

Yukon Legislative Assembly
Whitehorse, Yukon
Thursday, November 7, 2013 — 1:00 p.m.

Speaker: I will now call the House to order. I would like to ask all present to remain standing as we observe a moment of silence in honour of Remembrance Day and all that it means.

Moment of silence observed

Speaker: “They shall not grow old, as we who are left grow old:

“Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.

“At the going down of the sun and in the morning,

“We will remember them.”

Thank you.

DAILY ROUTINE

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

I will start the tributes.

TRIBUTES

In recognition of Veterans’ Week

Speaker: Veterans Affairs, at the beginning, defined a veteran as someone who had served in the military during times of conflict. Ironically, the First World War veterans who formed the Royal Canadian Legion didn’t want to recognize the World War II veterans as actual veterans because their war was not as hard as the first one.

In the 2003 time frame or so, Veterans Affairs changed the definition of “veteran”, as it needed to be updated — and I paraphrase it a bit: A veteran is a member of the military or RCMP who has achieved an occupation code and has been honourably discharged from service.

This means that current serving members of the Canadian Armed Forces and the RCMP are actually not veterans because they have not been discharged from their service yet. During Veterans’ Week, and particularly Remembrance Day, the line between serving and served is blurred and for very good reason.

It is with great pride and appreciation of my colleagues here that today, on behalf of all Members of the Yukon Legislative Assembly, I have the privilege to pay tribute to all who have served and are serving in the Canadian Armed Forces and the RCMP. We promise to recognize and appreciate all of your sacrifices and all you have given to us through those sacrifices. We will always remember with great respect those who have paid the ultimate price for the freedoms we enjoy in Canada.

Lest we forget.

In recognition of Remembrance Day

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: I rise today as well to recognize Remembrance Day. Remembrance Day is as important today as it was when it was established in 1919 on the first

anniversary of the end of World War I. On November 11, 1918 at 11:00 a.m., the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month, the Great War ended.

If it is hard for us to imagine what four horrible years of war is like, we are fortunate. If it is hard for us to imagine being one of the 30 million military personnel who were killed or injured in that war, we are fortunate. We wear our poppies each year to remember those who suffered and also to remember the sacrifice of the 117,000 Canadians who died in the two world wars, the Korean War and other conflicts. These men and women gave their lives in the name of freedom for Canadians and citizens all over the world.

This Monday, many of us will attend Remembrance Day ceremonies. Even if busy lives do not allow people to attend an event, I encourage Yukoners to pause for a moment of silence, to think of the courage of each man and woman who has given his or her life in order to protect ours. I encourage all Yukoners to support the Royal Canadian Legion each year by buying a poppy and wearing it proudly.

Let us think of the families who continue to be affected by the loss of a father, a mother, a son or a daughter. Let us think of what we can do to contribute to peace in our communities and in our country.

Ms. White: I rise on behalf of the Official Opposition in recognition of Remembrance Day. Today, I pay tribute to veterans in the struggles they face today.

Had I been asked even two years ago to describe a veteran, I might have described my grandpa. I can close my eyes and see older men and women with greying hair and deep wrinkles. They are people who lived in a different time with a different set of challenges — people who would remember the sound of an air raid siren; people who had made it home and had families and grandchildren and great-grandchildren. These veterans came from a time when their role was easier to explain. These veterans are from times of conflict. They had clear enemies and clear goals.

That all changed after the Korean War. Now our soldiers are sent into war zones to keep opposing forces apart. Now we call them peacekeepers and now they often come home with invisible injuries. The face of today’s veteran is very different. Mixed in with all that grey hair are the faces of young men and women, many younger than me. It surprised me to learn that one in 35 Canadians is a veteran. I’m not sure why this surprised me, but it did.

On the recommendation of a friend, I visited the Veterans Transition Network website. The Veterans Transition Network is a national non-profit initiative created to help reintegrate Canadian veterans with their families and communities. Many of the men and women that return from combat find themselves suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder, related to symptoms such as emotional numbness and depression, that leaves them unable to communicate with loved ones or find a meaningful place in society. It is currently estimated that 15 to 30 percent of returning soldiers will develop PTSD. This means that 4,000 to 6,000 soldiers

returning home will need support and services in dealing with post-traumatic stress disorder.

Knowing that we're still in the middle of Veterans' Week and that this week is about actively remembering, I ask you to watch the nearly eight-minute video excerpt from the documentary, *War in the Mind*. Be warned. This video is painful to watch. You're shown a very small glimpse into life after service experienced by veterans who are between 23 and 27 years old.

With the changes to the Veterans Charter of 2006, the Government of Canada has created a two-tiered system of veterans. The New Veterans Charter is putting the most severely wounded veterans at a risk of hardship and poverty. It's never easy to be a veteran, but never before have we seen the number of veterans suing the Canadian government like we do today.

For years, veterans have raised concerns about the programs and compensation under the Veterans Charter. Under the legislation, ex-soldiers saw the decades-old pension-for-life system replaced with a workers'-compensation-style approach of lump sum awards and allowances.

Imagine being told that the life sacrifice you made for your country is only worth a one-time payout. Worse yet, nine Veterans Affairs offices are set to be closed by February 2014. That means that veterans in these nine jurisdictions will no longer have face-to-face access to the services they need. This only adds to the current environment that Canada's veterans are finding themselves in — an environment that can only be categorized as confusing, challenging, complicated and disappointing.

It's challenging for veterans and their families to navigate through the various players involved. Once in the system and trying to seek benefits, the amount of paperwork and the processes involved to obtain benefits is extremely complex. There are two government departments involved, two rehabilitation programs and an application package that is 18 pages long. This is not at all like applying for a passport; that's easier. This paperwork decides your future.

I asked a veteran what he thought of the current changes. His barely audible answer was "betrayed". I then asked what he would say to a young person seeking advice about enlisting, and there was a long pause. "My patriotism says to do it. I'm an optimist. We have to look for a brighter future."

Those feeling betrayed are the very men and women who chose to serve and to protect us, our communities and our country. These are the men and women who get sent to foreign lands only to come home often forgotten and ignored. With these sweeping changes and challenges, how can every Canadian not be aware of the issues facing our veterans given the daily reporting of their concerns? How can we not be up in arms in their defence?

In 1917, just prior to the Battle of Vimy Ridge, Conservative Prime Minister Robert Borden had this to say to servicemen ready to be deployed: "You can go into this action feeling assured of this, and as the head of the government I give you this assurance: That you need not fear that the

government and the country will fail to show just appreciation of your service to the country and empire in what you are about to do and what you have already done. The government and the country will consider it their first duty to see that a proper appreciation of your effort and of your courage is brought to the notice of the people at home... That no man, whether he goes back or whether he remains in Flanders, will have just cause to reproach the government for having broken faith with the men who won and the men who died."

There is great concern that the Government of Canada has forgotten this commitment. Veterans worry that the sacrifices that they made are easily forgotten by us, forgotten by you and forgotten by me. The government must demonstrate its social and moral obligation to all veterans and their families who served and continue to serve our country.

With the 100th anniversary of World War I just around the corner, the most profound activity this government could deliver to honour this historic event would be to reaffirm its social contract to all veterans and their families and to ensure that an expanded and transparent review of the New Veterans Charter is conducted and that no veteran is ever left behind.

I asked my friend how he thought we could fix the problems that exist and make the government remember its pledge. He told me that the decision needs to come from the top — that politicians deal with public opinion and that politicians need to know that this issue matters to every Canadian. I asked him how he thought this could happen. He said that people need to care.

So I'll leave you with this. It is the veteran, not the preacher, who has protected our freedom of religion. It is the veteran, not the reporter, who has defended our freedom of the press. It is the veteran, not the poet, who has given us freedom of speech. It is the veteran, not the campus organizer, who has given us freedom to assemble. It is the veteran, not the lawyer, who has given us the right to a fair trial. It is the veteran, not the politician, who has ensured us the right to vote. It is the veteran who salutes the flag, it is the veteran who serves under the flag, and it is the soldier who dies defending it.

Lest we forget.

Mr. Silver: I rise today on behalf of the Liberal caucus to pay tribute to Remembrance Day. On this day, Canadians honour and remember our veterans who have all served Canada during war, armed conflict and peace, and commemorate their sacrifices.

The other common name for today is Armistice Day, which marks the day and time when armies stopped fighting in World War I on November 11 at 11:00 a.m., 1918, the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month. Over 100,000 Canadian soldiers died in the First and Second World Wars.

Throughout the world the poppy is associated with remembrance and symbolizes the memories of those who have died in order that we may be free.

During the First World War, Flanders in Belgium saw some of the most concentrated and bloodiest battles. There was complete devastation. Buildings, roads, trees and natural life simply disappeared. Where there were once farms and

homes there was now a sea of mud, a grave for the dead where men still fought and lived. The only other living that that survived was the poppy. Flowering each year with the coming of the warm weather, the poppy brought life, hope, colour and reassurance to those who were still fighting. John McCrae's poem, *In Flanders Fields*, may be the most famous one of the Great War. The day before he wrote it, one of his closest friends was killed and buried in a grave decorated with only a simple wooden cross. Wild poppies were already blooming between the crosses that marked the graves of those who were killed in battle. Unable to help his friend and the other fallen soldiers, John McCrae gave them a voice through his words.

Mr. Speaker, have you ever said to a friend or a family member that you would give your life for them? Well, soldiers willingly give their lives to total strangers when they sign on the dotted line to serve their country. We wear the poppies before and on Remembrance Day in memory of those to show our respect and to support our Canadian troops and veterans and commemorate their sacrifices. Remembrance Day ceremonies will be held across Canada and I will be attending those in Dawson, as I imagine folks will be going back to their communities and participating as well.

Lest we forget.

Hon. Ms. Taylor: *[Member spoke in French. Text unavailable.]*

I rise today as minister responsible for the French Language Services Directorate, as well as Minister of Education, to acknowledge the first ever National Francophone Immigration Week. From November 3 to 9, French-speaking communities in nine provinces and three territories celebrate for the very first time National Francophone Immigration Week, under the theme: Francophone Immigration: a Diversity that Unites Us.

This week aims to promote francophone immigration and diversity among our franco-Canadienne, Canadian and Acadian communities and to acknowledge its very importance. Immigration is important with respect to maintaining demographic diversity for the Canadian population as a whole as well as the Canadian francophone.

It's a significant recruitment tool for the labour market and is viewed as contributing to Canada's economic prosperity. Immigration is a party for the Canadian francophone and so too is true for the Yukon francophone community. I'd like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the l'Association franco-yukonnaise for the great work that they have achieved over the years, specifically since 2005, to successfully attract many francophone immigrants to Yukon and to support their integration within our territory.

The 2011 Canadian census shows that just under five percent of the Yukon population declares French as their first language, while 13 percent state that they are bilingual — roughly 4,415. Excluding Quebec, this ranks Yukon as the second-highest percentage of francophone and the second-highest proportion of the population able to maintain a conversation in French, just after New Brunswick.

The Yukon government recognizes the very importance of settlement services and related activities for a successful francophone community in the territory and supports francophone immigrants in their successful settlement and long-term immigration.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Ms. Taylor: With this, I would like to at this time introduce a number of individuals who have also joined us in the gallery here today in celebration of this very important week.

I would first like to start with the following people who are among the several French immigrants who integrated well into our franco-yukonnaise community. Starting with Lucie Creiser — and perhaps if Lucie wanted to stand, that would be great — Audrey Queverdo, Marie Alexis Dangreau, Emmanuelle Compoin, and Yann Herry — certainly not a stranger to our territory and who is well-integrated into the Yukon fabric as we know it today.

I would also like to introduce the following people involved with the franco-yukonnaise community: Nancy Power, who is a director of communications for l'Association franco-yukonnaise and Pierre-Luc Lafrance, director for *L'Aurore boréale* and also fairly new to the Yukon as well — so welcome. Also, with Pierre-Luc, is Pierre Chauvin, also with *L'Aurore boréale*, a new reporter, so welcome.

Finally, I would just like to point out a few employees of the Yukon government also involved in immigration with the Department of Education as well as the French Language Services Directorate: Nathalie Ouellette, who is an immigration officer with the Education department; Jeanne Beaudoin, who is a very important person of the Yukon francophone community and is also with the French Language Services Directorate; Véronique Davignon, also with the French Language Services Directorate; and our own director of the French Language Services Directorate, Patrice Tremblay has also joined us.

I would ask all members to join us in a warm welcome to each and every one of them.

Applause

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: It's certainly a great honour to see His Worship Dan Curtis here in the gallery with us. It's always a pleasure to see the Mayor of Whitehorse join us here. I know there's a bit of a personal reason for him to be here, because his son Nathaniel is a page today. Today is his first day as a page. I'd like to welcome and congratulate him. I invite all members to congratulate and welcome the mayor.

Applause

Ms. White: *[Member spoke in French. Text unavailable.]*

Applause

Speaker: Are there any return or documents for tabling?

TABLING RETURNS AND DOCUMENTS

Hon. Mr. Graham: Today I have for tabling my letter to the chair of the Yukon Hospital Corporation regarding the recent Judgement of Inquiry Reports of the Chief Coroner, dated August 29, 2013. I have also attached the chair's response to my letter, dated October 4, 2013.

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

Reports of committees?

Petitions?

PETITIONS

Petition No. 13 — received

Clerk: Mr. Speaker and honourable members of the Assembly, I have had the honour to review a petition, being Petition No. 13 of the First Session of the 33rd Legislative Assembly, as presented by the Member for Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes on November 6, 2013. The petition meets the requirements as to form of the Standing Orders of the Yukon Legislative Assembly.

Petition No. 14 — received

Clerk: I have also had the honour to review a petition, being Petition No. 14 of the First Session of the 33rd Legislative Assembly, as presented by the Member for Takhini-Kopper King on November 6, 2013. The petition also meets the requirements as to form of the Standing Orders of the Legislative Assembly.

Speaker: Accordingly, I declare Petition No. 13 and Petition No. 14 read and received. Pursuant to Standing Order 67, "The Executive Council shall provide a response to a petition which has been received within eight sitting days of its presentation".

Therefore, the Executive Council responses to Petition No. 13 and Petition No. 14 shall be provided on or before Thursday, November, 21, 2013.

Are there any petitions to be presented?

Mr. Barr: I rise to submit a further 14 signatures to the petition I tabled yesterday requesting the government introduce legislation banning the hunting of bears within the one-kilometre line.

Speaker: That petition has already been read in. If you are just adding names, please just pass them to the Clerk.

Are there any petitions to be presented?

Are there any bills to be introduced?

Are there any notices of motion?

NOTICES OF MOTION

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Canada to respect the service and sacrifices of Canada's veterans by working with organizations representing veterans to enhance services and improve service delivery to Canadian veterans.

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

THAT this House urges the Yukon Government to continue to implement the housing and land development commitments outlined in the Yukon Party's 2011 election platform, Moving Forward Together, by:

(1) Developing a housing action plan that builds on strategic investments and addresses the needs of Yukoners for a variety of housing options; and

(2) Seeking innovative ways to partner with the private sector, NGOs and other governments to meet the housing needs of Yukoners.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to move the Klondike Valley fire hall to the Dawson City Airport.

Speaker: Is there a statement by a minister?

This brings us to Question Period.

QUESTION PERIOD

Question re: Electrical rate relief

Ms. Hanson: Yukoners are bracing for another hit to the pocketbook from rising electrical rates. The rates went up 6.5 percent in July of this year, which is likely to go to 12 percent over the next three years. It is the Yukon Party's lack of action that is chiefly to blame for the ever-rising rates. Thank goodness Yukoners continue to get some protection from rate shock by the \$26 rebate that appears on their monthly bill, thanks to a previous NDP government. The Yukon Party has long made noises about axing the rebate.

