



Yukon Legislative Assembly

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HANSARD

Thursday, April 24, 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

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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
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**Yukon Legislative Assembly
Whitehorse, Yukon
Thursday, April 24, 2014 — 1:00 p.m.**

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

Prayers

Withdrawal of motions

Speaker: The Chair wishes to inform the House of a change which has been made to the Order Paper. Motion No. 637, standing in the name of the Minister of Community Services, has been removed from the Order Paper, as it is the same as Motion No. 649, which the House adopted yesterday.

DAILY ROUTINE

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

TRIBUTES

In remembrance of Chris Pearson

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: Chris Pearson could be called the “father of responsible government in Yukon”. He was a leader of the Yukon government at a pivotal time in Yukon’s history. Born in Lethbridge, Alberta, Chris Pearson moved to Yukon in 1957 as a civil engineer and worked for the territorial government from 1960 until 1973, when he entered private business.

Prior to 1978, Yukon had a non-partisan Legislature with the Commissioner acting as the head of government in the territory. Chris was first elected to the Yukon Legislative Assembly in the 1978 election, which was run on party lines. He was not the Yukon Party’s leader going into the election campaign; however, he was chosen as the party leader because of the defeat of Yukon Party leader Hilda Watson in her Kluane riding.

In June 1979, Mr. Pearson requested the Minister of the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development — the Hon. Jake Epp — to issue new instructions to then Commissioner Ione Christensen to create a wholly elected Yukon Cabinet. Responsible government was achieved on October 9, 1979, with the issuance of the Epp letter. The letter allowed the government leader to use the title of “Premier”. However, Mr. Pearson chose to retain the title of Government Leader. Government Leader Tony Penikett was the first to adopt the title of “Premier” on October 10, 1989.

Chris Pearson promoted Yukon control of territory affairs and land and resources through two parallel processes: constitutional development and the settlement of Yukon Indian land claims. Yukon First Nations were attempting to gain control of their land, resources and affairs through the land claim process, whereas Yukoners in general were attempting to gain similar control through constitutional development and devolution. The challenge facing the Pearson government was to ensure that these two processes proceeded in concert. The Yukon government’s role in land

claim negotiations was an evolving one, ranging from no participation at all to being part of the federal government’s negotiating team to full participation with its own chief negotiator.

The Pearson government stood firm against the federal government’s unilateral action to grant the Committee for Original Peoples’ Entitlement, resident in the Northwest Territories, 5,000 square miles of land in northern Yukon, including ownership of all major potential port sites on the Beaufort Sea.

In 1982 the Pearson government was re-elected with a majority government but had to deal with the economic recession caused by the collapse of the hard rock mining industry and the closure of the Faro mine. This in turn caused the shutdown of the White Pass and Yukon Route railway between Whitehorse and Skagway. The Whitehorse copper mine closed in the fall of 1982. Under Chris Pearson’s leadership, the Yukon government introduced a number of innovative measures to cope with their economic recession, including hosting an economic conference and implementing a nine-day fortnight program within the Yukon government itself to reduce government expenditures by \$2 million.

Chris Pearson, together with Yukon’s Member of Parliament, the Honourable Erik Nielsen, set the stage for Yukon’s future constitutional development and devolution. Prior to leaving political office in 1985, Chris — working with Erik — had developed the territorial formula financing agreement and had prepared draft amendments to the *Yukon Act* that included the recognition of the Crown in right of Yukon, granting the territory the ownership of Crown lands in Yukon, as well as recognizing Yukon’s offshore boundary in the Beaufort Sea.

The *Yukon Act* amendments in 2002 and the devolution transfer agreement that took effect on April 1, 2003 did not address these important issues. Had these amendments been made in 1985, the Yukon would be more constitutionally advanced than it is today.

Chris Pearson left Yukon to become the deputy consul general at the Canadian consulate in Dallas, Texas and upon retirement, took up residence in Claytor Lake, Virginia. Chris Pearson maintained a deep and abiding interest in Yukon and read the Whitehorse Star on-line religiously every day, as well as keeping in touch with many of his Yukon friends up to the very end of his life. Chris Pearson led the Yukon government through a time of great change and transition. His leadership helped establish a strong foundation of good governance that continues to this day. Yukon remains forever in his debt.

Mr. Speaker, our deepest sympathy goes out to the Pearson family.

I would like to inform the House that joining us today in the gallery is Chris’s son, Dan Pearson, and along with him, family friends Mr. Gordon Steele, Mr. Craig Tuton and Mrs. Geri Tuton. I invite all members of the House to welcome them today.

Applause

In recognition of Yukon Young Authors' Conference and Yukon Writers Festival

Hon. Ms. Taylor: I rise in the House today on behalf of all members of the Assembly to pay tribute to the 34th annual Young Authors' Conference, which is actually happening today and tomorrow at F.H. Collins Secondary School, as well as in select communities throughout the territory.

Since 1980, this conference has continued to inspire young writers from across the territory to hone their craft and learn from experienced professionals. At the same time, it has brought gifted storytellers to our great territory, offering them inspiration for their next great works.

The first Young Authors' Conference was the brain child of Terry Burns, who was then the librarian at F.H. Collins, and that first conference in April 1980 had 33 students from five Yukon schools working with three visiting authors. This annual event has indeed come a long way.

Terry Burns remained the conference's overall organizer for 10 years. The conference was then taken over by Joyce Sward, who was the main organizer for the next 20 years. Now it is being organized by Scott Henderson, who teaches at F.H. Collins.

I wish to commend all of these individuals for their hard work and commitment to the generations of Yukon students who have benefited from the Yukon Young Authors' Conference and for carrying on such a positive tradition in Yukon's education community.

This year's conference has 50 grade 7 to 12 students participating from across the territory. This year we're really pleased to be able to welcome guest writers Gary Barwin, Alan Cumyn, Lori Garrison and Charles Wilkins as our special authors to this year's conference. I can say I was there at the conference earlier this morning and indeed there was a huge complement of students. The work had already begun, with opening comments from our own Dan Davidson from the City of Dawson and with each of our guest writers in their introductory remarks.

At the same time, I wish to also pay tribute to the Yukon Writers Festival, otherwise known as "Live Words", which coincides with the Young Authors' Conference. Every spring, Yukoners come together with local and visiting writers to celebrate Canadian writing. Yukon's abundant literary talent is part of our culture and our history, and the festival is an opportunity to expose Yukoners to some of Canada's finest authors and, at the same time, encourage Yukon writers to pursue literary success at all levels.

The festival is Yukon-wide, with events taking place in Haines Junction, Faro, Tagish, as well as here in Whitehorse. The opening reception is tonight at 7:00 p.m. at the Kwanlin Dun Cultural Centre. It will showcase a number of guest writers, many of whom I just spoke to, including Lori Garrison from Whitehorse, Gary Barwin, Alan Cumyn, Charles Demers and Charles Wilkins.

Other events taking place throughout the Yukon between now and Saturday include readings in community libraries, and a special evening of readings and music hosted by

Junction Arts and Music will be presented on Saturday at 7:00 p.m. at the St. Elias Convention Centre in Haines Junction.

Strong support from national organizations, local community groups and businesses makes each of these particular events happen. I'd like to thank the many partners and sponsors who have collaborated over the years to ensure its success. Financial support from the Yukon government, as well as Canada Council for the Arts and The Writers' Union of Canada make it possible to bring writers clear across the country to the Yukon. Special appreciation is due to our Yukon festival committee and volunteers. After all, it is their love of the written word and spoken word and their hard work that help ensure a great, successful event. The festival is produced this year by the Public Libraries branch, the Public Schools branch and Junction Arts and Music.

Mr. Speaker, finally I would also like to remind Yukoners that the festival is open to the public, and program information for events taking place throughout the territory is available online on our own Yukon libraries page, through the local media and, of course, in each of our Yukon public libraries across the territory.

