance and appreciation of the rich diversity of our world's cultures, our...'different'...forms of expression and ways of being human."

"Tolerance is harmony in difference."

Tolerance "...is not only a moral duty, it is also a political and legal requirement. Tolerance, the virtue that makes peace possible..."

"Tolerance is, above all, an active attitude prompted by a recognition of the universal human rights and fundamental freedoms of others.

"Tolerance is not concession, condescension or indulgence tolerance fosters knowledge, openness, communication, and freedom of thought, conscience, and belief."

"Tolerance contributes to the replacement of the culture of war by a culture of peace."

"In no circumstance can the use of the word tolerance be for justifying infringements on fundamental values.

"... the practice of tolerance does not mean toleration of social injustice or the abandonment or weakening of one's convictions. It means that one is free to adhere to one's own convictions and accepts that others adhere to theirs. Tolerance means accepting the fact that human beings — naturally diverse in their appearance, situation, speech, behaviour, and values — have the right to live in peace and be as they are. It also means that one's views are not to be imposed on others."

In our modern world, tolerance is more essential than ever before in this age, marked by the globalization of the economy and by the world's rapidly increasing mobility, and in this age of large-scale migrations and displacement of populations, urbanization, and changing social patterns. Since every part of the world is characterized by diversity, escalating intolerance and strife potentially menace every region and every person. It is not confined to any one country, but it is a global threat. In commemorating the International Day for Tolerance, simply said, "Let us recognize our differences and celebrate them."

Speaker: Introduction of visitors.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Mr. Dixon: I would like to ask members to join me in welcoming a now-former constituent, also a leading contender for rookie of the year for the Whitehorse Recreational Hockey League, Mr. Jonathon Rudolph.

Applause

Speaker: Are there any further introductions of visitors?

Are there any returns or documents for tabling?

TABLING RETURNS AND DOCUMENTS

Ms. Hanson: I have for tabling the January 1997 memorandum of agreement among the Government of Yukon, the Council of Yukon First Nations, Yukon First Nations, the Kaska Dena Council and the Kaska Tribal Council.

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

Are there any reports of committees?

Are there any petitions?

PETITIONS

Petition No. 5 — response

Hon. Mr. Cathers: I rise today to respond to Petition No. 5, which was presented to this House on October 31, 2012. Petition No. 5 asks the government to take the necessary measures to ensure that backup diesel generation capabilities established near Tagish with sufficient capacity to supply the Car-

cross-Tagish area. The area in question is serviced by the Yukon Electrical Company. In its 2008-09 general rate application, Yukon Electrical Company Limited proposed the installation of a 1.5-megawatt backup diesel generator for the Carcross-Tagish area at a cost to ratepayers of \$2 million. This proposal was considered by the Yukon Utilities Board, which heard evidence from experts and the Yukon public on the proposed plan.

The Yukon Utilities Board is an independent, quasi-judicial board that is responsible for approving capital operation and maintenance costs for all regulated utilities. The board is also responsible for ensuring that all utility costs insured by utilities and passed on to customers are in the best interests of Yukon ratepayers. Based on the evidence presented, the Yukon Utilities Board was not convinced that the Carcross generator was the best option at the time to mitigate outages in the Carcross-Tagish area; therefore, the board did not approve the proposed Carcross diesel unit in the Yukon Electrical Company Limited rate base.

Accordingly, the board directed Yukon Electrical Company Limited at the time of its next general rate application to study the initiatives that similar utilities north of 60 are undertaking to address reliability concerns and to investigate alternative options to the proposed diesel generator, as well as to present its business case respecting the generator, if at that time Yukon Electrical Company Limited still considered installation of such a generator as the preferred option to mitigate reliability concerns in the area. A general rate application from Yukon Electrical Company Limited is expected in the not-too-distant future. Yukon Electrical Company Limited has implemented a number of other options, which have improved both safety and reliability, including brushing, right-of-way widening, linerouting and whole replacements.

Both the Yukon Electrical Company Ltd. and the Yukon Utilities Board are committed to finding the best solution to ensure reliable, cost-effective power to the community of Carcross-Tagish, and my colleagues and I in this government respect the role of the Yukon Utilities Board and its decision to ensure the most cost-effective means of supplying reliable power to all Yukon communities. All costs must be paid by someone and new assets included in the rate base come at a cost to those ratepayers. We are confident that the Yukon Electrical Company Ltd. and the Yukon Utilities Board will ensure that the community of Carcross-Tagish continues to receive safe and reliable electrical service while protecting Yukon ratepayers from unnecessary expenses.

Speaker: My apologies. I should have introduced you as the minister responsible for the Yukon Development Corporation and the Yukon Energy Corporation. My mind got ahead of me.

Are there any petitions to be presented?

Are there any bills to be introduced?

Are there any notices of motion?

NOTICES OF MOTION

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

THAT it is the opinion of this House that a Yukon living wage would:

- (1) eliminate the need for a minimum wage;
- (2) reduce social assistance costs;
- (3) reduce the need for food banks; and
- (4) lift individuals and families above the poverty line.

Speaker: Is there a statement by a minister?

This brings us to Question Period.

QUESTION PERIOD

Question re: *Oil and Gas Act* amendments

Ms. Hanson: Two weeks ago we suggested the government could avoid confrontation and conflict by not tabling amendments to the *Oil and Gas Act* and by consulting with all Yukoners. The government refused. This morning we heard Grand Chief Massie on the CBC clearly explaining the consequences should the Yukon Party unilaterally break the 1997 memorandum of agreement with the Kaska and the Council of Yukon First Nations. This agreement and the consent provision of the *Oil and Gas Act* respected the rights of non-settled Yukon First Nations in exchange for Yukon getting responsibility for oil and gas development from Ottawa. Yukoners have benefited from this.

Will the Premier take this opportunity to stand up and withdraw the amendments to the *Oil and Gas Act* and return to consultation and dialogue rather than this path of confrontation?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: We believe Yukon resources belong to all Yukon residents. For over 10 years we have worked to come to an agreement with the Kaska, with the Liard and Ross River First Nations, with regard to opportunities and economic development in the Liard Basin.

It has been 10 years and in excess of \$1 million to \$2 million during that time. We believe that we should treat all First Nations equally and we will continue to ensure that we consult and accommodate, as defined in our agreements and in the *Umbrella Final Agreement*. Certainly, this government has continued to exceed those requirements.

Ms. Hanson: It's not all about money. Breaking agreements leads to confrontation and suspicion. This does damage relationships with First Nation governments. This, in turn, undermines investment, which in turn hurts jobs and businesses — in fact, all Yukoners. Unilaterally breaking contracts, bulldozing ahead with legislation, and using a limited and flawed consultation process as cover are reckless actions of a government that does not seem to understand the seriousness of the fight they are picking. Will the Premier show real leadership and direct his Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources to withdraw Bill No. 49, *Act to Amend the Oil and Gas Act, 2012*?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: Mr. Speaker, as I said yesterday, we certainly won't be taking advice from the NDP when it comes to the economy, because the record is very clear in terms of their guidance and what they've done historically when they've been the government in power.

This government continues to work with First Nations collaboratively throughout every department that we have. Recent

developments: the Minister of Education signing a tripartite agreement, the MOU, with Yukon First Nations and the Government of Canada in regard to an action plan for First Nation education; the sharing of resource revenues with First Nations that we've come to an agreement on and look forward to a formal signing agreement; the agreement with the Minister of Health and Social Services and the Kwanlin Dun First Nation in terms of child services.

We have intergovernmental forums — the Yukon Forum that I mentioned — an MOU with Kwanlin Dun in terms of looking at affordable land for development with the First Nation — the list goes on and on. This government contributes millions of dollars every year to First Nations, over and above their obligations in support of First Nations and their capacity building and in support of their communities.

Ms. Hanson: The Premier can try to deflect as much as he wants, but the path the government has taken of breaking agreements, failing to consult, and creating confrontation ignores the voices of Yukoners, aboriginal and non-aboriginal alike. It is a provocation to First Nation governments, it is legally risky at best, and it is a waste of taxpayers' money.

Again, will the Premier do the right thing and choose dialogue over confrontation and withdraw the amendments to the *Oil and Gas Act*?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: What the Leader of the NDP consistently fails to reflect in her statements to this House is the fact that the government spent over 10 years working with the Kaska on this area, working with Liard First Nation, and providing them with millions of dollars to resource their participation in those conversations. The Liard First Nation was eager to see oil and gas development in that area, including on all of its interim protected land east of Toobally Lakes prior to the point in this year when, in attempting to receive more money beyond the government's obligation on other files, they informed government that they were withdrawing from any discussions aimed at oil and gas in that area and would be exercising their veto.

Again, I must emphasize and remind the member — the Liard First Nation was eager and approached this government early in its mandate to try and open up oil and gas development opportunities in southeast Yukon with them as a developer on land east of Toobally Lakes and to have the ability to bid on other government parcels. So the member's facts are not correct. We believe Yukon resources belong to all Yukon citizens and that it is only fair to all Yukoners to standardize the consultation requirements with all First Nations and not give the three First Nations who have not concluded land claims a veto, which the NDP gave them.

Question re: Shaw satellite dishes on YHC housing

Mr. Barr: Now that the CBC's over-the-air TV broadcast has been cancelled, some Yukoners are assessing Shaw cable company's local television satellite solution. This is a CRTC-mandated service that allows eligible residents to be set up for continued free access to CBC TV and other basic and local programming. People have told me that Yukon Housing Corporation denied some residents permission for installation of the satellite dish needed for the Shaw service, even though

other tenants supposedly already have dishes installed on the property.

Two months ago I wrote the minister responsible for Yukon Housing Corporation and asked them to find a solution. One month ago, the minister replied that he had asked the corporation to review this matter. Does the minister responsible for Yukon Housing Corporation now have an answer for his tenants?

Hon. Mr. Kent: I do recall the letter sent by the member opposite and the response I sent back to him. As of right now, I haven't heard back from the Housing Corporation on this issue.

Mr. Barr: Many Yukoners care about continued access to CBC TV. Cuts in services have the greatest impact on low- and fixed-income people in our communities. The gap between rich and poor is growing during this time of economic insecurity. That is why on July 1, I wrote an open letter to Yukoners about the Shaw offer to supply free programming to eligible Yukoners who apply before November 30, 2012. The Shaw offer is time-limited; in order to take advantage of it, tenants need to know immediately if Shaw can install the satellite dish needed to service their home. Given there are only two weeks remaining to take advantage of the Shaw offer, will the minister immediately instruct Yukon Housing Corporation to allow the installation of a Shaw satellite dish for Yukoners whose application is accepted by Shaw?

Hon. Mr. Kent: Again, as I mentioned, I did receive the letter from the member opposite, did respond and I'm happy to work with him. I'm sure that the Yukon Housing Corporation board members will hear Question Period today and I can get an answer as soon as possible. I'm happy to work with the member opposite on this issue that's not only a concern for Yukon Housing Corporation clients, but I'm sure a number of Yukoners.

Question re: Mine training

Mr. Silver: All this week I've been raising questions about how this government is responding to concerns the mining industry raised in its 2011 annual report. The industry has a number of worries including this government's cumbersome regulatory process and its inability to keep pace with the infrastructure needs of mining companies that want to do business in the Yukon. Industry is also concerned with finding a skilled Yukon workforce and so is the Premier, who told *The Wall Street Journal* this summer that temporary workers are mostly flying in from elsewhere in Canada, and I quote: "They come to Yukon and they work here and then they take their money and their taxes elsewhere."

What is the government doing to address this shortage of skilled workers, a problem even the Premier admits we need to work on?

Hon. Mr. Kent: With respect to addressing the skilled labour shortage, in the spring we passed a motion that the Member for Klondike put forward on one of our private members' days and it was unanimously accepted. One thing that has happened in the meantime is a report from Yukon College on the centre for northern innovation in mining. There was a study funded by the Department of Economic Development and

CanNor. It is anticipated that this centre will integrate and house all mining and exploration-related training programs within the territory. I'm pleased to say that our government has endorsed this as the model moving forward. We look forward to using it as a vehicle to train Yukoners, supplemented by the immigration aspects and other aspects to deal with the skilled labour shortage, particularly in the mining industry.

Mr. Silver: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the minister's commitments here. The industry has made a number of suggestions in the 2011 report, with a view to see Yukon residents and communities benefit. This summer the Premier once again admitted to *The Wall Street Journal* that a great deal of wage benefits from our mining industry are being enjoyed elsewhere in Canada. Once again, the quote: "They come to the Yukon and they work here and then they take their money and their taxes elsewhere."

Yukoners are not getting these high-paid jobs because they are not being properly trained. As the minister alluded to, Yukon College is currently spearheading the creation of a centre of northern innovation in mining. One of its goals is to increase the 53-percent rate of local employment in our mines by training Yukoners for skilled industry employment opportunities. What is the government doing to make this project become a reality in terms of real funding opportunities?

Hon. Mr. Kent: As I mentioned in my previous answer, the government has endorsed the centre for northern innovation in mining concept. The Department of Education has partnered with Yukon College to fund the executive director position, and we're now seeking funding sources to make that project a reality.

The problem that the member opposite speaks to is something that is not unique to the Yukon. For instance, Alberta has 59,000 unfilled trades jobs. Even in the member's home in Nova Scotia a number of people from that area of the country travel to Alberta to work and then travel home. What we're looking at through a number of initiatives is partnering with the Minister of Economic Development on the retention aspects, and we're trying to convince those Canadians who are travelling in from other jurisdictions to work in our mining industry to move to the Yukon. Many of us have settled in the Yukon over the past number of years for a number of reasons, and we want to promote the lifestyle and the opportunities for those workers and their families to relocate to the Yukon and make this territory their home.

Mr. Silver: Just to correct the minister responsible: my home is Dawson City. I want to see Yukoners benefit from the jobs that come with the mining industry. We don't want a continuation of the fly-in/fly-out situation that we find ourselves in now and have half of the workforce come from Outside. As a teacher, I know what the stock is here locally. I know that we have the ability. The only thing missing right now is a commitment from this government to funding.

YMAB firmly recommends a coordinated, collaborative approach by adapting the Yukon government regarding the mining training and the technology development in the Yukon.

They don't believe the government is currently doing enough in that capacity. Another question being asked: Where will all this training take place? We need an actual building; we need a commitment to an actual facility — an actual building. Is there something the government is looking at currently so that we could actually see funding in place for such a facility?

Hon. Mr. Kent: My apologies to the Member for Klondike. I know Dawson is his home, but I know his roots are firmly planted in Atlantic Canada.

As I mentioned, the centre for northern innovation in mining is something that the government endorses. There are some operation and maintenance aspects to the development of this centre. I should say that one of the exciting things about the centre, and one of the things that grabbed us as a government, was industry's involvement. This centre is designed to train Yukoners for real opportunities in the mining industry — opportunities that are identified by industry.