The question is simple: What is the plan? Will the Yukon Party axe the rebate when it comes up for renewal on March 31?

Hon. Mr. Kent: Once again, we see a hypothetical question coming from the NDP. There was a hypothetical question yesterday with respect to the staking withdrawal in the Peel watershed that is in place until the end of the year. There is now a hypothetical question from the Leader of the Official Opposition with respect to the interim electrical rebate, which is in place until March 31.

Since June 2009, Yukon government has transferred just over \$3 million annually to the Yukon Development Corporation for this rebate. We're currently looking for the options for the best use of these funds to keep electrical rates down. This program was one tool that we used to keep rates low for ratepayers. The program is in place until the end of this fiscal year and as soon as we've made a decision on how to proceed, we'll communicate that decision to the public and to the members of this Legislature.

Ms. Hanson: I think that gives very faint hope to most Yukon ratepayers. If Yukon Electrical Ltd., the ATCO-owned private utility, gets its way with the Yukon Utilities Board, Yukoners will be taking another hit to the pocketbook.

A typical electrical bill that cost \$118 in 2008 could cost \$177 on January 1, 2015 if the Yukon Party axes this rebate. This is a 50-percent increase that would have Yukon families paying \$700 more per year to keep the lights on. Clear and simple, this is rate shock. Why is the Yukon Party not interested in protecting Yukon families from rate shock?

Hon. Mr. Kent: As I said in my previous answer, the Yukon government has transferred just over \$3 million annually to the YDC for the interim electrical rebate. We're currently working closely with Yukon Electrical and the Yukon Energy Corporation to ensure that costs will not continue to rise in the future. One part of that work is the demand-side management plan that was submitted jointly by the utilities in the general rate application.

Members will recall on the first day of this legislative sitting — this fall sitting — that I introduced a motion in this House looking to ensure that there is a continuing and abundant supply of clean and affordable power in the Yukon in order to promote responsible and sustainable economic development. Of course, those initiatives include a large-scale hydroelectric dam, some of the micro-generation options that we have introduced and working toward an independent power producer's option. There are a number of ways that we can continue to ensure that we maintain affordable power here in the Yukon. There are short-term, medium-term and long-term options and we're exploring all of them at this point.

Ms. Hanson: Mr. Speaker, the minister is probably aware that the Yukon Utilities Board ordered demand-side management to be implemented in September 2009. That was then; this is now. We're still talking and planning it. Meanwhile, the cost of living under the Yukon Party is getting steeper. They did nothing about addressing the housing crisis and housing prices rose beyond the reach of many Yukon families. Yukoners' electrical bills go up and up and up — the clear result of the Yukon Party's mistakes in not managing and planning the energy file.

There is one sensible thing they can do now to reassure Yukon ratepayers and protect consumers and that is to maintain the rebate. Will the Yukon Party maintain this rebate? Yes or no?

Hon. Mr. Kent: As I mentioned to the Leader of the Official Opposition in my first answer, the rebate is in place right now. The interim electrical rebate will be in place until March 31. We're evaluating options for the best use of the funds to keep electrical rates down and that's what we intend to do.

As I mentioned, there are a number of activities that we're undertaking to ensure there's a clean and affordable power future for the Yukon. Of course, that includes exploring renewable sources of power, such as wind and biomass, to complement the existing hydro grid, and exploring alternative sources that are cleaner and more affordable than diesel.

Those are the short-term, medium-term, and long-term options that I mentioned, which is a vision of this government to bring another scalable hydroelectricity project to the territory to complement the ones that are already in existence here. There are a number of initiatives that are underway in

the short term, the medium term and over the long term to ensure that Yukoners enjoy affordable power rates now and into the future.

Question re: Dawson City and Watson Lake hospitals

Ms. Stick: Millions of dollars overbudget — the Yukon Party's mismanagement of the Watson Lake and Dawson City hospitals continues. The tab on the public purse is still running up. Fixing new insulation, changing siding, repairing generators, and housing for new staff who have nowhere to work yet— all of this is being paid from one purse, the public purse. That point seems far from this government's mind but it's not far from the minds of Yukoners. These are our precious health care dollars.

What is the current running total of cost overruns on each hospital?

Hon. Mr. Graham: I have no idea.

Ms. Stick: Thank you for that answer. It seems to me the minister should be aware of this and concerned about it. I will table the notice of statement of the receiver in the matter of Dowland's receivership and also the Supreme Court order that forces this department to place over a million from the public purse into the hospital's bonding agency. On top of departmental funds sent to the bonding agency, and on top of the unpaid millions owed to Yukon contractors, let's not forget the debt from these mismanaged capital projects.

Just this spring, the government provided the Hospital Corporation with a \$27-million bailout toward the principal of their ever-expanding debt. This government is wasting precious health care dollars. Can the minister tell us the dollar amount of all outstanding claims for unpaid work on the Watson Lake and Dawson hospital projects?

Hon. Mr. Graham: The \$27 million announced in the last budget wasn't a bailout. Fortunately, this government has the ability to make this money available to pay down the debt because of our fiscal responsibility that we've shown over and over again.

I would like to make sure that the record is corrected, because under the terms of the construction contract with Dowland, Yukon Hospital Corporation required that Dowland provide a 50-percent performance bond and a 50-percent labour and materials payment bond for each of the projects, the facility in Dawson and the facility in Watson Lake.

The bond is provided for the benefit of Dowland suppliers and subcontractors to provide them with a bond fund, should Dowland be unable to pay their accounts. Each contractor or subcontractor must qualify under the L&M bond and submit a legitimate claim in order for their claim to be considered. Matters regarding claims submitted by subcontractors and material suppliers that have a direct contract with Dowland for labour and materials supplied on the two projects are completely in the hands of Intact Insurance to determine the legitimacy —

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

Ms. Stick: And still, contractors are not being paid. All monies owed on these poorly managed projects come from the public purse. The tally includes over \$1 million in holdings of the hospital's bonding agency by court order — some \$3.5 million in builders' liens. Yukoners and unpaid contractors are not getting a straight story either from the minister or the Yukon Hospital Corporation.

In reply to a letter on project mismanagement, the minister wrote back "additional oversight on future projects" when he was referring to a steering committee including representatives from two government departments. Will the minister commit to having this additional oversight start now so that all outstanding liabilities are promptly resolved and repair the Yukon's reputation among contractors?

Hon. Mr. Graham: It becomes more and more evident as the member opposite gets further and further into this subject that she knows absolutely nothing about the contracting world, about bonding agents and how these things are paid out. In May of 2013 Dowland was placed into receivership through the Court of Queen's Bench in Alberta. A receiver was therefore appointed to oversee the receivership of the Dowland group of companies.

Subsequent to notification of default, the Yukon Hospital Corporation entered into two separate contracts with Intact, where it was agreed that Intact would complete each of the two projects. In accordance with those contracts the remaining funds that were payable under the contract were forwarded to Intact. That's actually how the system worked. Any subcontractors or materials suppliers that have a direct contractual relationship with Dowland and that may not have been paid by Dowland for work they performed may be eligible to make claims against the L&M bond issued by Intact in accordance with the terms of the bond.

Question re: Klondike Valley fire hall

Mr. Silver: I have a question about the Dawson City airport and the Klondike Valley fire hall. Recent renovations to the fire hall have turned it into more of a water distribution centre than a fire station. A project to drill a well was delayed several times and missed many completion dates. The renovations caused considerable disruptions to the activities of the volunteer fire department. Training drills were cancelled, for example, and equipment had to be moved off-site because of the disturbance. Unfortunately, the impact goes beyond a temporary inconvenience. Firefighters I've spoken to believe the facility will now need to be expanded if it is ever to be an effectively operating fire station once again. An alternative — favoured by many — is to relocate the station to the airport, as this would allow for a faster response to incidents there.

Is expanding the existing fire hall or moving it to the airport something that this government is considering?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: In fact what I would point out is that there have been significant investments by this government in many areas within our fire services including, first of all, updating the fleet of fire equipment. It was aged when we took office and we have ensured that our rural volunteer fire departments have much more modern

equipment and have significantly increased that investment in fire trucks, as well as equipment, such as turnout gear. As well, we have made investments in other areas related to that, including a significant increase to the annual budget for the Fire Marshal's Office.

I was up this fall in Dawson and met with the fire chief of the Klondike Valley Fire Department. We recognize that there were some issues during a period when a contractor was putting the water treatment facility in the fire hall, but that work has been completed. If there are additional issues that need to be addressed, we will work on them through the chief of the fire hall as well as the Fire Marshal's Office. A move to the airport is not being considered.

Mr. Silver: I'm sure that the Klondike Valley Fire Department appreciates the upgrades, but they need places to store these upgrades as well.

The decision by this government to turn the fire hall into a water treatment building has left firefighters with many questions about the future of that hall. For example, who will look after the new water facilities? This is not something that volunteers signed up for and it's not something that they are qualified for either. Firefighters have also told me that there is very, very little room left now for equipment or for training at the facility because of the changes that have been made.

Why did the government make these changes with no consideration of the impact on the fire hall, and how does it plan to fix the problems that they have created there?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Mr. Speaker, the upgrade to water — my understanding is that many of the investments that were made in recent years primarily through Building Canada deal with issues around water quality and wanting to ensure — especially in cases where people were already getting water for personal use from facilities, which to my understanding included the Klondike Valley fire hall.

The treatment of that water is meeting a standard that reflects the changes to the Canadian drinking water guidelines, in many cases related to the arsenic standard. That was the reason behind the investment, to the best of my understanding. It is intended to improve the water service for people within the Rock Creek area. I recognize that there were some issues where the contractor was putting in equipment, but the work has been completed.

Certainly if there are pressures on the space requirements at the fire hall, as with any of our other fire hall facilities, we will give consideration to that and we will not rule out the possibility of considering renovations or additional storage space if it becomes evident that those are necessary. But again I will reiterate: we're not contemplating moving it to the airport and the fire hall. From my viewing of it and what I understood from the fire chief is that it in fact is a very functional facility that had some space pressures as a result of the work that was being done.

Mr. Silver: It sounds like we have had two very different conversations with the fire crew there. Moving the facility to the airport — especially with the increased traffic that is experienced because of Holland America's announcement last year — it makes a lot of sense. I would

urge the minister to consider that option. It is one of the few improvements that need to be made to the airport in order to accommodate more traffic flying in from Alaska with Air North and with Holland America.

I have spoken to people at the airport itself and a number of individuals from the tourism industry and they have all expressed reservations about the state of readiness for these additional flights. There have been questions raised about everything from parking spaces for the jets to whether the airport is properly set up to allow passengers to clear United States customs, as well as the ability to manage the increased fire and emergency concerns. I understand representatives from Highways and Public Works visited the airport this summer in the beginning of their preparations for next year's increases.

What steps has the government undertaken to ensure that these flights will proceed next summer?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: First of all, I would remind the member that work that has been done and investments in the Dawson airport are an important part of actually accommodating those flights in the first place. I would also note to the member that I understand that, from what he's relaying, he's spoken to some members of the fire department and understand there may be various opinions, including within the fire department, about possible solutions, but we have what it is a very functional fire hall.

There were during periods of construction of the water facility some pressures and they had temporary interference with their training room. I have been in the fire hall. While it certainly is an area where there's not a lot of extra space, it is also a functional space. We will of course consider whether there need to be adjustments, renovations or storage additions, but there is a significant cost in constructing a fire hall and we do have one that is very functional right now.

In fact, I would remind the member that Wildland Fire Management has a station right at the airport. The Klondike Valley fire hall is quite close to the airport and it's also covered by the City of Dawson municipal fire department under a mutual aid agreement, so there is quite good coverage of the airport facility within the City of Dawson. The area just outside, of course, is well served by the Klondike Valley Fire Department.

Question re: Housing as a human right

Ms. White: Today is like Groundhog Day. Sadly, this isn't Hollywood, this isn't a comedy and Bill Murray isn't about to walk past. The weather is cold, the nights are getting longer and winter is settling in and we still have a homelessness crisis.

We had a homelessness crisis last year, the year before, and the year before that. There is a spectrum of housing needs ranging from shelters through transitional and supportive housing to affordable housing. The Yukon Party has not targeted the whole spectrum of Yukoners' housing needs. The Yukon Party approach to housing is neither compassionate nor fiscally responsible.

Homelessness costs us all in different ways. Research has demonstrated it costs less money to end homelessness than to maintain it. Does the minister responsible have any idea of the number of Yukoners in need of shelter, transitional housing and supportive housing?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: I would first of all remind the member that the situation as she has portrayed it is not accurate. We have made a 40-percent increase in our total social housing stock, significant investments in seniors housing and facilities in Whitehorse, Haines Junction, Watson Lake and in Teslin. Work is underway right now as a priority doing remediation work that will lead to the building of a seniors facility in Mayo. We are continuing to address these needs and I would point out, contrary to the member's assertions, that a report that has recently been referenced in this House exploring residences in the Yukon that was commissioned by Economic Development concludes there is a clear indication that Whitehorse is not as expensive as is commonly perceived and that the average cost of housing, when purchased through a realtor, is significantly less expensive in Yukon than in provinces such as B.C., Alberta and Ontario.

Ms. White: The Yukon Party is hoping that if they don't measure the problem, they won't have to deal with it or that it doesn't exist.

On May 4, 2012, members of the federal House of Commons from all parties voted in support of a motion that recognized that Canada has obligations to fulfill the right to housing. Housing First is the way to implement Canada's obligations as a signatory to the *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights*, which guarantees the right to adequate housing. Evidence shows that a Housing First approach improves people's quality of life, recovery and wellness. Housing First is about knowing that people need a home and that any other issue a person is living with can be more effectively addressed once a person has housing.

Does the minister responsible believe in the Housing First approach for those Yukoners who need either shelter, transitional housing or supportive housing?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: First of all, what I must again note for the member — I know she is passionate about this issue and I appreciate that there are always pressures. In fact, if the member looks to any jurisdiction within Canada, there are pressures on housing. But, in fact, what the member completely fails to recognize is the 40-percent increase in our housing stock that has resulted from investments during the Yukon Party's time in office — roughly \$100 million since 2002: 350 renovations; 150 new buildings; investments in seniors facilities in Whitehorse, Haines Junction, Teslin, Watson Lake and Faro; home ownership program for first-time owners; investments in housing for single parents; investments in the youth shelter; the construction of Betty's Haven; and the Kaushee's second-stage housing.

I might add that during my time as Minister of Health and Social Services, we made significant increases to the annual funding agreements for Kaushee's Place and provided capital

investments for the Watson Lake women's shelter as well as for second-stage housing.

We have provided lots to Habitat for Humanity and continue to work with them. There is a very long list of the investments we have made, and we will continue to make investments to further improve and further invest in ensuring there is a range of housing options affordable for Yukon citizens. I understand I've run out of time to list the very long list of investments we've made. Including increases to the social assistance rates are yet another area —

Speaker: Order please.

Ms. White: I appreciate the minister's response, but it sounds like we are lacking in compassion. It sounds as though the minister believes housing is only for people who can afford to pay. Canada is a signatory to the *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights*, which guarantees the right to adequate housing.

Does the minister responsible for the Yukon Housing Corporation believe that housing is a human right?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Quite frankly, I'm offended, as I know are my colleagues, by the member of the NDP's attempt to portray us as lacking in compassion when in fact our track record demonstrates that we have put more investments into social housing than the NDP. The NDP preach a good line, but they didn't put their money where their mouth was.

