



Yukon Legislative Assembly

Number 133

1st Session

33rd Legislature

HANSARD

Monday, March 31, 2014 — 1:00 p.m.

Speaker: The Honourable David Laxton

YUKON LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

SPEAKER — Hon. David Laxton, MLA, Porter Creek Centre

DEPUTY SPEAKER — Patti McLeod, MLA, Watson Lake

CABINET MINISTERS

NAME CONSTITUENCY PORTFOLIO

Hon. Darrell Pasloski	Mountainview	Premier Minister responsible for Finance; Executive Council Office
Hon. Elaine Taylor	Whitehorse West	Deputy Premier Minister responsible for Education; Women's Directorate; French Language Services Directorate
Hon. Brad Cathers	Lake Laberge	Minister responsible for Community Services; Yukon Housing Corporation; Yukon Liquor Corporation; Yukon Lottery Commission Government House Leader
Hon. Doug Graham	Porter Creek North	Minister responsible for Health and Social Services; Yukon Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board
Hon. Scott Kent	Riverdale North	Minister responsible for Energy, Mines and Resources; Yukon Energy Corporation; Yukon Development Corporation
Hon. Currie Dixon	Copperbelt North	Minister responsible for Economic Development; Environment; Public Service Commission
Hon. Wade Istchenko	Kluane	Minister responsible for Highways and Public Works
Hon. Mike Nixon	Porter Creek South	Minister responsible for Justice; Tourism and Culture

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Yukon Party

Darius Elias	Vuntut Gwitchin
Stacey Hassard	Pelly-Nisutlin
Hon. David Laxton	Porter Creek Centre
Patti McLeod	Watson Lake

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New Democratic Party

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Jan Stick	Official Opposition House Leader Riverdale South
Kevin Barr	Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes
Lois Moorcroft	Copperbelt South
Jim Tredger	Mayo-Tatchun
Kate White	Takhini-Kopper King

Liberal Party

Sandy Silver	Leader of the Third Party Klondike
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Yukon Legislative Assembly
Whitehorse, Yukon
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Speaker: I will now call the House to order. We will proceed at this time with prayers.

Prayers

DAILY ROUTINE

Speaker: We will proceed with the Order Paper. Tributes.

TRIBUTES

In recognition of Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month

Hon. Mr. Graham: On behalf of all members in the Legislature today, I wish to speak about something most people don't want to talk about in public, let alone in the Legislative Assembly, and that topic is colorectal cancer.

March is Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month and even though we are starting this sitting quite late in the month, it is important to take the opportunity to remind my colleagues — all of us here in the House and all others listening — of the importance and indeed the necessity of talking about this.

Colorectal cancer is the fourth most diagnosed cancer in Canada and the second most common cause of cancer death. With early detection, however, colorectal cancer is preventable, treatable and beatable and talking about it can actually save lives. The current guidelines for screening vary, but the majority recommend a simple screening test every two years for those aged 50 to 74 who have no additional risk factors. Unfortunately, only an estimated 34 percent of Yukoners in that age range have ever had this screening test, while less than one-quarter have had this test within the previous two years, according to a 2009-10 study.

By comparison, 48 percent of those aged 50 to 74 in Canada received the test, so we're lagging severely behind the rest of Canada in this testing process. From 2002 until 2011, there were, on average, about seven deaths per year in Yukon due to cancers of the colon, rectum and anus.

Mr. Speaker, that is seven deaths too many when you think that the treatment of this cancer is very simple if found early enough. Residents can lower their risk of developing colorectal cancer by eating healthy, exercising regularly, avoiding smoking and alcohol, and having regular screening tests — all things that, as the minister responsible for health, I would encourage all Yukoners to do.

Mr. Speaker, early detection is a key step in avoiding colorectal cancer. Patients who experience symptoms relating to this type of cancer, or who are at a higher risk of developing the cancer, are encouraged to be screened as quickly as possible. Anyone interested in the screening process should talk to their doctor about the screening tests available. It's not something we want to talk about but something we should all be talking about.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Mr. Dixon: I'd like to ask my colleagues to join me in welcoming two of our policy folks from the Department of Environment, Mr. Dan Paleczny and Diane Gunter, who I'm sure are here to see some of their hard work come to fruition.

TABLING RETURNS AND DOCUMENTS

Speaker: The Chair has for tabling the 2013 annual report of the Yukon Ombudsman. This report is tabled pursuant to section 31(1) of the *Ombudsman Act*.

The Chair also has tabling the 2013 annual report of the Yukon Information and Privacy Commissioner. This report is tabled pursuant to section 47(2) of the *Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.

Are there any further returns or documents for tabling?

Hon. Mr. Graham: I have for tabling responses to the 2014 February report of the Auditor General of Canada for Yukon Family and Children's Services Department of Health and Social Services, as I had promised last week.

Speaker: Are there any reports of committees?
 Are there any petitions to be presented?
 Are there any bills to be introduced?

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 73: *Act to Amend the Environment Act — Introduction and First Reading*

Hon. Mr. Dixon: I move that Bill No. 73, entitled *Act to Amend the Environment Act*, be now introduced and read a first time.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Minister of Environment that Bill No. 73, entitled *Act to Amend the Environment Act*, be now introduced and read a first time.

Motion for introduction and first reading of Bill No. 73 agreed to

Bill No. 71: *Act to Amend the Summary Convictions Act — Introduction and First Reading*

Hon. Mr. Nixon: I move that Bill No. 71, entitled *Act to Amend the Summary Convictions Act*, be now introduced and read a first time.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Minister of Justice that Bill No. 71, entitled *Act to Amend the Summary Convictions Act*, be now introduced and read a first time.

Motion for introduction and first reading of Bill No. 71 agreed to

Speaker: Are there any further bills to be introduced?
 Notices of motions.

NOTICES OF MOTIONS

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to use the 2014-2015 budget to allocate \$1 million for the down

payment assistance program (DPAP) to assist Yukon families in purchasing their first home.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to use the 2014-15 budget to allocate \$318,000 for the planning and design of a replacement building for the Faro RCMP detachment.

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

THAT this House urges the Yukon government to take all necessary measures to expedite the release of data requested by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission regarding the number and cause of deaths, illnesses and disappearances of First Nation residential school students in Yukon.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to work with all jurisdictions in Canada to restore national leadership in health care by:

- (1) negotiating with the provinces and territories a new 10-year health accord with stable and adequate funding;
- (2) enforcing the *Canada Health Act*, including the ban on user fees and extra billing, and correcting gaps in monitoring and reporting under the act;
- (3) implementing a national strategy to reduce health care-associated infections with dedicated funding for microbiological cleaning standards and mandatory public reporting;
- (4) promoting improved access to effective primary health care;
- (5) creating a national continuing care program (residential and home/community care), with dedicated transfers financed from general revenue and *Canada Health Act* standards plus minimum staffing and phasing out of for-profit delivery; and
- (6) establishing a national pharmacare program and exempting health care from trade agreements, starting with CETA, the Canada-EU trade agreement.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to consult Yukoners on different options to meet continuing care needs throughout the territory.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to side with Yukoners who will be impacted by federal cuts to the employment insurance program, instead of with their Conservative colleagues in Ottawa who are balancing the books by reducing benefits to the unemployed.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to work with the State of Alaska to ensure Yukoners continue to enjoy reciprocal fishing privileges in Haines and other Alaskan communities.

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

QUESTION PERIOD

Question re: First Nations/government relations

Ms. Hanson: The Yukon Party government is currently engaged in lawsuits with, among others, the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in, the First Nation of Na Cho Nyäk Dun and the Taku River Tlingit. They lost the Ross River Dena Council appeal last year, and just last week we learned that the Kaska Dena Council also filed a lawsuit against the Yukon government after the government repeatedly ignored the council's calls to be consulted on mineral permitting and exploration activity in their traditional territory.

The relationship between the Yukon government and Yukon's First Nations is at an all-time low. The government's actions are doing permanent damage to the Yukon's economy and reputation both at home and abroad.

What is the Premier doing to fix the broken relationships with First Nations?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: I will have to disagree with the Leader of the NDP's assumption as to where the current status is with the First Nations. As I have mentioned in this House many times, this government continues to work and produce great achievements on a day-to-day basis throughout all the departments in our government with individual First Nations.

In fact, I stood up in the House in the fall session and spoke at length, but only briefly touching the many areas in which our government works bilaterally with other First Nations or collectively with many or all First Nations, and we'll continue to do so.

Ms. Hanson: The First Nation agreements provide the foundation for a new relationship between the Yukon government and First Nation governments based on cooperation. These agreements have the potential to open up many great opportunities for jobs and small business success, for community development, for better environmental stewardship — and the list goes on.

The Yukon Party government's confrontational attitude toward First Nations is forcing court battles at every turn. This is seriously undermining the spirit of cooperation and closing off many opportunities for Yukoners. The question really is: When will the Premier understand that undermining the spirit of cooperation intended by the final and self-government agreements is bad for the whole Yukon economy?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: Again, I have to mention and talk about some of the great work that has been done — just recently, the work that was done with the Vuntut Gwitchin, in terms of the creation of a winter road. For the first time in approximately a decade, there has been a winter road

constructed into the community, which was of tremendous benefit to the government of the Vuntut Gwitchin and the community of Old Crow, as well as a benefit to their development corporation and to the Yukon government, in terms of helping us to be able to deal with, for example, some of the metal waste that was accruing within the community.

I could also talk about the memorandum of understanding with the Carcross-Tagish First Nation on many different initiatives right now.

We're very excited about moving forward with working together on a brand new campground for all Yukoners at Conrad and the availability of some cottage lots on some lakes in the Southern Lakes area, and of course many of the other developments that can occur and will occur within the Carcross-Tagish traditional territory. There is also some great work that has been done with the Teslin Tlingit Council in term of engineering on joint land development.

Mr. Speaker, we continue to work on a day-to-day basis, not only for the benefit of those First Nations, but also the benefit of all Yukoners, and we'll continue to do so.

Ms. Hanson: Despite all that, Yukoners are continuing to ask how many lawsuits it will take for this government to understand that their confrontational approach is not working. In his budget speech, the Premier announced \$700,000 to attract investments to Yukon's resource sector. You know, \$700,000 might be enough to print glossy Peel brochures and send the Premier to every mining conference in the country, but it won't buy economic certainty for Yukon. That comes from building relationships, not undermining them at every turn.

Mr. Speaker, does the Premier really believe that \$700,000 will compensate for the loss to Yukon's mineral sector and our economy caused by his government's confrontational approach with Yukon First Nations?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: Again, to continue to talk about some of the great accomplishments and the work that happens on a day-to-day basis; this government renewed its intergovernmental accord with the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation last fall, signed a new intergovernmental accord with Kluane First Nation and are working on a renewal with Champagne and Aishihik First Nations and with the peoples of Na Cho Nyäk Dun.

We're certainly talking to and very interested in: continuing to create intergovernmental accords with intergovernmental accords with all of the First Nations; entering into a tripartite memorandum of understanding on education partnerships with Canada and CYFN to focus on improving learning outcomes for First Nations; and looking at things such as the First Nations governance and public administration program that's delivered through the Yukon College with the support of Yukon First Nations. I believe, if I remember correctly, the first successful graduates came out of that program last year and we look forward to more of them on an ongoing basis.

We are working with Kwanlin Dun First Nation in terms of developing and allowing them the opportunity to see their land become titled so that they can create economic

opportunities here within the City of Whitehorse. Of course, Yukon asset construction agreements — YACAs — we've had many of those. We'll continue to work with First Nations today and every day.

Question re: Missing children research project

Mr. Barr: Truth gathering is what leads to reconciliation. That is why the Truth and Reconciliation Commission is collecting information about the number and cause of deaths, illnesses and disappearances of children associated with residential schools.

The commission accepted the Missing Children and Unmarked Burials working group's recommendations. To support the missing children research project, the commission is seeking to review all relevant church and government records as well as information from survivors, staff and others. Last Friday, British Columbia became the first jurisdiction to provide all the data requested to the commission.

Does the government support the truth gathering of the commission and does the government agree the commission should get the information it seeks as soon as possible?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: One of the very important moments this Assembly has seen was last year, when there was unanimous support of a motion to support the First Nations with a call for a national public inquiry into missing and murdered aboriginal women and girls. That was profound, and we have seen other jurisdictions also support that position. In fact, the Council of the Federation came out collectively and said they support the First Nations' call for such an inquiry.

We have to acknowledge the work that has been going on with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. It is truly part of the healing process and has made a significant impact and benefit for many, not only for those individuals, but also the second and third generations of family who have followed those people. We will continue to keep abreast of the situation and provide guidance where necessary.

Mr. Barr: The federal government's apology was an important first step but, after an apology, it takes action to make the wrongs right. The work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission is leading our communities toward healing from generational trauma. Media have reported that Yukon's *Vital Statistics Act* prevents the release of information the commission is seeking.

Where there is a will, there is a way. By providing the information the commission needs to complete its work, the Yukon government has an opportunity to help with the healing that is the ultimate aim of the whole process. What mechanisms is the government considering to meet the commission's request for the information from jurisdictions where there were residential schools?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: What I would say is that we certainly will look into what the request is, where necessary, and what we can accomplish, we will be willing to do so.

As I have mentioned, this has been very good work that has gone forward. I think it will help in the processes that are

involved. On my trip to South Africa, I had the privilege of going to the museum and learning a lot about the truth and reconciliation that had occurred in South Africa as well, and the impact that has made. We will continue to hear the requests from the federal government and continue to assess what role we can play going forward.

Mr. Barr: I'll say again, where there is a will, there is a way. I'm glad to hear that there is willingness. The important work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission is long overdue. We believe Yukon should explore all options to comply with the commission's request and avoid handing off its responsibility to the court.

Will this government commit to reporting back to this House by the end of May what mechanism it has found to provide the commission the information it seeks and on what timeline?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: I'm going to take this opportunity to thank all of those people who were engaged and participated in the truth and reconciliation process across the country and — as I have mentioned — help us as a nation and as First Nation peoples to be able to move on from this very troubling time. I will commit that we will continue to look at what is required and assist when and where appropriate to provide information as requested.

Question re: Watson Lake district office

Mr. Silver: I have a question for the Minister of Highways and Public Works about another construction project this government has recently announced. This one is the new Watson Lake district office for the Department of Environment.

When the project was tendered in December 2013, the advertised price of the construction contract was \$1.4 million. Can the minister confirm that this contract has been awarded at \$2.1 million, 50-percent more than the advertised price?

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: The replacement of the Watson Lake Department of Environment district office was tendered as a design/build project, and that means that the unit rate costs for the design and construction are combined. The cost of approximately \$440 to \$450 per square foot is considered reasonable for this type of commercial/industrial building in the design and the build model. We have estimated a project budget of approximately \$2.1 million for this project, which includes the design and construction of the new building, as well as the demolition of the old building.

Mr. Silver: When the new Watson Lake Environment office went to tender last winter, contractors were told that the job would be worth \$1.4 million. There were three bids on the job, and the lowest was \$2.1 million, so that is \$700,000 over what the government had budgeted. The government decided to accept bids and had awarded the contract at 50-percent over what was budgeted.

So can the minister explain how awarding this contract can be called good financial management?

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: As I said earlier, when it comes to design/build, there are costs associated with the pricing on that. The budget is approximately \$2.1 million; it's

Ketza Pacific. I know there are local contractors in the Yukon here and, if you look at our budget, there is more than just this project out there. There are lots of construction projects going on. We see it with F.H. Collins. There are job fairs and people are looking for people to go to work. We are happy on this side that people will be going to work and we're building the Watson Lake Department of Environment district office.

Mr. Silver: I'm glad people are at work, but this government has a bad habit and it's costing the taxpayers a lot of money to support that habit. We see it time and time again — contracts going overbudget. In this case, it's 50-percent over, yet the government is going to go ahead anyway. The new Watson Lake Environment office joins a long list of projects that this Yukon Party government — where money just seems to be no object at all. The Watson Lake Hospital, the hospital in Dawson, F.H. Collins will all come in millions of dollars overbudget and millions of dollars more than the government promised that they would.

What changes does the minister plan to make to the management of capital projects to stop the waste of taxpayers' money?

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: I thank the member opposite for the question. I'm glad that the member opposite is glad that people are going to work because we sure are on this side. The majority of the projects that the Department of Highways and Public Works manages — there are a lot of projects that come in on time and on budget. When you look at rural Yukon and some of the challenges that we had with the Beaver Creek Fire Hall, we had to go to retender for that with some of the bids that came in. We're confident that this project is going to be finished on time and we're looking forward to getting out there and getting to work this spring. There are a lot of opportunities for Yukoners to go to work and we look forward to them going to work.

Question re: Doctor shortage — Watson Lake

Ms. Stick: In Watson Lake, we read in the paper on Friday that there is a brand new hospital with no resident doctors. For years, the NDP questioned the Yukon Party political approach to health care planning. The answer we seemed to get over and over is, "if we build it, they will come," — meaning doctors. But, it didn't work. The brand new hospital in Watson Lake does not have adequate doctor coverage.

The minister responsible is in the process of creating a committee to address the issue, but residents of Watson Lake and the surrounding area just want to know when there will be doctors working in the new hospital. The government has already spent millions of dollars toward recruiting doctors and still the same shortage.

Mr. Speaker, will the government's new committee deliver better results for Watson Lake patients than the millions of dollars spent on physician recruitment already?

Hon. Mr. Graham: I sometimes wonder where the member opposite gets some of her numbers.

I will tell you that for almost 40 years, the community of Watson Lake has been served wonderfully by a family doctor

and in later time, his daughter, who was also a doctor. Mr. Said Secerbegovic has decided to leave the community, and will be returning from time to time as a locum doctor when required. The Yukon government is also working with the community to supply locum doctors.

The idea that the member opposite has just tried to implant in the minds of all members is that there are no doctors serving the hospital — that couldn't be further from the truth. There are locum doctors who are travelling to Watson Lake to fill in at the hospital as required. From time to time Dr. Secerbegovic is also there as a locum. We are making sure that there are a number of doctors there. However, the alternative that we have now taken is in response to a petition from the community and from the member here. We are attempting to work with the community to resolve the issue.

Ms. Stick: My numbers come from this government's budgets over the years.

This hospital needs three full-time doctors to provide adequate care and coverage in the Watson Lake hospital. Physicians are the only providers of many health care services that Yukoners and families need. When there are not enough doctors, there is a lack of continuity of care and an overuse of emergency room care. An ER doctor or locum — temporary doctor — may refer a Yukoner for a diagnostic test, but the same doctor is not always there to integrate those results into a treatment plan. The Yukon Party's political approach to health care has not worked for Watson Lake with this new hospital.