We have a commitment to move forward with this centre and the different aspects of training that they're willing to provide Yukoners. We have a commitment to look to entice those Canadians who are travelling here from other jurisdictions in Canada to relocate to the Yukon, bring their families here and set up their homes here. We also have a commitment to work on immigration aspects, partnering with the Minister of Economic Development and partnering with the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. This is something that's important to YMAB and it's also important to us as a government. We have made significant progress since that YMAB report was tabled last spring.

Question re: Residential Landlord and Tenant Act amendments

Mr. Barr: Last week the minister said the new *Residential Landlord and Tenant Act* was based on the work of the select committee, and I quote: "based on the significant input more than 200 Yukoners provided", but the government kept these public comments hidden, unlike in other consultations where public comments are posted so Yukoners have the opportunity to decide for themselves if government actions reflect public opinion. The Yukon public has some serious trust issues with this government, and it is incumbent upon the minister to show proof that the new act reflects public input.

Will the government promptly release the 200 public comments so that Yukoners can decide for themselves how well the *Residential Landlord and Tenant Act* reflects their views?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: I'd like to thank the member opposite for his question. You know, we on this side of the Legislature are very proud of the work that was conducted by the select committee that was comprised of members of the NDP caucus, comprised of the members of the Liberal caucus, and certainly included members of the Yukon Party caucus as well. The legislation that is before the Legislature currently really reflects the balance, the interests and the rights of both the landlords and tenants, and it reflects the feedback we heard during the select committee recommendations that were tabled and also the input that was received earlier this summer.

So we look forward to debating the bill on the floor of the Legislature, and we certainly look forward to getting into each and every provision that, according to the NDP, is 110 percent better than what it was.

Mr. Barr: This is shameful. The minister is refusing Yukoners access to information and impeding their ability to make up their minds. When the minister stands up and says their bill reflects public opinion, she had better make the case. A good case would be based on evidence, not simply saying, “Trust us. We’re the government.” By not releasing the comments, the minister is not being transparent. A reasonable person might speculate these are opinions in the 200 comments that aren’t reflected in the bill. Perhaps those opinions called for an end to no-cause evictions and provisions to prevent price gouging. Why is the minister treating the public’s own comments as government secrets?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Well, we look forward to debating the bill in its entirety in the days to come in the Legislative Assembly and it really is as a result of the good hard work of the public servants belonging to the Department of Community Services — work based on the select committee recommendations, to which every party contributed. They also reflect public comments that were tabled earlier this summer through a survey.

There is nothing to hide here. In fact, the bill as we’ve tabled it includes a new dispute resolution and enforcement provision — the first of its kind in the territory. It refers to minimum rental standards, written tenancy agreements, condition inspect reports, security deposit — bringing clarity to that. It speaks to rent increases, future rent, tenant privacy, overholding, subletting, transfer tenancy agreements, ending a tenancy — again, notice of a cause; with and without cause.

The government is not hiding anything. In fact, the government looks forward to a rigorous, full and wholesome debate in the days to come on this very bill.

Question re: *Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act* amendments

Ms. Stick: The Minister of Highways and Public Works likes to brush off his attack on our democracy by calling the access to information changes narrow and specific. The minister can repeat this claim all he wants. The fact of the matter is the changes are significant and apply to vast amounts of information currently available to the public — information that members of the public, the media, and legislatures have used to expose scandals and hold governments to account.

Remember the Yukon Party’s failed bid to sell the Yukon Energy Corporation? It was exposed through access to information. Partisan meddling in the Peel planning process — exposed through access to information.

Does the minister simply believe government should be above scrutiny or is there something to hide?

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: I thank the member opposite for the question. Our decisions are still public. We continue to make ourselves available to Yukoners to discuss our decisions. We have a dedicated period for Question Period in the Legislature every day. We also debate in Committee of the Whole. My fellow colleague just spoke to that. We have been and will re-

main fully accountable to Yukoners for our decisions. What we are doing is making some minor changes so that our officials can provide us clear and candid advice as we deliberate on these decisions.

Ms. Stick: It’s called “Question Period”; it would be nice if it was “question and answer period”.

Yukoners can feel the wool being pulled over their eyes. I’ll continue where I left off. Details of the failed Lot 262 scheme were exposed through access to information; government scientists’ concerns about fracking were exposed through access to information; problems with emergency medical services — you guessed it: exposed through access to information. I could go on but the point is that all kinds of information the public has a right to see will soon be off limits.

Will the minister stop this attack on access to information and withdraw his anti-democratic changes to the *Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act*?

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: As I said before, as its name implies, it’s about both access to information and, equally important, it’s the protection of privacy. As Cabinet ministers, we have the ability to have full and frank conversations. We have to have our officials be able to provide us with clear and candid advice. These amendments will allow officials to provide us with clear and candid advice. We continue to make ourselves available to Yukoners to discuss these decisions. I spoke to this earlier.

Question re: *Electrical rate stabilization fund*

Mr. Silver: In the budget update we are currently debating this fall, there is \$250,000 to bump up the interim electrical rebate.

This rebate saves Yukoners over \$25 a month on their electricity bills; in some cases, it means a 20-percent reduction in someone’s bill. It is due to expire at the end of March 2013, four months from now. This rebate has been in place since 1998 under different governments and different names and has protected consumers for years. All this week, the Yukon Utilities Board held a hearing to consider the separate 13-percent increases to power rates. If this increase is approved and the government rebate expires this spring, most resident consumers will be faced with a 30-percent increase. The decision about whether to extend the rate lies with the Yukon government.

March 31 is fast approaching. Will Yukoners be facing a 30-percent increase to their rates?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: First of all, the member actually has his math wrong on that. Secondly, I would like to remind the Member for Klondike that he has mischaracterized the nature of the rate stabilization fund, which then became the interim electrical rebate. That was put in place to shield ratepayers from the blow caused by the NDP’s failure that resulted in a significant cost to ratepayers when the ratepayers were left holding the bag for assets where the utility became over-extended as the result of the Faro mine shutting down. I would remind the member that this is an NDP legacy of failure that he sees every month on his electrical bill and we will certainly be evaluating the status of that, but there is a reason it was referred to as an “interim” electrical rebate because it is an ongoing

subsidy that ensures that the true cost of power is not reflected on people's bills.

Mr. Silver: I don't see anywhere where I got my math wrong, and I see this as a great opportunity for the Yukon Party to pick up where the NDP left off. Yukoners are now facing a 13-percent jump in their power bills as a result of this week's hearing. An even bigger increase would be on the horizon if the Government of Yukon did not continue with the interim electrical rebate — call it what you want. We know the Yukon Party government is on record saying that it didn't support the rebate and was thinking about doing away with it. The rebate currently saves the average consumer about 20 percent on their electrical bill.

Earlier this summer, a government spokesperson said that there had been no discussion at all about extending the rebate rate. What's the big secret? Will the rebate be continued — yes or no?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Again I have to point out that the Member for Klondike has his facts wrong, and I'll start by listing off a few of those areas. First of all, contrary to what the member has stated, the Yukon Utilities Board has not yet announced a decision on whether to approve a 13-percent rate increase. They approved an interim increase of half that amount. They are currently reviewing that and, contrary to what the member is saying as he's heckling, they did that on an interim basis — 6.5 percent.

Secondly, this government has no intention of taking up on anything where the NDP left off, because we want to see a territory that has an economy that provides for Yukon families and is diversified, not an economy such as the NDP have demonstrated they run, where they slam the brakes on the car and head for the ditch.

In this case we will look at this, but one of the reasons we have not made an announcement on the interim electrical rebate is to not have government decisions in that area influence or affect the Yukon Utilities Board review of the general rate application by Yukon Energy Corporation. We look forward to the Yukon Utilities Board completing that work, and I would again remind the member that was a subsidy put in place to cushion ratepayers from the blow left to them by the NDP legacy of failure.

Mr. Silver: With all campaigning aside, it is very likely that Yukoners will be facing a 13-percent increase for electricity in the new year. I guess time will just tell. The Yukon government can help soften the impact of the decision or it could add to people's bills, depending on what it does with its own rebate. The government certainly has the money in the bank to extend this rebate beyond March 31 if it chooses. It can become part of the problem or it can become part of the solution.

When will a decision be made on whether or not to extend the government's interim electrical rebate?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Again, it is entertaining listening to the Liberal Party provide their version of what they see the facts as being. I'd remind the member of the Liberal legacy: the Mayo-Dawson transmission line, which was budgeted to be \$17 million and turned out to be closer to \$44 million when all

costs were in. This government is focusing on — as I pointed out to the member earlier — is we have worked with Yukon Development Corporation and Yukon Energy Corporation boards to create a more structured relationship with them. We have indicated to them that our primary concerns are ensuring we invest in the assets to ensure that they remain in good operational shape and improve reliability.

We're focused on minimizing the financial risk to taxpayers and ratepayers from any and all decisions while also ensuring that we take appropriate steps to accommodate growth and demand for power and take advantage of opportunities for net benefit to the Yukon public as a result of that. We are very focused on taking a prudent approach on getting the input from board members and their advice and recommendations on how we can best move forward to put downward pressure on rates rather than seeing the upward pressure we're currently seeing.

We're very concerned about the cost of power. But the member's approach to artificial subsidies — I'd remind the member that that has other effects, including a continuing escalating bill where, rather than being paid out of the ratepayer pockets, the taxpayers pick up the bill.

Speaker: The time for Question Period has now elapsed.

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Ms. McLeod: I'd like to invite the members of this Assembly to join me in welcoming a former Watson Lake MLA on a revisit, and also a former Speaker of this House, Mr. John Devries.

Applause

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

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

Motion agreed to

Speaker leaves the Chair

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Chair (Ms. McLeod): Order please. Committee of the Whole will now come to order. The matter before the Committee is Vote 51, Department of Community Services, in Bill No. 7, *Second Appropriation Act, 2012-13*. Do members wish to take a brief recess?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

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

Recess

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

Bill No. 7: Second Appropriation Act, 2012-13 — continued

Chair: The matter before the Committee is Bill No. 7, *Second Appropriation Act, 2012-13*, Vote 51, Department of Community Services.

Department of Community Services

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Madam Chair, I would first like to extend a welcome to our respective officials from the Department of Community Services and thank them for all their continued support to our office over this past year. Indeed it is a very busy shop, as I've come to learn over the past several months.

I would like to thank the House for the opportunity to provide some opening remarks on our department's supplementary budget for 2012-13. The supplementary estimates before us consist of a \$2.864 million increase in operation and maintenance expenditures and an increase of \$360,000 in capital expenditures. The department's overall revenue and recovery target has also increased in the supplementary budget by just over \$3.4 million.

The department's combined operation and maintenance and capital budgets for 2012-13 including the supplementary estimate is \$190,466,000.

This represents a significant investment in programs and services that directly benefit every citizen across the territory. We certainly do that by developing and improving upon community infrastructure, which I will be pleased to elaborate on at greater length further on in the debate today. It also enables the department to assist and respond to emergency events, such as those we have seen transpire earlier this year in terms of flooding and forest fires. Also, this work goes a long way in fostering strong local governance, promoting and developing sport and recreation across Yukon, as members debated on the floor of the Legislature earlier this sitting. It also enables a broad range of licensing, business and regulatory services for the health, safety and protection of the public.

The Department of Community Services continues to work to achieve the goals set out in our strategic plan, and this enables our government to deliver on our commitments to moving forward together, to achieve a better quality of life for all Yukoners while promoting a healthy environment, growing the economy and practising good governance.

As a department, we remain committed to vibrant, healthy and sustainable communities throughout the territory and this supplementary budget very much contributes to this vision.

The department values collaboration, respect, integrity and service excellence, and I am proud to represent the Department of Community Services as we strive to bring long-term benefits to the territory.

In this spring legislative sitting, I spoke to our intention to address some of the challenges related to housing — specifically, to work toward introducing a new *Residential Landlord and Tenant Act* and increase the inventory of available residential lots. I am pleased to report that we have made significant strides since achieving these goals.

On November 1, I was very honoured to table a new *Residential Landlord and Tenant Act* in the Yukon Legislature, and in September of this year we were also very pleased to release more than 100 residential lots on the market with the completion of phase 1 of the new Whistle Bend land subdivision.

The *Residential Landlord and Tenant Act*, as I have repeated on the floor of the Legislature, strikes a balance between the interests and the rights of both landlord and tenant when entering into a tenancy agreement. It's an important point, because the purpose of the legislation is to set out the obligations, the rights and responsibilities of both landlords and tenants.

The new legislation will address rules around security deposits, frequency of rent increases, and notice of termination of tenancies. It clarifies residential tenancy relationships, requires the use of written tenancy agreements, and creates a new dispute resolution process that will be overseen by a new office that we are calling the "residential tenancy office". To this end, I would like to highlight that in the supplementary budget, we have identified \$61,000 to move forward with our commitment toward implementing the recommendations of the Select Committee on the *Landlord and Tenant Act* to modernize the legislation.

The additional dollars housed within the supplementary budget is for the hiring of personnel who will begin the work to establish the new office. The office will administer the legislation, provide public information and support clients. It will hear and settle disputes outside of the courts and will have the ability to make binding decisions on the parties of a dispute.

Over the next several months, the department will be establishing the residential tenancies branch and will be overseeing the development of regulations that will fall under the new act.

I want to take the opportunity to thank the select committee and the many Yukoners whose contributions helped frame this modernized legislation. I want to also thank each of our department officials for contributing to this very good piece of legislation on the floor of the Legislature and for their hard work in researching best practices across the country and really striving to find that very important balance of the rights and responsibilities between landlords and tenants.

When it comes to land development, we have and will continue to work with municipal governments to make land available. I'm pleased to report that we have made significant progress in this regard. Since 2009, our territory has invested more than \$100 million in land development projects that have resulted in more than 550 new lots in subdivisions crossing Dawson City, Haines Junction, Carmacks, Destruction Bay, Grizzly Valley and Whitehorse. For the first time in years, I'm very proud to say that we have lots in the City of Whitehorse that are available for sale over the counter. That is a significant accomplishment.

Together with the City of Whitehorse we are working hard to catch up on the supply of land with that of existing and future demand.

Today we find ourselves in a position where lots are available for sale in new subdivisions in communities across the Yukon. In 2009, 135 lots in the Whitehorse Copper and Mount

Sima subdivisions were made available by the government. All of these lots are sold, houses are constructed, and the neighbourhoods are thriving.