We have invested in social housing — I mentioned a 40-percent increase in social housing stock and increase to the social assistance rates. I remind members that the last two governments to increase social assistance rates were the Yukon Party during my time as Minister of Health and Social Services and a previous Yukon Party government. The NDP are very good at preaching a good line, but in fact their track record was lacking. In addition to tanking the economy, they did not invest in social housing to the same extent that we have. We will continue to make those investments and continue to invest in a range of housing options that address the needs of those who are —

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

Question re: Whistle-blower legislation

Ms. Moorcroft: The Yukon Party's 2006 election platform promised Yukoners — and I quote — “effective whistle-blower legislation which protects the anonymity of public employees who report abuse within the government and provides a clear process for a full and fair investigation”. Today whistle-blower protection remains a broken Yukon Party promise. This is a shame, given this government's long record of project mismanagement.

Will the minister explain why this government has not brought forward whistle-blower protection legislation to protect public servants who act in good faith to expose wrongdoing?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: I'd remind the member opposite that we recently had a select committee look at this issue and provide recommendations to the Legislature and thus to the government. We, on this side of the House, are taking those

recommendations very seriously. We're planning to move forward with whistle-blower — or sometimes referred to as public interest disclosure of wrongdoing — legislation. We have full intentions of bringing forward that legislation as soon as possible. Of course, there's some work that needs to be done on the side of the Public Service Commission and other branches of government to develop that legislation. But, as we heard in a motion this week from the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin urging the government to table that legislation in 2014, I have full intentions of fulfilling that commitment both to this Legislature and to Yukoners.

Ms. Moorcroft: The second Select Committee on Whistle-blower Protection did submit its report a year ago in December 2012. This May, the minister said the government was committed to implementing the committee's recommendations and that it was working on whistle-blower legislation. Well, the legislation has not appeared. This government has failed once again to follow through on its promise to bring in whistle-blower legislation — a promise dating back seven years now.

Is this government afraid to provide protection to courageous Yukon public servants who expose wrongdoing?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: In December 2012, the select committee released its final report on this matter and we are moving forward with the recommendations that it entails, but I have to say it's a little disturbing to hear from the member opposite that she would have us create a piece of legislation without doing the due diligence to make sure that we get it right. It's important that we let the Public Service Commission do the work they need to do to develop the legislation effectively.

We know the NDP's reaction here is to legislate first and then ask questions later. We're going to get it right. We're going to do the work that needs to be done to ensure that we have the best possible piece of legislation, and then bring it forward to this legislature for debate and discussion and eventually, hopefully, the passing of that legislation.

Question re: F.H. Collins Secondary School reconstruction

Ms. Moorcroft: The Premier states proudly that he has been fiscally responsible by spending yet another million dollars on redesigning F.H. Collins, this time to redesign an Alberta school and allegedly bring it up to Yukon standards, but, as we pointed out yesterday, the design is still based on Alberta standards and will be inadequate for our much colder northern climate. Ministers opposite like to talk about getting it right.

Will the minister tell this House why an inadequately insulated and designed school — in other words, an ice palace — is a better place for our children than a properly designed northern school?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: You know, Mr. Speaker, really it might come as a surprise to the member opposite that the Premier doesn't spend all of his time reviewing all the minute details on every construction project that the government undertakes.

Myself or the elected officials — the minister doesn't determine what the insulation value is going to be or what the window specs are or whether they're going to have to use a Phillips or Robertson screws when they build this.

Of course this building will be built to the building codes that we have here in the Yukon. That's what we expect and that's exactly what will occur.

Ms. Moorcroft: Mr. Speaker, I'm sure the building in Alberta looked beautiful and the Premier's eyes have been caught by a shiny object. This Alberta design is not energy efficient. It no longer uses geothermal heating that we have already laid the groundwork for and will waste more taxpayers' money. It would appear that the Premier is more interested in ensuring another election photo op after 10 years of broken Yukon Party promises to build F.H. Collins School. But that is politics at its worst and we're talking about our children and the facility that they are educated in.

The minister told this House yesterday that one of his government's objectives is to build schools on time and on budget. Does the minister realize that the August 2013 completion date has come and gone?

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: All of our construction projects meet or exceed the building code requirements. We have to get a building permit from the City of Whitehorse and then the city inspectors come and inspect it. It has to pass the code like your house does before you can get occupancy and you can go live in your house, or kids can go to school. The new F.H. Collins is being designed.

It meets LEED silver energy efficiency standards. LEED stands for "Leader in Energy and Environmental Design." This sets the benchmark for design, construction and operation of high-performance green buildings. The Mother Margaret Mary School, the model that we've got, is built to the LEED standards. The new F.H. Collins Secondary School will provide an exceptional learning environment for students for decades to come and we are looking forward to seeing the construction begin early next spring.

Ms. Moorcroft: Yesterday, the Minister of Highways and Public Works says it's not easy to build a school. Well, Mr. Speaker, with this government, building a school is apparently downright impossible and it's not just this side of the House who holds this opinion. The Auditor General, in reviewing the Department of Highways and Public Works, reported that she "found weaknesses in managing building development projects."

What is this minister and the government doing differently on the F.H. Collins project than they did on Whistle Bend, the new jail, the arrest processing unit, and the Dawson City and Watson Lake hospitals that the Auditor General wrote so scathingly about?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: As I said, this school will meet all the building codes and in fact we just articulated from the minister that, in fact, in most cases will probably be exceeding those building codes. Our job as ministers is to provide the direction and then allow the capable and well-experienced and competent government workers to ensure that the vision that this government puts forward is fulfilled.

We are building a new school. This will be a beautiful school that will be the envy of all of those students, and their parents, and the teachers and the school administrators. What is just as important is that we will do this school in a fiscally responsible manner. We're also looking forward to seeing many Yukon contractors and skilled tradespeople working on this job as it goes forward.

I'd also just like to take an opportunity to talk about some of the good projects that this government has delivered on time and on budget recently: the Dawson City housing project; seniors residence in Whitehorse; the Destruction Bay roof replacement; Ross River arena — in fact, on time and underbudget; Selkirk Street Elementary School roof, on time and underbudget; Whitehorse Elementary School roof; Porter Creek Secondary School roof replacement; and 207 Alexander Street continues to be on time and will be on budget. This government is managing Yukoners —

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

We will proceed now with Orders of the Day.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

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

Speaker: It has been moved by the Government House Leader that 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): Committee of the Whole will now come to order. The matter before the Committee is Vote 8, Department of Justice, in Bill No. 11, *Second Appropriation Act, 2013-14*.

Do members wish to take a brief recess?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

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

Recess

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

Bill No. 11: *Second Appropriation Act, 2013-14* — continued

Chair: The matter before the Committee is Bill No. 11, *Second Appropriation Act, 2013-14*. We will proceed with Vote 8, Department of Justice.

Department of Justice — continued

Chair: Mr. Nixon has the floor with one minute, 56 seconds remaining.

Hon. Mr. Nixon: I know I don't have a whole lot of time, so I will get back to one question that the member opposite had asked on Tuesday, and that was about a copy of the research methodology for the FASD prevalence study. Research that includes human participants commonly undergoes an ethics review of the research methodology. I did describe that a little bit on Tuesday. This is to ensure that the research is conducted in accordance with the highest ethical standards.

I can report that the methodology for the FASD prevalence study is currently being reviewed by a University of British Columbia's research ethics board. Our application was submitted last month. As the document passes through this process, small changes may occur to the study protocols. Once the document has been finalized and approved by a research ethics board, then the Department of Justice will be able to share it.

I know there's not much time. I'll let the member opposite ask another question.

Ms. Moorcroft: I'd like to thank the minister for that answer and I'll look forward to having an opportunity to review the research methodology when it has been cleared through the ethics committee at the university.

I would like to ask the minister a question regarding the court's video conferencing project, which will allow for remote remand court appearances. I think that will be useful in many circumstances. I would, however, like to ask the minister to assure the House that when it is important for a client to be present with his or her lawyer, they will be able to attend the court for an appearance in person if either the person who was accused and/or their legal counsel considers it necessary for them to appear in person.

Hon. Mr. Nixon: Before I go on to answer that question and some of the questions that were asked on Tuesday, I want to kind of expand a little bit on the Remembrance Day ceremonies that are happening and the tie that it has to Justice. As we approach Remembrance Day, I'd like to recognize the service that our Speaker and my honourable colleague from the Klane riding provided our country in the armed forces.

It's for veterans, like both of you and all who have served and are serving, that we mark Remembrance Day every year. As Minister of Justice, I am constantly reminded of why it is so important to never forget and to always be diligent. Each and every one of us here today has the good fortune to be elected by the people of our ridings into the Yukon Legislature, and I've had the privilege to serve in the capacity of Attorney General, Minister of Justice, as well as Minister of Tourism and Culture.

Speaking to justice — all countries have some form of justice, but it is important to realize that not all justice systems are equal or fair. The same can be said of governments. Not all systems of government serve all of their people or ensure that gender equality or minority rights are respected. In Canada, like most countries, gender rights, minority rights, a right to a fair trial, basic democratic rights and basic rights of freedom — including freedom of speech, freedom of

movement and freedom of person — all evolved over time. In many countries today, these basic rights are not respected or they are willfully suppressed by governments often led by powerful factions. We see this all over the world.

The current fight in Syria where a majority Muslim faction led by a dictator is suppressing a Muslim minority and other minorities who live under their regime is a good example. In Syria, prior to the civil war and all of its atrocities, citizens who spoke out against the government could be rounded up and thrown in prison without charge indefinitely. They could have their possessions confiscated. They could even be murdered by that regime.

Other examples include Afghanistan, where Canadians fought for justice and freedom and died recently to replace an oppressive Taliban regime that wanted to impose a harsh form of Sharia law by force on a public that was unwilling, but too brutalized by that regime, to fight.

It's not just in Muslim countries that oppressive regimes can occur. Communist dictatorships are still very much a part of the current world. In Korea, for example, where a state of war still exists between South and North Korea, we see a dichotomy of societies in its starkest form. In South Korea, which was and is still today backed by western powers, there is a democratically elected government that holds regular multi-party elections and has a strong and a fair justice system. There is freedom of speech, freedom of religion and freedom of movement. There is also a free press that acts as the eyes of the citizens and keeps scrutiny on those who hold public office. In South Korea there is justice. The government does not drag people from their homes in the middle of the night just because they oppose government.

In North Korea, which is commonly called the hermit kingdom, the government controls all communications and uses an enormous propaganda apparatus set up by the ruling clan and its supporters to stay in power. The government is nominally a communist government, but in reality it's a brutal dictatorship led by one family. In North Korea the government keeps out information about the rest of the world and carefully spoon-feeds its citizens information. They do this as a means of control.

Those who speak out could be killed outright or sent to prison camps. Whole generations of people are kept in these prison camps in atrocious conditions and put to work on menial tasks, often beaten, raped or starved. There is no fair justice system or democracy in North Korea. The only form of justice is the one that is entirely controlled by the ruling clan.

Sadly, throughout the world, there are still many more brutal governments and terrifying wars that are being fought. It is for this reason that each and every one of us must be diligent. We must remember the sacrifices of those who fought and died or were injured in fighting regimes such as those I have spoken about. If we don't, it's a short walk from here to that kind of brutal reality.

I want to leave you with a thought from a pastor named Martin Niemöller. Martin lived through Nazi-controlled Germany in the 1930s and the 1940s. He often spoke about the apathy of Germans when the government began rounding

up opposition groups that opposed the Nazi government. Martin Niemöller's famous quote goes like this:

“First they came for the communists,
and I didn't speak out because I wasn't a communist.
Then they came for the socialists,
and I didn't speak out because I wasn't a socialist.
Then they came for the trade unionists,
and I didn't speak out because I wasn't a trade unionist.
Then they came for me,
and there was no one left to speak for me.”

On Remembrance Day, surrounding the cenotaph, we have an honour guard who stand on guard and in remembrance. They stand on Remembrance Day to respect the sacrifices of those that went before them, but they also stand on guard against tyranny and are a warning against those that would try to destroy freedom.

I thank them. I thank them for their service and I would hope that each and every one of us would remember why they do it. Last year at the Porter Creek Secondary School Remembrance Day Ceremony, I spoke about the rights and freedoms Canadians enjoy. I also spoke about the fact that these rights and freedoms are not enjoyed around the world. There are countries in which oppression and violence exist.

Canadians have defended and fought for our rights and freedoms. We have stood with our allies in combat to uphold our Canadian values. Our Canadian veterans have served our nation by serving our armed forces and our RCMP. Our nation asks a heavy price of them in time of war and it is a price each of them has volunteered to pay. They do it for the love of our nation, of our values, of our rights and of our freedoms. As I shared the other day, veterans continue to serve in times of peace, including after they leave active service. I would like to share with this House one example of how one veteran continues to serve.

A friend of our family paid a heavy price for his service to our nation but he continues to find ways to give to Canada. Before I speak about his courage, I need to speak about my niece Jenna.

Jenna was born with a complex medical issue. She was born without the tibia in her lower leg. That's the weight-bearing bone. She was also born with what I understand to be a valgus foot, which is the opposite of a club foot. My brother and sister-in-law were faced with a gut-wrenching decision on what to do. They had the choice to keep the lower leg of their daughter, who would then require surgery — likely every year until she was well into her 20s — plus continuous therapy over the decades, or they could choose to have the leg amputated from the knee down.

In speaking to this in the context of our war vets, both Armed Forces and RCMP, and the incredible support my niece receives from War Amps, it's not hard to figure out what their final decision was. Bert, a World War II veteran, has been there to help my niece since she was about three years old. He provides support and comfort the family cannot, and yet he attests that it is my niece who supports and comforts him. For years now, my niece and Bert have laid a

wreath together every year at Remembrance Day. They have an incredibly special bond.

Just in the last year, War Amps approached my brother's family to inquire whether or not they would be interested in being featured in a War Amps commercial. That commercial can be seen on the War Amps website. Click the YouTube icon and choose the War Amps legacy video. It's really quite something.

As a father of a child with a disability myself, I understand first-hand the importance of support. It seems to me that the War Amps video's purpose is to show the important contribution that our vets and our war amps make to children. There is a focus on the important and significant contribution Canadian veterans make to our nation. It is important that each and every one of us — and not just at this time of year — should express our appreciation for their service to our nation in times of conflict and in times of peace.

Bert and the other veterans like him find ways to continue to contribute to Canada, for which we are all deeply appreciative. Our friend, Bert, and the other veterans like him contribute because of their love for Canada and because of their desire for justice and for freedom. Our veterans, both Armed Forces and RCMP, have volunteered and sacrificed a great deal for the betterment of all Canadians.

Since becoming the Minister of Justice, I have seen a number of sincere requests for assistance brought forward. Some strike an emotional chord when it involves people, especially children with disabilities. Finding the funds to address these needs is always challenging. I appreciate the need for provincial, territorial and federal governments — especially departments of Justice and Public Safety — to be prudent, efficient and thoughtful in how they spend money. I know the requests that come across my desk. I can only imagine the volume and scope of requests that other governments as a whole receive.

Fighting for justice, some of these veterans still carry with them the scars, physical and emotional, of their battles. Our family friend Bert is also an amputee. I know our Speaker and the MLA for Kluane both served. To both of them, to Bert, and to all other vets, we do remember. We remember every day the sacrifice given for our freedom.

Now, in response to the member's last question — and then I can get into some of the previous questions on court video conferencing. These are typically for routine appearances. Video remand allows an accused, who has been remanded to the Correctional Centre, to appear in court using video conferencing technology instead of travelling to the courthouse. The Department of Justice has installed video conferencing equipment that connects the Whitehorse Correctional Centre with the law courts. This allows everyone in the courtroom to see and hear the accused and for the accused to see and hear them.

There are also four interview rooms in the courthouse where a defence lawyer can have a private video meeting with a client held at the Whitehorse Correctional Centre. Court Services successfully tested the video conferencing technology in late June by conducting a video remand

appearance. In late August, staff facilitated a video meeting between defence counsel and a client at the Correctional Centre. Policy and procedures are being developed this fall with a view to implementation in the new year.