I would also like to say on behalf of the Government of Yukon — much appreciation to each of our Yukon public libraries throughout the territory for enabling both of these important events to take place.

In recognition of Yukon Robotics Challenge

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Mr. Speaker, it is also my privilege, on behalf of all members of the Assembly, to pay tribute to the first-ever Yukon Robotics Challenge, which was held at the Porter Creek Secondary School on April 15.

During Education Week, I had the privilege to attend the opening ceremony and to see first-hand many excited Yukon young students and their LEGO robots. For days and weeks leading up to the challenge, teams of students from grade 5 and 6 classes at Jack Hulland Elementary, Elijah Smith Elementary, Takhini Elementary and Holy Family Elementary schools designed, built and programmed the robots. Then they put them through their paces through a competition in a series of challenges.

I can say that, having had lots of experience with LEGO from having a nine-year-son in our household, this was indeed a challenge. The theme of alternate energies reminded students to think about sustainability and, of course, the kinds of materials used to build and to power technology. The robotics challenge is what I would call a great example of engaging, hands-on learning for Yukon students, inspiring young Yukon minds. Experiential learning develops students' core competencies in communication, collaboration, critical thinking and creativity — all of which, I believe, was successfully achieved with this particular challenge. These important transferable skills are the foundations of 21st century learning and prepare students for jobs in communities of the future.

This competition was championed by our own superintendent, Penny Prysnuik, and was co-sponsored by the Yukon Department of Education and the Association of

Professional Engineers of Yukon. My many thanks and our government's many thanks go to Penny for initiating this particular event and for bringing the partners together to bring it home to fruition to teach Yukon students about engineering, computer programming and applications of science and math, all of which are very key to today's top job skills.

I would also like to extend my thanks to the organizers — Executive Director of the Association of Professional Engineers of Yukon, Laura Markle, and Glenna Howard — who dedicated their time, energy and effort to make this unique event possible.

I would like to recognize also the association's continuing outreach to Yukon students. Through this competition and events such as the annual bridge building competition, the association promotes engineering as a career option through fun and interactive activities. I would like to thank the 12 volunteers, engineers — many of whom I have had the opportunity to know over the years — who spent their time during the day to judge the competition, applied their skills, put them into action and in turn inspired students.

I congratulate, above all, the students and their teachers on their robot designs, their teamwork and their friendly spirit of collaboration and friendly competition. I would like to congratulate the winners in each competition, some of whom are joining us here today. In the field track competition, first place went to Jack Hulland Elementary, team two. In the technical competition, Holy Family, team two, took first place. But the overall school champion was Jack Hulland Elementary and today, joining us in the gallery are a number of students who are the champions of the LEGO robotics challenge.

I would like to introduce them here today. I would like to extend a warm welcome to all of them starting with: their teacher, David Michanyuk; Leo Chen, student; Khurghan Lochington, another student; Adora Jennex; Erin Jim; Morgen Cawley and Milo Goodwin, who have joined us here. Also in attendance is our superintendent, Penny Prysnuke, and organizers and our partners in all of this — past president of the Association of Professional Engineers of Yukon, Carl Friesen, has joined us here today — and to our organizers Laura Markle and Glenna Howard for joining us here today. Many big thanks to all of these individuals who helped make this first robotics challenge a great success.

Congratulations to all the participants. It was truly a community undertaking. I thank all the competitors, the organizers, volunteers, the teachers and the host school, Porter Creek Secondary School, for making this inaugural event a great success.

Applause

In recognition of one-year anniversary of the Rana Plaza garment factory collapse, Dhaka, Bangladesh

Ms. Hanson: On behalf of the Official Opposition and the third party, I rise today — April 24, 2014 — to mark the one-year anniversary of one of the worst workplace accidents in the international garment industry. More than 1,100 people were killed when the Rana Plaza — an eight-

story building of garment and apparel factories — collapsed just outside of Dhaka, the capital of Bangladesh.

Many more workers were injured. Employees suffered and paid with their lives for the dangerous working conditions they were forced to work in. This is not an isolated case. Bangladesh has close to 4,000 garment factories. Their products account for more than 75 percent of the country's exports, mostly to North America and to Europe.

The International Labor Rights Forum estimates that more than 1,800 workers have died in factory fires since 2005.

You know, Mr. Speaker, we are all very familiar with the aftermath of the Rana Plaza disaster. We all saw the TV coverage, the brand labels that represented 15 international retailers — retailers that we all wear. Many companies pledged to fund improved safety systems in plants that produced their clothing. According to Human Rights Watch, a financial trust fund managed by the international labour organization was supposed to — was targeted to — receive \$40 million from those same global companies that purchased products from the factories in the Rana Plaza. About a year later, less than half of that amount has been contributed.

This morning I read and watched an interactive piece on the *Guardian* website, entitled: "The Shirt on Your Back: the Human Cost of the Bangladeshi Garment Industry." It provides a challenging and thought-provoking analysis that I recommend to all.

The ongoing needs of survivors and wounded workers must not be forgotten. Human Rights Watch has written letters to the companies that did not follow through on their promises to help the victims of this workplace tragedy. The message is quite simple. International garment brands should be helping the injured and the dependents of dead workers — workers who manufactured the clothes the companies then sold to us, generating massive profits for those brands.

As we in this House, so far away, remember the injured and dead workers from the Rana Plaza, we need to ask: What were the working conditions for the people who made the clothes we are wearing today? It can be as simple as reading the price tag and remembering the real cost of that cut-priced latest fashion might just be a life.

Speaker: Introduction of visitors.

Are there any returns or documents for tabling?

Are there any reports of committees?

Are there any petitions to be presented?

Are there any bills to be introduced?

Are there any notices of motions?

NOTICES OF MOTIONS

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to consult with the mayor and council of the City of Whitehorse about plans for the Arctic X games to take place in Whitehorse in 2016.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to make more local foods available in markets, restaurants, schools and institutions, with a particular emphasis on meat products.

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

QUESTION PERIOD

Question re: Tourism marketing funding

Ms. Hanson: This weekend is the Tourism Industry Association of the Yukon spring conference and annual general meeting. The Tourism Industry Association of the Yukon has been leading the charge to expand the scope of Yukon's tourism industry and, by extension, tourism's contribution to the Yukon economy.

Earlier this year, they proposed that the government invest \$2.5 million a year in a domestic television marketing campaign to increase the number of visitors to the Yukon. This marketing campaign would have direct benefits to Yukon and would finally give Yukon's tourism industry the national television presence that it has sought for years.

Has the minister revisited his decision not to support this request from Yukon's Tourism Industry Association?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: I thank the member opposite for the question. As many of us will know, TIA did come forward with a request to further market Yukon around the globe, more specifically within the domestic markets on television advertising campaigns.

Leading into the TIA conference this weekend, I do need to commend our stakeholder, Tourism Yukon, for the tremendous work that they do at marketing the Yukon and the Yukon brand around the globe. We have seen the success and the fruits of their labour with the increased visitation to Yukon. We know over the last four years that the overseas markets increased by about 33 percent. In 2013, we saw a significant increase in the domestic market, with a 17-percent growth specifically in the Canadian market.

We will continue a dialogue with TIA. We know that we have seen some great work from the strategic marketing that we do around the globe and in North America. We will continue the good work with our stakeholders.

Ms. Hanson: It is unfortunate the minister continues to repeat the same tired old lines.

What we are looking for is the kind of innovative and creative approach to this dynamic and significant contributor to Yukon's economy that has been demonstrated by the tourism sector. Yukoners know we have a good story here. TIAY has proposed that the government do more to promote the Yukon brand by featuring Yukon in a domestic television campaign. As TIAY's chair put it, it's a pivotal time for tourism in Yukon and it's the right time to take the tourism industry to the next level to boost Yukon's economy.