In 2010, the Government of Yukon followed up by investing in the development of 133 lots in my neighbourhood of Ingram subdivision and also eight industrial lots along Burns Road in Whitehorse. Every lot, I can say, in the Ingram subdivision has been sold, and a good mix of housing is well-established. From single family homes to townhouses, duplexes and multi-family housing — you will find it all there. The neighbourhood helps to meet a range of housing needs in the City of Whitehorse and meets the city's overall objective of increasing density of housing within our municipalities.

With the subdivision have come economic benefits for our local contractors, for industry, and new homes for Yukoners.

In 2011, the department worked with the Village of Haines Junction and delivered 27 new country residential lots in the Willow Acres subdivision. Today, 10 of these country residential lots remain available for sale over the counter at the Lands branch. Also, in 2011, the Yukon government developed five new lots in the Glacier Acres subdivision in Destruction Bay.

Madam Chair, 30 lots in phase 1 of the new Grizzly Valley subdivision near Lake Laberge also went to lottery in December 2011. Twenty of these lots are also available for sale over the counter, with additional lots to come to market.

The new subdivision provides new country residential land opportunities for people looking to live in a modern subdivision with wide open spaces. The subdivision is close to the City of Whitehorse and the lots are suitable for a wide range of uses.

Providing an adequate range of land options is one of our government's highest priorities, and we believe it is an important factor in overcoming challenges related to affordable housing in the territory.

As I noted, since 2009, and in every year since then, we have seen a wide range of lots come to fruition and on to the market. In 2012, we continue to invest in land development projects. In this fiscal year alone, as I have also stated on the floor of the Legislature, we have allocated more than \$35 million for land development.

This year, we have released 20 new industrial lots in the Callison subdivision in Dawson City, 52 urban residential lots in Haines Junction and 113 lots in the Whistle Bend subdivision in Whitehorse. As I referred to earlier, these investments mean jobs for Yukoners, a growth in capacity in the local construction industry, and of course homes for each of our families.

In March 2012, 49 residential and three multi-family lots were put out for lottery in Haines Junction and lots are available over the counter at the Lands branch. As I mentioned earlier, we have 20 new industrial lots available in Dawson for purchase over the counter and in Carmacks progress has also been made on getting three residential and two industrial lots ready for lottery by next year.

In Whitehorse, 111 lots in phase 1 of the Whistle Bend subdivision went to lottery in September. This included 90 single family lots, seven multi-family lots and 16 duplex lots. As of November 1, 28 residential lots have been sold or are in the

process of sale. All 14 duplex lots are sold and one of the multi-family lots is also sold. Two duplex lots in the subdivision were also given by our department and the Yukon Housing Corporation to Habitat for Humanity for the construction of a single duplex that will be home to two deserving families.

For the first time in years, we now have an inventory of land for sale in Whitehorse and elsewhere in the territory. A portion of this year's land development budget is also going toward design and planning of future phases of Whistle Bend, which is expected to bring more than 1,600 lots to the market in Whitehorse in future years. This anticipates demand and helps to ensure that we keep pace through supply.

In addition, work is well underway with Yukon's municipal governments to plan and develop subdivisions and infill lots in anticipation of future demand so that we can also continue to grow our economy. Along with making more land available, we are also committed to keeping lot costs as low as possible.

In Whistle Bend, for example, lots are offered below market value, helping contractors and families save on costs when financing new home construction. These lots are offered, on average, at 6.5 percent below market value and strike a balance so as not to negatively affect existing property values within the city. The allocation of prices by lot is determined by factoring in the cost of development, which is inclusive of zoning, location, lot size, traffic flow, view, proximity to greenbelts, parks, topography, and other factors that are commonly used by an independent appraiser. It also includes the infrastructure required for a new subdivision, inclusive of water storage; supply and distribution; waste-water collection and disposal; asphalt roads; concrete curbs and sidewalks; traffic control; storm water drainage; electrical; telephone and cable supply and distribution; landscaping; paved trails; parks; planning; engineering assessments; regulatory compliance; project management; design; public consultation, et cetera.

More than 550 lots have come on-line in the last three years alone, and we plan to bring more than 1,600 new lots to the market in the years ahead. I should stress that is not only in Whitehorse, but throughout the territory.

Community Services is committed to developing and maintaining a supply of building lots, and we remain confident that our planned investment in this fiscal year will help to address the wider issues of supply and affordability of housing. One of the areas that we recognize has been an ongoing challenge is in developing reliable, long-range plans that help forecast the demand for lots by community and overall. To this end, the supplementary budget includes an increase of \$347,000 to continue work on a territory-wide land development assessment project and feasibility studies with the City of Whitehorse for various potential projects.

The study will inform Community Services' land development plan for Yukon communities. The work will look at a 20-year planning horizon to support reforms to the land development process and revisions to Yukon policies and processes related to land supply and land development. The work will also help to characterize the current and anticipated land development issues from the perspective of all the players. It will

map out a more comprehensive, inclusive, and robust land development model that will establish effective demand forecasting for all Yukon communities and will develop a transparent and reliable decision-making tool for determining land supply.

We believe that our ongoing efforts to develop land for residential, commercial and industrial purposes will help to meet the long-term needs of communities across the Yukon.

Community Services remains committed to also protecting public safety through Emergency Medical Services, Wildland Fire Management, Emergency Measures and Structural Fire Protection. The supplementary budget includes an additional \$1.674 million in operation and maintenance expenditures and \$1.478 million in capital for Yukon's Protective Services.

The revised budget reflects the commitment made earlier this spring to enhance Structural Fire Protection by investing additional dollars in Yukon's Fire Marshal's Office. Every day across the territory firefighters are out answering the call of duty, protecting life and property, and they do this because they all share a common passion and commitment on behalf of the people they serve in their communities.

Over the past year Yukon's fire marshal has had many discussions about how to tackle the challenges our fire departments face with respect to rising costs, occupational health and safety standards and similar pressures. One thing is clear and that is the men and women of the service are passionate about improving their fire departments and safeguarding their neighbours and communities. So, based upon what we have heard, Yukon government has made a major investment in fire services that will result in improvements to the fire service and will help to increase public safety and emergency response capabilities.

The Legislature, as members opposite are very familiar, has already supported amendments to the *Municipal Finance and Community Grants Act* that includes \$2 million in structural fire protection beginning the next fiscal year. As part of this funding, an additional \$400,000 annual supplement will be included for structural fire protection, representing dollars for every community in each of the next five years. As I mentioned earlier, the structural fire funding complements the \$1.9 million investment that was announced earlier this spring, in May, for the enhancement of fire training, oversight inspections, and fire equipment delivered across Yukon through the Fire Marshal's Office.

Through this supplementary budget, we have requested just over \$1.1 million in support of this commitment. I see that my time is running low; it's truly unfortunate because I have so much more to offer. But rest assured there will be other opportunities today and in days to come to talk about all of the fine work of the Department of Community Services and all the respective employees working throughout the government, through which they have contributed to healthy, sustainable communities in the territory.

I certainly look forward to comments and any questions that members opposite have in this regard. Thank you, Madam Chair, again, for the opportunity.

Mr. Barr: I would like to thank the minister opposite for her remarks and also thank the officials of the department

— it is a very large department — and for your ongoing work. It extends to the libraries and recreation infrastructure, to regulatory functions in consumer safety, employment standards — also the *Residential Landlord and Tenant Act*. It is a huge department. In this first year, I am also realizing the extent of it. Sometimes it's where we are at with some of this stuff — even as to where we go with some of the questions. I'll get to that as I speak a little.

I'd also like to say in my opening remarks that I have some comments and also questions, along with those, as I proceed through this at this point. Also, some of the questions are the people's questions. Some are for my clarity, but the other questions are from the people who have posed these questions to me to get some responses. So, being elected to do so, I am happy to do that.

I'll just move into some of the headings I have. The *Residential Landlord and Tenant Act*, as I spoke about earlier in Question Period — we look forward to getting to debate on the substance of the bill when it comes up for debate. I do have a couple of questions around that. In Question Period today, I asked why the government wouldn't release the public comments to be submitted as part of the public consultation on the new act. I was wondering when we would be debating the bill and also if the minister, in the interest of transparency, would release the 200 public comments before we debate it.

In the area of civic addresses — the lack of civic addresses, in rural Yukon particularly, and in unincorporated municipalities, is a public safety issue that can lead to confusion and impact response times in emergencies. I know I have sat at countless LAC meetings over this last year, where this keeps coming up, again and again.

When I was at Mount Lorne last week, it was stated that civic addressing is going forward. I know at the Marsh Lake LAC meeting last night, there was talk of civic addressing going forward. I know the Association of Yukon Communities has been calling for this and wanting this for years.

So I would like to know what the scope of the project is, what the plan is, and how it will be implemented — the total cost. As I understand it, there is a cost allotted for this already and it's not going to be in this supplementary budget. How much of this budget is devoted to civic addressing, and to which communities will it apply? I understand from the comments at the LACs that they're seeking some clarity as to which ones will receive the go-ahead. One of the comments was, "It's who wants to go."

I would look forward to the minister's response on that.

In regard to recreational funding, a major item in the supplementary budget shows that the Ross River community centre is on hold for another year, and as we know in all the communities it is important to have a place for people to gather. I remember experiencing that for the first part of the year in Carcross when the gas station was shut down, and luckily another couple of coffee shops opened so people could get together, but in Ross River they did have a fire. The opportunities for community health and for recreation are not there. Can the minister explain why this project is not on time and what is the revised completion date?

In regard to Carcross community infrastructure, after the minister had challenged the Carcross residents to build a consensus on what they want — held a meeting actually and attended another where the Carcross residents wanted to discuss their priorities — they did speak loud and clear. They wanted clear timelines from the Yukon government about how to meet the priorities, assistance from a Yukon planner, a community liaison committee and a commitment to future long-term community planning.

This was a unanimous effort, and I believe the minister has now in her possession a letter signed by the LAC and the Chief of the Carcross-Tagish First Nation. I might add at this meeting the artists, the homeowners group, the LAC, and the First Nation were all in attendance, as well as various community members reflecting long-term residents and reflecting newer residents of the community. What they said is that, out of the four priorities, they would first like to see the community house built that CTFN has been putting forward — all in agreement. Second was a community centre that possibly would also have a youth centre included in that; and senior housing units available in the community, along with emergency measures buildings. Our fire department is in the old garage in Carcross right now; the ambulance station is old.

I remember driving around Carcross with the Minister of Highways and Public Works. As we drove around, I pointed out our ambulance station. They're doing the new water treatment there. That area is in a little bit of disarray. When we left town, I asked, "Did you see the community club?" He said, "No. No, I never saw that." I said, well that's because — as we drove right past it — it's lacking — for want of a better word.

I know there are concerns there; that centre was built by volunteers, and for decades the community has been asking for a community club. Without saying too much — because the disrepair is concern of the community. They don't want it shut down because they want to still be able to use it. There are concerns about health issues that people have also raised with me. I'll just leave it at that.

I guess the question to the minister: Now that the community has come together to work together, will the minister now — with residents and me, as the MLA, the LAC and the Carcross-Tagish First Nation — address their long-standing concerns in this area? They were also very quick to acknowledge the work that has been done in Carcross. That is valued. However, the comment in regard to that is that if the community itself had the money that has been spent, would their priorities have been the same as the Yukon government's priorities? The answer was loud and clear that they would have had this infrastructure in place prior to what has been put in place. I look forward to speaking more and working with the minister and the officials on this later.

At this point, I'd like to take the opportunity for hearing some answers from the minister opposite.

Hon. Ms. Taylor: I thank the member opposite for his questions and I appreciate the work that he is doing as the MLA and performing his role as the opposition in posing questions on behalf of his constituents. I thank him for that.

First of all, I just want to get back to the *Residential Landlord and Tenant Act*. I just want to thank the officials. I can't understate this because it's really important to recognize the fine work the officials have provided on this bill. As members opposite will recall, there was a select committee struck a number of years ago comprised of all party representatives.

They went around the territory, held some public meetings and came up with a set of recommendations. Since that time, there was an election. In the 2011 election, our government made it a platform commitment to proceed with a new *Landlord and Tenant Act* based on select committee recommendations. We proceeded with making that the foundation. Subsequent to the recommendations that were made, an on-line survey came forward, which was made available to all Yukoners in person, on paper or through hard copy so all residents could add their comments.

As I mentioned, more than a couple hundred Yukoners provided their input, which demonstrates to me a pretty overwhelming support for new, modernized legislation to come forward.

We have done our utmost to find that balance, as I keep stressing, because it's really important to go back — that the original *Landlord and Tenant Act* was really created to protect and balance those legal rights and the interest of both the tenants and the landlord. The new legislation is also about maintaining that important balance. We have put forth a number of improvements housed within this bill. It's quite a dense bill, as one can appreciate, but it is indeed a good bill, and I certainly look forward to debating it on the floor of the Legislature.

We rely on the House Leader to come up with business of the day to be debated by department or by legislation. That's really determined on a day-to-day basis, but we will be getting to the bill in short order. With respect to making the comments available — and as per the comments of members opposite — those individuals who provided input, whatever that was — if it was an oversight or what — certainly nothing deliberate. We certainly will be making those available for all Yukoners to peruse as well. We will ensure that members opposite and all members of the public have that in their hands prior to debate on the bill as well.

So I just wanted to make that very clear. For that, I also want to thank everyone who did provide comments because, as you can appreciate, there are so many different interests and so many different, thoughtful, considerate responses. I very much want to thank all Yukoners who took the time to provide that input, and put it in writing, and took the time to let their views be known. I believe it is, as the members opposite have coined it — it's 110 percent better than what it was or what it is currently. There is more work to be done, of course, with the regulations to go forward from hereon out as well. There will be a significant amount of work associated with those regulations on minimum rental standards and so forth. All of this is really important because the supplementary budget also houses some of the dollars necessary for initiating that work through the start of this new office to go forward — this landlord-tenancy office — that will help craft the proposed regulations and take it out for public consultation — moving these forward — and also com-

ing up with public education materials and coming up with a whole dispute resolution mechanism, which is absolutely key and is one of the most significant improvements housed within the bill. So I just wanted to add that.

I could go on about the bill, but I do recognize there are items before the Assembly here today.

Civic addressing has been an ongoing issue of importance to many of our communities, especially in the peripheral Whitehorse area. I know that it has been an issue that continues to be raised and an issue that the Department of Community Services also continues to work on in collaboration. This is an issue that the department spoke to at the recent local advisory council forum held last week. I had the opportunity to present just a few introductory remarks and congratulate all the newly elected councillors, thanking them for their good work, and recognizing the challenges that they have.

Rural Yukon communities may not have all the amenities that we in other places such as Whitehorse and more established communities have. Those are some of the issues and challenges that we continue to work on.