Bringing an accused in custody to court has some consequences.

There are personnel and transportation resources required. The accused is in a less secure environment while being transported between the Correctional Centre and the courthouse. Also, because all accused are transported in one trip, they must wait for each other to be finished in court before being transported back. This means they wait in court cells for hours on simple appearances that could potentially just take a few minutes. While held in the court holding cells, which are smaller cells with no windows, accused are unable to participate in work or program opportunities at the Whitehorse Correctional Centre.

Video remand eliminates the consequences of transporting an accused to the courthouse for non-contentious appearances, while still allowing them to participate in their court proceedings. There is no disadvantage to having the accused appear by video conference instead of being physically present.

Ms. Moorcroft: It is true that many people carry scars of injustice, and I'm pleased to hear the minister talking about the value of human rights, gender equality and the rule of law. I want to share with the minister that all members of society must be treated with respect and dignity and that the Yukon government must offer those human rights protections to every person it interacts with: its employees, the public at large, people who have been criminally charged, people in the correctional system, families who may be coming to the Department of Justice in relation to maintenance enforcement orders or custody orders.

Again, I'm pleased the minister has acknowledged the value of human rights.

The minister also spoke about Remembrance Day. I look forward to attending and speaking at Golden Horn Elementary School again this year with my colleague, the Member for Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes, at their ceremony tomorrow. The Leader of the Official Opposition will join the minister at the Porter Creek school tomorrow.

The minister, in responding to my question about the video conferencing appearances, indicated those would be for non-contentious appearances and there was no disadvantage, so I just want to repeat that I'm looking for an assurance that, if the accused and his or her lawyer believe that, because of the matter being considered, they need to appear in person, they would be able to make that decision.

I also want to ask the minister for some information in relation to segregation confinement and special handling at Whitehorse Correctional Centre. The minister uses the term "separate confinement" in responding to one of my letters of inquiry, but I'd like to start with speaking about the psychiatric effects of long-term segregation. There has been considerable study about the effects of what is known collectively as isolation sickness for people who are housed in

special handling units or secure housing units or separate confinement.

The Elizabeth Fry Society just last month put on a workshop with an evening discussion and then a full-day seminar up at Yukon College where they looked at solitary confinement as well as other issues. Typical symptoms of this isolation sickness include: affective disorders such as anxiety, paranoia, uncontrollable rage and depression; cognitive disorders such as confusion, inability to focus, oversensitivity to stimuli, obsessive rumination, hallucinations and other perceptual disorders; physical disorders such as headaches, lethargy, insomnia, digestive problems, heart palpitations, fainting spells and bodily aches and pains; and in extreme cases, psychotic breakdown, self-mutilation and suicide.

A study of 100 prisoners in the security housing unit at Pelican Bay State Prison showed that over 80 percent showed signs of symptoms such as anxiety, headaches, lethargy, insomnia, ruminations, irrational anger, oversensitivity to stimuli, confused thought processes and social withdrawal. Many of the symptoms associated with SHU syndrome overlap with post-traumatic stress disorder and with the typical effects of sensory deprivation and social isolation in the free world.

There is a phenomenon known as "prisonization" that Craig Haney wrote about, whereby prisoners who manage to adapt to the situation of extreme control find it difficult to adjust to life outside the control unit. The structure of their life, their relation to space and time, their social relations with others and even their own identity is so thoroughly organized by the prison regime that they find it difficult, or impossible, to initiate or sustain their activity without it. Haney writes, "Because so much of our individual identity is socially constructed and maintained, the virtually complete loss of genuine forms of social contact and the absence of any routine and recurring opportunities to ground one's thoughts and feelings in a recognizable human context, leads to an undermining of the sense of self and a disconnection of experience from meaning."

I wrote to the Minister of Justice in August about the use of segregation at Whitehorse Correctional Centre. I'd like the minister to answer some questions I have about the use of separate confinement at Whitehorse Correctional Centre. I understand from a briefing with his officials earlier in the week that the minister has a detailed briefing note and he should be able to respond to my questions.

How many inmates have been placed in separate confinement since Whitehorse Correctional Centre opened in March 2012? How many days have inmates spent in segregation at the facility, looking at individual inmates? What is the average number of days spent in separate confinement for male inmates and for female inmates? How many of the inmates who were held in separate confinement were on remand status? How many inmates have been kept in the special handling unit and for how long? What assessments are done on the mental and physical health of inmates who are kept in separate confinement?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: Before I enter into or start to discuss the issue about separate confinement, I'll address some of the questions that the member asked on Tuesday when we were on the floor.

The Member for Copperbelt South asked whether or not people can refuse to participate in the FASD prevalence study. I addressed this on Tuesday when I said that any correctional population involvement with phase 2 of the research study is completely voluntary. What participants choose to do with the details of their assessments is completely up to them.

Also, the Member for Copperbelt South asked about a cancelled tender for the FASD prevalence study, and I also addressed this on Tuesday. A tender for the services of the clinical coordinator was withdrawn because the two bids that qualified were over the budget limit. It is important for the study to stay within the budget allocation. A different delivery of this part of the study is now being assessed.

The member also asked for further details related to Victim Services projects. I provided very detailed information updating the House on the five areas of focus on the *Victims of Crime Strategy*. The *Victims of Crime Strategy* was developed by the Department of Justice and the Women's Directorate in collaboration with First Nations and community agencies in order to enhance our responses to the needs of victims, families and communities.

The strategy has five core elements: strengthening the focus on the needs of victims of crime; focus on addressing violence against women; exploring legislative options; mentorship and capacity-building in communities; and integrating responses for victims, offenders, families and communities.

Initiatives of the *Victims of Crime Strategy* have included enhanced staffing, enhanced services to rural communities, implementation of Yukon's *Victims of Crime Act* and a communication strategy. Initiatives have also included development of the *Links* project, victims of crime emergency fund, and mentorship and capacity building for workers who respond to victims of crime.

The Member for Copperbelt South asked whether the VictimLINK services were provided by people who are based in Yukon, familiar with Yukon services and Yukon legislation. The persons who respond to Yukon and the three northern communities are trained to provide programming options available through the Yukon government. There have been reports that some northern callers have felt the information they were receiving was not complete. Our Victim Services branch is working with VictimLINK to address this issue and to ensure the service is working at intended.

The member opposite asked whether the RCMP provide specialized training on investigating sexual assaults and child and elder abuse to members of detachments in rural communities.

The answer to this is fairly straightforward. The SRU is a four-member unit with specialized training and an enhanced knowledge of investigation techniques and specific responses appropriate to sexualized assault and domestic abuse. In

addition, the SRU identifies training and divisional needs related to domestic violence and sexualized assault. Any assistance provided by the unit on investigations related to their mandate is used as an opportunity to develop and share their specialized skills and abilities with all police officers in Yukon. The unit provides child abuse interviewing and investigation courses and has trained both police and social workers on best practices in conducting these investigations.

All members in M Division are required to complete a national domestic violence on-line course. I know the SRU is a fairly new unit. I would like to welcome all the members of the RCMP — the four specific members that make up that unit — to the unit and thank them for the incredible work that they do.

The Member for Copperbelt North also asked for some information about the protocol reached between the Watson Lake detachment of the RCMP and the community and the Liard Aboriginal Women's Society. The protocol follows a series of workshops that took place from February 2011 to March 2013. The project was initiated by the Liard Aboriginal Women's Society and was held in both Watson Lake and Whitehorse. RCMP employees joined with Kaska women, the Yukon women's coalition delegates, representatives from government and community organizations.

Sessions carefully focused on the justice system, policing, culture, historical colonialism and residential schools to explore and understand how society responds to women who experience violence. The protocol signed earlier this year establishes principles, objectives and core commitments which capture the new relationship. The purpose of that protocol is to create safety and justice for women through increased collaboration with the RCMP, Liard Aboriginal Women's Society and community agencies in the Watson Lake detachment area.

The member opposite also asked when a protocol agreement might be reached between the Whitehorse detachment of the RCMP and Whitehorse women's groups. Following the signing of the protocol between Liard Aboriginal Women's Society and the RCMP, Watson Lake and the coalition of women's organizations and the RCMP discussed developing a similar protocol between the RCMP and women's organizations in Whitehorse. I am told that the coalition of women's organizations has recently obtained funding to support them in the development of such a protocol. We understand that discussions on process and timelines will now begin.

The member opposite also asked how often in the last three months inmates and elders used the purpose-built First Nation healing room as well as a question asked about how often elders meet with inmates and how often carving, beading and drum-making programs have been offered. I provided detailed information about the elders advisory committee that works with management and staff to provide counsel on aspects of programming and operations at the Whitehorse Correctional Centre to ensure that First Nations traditional values are reflected.

There are a number of First Nation program options available at the Correctional Centre, including beading, carving, crafts, drum-making, traditional foods and traditional medicines. Madam Chair, First Nation offenders also take part in traditional activities such as elders' counselling, spiritual guidance, talking circles and traditional crafts. Recently offenders were participating in a traditional language program for Southern Tutchone, and from April to August 2013, elders performed 29 talking circles where inmates were given the opportunity to smudge. This fiscal year to date, 82 inmates have accessed elders on a one-to-one basis. Meetings are held on the unit or in the healing room as the inmate or elder wish. Elders meetings are facilitated via requests from inmates and then scheduled with the elders.

In August, at the unveiling of the Project of Heart workshop, which was held from May to June, thirty-one inmates participated. Project of Heart involved the creation of tiles reflecting on the effects and experiences associated with residential school.

From May to September, in Southern Tutchone language classes, between two and six participants on each unit participated. From September to October, for the eagle feather workshop on each unit, 15 inmates participated. In October, there was the talking stick workshop and nine inmates participated. Also in October, the talking circle was held with elders on each unit and six members participated.

The First Nations cultural awareness program that was held from October 22 to 23 was presented in the healing room. There were 23 males and four female inmates who participated. First Nations programs of this kind are voluntary. Stats on smudging are not available. Inmates can smudge in the fresh-air yards when they choose to. Elders will often smudge with inmates when they see them on a one-to-one basis, but statistics are not collected on the performance of that ceremony.

The member opposite also asked whether the department has arranged for a land titles registry that could both guarantee aboriginal rights and titles and allow for electronic land registry to serve the needs of First Nations and the general population. The issue of registering Yukon First Nation settlement land in the Land Titles Office is one that continues to be examined and is legally very complex. The Yukon *Land Titles Act* establishes a system for the registration of fee simple land, which is why Yukon First Nation fee simple settlement land is registered in it. It does not contain any titles for lesser interests that are not backed up by a fee simple interest.

Allowing for the registration of less than fee simple interests is something that would require amendments to the *Land Titles Act*. We understand the system the seven Yukon First Nations are considering would be established under the First Nation's legislation and would be independent of the Yukon Land Titles Office and therefore consistent with 5.5.1.4 of the Yukon First Nations final agreements.

We have identified that it would be desirable for whichever supporting computer platform is ultimately used in the Land Titles Office that it can be linked to other land

information systems, potentially including First Nations land registration.

The member opposite was recently asking about separate confinement. The vast majority of inmates have never been separately confined. Forty-four individuals were separately confined at the Whitehorse Correctional Centre this calendar year.

Under the *Corrections Act*, separate confinement can be used for one or more of the following reasons: to protect other inmates and staff from situational or chronic violence; to protect the inmate from others; to isolate inmates with significant physical or mental health problems that cannot be accommodated in other areas; to protect the inmate from self-harm; to isolate an inmate who is believed to be concealing drugs or other dangerous contraband; and to isolate an inmate for the purpose of having his or her mental condition assessed under the terms of the *Mental Health Act*. Inmates may be segregated pending, or as a disposition of, a disciplinary hearing. All separate confinement placements are reviewed by a manager.

All separate confinement placements are reviewed by a manager. The reasons for separate confinement are given to an inmate in writing within 24 hours of the placement. The inmate, in turn, has the right to provide their reasons to the manager regarding whether they believe that the placement is inappropriate or that their circumstances have changed or that an alternate placement should be considered. The *Corrections Act* established a system of independent adjudication to ensure that the rights of inmates are upheld during disciplinary processes. Inmates have a right to appeal disciplinary decisions through the Investigations and Standards Office, either by mail or telephone. All inmates are briefed on this process during their admission to the Whitehorse Correctional Centre. Time already spent separately confined pending a disciplinary hearing may be deducted from a disciplinary disposition imposed by the independent adjudicator.

Inmates are only placed in a separate confinement in a non-disciplinary situation if there are no other options available to ensure the safety and security of the inmate, other inmates, or the Correctional Centre and the staff.

It's important to note that the vast majority of inmates have never been separately confined. Forty-eight individuals were separately confined at the Correctional Centre this calendar year, as I had mentioned. Seven were separately confined for medical observation, three individuals were placed under separate confinement voluntarily, and 36 individuals were separately confined because of their conduct, which resulted in 119 placements under various sections of the Act. Two of those were women — one for medical detox.

Case managers work closely with long-term, separately confined inmates in an effort to return them to regular living units at the earliest opportunity.

Ms. Moorcroft: I'd like to thank the minister for reading into the record his answers to the questions I had been in discussion with him about on Tuesday. Some of them he had already answered, but I guess he wanted to make sure for the record that I knew the answer had been given.

The minister answered some of the questions that I had asked in relation to separate confinement, and I'm going to have to review the record, but I believe that he didn't respond to all of those questions. Perhaps, when he is next on his feet, the minister could respond to the question of what assessments are done on the mental and physical health of inmates kept in segregation cells and the special handling unit.

I'd also like the minister to outline what steps are taken to ensure that disciplinary hearings and the adjudicators' process that he spoke about when appealing to the ISO observes the rules of administrative fairness and the rights of inmates to appeal in accordance with human rights law.

I would also like to put on the record the last area of questioning that I have for the minister, which is the capital expenditures for the Whitehorse Correctional Centre infrastructure project building completion.

That is a \$369,000 revote. I'd like the minister to provide the information about what that covers. I know there were some heating equipment items in the budget. I'd like him to indicate what the total cost of the capital construction for Whitehorse Correctional Centre will be with the amounts before us in the supplementary estimates.

Hon. Mr. Nixon: First I'll answer the member opposite's question about the ISO. There's a process for inmates to raise concerns or complaints about their treatment at WCC. Those inmates who have a concern must first make a written complaint, which is then investigated and responded to by the superintendent of the Whitehorse Correctional Centre. If the inmate is unsatisfied with the superintendent's response, he or she may request a review by the ISO — and that's the Investigation and Standards Office.

The mandate of the ISO is to provide independent oversight of the Corrections branch. It was established in 2010 with the proclamation of the *Corrections Act* and accompanying regulations. The ISO makes recommendations to the Corrections branch manager to ensure a timely, thorough and fair complaint and discipline process.

The key responsibilities of the ISO are inspections of the Whitehorse Correctional Centre on a periodic basis, reviews of inmate discipline on appeal, reviews of complaints made by inmates or those on probation, as well as investigations. The director of the ISO may investigate any matter with respect to the administration of the *Corrections Act* at my request or that of the assistant deputy minister, or on the director's own motion.

In 2013 so far, the ISO has thus far received 71 complaints or inquiries and 47 appeals of disciplinary hearings. Out of the 71 complaints, 68 have been closed. There was a 91-percent increase of complaints or inquiries due to the ISO in 2012 compared to 2011. This year's complaint stats are expected to be comparable to those of 2012.