Mr. Speaker, what part of this does the minister disagree with, and what is he waiting for before he takes action?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: Mr. Speaker, as I said in my first response, we will continue to work with our stakeholders. We'll continue to work with organizations like the Tourism Industry Association of the Yukon, the Canadian Tourism Commission and the Tourism Industry Association of Canada. We have an incredible team, as the president of TIAC indicated this morning on CBC. In fact, he stated in his interview that he wished he had 13 jurisdictions across Canada that were like Yukon. We have an incredible team at Tourism Yukon, as he also indicated, and we've seen the fruits of that labour.

But as far as investments within tourism, Mr. Speaker, we see from the Department of Tourism and Culture — our government — that \$1.65 million is spent on marketing activities targeting Canadian travellers, \$546,000 is to be spent on marketing activities targeting U.S. travellers, \$1.3 million is spent on marketing activities targeting overseas travellers, \$700,000 for the tourism cooperative marketing fund, and \$244,000 to support the work of the Tourism Industry Association of the Yukon to promote our territory.

This government will continue to make significant investments and we'll continue to be the envy of other jurisdictions in Canada.

Ms. Hanson: There are times when the minister appears to have finally grasped that tourism is a key contributor to the Yukon's economy. What he fails to realize is that the tourism industry is doing well, despite a complete lack of leadership from this government and a tourism budget that hasn't seen a meaningful increase to core funding over the last 10 years.

The reality is that the hard-working men and women of Yukon's tourism industry are driving the growth we are seeing, and the minister is standing on their backs, taking the credit for it. Imagine what the tourism contribution to Yukon's economy could be if the minister actually stepped back from behind his speaking notes and actually set about to expand the tourism sector — imagine that.

When will this government step up to the plate, show leadership and make a meaningful contribution to the Yukon tourism industry, starting with a positive response to the reasonable request from TIAY?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: Imagine a leader of an official opposition who would pay attention to the budget before her and the significant contributions and investments that this government has made to the tourism industry. As the president of the Tourism Industry Association of Canada said on CBC this morning at about 8:15 a.m. — the member opposite could have tuned into that — Yukon is truly the envy of all jurisdictions across Canada. We have seen 10 years of significant growth, with an anomaly last year of eight-percent growth. This government will continue to invest in the tourism economy in Yukon. There's \$200,000 to support the Yukon Convention Bureau, \$264,000 to support the Wilderness Tourism Association and \$75,000 to support Yukon Rendezvous. There are investments in the Yukon Quest.

Mr. Speaker, the member opposite really does need to pay attention to what's going on.

Question re: Teacher staffing, on-call status

Mr. Tredger: Temporary teachers and education assistants form an important part of our education system. They help to fill much-needed positions in our schools and are an asset to Yukon. However, their positions are filled with uncertainty. They do not enjoy the certainty of employment that permanent employees do, which makes it difficult for them to set their roots in our communities.

The Yukon *Education Labour Relations Act* clearly states that temporary teachers must be made permanent after being employed for two years, except in exceptional circumstances.

Can the minister tell us how many temporary teachers and educational assistants who have been teaching for more than two years are employed by the Department of Education?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: I want to also recognize our temporary teachers and all teaching professionals throughout the territory and the invaluable work that they do provide on behalf of Yukon families in every community.

As the member opposite and I have had some great debate in this Assembly — and, to be sure, the previous minister as well. Temporary teachers are hired to meet temporary programming needs in schools. They are there to replace permanent teachers who are on long-term leave as well. They are members of the Yukon Teachers Association and they are covered by all the benefits of the respective collective agreement as well. I do not have up-to-date statistics in terms of how many temporary teachers we do have, but I can say that as part of the staffing protocol, which was just recently revised, temporary teachers are given priority consideration when vacant positions are filled.

Again, when they have three or more years of continuous service, they are considered after indeterminate teachers with three or more years of continuous service in the same school.

We have made some improvements to our hiring protocol within the past year, and we continue to make even further improvements.

Mr. Tredger: Last sitting, I asked during Question Period for these numbers and the minister could not provide them. I asked in budget debate and she could not provide them. So I'm not surprised she won't provide them now.

A decision was reached by an adjudicator that temporary teachers and educational staff should be made permanent after two years of employment, unless exceptional circumstances were present. It is my understanding that quite a number of teachers have been kept on past the two-year threshold.

Will the minister commit to tabling this sitting the number of temporary teachers and educational staff who have been employed by the Department of Education for more than two years?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: I look forward to debating the Department of Education and debating one of the record levels expended in the Department of Education by this Yukon Party government.

I know that we had a number of hours of debate and this question was not raised by the member opposite, but I'm sure the member opposite will raise this question again. We will certainly look at distributing information, as required.

As I mentioned, the Yukon government has made strides in improving the staffing protocol.

In fact, that protocol was revised less than a year ago and it does provide teachers with less than three years of continuous service — or I should say, in terms of First Nation candidates and temporary teachers with three or more years of service — as second on the list in terms of hiring protocol preference, right behind the permanent teachers with three or more years in the school. We have made significant changes. That category was actually raised from the level 5 — where it was back in 2009 — to a number 2 in terms of the protocol that was developed and initiated last year.

Mr. Tredger: We did debate this very question in the budget debate of the fall. It is my understanding that there are over 30 temporary teachers being employed in the Yukon in the past two years under some form of exceptional circumstances. Temporary teachers and educational assistants fill key roles in our schools. They take these positions with an understanding that, after two years, they will be eligible to become a permanent teacher. Extending the temporary basis of their employment at will is doing a disservice to the hard work that they put in teaching our children and improving our schools and communities.

At what point do these exceptional circumstances turn into normal circumstances? Will the minister commit to giving temporary teachers and educational assistants the respect they deserve, and stop systematically invoking exceptional circumstances to prevent them from getting a permanent status?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: I hate to reiterate for the member opposite — but again, temporary teachers are hired to serve a very important role — to meet temporary programming needs in our schools due to replacement of permanent teachers who are on long-term leave. That could be for parental leave, educational leave, for various absences for one reason or the other, in terms of replacing permanent individuals, as I said, from moving from school to school. There are a whole variety of reasons for the use of temporary teachers.

We have made advances in our staffing hiring protocol that do give precedence to temporary teachers, right behind the permanent teachers with three or more years in school. We have made those particular improvements.

In terms of other supports in our classrooms, the Yukon government continues to certainly provide services on behalf of our student population, whether that is speech and language pathologists, school counsellors, school psychologists, learning assistant teachers, reading recovery teachers, educational assistants, paraprofessional staff and many others.

Our government will continue to invest as we have. We have almost doubled the number of educational assistants in our territory and will continue to —

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

Question re: Dawson City housing for child services

Mr. Silver: Yesterday, I tabled a motion calling on the Government of Yukon to help find a permanent home for the Child Development Centre and the Canada Prenatal Nutrition Program in Dawson. These programs have move four times in the last two years as office spaces or homes they have rented have literally sold out from underneath them.

They are, once again, on the move as the house that they were renting has been sold and, as of the end of May, they will be homeless. The minister and I have exchanged letters over this matter several times over the past two and a half years.

I have also raised this matter in the House, including during Question Period in the spring of 2012, where the groups were in the same position that they are now. The minister said at that time — and I quote: “My answer to the member opposite is quite simple: Sorry, but we are working on it.”

Mr. Speaker, what assistance has the government provided to this group in their search for a more permanent home?

Hon. Mr. Graham: Mr. Speaker, I’m not sure that I’m the minister he was speaking about, but at this time, the Health and Social Services department is aware of the difficulty. They’ve been working with the CPNP in Dawson City in an attempt to find them appropriate space.

As the member opposite is perfectly aware, housing is in very short supply in Dawson City at the present time. We have attempted to, first of all, acquire space in the hospital. When that proved not to be fruitful, we also looked at the feasibility of providing space in the new McDonald Lodge facility. However, we’ve also discovered that there isn’t enough of a footprint — there isn’t enough property there to add additional space to provide a permanent space for the program.