Yukoners are in need of health services. Will the new committee be looking only at physician recruitment, or will it also look at collaborative care models with pharmacists, therapists, social workers —

Hon. Mr. Graham: It's good to see that the member opposite does realize that collaborative care is an option in Watson Lake. The member opposite has stated that it's absolutely essential that there be three doctors at the hospital at all times and, once again, that's not correct. She obviously does not understand collaborative care because, once the correct protocols are in place, a nurse practitioner could quite easily work in the hospital. We will be examining that alternative with the committee — the community of Watson Lake as well.

It's very difficult to recruit permanent full-time doctors to very many small communities. That's one of the reasons that we're attempting — I see the member opposite has something to ask. Maybe she'd like to ask a question too, because obviously she doesn't understand the situation in small communities in the territory.

That's one of the reasons we're trying to work with the community, with the town and with the Chamber of Commerce, to come up with a long-term resolution to this difficulty. It's a temporary one at the present time. It's very unfortunate. It's not a good situation for the community members, but we're trying to resolve it and we will resolve it.

Question re: Liquefied natural gas

Ms. White: The source of liquefied natural gas in Alberta that this government promised to power the proposed LNG plant on Robert Service Way has dried up. Before it was cancelled, Shell's Jumping Pound facility was to provide the Yukon with the LNG needed to operate its proposed new backup generating plant for five years. The selling point to Yukoners was that it was gas that would only be extracted using conventional means — that is to say, gas that is not extracted through fracking.

Now we're being told that the gas will be coming from a facility that has gas from both conventional and fracked sources. This is not what Yukoners were promised.

What does the government have to say to the people of Yukon, to whom they promised a supply of frack-free gas?

Hon. Mr. Kent: As members know, and most members of the public know, there are a couple of different processes underway with respect to the LNG replacement project at Whitehorse Rapids dam. The YESAA assessment is now in draft phase, seeking public comment on that draft executive committee screening, and there is a Yukon Utilities Board hearing that will be taking place this evening in Whitehorse. There are opportunities for those Yukoners who are concerned about this project to present those concerns.

As the member opposite mentioned, the Yukon Energy Corporation, which is the proponent of this project, has identified a second source of natural gas for this project.

Economically speaking, it's my understanding that it's very close to what the price would have been out of the Calgary facility, so I look forward to listening to the results of the Yukon Utilities Board hearing as well as getting the final screening report from the YESA Board when that's ready.

Ms. White: In December, the Ta'an Kwäch'än Council backed out of a tentative agreement on the proposed LNG plant because of their concerns about the sourcing of the LNG. They were concerned that after five years, the LNG for the plant could be fracked gas, either from inside the Yukon borders or from outside.

After the Ta'an backed out, the government expressed its disappointment because they had sourced the LNG from Jumping Pound and that that gas would be conventionally sourced and not produced through fracking. The concerns of the Ta'an were realized last week as now this government plans on burning fracked natural gas despite their prior commitment.

Will the government admit that they no longer have a way of guaranteeing that the proposed LNG plant will not use fracked gas?

Hon. Mr. Kent: As I mentioned, there are a couple of different public processes that are underway right now where Yukoners can express any concerns that they have with the project. There is the YESAA process as well as the Yukon Utilities Board process that are underway.

Again, just to remind members, of course the boards of the Yukon Energy Corporation and the Yukon Development Corporation approved this project to go forward and we did have representatives of those boards here last fall to answer

questions with respect to the project. Obviously, when Shell announced their plans to cancel the facility north of Calgary, the Energy Corporation did go to its secondary plan, which is to source the gas from a facility located in the Lower Mainland, and that's what they've decided to do.

I'm looking forward to the outcomes of the YESAA process as well as the Yukon Utilities Board process with respect to this project.

Ms. White: Mr. Speaker, the fact is that Yukoners are concerned about where the proposed gas will come from, and this government can no longer guarantee a frack-free source of gas.

Some Yukoners were nearly ready to give their support to the construction of the proposed LNG plant because of that promise of frack-free gas.

This government was attempting to gain social licence for this facility by committing to a frack-free source of gas. That social licence is now gone.

As mentioned by the minister, this evening the Yukon Utilities Board will be holding a public meeting to allow Yukoners to express their views on the proposed LNG plant. Will the minister and other members of his caucus be attending the Yukon Utilities Board meeting at the Westmark tonight to hear first-hand Yukoners' opinions and concerns about the proposed LNG plant?

Hon. Mr. Kent: As the minister responsible for the Energy Corporation, I think it would be inappropriate for me to attend that event this evening at the Westmark Whitehorse. Obviously there are Yukoners who are able to put forward their position, so while I'm sure the members opposite will be there in full placards and protesting this project, they are welcome to do that. But again, I think as the minister responsible, you have to take extra precautions to ensure that you avoid inappropriate situations or actions. I believe that my attending and drawing any focus away from what should be the process that unfolds this evening would be inappropriate.

Again, members of the Legislature will know — and there are members from both sides of this House on a select committee right now that is examining the risks and benefits of hydraulic fracturing. I'm looking forward to their report.

I know there are Yukoners who are out there and are on either side of this debate. It's not just a one-size-fits-all, as the member opposite would have Yukoners believe. There are Yukoners who do support the oil and gas industry and moving forward.

The Leader of the Official Opposition not only doesn't support the oil and gas industry, she doesn't support the officials who work for the Yukon government with respect to that.

Again, Mr. Speaker, I'm looking forward to hearing from both of these processes and moving forward in a manner that is consistent with what those boards recommend.

Question re: Continuing care facilities

Ms. Stick: This government is again telling Yukoners what kind of care they need and how it ought to be delivered. When asked about its plans to build a 300-bed continuing care

facility in Whitehorse, the minister responsible said, and I quote: "We would like to see seniors in this territory have a choice."

But the Yukon Party is not giving Yukoners any choice at all. The government is committing \$6.9 million to a decision they made to build a 300-bed facility centralized in Whitehorse with an initial ballpark figure of \$126 million. Can the minister tell Yukon seniors and others with complex care needs exactly what choice he is giving them by announcing a 300-bed continuing care facility with no evidence of proper consultation with the main stakeholders?

Hon. Mr. Graham: It is interesting to note that the member opposite and her leader don't seem to approve of long-term care for Yukon residents. She says "choice" — and yet they would have Yukoners only pigeonholed into government facilities. Our idea of choice is to provide not only facilities from the government, but also to encourage a number of others to get involved in the long term-care or secondary care of Yukon seniors. By doing that, we would allow these folks some choice. Shall we say, if an NGO came up with a plan to construct residences for seniors, we would think that that would be a wonderful thing.

If a private entrepreneur came up and decided to open a home for seniors and that home was adequately supervised and adequately constructed, then we would encourage that as well because Yukoners need those kinds of choices. We will continue along on our planning for a long-term care facility in the territory, and we will consult with seniors and other residents of the territory as time permits.

Ms. Stick: "As time permits," we will consult — is that a "perhaps," and will that be after the building is there?

We support and recognize the need for complex care beds and continuing care beds, and the fact that those numbers are going to grow.

The Yukon government has a real difficulty being transparent with their planning documents. The minister waded around his assessment and said that part of this tells us what we need to do. We encourage the minister to make public all background studies and assessments that support this government's decision-making. Yukoners want their voices heard, and they want to consider the choices.

The Yukon NDP strongly believes that Yukoners may have a better solution or propose one. Did elders in rural communities say they wanted to move to Whitehorse? Did the Watson Lake Signpost Seniors say they wanted a 300-bed facility in Whitehorse? Who exactly have they consulted to date?

Hon. Mr. Graham: Mr. Speaker, I sit here in total bewilderment. That is why we are constructing a new lodge in Dawson City for seniors care. It is why we constructed two new medical facilities in both Dawson and Watson Lake — to handle the complex care needs of those residences. We have these people opposite still telling us, to this day, that these are horrible things that we should have never have built in Dawson City and Watson Lake.

It goes to show how out of touch they are with rural residents.

Mr. Speaker, we will continue to work with rural residents. We are working with Mayo, as we speak, and with the Yukon Housing Corporation to work there. We are also doing some work in Haines Junction. We are working in those rural communities.

One of the simple facts of life is that the vast majority of seniors do live in and around the City of Whitehorse. We are looking after those long-term needs — that lack of vision that the Opposition complained about during their budget speeches. We are looking only 25 to 30 years down the road, Mr. Speaker, instead of 25 to 30 minutes, as the Opposition does.

Ms. Stick: Mr. Speaker, the minister says he is bewildered. Well, I am. Are people with complex long-term care needs supposed to move into these new hospitals? That's not appropriate care for them.

The minister responsible said, and I quote: "We looked at a mix of non-government, profit, non-profit and private operations that may have a chance to establish a foothill here in the Yukon." Some of those I would agree with, Mr. Speaker, but read the reports on what's going on across this country.

The Premier spoke about the opportunities the Yukon Party is considering — whether driven by government or the private sector. It is clear that the Yukon Party is considering privatizing continuing care. Some of those options may be appropriate but not all of them. Is it the minister's intention to have their 300-bed continuing care facility privately operated?

Hon. Mr. Graham: Mr. Speaker, I love to hear these questions from the Opposition. It reminds me of when I had young children living at home and we used to scare them with the bogeyman under the bed. That's exactly what we have from members opposite.

I spoke some time ago — I think a year or two years ago — about private care because we understood there was a potential for a private operator coming to the territory. We know how the members opposite feel about anything to do with the private sector. They totally disagree with it. I still believe seniors in the territory should have choices. Those choices we should be able to facilitate as well as we can. Where necessary, the government will build and maintain continuing care facilities. We will continue to plan 20 or 30 years into the future.

I know it grates on members opposite to think that we're actually doing something positive and good for people, and that we will consult seniors and others at a later date when we at least have a concept for them to look at. Right now, we've identified the fact that we need a minimum of 300 beds in this territory. Once we move along further in the business case and the planning, we will then incorporate users' comments with the department plan.

Speaker: The time for Question Period has now elapsed.

We will now proceed to Orders of the Day.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT BILLS

Bill No. 13: *Interim Supply Appropriation Act, 2014-15* — Third Reading

Clerk: Third reading, Bill No. 13, standing in the name of the Hon. Mr. Pasloski.

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: I move that Bill No. 13, entitled *Interim Supply Appropriation Act, 2014-15*, be now read a third time and do pass.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Hon. Premier that Bill No. 13, entitled *Interim Supply Appropriation Act, 2014-15*, be now read a third time and do pass.

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: The purpose of this bill is to seek the authority of this Legislature to approve interim spending for the government in an amount not to exceed \$344,392,000 for the two months ending May 31, 2014.

Mr. Speaker, this will permit government departments to make expenditures in order to provide public services to Yukoners until the main estimates are approved.

I move that Bill No. 13, entitled *Interim Supply Appropriation Act, 2014-15*, be now read a third time and do pass.

Motion for third reading of Bill No. 13 agreed to

Speaker: I declare that Bill No. 13 has passed this House.

We are now prepared to receive the Administrator of Yukon to grant assent to the bill which has passed this House.

Administrator Isaac enters the Chamber, announced by the Sergeant-at-Arms

ASSENT TO BILLS

Administrator: Please be seated.

Speaker: Mr. Administrator, the Assembly has, at its present session, passed a certain bill to which, in the name and on behalf of the Assembly, I respectfully request your assent.

Clerk: *Interim Supply Appropriation Act, 2014-15.*

Administrator: I hereby assent to the bill as enumerated by the Clerk.

Administrator leaves the Chamber

Speaker: I will now call the House to order.

GOVERNMENT BILLS

Bill No. 14: *First Appropriation Act, 2014-15* — Second Reading — adjourned debate

Clerk: Second reading, Bill No. 14, standing in the name of the Hon. Mr. Pasloski; adjourned debate, the Hon. Mr. Kent.

Hon. Mr. Kent: It's my pleasure to complete my opening remarks and my reply to the 2014-2015 budget.

Just to recap where I left off on Thursday — obviously I want to say thank you to the constituents of mine in Riverdale

North for continuing to provide their support and continuing to bring their issues forward to me. I think one of the most important parts of the political process here in the territory is that engagement with constituents on issues of concern. As I mentioned on Thursday, my door remains open to any of those constituents that have concerns and would like to speak to me about them. I'm very easy, like all members of the House are, to get hold of, and please don't hesitate to contact my office — or whether I see you in the street, the coffee shop or the grocery stores in Riverdale or other spots — I'm very happy to speak about issues of concern to any and all of my constituents.

Just in my response to give a bit of an outline, obviously there are some important things about this budget that I would like to highlight; things that are important to the riding of Riverdale North that I wanted to talk about, and then some of the other aspects of the budget.

I know that I will get an opportunity, perhaps, toward the end of my reply to speak about Energy, Mines and Resources to celebrate some of the companies that are doing work here in the territory, as well as accomplishments and priorities of the department. But if I don't get to that before my time expires, I certainly will be able to when we get into departmental debate.

I do want to reiterate my thanks to the Premier and my caucus and Cabinet colleagues for their support in putting together this budget. I did mention on Thursday that I believe it is the best budget ever presented in the territory for a number of reasons, not the least of which is that it is the largest capital budget ever presented, and capital projects mean putting Yukoners to work.

This past weekend, Mr. Speaker, I was in a grocery store in Riverdale and ran into a long-time family friend, a gentleman who was born in Whitehorse in 1955 and, as I mentioned, a long-time friend of one of my older brothers and someone who perhaps I wouldn't have thought followed the proceedings of that we do here on a regular basis, but much to my surprise and delight, he did mention the budget to me and how excited he was, as a contractor, to see the amount of capital opportunities and projects that are included in this budget.

I think that sometimes perhaps we don't think that we're reaching all the citizens of the Yukon, but when it comes to spending priorities and identifying projects that are going to provide jobs and opportunities for Yukon, we certainly do have those things touching those citizens out there and that we all in this House represent.

When it comes specifically to the riding of Riverdale North — and I won't repeat what I said on Thursday, but I did touch on the F.H. Collins project and how excited we are to see that project moving forward. I did, as mentioned, briefly attend a job fair being put on by the general contractor, Clark Builders, at one of the local hotels last week.

It is my understanding that they intend to break ground within the next month to six weeks, as soon as the ground thaws and the snow is gone. We are hopeful for a little bit of warmer weather.

I am excited to see that project move forward because I know they are looking for opportunities for local people. They have hired a local project coordinator and they are looking for local superintendents. When I was in there with Minister of Economic Development, they were taking resumes from skilled tradespeople, people who are looking for jobs and opportunities here in the territory.

As I mentioned, they jumped feet first into the community as a whole by sponsoring an important event coming up, the annual Special Olympics dinner and auction. Congratulations to Clark Builders, and we look forward to them building this project and employing many locals and some of the local subs who I know they have already contracted with.

Mr. Speaker, another important project for my riding — and I know that it is one that was promised in our 2011 platform — is the Heart of Riverdale. I think the concept started out with it being a youth centre, but through the hard work of one individual in particular — and I would like to single out on the floor of the House, Andrea Simpson-Fowler, who is a constituent of mine and one of the driving forces of the Heart of Riverdale — they have expanded that mandate to include a lot of other programs.

I know that the Health minister and I have visited the facility on a number of occasions and had the opportunity to have a tour and see what they are looking to accomplish. I was very pleased and happy to see in this budget an appropriation of \$140,000 per year for three years to the Heart of Riverdale so they can get a foothold and start to offer some of the programming they have in mind.

In looking some of the social media surrounding this, I know there are a lot of people who are proud of Andrea and all of the volunteers and individuals who support this project. A big thanks has to go out to her and to my predecessor, the former Member for Riverdale North, the former Speaker of this Legislative Assembly, Ted Staffen, and his colleague at the time, the Member for Riverdale South, Glenn Hart, who worked very hard to ensure this project got some legs underneath it. Along with my colleagues, I'm pleased to be able to deliver on that project and see it move forward.

Mr. Speaker, I want to talk a little bit about a couple of other aspects of the budget — with respect to health care, education and investing in infrastructure — because, as I mentioned last week, that's one of the reasons I chose the Yukon Party as the party to run for and this team as the team to run with. I know that everyone on this side of the House believes that being fiscally responsible and building a strong and sustainable economy allows us to make those investments in health care, education and infrastructure. Those investments we need to make are important to the citizens of the Yukon.

When it comes to health care, in my time as president of the Yukon Hospital Foundation, one of the slogans that we used when raising dollars from individuals and corporations to support medical equipment purchases for our hospitals was helping us to deliver health care close to home.

I think that this budget speaks to what we tried to do there and what this government is trying to do. I think one only has

to look at the multi-year capital plan, the project listing under Health and Social Services. In that you will see McDonald Lodge replacement for \$10,421,000; a replacement of the Sarah Steele Building here in Whitehorse; the St. Elias building replacement, \$1.235 million identified for that; \$6.9 million identified for a Whitehorse continuing care facility; \$472,000 into the ER MRI expansion at the Whitehorse hospital; a temporary MRI suite for \$2.775 million — that is one of the things that I'm particularly proud of and pleased about because I know how deep Yukoners dug into their pockets to donate that initial \$2 million to the purchase of an MRI, which was matched by the Yukon government, and now we can move forward rather than waiting until the completion of the ER MRI expansion. We can get that MRI here as soon as possible and provide that diagnostic equipment to Yukoners. That will be the first MRI north of 60 in Canada and an important addition to our medical imaging department at Whitehorse General Hospital. Also included in here is \$3.475 million for the Salvation Army homeless shelter redevelopment.

These projects and a lot of the spending that takes place in the Department of Health and Social Services allow us to deliver that health care close to home and make sure that our seniors can stay in their communities; that individuals can get the treatment that they need here in the Yukon to the biggest extent possible.

I'm sure that our rural members will know some of the strain and the stress that their constituents feel when they have to travel even to Whitehorse for any medical procedures. Travelling beyond Whitehorse for some seniors I know can be under stressful circumstances, because often they are in a new city and don't know their way around. Some are fortunate enough to have families or friends who can go down as escorts or even be provided with escorts through Health and Social Services if necessary. But making sure that we can provide as many tests as possible close to home here is something that's extremely important to me.

When it comes to education, as the former Minister of Education, I certainly understand that this is one of those things that you can't take away from a citizen once you give it to them. It's one of the most important gifts I believe that a government can give to its citizens. I'm very pleased with the work of the department and the new Minister of Education in moving on so many initiatives. Some that are contained in this budget include building the new facility — the new high school at F.H. Collins — but also some of the programming that I'm sure she can get into some further detail on with respect to 21st century learning and some of the aspects around bringing rural equity to our students.

I know that was something that was important to me. Whether it's the rural experiential model, or the RAM, that took place in Dawson City — and I believe there's another one scheduled for Carmacks coming up. The Dawson City one brought together a number of students from across northern Yukon to try their hand at different trades. That was last September. I understand it was a tremendous event — and moving even to the flip school model in Watson Lake, where

there are opportunities for some of the students to do self-paced learning with a teacher assisting them in the classrooms.