When an appeal of discipline is made by either an inmate or the person in charge of the Correctional Centre, the ISO has four available decisions under section 35.6 of the *Corrections Act* regulations: (a) confirm the decision made in the penalty or corrective measure imposed; (b) confirm the decision made

and substitute any available penalty or corrective measure that the person presiding of the hearing could have imposed; (c) rescind the decision made and the penalty or corrective measure imposed; or (d) direct that a new hearing be convened and presided over by a person appointed by the assistant deputy minister.

To date in 2013, the ISO has received 49 appeals of disciplinary hearings. Of those 49 appeals launched, the ISO confirmed the decision and disposition in 31 cases, confirmed the decision but substituted the disposition in nine cases, rescinded the decision and disposition on four cases, and directed a new hearing on five of those cases. When a decision on the penalty imposed is rescinded, the ISO will direct the person in charge of the Correctional Centre to change the inmate's record and reflect that decision.

The member opposite was talking about the increase of \$369,000. Highways and Public Works are the performing department for these funds and work continues on routing the heating/cooling systems at the Whitehorse Correctional Centre. Management Board approved \$369,000 as a revote to complete the infrastructure project building completion. This revote was based on the contract commitment in place as of March 31, 2013, and for outstanding work in progress as identified by PMD, including design and modification to equipment and systems to address items identified during the final testing and commissioning period.

There was an additional \$58,000 that was approved as a revote for the video remand system — a component of the corrections infrastructure project based on the 2012-13 year and a commitment to Northwestel. Supplementary funding of \$63,000 was approved for the video remand system component of the corrections infrastructure project to complete the original scope of work as well as improvements that will improve the functionality and reliability of the system.

Mr. Silver: I'd like to begin by thanking the officials from the department for their hard work throughout the year, and in particular, in preparing for today's discussion. Department questions in the House allow Yukoners to learn how the money is being managed. It's an important endeavour. We really appreciate your participation, and we appreciate the minister's time as well. I would also like to thank the Official Opposition for their thorough questions. I do have a few left over.

I'm going to start with Legal Aid funding. Yukon Legal Aid Executive Director Nils Clarke has been advocating for an increase in core funding for Legal Aid for years, as we all know.

The government's current solution of providing funds by injecting periodic money needs to be discussed a bit further here.

The Legal Aid core budget for 2013-14 is listed at approximately \$1.6 million. That is significantly less than the budget for legal aid in the two other northern territories, as we've discussed here. According to the most recent numbers from the Canadian Centre for Justice statistics, the CCJS, report the total amount of money spent on legal aid in the

Northwest Territories for 2011-12 was about \$5.3 million; that year Yukon Legal Aid cost \$1.9 million. In Nunavut it was \$8.3 million; however Nunavut has considerably different challenges.

As the member opposite mentioned in Question Period, this may be comparing oranges to apples, but the amount of cases heard in each district, as a ratio compared to the percentage of territorial contributions in each individual territorial budget for Legal Aid, does show vast differences in the contributions from the Yukon compared to the other two territories. I think that's absolutely worth noticing here in the Assembly today.

Legal Aid in the Yukon has had to suspend some of their services, as we know, that it could offer. It's my turn to ask this question and hopefully with a couple of days to reflect from the last time we asked this question through the Official Opposition, maybe the minister will have a response. Will the government commit to increasing the Yukon Legal Aid funding so that people who have a hard time making ends meet can still have access to justice? When will the government take action to ensure legal aid is adequately funded so that Legal Aid can focus on providing its clients with access to justice, instead of having to work on just keeping the lights on?

Lastly on this issue, aside from the money, the minister has ordered a budgetary review of Legal Aid. Officials are to report back to him before the end of the year with recommendations regarding funding as we are told, and we are just wondering: have his department officials met with Legal Aid representatives yet and, if so, can we get an update on that process?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: I thank the member opposite for his question. My department officials continue to meet with Legal Aid. When we talk about apples to oranges — if we in the Yukon had to fly into every single community because of legal aid issues, or to bring people into Whitehorse by fly-in, then we would require as much money as Northwest Territories or Nunavut would perhaps require. The other thing that we need to mention is that in Yukon we have a lower crime rate than both Northwest Territories and Nunavut. That is important to note.

Madam Chair, in 2012-2013 Yukon provided Legal Aid with core funding of approximately \$1.6 million along with almost \$200,000 in additional funding to deal with high-cost criminal cases. A further \$35,000 was provided for lawyer services, specifically related to the Community Wellness Court. Madam Chair, of that \$1,798,751, Canada provided Yukon with \$864,000 through the access to justice services agreement. Yukon contributed the remaining \$934,751, as well as the additional \$35,000 mentioned earlier to do with the Community Wellness Court. Since 2003, federal funding for Legal Aid has remained the same and will continue to be frozen until 2017. This does put added pressure on Yukon to make up Legal Aid's inevitable funding shortfalls.

The Department of Justice officials have been working and will continue to work with Legal Aid to ensure that it has enough funding to cover its high-cost cases and provide its

regular services under the access to justice services agreement. As a result of those discussions, the department provided Legal Aid with a one-time funding increase of \$180,000 in the 2010-11 fiscal year to cover the high-cost cases that were before the courts at that time. The Department of Justice also provided \$235,000 of additional one-time funding to cover Legal Aid's high-cost cases for the 2011-12 fiscal year. This year, the department provided Legal Aid with an additional one-time funding of \$200,000, just in September, to cover the high-cost cases.

This does more than just keep the lights on. Access to justice and the proper administration of justice demands that low-income individuals who are charged with serious *Criminal Code* offenses should be provided with legal representation during the court process. In some situations, citizens charged with criminal offences have a constitutional right to legal aid. The determination as to which applicants are eligible for legal aid is made by Legal Aid itself, according to the Yukon *Legal Services Society Act* and access to justice services agreement and Legal Aid's own eligibility rules.

It's also important to note that Legal Aid has currently a surplus with the Department of Justice of \$200,000.

Mr. Silver: I appreciate the answer from the minister responsible. A lower crime rate — absolutely. But yet the sheer volume of cases heard in the Yukon is much more than double that of either of our territorial counterparts. We do agree that the amounts from the feds is of grave concern. It must be difficult for the Department of Justice to cover the rest of those expenses, we agree. However, effective funding to Legal Aid actually means a savings to Yukoners in the end. We're getting an education in how the system works. Legal Aid is constantly being asked in community court to represent those who don't have representation and, in doing so, the savings are going to be passed on because it really clogs the system when there are people without the proper form of legal aid.

There's more on that, but we're going to move on.

We'll talk a little bit about the Ross River decision. The Supreme Court of Canada has dismissed the Yukon government's request for an appeal in the case involving mineral staking in the Ross River Dena Council traditional territory. My question to the Minister of Justice would be, How much money was spent on this case? I'll leave it at that.

Hon. Mr. Nixon: I thank the member opposite for his question. Pertaining to the case of RRDC, the bulk of the work was done internally with Yukon government lawyers.

I think we spent under \$20,000 on outside legal counsel on that case.

Mr. Silver: Just to clarify, on outside legal counsel — what percentage of the representation would that have made compared to the lawyers who are on the current payroll?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: The bill for the RRDC lawyers has not actually been submitted yet. We've currently spent just under \$20,000 on outside legal costs.

As for the other information that you are seeking, that is something that I'm going to have to dig for a little deeper and get back to you on that.

Mr. Silver: I appreciate that answer from the minister and the response to get back to us. That's great.

I'll move on to the francophone school board. CSFY launched a lawsuit against the Government of Yukon in February 2009. The lawsuit cites section 23 of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, a constitutional guarantee for minority language rights, and seeks sole control of the school's annual funding. As of December, 28, 2012, the Government of Yukon had spent \$2.25 million in legal fees fighting this case. The government was ordered by the court to pay \$400,000 in legal fees for CSFY in 2011 and 2012.

Can I get an update on the francophone school board lawsuit? Are we still waiting for the results of the appeal? What has the legal bill been on this to date? Same question for this file — and I'll leave it at that.

Hon. Mr. Nixon: I think it's important to note that over the last two years, the level of service that I, as Attorney General and as Minister of Justice, have received from our government lawyers has been truly second to none. I appreciate every single day the level of information and support that they provide the department, so I would like to extend my sincere thanks to all of the lawyers of Yukon government for their hard work, for their dedication and for their knowledge and wisdom.

The case that the member opposite is asking about is a case right now before the Court of Appeal. I think the member from Klondike will appreciate that, as the Attorney General and Minister of Justice, I can't comment on that case right now.

Mr. Silver: I appreciate that we can't speak about things that are in front of the court.

My line of questioning obviously is along the lines of — I think an accountable and honest government should have a method to allow the taxpayers to know exactly how much money the government spends in litigation.

Could the minister and his officials comment on whether or not their legal team has increased or decreased in the last decade, or in the last 20 years — maybe a request for a legislative return on the number of staff lawyers and how much that has increased over the last decade?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: Currently we have 25 government lawyers and 15 support staff, and that would represent the last 10 years. I'll have to dig a little deeper on the actual stats, but it's about a 25- to 40-percent increase in total.

Mr. Silver: Thanks to the minister for the answers. I'm going to switch gears. I have two more topics that are related under the Correctional Centre. The Whitehorse Correctional Centre demolition — I know the Member for Copperbelt South has already asked a few questions on this and I'm just reiterating some of this. After completion of the new Whitehorse Correctional Centre, the old one is being demolished. Has the contract for demolition of the old Whitehorse Correctional Centre been tendered?

In 2010, the budget for the demolition was \$900,000. How much is currently being budgeted for this work? How many estimates does the government have for this work?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: A structural review of the old building was done by Highways and Public Works to assess whether the old facility could be put to other uses, such as, perhaps, storage. That review determined that it would be more costly to refurbish the building than to demolish it. The old facility is being cleaned out and is being kept secure until the demolition occurs.

I know the Minister of Highways and Public Works, my honourable colleague for the Klwane riding, has been a tremendous support on this file and I appreciate his help. HPW has developed a plan and preparatory work has been completed for demolition. Management Board approval for the demolition was obtained in September and completion of the demolition is targeted for the end of the fiscal year. The cost to demolish the buildings is approximately \$1.1 million and that did increase because there was some asbestos that had been identified that didn't get caught. It's just primarily in the boiler building, but it did increase the scope of the demolition.

Mr. Silver: The other question that I did ask was, how many estimates does the government have for this work? The reason is that in February 2013, the new F.H. Collins School project was put on hold because of — we'll call it "estimate issues", it's less contentious that way. In May of 2013, we learned that the government had underestimated the cost of the arrest processing unit and had to pay to rework part of that project.

In August 2013 the government cancelled the tender for the Beaver Creek fire hall — again related to budgeting issues. So I'd like to know from the minister if he thinks the demolition of the Whitehorse Correctional Centre will come in under this budget of \$1.1 million that has been asked here? What risks are there that his team would have discussed in terms of this project going overbudget? I know the minister had already commented previously in debate here on hazardous materials on the site and also remediation. What other steps is the government taking to ensure that this project will be managed correctly?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: I'll just remind the Member for Klondike that it's the Department of Justice on the floor right now, and not the Department of Highways and Public Works. Those questions would be best directed to the Minister of Highways and Public Works.

Mr. Silver: We discussed that in caucus earlier and would hate to lose our opportunity here with Justice and have Highways and Public Works come in and then not have the opportunity there. So we're making sure we're —

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Point of order

Chair: Mr. Cathers on a point of order.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Could the Member for Klondike clarify how a one-member caucus has a discussion?

Chair's ruling

Chair: There is no point of order. Mr. Silver.

Mr. Silver: Thank you, Madam Chair. Seeing as how there is no point of order, I sure would love to answer that

question but I'm going to keep this thing above the belt. I just wish others would as well.

We're going to ask a similar type of question. I might get the same answer here on this as well. For the arrest processing unit modifications, the territorial government is constructing what it has called an arrest processing unit. The facility comes from a recommendation after Raymond Silverfox died in police custody in 2008.

After pouring the slab for the facility, the government learned that it would be approximately \$2 million overbudget if it continued with a building of that size. Then the government redesigned and decreased the size of the facility. It then had to spend money reducing the size of the slab to meet the adjusted arrest processing unit design.

What was the original budget of the construction of the arrest processing unit? What is the current anticipated budget of this work? How many estimates has the government had to complete for this work? Does the minister think the project will go overbudget? What are the risks that his team has discussed in terms of factors that may in fact make this project go further off the track or overbudget?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: I thank the member opposite for his question. I'll answer part of that question and then defer the rest of the question on to the Minister of Highways and Public Works. Initially on this project, the Department of Justice had budgeted \$4.08 million. That was approved. After a redesign — because it was taking off and going to be well-overbudget — now we're on track at \$4.98 million for completion. The completion should be in the beginning of next year.

Ms. Moorcroft: I'd like to thank the minister for his responses to the questions that we've had. I just wanted to revisit a few matters for the record.

We had a discussion about the land titles registry. I wanted to encourage the minister to ensure that the department works with Yukon First Nations to support having links to any new First Nation systems and Yukon government systems and to consider whether amendments to the *Land Titles Act* might be a means of accommodating the interest of First Nations for registering land titles.

I also want to note that I had put on the record questions relating to the Whitehorse Correctional Centre phone system. I wanted to ask the minister to give some overview of programming. The question I have remaining is, Do inmates have access to programs on a daily basis, on a monthly basis or on a weekly basis? How frequently can inmates access programming? I had asked the minister what, if any, assessments on the mental and physical health of inmates are being done for those who are kept in separate confinement.

I'd like to inquire if inmates have access to an advocate to help them with complaints or appeals before the Inspections and Standards Office, and I'd also like to ask if the procedures follow rules of natural justice and administrative fairness.

The member for Klondike also asked some questions about the demolition of the old Whitehorse Correctional Centre — which is, in this capital budget in the supplementaries \$1.1 million for the demolition. I'd like to know if the minister does in fact anticipate that being on

schedule for March 31, 2014? He may have responded to that on Tuesday, but I just wanted to confirm because I didn't see it when I reviewed the record. With that, I would complete my questions for the minister.

Hon. Mr. Nixon: The inmate phone systems are commonly in correction centres across Canada. They provide the necessary technology to monitor and record phone calls to protect victims and enhance public safety and the safe operation of the facility. Monitoring recorded calls will only occur when the individualized responsible grounds to believe that an inmate's conversations may disclose involvement in illegal activities, harassment or harm to others, or possibly a threat to public safety or a threat to the management, operation or security of the Correctional Centre.

There are telephones in every unit, available to inmates for phone calls. Phone calls are free to lawyers, the Ombudsman, Offender Supervision and Services, which is probation, the MP, Members of the Legislative Assembly, the ISO, community justice workers, aboriginal court workers, ATIPP, family law centre, maintenance enforcement, and Health and Social Services.

The member also asked about the completion date for the arrest processing unit, and so far it's on target to be open for the end of this fiscal year. The member opposite also asked about offender programming at WCC. One of the key strategies of the correctional redevelopment initiative 2008-2012 was, in fact, the adoption of evidence-based rehabilitation programming to reduce recidivism. Offenders are referred to programming based on their specific needs. For example, if an offender is violent they will be referred to a program that addresses violence.

The following programs are delivered to offenders based on the assessed needs. There is the changing offender behavior program, respectful relationships, the relationship violence program, violence prevention program, emotions management for women, relationship skills for women, substance abuse management, sex offender treatment, and sex offender maintenance — just to name a few here. I could go on to the other programming that's offered at WCC. I think I have done it on a number of occasions on the floor of the Legislature so I won't repeat that unless the member opposite would want me to. I think that covers the questions from the member.

Chair: Is there any further debate on Vote 8, Department of Justice?

We're going to move into general line-by-line. We're going to start with operation and maintenance on page 11-4.