When it comes to civic addressing, we have been doing a lot of research. This is really based on requests coming forward from many of the local advisory councils on what happens in other jurisdictions across the territory and how they have tackled this issue and the resources required to implement a civic addressing system.

I just wanted to make it known that we have been providing assistance each year — actually for over 10 years, as I understand — with house numbers and signage for communities. Of course, as the member opposite would probably know better than anyone, the address consists of the actual street address name, the street name, the municipality name, the postal code, and so forth. In municipalities, civic addresses play a very important role in assisting our emergency and first responders in responding to emergency events and finding those houses.

In unincorporated Yukon, however, those addresses do not formally exist. So that is one of the reasons why LACs have approached the Community Affairs branch within the department to request that the government work toward a civic address system in those communities. That is why we have proceeded with research. I believe a report or a paper was prepared. That was distributed to all the members of the LACs at that recent forum, if not sooner. In particular, it looks at P.E.I., Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. One can appreciate, now that we have that in hand, as the member opposite has just referred to — it is complex; it crosses a whole number of government departments and it's something that not everyone aspires to and we appreciate that as well.

With that said, we will continue to work with the LACs, to talk with them and put into action that basic address signage and those numbering issues based on some of the information that was brought to light through the report. It's about working with those communities that want to take the lead and perhaps even undertaking a pilot project, as I understand, as a first basis.

One thing I did want to say, though, about this particular issue is that, when it comes to emergencies — and I'll say it

again — the Government of Yukon very much recognizes enhancing the ability to respond to emergency events. That's why this plays a part in how we deliver emergency responses, whether it's through Emergency Medical Services, or Wildland Fire Management, or whether it's through our own fire departments. Again, housed within the supplementary budget are specific increases to those areas — specifically, the fire departments. For the Mount Lorne fire department, there are monies for improvements or upgrades to their fire department. In addition to that, through the Fire Marshal's Office, there is a \$1.9-million increase to that office alone

That is really key because that support will result in doubling the number of deputy fire marshals from two to four, which will give us the ability to increase that training and provide that new equipment that will address what I would call the most critical fire-service safety issues at each of our fire halls, specifically the ones that we oversee in addition to the ones that municipalities oversee. That added HR capacity provides us with a greater focus on training. It provides the necessary resources for territory-wide fire prevention and education. It also gives us the ability to enhance the inspection capacity and for keeping Yukoners safe.

In addition to that, I also wanted to note that the increased money through the Fire Marshal's Office also provides us with the added capacity for an additional fire truck and protective equipment. In previous years, up until currently, we have only been able to have the resources to actually have one new fire truck come on-line.

It doesn't sound like a lot, but after having taken a look in person at one of those fire trucks that was delivered to the Ixex Valley fire department, they're something else. Fire trucks have come a long way over the last number of years since the days I first got to see a fire truck when I was back in kindergarten. As one can appreciate, these things really respond to emergencies in the middle of the night, respond to cold weather conditions — again, for the flow of water to be able to be maintained, mechanically behind the wheel — it's incredible what these specific pieces of equipment can do.

With these added dollars, we're able to increase the number of fire trucks for our fleet from one to two per year, so that also benefits each of the community fire departments. It also means a more effective response with more modern equipment.

As I mentioned, the Mount Lorne fire hall expansion — again, just to continue work on that. It also contains dollars for when we talk about enhancing emergency response and preparedness.

There is also the ability through a mobile unit, which is pretty interesting — it's also going to be a pretty integral part of firefighter training — providing our firefighters with practical experience as firefighters; learning how to perform their jobs safely within a safe environment, but also coming up with the right and safe way to perform their job functions.

This contains dollars to do that and it's a mobile live fire safety unit. There is only one company of its kind in the country that is able to actually come up with these machines, but it will be fascinating to see it come off the assembly line next spring because it will be able to be transported from commu-

nity to community and provide those firefighters that really important hands-on experience in being able to deliver sustainable fire services across the territory. I just wanted to add that to the mix as well.

The member opposite referred to fire halls and the Carcross fire hall being one of them, for example. It comes down to infrastructure priorities and requirements.

This is something, not just within the Department of Community Services, but that we work as a whole throughout every one of the departments because there are requests for enhanced infrastructure and new infrastructure, responding to all priorities from every community. I think that we've been able to do a relatively good job over the years. We've been able to really make good use of those infrastructure funding programs that have been made available by the Government of Canada and through stimulus funds through Canada's economic action plan. We've been able to leverage additional funds through other use of communities and First Nation investments; I think that's really key to note.

Of course, it all comes down to prioritizing. I go back to the infrastructure plan that was developed back in 2009. It's something that we go back to the communities and we continue to tweak. In 2009 the main priorities were, at that time — and I believe still are, because there are still deficiencies within our communities on these ends — it comes down to drinking water upgrades, waste-water treatment, rural roads, green energy initiatives and also solid-waste improvements — all of those areas.

In 2009, there was roughly a billion dollars identified as priorities within our communities. We have worked pretty diligently with municipal governments, unincorporated communities and First Nation governments through a multitude of different funding mechanisms — gas tax, of course, that the federal government has committed to continuing with, the municipal rural infrastructure, Canadian strategic infrastructure fund, Building Canada — and I know that the community of Carcross has benefited from some of those funding mechanisms over the years. In fact, I was just taking a look and seeing some of the improvements, but in Carcross over the past number of years, there has been almost a \$12-million investment. That includes some street improvements, some water treatment system upgrades, and of course the waterfront improvements that came primarily out of the downtown Carcross plan that was initiated. The phenomenal transition, or the improvements made within the community, has been incredible. It's not only benefiting the community residents, but it is benefiting visitors as well — and we know how important the Southern Lakes, in particular the Carcross region, is to all Yukoners — the landscaping, the restroom, the waste facilities, the foot bridge, the carving facility administered by the Carcross-Tagish First Nation, shore cleanup, the boat launch and then, more recently, the gateway pavilion, the memorial to the *SS Tutshi* and the visitor base infrastructure — and these are just some of the examples of how the government has been making improvements. Rest assured, we also recognize that there is also a desire for the two facilities that the member opposite recently made reference to: the Carcross community house and the

community centre. As I have referenced in response to their letter dated — I believe it was back in October, if I'm not mistaken — many of those programs, when you look at MRIF and CSIF, and even Building Canada, have already either lapsed and are now complete or they are coming to completion next year.

So as I have stated on the floor of the Legislature, I have been working very closely with AYC, and our two northern counterparts, the Northwest Territories and Nunavut, and the ministers responsible for infrastructure. Our Premier has been working diligently with the Council of the Federation and his partners, specifically for the northern territories, in ensuring that there is continued funding, specifically for infrastructure — critical infrastructure — and ensuring primarily that it's not just population-driven, because that never works in a place like the Yukon or the north, for obvious reasons, but that it's base plus and it's long term. It has to be flexible. It has to be responsive to the priorities of the northern residents as well. We do have very unique challenges compared to the rest of the country, and that has to be taken into consideration. We have had pretty great success with the Government of Canada in being able to meet some of those priorities by communities. Many of those initiatives — sewer and water upgrades in the Town of Watson Lake, for example, is a multi-year upgrade that will require some time to implement, but we're getting at it.

This year we saw things in full force and surprises happen. Sometimes we come along antiquated old pipes that we didn't know were there, or perhaps the pipes had crossed at inconvenient times, and that creates challenges for our contractors and for the engineers. But that's what happens when you're dealing with aging infrastructure. That's really what we're talking about when it comes to the rest of the country as well, in terms of addressing that infrastructure deficit.

In terms of Carcross-Tagish First Nation, we've also been working with them over the years through gas tax funding and through Building Canada, through arsenic treatment, bus shelters, lighting, solid-waste improvements, and so forth. There are things going on and, believe me, there will continue to be improvements made to each of our communities.

I see my time is up and I haven't even gotten to half of the questions, so I'll carry on as soon as the member opposite is finished.

Mr. Barr: I would like to thank the minister opposite for committing to sharing the comments of the *Residential Landlord and Tenant Act* with regard to the people who did take the time and making that public before debate. I would hope that we could have a date and I realize that it is up to the House Leader for this to happen. In the efforts of working together, I would ask that we do know ahead of time when these areas are coming forward for debate.

I would just like to say while it's on my mind that the minister was speaking regarding the funding agreements that are possibly coming to an end that would allow for continued infrastructure — building in the country in general but specifically to the Yukon. When I was speaking yesterday in the House, referring to the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, there is a website and I did urge this government and I would

urge the minister opposite again to speak to their federal counterparts in Ottawa to have this funding continued.

The challenge issued to the minister opposite and to the community of Carcross is to come together unified, as the minister has — I would say in her hands; I don't see it there, but I'm sure it's in her office — their priorities set and the infrastructure along with their timelines, that we could get a commitment from the minister to move forward with the priorities of infrastructure as was stated earlier so the community can have a place to congregate.

I know that the minister said that, yes, the tourists are there and that is important, but the people who live there have to be there to welcome those folks and the community is the people. When a spirit is alive and there's a genuine walking-around-happy-feeling going on, tourists appreciate that. Any of our rural communities have to have this place to come together, and our community centre, our community house, along with our museum that is proposed will enhance not only what is in place for the tourists now, but continue to grow that in a huge way.

I say in all fairness that when I heard the minister commit to having the comments of these 200 folks for the *Residential Landlord and Tenant Act* be public, a calmness came inside of me and I said, this is great. It would be the same feeling I think in any community when you are walking around and feeling good — that emanates to visitors.

For clarification, the minister just spoke of lighting, and I know in the House the other day I brought forward a question regarding street lights.

While I was speaking with the Minister of Highways and Public Works I did ask his deputy minister in that meeting who is responsible for lighting on the highways and who is responsible for lighting in the rural communities. The response from him was that on the highways it is Highways and Public Works, and after that Question Period we discussed this. He showed me some information on highway lights in the Stewart Crossing area. We are looking forward to resolving some of the highway light issues at Doehle Drive in Judas Creek and at the South Klondike Highway as you are heading to Skagway out of Carcross, just on the other side of the bridge. These were pointed out in a letter yesterday to the Minister of Highways and Public Works.

Actually when I went to go to the LAC yesterday at Marsh Lake, I drove right by the turnoff to Doehle Drive because it was unlit. I don't know for how many people this time of the year that it's this dark and the signage is very poor. You can't see anything and these are important intersections that people need to be able to see.

Also in the clarification — I'll just ask this specifically and quickly — is the Minister of Community Services responsible for the lighting in the rural communities? In Carcross alone, as I mentioned in that question, there were 21 lights out. So we have received calls since then in our office, and people are wondering where to go to get clarification. It's about safety. This isn't about one-upmanship or anything. It's about little kids walking around their communities — seniors, elders — being able to stand at their bus stops and near highways —

walking around. This is what it's about. It's about people being able to be safe, and they would like to know that. This is a question from community people. I'll maybe just get a clear answer on that.

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Moving back to infrastructure — I just wanted to say a few additional remarks about infrastructure, because I know that was made quite clear by the member opposite as well. There were questions about recreation centres and community improvements throughout the territory, and I just want to be clear that recreation was not one of those planks that were identified back in the day when Building Canada first came out.

I do know that through the Association of Yukon Communities they have made known how important recreation is; we also recognize the important of recreation, obviously, and we have in fact made improvements over the years. Mayo — Klwane First Nation: there's a great example of what can be done by pooling resources and working on the elders/youth facility. It has been a great example of what can be done by leveraging those dollars.

There is a whole host of requests from many communities, not just Carcross — Old Crow, as we've heard from the member opposite over the years; Dawson City, as the MLA for Klondike has made known; Haines Junction has requested improvements to their recreation facility.

So there are several requests, actually, when it comes to recreation improvements. We have been working on some smaller upgrades. When we talk about Ross River recreation centre — the replacement — we committed \$7 million over the next couple of years for proceeding with the construction of a new recreation facility. We remain committed to working with the community to build that centre and one that meets their needs.

I understand the request for proposals for the design/build project closed recently, and we are looking forward to awarding the contract and proceeding with construction. As I understand, I know the Minister of Highways and Public Works would have more information specific to the contract. But we're looking forward to an opening, and we're still looking forward to that opening being next year. So it's not removing those dollars — it's really reallocating those dollars to the year in which the facility will actually be built.

We did take some time to work with community residents to come up with a design that would be functional for the community. I just want to thank the community residents. I was there with a number of my colleagues when we were able to announce the investment in Ross River and were able to be joined by much of the school, the students and the teaching professionals in the school, and they were pretty thrilled. That said, I also just want to take note that it was the Yukon Mines Legacy Foundation — they also came up, took the leadership and they came up with really a warming shelter for those individuals and, of course, we came up with an interim set of ice as well for the communities to enjoy — those outside recreation opportunities that haven't been there in the past. It has been a work in progress, and I'm glad to see that it's coming to fruition.

Again, we recognize the very importance of recreation and we also know that on that end of it, when it comes to infrastructure and coming up with a successor to the Building Canada plan and the fund itself, I just want to be very clear again that I have been working very closely with the Government of Canada and with the president of the Association of Yukon Communities on coming with that subsequent plan and fund. We have had a number of meetings with the federal minister responsible for infrastructure in Canada and the federal-provincial-territorial ministers. We met in Alberta recently and that entire meeting was dedicated primarily to a new successor Building Canada plan. Whether or not it will be called "Building Canada", one only knows. But we do understand that they are looking to have some funding envelope in the budget, and again will be working with provinces and territories the year after on coming out with individual agreements. I also wanted to take note that we had an excellent roundtable session with key stakeholders and respective governments here in Whitehorse not long ago, held at the Kwanlin Dun Cultural Centre. It was a great opportunity to showcase a great example of what happens when three governments come together to work together, bringing a facility such as the cultural centre and seeing what can come to fruition.

At that time, the Secretary of State came on behalf of the federal minister and we had an excellent discussion bilaterally with me and also with the stakeholder. We had representatives from the engineering and recreation areas, from the construction and trades sector, and we had individuals representing the municipal and First Nation governments. There were a lot of individuals representing many different sectors that all contribute to implementing these projects and there was excellent feedback as to what has and hasn't worked over the past several years since Building Canada has come around. It's that kind of feedback that the federal government hopefully is taking heed of to come up with a made-in-Canada approach.

For the north, I know that there were comments received from the engineers and from the building construction sector as well, just recognizing that in order to plan projects, lead time is needed to plan accordingly, so it's not start and go — start, stop, go — so that we actually have that long-term ability to see that funding is going to be there and so we can plan for multiyear projects that are so important to all of our communities.

We've seen some of that come and go and it takes time, but that was one of the concerns that were made known. The flexibility as well — you know, there may be occasions where, as I just mentioned, in Watson Lake, for example — I'm not trying to pick on Watson Lake, but the best laid plans sometimes receive a glitch from there and there. I'm not saying it's any fault of anyone, but these things happen which may push the project out to the next year because of weather conditions or because of the need to go back and redesign a certain element of that project.