I know when I was in Watson Lake to speak to the Chamber of Commerce at lunch, one of the chamber members mentioned to me that she was so pleased with that program, because it allowed one of her children who was perhaps a month behind, and would have had to repeat the course under the previous model, to finish her time in that math course, take that extra month and not lose all the amount of time she had invested. So congratulations to Watson Lake on that new model. I know they're showing tremendous results. I believe the Premier mentioned in his budget speech that not only the flip school but the rural experiential model will be the subject of a presentation at two national conferences on education.

Congratulations to the new minister for seeing those through, and to the Department of Education and the officials for delivering on something that I know will make a difference for those students who live outside of Whitehorse and who are looking to take advantage of similar opportunities that students in Whitehorse enjoy, and indeed students across the country.

I'm going to talk a little bit about some of the infrastructure investments in this budget because I think that with the largest capital budget, some of the highlights are certainly worth mentioning, because I know it puts many individuals in the territory to work, not only on the construction side, but also on the highways side.

When it comes to highway or transportation spending, \$85.264 million is the largest transportation budget ever presented in this House; \$48.17 million of that will be for highway work; \$14.23 million for bridges; \$16.316 million for airports; and \$3.3 million for other roads, such as the Silver Trail, and turning lanes on the North Klondike Highway close to town in the Whitehorse periphery.

I think that those types of investments not only provide improvements to the infrastructure and make our roadways and transportation links safer for the travelling public, but again, they provide those jobs and opportunities that so many of our constituents look forward to. Again, as I mentioned earlier, that gentleman, the long-time family friend, was particularly excited about some of the smaller projects that are contained within this budget when it comes to investing in road infrastructure.

There are obviously a number of capital building projects that are also underway — as mentioned, F.H. Collins and all of the health care ones — but I think it's also worth mentioning that the Yukon Housing Corporation is also making significant investments in the housing stock of the territory, not only with the Alexander Street residence.

Many people in Whitehorse will see that building going up at 207 Alexander Street. It is a seniors facility that will have 34 one-bedroom units for seniors. We also see investments being made in Mayo — another campaign commitment that we are following through on to build a seniors facility that is independent living in the town of Mayo. I think that's obviously an exciting development for the people in that community, because I think the ask goes back a

number of years, so I was pleased that we were able to include that in our platform and deliver on that project two short years after being elected.

Some of the other investments that the Yukon Housing Corporation is making that I know many Yukoners will be pleased with: \$12 million in this budget for a new 48-unit seniors building in Whitehorse and \$2.9 million for the six-unit seniors housing complex in Mayo.

There are a number of upgrades to existing facilities that I think are important. Many of the buildings that the Housing Corporation is upgrading are long-time buildings here in the Whitehorse area: \$250,000 for Greenwood and \$250,000 for Closeleigh Manor.

There is \$225,000 to revitalize some decommissioned social housing units in the community of Ross River; \$450,000 for reconfiguration of existing social housing units in rural Yukon; and \$250,000 to upgrade the six-plex in downtown Whitehorse that has become vacant as a result of the relocation of tenants to the new Options for Independence building that was recently opened.

One of the most important things I would like to talk about with respect to these upgrade numbers is the \$250,000 for accessibility improvements in a number of seniors buildings in support of tenants who want to remain in their homes. As the former minister responsible for Yukon Housing Corporation, I visited a lot of the seniors facilities throughout Whitehorse and the Yukon and I was able to see first-hand what those individuals were looking for as far as changes to their units that would make them more accessible. I congratulate the minister responsible for the Yukon Housing Corporation for this appropriation in this budget, because I think it's going to make a big difference to some of those people who needed a shallower tub or handicap bars in their units, or whatever the individual need would be. I'm looking forward to seeing that move forward.

One of the things that were important to individuals in the House during the first couple of years was the northern housing trust money of \$13.5 million that was left over. I am pleased that those dollars will be leveraged against private sector dollars to ensure at least a \$27-million investment in affordable rental housing throughout the territory. I know they went through a request for qualifications and then a request for proposals phase — I think they are still in the RFP phase — but we look forward to successful proponents being announced soon.

Mr. Speaker, another big aspect of course is the housing action plan, which we are working on under the lead of the Housing Corporation but also myself, as Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. The Department of Health and Social Services and Community Services also have a role to play, along with a number of committees that they've structured to provide advice. We'll look forward to hearing the results of their work soon.

When it comes to Energy, Mines and Resources, as I mentioned — it looks like I'm running a little bit low on time, so I will get to addressing some of the accomplishments and priorities and celebrating the companies like Victoria Gold,

Casino Copper, North American Tungsten, Kaminak, Teck and Rockhaven. I can do that, I think, when we get into line-by-line debate.

A couple of the projects I think that are extremely important and worth highlighting really go to that vision piece that the Minister of Health and Social Services spoke about during Question Period and that is our legacy hydro project. We've got \$2 million in this budget to continue with the workplan — a workplan that I will table in this House once it's ready. Again, it's a project that is exciting because it allows us to look long term into what this territory will require for important energy infrastructure.

The second aspect of this budget is the money for the additional fibre tie. I know that many Yukon businesses are looking to have that redundancy with their Internet service. It doesn't matter if it's from small businesses who are receiving that 25-percent small business tax cut to larger businesses and individuals in the community. I think it's going to be extremely important and I'm happy to be part of a government that has that vision and looks long-term.

With that, I will conclude my remarks. As I mentioned, I didn't get a chance to talk too much about Energy, Mines and Resources and all the fantastic things that that department is doing as far as the accomplishments of the last couple of years and the priorities going forward, but I'm sure I'll get that opportunity to speak in more detail once we get into Committee of the Whole and departmental debate.

With that, a big thank you to all of my colleagues on this side of the House and I'm hopeful that members on the other side will reconsider supporting this budget, because I think there are an awful lot of great things in there that will help Yukoners no matter where they are in the housing continuum or where they reside.

Thank you very much.

Hon. Mr. Graham: It's indeed a pleasure for me to rise today in supporting this government's budget. I listened with interest to the Leader of the Official Opposition's reply and one of the first departments with which she took exception was my department, the Department of Health and Social Services.

After getting the Blues and reading carefully through all of the things that the member opposite had to say, I thought that what I would do was structure my comments today to answer some of the questions or some of the misstatements that were made during that speech.

One of the first was that the government has no territorial end-of-life strategy. Well, obviously, the Leader of the Official Opposition is not aware that the Yukon government has a palliative care resource team. They are available in all Yukon settings and provide palliative care services, including community nursing, acute care, continuing care, home care, and First Nation health programs. The team includes a nurse, social worker, education liaison, and contracted physician.

This team has been working very hard over the last while — the last several months, as a matter of fact — on a palliative care framework for the Yukon Territory. The

framework is based on existing national, international and gold standard frameworks in the area of palliative care. The document will outline when it's completed the principles of quality, integrated palliative care. It's not intended to be prescriptive, but to guide future planning and the development of all services in this area throughout the territory.

To date, the team has completed a great deal of research on palliative care frameworks, strategies, action plans and standards of practice from across the world, and at national levels as well as at the provincial, regional level in Canada.

A draft document has been prepared by the palliative care team, and it has been presented to internal stakeholders, including the Yukon Hospital Corporation, the palliative care team itself and other staff within continuing care, Health and Social Services managers, Hospice Yukon Society and an expert reviewer from the Fraser Health authority in British Columbia.

The document was then revised, based on feedback, and consultation with other groups has now begun. Presentations to date with this draft framework include consultation with the Council of Yukon First Nations health directors, Yukon Health and Social Services Council and the Dawson City health care community, which includes the hospital, home care, community health and others.

To date, we've been unable to successfully set up interviews with the Kwanlin Dun First Nation, although the manager attended two of the sessions that were held previously, so they are aware of it and we look forward to further consultation with them. We have also been unable to find a time to meet with the physicians association or with the Watson Lake health community, which is next on our list.

We had originally planned for an announcement in the Legislature somewhere around the middle of April, once the further consultation has been completed, but we will play that one by ear and, once the framework document is ready, we will announce it and table it in the Legislature, as well as post it on the government website.

I think it's important to understand that with an increasing aging population here in the territory, we are experiencing an aging population quicker than the rest of the country, probably in part due to the fact that many of our seniors used to leave the territory and retire to warmer climates, and they are now staying at home staying with family and friends in the territory for any number of reasons. We find that they are remaining here in much greater numbers than they ever have before.

We want to make sure that not only are there palliative care services available to these folks when required, but we want to also make sure that our continuing care, our home care and our medical systems are all in place to provide the services that these folks will need.

It was interesting to me to read some documentation in terms of what other countries are doing for their aging populations. While reading, I found a very interesting label that was attached to seniors or retirees. In the Spanish culture, the name *jubilado* is roughly translated to mean "jubilant ones". It is an interesting concept that they see their retirees

and senior citizens as the jubilant ones, and they are treated as such in those Spanish cultures.

I think that we have a ways to go to get there. Some of our cultures to treat our seniors in that sense. Some have a ways to go.

We are attempting with everything we do here in this government, and especially in Health and Social Services, to ensure that our seniors, our retirees and our aging population are treated as *jubilados*, one and all. It has been a particular area of concern and it has been one of those things that I believe is absolutely essential to show you're a real caring society.

To that end, we made a decision some time ago to take a look at what our future long-term care needs are. We did a number of things. As you know, Mr. Speaker, over the last few years we have increased dramatically our home care budget and the profile of our home care clientele was also thoroughly researched. We found that in the last 10 years, home care in the territory has increased in regions outside of Whitehorse, from a mere 50 people to well over 200 in 2012-13. In Whitehorse, the number of people being served by home care services here in the territory went from 275 or 280 to well over 500 being serviced by home care within the City of Whitehorse and in excess of 200 in rural communities.

These people have a huge variety of needs that are provided by home care. We've also determined that of the 520 or so home care clients here in the city, approximately 208 of those people are considered high risk. Many of them lack support systems. Many of them don't even have informal caregivers. In fact, we found that 14 percent of home care clients here in the territory have no caregiver at all. They don't even have an emotional support person whom they can go to. The national average is about three percent, and that's kind of an indicator in itself — 14 percent in the Yukon, three percent on a national level. So that's one of the things that concerns us greatly and it's one of the things that home care does so well — provide that emotional and daily contact, the physical contact with people that many of them don't have.

We find that many of our clients are older, middle-aged, single men and perhaps that's a result of the way that Yukon grew up as well — these hardy, pioneer types who came to the territory and worked hard in the mines, worked hard at doing whatever they did, and now they find themselves with no family here, with very little support, and with very little money because many of them worked in areas where no pensions were available and they didn't save a whole lot. They were those hard-drinking, hard-working guys that you so often hear about, and now they're dependent on home care or dependent on long-term care here in the territory.

It's one of the highest predictors of future need for facility care and poor health outcomes in the homes, because many of these older men — because they don't have the supports and because they don't have the emotional or the support from a distance — are the fellows who will wind up in our long-term care facilities.

We also find that clients in Yukon are currently younger than in other jurisdictions. The national trending does show

that the greatest growth of seniors will be in the northern territories, and the Yukon is one of those areas of very high growth.

Our home care service currently is one of the largest, most comprehensive, no-cost bundles of service anywhere in Canada. In a recent evaluation of the program, the program received excellent grades from the evaluators. It was seen as one of the best programs in the country. The program provides individual care planning. The folks in the program will meet with caregivers. They will meet with the seniors themselves to try to work out individual plans for each one of the many, many people in home care.

We have approximately 70 Meals on Wheels clients, supplying approximately 1,000 meals per month. We have 10 clients in day programming, and these are usually frail or elderly people who are still managing to live on their own, or at least with support from family or friends, but they need day programming to allow them an opportunity to get out of their home. We do provide that.

We also provide facility-based respite care. We currently have 82 users. It's increasing at a rapid rate. The average number of days per user has increased from 22 days per year to approximately 38 days per year. It also indicates to us that the need for long-term care beds has also increased. In 2013, there were 3,104 bed days dedicated to respite here in the territory.

Now we get to long-term care, and the recent comments by members of the Official Opposition with respect to the long-term care program and where we're headed with that program. At the present time, there are four care facilities in the territory. Copper Ridge Place has 96 beds, Macaulay Lodge has 47 beds, Thomson Centre has 28 beds and McDonald Lodge in Dawson City has 11 beds. So it's a total of 182 beds. Currently, I believe as of last week there were 47 people awaiting spaces in long-term care facilities, and the wait-list could be as much as four to six months to access. The wait-list grows, we find, by two to three people per month. The number of beds available has tripled in the last 29 years. It will increase slightly with the construction of a new McDonald Lodge in Dawson City. We'll go from 11 to 15 beds at that facility. Consequently we determined, after looking carefully at population trends, at home care statistics, and at a variety of other indicators, that we would need a facility here in the territory fairly soon.

Macaulay Lodge currently has a building life expectancy of approximately 7.5 years. Further upgrades and renovations may extend that time frame, but we don't expect it will extend it to any great extent and, besides, that building was built in another time and era when the needs of today's seniors weren't anticipated. We believe that Macaulay Lodge will have to be decommissioned. Forty-seven existing beds will need to be replaced if the facility is decommissioned.

The Thomson Centre is an excellent facility. My father-in-law stayed there until his death, and he enjoyed his stay there. He felt the facility was second-to-none and the staff was absolutely wonderful, but it's very costly to operate. The high staffing levels are required to maintain resident safety, and

that's primarily due to the structural design. The functional design of the space doesn't really meet ongoing space program requirements.

We also rent the space from the Yukon Hospital Corporation and I believe the Hospital Corporation has an interest in regaining the use of that space at some time in the future. We would see the Thomson Centre, at some point in the future, being decommissioned as well, and those beds would need to be replaced by another facility.

Our continuing care trends are quite different from the national average. We have a younger, more mobile, group of people there. For example, people suffering with multiple sclerosis are in our residences. We have people with mental health and cognitive issues in our facilities. We have people with higher needs — more clinically complex folks in the facilities. We have much higher rates of impaired cognition, on average, than other jurisdictions in the country. We also have a number of children as residents in these long-term care facilities and their needs and requirements also need to be taken into consideration.

Our projections call for at least 40 percent of the beds in a continuing care facility, which will be required for special dementia care and 40 percent for extended care. The remainder of the beds would serve a mixed population of intermediate care residents with diverse needs, this is the population that we see not always requiring long-term care facilities. These people could hopefully be placed in an intermediate care facility that has some kind of ongoing recognition of their needs and some kind of ongoing supervision.

What we are also recommending is that any new construction be done with dementia care done as the primary concern, because we found that if the building is designed for dementia care, it can be utilized to do any number of different things. But if it has not been designed specifically for dementia care, then the cost to rehabilitate or to house dementia patients within a facility is cost prohibitive.

The Yukon population is aging quickly, as I have said. We suspect that the average number of seniors over 65 in the year 2021 will be in the neighbourhood of 3,500 seniors. By 2030, we could have as many as 6,200 or 6,300 seniors who are 65 and over. Just to give you an idea of what this means, it will mean that our population will more than double by 2030, and it could be as much as triple if our higher population trends continue. I'm sorry, I guess I said we have almost 3,500 seniors in the territory now. I should have said by 2020. I should have said that in 2012 we had 3,400 seniors in the territory.

In addition to the population trend toward a higher seniors population overall, Yukon is impacted by the increasing number of seniors choosing to remain in the territory, as I said before, after retirement, where many of them used to leave the territory. Yukon pharmacare coverage, no-cost health care and the comparatively lower cost of residential care I believe all contribute to that trend.

We did some modelling to determine what percentage of the population would need long-term care in the future as

well. We looked at what we felt we would need by the year 2021. We thought we would be up to at least 300 to 320 beds in total within the continuing care system.

Given that we currently have 182, it would indicate that we're probably looking at an increase of at least 150, and if Macaulay Lodge and Thomson Centre are both decommissioned, it means 225 extra beds. We will need even more by 2031, so we would plan for at least 400 total beds across the continuing care system to ensure that bed capacity will meet projected demands here in the territory.

Now, when I listen to the members opposite — perhaps, Mr. Speaker, I'll give them the benefit of the doubt and they don't understand some of the things facing seniors in this territory right now. At present, we have a number of seniors occupying spaces in the Whitehorse General Hospital who shouldn't be there. They don't require that kind of care, but they simply don't have anywhere else to go. They don't have homes to go to, and if they get there, they don't have care providers who can care for them on an ongoing basis.

So we looked at a number of options — and I'll cut very quickly to the chase — and we determined that we would need at least 300 new continuing care beds in the next 20 to 30 years.

Some Hon. Member: (inaudible)

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Speaker: Hon. Premier, on a point of order.

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: Mr. Speaker, with your indulgence, I'd like to introduce to the members in the House a friend in the gallery. George Privett is here. He lives in Porter Creek Centre, I believe, and I think his nephew Allen is a Page and I know he has come to perhaps listen to some of the general debate on the budget, but perhaps to admire and see the good work that his nephew Allen is doing as well.

Applause

Hon. Mr. Graham: Once the department had done those projections and we made some tentative decisions, we brought this forward within my own caucus. It was supported unanimously here within our caucus because everyone here is aware of the fact that there are a number of seniors out there who simply do not have a place to go. It's quite simple, Mr. Speaker.

We then looked at the further steps in the process because we felt that the needs assessment, which has been basically completed, has determined that we do need a significant number of beds required to meet not only the current but the future needs of seniors, jubilados, here in the territory.

We have now hired a consultant and we will be putting together a business case, but we have also asked the consultant to verify our numbers, to take a look at our population projections, to take a look at our home care projections and to determine what they believe that the total Yukon residential bed requirements would be. That was one of the criticisms of the Auditor General with the two medical facilities in Watson and Dawson, and we felt that we needed

an ironclad business case and needs assessment for this new facility.

Our consultant looked at a number of projected populations — and I won't bore you with the details, Mr. Speaker, and tell you how they came up with the approach used to plan a projection methodology. The methodology relied on data published by Statistics Canada and the Yukon Bureau of Statistics, et cetera.

They were also working on an understanding of population culture to make determinations. They did a population projection that required extrapolation of Bureau of Statistics data to the year 2035, and they also used algorithms — and I won't bore you with those either, Mr. Speaker. But they managed to project the seniors population, and it was remarkably close to what the department had projected — perhaps higher, in some cases, than what the department had projected — because they felt that good baseline data was available. Yukon seniors accounted for 9.5 percent of the total population in 2012, 9.9 percent in 2013, and they estimate that the total population of seniors in the territory will be 16.1 percent by 2021.

2021 is only seven years away, and it will be 16.1 percent of the population — or at least that's what the projection is. That's a fairly loud wake-up call for all of us. With the support of all members of the Yukon Party caucus, we've decided to go ahead as quickly as we possibly can with planning of the facility.