On Operation and Maintenance Expenditures
On Management Services
Management Services in the amount of \$567,000 agreed to

On Court Services
Court Services in the amount of \$420,000 agreed to
On Legal Services
Legal Services in the amount of \$426,000 agreed to
On Regulatory Services

Ms. Moorcroft: Could the minister just please read into the record the breakdown for this line item, because we did not discuss it in general debate?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: The Worker Advocate Office will have an increase of \$10,000 in expenses this fiscal year. This increase is to align the budget submitted and approved by the board with the Justice main estimates and O&M expenditures. That's \$10,000.

The Department of Justice will receive an additional \$45,000 from the Yukon Energy Corporation in 2013-14 for costs associated with rate application hearings. A one-time increase of \$6,000 and an ongoing increase of \$25,000 has been allocated to fund collective agreement increases, and a one-time increase of \$10,000 and an ongoing increase of \$4,000 was approved to fund management group salary increases.

Regulatory Services in the amount of \$100,000 agreed to

On Community Justice and Public Safety Division

Ms. Moorcroft: Again I would like to ask the minister to please provide a breakdown for these amounts.

Hon. Mr. Nixon: The Department of Justice has approved to continue work on the project funding agreement with Justice Canada, and that's \$500,000.

The Department of Justice has also approved a project for funding agreement with Justice Canada for \$5,000. Justice has a memorandum of understanding between British Columbia and Yukon for \$10,000. There is a transfer of \$95,000 that was approved to reallocate funds from lapsing personnel dollars. Public safety and investigations program director's office will be conducting a resource review as part of the *Sharing Common Ground* project — that's \$55,000. A review of the RCMP air services was \$60,000. Management Board also authorized a time-limited operation and maintenance funding of \$205,000 and an ongoing O&M increase of \$90,000 into 2013-14 to continue the implementation of *Sharing Common Ground* recommendations. There is also a one-time increase of \$59,000 and an ongoing increase of \$317,000 that has been allocated to fund collective agreement increases and, finally, there is a one-time increase of \$15,000 and an ongoing increase of \$40,000 that was approved to fund management group salary increases.

Community Justice and Public Safety Division in the amount of \$1,261,000 agreed to

On Total of Other Operation and Maintenance

Total of Other Operation and Maintenance in the amount of nil cleared

Total Operation and Maintenance Expenditures in the amount of \$2,774,000 agreed to

On Capital Expenditures

On Management Services

On Information Technology Equipment and Systems

Ms. Moorcroft: I'd like the minister to provide a breakdown for this line item. I'm aware that one of the projects that it refers to is the courts video conferencing project and another is replacing the court registry information system. I'm wondering if the additional amounts are because

it costs more than anticipated. Why was it necessary to bring in a supplementary?

Aside from providing the breakdown of the management services capital line items, I just want to go back to the question relating to the video conferencing project that I had. I do support the project. I understand that it can be quite helpful. I did ask the question though if an inmate and his or her lawyer felt that it was a substantive matter and they wanted to be present in the courtroom, the availability of a court video conferencing appearance would not preclude the ability of attending in court if the accused and the lawyer argued that it was a matter where they wanted to have the accused appear in person.

Hon. Mr. Nixon: I thank the member for the question. The answer to that question is that the policies are still being reviewed and created, so situations like those are ones that Justice is looking at as we move forward.

Management Board approved \$231,000 as a revote to continue work on the JEIN system. Project delays occurred in 2012 and 2013 due to changing the scope of the project, re-evaluating and regrouping to ensure success upon project completion. This revote has been endorsed by IRMC, so I'd like to thank the Minister for Highways and Public Works on that.

Management Board also approved \$49,000 as a revote to continue work on the quartz video conferencing project, as the member opposite had indicated. This project was delayed due to time spent on consulting with clients to develop project tender specifications. The project, once completed, would allow for the facilitation of remote remand court appearances. This revote has also been endorsed by IRMC.

Ms. Moorcroft: The notes that I have from the Opposition briefing indicated that, as well, there was an \$80,000 revote allocated to complete the snow and ice melter project for repairs to the heated elements under the concrete ramp to the underground parking at the Law Centre, as well as \$25,000 for a one-time supplemental to continue work on the Court registry renovation project.

Information Technology Equipment and Systems in the amount of \$280,000 agreed to

On Building Maintenance, Renovations and Space

Ms. Moorcroft: Could the minister give a breakdown please?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: I'd be happy to give a breakdown on this item. The Management Board approved \$80,000 as a revote to complete the snow and ice melter project for repairs to the heated elements under the concrete ramp to the underground parking lot at the Law Centre. Management Board has also approved \$25,000 as one-time supplemental funding to continue work on the court registry renovations project. A one-time reallocation of funds has been approved by Property Management division from the Health and Social Services project entitled "Mechanical Upgrade — Mayo Nursing Station", Project No. 00049, to the Department of Justice's capital building maintenance projects to fund the Justice project entitled "Fire Alarm Replacement — Yukon Justice Centre".

Building Maintenance, Renovations and Space in the amount of \$505,000 agreed to

On Court Services

Court Services Furniture and Equipment

Ms. Moorcroft: Could we get a breakdown for the amount of \$100,000 please?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: Management Board approved \$6,000 as one-time supplemental funding to finalize work on the installation of bullet-resistant glass for the judges' chambers. There was also a Management Board approval of \$17,000 as a one-time supplemental funding to continue the work on the Court Services sound booth project. Management Board also approved \$27,000 as a one-time supplemental funding for courtroom furniture refinishing and a transfer was approved in the period 5 variance report to reallocate \$50,000 in capital funds from institutional facilities, correctional facilities renovations to Court Services capital, furniture and equipment to facilitate the replacement of the courthouse cell doors.

Court Services Furniture and Equipment in the amount of \$100,000 agreed to

On Community Justice and Public Safety Division

On Correctional Facilities Equipment

Ms. Moorcroft: There are three correctional service line items here. I'm not certain which of the line items this question would fall under. I'll just put the question on the record.

I had asked the minister to provide a total figure amount for the Whitehorse Correctional Centre infrastructure project, and the building completion is one of the line items in the Community Justice and Public Safety division.

Hon. Mr. Nixon: As we know, this project happened over a number of years and funds were allocated for the project each year: in the 2006-07 fiscal year there was \$102,000 allocated; in the 2007-08 fiscal year there was \$731,000 allocated; in 2008-09 there was \$2,554,097 allocated to the project; in 2009-10 there was \$24,465,140 allocated for this project; in 2010-11 there was \$27,017,621 allocated to the project; in 2011-12 there was \$13,962,719 allocated to the project; in the 2012-13 year there was \$1,533,000 allocated to the project — for a total project cost for the Yukon corrections infrastructure project of \$70,366,000.

Correctional Facilities Equipment in the amount of \$9,000 agreed to

On Correctional Facilities Renovations

Correctional Facilities Renovations underexpenditure in the amount of \$59,000 cleared

On Corrections Infrastructure

Ms. Moorcroft: Could the minister provide us with a breakdown for this line item please?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: Management Board approved \$369,000 as a revote to complete the infrastructure project building completion. In addition, \$58,000 was approved as a revote for the video remand system.

Corrections Infrastructure in the amount of \$490,000 agreed to

On Arrest Processing Unit

Ms. Moorcroft: Could the minister explain what the increased \$516,000 supplementary item is for, for the arrest processing unit please?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: Management Board approved \$116,000 as a revote to complete construction of the APU. Management Board also approved an additional amount of \$400,000 as supplemental funding to support the arrest processing capital project.

Arrest Processing Unit in the amount of \$516,000 agreed to

On Old Corrections Centre Demolition

Ms. Moorcroft: I'd just like to ask the minister when they anticipate the tender will go out for the demolition of the old Correctional Centre and if the minister anticipates that it will be completed on time for March 31, 2014.

Hon. Mr. Nixon: I understand that the tender has been in the newspaper, but the question about the tendering process really needs to be taken up with the Minister of Highways and Public Works.

Ms. Moorcroft: Another question that I have in relation to the demolition of the old Correctional Centre, which is on the grounds where the building that was formerly a women's inmate facility was housed. Can the minister tell the House when the fence will be taken down around the building that is now a group home?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: I'm certain that the Minister of Highways and Public Works would be happy to answer that question when he's defending his supplementary budget.

Old Corrections Centre Demolition in the amount of \$1,100,000 agreed to

On Total of Other Capital

Total of Other Capital in the amount of nil cleared

Total Capital Expenditures for the Department of Justice in the amount of \$2,941,000 agreed to
Department of Justice agreed to

Chair: We're going to move on to Department of Community Services, Vote 51. We will recess for 15 minutes.

Recess

Chair: Committee of the Whole will now come to order. The matter before the Committee is Bill No. 11. We're going to proceed with Vote 51, Department of Community Services.

Department of Community Services

Hon. Mr. Cathers: It's a pleasure to begin here this afternoon to appear before the House in my first opportunity in Committee of the Whole as Minister of Community Services.

In introducing the debate in Committee of the Whole on the department's supplementary estimates for 2013-14, I'd like to identify a few of the highlights from it. The supplementary estimates before us consist of a \$10.83-million

increase in operation and maintenance expenditures and an increase of \$4.267 million in capital expenditures.

As I will detail in a moment, the significant part of the increase in cost was related to the unusually high cost of our fire season this year. As members will recall from previous years, I suspect our budgets typically have a range they operate within based on the average fire season. But when those higher fire seasons arrive, such as this one, that is not something that can be predicted in the spring, and even during the fire season it is something that is a daily challenge that meteorological staff at Wildland Fire Management do face, trying to predict what the next few weeks of summer will entail.

The department's overall operation and maintenance recoveries increased by \$197,000, mainly due to support for community recreation and particularly the various parent bodies of our numerous sports groups.

Operation and maintenance revenue increased by over \$1 million due to an increase in property tax volumes. Yukon's population continues to grow. Along with this growth comes an increase in the number of properties in the territory, as well as the value of those properties. The department's capital recoveries have decreased by \$590,000. This decrease is mainly due to some Building Canada projects being deferred to 2014-15.

The department's combined operation and maintenance and capital budget for 2013-14, including the supplementary estimate, is \$183,892,000. This represents a significant increase in programs and services that directly benefit Yukon people and communities by developing and improving community infrastructure, enabling the department to assist and respond to emergency events, building strong local governance, promoting and developing sport and recreation across the Yukon, enabling a broad range of licensing and business and regulatory services for the health, safety and protection of the public. The department continues to work to achieve goals set out in our strategic plan, which enables the Yukon government to deliver on our commitments to moving forward together and to achieve a better quality of life for Yukoners, promote a healthy environment, grow the economy and practise good governance. The Department of Community Services remains committed to vibrant, healthy and sustainable communities in the Yukon, and this supplementary budget contributes to this vision.

I will move to a few specific program areas. In the area of Protective Services, each year Yukon experiences emergencies from things such as wildfires, floods, avalanches and extreme weather-related events. Protective Services is the division of Community Services that provides public safety through emergency medical services, wildland fire management, emergency measures, structural fire protection, building safety and animal welfare.

By continuing to invest in equipment, training and infrastructure, the Yukon government has strengthened integration and coordination among the territory's emergency response agencies to bolster their preventive and response capacities.

This supplementary budget includes an \$8.038-million increase toward operation and maintenance of Protective Services division. In spring 2013, the Emergency Measures Organization, or EMO, coordinated the integrated, interdepartmental and inter-agency response to the spring floods in Rock Creek and Ross River. Both communities were significantly affected by separate ice jams and flood events that occurred concurrently. This supplementary estimate includes \$225,000 toward expenditures that deal with the spring and summer flooding at Rock Creek and Ross River and also assisted with the response to flooding in Mayo.

\$100,000 is allocated in this supplementary estimate to support oil-fired appliance inspections and permitting, including funding to recruit an oil fire and heating inspector as well as travel, training and other support costs.

This past fire season, as I mentioned, was higher than normal, in terms of the costs associated with protecting communities and fighting those fires. It was the fifth-most serious on record, and that necessitated \$7.4 million in increased costs as part of the supplementary estimate for Wildland Fire Management due to the high volume of fire starts and the high costs of dealing with some of the specific fires, including those close to communities — notably the fires that were at the Mandanna Lake and Little Salmon fires that were in proximity to both the highway and the community of Carmacks.

In 2013, 174 fires consumed some 260,000 hectares of vegetation. Wildland Fire Management fought 67 of them with no serious loss of property and no loss of life. The warm and dry extended fire season also saw several large lightning-caused fires burn near communities, such as the one that caused severe smoke conditions in Carmacks for several weeks. Wildland Fire Management protects Yukon communities and infrastructure from wildfire and other natural or human-caused disasters and helps to prevent personal injury, loss of life, and property damage. It achieves this by means of preparedness, early detection and rapid response.

We also had an increase of \$487,000 to Protective Services due to impacts of the new collective agreement and market adjustment impacts for staff. We also see an increase of \$2.78 million in capital expenditures to Protective Services as part of this supplementary budget. This includes a \$2,567,000 revote for projects carried over from the 2012-13 fiscal year for completion in 2013-14, including completion of the new emergency response centre at the top of Two Mile Hill in Whitehorse.

As I believe you know, earlier this week the Premier and I, along with the Minister of Education and Member for Whitehorse West and former Minister of Community Services, opened this and it is now officially in operation. Built to post-disaster construction standards as well as LEED energy efficiency standards, the building now houses Whitehorse's primary ambulance station. The ambulance station near the hospital now complements the emergency response centre by serving as Whitehorse's secondary station.

The key part of building the facility, which has been in the works for a number of years, is the intention to improve response capacity within the City of Whitehorse by having a more centralized facility that better enables staff based out of that facility, to respond to all areas of Whitehorse and to respond to rural areas outside of Whitehorse, including my constituents on the north side of Whitehorse and people on the south and southwest sides.

The motto of Protective Services is “semper paratus” — always prepared. The Yukon government’s priority is to have safer, less vulnerable communities while sustaining key government programs and services. This approach has produced many benefits for Yukon residents and organizations by ensuring emergency management, life safety and first response programs are always in a state of readiness.

As I mentioned earlier today in the House, there have also been, in recent years — and particularly last year — increases to the budgets for the Fire Marshal’s Office to better enable us to support our volunteer fire departments. The schedule in recent years of replacing fire equipment and updating the fleet vehicles has resulted in a dramatic change to the age of the fleet of Yukon fire-response vehicles.

Earlier this year I was pleased to join the then Minister of Community Services in providing Hootalinqua volunteer fire department, which is in my riding and serves one of the largest areas of families and homes for our volunteer fire departments, with a new pumper tanker truck that is state of the art — has pump and roll capacity and a bumper-mounted spray turret. This adds to the one that was provided to the Ibex volunteer fire department last year and a similar one provided to, I believe it was Golden Horn fire department — but it’s a new era and a new age of state-of-the-art equipment being provided to our volunteer fire departments.

In addition, the wildfire training trailer is another significant investment in helping our volunteer fire departments as well as rural municipal fire departments. I had the opportunity to see it in action in the community of Faro when I was there this fall with the Member for Pelly-Nisutlin. The feedback I have heard from volunteer fire departments and municipal fire departments in rural areas is that they think this new training equipment greatly improves the ability for firefighters to experience real-life type situations in a controlled environment that allows the controller of the unit to shut down all flame if there is any adverse event that could cause a risk to those firefighters who are within the unit.

Moving on to the area of lot land development — over the last number of years, the Government of Yukon has worked with municipal governments to make land available. At the same time, we’ve worked to ensure that home ownership becomes a reality for low-income families.