There's a whole host of reasons for having that flexibility to be able to make the best use of those funds and not have such a prescriptive way of delivering. I think that, by and large, we've been quite content with how the Building Canada fund

has been administered. Community Services has played a real leadership role and in many of the communities, at the request of communities, has taken on some of the project management of those projects as well, simply because many of the communities don't necessarily have that capacity to lead those projects.

I happen to sit in a caucus made up of many rural MLAs and so I'm reminded of the very importance of all of these projects on a daily basis and how important it is that we carry on with the funding.

We really remain committed as a government to building on those investments that have been made in support of a strong economy and we'll continue to work with the Government of Canada to invest under those jointly funded programs like Building Canada when it comes to improving bridges such as the Upper Liard or Teslin bridge, highways, solid-waste improvements, drinking water upgrades, I mentioned waste water, the community roads, energy and other priority projects.

We are working toward that successor program to Building Canada, and I also just want to make special note that I know that recently the president of the Association of Yukon Communities has been on the radio a couple of times, and she and I have talked and when you compare our jurisdiction to the rest of the country — as I referenced yesterday in my remarks — we are the envy of many jurisdictions and that is because we do enjoy a relatively strong working relationship. It's based on collaboration and not confrontation and that is really key to moving things forward. The Government of Canada likes to see that as well, in terms of moving initiatives such as infrastructure.

That is something that I know that she has given accolades in terms of the good working relationship that specifically the Department of Community Services has had with the Association of Yukon Communities and all the municipal governments. We continue to improve upon that relationship and so we are working with really a similar voice in ensuring that we do have that successor program to Building Canada.

In particular, I'm happy to say the supplementary estimate that we're talking about today is actually requesting a number of increases. A few examples of those infrastructure projects are as follows: \$336,000 for the Na Cho Nyäk Dun First Nation geothermal project; \$400,000 for road upgrades in Beaver Creek, as the project is proceeding ahead of schedule; and \$350,000 for road improvements and \$735,000 for drinking water wellhead production and protection in Burwash Landing. Again, both of those projects are moving more quickly than we initially anticipated, so this funding is being advanced to be able to meet the good work.

There is a \$939,000 increase for the Carcross drinking water treatment system upgrades, also due to the project being ahead of schedule; a \$57,000 increase to transfer funding from planning administration to the project, representing completed design work for the sewage treatment and waste-water collection in Carmacks; and \$800,000 for road upgrades and resurfacing in Carmacks, as the project is ahead of schedule.

Thanks to having infrastructure funding in place we've been able to really enhance the capacity of our local building

trades and contractors across the territory. They are doing very fantastic work on Yukoners' behalf, and I attribute a lot of that to a lot of these projects being ahead of schedule.

We also are requesting just over a \$1-million increase for the completion of the sewage treatment, the district heating system in Dawson City. A \$200,000 increase is requested for water and sewer pipe replacements in Faro; \$2.1-million increase to advance water treatment and arsenic removal in Haines Junction — another example of a project that is moving much more quickly than initially anticipated.

We're requesting \$18,000 in additional funding to cover the completion of Old Crow roads, which has helped to solve a long-standing drainage issue that will not only lengthen the life of those community roads, but will make them safer for local residents.

A \$917,000 increase is requested to proceed with the Old Crow water supply upgrade since the project is moving more quickly than expected and is nearing completion. Just over \$525,000 is identified to keep pace with progress on upgrades to community roads in Pelly Crossing. \$555,000 is also identified to move forward with improvements to community roads in Ross River — again, the project moving more quickly than anticipated. \$37,000 is requested to continue with road and drainage upgrades in the community of Teslin, and just over \$2 million to advance work on arsenic treatment and drinking water improvements in Teslin. \$500,000 is also requested to continue work on the Teslin Tlingit Council road upgrades — again, as the project is moving more quickly than expected. This is just another example of how the community is working together but, rest assured, there is more work to be done.

With the successor to the Building Canada fund, we'll be able to continue to work on those improvements to community roads, such as in the community of Teslin, which I know they continue to aspire to and we're pleased to continue our work with them.

Just over \$3.6 million is also identified in the supplementary budget to move ahead with water and sewer pipe upgrades in Watson Lake, including the replacement of the community wet well — that's under the Building Canada fund. That also is coupled with \$45,000 for the Lakeview Drive water and sewer project identified under MRIF — municipal rural infrastructure fund. We also have approximately \$2 million identified for reconstruction of Black Street here in Whitehorse and \$290,000 in upgrades to the intersection at Two Mile Hill and the Alaska Highway.

I also wanted to remind members that when it comes to Building Canada funding, Yukon government contributes 25 percent, and Canada contributes about 75 percent. In other jurisdictions, that mix has been different and, in fact, there has been an expectation that the municipality has also contributed to those projects. That's not necessarily the case here.

So when it does run its course, we will have contributed just over \$240 million-plus in support of critical infrastructure improvements. So, again, we recognize the wide benefits for Yukoners of all these infrastructure improvements, and we'll continue to work with the Government of Canada and all of our

partners here in the territory to work on those areas of importance.

Mr. Barr: I would like to start by saying that people who are calling in would still like clarification as to their street lights in rural communities and on the highways.

I heard at the Marsh Lake LAC meeting last night that there is a plan to introduce tipping fees at Marsh Lake solid-waste facility. I'm worried that this could lead to garbage being burned in backyards or dumped in the bush. Is this decision regarding introducing tipping fees a direction from the Yukon government, and how does this move adhere to the *Yukon Solid Waste Action Plan*? Are other solid-waste facilities introducing tipping fees?

Also in regard to the solid-waste facility contracts, a public tender for transporting and processing of recyclables from solid-waste facilities in rural Yukon advertised September 12, 2012, was cancelled. Why was this tender cancelled and what is the contractual arrangement to do this work?

A public tender for preparation of management plans for solid-waste facilities in Yukon advertised July 27, 2012, was cancelled. Why was this tender cancelled and what is the contractual arrangement to do this work? What has been the total cost of upgrades to solid-waste facilities to make them transfer stations?

I've also heard issues about the compactors that were purchased for the solid-waste facilities in the Yukon. They are compactors that were built for cardboard and the reports that I have from the different facilities is that they have already experienced several breakdowns. The cold weather at minus 10 — they don't work; they're built for household garbage.

There have been some electrical repairs done. The electrical was done wrong. There have been rumours that because the wrong compactors were bought in the first place that now — this is why I asked for the costs — we may have to build little houses around these compactors to protect them from the weather so that they will work efficiently. I ask why we wouldn't have bought the correct ones to begin with. There is a concern that fluids leaking out of these compactors are health issues to those attendants in the solid-waste facilities. When I was speaking with one attendant at one of the Southern Lakes facilities he asked about his concerns for his health in regard to the chemicals that are unknown to anybody that they throw out and how they mix together — what's the government going to do in regard to his health? The response he told me was that we'll deal with that when it happens — unsatisfactory.

There are also concerns around contracts in solid-waste facilities, that they were way late this year. Contracts that would have been put forward and signed, sealed and delivered in May weren't done until September of this year, which created issues with the weather, with transporting the tires out of the community to Alberta. They ask why, with respect to all the tires that are disposed of in the Yukon, this contract isn't tendered to people in the Yukon and the jobs made available to Yukoners. The shredding of these tires goes out to Alberta and they're shredded there and then distributed to people for other practical uses. Why are we not benefiting Yukoners not only with this by-product of tires, but also the jobs available?

There is also fire management at the Fire Marshal's Office — I'm glad to see that there's money being put forward in this budget around that. Is there money in this budget to address the need for standardized equipment between volunteer fire departments that have mutual aid agreements? As I recall in the last sitting, I brought this forward and there seems to still be a lack of clarity as to standardization of equipment — for example, Tagish to Carcross, the fittings don't match up when they go to a fire — they have to have a pool and suck it up from the other truck rather than connecting one to the other.

There is also a recruitment for volunteers at the volunteer fire departments. This is a big problem. There have been volunteer fire departments that have been active in the past. I have recently heard that a volunteer fire department was being threatened to be padlocked because of not having all the positions filled. We don't want to see this in our communities, and this causes fear in people who live in these rural communities about their public safety.

Are we doing enough to support the recruitment and the retention of volunteer firefighters? I would also like to know: What is the process, then, in shutting down a volunteer fire department, when they were threatened by this? Luckily, I understand, a couple of volunteers have stepped up, and it's not going to be shutting down. But I know this is a concern, not only in the one community I spoke of.

The *Dog Act* — I've heard from constituents about problems in unincorporated communities with dogs. The *Dog Act* states: "No owner shall permit a dog to run at large (a) in an area that may be defined by the Commissioner in Executive Council; (b) contrary to a bylaw made by the council of a municipality; (c) that is of a vicious temperament or dangerous to the public safety; or (d) while in heat. (2) An officer may seize or kill a dog found running at large, contrary to paragraph (1)(c)", or when citizens in unincorporated areas encounter dangerous dogs they are told to call the RCMP. I've heard that the RCMP — it's difficult — when they arrive, the situation is over and the threat is still out there to the communities.

Is a review of the *Dog Act* scheduled, as well as putting resources in place to deal with dog problems in unincorporated areas? I'd like to hear a report on the effectiveness of the animal welfare officer and whether there is any interest in extending the powers of this office to include complaints stemming from the *Dog Act*.

Also, the Tagish LAC is still waiting on an order-in-council. The LAC has been in existence for many years and they do not, as yet — and I might add that, at their request, I've been waiting to put this out there, because they felt that possibly last year this was going to go ahead, and there are still no defined jurisdiction boundaries.

Although they are an active LAC — and I might add that the people who volunteer on LACs do so time and time again. The volunteer "cup" in the communities is small, so many people duplicate their efforts. I think we could at least provide them with the order-in-council so that they could have that clarified for them. I know that in the past others have stepped down from their positions because they felt they were not being listened to.

In regard to consumer protection, our consumer protection law is old. When a consumer has a complaint, they are told to write the company first, get a response and after this the consumer protection officer can offer some mediation between the complainant and the company to resolve the issue. We've had a discussion with a Yukoner who went through this process and said he wasn't offered much assistance. We know of the old line, "Let the buyer beware", and I would believe that most good companies want honest feedback from consumers and to have the opportunity to resolve complaints.

So I'm curious about whether Yukon's consumer protection laws offer enough consumer protection. I'd like to hear the minister's thoughts on this. As well, what do other jurisdictions do? Across the country there are consumer complaints about things like payday loans and cellphone contracts. I hear this from people and I see the young folks forfeiting part of their paycheques to these fast-cash facilities. Are there any plans to introduce rules to provide more consumer protection in this area?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: There was a multitude of requests put forward by the member opposite and I will do my utmost to respond to those in the next couple of supplementaries.

I might as well just start off with the member opposite's reference to solid waste. A couple of years ago, Yukon came up with the *Yukon Solid Waste Action Plan* which was a vision as to how we can modernize and make solid-waste management sustainable — one that is responsible and suited to the north and bringing it in line with environmental practices and sustainability objectives.

The plan that really sets the stage in a broad base for the government is to implement key improvements and work with the communities, municipalities, industry, and stakeholders to explore those approaches to improving waste recycling, diversion, reduction and handling. I believe we have made substantive progress in this regard over the territory. What I can say is that practices continue to evolve pretty rapidly throughout the territory. Of course, our challenges in the north are challenges unique to the north compared to the rest of the country. I would like to say that one of the things that we have been working on is the open burning of the domestic waste. I was pleased to see that it did come to an end in 2012, as per permits administered through the Department of Environment within 20 of our unincorporated solid-waste facilities.

We have been refocusing our operations toward diversion rather than disposal. We have been working on improving site management and a number of key facility improvements. We have installed groundwater monitoring wells at all of our facilities. There are a lot of examples as to how we have been working to address solid waste in the territory — again, as I referenced earlier, through the Building Canada fund. One of the five top planks in coming up with an infrastructure plan for the territory was based on solid-waste improvements. Since 2007, we have been working to make solid-waste improvements. I have quite a list of examples of how we have been working toward improving facilities and the way we handle waste in our territory in every single community. There has been a lot achieved.

Earlier this year — in March of this year, actually — we came through with some additional funding for solid-waste management. That included dollars toward the operation and maintenance, and we also came up with some dollars for capital infrastructure improvements. That added investment has helped to improve recycling and waste diversion; it has helped to enhance waste handling systems and site safety; it has helped complete those groundwater monitoring stations and the installation thereof; it also improved household hazardous waste management at our facilities.

There is a lot of work to be done. This is no small feat. I will be very, very clear on that. Some of the items that the member opposite made reference to — I can't speak to those specifically because, forgive me, I'm not involved with checking out every one of the compactors at every one of our unincorporated sites, but that's the first that I've heard of it. So I thank the member opposite for that, and we'll certainly look into that.

In other words, it is the department that administers the plan, brings to fruition the implementation of the plan; it really is the work of the department that lives and breathes that work on a day-to-day basis. That said, I thank the member opposite for bringing forth those concerns.

The tire-shredding contracts being issued late — I don't issue those contracts on a day-to-day basis, but what I can say is that where we're at is because we've had the *Yukon Solid Waste Action Plan* in place for a couple of years, we have made a number of improvements and, specifically since January 1, 2012, the no-burning requirements and the new regulatory requirements associated with environmental compliance.

We have really had to initiate a lot of swift changes and a lot of those changes I can say that, in travelling the territory over the course of the summer and in the spring and again in the fall, I have heard first-hand concerns raised by individuals in a number of communities and by way of MLAs, members opposite, and also members on our side of the House, looking for clarity, looking for information and providing that constructive feedback as to how we can improve the delivery of solid waste management. We are working toward making it efficient and making it responsive to the needs, but at the same time, we have to be cost effective as well.

As much as we would love to be everything to everyone, it is a difficult task. There is a fiscal bottom line and we have to be held accountable for expenditures and investments in all areas, and solid waste is one of them, so we are reviewing where we're at and I think it's a key time to do that. When we announced some of the new dollars in place earlier this spring, it was almost \$800,000 in new O&M monies. We were allotted those dollars on that year basis to come back and report and see how we're doing — was it enough? Was it not enough? Where can we improve? Where can we tweak? So really it folds into an opportunity for us to review where we're at with the plan.

Are we meeting each of the intended objectives? Are we on track? What do we need to do? That said, it was very interesting — last night I actually had the opportunity — I stopped in at a public open house hosted by the City of Whitehorse, which is also currently working on their own solid-waste action

plan and also looking at ways to modernize in an efficient and effective manner. So I had great discussions with City of Whitehorse officials about the steps that they're taking. It's interesting to note that 85 percent of the waste within the territory is really derived through the City of Whitehorse, so they are obviously a key player in all of this.