As I said, we are currently working up a business case to verify numbers and to determine the options to best assess the needs that we know are out there. We know those needs are out there through home care, through medical records and through a variety of other sources.

Consultations, as I have been accused of not doing, would not normally happen in any construction of this kind during the needs assessment or the business case. Targeted consultations would normally occur during the design phase, because we are not trying to consult these seniors to determine if there is need out there for this facility, nor are we trying to target them to build a business case. We know, now that the business case and the needs assessment have been completed, that the need is there. What we will be doing from this point on is working up some graphed designs and we will be doing targeted consultations with seniors around the territory.

I think it's really important that when we talk about seniors facilities, we have a pretty good track record. Former governments do as well, Mr. Speaker, because not only the Yukon Party government was in charge of those facilities. It is really important to us that these facilities are constructed in such a way that they are welcoming and that the seniors who will populate these facilities enjoy their final days in the facility itself.

We are also actively examining best practice. We are looking at new design intelligence for continuing care facilities.

We're looking at what other jurisdictions have done in terms of dementia care. We're looking at creative, innovative designs to achieve the atmosphere — the warm, homey

atmosphere such as folks at Thomson Centre and at Copper Ridge experience at the present time. We're trying to create those qualities that Yukoners expect, and we need to also create them in order to meet the programming and care needs of the Yukoners who will reside in our continuing care facilities, as we have done to date in all of our continuing care facilities.

Other than the fact that the Opposition seems to have some kind of mental block with the fact that it will be 300 beds — it will be a fairly large building; there is no doubt about it — but if it's needed, then we should be building it because we don't want to be caught in 10 years with 200 people on a waitlist, and we are still in the planning processes for a facility. We want to make sure that this facility is ready for those folks when they reach the age that they require it. We will talk with seniors and groups to make sure that the facility is designed in such a way that it's a homey, welcoming facility that they will all appreciate.

I had some other numbers as well — just for interest's sake — that the consultants came up with. The consultants indicate that they believe that we will probably reach the requirement for 300 beds much quicker than we believe we will. We think with the robust home care system that we have, and the fact that as people age in this era, it seems that their health is a little better than what it perhaps was in the past, that many of these people will remain in their homes with adequate home care, and many of them will be able to live on their own well into their senior years.

If we're wrong, then we'll have to address that when it occurs. We believe that 300 beds will address the Whitehorse and surrounding area requirement for some time to come. We are also doing planning for other facilities. As I said, we'll be replacing McDonald Lodge this summer and we'll be continuing with design and work in other areas as quickly as we can.

One of the other things that the member opposite mentioned in her reply was a mental health strategy. As I said before in answer to a question or a comment from the member opposite, members opposite seem to believe that because there isn't a strategy in place that nothing is being done in the field of mental health. Nothing could be further from the truth. Mental health is a key priority for my department and for me as a minister. We currently provide a huge number of supports to clients and families with mental illness, with mental health challenges, with concurrent disorders and with addictions.

The member opposite said we promised a mental health strategy a few years ago and have not delivered it. She's correct in one thing: I did promise a mental health strategy. We delivered a mental health framework and then, in consultation within our own department, we realized there were many things we should be getting in order within our own department. So we are in the process of doing that.

We recognize there are some gaps. We know that mental health is a growing issue not only here but in the rest of Canada as well. We also recognize the importance and benefits of enhanced, integrated service delivery approaches

to meeting the needs of clients, not only in their own lifespan, but through an integrated service model.

We recognize this and we realize that it's an ongoing journey and that we can help in that journey. The needs assessment that was recently completed for Watson Lake and Dawson City has identified the important role that collaborative care practices and integration can play in mental health, addictions and service delivery. As a result of that and as a result of internal department reorganization or works, we are currently providing mental health services for continuing care clients. This is all done under the direction of a clinical psychologist. We've placed a greater emphasis and focus on child and youth needs through policies and approaches to child and youth mental health services in the Yukon. We have a department working group.

This department working group will ensure that we are maximizing internal integrated service, and that's what I meant when I said we are trying to get our own house in order. We have to maximize the integrated delivery and access the quality support and services that we can provide across the department, not only through social workers and mental health workers, but also through our community health facilities and any other services that we provide as a department.

So the department is exploring the opportunities to ensure that, as I said, not only social services, but addiction services and health providers are attuned to mental health needs of people across the territory, that they're working together and they're exploring innovation to dealing with some of the problems faced by people across this territory. The reason we're doing it is we realize we don't have an endless budget in Health and Social Services.

Some Hon. Member: (inaudible)

Hon. Mr. Graham: That's it? Holy — thank you, Mr. Speaker. I didn't realize I'd been rambling on that long.

Health and Social Services consumes a huge amount of the total territorial budget. I know that every time we talk about new initiatives in Health and Social Services, many of my colleagues cringe because the money has to come from somewhere. So what we're trying to do within Health and Social Services is move to an integrated case management system between Mental Health and Alcohol and Drug Services, and we're trying to link those services with other areas as well, such as the community health nurse with FASSY or with Many Rivers. So we're trying to bring in as many players as we can to deal with the complex needs of many of these people with mental health issues.

Again, we work with partners such as First Nations, Many Rivers Counselling and Support Services — all kinds of Yukon departments. We work with as many as we possibly can. As I said before, we're not perfect in the mental health services phase, but we're getting there. We're making strides and we're working very hard to deal with the issues that we have to deal with.

Unfortunately, I haven't had time to deal with many of the issues or to tell you about many of the things that are in our budget here today. We didn't have time to talk about the planning and design of a replacement for the St. Elias group

home. I didn't have time to tell you about one of the things that I'm most proud of, which is the new Sarah Steele Building and about the construction that we hope will start very soon on that facility.

I didn't have time to tell you about the new MRI and the reason that it's going in as a temporary structure — a temporary structure that once the new hospital facility is completed, will then be reused. So even though the MRI will be housed in a temporary structure, the structure will not simply be destroyed on completion of the new facility. It will be repurposed and reused; therefore, that money will not be wasted. I think that the work that the Hospital Corporation is now doing in terms of planning for the new expansion is absolutely wonderful. In fact, I understand now that a group of local physicians, as well as the Hospital Corporation, will be making a trip to a facility to take a look at a modern emergency department. I really encourage them in their planning and think that they're doing an excellent job there.

I didn't have time to tell you about the continued support of the food bank facility and the money that we've given to them. That is part of this government's focus. We not only provided the \$750,000, but we also made it incumbent upon the Food Bank Society itself to really put some effort into paying down the mortgage that they will have on the rest of the building. We think that kind of partnership between government and NGOs, such as the food bank, really works. The Food Bank Society has done an absolutely wonderful job there, and I just signed the papers today to ensure that the money will be going to the food bank.

We didn't have time to talk about FASD, including increasing our capacity for local diagnoses and assessment and any number of other things that, Mr. Speaker, I'm very, very proud of the department for doing.

Seeing how I've almost run out of time — or I guess I could go on until you've cut me off completely — I will thank you for the opportunity and also thank the residents of Porter Creek North for allowing me the opportunity to spend the few years here in the Legislature, and I've enjoyed every second of it.

Ms. Stick: I'm fortunate and honoured to represent the riding and constituents of Riverdale South. This is a very interesting and very diverse riding, comprised of single-family homes, apartments, condominiums, seniors housing, five schools, and many locally owned businesses that many people access from around Whitehorse and also from outside the territory.

I want to thank the constituents of my riding for their support and for their ongoing communications with me and the feedback I receive on what my constituents believe to be important issues for themselves and for the Yukon.

This is another big budget, and the Department of Health and Social Services, which is my critic area, has the largest amount from this budget, coming in at over \$338 million. It is a stunning budget for what it proposes and what it leaves out.

The Department of Health and Social Services impacts each and every individual in this territory from birth to death.

I do not believe there is a department as important as this one. For that reason I will be examining the spending closely.

We are a diverse and growing population and, as it was pointed out previously, we have a growing aging population. Our needs for ourselves and our family members continue to change.

Since taking on this critic area, I have been collecting health care stories from Yukoners. In the last year I made a concerted effort to go out and actively collect health care stories from different Yukoners. What I received were their concerns, their tribulations and their kudos to the health care system.

I have been overwhelmed by the response, by what people have shared with me — including their own personal medical information and the crisis that they or their family members faced. I have been to the communities, I have sat at kitchen tables and listened to people on the streets — listening to people share their health care concerns.

I have heard from Yukoners still without access to a family doctor. I have listened to Yukoners talk about their chronic conditions and lack of clear support and guidelines, and the mixed messages they received.

I've listened to Yukoners caught up in medical travel red tape that leaves them feeling frustrated — this, on top of their own personal worries, their illness, their stresses about their own health concerns or those of a family member.

I've also heard from First Nation citizens who are not receiving the same level of care through the non-insured health benefits, through Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, as other Yukoners are receiving.

We know that health care should be fair and equitable across the board, for all Yukon citizens. It's important that these inequities be addressed and negotiated between the federal and territory officials.

I know our health care dollars are finite, and I know that we're not going to see an ever-increasing amount from Ottawa. For that reason, we cannot continue on this upward spending trajectory without a clear plan to address Yukoners' needs. We need to be spending our health care dollars wisely but, more importantly, in a sustainable manner.

The minister just mentioned that the hospital will be building a temporary building for the MRI. I support having an MRI in the Yukon. It's important for Yukoners. I've heard that. What we didn't hear was what this temporary building will be repurposed for after the MRI is moved into the ER expansion.

Repurposed to what we haven't heard, but it should be in the plan and it should be known ahead of time.

We haven't seen the business plan that says this is the best way to spend our health care dollars. Are we sure there is still a need for ER expansion? We've been pleased to see new doctors arriving and taking on new patients, and we are pleased to see a clinic that was opened for the frequent users of the emergency room. With these services — new physicians, new clinics — we should be seeing a drop in the inappropriate use of the emergency room as a place where people have to go to get a prescription refilled, or a place

Yukoners go because they don't have a family doctor and need ongoing support with their chronic needs.

We would like to see the statistics that back up the expansion of the emergency room, and what the impact has been of new doctors and the new clinic. Who are the people using the emergency room? What are their needs? Are they truly emergencies or are there other needs that can be provided for in a more efficient and less costly way?

We know the emergency room is the most expensive way to provide health care services that are not appropriate to emergency room care.

We are still waiting to hear the final capital costs on the new hospitals in Watson Lake and Dawson City. What are those final costs for each? What are the outstanding bills and liens against these hospitals? The NDP have heard from contractors who are still waiting to be paid for work that was done.

At this point, the government can only guess at what the annual operating costs will be because of the changing model. Even as we speak, we've gone from what was originally going to be acute care to what we have heard talked about as "collaborative care." The community consultation report that was completed after the building of these two health care facilities tells us that collaborative care should be the model. Well, Mr. Speaker, housing different services in one building does not make for collaborative care. Collaborative care is firstly about teamwork and not a top-down approach. Collaborative care should include communities, patients and their families in both the planning of facilities and how they operate. In its best form, collaborative care brings the team to the patient and considers the whole person and their needs. That's what patient-centred and family-centred care is — when the needs to patients and their families are at the centre of a team of providers. Provider-centred care is putting the needs of the providers of that care first and ignoring the voices and the choices of Yukoners.

In Friday's paper, we heard that the government is unable to staff the Watson Lake hospital with the required three physicians needed to run effectively. Finding a locum for this community is difficult. The minister said he will strike a community committee to solve this problem and that's fine, but why wasn't the position funded by the department to recruit new physicians to the Yukon who are able to do this?

What will the community committee the minister spoke of do differently? In previous budgets, Dawson City had their own physician recruiter. Why wasn't a similar position created for Watson Lake, considering they too were building a new hospital that would require physicians?

Two years ago, nurse practitioner legislation was passed, and we still are waiting for the new regulations. There is a nurse practitioner working in Continuing Care and another working in a local clinic, but why the delay? Why haven't we seen more nurse practitioners providing the care in the communities that is more effective and less costly? That was what was trumpeted when this legislation came forward. That's why the support was there for it. It was a better way of providing good care to Yukoners.

At the last sitting, we were provided with the consultation information gathered on midwifery. Will we be seeing legislation that addresses this maternity care, which at this time is only provided in Whitehorse? Mothers-to-be still have to leave their communities, leave their families and their support systems to come to Whitehorse to have their babies delivered in Whitehorse hospital. Some have access to midwives, but not all. Again, a more efficient, better end result and better outcome system is midwifery. There's plenty of documentation to support this and still we're waiting.

The 300-bed continuing care facility, Mr. Speaker — that we've already begun to question — is the real shocker. An assessment that was available on-line and is now gone, has been completed — which looks at our aging statistics and projects the need for beds by 2020. I'm not going to argue those numbers. I found the report; I have it; I've read it. I believe what they say with regard to growing populations, growing seniors and a growing need for beds. What does concern me is the jump from the statistics to the current work being done to look at a design, location and cost without first consulting Yukoners about what their needs and desires might be. What do Yukoners want?

Is moving seniors away from their communities and away from their families and friends and locating them in Whitehorse the best way to provide support? For many, this would be the absolute worst thing you could do to them, by isolating them from what's most important in their lives. I know of people in Whitehorse, part of a partnership or married couple, who receive daily visits from their family member who might not have moved into that continuing care facility. It's important to the resident and it's important to the family member to be able to maintain that contact with their partner, their family member or their friend in continuing care.

I know this, Mr. Speaker, from my own experience with my parents. My dad was moved into an extended care facility and my mom visited him every single day — twice a day — as long as she could. The only time she missed visiting was if it snowed and she didn't want to drive, or she was ill and didn't want to pass on any colds or flu to other residents. There is no way in the world my mother wouldn't have done that, it was just part of her partnership with my dad. There are many, many couples like that in the Yukon.

The minister said something about how this would be for Whitehorse and the surrounding area. I know that we are replacing McDonald Lodge and that is great, and that can meet some of the needs for Dawson, Old Crow and perhaps Pelly. But I am not aware of any other continuing care residences in the Yukon.

The surrounding area for Whitehorse could include Beaver Creek, Burwash, Haines Junction, Carcross, Carmacks, Watson Lake, Teslin and all points in between. For many of the First Nation elders, they have only lived in one place their whole lives, and to uproot them away from their community and to move them to Whitehorse will isolate them.

Not every family member has the ability to travel to Whitehorse to visit, there are many that don't. Surely we should be looking at other alternatives. There are other models

of care out there that recognize the need for access to community, family and friends.

There should be an options analysis that goes out to the public for consultation and asks: What would be the best for you, for your family members and for your community?

The minister also touched on a mental health strategy to address the growing need for support in the Yukon. The studies, the assessments, reports — they've all been done, but we still don't see that strategy that has clear goals, timelines and measurements of outcome. We've never said that nothing is being done, but we do know that there are long wait times, there are gaps and, in some communities, very little services and very little support.

We know there are two mental health nurses, one located in Dawson and one located in Haines Junction. These two individuals are to provide the support for all of the communities in the Yukon, along with Many Rivers and social workers. It's not enough.

Many of our children, our youth, adults and seniors suffer from serious mental health problems and by not addressing this in a comprehensive way, we've seen the results — involvement in the justice system, inappropriate housing in our jails or hospitals, homelessness, suicide and addictions.

Communities are asking for help. Families have been asking for help. Yukoners have been asking for a strategy to not just promote mental wellness, which is a key component, but to address the ongoing difficulties for those who need treatment and support now and are not receiving it.

Again, I would just point out the example of a person medevaced to Whitehorse, placed at the hospital for serious mental health concerns, and then being discharged without even a way home. That is not part of a good mental health strategy.

Again, I'll mention the national mental health strategy that was launched in the Yukon in 2011, *Changing Directions, Changing Lives*. It came with six strategic directions that addressed promoting wellness, fostering recovery, providing access to service, reducing the disparities, working with First Nations, and fostering collaboration at all levels.

An internal review is good, but we need to look beyond that and have a strategy that has targets that we can measure and outcomes that we can see. How much longer do individuals that are hurting have to wait?

It is true, mental health and substance abuse issues can coincide, but it's not always the case. Managing alcohol and substance abuse is a critical need in the territory. We need that integrated plan to deal with addiction. The needs assessment that the minister mentioned for Watson Lake and Dawson City hospitals recommended more local care for substance abuse. The report also recommended both new hospitals have professionally staffed medical detoxification capacity.

Then there's the need for after-care throughout the territory.

Once a person has gone through treatment, it can be tough to maintain sobriety if their only choice is to return to the setting where the addiction took hold. Mr. Speaker, we urge

this government to start dealing holistically with the abuse of alcohol and other substances in the territory.

The NDP would like to know what has happened to our *Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Strategy*. We received the report in 2012 and that was to be the plan — social inclusion, reducing poverty. I read the report and I've read other recent strategies from other jurisdictions, including our neighbours, the Northwest Territories and Manitoba. To compare these reports with the Yukon one is to compare apples and oranges. In the Northwest Territories and Manitoba there are clear goals and strategies that involve not only internal government departments but NGOs, communities and other service providers and other levels of government. They set clear, measurable steps to raising individuals and families out of poverty. They put timelines on action items and define responsibilities. That's what is missing from our strategy. What has been achieved? How much poverty has been reduced since this report was released? How are we measuring the successes? Do we know? Is poverty being reduced in the Yukon? We do welcome and see that there is a concerted effort being made to assess for fetal alcohol — sorry, I just forgot the words for it.

Some Hon. Member: (inaudible)

Ms. Stick: Spectrum disorder, thank you — for those in the justice system. It's great, Mr. Speaker.

It's great, but we are looking at these individuals far downstream where they have been literally captured by the jail system.

My questions would be: What's being done to address preventing this 100-percent preventable disorder? How are we diagnosing those individuals affected by FASD at an early age? How are we providing supports to keep them out of those systems?

We saw the release of the latest Auditor General's report that audited Family and Children's Services programs against the *Child and Family Services Act* passed in 2010. The report did have good points to make on some aspects of service provided but pointed out deficiencies in the delivery of programs to family and children. These issues will be addressed in a public hearing later in the year. In the meantime, the NDP has heard from families and care providers who are not feeling supported or listened to when it comes to caregiving and their support needs.

Support for families with adult children with disabilities continues to be another area of concern. For families to continue to care for and support their adult children, they need support. Families are looking for appropriate day programming, for job training and life skills training for their sons and daughters. They are looking for respite care of their choosing. These families have a lifetime of experience with their sons and daughters and need to be heard when discussing the long-term, lifelong planning. They will not be able to provide the care on an ongoing basis. Those plans need to be made.

Mr. Speaker, there are many more questions and areas of concern that I will bring up during the budget debates, and some of the questions are with regard to budget amounts and

others around services being provided or not provided to Yukoners.