As I mentioned earlier today, in fact, work has been done under contract for the Department of Economic Development for an assessment, primarily in an attempt to identify things that might be a barrier to people working for Yukon’s producing mines who choose to live in the territory and pay taxes here. In fact, I would again quote from a report by Ecofor Consulting, “There is clear indication that Whitehorse

is not as expensive as commonly perceived. The cost of living comparison indicates that although the majority of BC locations are less expensive to live than Whitehorse, the majority of other cities/provinces in Canada are not. In addition, the average cost of housing when purchased through a realtor is significantly less expensive in Yukon than in provinces such as BC, Alberta, and Ontario. When housing costs are factored in, it would appear that Yukon is in fact more affordable than commonly perceived.”

So, again, investments through land development — you’ll see in the supplementary budget that we’ve invested another \$150,000 for a duplex lot for Habitat for Humanity in phase 2 of Whistle Bend subdivision. This builds upon the other duplex lot that was gifted to Habitat for Humanity in phase 1 at Whistle Bend. Through the dedicated work of that organization and its volunteers and supporters, we’ve seen a number of projects built by Habitat for Humanity that have provided affordable housing opportunities for Yukon families and have provided benefit, both to them and to the community.

Since 2005, the Yukon government has made land available to help Habitat for Humanity provide 13 families with affordable, sustainable home ownership.

The Community Development division of Community Services includes municipal affairs, community operations, public libraries, sport and recreation and infrastructure development. These programs and services provide a vital link to our communities and ensure safe drinking water, wastewater treatment in unincorporated Yukon, manage solid waste sites, support municipal governments and provide a range of services that benefit citizens and communities.

The supplementary budget includes an increase of \$1.741 million, or \$1,741,000, in operation and maintenance expenditures and a capital expenditure increase of \$1,386,000 — that’s in Community Development. We are working to create a modern solid-waste management system in Yukon that will adapt to the changing needs of future generations of Yukon communities, as well as finding opportunities for efficiencies and reducing the cost of operation in the current model.

The department is progressing on the *Solid Waste Action Plan* to continue to develop workable solutions that enhance our efforts for recycling, waste reduction and diversion, explore potential new waste management programs and technologies, work with communities to develop measurements and targets for waste reduction, and ongoing monitoring and review — and explore potential partnerships and business opportunities, as well as assessing future impacts and looking for opportunities for improvement. Staff is working hard at modernizing solid-waste management in the Yukon and attempting to balance the needs of citizens with best practices at reasonable cost.

In this supplementary estimate, \$500,000 will go to solid-waste site preparation and metal waste removal in the community of Old Crow.

The Building Canada fund has been a key infrastructure funding program in the Yukon, allowing us to address vital

community infrastructure projects in the categories of water, waste water, solid waste, roads, green energy and northern infrastructure.

Entering our sixth year of the Canada/Yukon Building Canada agreement, 76 projects have been identified and actioned through the territory, with eligible costs totalling over \$265 million. This year alone, over \$39 million will be spent on Building Canada projects through the Department of Community Services.

Moving on to the “Our Towns, Our Future” process — the “Our Towns, Our Future” process is a proven model for collaboration and innovation. It was through this project that we found a way to address comprehensive municipal grant funding and launch a review of the *Municipal Act*. A \$57,000 revote will support the “Our Towns, Our Future” municipal review that will continue to support this important process and this important working relationship.

The supplementary estimate also includes an increase of \$338,000 in costs associated with grants-in-lieu of taxes to property assessment changes in various municipalities. Within Community Development, this supplementary estimate includes a \$239,000 increase due to a new collective agreement, market adjustment impacts and other personnel changes.

Changes to capital expenditures in the supplementary estimates include \$440,000 in revotes for projects carried over from 2012-13 for completion, including \$215,000 for the Ross River rec centre that was recently completed and will be of significant benefit to the community.

A reduction of \$216,000 is due to deferred costs from 2014-15 for some gas tax products for unincorporated communities. A total of \$142,000 in supplemental capital expenditures will go to support Watson Lake in their Lakeview water and sewer project. \$650,000 in capital funding will support flood mitigation work in various areas, including Upper Liard, Mayo, Old Crow and Carcross.

This supplementary estimate provides \$2,514,000 for revotes associated with the federal government’s Canada Strategic Infrastructure Fund to complete projects associated with the Whitehorse waterfront project. As I believe you know, this project recently won a Canadian Urban Institute Brownie Award for excellence in project development in the neighbourhood scale and we’re very pleased to see this project recognized with that award. Once again, I want to congratulate everyone who was a part of that multi-year project that resulted in over \$40 million in expenditures through work with the City of Whitehorse, Government of Canada, Kwanlin Dun First Nation and Ta’an Kwäch’än Council, as well as many individuals, businesses and citizens who participated in discussions that developed the vision for redevelopment of the Whitehorse waterfront.

Madam Chair, I believe you’re signalling me that my current time has elapsed.

Mr. Barr: I’d like to thank all those folks in my riding of Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes and those folks who have sent personal notes of their thanks for my efforts, both here in

this House and on the streets of the communities in which we live.

It is my honour to do this work on behalf of those we serve. I’d like to thank all those hardworking public servants, volunteers and families who give of themselves on a daily basis to make Yukon a place we’re all proud to call home. We have all chosen to live here and raise families, and many retire here.

I’d also like to congratulate the minister on becoming Minister of Community Services and his new Cabinet position and to thank the official here today from Community Services, especially for the briefing the other day. That was most helpful. Thank you for the ongoing hard work that those in the Department of Community Services do on a daily basis.

I’d also like to say that I look forward to having lunch with the Minister of Community Services, which we previously discussed, to share ideas and foster a more congenial working relationship in hopes that we serve the people of the Yukon as effectively as we can.

I’m going to keep these comments brief in hopes that we can get right into some questions about the supplementary budget. I would like to just start with is the Ross River bridge. It is a topic that we’re concerned about these days. I appreciate that the minister has called a timeout on the demolition of the heritage Ross River suspension bridge and announced that a peer review process is a way to hear the differing opinions.

I would like to get some detail about the peer review that the minister spoke of the other day. Maybe some of the questions of that detail could explain if this is a standard where differences of opinion in engineering arise, and who might be the new engineer that this minister speaks of — or is that even that the way this will go? If the bridge is ultimately demolished, will the minister commit to building a new bridge? I would just like to start with that.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Before I resume the notes that I didn’t have time to read from my introductory speech, I’ll just specifically answer the Member for Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes’s questions regarding the Ross River bridge.

First of all, I would like to set the context for this and again note that, earlier this year, Management Board had approved the \$1.1-million project for repairs on the Ross River suspension bridge due to the potential damage from the ice jam and flooding that occurred in the spring of 2013.

An additional assessment with the bridge was conducted in September that was undertaken by David Nairne and Associates, which was the engineering contractor who was retained to undertake the repairs on the bridge, as well as by the welding contractor who was on-site there when they did the inspection, both from the ground and by crane. The assessment of the bridge that we were provided by the engineer was dramatically different from what we had previously heard, and we went on the assumption that the bridge would be fixed within a \$1.1-million budget and that those would be the repairs that were necessary to keep the bridge in good structural condition and reopen it to foot traffic, since it had been closed since last summer. I

understand, though, from community members and constituents that, despite the notice not to use it, there were some who were continuing to use it as they felt those warnings were from an abundance of overcaution.

The assessment we received from David Nairne and Associates, the engineering contractor that had successfully bid on the project — \$1.1 million was allocated to repair the Ross River suspension bridge — indicated the Ross River bridge is at the point of failure and can collapse at any time without warning. The memorandum from them — I'll also table a copy of for the record of members here. The September 30, 2013 memorandum we received from David Nairne and Associates — I'll table a copy of that now so members can review it later.

It states: "Memorandum re inspection of bridge towers. This memorandum summarizes our findings and recommendations following the results of a site inspection of the north and south bridge towers, carried out by Klondike Welding Limited on September 26 and 27, 2013" — the date of this memo, I should have noted, is September 30, 2013. Resuming with the memo, "...Finding number one: here is severe structural damage occurring in the north tower head beam. This damage is much worse than anticipated. The head beam is overstressed and laterally unstable and can no longer safely support the bridge suspension cables. The north tower head beam is in a critical condition and is at the point of failure and can collapse at any time, without warning. The collapse of the head beam will result in the collapse of the bridge deck, and possibly the collapse of the north and south towers. The north tower head beam is structurally unsafe in its present condition and we recommend that no further inspection of it or any repairs to the head beam be carried out. Finding number three: in consideration of the critical condition of the north tower head beam and the poor overall condition of the bridge structure, we believe that it is no longer practical from a structural and construction-safety perspective to repair and salvage the bridge. As a result, we recommend that the bridge be demolished as soon as possible for safety reasons. In the interim, the bridge should continue to be securely closed to all public use, with a danger zone established around the base of the north tower."

So, Madam Chair, I would again like to correct the record and correct the member's understanding. He characterized the current situation as me having called a time out on demolition of the bridge. I would like to emphasize the fact that there may have been assumptions by some in the public that — because we acted quickly on the engineer's recommendations to establish a danger zone and because the Department of Highways and Public Works acted quickly to, first of all, immediately and temporarily cease the use of the ferry because of concern of operation, and then after discussions regarding potential ways to safely operate it in the interests in bringing back people who are on the other side of it — they came up with a solution that it could be operated twice daily to bring back as many people as were on the other side at that point in time.

They did so with a search and rescue boat alongside so that, in the event that the bridge started to collapse, it would give sufficient time for them to move staff out of the way and avoid a tragedy or a loss of life as result of a bridge collapse. They transported only passengers' vehicles across, while moving people across with the search and rescue boat — I believe the RCMP boat was also employed at one point to bring people across. There may have also been private boats. I don't have all of that information in front of me.

The intention of that was to ensure that members of the public were not put at risk — that as few people as were required to operate the ferry and operate the search and rescue boat were in the situation where they would be in its path if the bridge collapsed. The whole point of having that boat in place was to enable staff to get out of the way rather than being stranded on a very slow-moving ferry that is propelled on a cable.

To reiterate, the only immediate action that was taken was to secure the area for public safety. Government had not and has not yet reached the conclusion that the only option is to demolish the bridge. We have shared the engineer's recommendations and attempted to make it clear that we think we have to treat that quite seriously.

Work was underway. I don't have the details yet on the name of the individual or the timelines, but I can provide that to the member at a later date regarding the name of the individual who is being contracted to do the peer review. Staff were in the process of trying to get a respected expert in this field to review the recommendations of the engineer and provide us with information. That work was being done and as soon as there are more details we can announce, we will do so.

Before returning to my other remarks from my introductory notes, since we're on the topic here, I'll briefly lay out some of the other key elements regarding the Ross River suspension bridge. The financial records for expenditures on the bridge only go back to 1995. Since then, the Yukon government has spent \$583,000 on repair and inspections for the bridge. For the known maintenance history of the Ross River bridge, a few of the highlights are: in 1979 they removed the access ramp and replaced it with stairs, repaired sway anchor posts, replaced decking, adjusted sway cables and replaced guide railing. In 1984 the Transport Canada inspection report I referred to earlier in this House was the first report to identify that the bridge was nearing the end of its lifespan and the conclusions of that report were for major repairs or demolition or appropriate action.

From 2005 to 2009, there were decking and railing repairs, A-frame repairs, an anchor condition assessment, condition assessment, tower base repairs, and geotechnical investigation. From 2010 to current, there were engineering inspections, decking repairs, A-frame repairs, environmental detail design for extensive repairs — and those were just a few of the areas.

Again I want to emphasize that our priority for this is to take quite seriously, as we must, the recommendations of the engineer who identified safety issues, but also recognize the historical importance that many people attach to the bridge

and the importance of it, both the community of Ross River and other Yukoners who have previously lived in or spent time in the Ross River area. We are continuing to look for whether there are options that would be safe and reasonable to consider doing.

Moving to a few other specific details that are relevant to that — just to get it on the record, since I know this is a topic of concern for the member — and moving to recent chronology here: on September 27 the contractor and consultant discussed site inspections for findings, and additional photographs of the south towers were forwarded to the consultant later in the day. On September 28, the contractor DNA and the Infrastructure branch reviewed the damage through photo and video of the north head tower beam. On September 28, the Ross River suspension bridge was declared at risk of imminent failure by DNA engineering and then the memo that I referred to was their formal written assessment of the notice that they initially provided in a less formal form. That was immediately acted on at the end of September and the first few days of October.

A 1984 inspection and evaluation report done by Public Works Canada determined corrosion of cables and towers, decay of timber, truss members, weathering of the bridge deck, bridge severely overstressed, under code loading for pedestrian bridge. This again is from information prepared and presented by David Nairne and Associates Ltd.

Bridge repairs done in 2005: level and reinstate timber bridge deck, repair damaged timber members, repair tar-based pedestals and repair broken cable. 2007 bridge repairs: repair timber guard railing and repair concrete tower pedestals. A 2009 September field inspection identified other areas as well, including the need to tighten sway cables, repair damaged timbers, repair northern tower head beam, paint towers, modify southwest sway tower and modify hangers. In 2010 another inspection noted that there was more damage to the bridge that had occurred since 2009. In the reports from DNA, my understanding is that from 2009 to present, the one tower at that point had been leaning at an angle of four degrees, and my understanding is that angle has increased to leaning at a 12-degree angle, which is a significant shift.

I do actually have significantly more details here, but I think I've outlined some of the key points here. Again, quoting from David Nairne and Associates: the bridge is over 69 years old, has exceeded its design life and is in poor structural condition. The bridge is severely overstressed for use as a pedestrian bridge. Critical members are deteriorating rapidly, with the north tower head beam at the point of collapse. It is not feasible structurally to repair or salvage the bridge. Again, that's the engineer's recommendation. It's one we have to treat seriously.

As I mentioned earlier in the House, based on the requests from, first and foremost, the Member for Pelly-Nisutlin on behalf of his constituents, the Chief of the Ross River First Nation on behalf of his citizens — as discussed by him, along with the Member for Pelly-Nisutlin, the Deputy Minister for Community Services — when I was in Ross River this fall to visit the community and meet the chief and view some of our

facilities, including the Ross River arena and the new Ross River protective services and water treatment plant building, we did have that discussion. Pursuant to the commitment that I made to the chief and the Member for Pelly-Nisutlin at that point, we looked into options, which we were then pursuing, to find an engineering peer review and to look into whether there are potential options for salvaging the bridge.

Should it be determined that cannot be done, another option that is being given some consideration is whether there are options that would potentially do things like dropping down the bridge deck itself — which is the serious source of load and is, in fact, significantly heavier than the bridge was originally intended to carry. The bridge was originally intended to carry an oil pipe of 50,000 pounds and it is currently at a 230,000-pound load — a significant load and higher than the bridge was originally intended to carry. Options like whether there is the ability to perhaps leave towers intact and remove the significant load source to prevent a collapse, while recognizing the interest in seeing as much of the bridge as possible remain — we recognize that the preference from those who have an attachment to the bridge is to see the entire bridge remain and be in fact operational. We will give consideration to all options that seem reasonable and appropriate. Of course, I will again reiterate the fact that government has to treat engineers' reports that identify potentially catastrophic failure of bridge infrastructure quite seriously and we have to take the safety issues related to that quite seriously as well.

Madam Chair, returning to my notes that I ran out of time for with the Whitehorse waterfront project — as I was saying before I last ran out of time, over \$40 million on 16 projects was spent on the Whitehorse waterfront.