We need to work very closely with the City of Whitehorse, and we need to work closely with all stakeholders — talk about the challenges, talk about the opportunities and waste diversion — and really determine what those key essential elements are for moving forward.

Again, there has been lots of great feedback from stakeholders over the course of the last year during my tenure as the Minister of Community Services. Rest assured, not everything has gone as perfectly as we would have liked, but as with anything relatively new and within the time constraints as well, I think that the department has worked to the best of its ability and so we remain committed to working toward adhering to our obligations and our commitments in the action plan.

There's a lot to it and there are a lot of requirements — even just educating individuals in the communities who haven't necessarily had to recycle or sort or really think about how we handle waste. I think in Whitehorse we have had the luxury of having the opportunity to experience the cart system where we've had garbage and compost every other week. We have recycling facilities and they've done a great job — private sector and public as well — but we also have to pay heed to the communities that they don't necessarily have that infrastructure on the ground. So this is new ground for some, not all, so there is a great deal of public education to be dedicated to this ongoing effort.

There are the same challenges in Whitehorse — it comes down to encouraging individuals and not just residential, but the commercial and industrial sector as well. It's quite a complex, interwoven network of partners involved with moving forward, but I am pleased to see the progress being made and we'll continue to work with community partnerships as well.

With respect to the Fire Marshal's Office, I was really pleased upon taking office and assuming this file. I have learned so much about fire protection and structural fire and wildland fire management, and I continue to learn. I continue to be overwhelmed by the passion and by the commitment of every single individual who contributes their time and also sacrifices their time on behalf of us.

I was in Dawson earlier this summer for the AGM of the Association of Yukon Fire Chiefs. They had issued a number of long-service medals and awards for their accomplishments over the year.

There was quite a healthy crew of individuals in that room representing every single community from Ross River, to Watson Lake, to Dawson City obviously — Dawson has a very healthy crew of very committed individuals who share the responsibility of EMS responders and also structural fire.

It certainly has opened up my eyes as to the ongoing regulatory — I wouldn't say "burden", but there are requirements associated every time we alter regulations. I'm not saying that's bad thing because they are there to enhance the safety of our

firefighters and our first responders, but that does take requirements financially and with human resources as well. What we have done over the course of the last year is worked closely with the Fire Marshal's Office and with the municipal fire departments to identify some of those deficiencies.

There have been deficiencies; there's no question about it. That's why that has precipitated the new investments made to structural fire. Earlier this spring, over at the Golden Horn fire hall, I was able to announce the \$1.9-million investment. That is really substantive because, according to our fire marshal, that was the largest investment in structural fire in Yukon's history. That will go a long way because, as I mentioned in my opening remarks to do with the supplementary, it will double our capacity. Currently we have two deputy fire marshals, and of course, we have hired another one. Another one is coming on stream in the new year, I believe. That will be a total of four, plus the Yukon fire marshal. That in itself will really help add that capacity to not only work with the unincorporated communities, but with each of the municipal fire departments. Some are stronger than others and they have been working at it for a long, long time.

This added capacity will go a long way in terms of recruitment and retaining volunteers. It's an ongoing issue; it's an ongoing challenge, but I believe that, again, by having skilled individuals with expertise on the structural fire side, they will be able to motivate individuals in the communities and provide those necessary skills to do their jobs in a safe and effective manner and provide the training capacity through that mobile live fire training facility. That is going to add an element that's going to also help to attract and retain. These were all recommendations made by our fire marshal, and I rely on that fire marshal to provide the leadership to our government in terms of direction and working with the municipal fire departments on how we can better respond to emergency events. I know the fire marshal works diligently and with great passion with each of our municipal and First Nation governments to address the ongoing issue of attracting and retaining individuals to volunteer.

I recognize that some communities have had more difficulties compared to others but, as I've stated on the floor, we're committed to providing the equipment and the training necessary through the leadership of the Fire Marshal's Office and working through the leadership offered by our municipal fire departments as well on this very issue. The Fire Marshal's Office manages and supports some 16 volunteer fire departments, which includes 225 volunteers, as I understand. That's a large group of volunteers, including 16 fire chiefs. These members, I've just been reminded, have responded to some 856 fires and emergencies in the Yukon last year alone: 257 fire-related, some 70 life and fire safety inspections, and 75 residential storage tank removal inspections. So, with the considerable growth in our territory and the added population, we recognize the challenges, but I commend our Fire Marshal's Office and everyone who contributes of their time on a volunteer basis. I see that my time is up again.

Ms. Hanson: I have about three areas that I would like to touch on with the minister, so I don't intend to be all that long.

Because it was raised with me a number of times in my riding, an important area in my riding is the Whitehorse Public Library. Since Community Development division includes public libraries, I was hoping that the minister could comment on a concern that has been expressed. There was a reference earlier today to program sunsetting, and there are also the implications and the impact of federal government cuts. One of the cuts is Industry Canada's community access program, which, as I understand it, has been around since about 1994 or something, which has helped libraries and other community hubs, particularly those in remote and rural locations that provide free public access to computers and the Internet.

I'm sure, Madam Chair, in your community of Watson Lake — I've been in libraries in Mayo and just about every community whether they are shared facilities or stand-alone facilities — one of the most used aspects of that is people using the free Internet for limited periods of time, and increasingly limited periods of time, in order to either keep in touch with family or to look for jobs or to do research. You see students in the libraries a lot — particularly students who don't have any other safe place to do work.

Apparently the federal government declared that the program had outlived its usefulness because 94 percent of Canadians now live in communities where broadband Internet access is available for purchase. It's my sense that cutting this program means a direct service cut to Yukoners' access to the Internet, and it could be yet another example where cuts in services have the greatest impact on people with a lower fixed income, and certainly in my riding that is very true. For the people who use the public library, and in particular the Internet services, that is their reality and so it's my reality as well.

It is one thing for the federal government to say everybody has access, but the Canadian Library Association pointed out when these cuts were put across on a national basis that only 79 percent of Canadian households have Internet connection, and just 54 percent of households in the lowest income bracket do.

So it may save money, but our concern is about the potential impact of these federal cuts in our community. I had hoped that the minister could apprise the House that she is monitoring this situation and what the impact of this is in the Yukon. I'd be interested if the minister could tell the House what the historic amount is that the territory has received for this program and what's projected for the future in terms of what the cuts are and how they will be accommodated in this territory. I say that because each territory responds in a different way. It's my understanding that in May of this year, the Government of Nunavut announced it would take over the \$85,000 gap in funding for the community access program, and I'm wondering if there are similar plans in this territory in order to provide essential service for people in this area — if that's something that the minister is proposing to do here — and backfilling where the federal government has vacated the field, I guess. So that's one.

The other area is in the corporate policy and consumer affairs division of Community Services. I note that the minister

has overall responsibility — and I'd like her to clarify the role and responsibility she has vis-à-vis the Yukon Medical Council. Is this an oversight role? Is it a funding role? If it's a funding role, what resources are provided to the Yukon Medical Council? How is the amount determined and is it reviewed or evaluated? Is the minister involved at all in the appointments to the Medical Council? I'd be interested in that.

The third area that I would ask, and it has to do with — there was a fair amount of money — well, money, yes, as well as discussion with respect to infrastructure. Certainly the territorial government has made a significant contribution financially to the planning of the Whistle Bend development in this city. When would the plan be to complete the paving of Range Road? If anybody drives out there, the paving of Range Road between the upgraded road works from Whistle Bend to the Mountainview intersection.

The final area has to do with following up with respect to the oil-fired appliances working group recommendations. One of the key recommendations that was in that working group report and seems to have slipped under the radar and right out of the focus of the government in terms of what they've indicated they're planning to do was to require people who service oil-fired appliances to be certified journeyman oil burner mechanics. I just remind, again, that we've had reports going back to 2007 through to 2010, and the recommendations of the previous committee. There's the importance of having that aspect of it, and the other part of it is that we were pleased to see in the new *Residential Landlord and Tenant Act* that the government's going to make carbon monoxide and smoke detectors mandatory. I understand that there's a lot of complexity to the process of getting the rules and the regulations in place. Hopefully we see some amendments to this act, but once this act is passed, it will take about a year to get those regulations in place.

My concern and the concern of the Official Opposition is what kind of interim measures will be put in place to make carbon monoxide and smoke detectors mandatory now so we don't see a repeat of the kind of tragedy that occurred last January.

There are sort of four focal areas of question here. I certainly look forward to the response from the minister.

Chair: Before the minister rises, would the members like a break?

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 with debate on Vote 51, Department of Community Services.

Hon. Ms. Taylor: I'll do my best to respond to the Leader of the Official Opposition.

With respect to the question regarding the community access program offered by the Government of Canada — that program, as I understand, is administered under the Department

of Economic Development and has been since it was first formed. That said, I know that the Minister of Economic Development has been monitoring changes to the program and we will certainly continue to work with the Department of Economic Development.

As the member opposite said, enhancing connectivity among Yukoners to the rest of the world via broadband access is critically important and especially to our public libraries. It is one of the very few public places in the territory that we are able to provide that free Internet access to Yukoners over the course of a period of hours on any given day. I can say we are very proud of each of the libraries that we oversee throughout the territory. I know that even the Whitehorse Public Library — I think it was almost a year ago that we were able to relocate the public library to the new space in the Kwanlin Dun Cultural Centre, and what an added improvement that is — we have been able to work on expanding our social media presence, for example, through Facebook, as well as through our own library website. Wi-fi access is also being provided in various rural locations as well as in the City of Whitehorse.

Booking software is also being used to ensure users have equitable access to our Internet and computer stations, and of course the use of e-books, as well, has been a great expansion of the services that we provide in the library.

I'm just wondering if I have some statistics on the e-book resource. Unfortunately, I don't have that at my fingertips. But I can say that we continue to deliver services by way of phasing in e-books, as I mentioned. We now have an e-library with downloadable e-books and audio books, and we continue to carry on that very theme. It's amazing — the very digital infrastructure, so to speak, being made available to Yukoners without having to leave their own homes to access the library is incredible, actually, when I think about it — where we were some 20 years ago, and where we are today. It's quite incredible. So we continue to celebrate libraries throughout the territory. Of course, just having the ability to connect among our own public libraries and celebrating connecting people with information through a broad range of sources is of the utmost importance. I can say that with information, as I mentioned, being widely accessible on-line, libraries have been somewhat challenged to keep the pace and offer new services to the public in such a competitive environment.

So I'm very appreciative of the public libraries for those innovative ways of providing those resources and services in a variety of formats to meet the needs of the people they serve through audio books, DVDs — often with multi-language capacity — a number of children's collections, I know, in the new public library in Whitehorse. In the public library in Watson Lake, there is actually a toy library — an added resource that is unique to that library.

I mentioned the growing e-book collection, which now, as I understand, includes more than 700 titles and has seen significant growth in virtual checkouts — interestingly enough, more than 3,000 in the last year alone. The public libraries are continuing to work to expand the collection of large-print books for those with visual impairments. Again, I really commend our libraries for connecting the people and providing that

safe and welcoming, warm environment for individuals throughout the territory. I think they have done a great job of keeping pace with the changing world. That said, we need to continue to make improvements in programs, such as the community access. The program is and will continue to be very important. We'll continue to work with the Department of Economic Development on ensuring that we continue to have these services made available and that we continue to expand and improve upon the delivery through Internet connectivity.

With respect to the Yukon Medical Council, the member opposite raised a question regarding the role of Community Services in providing oversight — that, I believe, was the question that was posed. As the member opposite may know, the primary purpose of providing that professional regulation is public protection. In the Yukon, health professions are either self-regulating or they're regulated by Yukon government. Registered nurses, for example, are the only self-regulating health profession in the territory.

Physicians are often referred to as quasi-self-regulating in the territory because of the *Medical Profession Act*, which establishes the actual Yukon Medical Council, and which plays a strengthened regulatory role compared to advisory committees set out under other health profession legislation. So it is a bit of an anomaly.

The Yukon Medical Council, as I mentioned, is a statutory body that's created under the *Medical Profession Act* to be the primary decision-maker for providing that administrative and disciplinary oversight of the medical profession in Yukon. It's independent from the Government of Yukon and is something that is administered or is housed within the Department of Community Services. The Yukon Medical Council is specifically established under section (2)(1) of the act. The members are, indeed, appointed by Cabinet to serve at pleasure for three-year terms. The membership of the council consists of three physician members nominated by the Yukon Medical Association. They are resident in Yukon and registered under the act. One physician member from outside of Yukon is chosen in consultation with the Yukon Medical Association and two public members.

I think section 2(3) of the act also states that should a member's appointment expire, that member will continue to serve until a successor has been appointed. In the past we have found that vacancies have not necessarily impaired the council's ability to exercise its powers under the legislation.

With respect to the other question that the member opposite referred to — I think it was the oil-fired appliance review — I know there has been significant debate in this Assembly regarding this matter. As you will recall, earlier this March the minister responsible for Yukon Housing Corporation and I, as Minister of Community Services, tasked an oil-fired appliance working group to come together and put forth recommendations for enhancing the safety of oil-fired furnaces in the territory. They did that. I believe that Marc Perreault, who was the chair of the working group, assembled a group that represented industry and municipalities for Association of Yukon Communities, and I believe there were two industry reps in addition to the chair. One was certified and one was non-certified. The

group came together and did their work. They came back with a set of recommendations, which is housed in a report that was presented to us in August or September. Within days, literally less than a week, we did respond by agreeing to take the report out to the communities in the territory.

The minister responsible for Yukon Housing Corporation and I embarked on a territory-wide discussion with residents. We went to all the communities. I know I went to the communities of Ross River, Carmacks, Pelly Crossing, Watson Lake, Teslin, Faro and others. Those are the ones that come to mind right away. Based on the actual work of the report of the working group and the input received from citizens across the territory, we announced on October 25 that we would be moving forward with a number of changes in response. Basically, the three areas of importance were public education, the training and education initiatives and also the regulatory legislative piece.

What we were able to announce on October 25 was moving forward with a number of changes. Specifically, Yukon Housing Corporation has agreed to spearhead the public education campaign, working with a multitude of different departments because of the multi-departmental element — not only Education, but Yukon Housing Corporation, certainly through Department of Community Services and others really spearheading this public education and public awareness campaign that specifically targets the residents in our communities, promoting the importance of maintaining a proper installation of home heating systems.

What was heard time and time again throughout all communities was that we need to really step up the importance of our own shared responsibilities. Not only is it the government's responsibility or industries' responsibility, but it's also the individual homeowner's responsibility to do our part to ensure that our homes are safe. That comes down to education and informing individuals of the importance of having that routine maintenance on their home heating appliance.