As I mentioned at the beginning, the Department of Health and Social Services touches each and every person in the Yukon and is the department with the largest budget. I am concerned that in these last few years we have seen a movement further away from sustainable health care. Increased spending has not improved health outcomes.

In closing, I again want to thank my constituents of Riverdale South and those who provide daily support to me to be here representing all Yukoners. I would like to thank my colleagues for their hard work and support on this side of the House.

Hon. Ms. Taylor: I rise today to speak to second reading of the budget before us, 2014-15. I want to start by also thanking my constituents of Whitehorse West for their continued support and the opportunity to work on their behalf these past 11 years. There is no greater honour or privilege than to serve others and their interests, priorities and issues that are important to the people of our territory. It is with gratitude that I am able to serve as a member of the Legislative Assembly for the Yukon, but also to serve as a minister in Cabinet these past 11 years.

The constituency of Whitehorse West has grown and continues to grow significantly with the introduction of the new Ingram subdivision and the full expansion of the Copper Ridge subdivision and surrounding areas. This is really indicative of the growth in our economy over the past several years and the introduction of 5,000-plus people over the past several years to our territory, specific to the City of Whitehorse or capital city.

My riding comprises a wide variety of homes, residences, and those who make up those homes are from seniors, elders to families to young professionals, individual students and beyond. The constituency of Whitehorse West is also comprised of Yukon's one and only French first language school, l'École Émilie Tremblay. Student enrollment at l'École Émilie Tremblay continues to grow, reflecting a very strong, vibrant francophone community here in the territory.

I wish to speak over the course of the next little while to a number of initiatives within the departments I oversee, but also overall to the budget as was spoken to and presented by our Premier a week ago.

As members opposite will know, I had the privilege of taking on the Department of Education last August, and it has been a real privilege for me to serve in this particular portfolio. It speaks near and dear to my heart, having been born and raised in the territory, having gone to school here, and now having the opportunity to raise my own child here in the Yukon.

The Department of Education is a very large department and a very important and essential department. It is responsible for 28 schools, busing, post-secondary education inclusive of the Yukon College, labor market programs as well as immigration.

The vision of the Department of Education is to foster a lifelong love of learning among all Yukoners and to provide the knowledge, training and skills development that students require to participate in the economic success of our territory. This vision is articulated in the budget itself that we are speaking to, starting with new additional investments in support of student achievement, program expansion and supports in our classrooms.

Student engagement, as I have come to know over the past couple of months, and how we deliver education is very much changing as it is across the country and across the globe. Student engagement through new self-directed and experiential learning programs is one of the successes we have been seeing as part of our own rural education action plan. REAP, as it has become known includes enhanced distance learning opportunities, sharing of resources among schools in the department, specialization of teaching professionals, supports for the arts, trades and other enhanced opportunities for students to come together in larger groups for program delivery.

The rural experiential model in Dawson City that was held last fall in September was a great example of delivering fine art and applied skills, educating students from rural Yukon.

Some 86 secondary students from seven communities in total took part in week-long sessions from digital art to music to food and service training. Students were able to take new courses that are not available in rural Yukon — in their particular schools, I should say — while at the same time they were able to earn credits toward their high school diploma. The program gave them the opportunity to meet fellow students from other communities, share their experiences and expand their peer group. Indeed, it was something else to see. I had the privilege of being able to see that program underway first-hand in Dawson at the Robert Service School and it was very widely received, not only among the student population, but among those who assisted — those such as Steve Slade, for example, who provided input and who helped lead the session on music in Dawson to other teaching professionals, who were then able to deliver the course content throughout that week.

That program is very, very successful on a variety of fronts and as such, we're able to continue with that program with the second delivery of REM to be delivered in Carmacks later on this spring in the month of May. This program, however, delivers to students who are younger in age and again targets rural Yukon students as well.

As I mentioned, the way that we are delivering education is changing very much. It's becoming less varied — less rigid than it was previously perhaps, from the days when I went to school. I got to see this first-hand at the Watson Lake Secondary School back in January. Watson Lake Secondary School, for example, has just recently implemented a new teaching approach which blends on-line curriculum with teacher expertise to support students at their own pace.

My colleague, the MLA for Watson Lake, and I were able to spend a couple of days in Watson Lake at the school and to

really be able to engage fully and wholeheartedly with not only the students themselves, but the teachers, as well as the administration, the members of the school council, the parents themselves and members of the community to hear their thoughts about this new teaching approach.

As I can say, as I saw first-hand, it was an incredible experience to be able to walk into a classroom and to see first-hand a number of students of varying grades and ages within one classroom learning course curriculum that covered a range of subjects — all within one classroom — and having teachers present in the classroom. Having their expertise and their experience of being able to help deliver these curricula to this wide variety and scope of student population in this classroom was very incredible.

I remember talking with one of the teachers, asking what her experience was, knowing full well that she has been with the school for many, many years. She spoke of it very positively, as did all the teachers I spoke with at that time, speaking to the net results and that even the behaviour-related issues in the classroom had diminished significantly and that students were far more engaged, more empowered in the direction of their own education.

We heard just earlier from the Member for Riverdale North, the previous Minister of Education, hearing again first-hand some of the comments he has heard from members of the community of Watson Lake. I know there are also members of the community who were once home-schooled and now their children are back in the classroom. It's obviously showing confidence in the program and all that is being delivered in the classroom. It is very much what I would call a game changer for that particular community. Results so far are very promising. Students have access to more course options than ever before, and teachers, as I mentioned, are able to deliver a number of subjects to multiple students in every single classroom.

Positive learning, work environment, maintaining an improvement in attendance and holding the line in attendance, which is significant, more engaged and empowered students — those are all very positive attributes.

I want to extend my heartfelt thanks to Watson Lake Secondary School for opening their doors to the MLA for Watson Lake and me for a couple of days, and for spending the time that they did, from morning to night for two days, and answering hundreds of questions from me and being so thoughtful and showing leadership in their school — in particular to the principal, Jean Maclean and the school community, the school council for championing this initiative and, of course, for initiating this new approach to learning.

It forms part of the rural equity strategy and the Department of Education has been working alongside all communities to improve the delivery of education in the territory. Again, a big thanks to the students in Watson Lake and the staff and the parents who spent time with us to speak first-hand of this made-in-the-Yukon success.

Watson Lake and other rural schools are achieving success in finding new ways to engage students, and that is what I call a good thing. There are a multitude of other

examples of what is being delivered, which I will get into greater detail about when we get to the Department of Education in Committee of the Whole. There are a number of very exciting initiatives, and if there was ever a time to walk into the shoes of the Minister of Education, now is the time.

I want to thank the Department of Education for showing their openness and their leadership to working with school communities, to be accepting of new ideas and to think outside the box.

In Old Crow and the community of Teslin, for example, alternate high school is also being delivered. That forms too, part of the rural equity strategy.

In the community of Teslin, for example, alternate high school is also being delivered. That forms part of the rural equity action plan. It provides that alternate scope of delivery of education to those students who may not necessarily want to come to Whitehorse to finish off their high school, may not want to leave their community, especially for as large a community as Whitehorse, when in fact you are used to a much smaller community. Having come from the community of Watson Lake, I get that. It is a big jump and not everybody is up for that challenge. An alternate high school provides that. Again, it's to be attributed to the leadership in those communities — in Old Crow and Teslin — that are actually making it work. They are using resources from Vuntut Gwitchin government, for example, using resources from Yukon College, the high school itself, and the school council and other members of the community to make it happen, to really come up with those individualized education learning paths for students to be able to help forge a way. For those students who may not necessarily have wanted to go to Whitehorse or may not have succeeded in Whitehorse when they did try to come here, that individual focus is working in those communities.

It's not a cookie-cutter approach as one would perhaps learn — or one would hope. In fact every community is very different and very unique. I can say that over the course of my tenure as Minister of Education — ever since August — I have been on the road. I have travelled to just about every single community in this territory and have met with every single school community in the territory, making my way through a number of the schools in Whitehorse.

But when it comes to the communities, I've had the opportunity to sit down with First Nation governments, to sit down with school councils, to actually have student-led tours of their schools, and what a fabulous opportunity for me to learn through the eyes of the students who live and breathe their school environment each and every day, to learn about every classroom and to learn about what makes them proud to call the St. Elias school, for example, or the Watson Lake Secondary School or Eliza Van Bibber School their community school — what makes them so proud of that.

I believe that Watson Lake and other rural schools are achieving success and finding new ways to engage students. As I mentioned, that is indeed a good thing. It's encouraging. The more meaningful experiences that we can give students in high school or throughout the schools, the more opportunities

they will have to find out what their interests are and, in turn, they remain engaged in lifelong learning for the betterment of our entire territory.

Mr. Speaker, I will speak to the budget that we are also referring to and it does contain significant resources in support of the F.H. Collins Secondary School project initiative. I know there has been a lot said about this particular initiative over the course of the last number of months, but again I am very pleased to see that this project has been awarded to a company and that the project will be proceeding and is in fact proceeding.

As I have mentioned on a number of occasions, the new F.H. Collins Secondary School will provide a new learning environment that meets the current and the long-term needs of the school community. It is based on a design that has been successfully built but has been modified to reflect those priorities of Yukoners that will meet the needs of the learners of today, as well as tomorrow.

I want to thank the input of many individuals and the many partners in education over the years who have contributed to where we are today. I am excited — as the Minister of Highways and Public Works alluded to before, we had the opportunity — as I know the previous Minister of Education also had — to see the Mother Margaret Mary Catholic High School in Edmonton, Alberta, last fall. We were able to travel there with a number of school council members. I want to thank them for accompanying us and providing their input as well.

It's a very beautiful school. It's full of light and is full of learning spaces. With respect to student capacity, I know there was some confusion by members opposite about the capacity for students. Capacity will be up to 750 students, unlike — the Mother Margaret Mary school is not a replacement school. It's actually a new school that is being phased in by adding grades every academic year. So for this reason, student enrollment currently at that school is just over 430 or 440 students, so it will be phased in year after year.

Of course, F.H. Collins will have more room than that particular school, since in addition to the new school facility, there will also be — the technical education building will be retained, of course.

There are a number of different attributes to the school that we have also modified to reflect the unique needs and priorities of the Yukon and of that particular school community. We, of course, will include more classrooms, more learning studios, enhanced science facilities, and increased wireless network capacity — which we know is so fundamentally important to students and learning, as part of the digital age.

There will be, of course, a number of First Nation language labs, elders lounge — there will be three different offices for community education liaison — coordinator offices.

So there is a number of great attributes here — an industrial kitchen. There wasn't an actual industrial kitchen within the Mother Margaret Mary school, and that was because the school was built right across the street from a

large food court, and obviously we don't have kind of access here — albeit, perhaps, just down the road, but not across the way. So, in fact, that has been accommodated. There will be a food service area that opens along with the band room to the lobby, which is also considered a multi-purpose common area.

There have been a number of officials and individuals who have travelled to Alberta to see the school itself and are excited about this particular design. We look forward to seeing this particular school get underway and seeing the final product here in due time.

Also contained in the budget are upgrades planned for a number of school playgrounds in the territory — \$1.4 million over two years. Investment in equipment will encourage safe play for years to come. I know that in Whitehorse, last year Whitehorse Elementary School received playground equipment and replacement. There was also some older equipment that was removed from the Del Van Gorder School in Faro.

With these new investments in Whitehorse, there will be a number of schools that will be receiving new playground equipment, including Christ the King Elementary School, Elijah Smith Elementary School, Golden Horn Elementary School and Takhini Elementary School. Also in the communities, there will be a number of schools receiving upgrades, including Eliza Van Bibber School, Robert Service School, St. Elias school, and the Tantalus School as well.

We are very excited about that. It is based on an assessment that was provided about our playgrounds and now we are implementing those recommendations over a two-year time frame, starting with this fiscal year.

Also housed within the budget is continued support for experiential learning. I know that this week, as we speak, there is — I believe it has been coined as the “rat camp” and it is underway over in the Kluane country. I know that the MLA for Kluane will be, I believe, taking part in some of that as it wraps up on Friday. Also underway and more to come is the spring culture camp in Old Crow. Of course, we're very familiar with many other programs when it comes to experiential programs — another facet that is part of the rural equity action plan in terms of engaging and empowering students and making education a lot more relevant to the student population and keeping their interest and making it applicable and applying credits to those particular experiences. They are all a great thing as well.

I could go on about the Department of Education, but there are a couple of other things I wanted to make mention of as well. When it comes to post-secondary education, this year's budget for Yukon College includes a number of significant funding allocations in support of the base funding of the college — over \$18 million, almost \$19 million this year — with continued funding in support of the Northern Institute of Social Justice.

We're very pleased to see that we're able to continue to deliver with Yukon College professional training and education for front-line workers in government and non-government organizations that deliver a variety of social justice related programs and services — anything from trauma

to fetal alcohol spectrum disorder, residential school awareness, First Nation history and culture, arbitration, mental health, first aid, applied suicide intervention to group and individual crisis intervention and peer support. There is a wide range of delivery options made available through the Northern Institute of Social Justice.

One I wanted to mention is the residential school awareness program. It was a half-day session that was launched during the summer academy of teachers that was held last fall for some 588 teaching professionals and principals from across the Yukon as part of their professional development at the start of the school year.

First Nation history and culture training is also being delivered to the RCMP and the Yukon Alcohol and Drug Services and is yet another example of the collaborative and innovative approach being taken by the Northern Institute of Social Justice. Training covers broad topics such as self-government, clan systems, potlaches, protocol, intergenerational effects of residential schools on First Nation citizens. All of this is very widely received and it is receiving some national recognition for the work that they are doing. In fact, I know that we are working with the Northwest Territories and Nunavut to come up with a pan-north approach on victim services training, for example. It's another way that the Northern Institute of Social Justice, through Yukon College, has been able to come up with some unique, made-in-the-north solutions to issues of fundamental importance to us as northerners.

The Yukon Research Centre continues to experience growth and unprecedented national and international recognition, as well. Last year it received a ranking of fourth place among Canadian community colleges and Canada's top research colleges, placing after SAIT, NAIT and the College of the North Atlantic — so no small feat. Again, it builds upon the work of previous years. Again, thanks to significant investments being made by the Yukon government, but having the Yukon Research Centre taking those dollars and leveraging them four-, five- and sixfold is incredible. They have been doing a fantastic job in terms of reaching out to industry, like the Alexco mining corporation, in coming up with new ways of remediation. Bioremediation, as an example, is the most recent example, separating those waste metals from the water when they are processing in those mines.

The degree of expertise they've been able to attract to their centre is significant and they have also been able to leverage those funding mechanisms — contracts, as well. That is for the fundamental importance of keeping that research here in the north, for the use and direct benefit of our community, not just for the mining producers, but for just about everything you can think of. Composting is a significant example of another great partnership, with the private sector and the City of Whitehorse working with the college to come up with unique ways to process and to separate that plastic from the compost that we all throw out our door every two weeks.

It is another example of how significant this investment is. We're very pleased to be able to continue funding to the Research Centre of Excellence.

Of course that also combines resources being delivered by the Department of Economic Development in support of the commercialization of cold climate technologies.

I think there is some incredible work being done by the research centre. I had the opportunity to tour the centre earlier this year — I think it was in January or February — and was able to go to every single unit within the centre and hear and see first-hand the work that is going on. It is incredible the number of individuals who are housed within the centre and the passion and the expertise that is housed within the centre as well. It is incredible.

Mr. Speaker, I would be remiss if I didn't mention our ongoing contributions and investments in the Centre for Northern Innovation in Mining.

Let me tell you — I'm very excited about this. Earlier this month, I had the privilege of helping celebrate the achievements of seven Yukon graduates of the underground mining operations program offered by the Centre for Northern Innovation in Mining, in partnership with the Yukon College, the University of Alaska, the Yukon government and industry. The ceremony took place underground at the Delta Mine Training Centre, just outside of Delta Junction in Alaska.

The centre itself is a 100-acre replicated mine environment built into a granite hill. It has been the base of operations for two 14-hour shift rotations where students had received hands-on skills, training in industrial safety, employability, entry-level mining theory, drilling, ground conditions, ventilation and operating heavy equipment underground.

It was significant and when I say that I'm very excited about this particular program — to see it first-hand and to meet each of these several graduates — to have the opportunity to meet them underground and to have the opportunity to see each of them and to discuss with them what they had learned — at every turn within the underground mine, we met up with another graduate and met up with another graduate soon thereafter.

They each had the opportunity to showcase their piece of equipment. They demonstrated safety checks. They talked about how proud they were as miners. They talked about the importance of safety in every aspect of their work. They talked about the importance of production and having produced the outcome with the most efficient and expedient means. They also talked about respect for the environment. Any spill of oil or any fluids that could be considered a contaminant to the ground — how there were protocols in place.

The respect all around for this program — any and all employers should be very proud to have any one of these individuals. These individuals were all Yukoners. They were from all walks of life — from every age, from 19 years of age right through to the late 50s, if I'm not mistaken. They were from communities like Old Crow to Haines Junction to Whitehorse to Dawson and other communities.

The pride they can take now, having received that hands-on training and experience is significant. That's why Yukon government has chosen to invest in CNIM, for the very fact that, with all the opportunity with mining exploration and development, we want Yukoners to take advantage of those opportunities and to have those skills and training required to take advantage of those economic opportunities here at home. This program is just one example of many training opportunities supported by our five-year \$11.4-million investment in CNIM, to train and help Yukoners receive the training they require to do the job they need to do when working underground.

I also want to touch upon the labour market initiatives underway within the Yukon. Housed within the Department of Education under Advanced Education, there are a number of agreements that we facilitate on behalf of the federal government — various labour market agreements. One that I want to highlight is one that we just recently signed off for persons with disabilities. It provides dollars for eligible Yukoners, enables them to upgrade their skills, get on-the-job experience, find a job or become self-employed. Our government is really proud to be able to help facilitate the signing of the first agreement ever north of 60 in the Yukon, with Minister Jason Kenney back in mid-February. Full inclusion of persons with disabilities in our community not only improves quality of life, but it makes it our territory stronger and a more prosperous territory when we engage all who live here in Yukon.

I had no idea time has been flying by so quickly here. As you know, I could speak at great length on many different facets, but I do want to touch on a couple of other things in my few remaining minutes — the French Language Services Directorate. The Minister of Health and Social Services and I accompanied by the francophone community and the Yukon Hospital Corporation — we were really pleased to officially launch a pilot project earlier this year that actively offers French language interpretive services to residents of the francophone community at three separate sites — insured health services, home care services, and the specialist clinic at the Whitehorse General Hospital.

I am really proud of the collaborative work between our government and the francophone community toward developing what I would coin as a very strategic and cohesive French language service delivery model within our government.

Although isolated from major eastern francophone centres, Yukon now ranks third behind Quebec and New Brunswick, with 13-plus percent of the population being able to carry on a conversation in both English and French. I am really proud of this fact. That is why, in fact, the government continues to invest in French first language programming and French immersion programming, core intensive French language programs, and there is a proliferation of different programs being offered. My son, being one of them in grade 3, hopefully going on to grade four, will be completing his fourth year of French immersion.