We understand that the Canada Prenatal Nutrition Program does extremely good work in Dawson City. We hope it will continue and if we can assist in providing them with housing, we will do so.

Mr. Silver: Yes, it was the Minister of Health and Social Services.

I do appreciate his commitment here today. Mr. Speaker, as you can imagine, it is quite disruptive to service delivery when you are moving every six months. A more permanent home would provide much-needed stability, both for those who use the service and also for those who deliver it.

The minister has provided assurances in the past that the government would try to find long-term accommodation for this group. “We are working on it,” he did say, and it sounds like today that the commitment will continue, but despite those assurances, the CDC is once again on the move and the people using this service are now homeless once again.

The minister and I had discussed options: the new McDonald Lodge, the hospital, the old McDonald Lodge and also Yukon Housing options as well, but all of those options have so far fallen through. So I guess what I’m asking for today is a continued commitment.

Is the government working with the CDC and the prenatal program to find them a new home? Yes or no?

Hon. Mr. Graham: As I said in the first part of the question, yes, we are definitely working with them. Unfortunately, the Department of Health and Social Services doesn’t have any space in Dawson City that we could make available to the prenatal nutrition program.

What we will do besides what we’ve already accomplished is we will work with the Housing Corporation to see if there is any space available through that department. We are also aware that the executive director of the program said this morning on CBC that she also had a couple of good leads. So not only is the department working — I’m sure that the Yukon Housing Corporation will soon be checking their inventory as well — but I know the executive director there is working hard to find space as well. I’m sure that with all of us working we’ll find something.

Question re: Addictions treatment

Ms. Stick: Recently a young Yukoner who has been struggling with drugs and alcohol decided to ask for help and they spoke to their family about wanting to go for treatment. This is great news, Mr. Speaker. The bad news is no residential treatment is available for four months. It will be four months before this youth can have a spot in the residential treatment program, which the website indicates is open to Yukon adults.

What answer does the minister have for this Yukon youth and this family? Does he believe that a four-month delay to access residential treatment and help needed is acceptable?

Hon. Mr. Graham: The preliminary comments were not entirely correct. There is a program beginning in the very near future. The young person in question is number 12 on the list of people who have applied for space in that program. Unfortunately there are only 10 beds. We have kept the young person in question on the list because often there are people who drop out at the very last minute and, if that happens, he will have a seat in the program. Unfortunately, there are 10 beds. It’s not something we can do until the new Sarah Steele Building is completed.

What we have also done is begun conversations with the young person in question to see what alternatives are available to him. The department will be going ahead with those alternatives.

Ms. Stick: In 2011, a young Yukoner who was struggling for years with addiction took his life. His death inspired his friends to petition this government for addiction services and treatment aimed at youth. Six hundred concerned community members signed the petition, which was presented to the Department of Health and Social Services. In January 2012, this story was in the media. The news story stated that the territorial government promised to provide specific addiction programming to youth.

Since that tragic event, what has improved for Yukon youth needing intensive addiction treatment?

Hon. Mr. Graham: The simple answer to that one is the revised Sarah Steele Building — that is on-line and will

begin construction in the very near future. Changes have been made.

Also, huge changes have been made within the addiction services of the department itself. We now have a medically supervised detox. We have added additional staff — I believe it is eight additional staff — to the program. Unfortunately, one of the limiting factors right now is simply space. We don't have enough space to offer the 28-day program on a rotational basis because there aren't enough spaces available in the city for us to rent.

What we are also faced with is doing programs for females only. In other words, there are times when the program is being run for female people who need assistance; therefore, there aren't programs available for the men. We're working very hard to ensure that our 28-day program doesn't have a definite start and end date. We will be implementing that process as soon as we possibly can.

Ms. Stick: The 2012 petition signed by 600 individuals was a collective call for help, and the government has failed to make addictions programming available to Yukon youth in Whitehorse and the communities. How many other youth and families have asked for help, only to be turned away?

Some families with no other recourse have spent tens of thousands of dollars to get appropriate treatment for their sons and daughters outside the Yukon; this because there are no intensive addiction treatment programs for youth under 19. Asking families to pay for outside treatment is not a solution.

Since the government is not providing the needed help here, will this government help send Yukon youth to appropriate programming and treatment outside the Yukon?

Hon. Mr. Graham: I guess first of all, I'm quite surprised I received such a pointed question with respect to a certain individual. I have to respect that individual's privacy. I'm not going to go on at length as to what we are doing with this specific individual. We are making every effort to assist and we will continue to do that, but we also have outreach workers who can deal with people who are in conflict or in crisis situations, so nobody is turned away completely. They may not be able to fit into a specific program at the specific time they need it, and that's unfortunate, but we will provide services through our outreach workers, through our social workers and through other people in the addiction services department. No one is going to be completely turned away. We will work with them and we will provide whatever services we possibly can.

Question re: Oil-fired appliance safety

Ms. Moorcroft: On Tuesday, I asked the Minister of Highways and Public Works a question about the safety of government-owned oil-fired appliances, and he was not very forthcoming.

Many of the safety issues and inconsistencies with oil-fired appliances in the Yukon extend to the oil tanks and oil supply systems that fuel them. Faulty oil tanks and oil supply systems can create a dangerous situation for the public and for

the environment. I have one simple question and I would like one simple answer.

Can the minister assure this House that all heating oil tanks in or on property leased or owned by this government are regularly inspected and are all up to code?

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: I thank the member opposite for the question. Community Services is responsible for the inspection of oil-fired appliances in our Yukon government buildings. Highways and Public Works is responsible for servicing the oil-fired appliances in the buildings. Servicing is performed annually and routine maintenance and proactive care continues.

Servicing and maintenance is performed by qualified Highways and Public Works staff. Qualified individuals are also contracted to perform the work depending on the circumstances. Annual servicing does include filter change, nozzle change, burner set-up and tuning, safety checks, efficiency testing and flame testing.

I know that, especially in rural Yukon, quite often a lot of these guys who are qualified to do this job work in Highways and Public Works should get big kudos from the Yukon public because they spend a lot of time, sometimes in the middle of night, working on these furnaces in cold weather. I have complete faith in the department and in the good work that we do at Highways and Public Works.

Ms. Moorcroft: Once again, the minister did not answer the question.

Rod Corea's Fuel Oil Heating Installation Inspection Report #5 helped to reveal the sad state of oil-fired appliances in Yukon and it highlighted issues with the heating oil tanks. Corea found over 500 infractions on both public and private oil tanks during inspections in both Whitehorse and Haines Junction. Corea's investigation found that these code infractions were not just on old and poorly maintained tanks. In fact, nearly 300 significant infractions were found on oil tanks that had been installed since 2008.

What has the minister done to improve the sad state of oil tank safety that was highlighted in Rod Corea's reports?

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: Of course the Yukon government oil-fired boilers meet all code requirements under the *Boiler and Pressure Vessels Act* and meet all legal requirements. This act requires only ticketed engineers to operate and maintain supervising heating plants. Red seal oil-burner mechanics — and we have debated this in the House before — service the oil-fired boilers and ticketed gas fitters service the gas propane appliances and burners.

As I said before, we inspect on a regular basis. We look at it all — whether it's the appliance, the fuel tank or the fuel lines that go in, they are constantly inspected and have annual servicing. They even do flame tests — I could get into some of the things that they actually have to do on these things when they do their regular tests. They do efficiency testing to make sure that the boiler units are actually running at the maximum efficiency, so that we can reduce our greenhouse gases.

What more can I say?

Ms. Moorcroft: The minister just said that all boilers meet code. He did not answer the question at all about oil tanks and the inspection of oil tanks and supply lines. Perhaps he could provide a legislative return with full information, including the dates and locations and findings of all the inspections that were conducted that indicate that all boilers do meet code.

The safety of the government's oil tanks is a pressing concern, particularly when tanks are situated at sites where Yukoners live and work. Within the last year, there have been serious oil spills at both Macaulay Lodge and the Carcross Community School.