I have to say that my father was a building contractor for over 45 years. I remember when we purchased our first home almost 16 years ago, the first thing he asked every single year was, "Have you had your furnace maintained? Have you had it serviced? Have you set up that appointment?" At the time, I just thought, "This is really growing old, actually." I did not see the merit of needing to have that annual maintenance, but we had it done.

Another individual in the community said to us — and this was not just one individual, but many — that perhaps if we paid as much attention to our furnaces or our home heating appliances as we do our vehicles how much further ahead we would be. Again, just a reminder of the very importance and how we have to all do our part.

Again emphasizing the individual homeowner and the landlord — the tenant responsibilities. Increasing awareness about the importance of early warning devices like smoke alarms, the carbon monoxide detectors; absolutely critical to do just that. Working with the communities and industry to develop the checklist which identifies relevant points, proper installation, modification, and servicing of oil-fired appliances,

and enhancing — and this is very key — the opportunities for residents to access contractors visiting communities, for example, for Yukon Housing Corporation work. That was absolutely critical, because what we heard in the communities was that not every community has the liberty — by far the large majority of communities did not have certified technicians within their community.

So until such time as we are able to build a capacity of having certified people on the ground in our communities, we need to work with the communities or through First Nation governments — whether it's in Pelly Crossing or whether it's with municipal governments like Watson Lake — to help coordinate, similarly to what they do with surveyors, for example, in Watson Lake. They take a tally, such as a list of individual homeowners who would like to obtain the services of a surveyor — not necessarily there, but through the municipality — and piggybacking on to that ability so the individual homeowner is not hamstrung by the costs associated with travel and per diems and so forth. Rather, that cost is borne by our municipal governments or First Nation governments and so forth.

The Department of Education, once again, is being tasked to work with the other departments and the college to lead the development and implementation of training, again, providing that education on the ground and delivering it as best as possible within the communities, with that accessibility factor and affordability factor as well.

So again, we are assisting eligible individuals to become certified mechanics and enhancing those training opportunities for apprentices to participate in school technical training in the Yukon. That was a key critical point as well. There are a lot of individuals in the communities who may have been doing this work for 25 years — they're not certified, but they're good at their work. How are we able to assist those individuals to make that additional step, but in the meantime, enable them so that when the furnaces do run out in the middle of the night when it turns cold that they are still able to do that and not be held liable within the legislation for breaking the law, so to speak.

The third component, of course, has to do with legislative and regulatory changes. Of course, two of those require that building permits for those major modifications, certification and installations of those appliances be issued to certified individuals, and also requiring the installation of those carbon monoxide smoke detectors in all Yukon residences, including rental units. Which way we do that, whether by regulation or by legislation, is what we're doing our homework on. As I understand it, we will be the first in the country to actually implement this, by legislation or by regulation, to ensure that all homes are geared with those early warning devices.

Again, we are going to be taking a little bit of time, but we have committed to coming back in the next few months with those specific changes.

Mr. Silver: Thank you to the officials who are here today from Community Services. I will keep my comments brief. I have several specific questions, and I would appreciate some specific answers. I'm just going to list them all right away in my 20 minutes here.

I'm going to start with my first question, which is on training for initial-attack firefighters. We have an extensive file on this issue. We've been in communication with actual initial-attack firefighters. We've been talking with the agencies that handle the hiring and the contracting of the First Nation crews and the actual certified trainers as well. We've talked with a few of them. I've also sent a letter to the minister in August on this topic.

The issue here is that people have been receiving conflicting information as to the — well, for one, the availability of training locally with local trainers and also the cost of such training.

I would like the minister to take this opportunity to clear the air on a few of these questions.

Is the minister aware of how many local instructors live in Yukon who are willing to instruct? What is the cost per individual and what would the cost be for a class? This is assuming there would be a number cut-off for that individual rate.

We're still lacking a plan from this government for the overflow of the Quigley landfill. What is being done to address this? What is the rural waste management solution?

Land development protocol for Dawson and other communities — I have brought up several times in this Assembly the need for a specific land development protocol for Dawson and for other municipalities. The minister is on record in *Hansard* speaking of her support for this initiative. I would like to know if there is a timeline for the development and implementation of this protocol as it is critical to solving lots of municipalities' unique housing crises.

The increase for funding to the firefighters — this commitment was released to the public on May 8 of this year. I don't want to bite the hand — we did get an additional \$40,000 in Dawson for our fire crews, and I'm unsure what the other numbers are for the other incorporated communities. But I do know a bit about the process.

It seems that the fire crews were asked to provide a number based upon need, and then the department replied with a dollar value in response. In the Klondike, the members of that particular fire crew provided a number that was over \$100,000, I believe. Can the minister maybe run through the decision process, where they come up with the number of \$40,000 compared to what was put forth? Once again, I'm not criticizing. I am really merely inquiring as to that process.

We're looking for line items here for the lawsuit that was covered outside of courts with Norcope, with the Whistle Bend subdivision. We're wondering if there was an out-of-court settlement that includes cash and if there is an actual line item that we could be directed to, where that would be in the supplementary budget or any other previous budget.

The last one here — I'll go strictly to the last one here. It comes to my favourite question for the minister. We received a commitment from the minister after one of — if not my very first — but one of my first questions in this Legislative Assembly in regard to a recreation centre in Dawson.

In her answer, she made positive comments on the previous Minister of Community Service's commitment during a press release on the campaign trail in the summer of 2011

where he said in two, three years tops, there will be a new recreation centre — not a rebuild, but an actual new recreational centre in Dawson. The current minister, when answering my first question here in the Legislative Assembly last fall, made reference to it only being the first of many sessions in this government's mandate, so I will continue to ask each time we have this opportunity for a general debate with Community Services for a progress report.

When can Klondikers plan in their calendars for a ribbon-cutting ceremony for a new or a completed current recreation centre?

Those are my questions, and once again I would like to thank the officials for their time today.

Hon. Ms. Taylor: I would just like to say “welcome” to the Member for Klondike. It's always a great opportunity to talk about all the good things we're doing in the Klondike.

It's actually always a good opportunity to talk about all the good work we are doing in every community, but I know that the Member for Klondike, the Leader of the Liberal Party, is very much favourable to his own home riding.

With respect to initial-attack firefighters, I sent a letter to the member opposite on October 12 and tried to do the best that I could to respond to that training. I also came across another individual in the City of Whitehorse who had raised the same concerns over the mixed message. That is something that we can go back and take the questions and the comments raised by the member opposite. As I referenced in my letter about initial attack firefighter training, it all comes down to national standards for crews. They are all varied according to what type those crews are.

I'm just going from my letter here, but the training is individually tailored for a crew member following a very thorough assessment of the respective needs of that specific firefighter or crew. Training is also dependent on circumstances, such as the number of individuals who require training, experience levels of crew members, senior staff availability and cost. As to who actually provides training, I can't say off the top of my head. That's more of an administrative matter, but I certainly will endeavour to take a look at that.

As I mentioned in my letter, we offer crew member training when there is sufficient number of crews that are either administered by the Yukon government or First Nation crews who require it. I think I referenced typically anywhere around 20 individuals at a cost of approximately \$40,000. We also offer a number of the seats to the public to address the turnover, with the understanding that obviously employment is not automatic, but still, it's a means of building capacity within the firefighter community.

I do know that we run annually a number of specialized in-house training courses and recurring training using branch staff as well as courses delivered by the college, other fire agencies and contractors that may likely be outside of the territory. Again, the costs vary depending on those specific needs and standards. Recognizing the value of this ongoing training, I would have to go and defer to our department. I know that in speaking with this individual from Whitehorse, I have alerted

the department to it and I believe they are working on it, but I have not received an update as of yet.

With respect to the Quigley landfill — I love talking about dumps and it's a far departure from Tourism and Culture — dumps are so important to our routine day-to-day life. I also know how complex the topic is, as I mentioned earlier in my remarks about solid waste and how we handle waste in our territory. It is no small feat, especially when a community continues to grow and there is industrial activity, with waste oil and hazardous waste, which places pressure on how we get rid of it.

I've had this discussion with AYC — Association of Yukon Communities — a number of times over the course of the last year on everything from liabilities to finding a way forward, working collaboratively with our communities. Every community is so unique in their needs and their unique challenges. I appreciate the challenges associated with Quigley landfill, that's for sure. We have agreed to do a couple of things. I had a discussion recently with the newly elected Mayor of the City of Dawson in which I congratulated the new mayor and his council as I did on the phone not long ago. We are committed to working with the communities — not only AYC, but every single municipal government to address those long-standing concerns about liabilities and all other long-standing concerns.

In the case of Dawson, it may not be that; it's really coming up with a landfill agreement and that is something we have been trying to do over the last several months. I think there is perhaps a renewed appetite to at least sit down with the new mayor and council to take a look and come together collaboratively and identify how we can work together to address some of these challenges.

When I spoke with the new mayor — you know, he is pretty keen and excited to hear that the door is still open — and, of course, it's still open. We're excited too that the City of Dawson would like to work with the Government of Yukon. We recognize that there is a significant amount of work to be accomplished on the solid-waste file, and we'll continue to work with municipalities in the months ahead. That said, as I mentioned yesterday in my remarks, we have also agreed to strike a working group with Association of Yukon Communities, similar to what we did on the *Municipal Act* review and also the comprehensive municipal grant. It's another working group under the “Our Towns, Our Future” review, and they have worked exceptionally well. I'm not saying that this is going to be as easy as perhaps the others were relatively, but they have garnered that forum for having that really candid discussion and, more importantly, coming up with solutions as to how we can strengthen our working relationship.

I don't have a timeline — you know, when I spoke with the Mayor of the City of Dawson — I appreciate that individual was just elected in his new role, and a relatively new council as well, so as soon as the time is ready, and the City of Dawson is ready to move, we're right there as well.

I can't recall what the next question was — forgive me. Perhaps I'll go on to Norcope — sorry, I don't have the fourth issue there. With respect to Norcope, the costs associated with

delivering Whistle Bend — as I mentioned in the Legislature, of course, that is a matter that was before the court, and there was an out-of-court settlement that came about as a result of that. I should say we always work hard to resolve disputes outside of the courts, and we try our very best to resolve those disputes with mediation and, if necessary, arbitration. Even a lot of those contracts have clauses to deal with them, and beyond that, there are all these other dispute mechanisms.

We continue to deploy those methods in a number of ways. When it comes to that particular dispute, as I mentioned the other day, there was an out-of-court settlement. There was a non-disclosure clause associated with that, so I'm unable to talk about the specifics of that dispute, other than to say that we're pretty committed to ensuring that this project and all land development projects go ahead on time and on budget. It's so important to Yukoners. That's what we heard during the last election, and we'll continue to work hard to resolve all disputes.

When all is said and done, at the end of the day, Whistle Bend will be by far the largest subdivision project in Yukon's history. I think, all told, the costs are about \$265 million to deliver all of the eight phases of the project. There will be disputes from time to time, but I can say that our staff within the department work pretty closely with the Department of Highways and Public Works and will continue to exercise those dispute mechanisms before we head into court.

The third item is the land development protocol. I think we've had some great wins by working with the City of Whitehorse over the last few years. Since about 2004 we've had an agreement in place, a protocol with the City of Whitehorse, and it has worked very well in providing that clarity on the roles and responsibilities of each party in terms of delivering. That wasn't always the case. In years past, there was some confusion. I'm not saying that things are perfect all the time but this protocol has really set the stage in terms of what are the priorities, what are the roles of your government, what are the responsibilities of our government and how can we work together, and just keeping that line of communication open. It's something that has helped us to really streamline the delivery of land in the territory and it's something that we continue to improve upon. It's something also that we continue to work on with the communities like Watson Lake and the City of Dawson.

I know that we have attempted to work with the City of Dawson in the previous year, but I think that there is perhaps a renewed interest in sitting down and talking about this issue as well. So we look forward to that. It's great to hear. I recognize, as I've stated on the floor, the challenges associated with land development in the Klondike area and recognize that the City of Dawson also has a new official community plan that of course spells out some areas of interest to the City of Dawson for future development. So we will continue to work with them on making land available within the city parameters. But I know that with the previous council, there was an interest in looking outside of the municipal boundaries. Obviously our preferred route would be within the boundaries because of the infrastructure and because the costs of delivering are perhaps

far more effective and efficient within than outside. That said we look forward to working with Dawson on that as well.

Last but not least, there is the recreation centre. I could go on at great length about the recreation centres. As I just mentioned to the Member for Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes, there is significant interest in investing in community recreation centres. I recognize that when it comes to Dawson, there have been some unique challenges over the years in delivering on a new recreation centre. We have an agreement in place and this too is another area that the Mayor of the City of Dawson and I spoke to as well. That funding does come to an end next year and so we're looking for the best way forward in being able to continue to deliver that funding. While recognizing there is work to be done on the existing facility, there is also a genuine interest in advancing work on a new recreation centre. I know the previous council also helped develop a trust fund through taxation revenue to be put into a reserve trust fund for a recreation centre down the road. Again, I know that there is significant debate about whether to go with a new centre or continue to invest in the old one.

That's the discussion and the dialogue we need to have with the City of Dawson here in the coming months, before the end of the fiscal year, to find our way.

But I just wanted to again stress the significant investments that the Government of Yukon has made in the community of Dawson. We're proud of those investments. As I've referenced before, there have been some \$45 million-plus just under the infrastructure funds over the last number of years. That doesn't include the investments in the hospital and other improvements. Again, it's always a pleasure to visit the community of the Klondike. I look forward to my next visit and very much look forward to working with a newly elected mayor and council.

Mr. Tredger: I'd like to welcome the officials from Community Services. I would especially like to thank the staff who have taken the time and made the effort and travelled to the communities to meet with community members on many different issues.

They have formed relationships that have strengthened the links between Yukon government and the communities. As a community member, those relationships are very critical. So I thank the minister, the deputy minister and all the staff for the efforts they have made to spend time in the communities.

I just have a few issues — some of them have been touched on. I will reiterate them a little bit, but — yes, solid waste continues to be a concern in most communities. There should be some kind of risk assessment done to try to evaluate what the risks are as we move from the old-style landfill and, as the minister mentioned, many of the chemicals that have been dumped in there — over centuries, in some cases. So if the minister could provide an update: How many of the communities have developed solid-waste facilities? How many are in the process? What are the plans for including the rest? Have they encountered extra costs, in terms of solid-waste facilities, in terms of liabilities — especially in terms of affecting the water table?