Again, growing bilingualism in Yukon has been attributed by members of the francophone community to the quality and accessibility of our immersion programs and education infrastructures in place, as well as immigration of Canadian francophones and from French-speaking countries — something I wanted to make reference to.

Women's Directorate, again, Mr. Speaker — this budget carries on the good work of the Women's Directorate in working collaboration with a number of women's organizations seeking to advance the equality of women on all fronts.

Of course, we were very pleased to open Betty's Haven last year, marking a new 10-unit transitional, supportive, secure housing facility for women and children fleeing abuse.

This year's budget carries on a number of funding mechanisms in support of organizations through the women's equality fund.

In carrying on the second year of a three-year agreement, there is new funding in the amount of \$450,000 in support of furthering equality for aboriginal women, specifically to address priorities identified at the Yukon Aboriginal Women's Summit. It also includes dollars allotted for the prevention of violence against aboriginal women fund to support the important efforts of aboriginal women to advance their work in their respective communities.

I guess in closing, because I see I have 10 seconds, I just want to thank all of our officials in the Yukon government and my particular departments for their stellar work in putting forth this budget and helping us.

Ms. White: I thank you for the opportunity to stand here to respond to the Yukon Party's 2014-15 budget. I'm sure that just like every other elected member of this House, I believe I represent the best and most unique riding in the territory.

The riding of Takhini-Kopper King stretches from the vast expanse of Fish Lake to the banks of the mighty Yukon River. McIntyre Creek plays a vital role in the ecosystem of my riding. It starts at the top of the riding and flows all the way down to the Yukon River. The creek feeds two separate wetlands. It offers wildlife valuable habitat and all of the essential elements they need for life. A comprehensive trail network of the area supplies Whitehorse residents with a close and intimate window into ecosystems that are rich in diversity.

This year, during Canada Water Week, the Friends of McIntyre Creek, received the Excellence in Water Stewardship award. This comes as no surprise to me, as this group has been a strong voice in the protection of the McIntyre Creek ecosystem.

Last year the group unveiled interpretive signs that highlight the richness of the area to visitors. Friends of McIntyre Creek plan on using the \$1,000 prize to buy equipment for a wetlands keeper program this summer. The program will give volunteers the tools they need to monitor the health of the water, plants and animals and the creek. It is worth noting that this is the second year in a row that the

Friends of McIntyre Creek have won a water stewardship award.

My riding represents nearly every facet of housing in the territory. We have off-grid cabins, condominiums, trailers, duplexes, big houses, little houses, supportive housing, apartment buildings, seniors housing and college dorms. We're home to educational facilities like daycares, the Yukon College and Takhini Elementary School. We're home to both of the territory's correctional facilities, the Yukon Arts Centre and other things.

If you're interested in recreation, we've got that covered too — ice rink, parks, the home of Softball Yukon and the Takhini Arena. We have a vibrant community garden with the hopes of seeing others sprout up in the future. We're also home to the territory's first edible roundabouts, where you can pick berries and other delightful things. The people in my riding are thoughtful. They worry about their neighbours, the environment and the future. They have thoughtful questions about education, housing, health services and our energy future. They want to talk about the Peel and they want to talk about their concerns regarding oil and gas development in the territory.

I have been incredibly lucky in the last 12 months to travel to many Yukon communities. I have been to Mayo, Beaver Creek, Burwash Landing, Haines Junction, Dawson City, Pelly Crossing, Carcross, Tagish and Carmacks. I have driven to some of them multiple times.

I've been to public meetings, to community gatherings and to kitchen tables all over the territory, and one thing is clear: Yukoners are a thoughtful bunch. I love the Yukon and the people who call it home.

It is with all of these faces that I respond to the budget today. I think of the tenants who regularly cross our door to ask for help. In 2012 when this House passed the *Landlord and Tenant Act*, there was a great hope that finally there would be clarity for both landlords and tenants, that there would be a place where they could both go that wasn't the courthouse. I'm dismayed to have heard that the residential tenancy office won't be open to the public until the end of this year, so where should we send people desperate for help until those doors open?

I think about the homeowners in trailer parks who have been all but forgotten by the *Landlord and Tenant Act*. They have no protection on pad rental increases. They, like other tenants, can have their rent increased once every 12 months without any cap or limit. Will they be able to address their concerns to the residential tenancy office? How does this \$1.3 billion protect homeowners in trailer parks?

I think about my sister and her family, and families like hers — hard-working parents with two full-time jobs. They cannot afford the \$800 a month for full-time daycare for the youngest. They don't live lavishly, they can't cut more corners, and there just isn't money to be found. One of them staying home isn't a financial option.

My sister is lucky. She has access to two sets of amazing grandparents who share childcare duties. My nephews are lucky because they get to spend time with their grandparents,

but what about the families who don't have this support network? What about the families who just barely earn enough to qualify for subsidies but not enough to be able to afford childcare? What are their options?

We know that any money invested into a child pays back tenfold in the future. We know that early childhood education is the key to future successes. We know that the easiest way to close the learning gap is to start early. So instead of just changing the criteria for the childcare subsidy, why don't we take it one step further?

Imagine a territory where all children have access to quality early childhood education, where any family who chooses to is able to access early childhood education. Imagine a Yukon with universal child care. I dream of a Yukon with universal child care, staff with early childhood educators.

Right now, more than one-third of children in the territory are deemed vulnerable before kindergarten and require intervention for social, emotional, language or physical needs. How many of the parents of those 38 percent of vulnerable children are like my sister, part of the hardworking families who simply cannot afford child care?

I think of the faces I see outside of the Salvation Army or who attend the soup kitchen or who I meet at Whitehorse Connects. What is the government's answer to the Yukoners who struggle on a daily basis with social exclusion, those who struggle to find adequate housing, medical care and a permanent place in Yukon society? What happens to those who could thrive in a housing-first model, but there are no options? What happens to these faces as they wait for the new Salvation Army complex to be completed? How does \$1.3 billion help them today?

I think of the faces of the individuals and the families who, in record number, are accessing the food bank. In a perfect world, we wouldn't have the need for a food bank because no one would be hungry. No child would ever go to school or to bed hungry. No person would ever have to decide between paying their bills or eating. Helping the Food Bank Society to purchase the building is great, but what part of \$1.3 billion can a person eat?

I think about the faces of those Yukoners who tell me they've lost faith in the system — all of those who participated wholeheartedly in the land use planning process with the Peel planning commission. They ask me how can they take part honestly and actively in future land use planning if the goal line is constantly moved.

I think of the faces that I see at community meetings hosted by Yukon Energy, by YESAB and the Yukon Utilities Board and public consultations hosted by the government and the multitude of other organizations. I think of the faces of citizens I see at rallies and community gatherings, of people who desperately want to be heard by the government leaders and feel that they aren't being listened to. How does \$1.3 billion dollars address their concerns around a weakening of democracy?

The Yukon NDP — the caucus, the staff, the members and the supporters — really believe in leaving no one behind.

The growing gap between rich and poor is doing just that. It is leaving more and more Yukoners behind, and this worries me. I have many more concerns, but there will be more time to elaborate on them during departmental budget debates.

I want to speak about how the environment cares for us all here in the Yukon, and how it feeds our bodies and souls. I love outside. I love riding bicycles, I love snowboarding, I love mountains, I love rivers, I love canoes and fishing. We live in the biggest playground anywhere.

Our air is clean, our water is pure and the vast majority of our ecosystems are healthy. Yukon's pristine environment feeds us all so much, and too seldom do we stop and appreciate its value. Today, we are talking about a budget with numbers that are so big they hardly seem real — \$1.3 billion. When I was kid, when we made up numbers, we added "billion" to the end of them because then they were really, really big — \$1.3 billion.

The environment is made up of things with values that are all too often overlooked because it cannot be measured in dollars. What is the worth of clean air, water, dirt, rocks, and healthy critters both big and small? What about the value of open spaces — of mountain vistas, of mountaintops — how do you put a monetary value on all of that?

When we measure the GDP that depends on those very things, we know that the GDP relies on water to generate profit and yet too often it leaves the water in worse shape than when it started. The GDP measures the movement of money, but it cannot measure the invaluable things that support us the most.

We have a vision that is far-reaching and long-term, and change takes consistency over time. I'm hopeful for the future when I think of what we and many Yukoners stand for together.

The ideologies of the Yukon Party, the Liberals and the NDP are different and will always be different. We have different values and we have different priorities. It is these differences in these priorities that will make it impossible for me to support this budget.

I'm not voting against the good initiatives, and if we could go line by line and I could say, "Yes, I support this wholeheartedly," I would, but my only option is to vote on it as a whole. So when I look at this budget as a whole, it's not the good things I'm voting against — I'm voting against all the things it leaves out.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: It's a pleasure to rise here in the Assembly today. I'd like to begin, first and foremost, by thanking my constituents for their support over the years I've been here and for the ongoing opportunity to serve them and work with them on issues that are important to them.

I'd like to acknowledge — one of my constituents here, a Page, Allen Mark. He and his family are constituents of mine in the Ibex Valley. Welcome here today.

In speaking to the budget, I will begin by referencing a few items that are important to my constituents that I'm very pleased to see within the 2014-15 budget. Some of the investments that are included here are specifically responding

to what I have heard and what we have heard from my constituents. This includes the commitment for moving forward with turning lanes at the Couch Road entrances. That is the single most requested project that I heard from my constituents within Hidden Valley. It's a pleasure to see this commitment in the budget for moving forward with that.

I am pleased as well to see money allocated to construct a cell tower at Grizzly Valley, which again responds to something that I heard on the doorstep in the last election and also is part of fulfilling a commitment we made in our last platform to improve cellular service in existing areas and to expand service to other areas that have significant populations but are not currently served by cell service.

So to that end, and in the same vein, I am also pleased to see the investment committed to providing 4G mobile service in 17 communities that currently have cell service. This investment in our infrastructure builds on what was originally a government investment that facilitated the expansion of cell service from beyond the Whitehorse area to, in fact, all 17 Yukon communities that are currently served by that. I am pleased that with the construction of a cell tower in Grizzly Valley, that will be the third cell tower that the Yukon government has constructed in my riding to improve service for my constituents.

I'm also pleased to see the continued investment in the rural well program, a program that originally came from a suggestion made to me by constituents. I'm very pleased to see how successful this program has been since 2004. The investment last year totalled roughly \$1 million. I'm pleased to see that carried forward as well in this current budget.

Approximately 28 projects were completed in the last fiscal year. Of course, all of the money under the rural well program is 100-percent recoverable. That program has been of great benefit, I believe, to my constituents and to other Yukoners who have had the advantage of having government help them bear the significant up-front cost of putting a well into their house, and then has allowed them to pay it back over a period of up to 15 years at the Bank of Canada prime rate. It is similar to, and originally based on, the same structure that has been successful for a few decades under the rural electrification program that provides security for government and for taxpayers of repayment of the money, but gives citizens a significant advantage at the start in terms of reducing their upfront costs and being able to afford to install that infrastructure.

I'm also pleased to see the continued commitment to moving forward with a community well in the Deep Creek/Grizzly Valley area.

As well, the continued investment in this budget and within the department that I'm responsible for — Community Services — our continued investments in upgrading our infrastructure for fire response with the additional purchase of new fire trucks. We have seen, in recent years, the purchase of three new pumper tanker trucks for a total of \$750,000 for the Hootalinqua, Ibex and Golden Horn areas. We have the recent purchase of pumper trucks for the Ibex Valley and Tagish areas for a total of \$610,000. I had the pleasure of attending

the Ibez Fire Hall with volunteers, welcoming the addition of this new truck to the fleet.

We have, as well, within this current budget, an additional \$610,000 to purchase new fire trucks for other areas of the Yukon to help our volunteers, who within Yukon — in rural Yukon, our volunteer firefighters along with our volunteer EMS attendants, are a key part of our emergency response infrastructure. They provide a tremendous service to their fellow citizens and to the Yukon government.

Mr. Speaker, I'm also pleased to see continued investments in other areas of the territory — within the fire response area, including money for the construction of a fire hall in Beaver Creek, which is set to begin this year, with an allocation of \$3.3 million. As well, \$393,000 is being provided to plan and design a new Carcross fire hall. I also want to note that I've had the opportunity recently — along with the fire marshal and our director of infrastructure — to tour facilities in Carcross with members of the local advisory council.

We look forward to, as discussed with them, considering the opportunity for addressing the state of the recreational centre by looking to the possibility of adding a room on to the fire hall, similar to what is in place in Hootalinqua and, I believe, Golden Horn, thus allowing us to build one building and build it sooner to address the needs of the communities for meeting and recreational space.

Investments in other areas that I would like to move on to include the additional funding for the rural road upgrade program. I'm pleased to see an increase in this budget to a total allocation of \$500,000. That, of course, goes a long way to improving rural roads within my riding and other areas of the territory.

I'm pleased to see the continued investment, through the work of the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources and his department, in carrying forward with the Growing Forward 2 program, the five-year funding agreement that has approved 78 projects to date, for \$914,000-plus in contributions under Growing Forward 2. That includes funding to do strategic planning for industry and infrastructure development. I had the pleasure, as then Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, of signing the agreement. I want to again thank staff of Energy, Mines and Resources for the excellent work they did in achieving the key objectives that Yukon government had in negotiating that agreement with the federal government, which allows us increased flexibility in spending the money and the ability to do things, including to fund infrastructure that responds to what we've heard from Yukon farmers and that we believe will allow us to continue to support the growth of Yukon's agriculture sector.

I'd like to also touch on a few highlights from the Department of Community Services as well as the Yukon Housing Corporation — the areas I am responsible for — and the Yukon Liquor Corporation and the Yukon Lottery Corporation. I will leave most of my comments for departmental debate in Community Services, but I'd like to reference a few of the highlights: the \$12 million in this budget to construct a new 48-unit seniors residence in

Whitehorse; the investment of an additional \$1.6 million to upgrade social housing properties and seniors residences within Whitehorse and rural areas of the Yukon; the work that Yukon Housing Corporation is doing to complete the 34-unit Whitehorse seniors building that replaces 207 Alexander Street. As members and others can see as they drive down Second Avenue, that construction is progressing well.

Work is continuing on in the development of a housing action plan. I'd like to thank all of the stakeholders who are participating in that area and, as well, the northern housing trust funding is being used in an innovative manner to leverage at least \$26 million in investment from the original \$13 million, which is from the government. I'd like to acknowledge the work staff are doing there and look forward to the results of that program, which is set to conclude sometime this month.

I would also like to acknowledge and thank the Yukon's former Ombudsman, Hank Moorlag, for his services and participation in that process as a fairness monitor whom we engaged to provide advice to staff and to do our best to ensure that the process was being run in a very fair and clear manner.

Mr. Speaker, as one of my colleagues noted through the tabling of a motion today, we have also allocated in this budget an additional \$1 million for the down payment assistance program. To date, 28 applicants have been pre-approved to be assisted under this program to purchase their new home and, to date, have provided over \$350,000 in loans, which results in new homes for 25 families that were assisted with the down payment for their homes through this program. That was a program that, while in its very early stages, the sense that Yukon government has — and the board of directors has confirmed that they have a similar view and they believe that the program is working well and look forward to continuing it and doing further evaluation after the program has been operating for a little longer because it is, of course, hard to get an accurate evaluation of a program's success when it has been operating for roughly a year.

Another area I would like to reference, and am pleased to see, is the continued support we've provided for Yukon's ambulance services, which include the new emergency response centre. I had the pleasure, along with the Premier and two former ministers of Community Services — the Member for Whitehorse West and a former Member of the Legislative Assembly — to open Yukon's new emergency response centre at the top of Two Mile Hill. This new centrally located ambulance station fulfills a platform commitment we made to build this facility to improve emergency medical response to people in Whitehorse and nearby rural areas. It has the capacity for six emergency vehicles, training and conference space, and the capability to accommodate emergency dispatch. It is now the primary ambulance station for Whitehorse and the surrounding area, while the older ambulance station at the Whitehorse General Hospital site has become a secondary station.

I also had the pleasure recently of joining staff in welcoming the addition of two new ambulances to Yukon's fleet. I'm pleased to see this budget contain funding for an

additional two ambulances, which again are part of our commitment to continuing to invest in improving Yukon's emergency response capabilities and ensure we have a modern ambulance fleet as well as a modern fire service.

In both of those areas, I want to emphasize the fact that this has not always been the case. In fact, during my time as Health and Social Services minister — I was sworn in as minister in late 2005 and held the post for two and a half years — one of the concerns and issues at that point in time was that our ambulance fleet was not in the best of shape.

There had been a long period of neglect by previous governments where equipment was not replaced as regularly as it should have been. We set out to change that. I think that anyone walking into any one of Yukon's EMS stations or into our fire halls can attest to the fact that there has been a significant change in the average age of the equipment. We have modern equipment in all of our areas and have invested millions of dollars in improving both our fire response capability and our EMS response capability to support our volunteers who provide these vital services to their fellow Yukon citizens.

One area I missed mentioning under investments under agriculture is — the investments under Growing Forward include the investment in supporting the operations of the Fireweed Community Market, under which the Yukon government has entered into a multi-year agreement that will see the Fireweed Community Market receive \$250,000 to support their continued operation and to support the farmers and other crafts people who participate in the market. I think most people would agree it has been a real contribution to the activities here in the Yukon — particularly in the case of Yukon-made products and Yukon-grown food. It has provided an opportunity for farmers to directly connect with customers, to establish relationships both at the market and outside of the market, to make people aware of the products they have available for sale and to sell them healthy, Yukon-made food.

With that, I will leave my remaining notes for additional opportunities to speak in introducing the department at Committee of the Whole. I thank members and you for the opportunity to speak here this afternoon.

Mr. Hassard: It's truly a pleasure to rise today and speak to this 2014-15 budget. I'd like to begin by thanking my family and all of the great constituents of Pelly-Nisutlin for entrusting me with the duty of speaking on their behalf in this Legislative Assembly.

As noted in the Premier's Budget Address, this budget is in excess of \$1.3 billion. It's a record budget for the Yukon, with a \$72.027-million surplus.

Mr. Speaker, the Building Canada fund that was just announced will be \$53 billion across the country over the next decade. This represents approximately \$420 million in dedicated federal funding, including \$257 million under the new Building Canada fund and an estimated \$163 million under the gas tax fund.

While these two funds are crucial to capital projects in the Yukon in general, they are of utmost importance to rural

Yukon. When we look at the budget breakdown for the three communities in the great riding of Pelly-Nisutlin, you'll see just how important it is.