Can the minister assure Yukoners that those spills were not a result of oil tanks — or oil supply systems — that are not up to code?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: It's often very interesting listening to how the NDP chooses to frame issues. In fact, I would remind the member that, in addition to the significant public education campaigns that have been initiated by this government, that the Yukon — through the *Oil-Fired Appliance Safety Statutory Amendment Act* — has modernized our legislation and become the first jurisdiction in the country to require carbon monoxide detectors. We've increased the inspections and increased the resources in the department to do inspections. When it comes to government buildings, what's evident yet again here in the House is that the NDP has a much lower opinion of the competency of government employees than this government does. We have confidence in the good work that they do, and that they are doing their jobs.

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. 69: Act to Amend the Fatal Accidents Act — Third Reading

Clerk: Third reading, Bill No. 69, standing in the name of the Hon. Mr. Nixon.

Hon. Mr. Nixon: I move that Bill No. 69, entitled *Act to Amend the Fatal Accidents Act*, be now read a third time and do pass.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Minister of Justice that Bill No. 69, entitled *Act to Amend the Fatal Accidents Act*, be now read a third time and do pass.

Hon. Mr. Nixon: I'd like to begin by thanking several members of our community for their input into this legislation. I appreciate the comments brought forward by Charles and Sandra Behan, who shared with me their experience of the passing of their daughter. The Behans have made themselves available to meet with us as government and I think we all appreciated having them in the gallery for our second reading in Committee of the Whole debate on Tuesday. I know that they would have liked to have been here

for third reading but had other commitments this afternoon. I do understand that they are planning on being here in the Legislative Assembly for assent this afternoon. I would like to thank them so very much for their contributions.

I would also like to thank Grant Macdonald for sharing his thoughts and perspective. Mr. Macdonald has reached out to government to offer his insights, both on the merits of amending the fatal accidents legislation and on the amendments themselves. We are very grateful for his assistance.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to thank all members of this Assembly for voting unanimously in favour at second reading to advance this bill. I would also like to thank the MLA for Pelly-Nisutlin for his motion on Thursday, October 31, 2013, which stated: "THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to consider amending Yukon's *Fatal Accidents Act* to enable family members of deceased children to pursue actions for bereavement damages."

I believe the member had a connection through his children to the family.

Given that we've already debated this at second reading in Committee of the Whole this week, I'll limit my comments to a brief overview of the bill, but I'd like to reiterate some key points to this bill.

At present, the fatal accidents legislation only permits financial compensation for out-of-pocket expenses. The damages envisioned by the amendments of this bill would apply where a person is killed in an accident caused by the wrongful conduct of another person. The amendments would allow certain close family members the right to claim compensation from the wrongdoer for grief and loss of companionship suffered by the family. This compensation is often referred to as bereavement damages.

The amendments propose that, once a claim is made and the liability of the wrongdoer is established, the amount of compensation would be automatic and there is no requirement for the family members to prove their grief in court. We're also proposing that family members entitled to make a claim include the spouse, parents and children of the deceased. These claims are very common in auto accidents, and most often the damages awarded will be paid by the insurance company of the person found at fault.

There are two parts to the amendments before the House today. I'd like to explain them again, just in a little bit more detail.

As I noted previously, at present the act only allows for damages for out-of-pocket costs such as funeral costs for family members. The first amendment would expand the definition of what expenses family members can claim repayment for, including expenses such as care for the deceased person between the injury and death, travel and accommodation expenses for visiting the deceased person between the injury and death, and grief counselling fees. As noted, these amounts are paid by the person who caused the loss or by his or her insurer.

The second amendment allows close family members to claim damages in amounts fixed in the act from the wrongdoer

who is responsible for the death — again, likely paid for by the insurer.

This issue was brought to our attention after the death of a young person in a car accident south of Whitehorse last year, and, as I mentioned earlier, the family of the deceased, who have been present for our debates, asked us to make the changes so that other families who may go through similar situations will have the ability to receive financial support as they try to get back on their feet. Under this proposal, a family would not have to testify about the grief that they experienced in order to receive compensation.

The proposed amendments are based on Alberta's approach, which provides compensation for close family members only and amounts are fixed in the legislation. Alberta adopted a fixed-dollar approach to provide fair compensation to family members, and they recently raised the amounts for bereavement compensation and their rates remain among the highest on average in Canada.

There is a general trend of increasing compensation in other provinces as well. While Alberta's compensation may be more than other provinces, this is balanced by limiting compensation to only the closest family members. Saskatchewan, for example, provides for a lower fixed amount of compensation but allows a much wider range of family members to be eligible. A true direct comparison of compensation amounts is not possible due to differences in the rules of each jurisdiction. Therefore, Alberta provides the highest award only where there is just one parent of a deceased child.

For Yukon, after examining all of the models, we've decided to propose a compensation scheme that is based on Alberta's example. So we've proposed compensation of \$75,000 for a spouse, \$75,000 for a parent or guardian, which would be split if there are two parents, and \$45,000 for each child. The fundamental advantage of a set statutory amount is that, once a claim is made and liability of the wrongdoer is established, the award is automatic and no testimony or evidence of grief is necessary for the claimant to receive that award.

The underlying concept is that the law should acknowledge the grief and loss of guidance, care and companionship and allow the family members to deal with tragedy without the intrusion of litigation. As I stated before, no amount of money can fully compensate a family for their grief and loss of a loved one, so setting an amount for damages is not easy.

These damages are not a measure of the value of loss of life. They are meant to give recognition to the seriousness of the family's loss and compensation for grief and loss suffered by the surviving family. Thus the amount must balance a number of factors. It must be large enough to be meaningful to the person receiving it; it must be empathetic; it must be justifiable within the context of existing damages made in other areas of the law and across Canada. It must also take into account that, with a set amount, some survivors may be overcompensated while others may be undercompensated

when the specific circumstances of each case are taken into consideration.

It must be re-emphasized that an automatic amount is meant to save the family the stress and aggravation of litigation.

As mentioned, the cost of compensating surviving family members for grief is paid by the wrongdoer, which is often covered by the wrongdoer's insurer, when the death results from a motor-vehicle collision or other incident with that insurance coverage.

Insurance coverage in Yukon is often provided by insurers that also offer coverage in Alberta and Saskatchewan. The government consulted with insurance providers that offer policies here in our territory. The insurance companies are comfortable with fixed amounts for bereavement damages because they often administer similar claims in provinces that also have fixed damages for bereavement set in legislation.

Insurance rates in Yukon are either based on the rates applied to the pool of customers in the company's home province or on a broader pool of customers throughout Canada. Past experience shows that there are very few eligible fatal accidents in our territory — sometimes none.

The government has recognized that there may be varied options among Yukoners about which family members should be compensated in which amounts.

In closing, I would like to thank everyone who has been involved in these amendments as they have moved forward and thank the Member for Pelly-Nisutlin for bringing the motion forward last fall.

Ms. Moorcroft: As I indicated at second reading, the Official Opposition supports this bill amending the *Fatal Accidents Act*.

Bereavement damages can never compensate for the loss of a loved one in a fatal accident. We extend sympathy to all family members who have lost a loved one in a fatal accident.

We did raise the issue during debate at second reading and in Committee of kinship in the Yukon. Often in Yukon, grandparents or others are the primary caregivers and they should have been included in the compensation section of the bill in our view. Nevertheless, the fact that close family members can now claim damages in the amounts fixed in the act will ease the burden on grieving families. We support the *Act to Amend the Fatal Accidents Act*.

Mr. Silver: Thank you to department staff for being here earlier this week and for their work on this bill. As I stated in our second reading, this legislation is a much-needed update to the current act and brings Yukon in line with almost all of Canadian provinces and puts us ahead of the two other territories. I will absolutely be supporting this bill as I feel that it is in the best interest for Yukon families.