A number of communities in my area are concerned about the runoff or the seepage from solid-waste facilities and old landfills getting into the town water supply. I would appreciate a bit of clarity between rural municipalities and unincorporated communities. Two of my communities, Keno City and Stewart Crossing, are unincorporated as is Pelly Crossing, so if the minister could clarify the difference between an unincorporated community, as in Keno and Stewart; an unincorporated community that's a First Nation in terms of Pelly Crossing, and then of course an incorporated community like Mayo and Carmacks and how the funding differs between them. Constituents in my area, myself included, are somewhat confused by the differences and how that would affect funding arrangements and their relationship with the Yukon government.

As I mentioned earlier, I commend Community Services personnel for the public meetings and for the information and consultation they've done. I would ask that when there are public meetings in the communities or in an MLA's community, whether it is consultation or information — that the MLA for that area be included on a mailing list so that they can help advertise it and possibly also take part.

I know that other rural members also have difficulty and the more heads-up we can get to take part in consultation efforts in our communities — whether it be Faro; whether it be Pelly Crossing or Mayo or wherever — that we have a heads-up. So I would ask the minister to please include the MLAs on the list when there are events happening in their constituencies.

I know in the "Our Towns, Our Future" they talked a little bit about peripheral residents — those residing outside or near proximity to community boundaries. It was suggested that that be looked at. I'm wondering whether anything has been done, what accommodations are being made to help communities provide services for the peripheral residents and how that is being handled.

An issue that has come up quite a lot lately is fuel storage tanks. As people are looking for insurance, they have to renew for their fuel-storage tanks.

What has been done to facilitate that in rural communities? What is available to people? What training is available to people who are the installers and what efforts have been made around that?

I will probably deal with in line-by-line debate as we come to them. I would thank the officials again. I would stress the continued importance of personnel from Community Services spending time in the communities and working with the communities. As all rural MLAs can probably attest to, that connection is very important and it's nice to see. I would commend the minister for the work on "Our Towns, Our Future" and encourage the liaisons and the communication channels that have been opened up through that process to be continued and expanded upon. Thank you and I look forward to the answers.

Hon. Ms. Taylor: With respect to the member opposite's question about solid waste, I don't want to sound repetitive; I don't want to go through what I already have stated on the floor of the Legislature, but as I referenced earlier, a lot has changed in terms of how we handle solid waste in the Yukon. That has added responsibilities for municipalities and for com-

munities, which we are required to adhere to by law. The *Yukon Solid Waste Action Plan* came about in 2009, and one of the recommendations was the commitment to end open burning of waste. Those are part of the permits administered by the Department of Environment. The permits specifically require Yukon, our territory, to end open burning of waste. It also requires the installation of hydro-geological monitoring wells to build engineered cells within the landfills, to improve the handling of special and hazardous waste and to enhance those diversion opportunities.

The Department of Community Services administers many, many unincorporated sites under our facility permits and under the guidance of the action plan. We continue to work to find those cost-effective solutions for really updating and modernizing the way we handle waste in the territory.

As of January 1, as I mentioned before, the open burning of domestic waste came to an end at all of our unincorporated facilities operated by the Yukon government. Over the past year, our department has installed groundwater monitoring wells in a number of sites. Today, every solid-waste facility operated by our government has groundwater monitoring wells in place for the coming year. Groundwater monitoring wells are in place in Braeburn, Champagne, Johnson's Crossing, Silver City, Upper Liard, Tagish, Carcross, Marsh Lake, Mount Lorne, Deep Creek, Beaver Creek, Canyon City, Destruction Bay, Keno City, Pelly Crossing, Ross River, and Stewart Crossing. Monitoring wells will also be installed in Old Crow, and also Horse Camp Hill and Burwash Landing.

The department is also moving forward with installing new cells at facilities like Beaver Creek, Ross River, and Champagne for domestic and construction demolition materials. We are also working to implement better handling of hazardous waste to improve the overall management at a number of landfill sites. We have a number of waste containers. We have worked to improve signage that makes it more user-friendly. As I mentioned, we are also working to establish those community partnerships with municipal governments.

In that regard, we are working with every community and the territory, and we recognize that there is a lot of work to do to help address those municipal challenges around the management of solid waste in the territory. Obviously, we're very interested in working toward solution-oriented successes that are not only measured, but they are also cost effective. As I referenced earlier with respect to municipal landfills, we have had a lot of discussions with many of the municipal governments prior to the elections over the past year.

Our government recognizes the logistical challenges associated with adhering to permitting obligations and keeping pace with the rest of the country. We have chosen to work through the Association of Yukon Communities, as I mentioned earlier, through the "Our Towns, Our Future" review. We've been able to strike a number of what I would coin "successful working groups", one of which was overseeing the *Municipal Act* review; it still is. Another is the comprehensive municipal grant, for which we tabled legislation here. Another area of importance to municipalities is landfills. We've committed to working with AYC on addressing those long-standing concerns, and

they are long-standing concerns with respect to historic liabilities associated with landfills.

We recognize that there is work to be done and we recognize that it's a shared responsibility and that we all have to work together.

As I mentioned, we have been able to assist municipal governments over the last while with solid-waste improvements — again, by way of Building Canada funding, capital investments made through their own gas tax funding — made available through the federal government and through their own revenues. Of course, through this new comprehensive municipal grant, there will be some additional room to be able to adhere to some of those responsibilities, obligations and challenges as well.

We'll continue to work with the Village of Mayo, and the community of Carmacks, and all municipalities in the territory to really come up with creative, made-in-Yukon solutions so that we're able to adhere to our obligations — again, coming up with those cost-effective solutions to administering waste.

I would also like to recognize the work of Community Services. There are so many committed individuals who do such a diverse breadth of work in that department. It never ceases to amaze me.

On almost any given day — if something comes up, I know it's pretty much going to be ours because we work on so many different files — you know, I really think it should be two or three different departments. I don't think I am going to have much success with the Premier on that one. I have to say, I have to commend each of them, and I have to also commend the work that has gone into "Our Towns, Our Future" review and establishing a template that can be replicated in so many different ways. It has transformed the way we work with municipalities. It has really identified a number of key areas as we spoke about yesterday: 18 specific areas, and there may be other areas, as the Member for Riverdale South also mentioned yesterday.

I want to also thank each of our community advisors. I have a renewed appreciation for the work they do. You know, when we were on the road conducting some of these discussions on oil-fired appliances, I had the liberty of being accompanied by community advisors, and I learned first-hand some of the detailed work that they have really worked on over the years.

I didn't get into all the successes of our review — I ran out of time yesterday — but one example is the community development team concept really working on a pilot project in the community of Faro. That's turning out to be a very interesting project. It's really interdepartmental. It's working on a whole host of different issues of importance to the community, but really tackling them not just within one department, but really exerting resources and utilizing those resources for a multitude of different departments. So, it is working phenomenally well and these community advisors have a very special relationship with each of our municipal governments. They work very effectively with them almost on a daily basis. It's through that ongoing communication that we are able to address not all but many of the issues that are within those communities. I, too, would just like to thank our staff in

would just like to thank our staff in every branch within Community Services from Solid Waste Management to Sport and Recreation and everything in between. It's pretty all-encompassing and it has been a real privilege to serve in this portfolio.

The member opposite referenced furthering work with respect to "Our Towns, Our Future" and talked specifically to peripheral areas outside of the communities. That is becoming and continues to be an issue of importance and an issue of concern to municipalities. It's something that we will continue to work on as well.

As I mentioned before, we have worked on meeting infrastructure needs so not only are we working with municipalities through the comprehensive municipal grant, which has resulted in additional dollars — just over a \$1.4 million increase for the next fiscal year, which is the single largest increase in the grant history, which will help municipalities to address some of these ongoing challenges — but also having funds available, whether it's a supplement for fire protection or whether it is through infrastructure funding; working with unincorporated communities or incorporated communities.

I think we have gone a long way, and I think that has to be said. As I mentioned, in other jurisdictions in the country — compared to them, I think that we've had a very good working relationship with our municipal governments. To be sure, there will be times that we'll agree to disagree, but for the large part, we have been able to leverage our dollars strategically and to continue to invest in roads and solid-waste improvements and drinking water upgrades — and the list goes on.

We continue to work to address the ongoing challenges associated with adhering to regulatory changes — occupational health and safety, as we have on the structural fire part, working on solid-waste improvements, working with municipalities on monitoring wells, adhering to permit requirements from the Department of Environment. Again, it's something that we will continue to work with.

I also wanted to mention that when it comes to solid waste and some of the challenges that the member opposite referred to, one of the things I did want to say is that, on the working group, we have asked for, and there will be, representation from the Department of Environment as well.

That's a really critical, key component in addressing solid waste because there are so many shared responsibilities between the two departments on that file, as a regulator and also as the individual department that is working to administer all of those files as well.

Last but not least — I'm just trying to find where I am at — the fuel storage tanks, I believe it is. Is that the issue? I do not have an update for the member opposite, other than through the Fire Marshal's Office, and that's why we invested in the Fire Marshal's Office — to be able to keep up with the demand for meeting the regulations on that end. As I mentioned earlier, all of our fire departments respond to many incidents but when it comes to inspections of storage tank removals we had some 75 — I think that was the last year, if not the year before — so the added capacity of the fire marshal and the deputy fire marshals, has doubled the capacity to four.

That will give us strength in capacity to work with individual homeowners and commercial entities to ensure that we meet the regulatory requirements, but work with them to adhere to those requirements as well.

Mr. Tredger: I didn't hear an answer to my request for being added to a list when department personnel are having public meetings or information or consultation sessions in an MLA's constituency; that it would be courteous and part of good governance to include them on a list and let them be aware of that. My final comment is just not so much a question, so that you don't have to repeat yourself again, but land availability is still a concern and, subsequently, housing in many of the communities. I realize the government is doing quite a bit and they are trying to make up for years of no land availability in short order.

I thank the minister opposite for all that is being done, but I just want to flag that it is still a concern in virtually every community that I go to. Land availability is important — it's important that people are able to get land, build houses, and stay and make commitments to communities. Having said that, thank you very much and thank you to the officials again for coming out this afternoon.

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Thank you. I want to thank the member opposite for raising land development again, because it was one of the primary planks that this government was elected and re-elected on — and that was really making land available for all Yukoners. We do that in a number of ways: through mechanisms such as land development protocols; by way of working with our municipalities; and working within the communities throughout the territory on a number of different fronts.

As I mentioned, I think that we've made significant progress. Rest assured, there's more work to be done. As I mentioned, since 2009, we have invested more than \$100 million in projects that have resulted in nearly 550 new lots in subdivisions in Dawson City, Haines Junction, Carmacks, Destruction Bay, Grizzly Valley and in Whitehorse. As I mentioned before, for the first time in years, we do have lots available over the counter for sale in the City of Whitehorse — and not just in the City of Whitehorse, but in other communities as well. I think that's pretty exciting too, because that has not been the case always.

We respect that there are processes involved in identifying land for development, coming up with the design and the consultation and regulatory processes associated with making land available. So there are a number of safeguards and there are a number of public participatory opportunities, as well, for making land available. But it does take time and it does take a measured and also reasonable approach to land, in partnership with other partners, and that has to be taken into consideration.

In Whitehorse, for example, we worked hard to make land available. As I said, in 2009, we made lots available in Whitehorse Copper and the Mount Sima subdivisions. Those were made available by our government — all of which have been sold and houses are up and running — beautiful homes, I might add.

A couple of years ago, we also followed up by investing in the development of 133 lots in the Ingram subdivision. I have to say that it has worked out to be a fantastic subdivision. I remember going out to one of the first open houses when this concept of Ingram first came about — it wasn't Ingram; it was a parcel nestled in between McIntyre and Arkell. At that time, the city planners were really trying to carve out a proposed concept for this new area and it was really the city's first, I would say, concerted attempt to really focus on density. As you can imagine, that wasn't always necessarily received with open arms, particularly by people living in the area.

But now that it has come about, it has evolved and it's a thriving community. It's a thriving neighbourhood and it has a very unique mix of housing developments in the area. For single individuals or retired individuals, for young families, young professionals, there is a real mix of lots. Part of the success with that whole design concept was also taken over to parts of Whistle Bend — again, working on that concept of higher density. We, as a government, have been working to develop Whistle Bend. Earlier this year, we were able to announce the first release by way of lottery, in collaboration with the city, the previous mayor of Whitehorse, and we were able to make available a number of great lots that are now being sold over the counter. As I said, this is the first time in many years. We continue to work with the City of Whitehorse to meet their overall objective to enhance that density within the municipality.

Last year, we worked with the Village of Haines Junction. We delivered 27 new country residential lots. Today, we have about 10 of those available for sale. We've developed lots in Destruction Bay and we've developed lots in Grizzly Valley. There is a whole host of other land development planning initiatives also underway. As a result, since 2009, of those hundreds of lots, a real wide range of lots has been made available, which is important for all Yukoners.

This fiscal year we were pleased to announce, as part of our budget exercise, just over \$35 million in support of land development in the territory. That has helped us proceed with releasing new industrial lots in Dawson, 52 urban residential lots in Haines Junction and, as I mentioned earlier, over 100 lots in Whistle Bend subdivision. This is all good news for the territory.

A portion of this year's land development budget is going toward design and planning of a number of areas, including Whistle Bend, the residential lots in Dawson and, as I just mentioned, working with the City of Dawson on a land development protocol to bring those to fruition, to identify areas of importance to the residents, and finding a way forward, and working again to identify dollars for planning in Watson Lake and Mayo. We'll continue to work with the municipal governments to plan and develop those subdivisions, and that also includes infill lots, as prescribed by municipal governments, in anticipation of demand so that we are able to meet those added demands as a result of our economy.

As I mentioned, we're also paying attention to the price of the lots being offered and, with Whistle Bend, making lots available at development cost, which, in the case of Whistle

Bend, has resulted in lots being about 6.5 percent below market value — so very important to allocate the prices in such a way that we're not negatively affecting existing property values as well.

So, as I said, we have delivered on 550 lots in the past three years, and we are on par to deliver more — more than 1,600 new lots to the market in the years ahead. It's important to note that that's not only within the City of Whitehorse, but also within Watson Lake, Mayo, Dawson City and many other areas. We continue to work with each of our communities and the unincorporated areas to identify areas of importance and of interest to the citizens of the territory.

Seeing the time, I move that we report progress.

Chair: It has been moved that the Chair report progress.

Motion agreed to

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

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

Motion agreed to

Speaker resumes the Chair

Speaker: I will now call the House to order.

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

Chair's report

Ms. McLeod: Mr. Speaker, Committee of the Whole has considered Bill No. 7, entitled *Second Appropriation Act, 2012-13*, and directed me to report progress.

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

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Speaker: I declare the report carried.

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

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

Motion agreed to

Speaker: This House stands adjourned until 1:00 p.m. on Monday.

The House adjourned at 5:26 p.m.