Faro will be receiving \$1.1 million for their new pumphouse. This is a direct result of Building Canada money. There is \$318,000 toward the planning and design of the much-needed new RCMP detachment, thanks to the Department of Justice. There is \$225,000 for the Faro aerodrome and \$160,000 for maintenance and renovations at the Faro Health Centre.

Mr. Speaker, in Ross River, we're looking at \$1 million for the water treatment plant; \$1 million in the local solid waste facility; \$500,000 toward the North Canol; and \$350,000 for the public works shop. Again, three of these four projects I've just mentioned are funded in large part by the Building Canada fund or the gas tax fund.

Another important item in Ross River — while not as big a ticket item — is \$81,570 in summer recreation contributions. This is absolutely vital to a small community such as Ross River. In Teslin we're looking at approximately \$9 million in two projects alone: the Nisutlin River bridge rehabilitation as well as the wastewater system upgrades. Again, both projects are due to the funds from the Building Canada fund and gas taxes.

I believe that it is important to note that in 18 communities throughout the Yukon, this government has committed in excess of \$110 million in capital projects. This is just another example of the commitment on the part of the government to the understanding of the importance of rural Yukon.

This \$1 billion-plus budget covers so very many important items near and dear to the hearts of Yukoners all across this great territory. Housing is always a hot topic, no matter where in the Yukon you are. This government is promoting new initiatives designed to assist first-time homeowners. As well, the Village of Mayo will soon be seeing a nice, new seniors complex built in that community.

In Ross River we'll be spending \$225,000 retrofitting five Yukon Housing units. Five houses in a community the size of Ross River is quite significant.

The planning for a complex that will eventually become a 300-unit seniors housing complex is in the works here in Whitehorse and will be a great addition to the seniors housing situation not only here in Whitehorse, but in the Yukon in general.

Education is very important to this government, and it's quite apparent when you listen to the address by the Premier last week. There will be \$27.7 million for the construction of the new F.H. Collins school. There is the implementation of the rural equity action plan to help rural students stay in school and achieve better results. There has been money set aside in the budget to do renovations and upkeep to the Gadzoosdaa residence, which just happens to be where all three of my children lived while they attended high school here in Whitehorse.

We all understand the importance of mining to the economy of the Yukon. While the high level of mineral

exploration spending of 2011 proved to be unsustainable, this year there is still expected to be considerable investment with Selwyn Chihong alone spending in the neighbourhood of \$56 million.

Mines need power, as do all Yukoners. Because of this, the government is providing the Yukon Development Corporation with some \$2 million to develop a plan for one or more hydroelectric projects to help meet the long-term demand for clean, affordable power for all Yukoners.

As well, the government is working with Canada and First Nation governments to improve the *Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Act*. The government is working with the Water Board to improve the water licensing process.

Highways and Public Works — \$85.264 million is the largest transportation budget ever. This \$85 million plus will be broken down or allocated by \$48.17 million for highway work, \$14.23 million for bridges and \$16.316 million for airports. The airport section includes surfaces, airside improvements and facilities.

Another \$3.3 million will be allocated for other roads such as the Silver Trail and turning lanes to be built at the entrances of Couch Road. Some of the detail will include \$2.2 million for the Dempster highway and \$600,000 for functional planning for Nahanni Range and the Freegold roads as well as the Klondike Highway.

There is \$675,000 to do local safety improvements on the Hunker Creek road, the Ten Mile Creek road and rehabilitation on the Klondike Highway.

We see the \$500,000 that I mentioned previously for the North Canol. There is \$200,000 to enhance highway lighting in areas such as Upper Liard and Two and One-Half Mile Village.

The budget for 2014-15 will see an additional \$300,000 added to the rural road upgrade program, which is another very important program to rural Yukoners.

On the building side of things, I am happy to see \$4.718 million for the completion of the Alexander Street seniors housing complex, the retendering of the replacement of the Beaver Creek fire hall, money set aside for a new McDonald Lodge in Dawson City as well as replacement of the Sarah Steel Building and replacement of the Watson Lake district office. Those are just a few of the projects in the hopper for this 2014-15 budget.

Highways and Public Works will be issuing approximately 6,500 contracts this year, keeping Yukoners working. The Department of Justice continues to enforce the SCAN act to help keep Yukoners safe. As well, the department has ensured that the arrest processing unit includes access to medical resources for individuals requiring them.

We are all looking forward to seeing the completion of the arrest processing unit over the next few weeks. The Department of Justice has also supported an alcohol and drug services addiction counsellor for the Community Wellness Court and has ensured that the correctional services staff and contracted services are ongoing to support the Community Wellness Court.

Mr. Speaker, as you're well aware, tourism is a huge part of the Yukon's economy as well. I'm happy to say that in 2013, the number of border crossings into the Yukon increased by eight percent, and reached an all-time high. This increase helped the value of tourism in the Yukon reach approximately \$200 million in private sector revenues. This includes money spent in local hotels, restaurants, and souvenir stores.

Tourism is a strategic industry for Yukon, providing significant and substantial growth opportunities. Overseas tourist numbers are increasingly growing every year. With the CanNor assistance of \$2 million over the past four years, the Department of Tourism has been able to pursue an enhanced overseas destination awareness marketing project. This initiative has been a great success, with overseas visitation to Yukon growing by 33 percent over the life of this project.

Now that, as of today, March 31, the CanNor funding will come to end, this Yukon Party government has decided to increase Tourism and Culture's marketing budget for this fiscal year by \$590,000, ongoing.

It is estimated that the Yukon will see 3,800 visitors from Japan alone this winter, all coming here to see our spectacular northern lights.

In 2013, Condor Airlines carried approximately 4,000 visitors from Whitehorse aboard its direct flight from Germany. These visitors contribute \$8- to \$10 million each year to the Yukon's economy.

For me personally, one of our most exciting recent announcements was in December, when we had the Carcross-Tagish First Nation here and signed an MOU with the Premier and the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. One of the items in that MOU was the development of 20 remote-access recreational lots in the traditional territory of the Carcross-Tagish First Nation. These lots will be the first over-the-counter titled recreational lots since the lots at Little Salmon, in excess of 25 years ago. I'd just like to congratulate the lands branch in Energy, Mines and Resources as well as the chief and council from the Carcross-Tagish First Nation on this great commitment.

The Department of Energy, Mines and Resources continues to oversee the Faro mine remediation program, which quite obviously is a vital component in the success of the town of Faro.

Mr. Speaker, as you can see, this 2014-15 budget continues to promote healthy growth in the Yukon. I'm proud to support this budget and hope that all members of the Opposition find it in themselves to help Yukoners move forward and prosper and vote in favour of this budget.

Ms. Moorcroft: As we are past the spring equinox, I would like to welcome spring and to welcome all MLAs to the spring 2014 legislative sitting. I trust we will work responsibly during this sitting for the well-being of our constituents and for all residents of the Yukon.

We in the Official Opposition are here to hold the government accountable for its spending priorities and to present our vision and ideas for effectively governing the

territory. I am grateful to all the people who share their experiences and help us bring forward constructive and relevant ideas that are meaningful to the people we represent.

At the outset, I would like again to thank my constituents for the opportunity to serve as the MLA for Copperbelt South. I appreciate their support and look forward to developing more friendships as I work on behalf of all my constituents in this Assembly.

My riding, which extends from the bridge over the Yukon River at the Lewes River dam to the Mount Sima road, includes a mix of country residential and rural properties. In the McCrae and Mount Sima subdivisions, there are several commercial and industrial properties with residences on-site.

The Mount Sima ski hill is a popular Copperbelt South recreational attraction that appeals to youth and adults, not just in Whitehorse, but in the communities and even from Alaska. I would like to congratulate the Friends of Sima Society and the many volunteers and community members for their incredibly hard work over the past several months to ensure the hill was open this winter, in the face of real challenges and a shortage of funds. Thanks to their work, more than 20 businesses, the Yukon government and many individuals have become funding partners and sponsors of Mount Sima — so thanks to everyone for supporting recreational opportunities in Yukon.

The school in Copperbelt-South, Golden Horn Elementary, is a great place to learn. Its wonderful teaching staff and experiential learning model no doubt contributed to Golden Horn's students' great performance at the 2013 Yukon/Stikine Regional Science Fair. Congratulations to students Lisa, Seth, Orion, Wyatt, Sophie, Kaitlin and Nic, who took part in the fair. Golden Horn students took first place in the grades 4, 5, 6 and 7 categories, third place in grade 5, a second place in grade 6 and two special awards. "But Mom, Music Helps Me Concentrate" won the Commissioner's Award for best of fair, "Video Games and Sleep Disorders" won the B.C. Science Teachers award. We are all proud of the imagination and fine work Golden Horn Elementary, and indeed students throughout Yukon, put into their science fair projects.

In this budget I will be looking to the Highways and Public Works minister for an update on the Alaska Highway corridor functional plan. This Alaska Highway corridor runs through Copperbelt South and it services not only the capital city of Whitehorse but all of Yukon and Alaska. What work will be done this year? We have heard mainly about studies and investigations.

Yukon is a spectacular environment. It has been home to indigenous peoples from time immemorial and is unique in the world. The land and the water are home to, and part of, the animals, the fish, the people and the birds. As leaders we need to think about what we are leaving behind and to plan for seven generations into the future.

In conducting the public's business, we must be certain of clean water to drink from the streams and the rivers, of habitat for fish and animals and birds, of keeping the country life of a

traditional economy so that people have access to traditional foods.

I have learned from many years of working with Yukon communities and First Nation organizations and governments that we have to care for the land and the water so that people can thrive. We have to respect the cultural and spiritual values of the land.

I spoke about Yukon's unique place in the world as a circumpolar state. Through Yukon College, the Arctic Council and other northern agencies, we are part of the international world. As legislators, we also have the opportunity to participate in Commonwealth Parliamentary Association national and international events.

Last summer I was fortunate to attend the 59th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference in Johannesburg, South Africa. The Yukon delegation included you, Mr. Speaker, and the Member for Watson Lake. I think all of us gained new insights from the conference. It is a rare and rewarding experience to gather with parliamentarians from 52 Commonwealth countries. I was able to take part in the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians and the Small Branches Conference as well as the Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference.

The Commonwealth nations are certainly diverse and there was a lively and contentious debate leading up to the passage of the *Commonwealth Charter* on the last day of the conference.

South African nations outside and within the Commonwealth have criminalized homosexuality and some even have brought in the death sentence. During debate, Canadian and South African parliamentarians, among others, persuasively advanced arguments for equality and promoted human rights to protect people from discrimination, whether that discrimination is based on a person's sexual orientation or on other grounds.

The 2013 *Commonwealth Charter* was adopted and it is another tool, like United Nations international conventions and treaties, to ensure that our laws, our governments and our communities respect and protect equality and human rights.

There were many issues common to Yukon political life and a lot to learn from our Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference participation. Just to mention a few of those sessions, parliamentarians considered: inequitable resource sharing a threat to democratic governance, states' regional approach to taxation, room for improvement in the representation of women in Commonwealth parliaments, social media as a tool for democratic participation, and land disposition and food security.

South Africa, of course, was led to democracy by the incredible work of Nelson Mandela, who struggled to overthrow an apartheid regime and was elected president in the first democratic elections after black people won the right to vote. The apartheid regime laws excluding the citizenship rights of blacks in South Africa were a model from Canada's *Indian Act*, which legally entrenches discrimination on aboriginal people still today. This should give us pause.

In speaking of First Nation relations, governments should be motivated to ensure that the Yukon budget priorities respect the values and principles of cooperation with Yukon First Nation governments. These values are implicit in Yukon First Nation final agreements, agreements that are entrenched in the Constitution of Canada. Unfortunately, we see instead that the Yukon Party government is facing many legal challenges. The Yukon Party should be able to cooperate with Yukon First Nation governments.

It shouldn't be necessary for First Nations to have to resort to the courts because this government is unable or unwilling to respect First Nation interests, to negotiate in good faith with First Nations as partners, to live up to the First Nation final agreements. These court cases are creating economic insecurity and causing division in our communities.

I would like to acknowledge the hard-working employees of the Yukon government who deliver the public services we all rely upon. Public servants work under different political leaders with different priorities. They do good work, and their work can be difficult.

For the past several years, the Yukon NDP has been a strong advocate for effective whistle-blower legislation. After promising to deliver in the last two elections, the Yukon Party government has finally responded to repeated calls from the Yukon NDP, from Yukon citizens and other stakeholders to develop whistle-blower legislation. The government recently posted an information package outlining the key points of its proposed whistle-blower act. Unfortunately, they have chosen to give the public only a few weeks, until April 16, to examine their approach in a number of critical areas that may be covered by the proposed law.

It has been more than a year since the whistle-blower select committee submitted its final report to government in 2012. The report covered a number of key areas, such as who should be able to access whistle-blower protection under the new law, what kinds of disclosures would be protected, how whistle-blowers would be protected from reprisals, how reprisals would be remedied, and how perpetrators of wrongdoing and reprisals would be sanctioned.

It is unclear from the information package whether the government's proposed law will protect whistle-blowers who disclose the, and I quote: "gross mismanagement of public funds or assets" from reprisals, even though this was recommended by the Select Committee on Whistle-blower Protection, given it is common in jurisdictions across Canada. The Yukon NDP has certainly always maintained that this would be a very important part of any effective whistle-blower legislation.

The government is also proposing that the Ombudsman will only have the authority to recommend a remedy when a whistle-blower is subject to reprisals and that the final decision will be up to the employer. This is a major concern, because the employer could also be the one engaging in reprisals. The whistle-blower select committee recommended that the Ombudsman's office be given the authority to decide how to remedy any reprisals suffered by a whistle-blower. One of the most important reasons for having a whistle-

blower law is to provide some protection to government employees who decide to responsibly disclose wrongdoing.

We can all understand why this is necessary and we know that exposing wrongdoing is a courageous act that we need to support as a society for our good and the good of those who take this step on our behalf. We will be asking the government to clarify these key issues of concern during the sitting and we welcome the input of Yukoners who submit concerns and comments of their own to the government before the April 16 deadline.

I would ask the minister if he would consider extending that deadline to May 16 and I also hope that the government will call the Public Service Commission for a full debate during the sitting.

Mr. Speaker, we see the biggest budget ever, as the Premier referred to it. As all members know, this Yukon Party budget benefits from large transfer payments from Ottawa. For its 2014-15 budget, the government has increased its operation and maintenance costs across government by more than \$47 million from its 2013-14 operation and maintenance estimates.

The forecast expenditures for last year, for 2013-14, indicate that the Yukon is projecting that its O&M expenditures will be \$78.9 million overbudget — more than they forecast for the 2013-14 year. The Premier continues to boast about the size of his budgets. The Yukon Party government delivers yet again the largest-ever capital budget — wow, can it spend money.

However, this budget does not represent the needs we are hearing about as we travel around Yukon communities. The Yukon Party is not delivering good governance. I will not be supporting this budget.

A report on government spending in Canada done by the C.D. Howe Institute was released just this week. The report gave the Yukon government a failing grade for its ongoing mismanagement of Yukon's finances. The C.D. Howe report says the Yukon is among the worst jurisdictions in Canada for meeting its budgeting targets.

The government has dismissed the report's finding with the excuse that territorial financing is more difficult to budget because so much of the revenue comes from federal programs. The NDP believes Yukoners deserve better.

The Premier also boasts about the Yukon as a debt-free jurisdiction. However, this debt-free label is not quite accurate when you take into account more than \$150 million in debts that are held in corporations, including the Yukon Hospital Corporation and Yukon Energy Corporation. Yukoners will be paying millions of dollars for years for the Yukon Party's political decision to build acute care hospitals in Watson Lake and Dawson City. The Yukon Party made the political decision to build those two acute care hospitals, and ignored the requirement to conduct a proper needs assessment before starting to build such massive projects.

As a number of Auditor General reports have observed, the Yukon Party government does not engage in thoughtful, adequate planning before it rushes into huge capital spending budget infrastructure projects. Following its poor planning, we

have seen huge cost overruns, which can be predictable when you have poor planning.

So the Yukon Party government can really spend money, but can they spend it responsibly?

The multi-year capital plan project listing found in the 2014-15 Budget Address tabled March 25, lists the multi-year cost for F.H. Collins Secondary replacement at \$51 million. We're concerned that the Yukon Party government's handling of the F.H. Collins school project get on track and stay on track. The Official Opposition does not want to see a repeat of huge cost overruns as this project proceeds.

The new F.H. Collins has been promised for over a decade now by the Yukon Party government, and it has already been much-delayed and mismanaged. The loss of energy-efficient geothermal use in the new F.H. Collins is disappointing. So are the loss of the track and field and the smaller gymnasium of the Yukon Party redesign.

In September 2013 the Department of Education and Community Services partnered with Sport Yukon to announce plans for a sports school pilot project at F.H. Collins Secondary School. This pilot project is based on the Canadian sport school model used in British Columbia.

In this program, Yukon athletes split their day between academics and sports training. It's a wonderful opportunity for students to take the next step in their athletic development. However, this program requires space, as the sports program has to operate alongside regular gym classes. F.H. Collins is currently squeezed for space and the gym classes are already at capacity. If this program is to continue and grow, it will need more space and better facilities. I'm concerned that the F.H. Collins school replacement will not meet these needs. The gym at the new school will be smaller than the gym the program is currently using.

Furthermore, the F.H. Collins track and field will be lost indefinitely, due to the placement of the new school. For this program to grow and expand, it needs adequate space and adequate facilities. We will not see an expansion, though, with the new F.H. Collins. Instead, it will be a step back as far as amenities.

Every year, the Yukon receives funding from the federal government through the labour market development agreement and the labour market agreement. The labour market development agreement provides funding for individuals who are on employment insurance or otherwise unemployed, to help them get back on their feet and find work. The labour market agreement provides similar support; however, labour market agreement funding is for individuals who are underrepresented in the workforce and have trouble finding employment. This would include people with disabilities or people with English as a second language, for example.

Early this year, the provinces and territories negotiated a deal with the federal government for the Canada job grant plan. The Canada job grant consists of funding from Ottawa, employers, and the provinces and territories in the form of cuts to the labour market agreement and the labour market development agreement. I'm concerned about the impacts of

the labour market agreement and the labour market development agreement cuts on Yukoners who are searching for ways to break into the work force or find employment. I'm looking to the government to provide us with a plan on how they will address the impact these cuts will have on Yukon workers.

The Yukon NDP economic vision recognizes how essential education and training are as part of a diversified local economy. Certainly previous NDP governments made large investments in policy, research funds and the physical structure at Ayamdigut Campus and elsewhere for the college. We are fortunate to have great post-secondary education at Yukon College, where the staff and students at Ayamdigut and 13 community campuses contribute.

I'd like to congratulate the research arm of Yukon College, the Yukon Research Centre of Excellence, on being ranked fourth in Canada's top 50 research colleges in the research income category.