Speaker: If the member now speaks, he will close debate. Does any other member wish to be heard?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: I just want to reiterate my appreciation for all members of this Legislative Assembly in support of these amendments and thank those who have been involved, thank the family members in particular for coming forward and being so forthright to have these discussions with me, and thank the Member for Pelly-Nisutlin for bringing the motion forward in the fall.

Speaker: Are you prepared for the question?

Some Hon. Members: Division.

Division

Speaker: Division has been called.

Bells

Speaker: Mr. Clerk, please poll the House.

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Agree.

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Graham: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Kent: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Nixon: Agree.

Ms. McLeod: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Agree.

Mr. Hassard: Agree.

Mr. Elias: Agree.

Ms. Hanson: Agree.

Ms. Stick: Agree.

Ms. Moorcroft: Agree.

Ms. White: Agree.

Mr. Tredger: Agree.

Mr. Barr: Agree.

Mr. Silver: Agree.

Clerk: Mr. Speaker, the results are 18 yeas, nil nays.

Speaker: The yeas have it. I declare the motion carried.

Motion for third reading of Bill No. 69 agreed to

Speaker: I declare that Bill No. 69 has passed this House.

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

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

Motion agreed to

Speaker leaves the Chair

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

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

The matter before the Committee is Vote No. 54, Department of Tourism and Culture in Bill No. 14, *First Appropriation Act, 2014-15*.

Do members wish a brief recess?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

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

Recess

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

Bill No. 14: *First Appropriation Act, 2014-15* — continued

Chair: The matter before the Committee is Vote No. 54, Department of Tourism and Culture.

Department of Tourism and Culture — continued

On Cultural Services — continued

On Operation and Maintenance Expenditures — continued

On Archives — continued

Hon. Mr. Nixon: It's an honour again to rise to debate Tourism and Culture's 2014-15 main estimates.

I would like to begin this afternoon with a comment about the tourism town hall that is being held in Whitehorse today — a partnership effort between the Tourism Industry Association of Canada — known as TIAC — and the Canadian Tourism Commission, the federal government's tourism promotion organization. TIAC is the national equivalent of our own TIAY. The president and CEO of TIAC is David Goldstein, who is in Whitehorse for the town hall session.

The Yukon tourism industry has been seeing a lot of positive data of late. Data from the Yukon visitor tracking program, from border crossing statistics, and from the 2013 Yukon business survey all confirm that tourism in Yukon is enjoying a period of growth with a clear and steady upward trend in visitation and tourism-generated revenue for Yukon businesses. This is excellent news for the tourism industry, the economy and Yukon as a whole. This is being recognized outside the Yukon by people such as David Goldstein. Mr. Goldstein commented on CBC this morning that he continues to be impressed with the work of Tourism Yukon. Moreover, he stated that if Canada had 13 Tourism Yukons, it would make his job — and his industry's job — much easier. This is a fantastic testament to the hard work and success of both the Department of Tourism and Culture and the Yukon tourism industry. I'm very, very proud to be standing here today representing both.

Of course the TIAC and CTC town hall is part of the program of TIAY's 2014 spring conference and AGM. I am looking forward to addressing the industry on Friday morning and the agenda for the next two days is full of very valuable sessions. This conference will be an opportunity to reflect on

the great year the tourism industry had last year, and to look forward to a promising future.

Of particular interest will be the Yukon tourism awards of excellence, sponsored by OTC, to be presented on Saturday night. There is always good representation from among the members of the Legislature at the TIAY conference. It is great for members to be engaged in tourism and to show their support. I look forward to seeing some of you at the conference over the next couple of days.

The other day when we resumed debate, I spoke about what has been taking place with the tourism side of the Department of Tourism and Culture; today I want to focus a little bit more on the culture side.

One of the most important activities of the Cultural Services branch is the designation and preservation of historic sites. Members will recall the exceptional underwater archeological discovery of the *A.J. Goddard* sternwheeler in Lake Laberge in 2008. Following that discovery, I had the honour of presiding over a ceremony honouring the official designation of the *A.J. Goddard* as a Yukon historical site last August.

Last year we also saw the official designation of the Watson Lake Sign Post Forest as a Yukon historic site. I am looking forward to a community event in Watson Lake in June of this year to unveil the commemorative signage that will be another momentous occasion for historic preservation in our territory.

Chair: Mr. Nixon, I wish to remind you that we are in line-by-line debate on Archives and not in general debate on Cultural Services.

Mr. Barr: Thank you, Madam Chair. We can just move right into line-by-line debate. I would like to first welcome the officials back.

Some Hon. Member: (inaudible)

Chair: I apologize to Mr. Silver. I had talked to the others. We are on page 17-7. We are in line-by-line debate, discussing Archives, \$1,534,000.

Chair: Mr. Barr, do you have any questions for Mr. Nixon?

Mr. Barr: May I have a breakdown on Archives?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: The Yukon Archives acquires, preserves and makes available documentary sources related to our territory. The Archives reference room is open to the public and copy services are available there. This line item is \$1,534,000. \$1,402,000 is for personnel; \$123,000 is for other.

Of that, there is: travel in and out of the territory; contracting for records; digitization and conservation; library, archival and storage, program materials; public programs; advertising; printing; rentals; postage; memberships; and supplies to facilitate records preservation. Madam Chair, there is also \$9,000 for Friends of the Yukon Archives Society.

Mr. Silver: Thank you, Madam Chair. Sorry, I wasn't sure about the lines. I did have a question about the Yukon Beringia Interpretive Centre if I can go back to that line.

Unanimous consent re revisiting the line, Yukon Beringia Interpretive Centre

Chair: In order to return to a previous line, we will need unanimous consent.

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Some Hon. Members: Disagreed.

Chair: Unanimous consent has not been granted.

Archives in the amount of \$1,534,000 agreed to
Cultural Services Operation and Maintenance
Expenditures in the amount of \$10,735,000 agreed to

On Capital Expenditures

On Heritage Resources — Prior Years' Projects

Heritage Resources — Prior Years' Projects in the amount of nil cleared

On Historic Sites — Historic Sites Maintenance

Mr. Barr: Can the minister explain why there is a \$45,000 increase in this?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: The increase of \$45,000 from the 2013-14 estimates to the 2014-15 estimates is related to the capital purchase to replace the 30-year-old boat currently being used by the program.

Mr. Barr: I was not able to hear the last part of the answer. Could the minister repeat that please?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: It is to replace a 30-year-old boat that is used by the program.

Historic Sites — Historic Sites Maintenance in the amount of \$145,000 agreed to

On Historic Sites — Fort Selkirk

Mr. Barr: Can the minister speak on what is being done with the erosion of the bank? We were down there last year and there is quite a bit of work going on. Is that included in this budget line?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: There aren't any funds in the spring budget for the erosion component of Fort Selkirk. This has been a work in progress so we're evaluating this spring to see what work needs to be done. We will be looking at potentially doing some work this year in that area.

Mr. Tredger: The Fort Selkirk historic site is accessed via the Pelly River Ranch road, which is deteriorating quite a bit. Has the Minister of Tourism and Culture lobbied the Minister of Highways and Public Works for an upgrade to that road? A fair amount of traffic goes over that to service the Fort Selkirk site. Is the minister aware of the concerns and is anything being done?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: It has been a few years since I have been down that road, but this is the first time I'm hearing of any recent concerns on that road.

Mr. Barr: I would also like to inquire about the new roofing material on one of the buildings. When I was there, it was pointed out that the metal sheeting was not in line with the period of time. Is that a move by Tourism and Culture in the maintenance to have that difference?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: The materials there are not original but they are brought in to look as close to original as possible.

There is \$141,000 in this budget for a contribution agreement with the Selkirk First Nation. That money is for restoration, maintenance and interpretation.

Historic Sites — Fort Selkirk in the amount of \$166,000 agreed to

On Historic Sites — Historic Sites Planning

Mr. Barr: Can I get what that entails please?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: These funds provide research, analysis and plan design support for historic site conservation and development. Our work this year will focus on heritage sites in the Southern Lakes region.