Collective work with the partners of the City of Whitehorse, Kwanlin Dun First Nation, Ta'an Kwäch'än Council and the Government of Canada has resulted in the Whitehorse waterfront being reinvigorated and becoming a year-round destination for residents after many years. As long-time residents of the Yukon will recall, there were decades of discussion about what might happen one day with the Whitehorse waterfront. Though there was a long period where not really a lot was occurring on the waterfront, the net result through a contribution of many individuals and a number of government projects, led by the Yukon government — with full recognition to all partners in that — has resulted in the Whitehorse waterfront being transformed into an area that has much more use and is, for many people, now a part of their daily lives, rather than an area that a lot of people really weren't comfortable going back in the days when it was somewhat industrial and didn't have good walking paths or really good lighting in certain areas. The upgrades and improvements to this vital area have resulted in important social, cultural and economic benefits, enhancing Whitehorse as a destination place to live and do business.

Moving on to other areas within the budget, the supplementary budget includes a \$110,000 revote for the First Nation of Na Cho Nyäk Dun's geothermal project funded under Canada's municipal rural infrastructure program.

I believe, Madam Chair, that you are signalling that it's time for me to sit down again.

Mr. Barr: I do thank the minister opposite for answering the questions around the bridge and for giving more detail around the peer review. From what I understand, the minister is saying the peer review will be studying the engineer who has recommended the bridge is unsafe at this time. Will this peer review person also be looking at the engineer — who I know met with the minister's deputy minister and others in the department — with the opinion that the bridge can be saved and reviewing the beam diagrams? In his opinion, will the peer review weigh both of those to look at both sides of that? Will the minister commit to that?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: What I would note is that the peer review will look at options and provide to us whether there are ways that repairs can be safely done, and I would trust that various opinions, including the view of one engineer — I would again point out with all due respect to the individual that there is a difference between an engineer who has been on-site and visually inspected at close range, with a crane, certain parts of the bridge, and someone who is looking at it from the ground and based on pictures. There are differences between the two.

I'm not an engineer and I'm not going to get into an argument of dueling engineers, but because the officially contracted review from the successful bidder on the engineering contract provided us with those serious recommendations, I would again note that we don't want to rip down the bridge. If it weren't for this recommendation from an engineer who says that's the recommended option for safety reasons, we wouldn't even be considering it. That's the only reason that consideration is being given to that option. In this type of case when it deals with a matter of safety, there's also an obligation on government to be somewhat cautious, careful and prudent when it comes to perhaps debate among engineers on whether it can or can't be done. That's why staff have been working on trying to come up with somebody who is considered an expert in the field, so we can have the benefit of that advice prior to decisions being made in this area.

Moving back to other details of my remarks on the budget, for Sport and Recreation we are pleased to provide \$400,000 as part of the supplementary budget to support Team Yukon's participation at the Arctic Winter Games in Fairbanks, Alaska, in early 2014. Yukon's athletes always do our territory proud and represent their fellow Yukoners with great enthusiasm and dedication. We look forward to cheering them on as they compete again in Alaska this winter.

We've also allocated \$173,000 for athletes and coaches due to a contribution from the Yukon Lottery Commission. \$50,000 has been committed this year to Softball Yukon to help them prepare for hosting the 2014 world junior fastball tournament. Tournaments like this are of significant economic and social benefit to the Yukon and Softball Yukon continues to attract world-class athletes while delivering world-class events. \$60,000 has been committed to sport governing bodies due to the signing of a bilateral sports agreement with Canada.

In the area of Corporate Services, there is a \$128,000 increase to Corporate Services due to a revised collective agreement and market adjustment impacts for personnel. An \$11,000 increase to Corporate Services is due to a revote for the corporate registry system.

In the area of corporate policy and consumer services, the remaining items under the community supplementary estimates fall under this area and those are detailed through \$218,000 in this area allocated toward revised collective agreements, market adjustments and other personnel costs, as well as an increase of \$208,000 in homeowner grant costs due to an increased number of eligible taxpayers.

Finally, a total of \$50,000 was provided to assist the Yukon Medical Council with administration, travel, training and contracting.

Madam Chair, in closing my introductory remarks — I'm past my introductory remarks but not past my notes — the Department of Community Services values collaboration, respect, integrity and service excellence. It has been a pleasure during my short time as minister to work with the department and their dedicated staff and to have the opportunity to visit all of Yukon's incorporated municipalities and a number of other areas.

As I mentioned earlier, I look forward to visiting more communities in the Yukon and sitting down with local advisory councils and First Nations that provide services to their citizens. Due to time constraints before the House came in, I was not able to make it everywhere within the territory plus deal with my duties here at the office and other meeting requests that have come in from people who have wanted to meet with me, either due to new issues or to discuss ongoing relationship issues that they dealt with my predecessor on.

So again, it has been a real pleasure. I very much appreciate the work of staff in the Department of Community Services and also the volunteers who provide the services in relationship with the department but are not direct employees of the department. In the areas of emergency medical services, our dedicated ambulance volunteers in Yukon communities are a key part of our ability to respond to emergency health situations in all Yukon communities. Through the service of those dedicated volunteers it does save lives. It is a key part of the service that is provided to Yukon communities through government, but not directly through government staff.

As well, our volunteer fire departments — again these dedicated volunteers also respond quickly with little notice, and like the ambulance volunteers, they put their lives on hold. They rush into situations where in some cases there is the possibility of personal risk in dangerous situations. They put their communities and neighbours before themselves in doing that work. Between those two important volunteer groups, they save people's lives, they save people's houses and also respond to other critical incidents, including accidents on the highway that can involve emergency medical services and/or fire departments. Additionally, the volunteers we have within search and rescue, though not called as frequently, do in those situations perform a very important service to assist Yukoners in those types of events.

We recognize the importance of strong relationships between the Yukon and other governments, including First Nation governments, municipal governments and the federal government, as well as the two other territorial governments and the provincial governments. We recognize the importance of the relationship with Yukon people, Yukon citizens across our territory, and other important community partners and those who receive services.

The Department of Community Services continues to invest in Yukon communities and Yukon citizens, and this supplementary budget reinforces the commitment of both the department and the Yukon government through the many projects and programs that are underway.

Community Services is not as much of a subject within my budgetary notes, but it should be noted that Community Services performs a number of important regulatory roles including those related to health professions, where, for a number of health professions, Community Services is the regulator, while Health and Social Services has the direct relationship and is the employer in many of those cases.

As well, the work that is done by staff in Community Services includes working with the Yukon Medical Council and supporting them — related to that very important area of ensuring that we have an appropriate system to licence physicians so as to ensure the qualifications of physicians that are licensed within the territory and, in rare cases, if necessary, to deal with issues related to problems with physician services. Again, that relationship is an important part of the relationship Yukon government has with our dedicated health professionals in all of our health professions. In the case of those who are not employees, but are volunteers who are trained in emergency response as paramedics, emergency medical responders and so on, it plays an important part in the services we provide to all of Yukon and all of our communities.

I will look forward to more questions from the member for Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes.

Mr. Barr: I'd like to thank the minister for giving more clarification on the peer review.

While we're speaking of EMS and volunteers and volunteer fire departments a bit — which the minister was just speaking about — I'd like to ask with regard to our EMS volunteers — I know that all the volunteers who are providing these essential services work very hard to keep our communities safe. There have recently been some calls to our office regarding the new made-in-Yukon training regime. I would ask the minister if he could describe this training regime for EMS volunteers in detail and how will the volunteers get the training they need? Who will be responsible then for the ongoing training within EMS in rural areas particularly?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: First of all, what I would note is that staff of Protective Services have been considering options for how to best address the training needs of our rural volunteers in Emergency Medical Services. The possibility of Yukon-specific training that varies from the standard courses offered through the Red Cross and others is not an option

which has been settled on. It is an option that is being considered.

I have also, in my visits to communities and through sitting down directly with almost all the rural volunteer supervisors, heard the concerns that some of them have with what was being considered. I can assure the member that a priority for me is going to be working to strengthen the relationship between me and the rural supervisors for emergency services, as well as the relationship with the department, ensuring that we are strengthening the support that the Yukon government is providing to our rural EMS volunteers. We are in the process right now of working on additional steps that I look forward to announcing shortly for increased support to these very important rural service providers.

If the member has any specific information or concerns, he can certainly provide them to me. As I have indicated to the rural supervisors I've sat down with, I'm very much open to discussions with them either at my level or the department level to hear their concerns, suggestions and views on where we can better support our volunteers in Yukon communities that provide ambulance services.

I didn't sit down with all of the emergency medical supervisors due to their availability and, in the one case — I believe within the member's riding — there is a new supervisor in place. To those I haven't met with, I'm very happy to talk to them and very happy to hear their suggestions about which potential options being considered are the best ones to choose to ensure that we're fully and effectively meeting the training needs of our EMS volunteers in rural communities.

Mr. Barr: I thank the minister for his response. I'll just quickly provide him with some of the stuff I know. I would be happy to forward, in the interest of time, some other information.

Specifically, the supervisors feel they already have enough to do, and their response to me was that they're not trained to train, so that's one of the things that was a concern. They also like what is happening now. The concern around who will be beside them when they're out on calls — the differences in the training — creates stress in knowing the different levels or the differences in training, and if they will be able to effectively support each other in the field. Those are just a couple of things, but I'll be happy to pass them on.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: I thank the Member for Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes for sharing that information. That is something that I appreciate. If there are concerns with the options that are being looked at, I want to understand the concerns and will reiterate that the options that are being considered have not been chosen yet.

When I have heard concerns and questions from the supervisors of volunteers for Emergency Medical Services, I have instructed the department to take those concerns and viewpoints very seriously. I believe that our supervisors and volunteers in rural communities often see things from a perspective that, on the ground, might not be fully understood within Whitehorse. My focus is on trying to ensure that I

understand and that everyone is very much aware of the importance of understanding the perspective of our rural volunteers, understanding where they think that, through additional supports or through the types of training provided, we can better support those who are currently volunteers, can put in place additional supports that increase the likelihood of volunteers remaining volunteers for a long period of time, and make it attractive to new volunteers to join those important units within our rural communities.

I thank the member for passing on what he has heard. I would like to emphasize the fact that I do very much appreciate also the dedication of our Whitehorse EMS staff, both those within the administrative and management structure and those who operate the ground ambulances and our medevac crews. They are a very important part of our ability to provide services as well.

I can assure the member that I recognize that there are differences in each community and recognize that the Yukon government needs to give full consideration to the challenges faced by our volunteer supervisors in rural EMS and that we need to listen to their input, which is what we are doing, and need to act upon that input in an appropriate manner, which is what we are doing as well.

Mr. Barr: I am happy to hear the minister's response and the insight into the retaining of our volunteers in the rural communities, especially when the pool generally comes from such a small pool. In the past it has been expressed that the more red tape — or the demands of the volunteer to be able to go out on a call, has changed from the past where you get on your boots and we'll get the job done. I understand his reasons for being trained and safety and such. However, he needs to be aware that we do depend on these pools that are often stretched in the communities. It is different in each community, so I thank the minister for his response.

I would just like to go back to Ross River. I see here that I had brought this up previously in the House. There is still concern when I spoke with people in Ross River around the violating of the water licence for the sewage pit.

The sewage continues to be dumped one kilometre upgrade from the community in violation of the water licence. The water testing of the monitoring of the wells around the pit have found ammonia at nearly twice the allowable rate. I'd like to know from the minister when the government will deal with this toxic problem and keep its promise to the people of Ross River.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: First of all, with regard to Emergency Medical Services volunteers, when the member refers to increasing standards around training, one of the things that should be noted is that for many years in the Yukon, the reality in our rural EMS units was that, for response, they would have someone who would at least have standard first aid and someone who had a class 4 licence. The model behind that has been sometimes referred to within the department and the volunteer units as a scoop-and-drive model — which was a bit of a crass way to put it, but it is the term that has been used. The theory behind it for years in the earlier era of our rural emergency services is it was not

feasible at that point in time to have people with higher levels of training in rural areas. The view was that it was necessary to have somebody who was capable of stabilizing someone and then shipping them to a nursing station as quickly as possible.

The increase in the training level, the minimum standard, has not gone up through government rules or expectation but starting under my predecessor as Health minister back in 2004-05, the then Minister of Health and Social Services Peter Jenkins, we had taken the first steps toward increasing and providing our support for training for the emergency medical responder level. That's something that, during my two and a half years as Minister of Health and Social Services, was a focus for me and my department staff — to provide more training opportunities. It's really more due to the expectations of volunteers and what they see as appropriate competency levels that drive an increased standard, rather than government regulatory standard creep.

Having heard from volunteers and from supervisors, the importance that they place on having the higher level of standard first aid, whenever possible within communities, I can assure them that we're going to continue to make training for rural volunteers a priority and look at methods to enhance it from what it has been at recently to respond to what we've heard from them.

Moving to the Ross River waste-water issue: first of all, I would note here that this is a matter that the Member for Pelly-Nisutlin and I did discuss with Chief Ladue during our visit to Ross River this fall. There has been work to address it. We did go to the site; we did inspect it. Understand that one of the issues — and this is sometimes the benefit you get when going to communities — the information you find out from personally going there and hearing from community members — and the ammonia contamination the member referred to appear to relate to the methods with just the one septic truck that was dumping into there, not properly hitting the entrance to the pit and dumping short of the septic pit itself.

There was a report in November 2012 by Water Resources branch that indicated the Ross River septic pit was not in full compliance with the regulation. Community Services is in the process of applying for an amendment to the existing water licence as an interim solution while a permanent solution is sought. The department has engaged a consultant to review the options for treatment of waste water and to complete an environmental assessment.

Community Services staff will hold a public meeting in Ross River to present the consultant's preliminary report findings and the result of an environmental assessment. Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada has committed to working with Community Services on an appropriate waste-water solution for the community.

I would point out that staff have indicated to me that a number of the issues of non-compliance were not as serious as I believe the member first understood them to be, based on some of his questioning in previous sittings of the House.

The report that was provided by Water Resources branch, to which I referred, indicated that non-compliance issues with

the Ross River septic pit were due to a number of mainly administrative issues, including missed reporting requirements. So again, to emphasize what staff have advised me, a number of those issues of non-compliance were due to reports that should have been filed on the usage of the pit that were not addressed, but were not themselves related to non-administrative issues.

Staff are working with Water Resources branch to take appropriate steps to come back into compliance. Department officials have been working with Water Resources branch to review and discuss and come up with a compliance plan. From the regulator's perspective, the options that have been considered appropriate are either building a new sewage facility or applying for an amendment to the license which fully recognizes the existing pit.

Madam Chair, I think that has addressed that issue. Seeing the time I move that we report progress on Bill No. 11, *Second Appropriation Act, 2013-14*.

Chair: It has been moved by Mr. Cathers that the Chair report progress on Bill No. 11, *Second Appropriation Act, 2013-14*. Are you agreed?

Motion agreed to

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Madam Chair, 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. 11, entitled *Second Appropriation Act, 2013-14*, and directed me to report progress.

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

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Speaker: I declare the report carried.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: 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. Tuesday.

The House adjourned at 5:29 p.m.

The following documents were filed November 7, 2013:

33-1-64

Recent Judgment of Inquiry Reports of the Chief Coroner, letter re (dated August 28, 2013) from Doug Graham, Minister of Health and Social Services to Craig Tuton, Chair, Yukon Hospital Corporation Board of Trustees, and Chief Coroner Report — Two Patient Deaths — Watson Lake Hospital, letter re (dated October 4, 2013) from Craig Tuton, Chair, Yukon Hospital Corporation Board of Trustees to Doug Graham, Minister of Health and Social Services (Graham)

33-1-65

Yukon Hospital Corporation accountability, letter re (undated) from Doug Graham, Minister of Health and Social Services to Jan Stick, Member for Riverdale South (Stick)

33-1-66

Inspection of Bridge Towers (Ross River Suspension Bridge Repairs), memorandum re (dated September 30, 2013) from Jerry Lum, P. Eng. Struct. Eng. to Jack Bowers, P. Eng. and Jennifer Macgillvary (sic.) (Cathers)