Turning to the Justice budget, I would like to point out that the Yukon Party must understand the courts are not the right place to develop legislation. The need for modern successor mining legislation is not going to go away. Neither is the need for the Yukon government to work cooperatively with others. I will be looking for details in the land titles modernization project on how the Yukon government will fulfill the Yukon Party's commitment to work with Yukon First Nations to accommodate their interests and resolve the issue of registering land titles on First Nation settlement land.

Mr. Speaker, the 2014-15 Department of Justice budget shows a \$2.2-million increase over last year. In the government's departmental budget for legal services, there are small increases for solicitors, counsel and law groups, but there is no increase projected for outside counsel. I would like the minister to have accurate information about the anticipated costs for all of the lawsuits pending in the courts and how much of that will be coming from outside counsel.

For the past two years, the Yukon government has had to provide additional funds to cover increased costs for the Yukon Legal Services Society, and that is occurring again this year when the government anticipates covering a \$435,000 shortfall for legal aid. However, this budget shows only a \$21,000 increase for legal aid.

Last fall, the Yukon Legal Services Society had to stop providing some services until the government agreed to increase funding. Legal aid coverage should remain available for vulnerable people in our society, for aboriginal people who are severely overrepresented in the correctional system and in the courts, for prison law, for family law and for other civil law matters.

The Yukon Department of Justice, the RCMP and the Council of Yukon First Nations prepared the *Sharing Common Ground* report following the 2010 review of Yukon's police force and made a number of recommendations to improve policing in Yukon. I am pleased with some of the work that has been done but must note that more work needs to be done.

The new sexual assault response team of the RCMP is a welcome initiative that has been supported by Yukon's women's groups who worked hard during and after the police review to draw attention to improving the police and community response to women's reports of violence. In today's society, women do not enjoy the same degree of safety in the community as men.

Previously, I asked the government to provide financial support to a coalition of Yukon women's groups to work with the RCMP and others to implement recommendations found in *Sharing Common Ground*. I will be asking the Minister of Justice to ensure that funding continues for this coalition of women's groups in the 2014-15 budget.

The arrest processing unit attached to Whitehorse Correctional Centre is not complete yet. I attended the recent open house and virtual tour at Whitehorse Correctional Centre and I would like to also thank the minister for arranging a tour of the facility for the Opposition.

I have communicated with the minister my concerns about reports that the separate confinement of inmates in a small cell, where they do not have access to speak with or even see other people for 23 hours a day, is a common disciplinary measure taken by Whitehorse Correctional Centre. Withholding social interaction and the overuse of solitary confinement can have lifelong negative consequences.

Generally in the Yukon correctional system, First Nation inmates are between 75-85 percent of the inmate population. The Whitehorse Correctional Centre elders committee would like to feel that they have more of an influence on the nature of programs and the kinds of programming supports that are available to that high number of First Nation inmates.

There have been a lot of staff turnover and new hires at Whitehorse Correctional Centre in the past year. I would like to know how much staff orientation and training has been developed and delivered based on the cultural teachings of Yukon First Nation elders. Are there regular in-service opportunities for staff to meet with and learn from Yukon First Nation elders? Do correctional staff get any education about Yukon's residential school history?

The Highways and Public Works department is responsible for construction and property management. Proper needs assessment and project design in advance of construction are the appropriate standards to set. The government has budgeted a lot of money for roads and infrastructure, but we cannot be confident that they have done proper planning. For example, this budget announces a 300-bed continuing care facility for seniors, without saying anything about who the government has consulted with in Whitehorse or the communities. Is this what our seniors want and need?

Once again, this budget does not seem to include any money to improve the highway between Faro and Ross River, where the road narrows and the road surface deteriorates. Why does this government not find it worthwhile to improve this section of road between Faro and Ross River? There are Ross River citizens who work in the mining sector; there are government workers who travel to Ross River to deliver

services; there are community members who travel to Whitehorse for medical appointments, supplies and visiting. Why does the Yukon Party government fail in every budget to allocate funds for a road surface that is deficient in comparison with other Yukon highways?

I'm pleased that the Yukon government has received more than \$6.4 million in federal funding through the airport capital assistance program for rehabilitation of the runway apron panels at the Erik Nielsen Whitehorse International Airport. I will be asking the Minister of Highways and Public Works for information about the most recent Transport Canada safety audit and the issues addressed by the Yukon government's corrective action plan, which it submitted to Transport Canada. What measures are being taken by the Yukon government to follow up and implement corrective action for issues raised in the Transport Canada safety audit of Whitehorse International Airport? How and when will these corrective measures be taken?

The Peel watershed region is a vast, intact ecosystem. Its many free-flowing rivers intersect mountains and support wildlife, fish and birds. It is the ancestral homeland of indigenous peoples. The elders have talked to us about the cultural, spiritual and heritage values of their lands and of the Peel region, which they feel a duty to protect for themselves, for future generations and for the planet.

In his Budget Address, the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin stated that, "...it's a land use plan. It's not a protected area plan" when he put on the public record in this Legislature that he could live with the Yukon government's unilaterally imposed Peel River plan — a Yukon government plan that is being challenged in court by the Na Cho Nyäk Dun and Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in nations. Environmental groups are participating in this court action.

What the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin failed to say is that the Peel watershed regional planning commission was established under Chapter 11 of the *Umbrella Final Agreement*. He failed to say the Yukon government and the four First Nations of Na Cho Nyäk Dun, Vuntut Gwitchin, Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in and the Gwich'in Tribal Council were all participants, as provided for in land claims agreements. He failed to say that the *Final Recommended Peel Watershed Regional Land Use Plan* was developed over a six-year period of consultation and careful study.

The Peel watershed land use planning commission recommended significant environmental protection and carefully controlled development in the Peel region because of its irreplaceable value. The Yukon Party government's 2014 unilateral plan would result in opening up the Peel region for mineral and oil and gas staking, for transportation and industrial development in a way that doesn't respect land use planning or the land use planning project and the final agreements.

This government doesn't seem to appreciate economic diversification. The Yukon Party has made limited investment in green jobs, investment in renewable energy supply, in wilderness tourism. The government could invest more in job creation in rural Yukon, in the arts and cultural industries, in

incentives for employers to hire apprentices, in the knowledge-based economy.

The Yukon Party government has referred to oil and gas development several times in this budget. It has also established an all-party select committee of the Legislature, mandated to gain a scientific-based understanding of fracking; to gain an understanding of Yukon's current legislation and regulations relevant to the oil and gas industry; to consider the potential risks and benefits of fracking, if it were used in the Yukon; to facilitate an informed public dialogue for the purpose of sharing information on the potential risks and benefits of fracking; to gather input from the Yukon public, First Nation stakeholders and stakeholder groups, including non-government organizations; to hold public hearings on fracking in communities; and consider whether fracking can be done safely, if properly regulated.

The fracking committee has held one set of public proceedings, which overall was successful, I think, and well-received in the community.

What the select committee must still do before it reports is schedule additional public proceedings that address such issues as public health impacts, wildlife impacts, energy choices and global warming, climate change and greenhouse gas emission reductions.

When I observe the frantic pace of development and the lack of environmental planning that has occurred elsewhere in North America, and what that experience has resulted in, I see a need to consider wisely what we do now, bearing in mind needs of future generations to come. As we have begun to examine scientific records associated with fracking and possible effects on the lands and waters around them, the lack of gathering solid baseline data prior to development is frequently cited as a mistake other jurisdictions have made.

As we have proceeded with the work of the committee, I have become increasingly aware of the fact that we can't simply jump to the question of how we regulate fracking when we see how jurisdictions nearby — both Alberta and British Columbia, for example — and further away, the United States and many other countries — are finding that regulators have consistently failed in this regard. While we might hope that Yukon will be different, it is becoming increasingly clear that the nature of fracking as a technological process, as well as an industrial and economic activity, is fraught with risk that makes it difficult for regulators to keep up with the pace and scale of development.

This is the experience in British Columbia, as we have learned from the BC Oil and Gas Commission. We have very little knowledge of the quality and quantity of groundwater across Yukon, particularly in areas that would be subject to fracking. One question is, should Yukoners invest in a better understanding of the territory's water system for the sole purpose of going forward with fracking, an extraction process that poses a risk to groundwater?

There is more than one way to look at development and it is clear that Yukoners are very concerned that this government's sole focus on expanding and diversifying a non-renewable resource sector is putting the territory at risk.

The NDP caucus members of the committee are working hard to understand the issues and to come to a rational conclusion for the benefit of Yukoners. This is not an easy task, especially given the great resources the industry is devoting to promote what it considers the benefits of fracking while doing everything it can to deny any risks.

Mr. Speaker, the opportunity to do the public's business is a privilege not to be taken lightly. As members of the Opposition, we believe the Yukon needs a government that understands that we can create jobs, protect our environment, honour First Nation agreements and provide investors with a degree of certainty. This budget, like previous Yukon Party budgets, is heavy on capital infrastructure projects and, as I have said, there are some worthwhile projects, as of course there are bound to be in over \$1 billion of spending. But this budget continues the pattern we have seen over the last dozen years — for the Yukon Party to boast on its mega-spending pattern without demonstrating a comprehensive approach to planning or the ability to work with others. Treating First Nations and non-government organizations with respect and completing regional land use plans in a fair process are ways that could ease tensions in the community.

The 2014-15 O&M budget increases government operating expenditures by \$47,640,000 from last year's 2013-14 operation and maintenance estimates. According to the budget documents, the Yukon Party government forecast that it will spend \$78.9 million more than it budgeted in the previous fiscal year — the 2013-14 year that we are just completing today.

Will the Yukon Party be able to live within its means? Will it spend less in 2014-15 than it did in the current year? The Yukon Party government does not have a clear vision of the future, and that lack of vision for the future is reflected time and again in the government's budgetary choices. This budget does not deliver a thoughtful, balanced approach that Yukoners deserve. That's why we cannot support this budget, as tabled by the Premier.

Ms. McLeod: It gives me great pleasure to rise today in response to the budget for 2014-15, as presented by the Premier.

Before I begin, though, I'd like to take just a minute to thank the great people of southeast Yukon for their continued faith in me to represent them in this Legislature. It is such an honour. Our community of Watson Lake is a busy one, and I'm proud of everyone who takes the time to embrace that great community spirit in all of the events that take place and in our daily lives.

Now to the budget. Last week — and indeed, today — I heard from Opposition members that they would not be supporting this budget. That in itself is not a great surprise, as they have not supported any budget in the two and a half years that I have been here. No, the surprise was that they were voting against it not because of what was in the budget but because of what wasn't in the budget. I confess that I can't find any logic in that position.

I would be a little remiss if I did not comment on the ongoing debate regarding the hospital in Watson Lake. It seems that some of our opposition members aren't aware that Watson Lake has had a hospital for many years. They argue that Watson Lake shouldn't have had a hospital built. The people of southeast Yukon deserve to have their hospital and, frankly, the people have heard enough. They are tired of being dragged through the mud for the Opposition's political games.

This is a great budget.

Some Hon. Member: (inaudible)

Point of order

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

Ms. White: The one that refers to violence — Standing Order 19(i), uses abusive or insulting language, including sexist or violent language — dragged through the mud is a violent term.

Speaker: The Government House Leader, on the point of order.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: On the point of order, Mr. Speaker, I believe that term has been allowed in the House in the past and I don't believe that the Member for Watson Lake singled out any member in expressing her viewpoint that the Opposition was playing political games to the disadvantage of her constituents.

Speaker's ruling

Speaker: I am going to allow it now, but I will also look back and confirm whether it has been used in the same context that it has been ruled out of order in this case.

Ms. McLeod: I want to say that as chair of the Select Committee Regarding the Risks and Benefits of Hydraulic Fracturing, I find it extremely inappropriate for a member of the select committee to rise in this House and present her biased opinions. In my mind, that —

Some Hon. Member: (inaudible)

Point of order

Speaker: Order please. Member for Copperbelt South, on a point of order.

Ms. Moorcroft: Mr. Speaker, the Member for Watson Lake has just stated on the record that I have presented biased opinions in this House. I believe that as a member of the Select Committee Regarding the Risks and Benefits of Hydraulic Fracturing that I have every right to speak to what that committee is doing and where it is at. I find the member's comment as offensive and inaccurate.

Speaker: Government House Leader, on the point of order.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: On the point of order, I believe that the member's own leader has stood and accused government members of being biased and it seems to be the pot calling the kettle black.

Speaker's ruling

Speaker: On the point of order, my concern is on whether members should be talking to the actions and information that a select committee is actually in the process of reviewing before they've given their final report.

The point of order that was brought forward was on the Member for Watson Lake's statement that she did not believe it was appropriate. After a little bit of thought, it really comes down to a point of interpretation of the facts. It is not a point of order, but at the same time I have to wonder and question if commenting on the actions of a committee before the committee has had an opportunity to come to a final decision and put forward the report — it does cause concern on both sides of the House as to the position of the individuals. As such, I would just caution everybody to keep that in mind.

As I said, there is no point of order. It is a dispute between members.

Ms. McLeod: In that there has been this unfortunate discourse on the workings of the select committee, I certainly hope that the committee's work has not been derailed by the actions today.

Some Hon. Member: (inaudible)

Ms. McLeod: You may find that very amusing but I don't. I have invested —

Speaker's statement

Speaker: The member is to speak to the Chair.

Ms. McLeod: Mr. Speaker, they might find this amusing, but I have invested — and the members have invested — a lot of time and effort into this process to date. We don't find it amusing.

Carrying on about the budget, I think this is a great budget. Anyone who takes the time to read it would find out just how much our government supports all Yukoners. Every department contributes in a major way to grow our people, our infrastructure, our health and well-being and our economy. I want to thank the ministers and their respective departments for all their hard work.

I am pleased to see in this budget that the Department of Highways and Public Works is continuing the upgrading of the Robert Campbell Highway to the tune of \$10,250,000. This builds on the investment of previous years, and the investment in our roads is a crucial one.

I am also pleased to see that \$4.5 million is going into maintenance of the road that has already been completed. This past year we saw the designation of the Sign Post Forest as a heritage site. We are very pleased with this and look forward to the official dedication ceremony early this summer. My thanks to the Minister of Tourism and Culture and his great team.

If you drive down the Alaska Highway, you'll notice that 11 kilometres through Watson Lake were paved last year. It's an amazing thing. It causes a lot of people to really smile. An investment in southeast Yukon is worth every penny. The people of Watson Lake and Upper Liard didn't have a lot of

demands at election time, but one of the things they did want was extra street lighting along the Alaska Highway at Upper Liard and along the Robert Campbell Highway to the subdivision of Two Mile.

I want to thank the Minister of Highways and Public Works for moving this project forward, with the support of the Premier and caucus, with an investment in this budget of \$200,000. This installation will bring added safety for the drivers and pedestrians who use these routes.

The continuing investment in rural education is always appreciated. I want to thank Jean MacLean and her staff at Watson Lake Secondary School, for their infectious vision and the ability to lead parents, students and staff down a road of success. No longer are we focused on a system that didn't work for our students. Instead, Jean's vision of a flip school has the students engaged and working toward success.

As the Minister of Education mentioned, we did have the privilege to visit the high school. In the past we might have seen all manner of misbehaviour, but it was quite a magical thing to see that the students were working hard at their studies, completely focused on their tasks.

Now I'm told that other schools are interested in adopting this learning style, and I would certainly encourage them to look at it. Of course, the Department of Education is to be congratulated as well for getting on board with this winner.

I want to give credit to, and congratulate, Michelle Koehl, who is the leader of our Yukon College campus in Watson Lake. Through her, the college is a bustling hub of adult learning, and I hear it's the busiest rural campus we have. The people of southeast Yukon really appreciate her dedication.

Aside from the millions of dollars spent on O&M within our community, we will see almost \$15 million spent on capital projects, from ongoing sewer and water projects, repairs to existing buildings, to new construction of a renewable resources office complex. It's all welcome news.

Territory-wide, there are a number of capital projects to roll out — over \$112 million worth — non-specific to a particular community but impacting our lives nonetheless. I know that many of my constituents will welcome the extension to the electrical rebate program.

Of particular note, and something welcome by small businesses that operate in southeast Yukon, is the decrease in the corporate tax rate. I've said it before and I'll say it again: when a Yukon Party government is managing the territory, we see population growth, economic growth, new jobs and sound fiscal management.

In the end, this is a good budget — good for rural Yukon and good for all of Yukon.

Mr. Tredger: I want to begin by thanking my constituents — the men, women and children of Mayo-Tatchun — for placing their trust in me to serve them as a member of the Legislature for Mayo-Tatchun. I'm humbled by the trust they've placed in me. Each day it is an honour to stand here on their behalf and carry forth their questions, their ideas and their concerns.

I only hope I can reflect some of the wisdom, some of the ingenuity and some of the power that they have shared with me.

The Mayo-Tatchun area is a magnificent region of this planet. It is home to a vast, interesting and diverse area rich in natural resources, pristine wilderness, lakes, rivers, mountains — a vast diversity of boreal flora and fauna. It is also home to the Peel River watershed. When I first realized the enormity of that, it was almost overwhelming. We as citizens of the Yukon have been bequeathed one of the last pristine watersheds in a boreal forest on this planet.

People in the Yukon, in Canada, in Düsseldorf, in Los Angeles — from around the world — are recognizing what a treasure we do have. But, Mr. Speaker, the greatest real resource of the riding is the people. Mayo-Tatchun is home to three Northern Tutchone nations — Little Salmon Carmacks, Selkirk and Na Cho Nyäk Dun — several communities — Keno City, the Village of Mayo, Stewart Crossing, Pelly Crossing, the Village of Carmacks — as well as many homesteads, farms, traplines, fish camps and highway lodges, service centres, home to mines operating and developing and to mining claims, and home to placer miners.

The people of Mayo-Tatchun are strong, independent and resourceful; they're self-reliant. They are entrepreneurs and builders and, most importantly, they accept their responsibility as stewards of the land. They are respectful of others and expect to be treated with respect. They expect to be involved in decisions that affect them and their communities. They take responsibility for their affairs and their communities.

The strength and vitality, the resourcefulness and ingenuity, and the resilience of people in our communities across the Yukon never cease to inspire me. We can all learn from each other, respectfully learn, earn and play together. The residents of Mayo-Tatchun are proud of their heritage and value their quality of life.

The residents of Mayo-Tatchun encourage —

Speaker: The time being 5:30 p.m., this House now stands adjourned until 1:00 p.m. tomorrow.

The House adjourned at 5:30 p.m.

The following Sessional Papers were tabled March 31, 2014:

33-1-112

Ombudsman 2013 Annual Report (Speaker Laxton)

33-1-113

Information and Privacy Commissioner 2013 Annual Report (Speaker Laxton)

The following document was filed March 31, 2014:

33-1-77

*2014 February Report of the Auditor General of Canada
Yukon Family and Children's Services — Department of
Health and Social Services Action Plan to Implement
Recommendations (Graham)*