Mr. Tredger: This is of particular interest to many of the people in my area. What plans are there to engage local people in the development and identification of new sites?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: There is a process laid out in the *Historic Resources Act* where community members can dialogue with the Department of Tourism and Culture and bring forward any recommendations or ideas pertaining to new historic site designations.

Mr. Tredger: So the process would be for community members to identify the sites and then go to the Department of Tourism and Culture or is it a co-managed kind of situation?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: Those discussions can be reciprocal, so it could be a community coming forward and speaking to the department or, if the department was aware of one in the community, the department could always reach out to that community.

Mr. Tredger: The reason I ask is that a number of people have asked for how the process works to be identified and they have ideas about that. Is there a particular position within the department that I can advise them to contact?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: The member opposite is welcome to go on-line on to the department's website and just follow the links to the historic sites.

Historic Sites — Historic Sites Planning in the amount of \$25,000 agreed to

On Historic Sites — Interpretation and Signage

Mr. Barr: Could the minister inform the House if some of this signage will be put towards — the Southern Lakes loop, the sign that used to be there, is no longer there. Is that going to be reintroduced to help travellers explore that site?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: These funds in particular provide for interpretation of Yukon heritage through various media, including live programming, exhibits, publication, websites, film and signage.

Work will focus on heritage trails and sites and other points of interest, but the Department of Tourism and Culture continues to be engaged with the Department of Highways and Public Works to look for other opportunities throughout the territory.

Historic Sites — Interpretation and Signage in the amount of \$70,000 agreed to

On Historic Sites — Rampart House

Mr. Elias: Can I get a breakdown of that please?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: I'd like to thank the member for his question. This project of \$60,000 provides funding for Rampart House historic site preservation, management, development and interpretation. Work will continue to focus on stabilization of the Anglican mission buildings in that area

Mr. Elias: I would like to thank the minister for that response.

Historic Sites — Rampart House in the amount of \$60,000 agreed to

On Historic Sites — Forty Mile

Historic Sites — Forty Mile in the amount of \$91,000 agreed to

On Historic Sites — Yukon Sawmill

Historic Sites — Yukon Sawmill in the amount of \$30,000 agreed to

On Historic Sites — Heritage Trails

Mr. Barr: Could I get a breakdown of what this entails?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: This \$40,000 provides funding for research planning, improvement and development of heritage trails in the territory.

Historic Sites — Heritage Trails in the amount of \$40,000 agreed to

On Museums — Military and Industrial Artifact Assessment

Museums — Military and Industrial Artifact Assessment in the amount of \$50,000 agreed to

On Museums — Museums — Capital Maintenance

Museums — Museums — Capital Maintenance in the amount of \$185,000 agreed to

On Museums — Beringia Exhibits Renewal

Mr. Silver: Could I get a breakdown of that number please?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: This funding is for planning and design of existing and future exhibits, so the increase of \$200,000 from the 2013-14 estimate to the 2014-15 estimate is a result of new project funding.

Mr. Silver: I think that is pretty obvious. I am just wondering why the government — on top of this number, the increase to Beringia's budget was 15 percent from \$383,000 to \$442,000 this year. We look at a lot of money being spent on Beringia specifically, yet the other 19 community museums have not received any additional funding.

Can the minister please let me know what his reasoning is for that?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: The department recognizes the important role that Yukon Beringia Interpretive Centre plays in educating the public on our ice age past. It also functions as a community centre. The Beringia Centre has issued two contracts totalling \$161,500 for the upgrades to the centre's aging theatre audio-visual systems and theatre seating. The Beringia Centre was provided with \$50,000 from the Cultural Spaces Canada fund as part of the federal government's economic action plan to assist with the project.

The Government of Yukon also acknowledges the important role of museums and First Nation cultural heritage centres in protecting, preserving and interpreting Yukon's

heritage. The department provides over \$1.17 million annually in operation and maintenance funding to 19 museums and cultural centres and one umbrella organization. Following a request made by the museums community at the museums round table last fall, the Museums unit is currently researching options for improving how existing O&M funding and project funding and infrastructure funding is allocated throughout the number of museums in the territory.

The Government of Yukon also recognizes the social and economic importance of preserving and presenting First Nation heritage and culture. The department works in partnership with Yukon First Nations to help turn our shared vision for cultural and heritage centres into a reality. This year the department is providing over \$500,000 to directly support operations and programs at seven Yukon First Nation cultural heritage centres.

Mr. Silver: Once again, if the minister can walk us through how they decide which museums get increases and which do not — that's the focus of the question — seeing as how Beringia Centre has been given a 15-percent increase, yet the other 19 community museums have not received any additional funding.

Hon. Mr. Nixon: For the member opposite, with the museums throughout the territory, there are four levels of funding that the museums can apply for, depending on the size of the museum. There is also special project funding that museums can apply for as well, on top of the core funding that they get.

Museums — Beringia Exhibits Renewal in the amount of \$200,000 agreed to

On Museums — Prior Years' Projects

Museums — Prior Years' Projects in the amount of nil cleared

On Visual Arts — Visual Arts Acquisition

Visual Arts — Visual Arts Acquisition in the amount of \$25,000 agreed to

On Visual Arts — Visual Arts Maintenance

Visual Arts — Visual Arts Maintenance in the amount of \$13,000 agreed to

On Arts and Cultural Development — Art Collection Storage

Arts and Cultural Development — Art Collection Storage in the amount of one dollar agreed to

On Arts and Cultural Development — Yukon Arts Centre

Mr. Silver: Can I get a breakdown of that number please?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: We are speaking about the \$151,000 for the Yukon Arts Centre, and that's funding for capital maintenance projects — upgrades to the fire alarm panel and theatre curtain replacement.

Arts and Cultural Development — Yukon Arts Centre in the amount of \$151,000 agreed to

On Archives — Archives Vault Expansion

Mr. Barr: What is the timeline for the construction of the Archives and who has designed it?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: For the member opposite, it hasn't gone out to RFP yet, so it wouldn't be reasonable for me to comment on a timeline as of yet.

Archives — Archives Vault Expansion in the amount of \$879,000 agreed to

On Archives — Archives Preservation Projects

Archives — Archives Preservation Projects in the amount of \$25,000 agreed to

On Archives — Archives Building Maintenance

Archives — Archives Building Maintenance in the amount of \$185,000 agreed to

On Archives — Prior Years' Projects

Archives — Prior Years' Projects in the amount of nil cleared

Cultural Services Capital Expenditures in the amount of \$2,340,000 agreed to

Cultural Services Total Expenditures in the amount of \$13,075,000 agreed to

Chair: On to page 17-14.

On Tourism

On Operation and Maintenance Expenditures

On Directorate

Directorate in the amount of \$343,000 agreed to

On Industry Services

Mr. Barr: Can I get a breakdown on this?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: Industry services unit supports tourism industry development and provides educational opportunities that help businesses and entrepreneurs grow their operations to meet today's visitor needs and expectations. It does this through product and experience development programs and participation in planning and development processes. The unit conducts market and consumer research, data analysis and provides client services, which assist in capacity development of businesses and organizations and assist operators in developing products, experiences and services.

So the breakdown of \$1,866,000 would be \$518,000 for personnel; \$294,000 for other expenditures — so that is the travel for in and out of territory, contracts, program materials, supplies and so on. There is \$1,054,000 for government transfers for product development partnership programs, First Nation Tourism Industry Association of Yukon and tourism cooperative marketing fund.

Industry Services in the amount of \$1,866,000 agreed to

On Marketing Operations

Mr. Barr: Can I have a breakdown of this?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: Prior to the breakdown, I want to extend my sincere appreciation to both my department officials who have joined me on the floor of the Legislature to go through the budget here today.

The Marketing Operations breakdown — and I have to commend the marketing unit for the exceptional work that they have been doing over the last number of years. I think all of us in the Legislative Assembly see that their good work is clearly paying off.

There is \$1,089,000 for personnel; there is \$3,684,000 for other expenditures, which covers travel in and out of the

territory for community tours, marketplaces, sales calls and familiarization tours. There are funds in there for consumer trade and media relations; marketing programs in Canada, the U.S. and overseas; program material supplies; registrations, memberships and other expenses; and their postage and freight for distribution of printed materials.

There are funds in there for development of all digital initiatives including websites, electronic marketing and social media. There is \$1,049,000 in government transfers, which would include cooperative marketing agreements, funds for WTAY, for the Convention Bureau, for the state of Alaska, for Yukon Quest, for Tourism North, and for sport tourism through Sport Yukon.

Marketing Operations in the amount of \$5,822,000 agreed to

On Visitor Services

Mr. Barr: I would like to hear what that is about.

Hon. Mr. Nixon: While we are talking about this, I want to give a shout out to all of the staff, both year-round staff and temporary staff who work at the visitor information centres across Yukon providing our visitors with some really good information on roads and accommodations and sites to see.

The breakdown of the \$1,872,000 is as follows: there is \$1,564,000 for personnel; \$208,000 for other expenditures — so travel in Yukon, including the cost for the distribution vehicle and the staff training.

There are contract services for the VIC and the photography unit. There are visitor information centre lease costs, as well as communication repairs, audio-visual equipment, visitor information centre supplies and program materials, as well as government transfers of \$100,000 for the Stay Another Day funding program and the Yukon Sourdough Rendezvous.

Visitor Services in the amount of \$1,872,000 agreed to

Tourism Operation and Maintenance Expenditures in the amount of \$9,903,000 agreed to

On Capital Expenditures

On Visitor Information Centres — Capital Maintenance and Upgrades

Visitor Information Centres — Capital Maintenance and Upgrades in the amount of \$130,000 agreed to

On Travel Equipment, Displays and Productions — Purchase and Maintenance of Displays

Travel Equipment, Displays and Productions — Purchase and Maintenance of Displays in the amount of \$20,000 agreed to

On Marketing North America — Digital Development

Marketing North America — Digital Development in the amount of \$200,000 agreed to

On Special Initiatives — Banners

Mr. Silver: Can I get a breakdown of that number please?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: Those are for the banners that we see throughout the territory. They get replaced every second year.

Mr. Silver: How many banners are we talking about here?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: There are a lot of banners.

Mr. Silver: I can appreciate that. It's a big number. We're wondering if he can give us the number of how many that would be — a rough estimate would be fine.

Hon. Mr. Nixon: I don't have a rough estimate, but the member opposite is welcome to drive throughout the territory this summer and count them.

Mr. Silver: This is a question that has been forwarded to me from people who are very concerned about the number of banners and the money that is being spent on them. If I could ask for a return and the minister can provide that number for me — as opposed to some kind of answer about me driving around the communities — that would be much appreciated.

Some Hon. Member: (inaudible)

Mr. Silver: I would like to put on the record that the minister has refused to answer the question.

Hon. Mr. Nixon: I answered the question.

Special Initiatives — Banners in the amount of \$75,000 agreed to

Tourism Capital Expenditures in the amount of \$425,000 agreed to

Tourism Total Expenditures in the amount of \$10,328,000 agreed to

On Revenues

Revenues cleared

On Government Transfers

Government Transfers cleared

On Changes in Tangible Capital Assets and Amortization

Change in Tangible Capital Assets and Amortization cleared

Department of Tourism and Culture agreed to

Chair: We are going to move on to Department of Energy, Mines and Resources, Vote 53, resuming general debate.

Committee of the Whole will recess for 10 minutes while we await officials.

Recess

Chair: Committee of the Whole will now come to order. We are resuming general debate in Vote 53, Department of Energy, Mines and Resources. Mr. Kent has the floor.

Department of Energy, Mines and Resources — continued

Hon. Mr. Kent: I would just like to welcome back Deputy Minister Komaromi and director of finance, Ross McLachlan who are again providing support here as EMR officials for debate this afternoon.

Just before I begin, I wanted to make a couple of statements with respect to issues that transpired during debate last week on Energy, Mines and Resources as well as an issue

that came up in Question Period yesterday raised by the Member for Klondike.

The Member for Klondike was asking about the Yukon Energy LNG project during Question Period yesterday. During Committee of the Whole on Tourism and Culture, I provided him with a copy of the opening statement made by the Yukon Energy Corporation in the matter of the Yukon Utilities Board review, as directed by the Minister of Justice, of an application by Yukon Energy Corporation under part 3 of the *Public Utilities Act* for an energy project certificate and an energy operation certificate regarding the proposed Whitehorse diesel to natural gas conversion project.

Obviously, there is quite a bit of information in the opening statement. It is almost 10 pages long. Once the Member for Klondike has an opportunity to review that opening statement and if questions persist about the LNG project, I certainly welcome a letter from the member opposite or a question that I can refer to the Yukon Energy Corporation to get back to him with any specifics that he may have with respect to the project itself as well as any of the costs and effects on rates that the Yukon Energy Corporation made in their opening statement to the Yukon Utilities Board during the public part of the hearing.

During Committee of the Whole on Tourism and Culture, I also provided the Member for Mayo-Tatchun with a couple of letters during debate on April 14 and April 8. There were questions raised by the member opposite with respect to Mount Nansen remediation. I'll just read a couple of the questions for the record, and then again I have provided a written response to the member to help inform debate either today or, if Energy, Mines and Resources doesn't clear today, perhaps another day or in Question Period for the balance of this sitting.

The first question was: What is the timeline for the Mount Nansen cleanup and final closure to be completed?

I provided a number of dates in this letter, including the estimated finish date of 2021 and work that started in June 2012 and has continued through to what we expect will be a submission of the remediation project proposal to the Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Board in December 2014. That assessment is anticipated to take 12 to 18 months to complete.

In early 2016, we are anticipating processing of the water licence application to the Yukon Water Board, and that water licensing phase is expected to take six months. In late 2016: preparation of the construction tender packages for implementation of the remediation plan. 2017: construction begins and is anticipated to take four to five years, as I have mentioned previously in debate. Then, perhaps as early as 2021: pre-construction monitoring and adaptation of the remediated site begins and is expected to continue for a number of years.

The second question that I answered in this response to the member opposite was: What is the status of the contaminated mine site at Mount Nansen? I won't go into details. Obviously it is contained in the letter and I do believe that I have answered previously that the site is currently under

care and maintenance. While design of the remediation plan is under development, care and maintenance services are provided by Denison Environmental Services, which was awarded the contract in April 2012 after a public procurement process.

The final question was: Is, and where is, the sampling data for Mount Nansen available to the public? The answer to the member opposite is that water sampling data for the Mount Nansen site is available directly from Assessment and Abandoned Mines. Also, we endeavour to make data related to the remediation design and ongoing monitoring directly available to Little Salmon-Carmacks First Nation in an appropriate format. That is a brief synopsis, Madam Chair, of the letter with respect to debate on Mount Nansen remediation.

I would also like to touch on the second letter that I sent the member opposite with respect to type 2 planning and closure. The first question, from debate on April 14 was: Are the closure plans available to the public and for public consultation? The response in the case of Faro was that a draft conceptual level closure plan was submitted to Canada and Yukon in 2010. In its generation, significant consultation occurred with First Nations, local communities, NGOs and federal and territorial government departments. Following submission, the draft conceptual plan went through extensive independent peer review and was the subject of presentations and discussions with Selkirk First Nation, Ross River Dena Council, Liard First Nation and the Town of Faro. CH2M Hill was awarded the detailed design contract in the fall of 2011 after an open and public procurement process and is leading the further development of design. That's just a brief summary of the answer with respect to that question. A more detailed answer I did send to the member opposite in the letter.

Regarding the Mount Nansen site, there was another question from the member opposite: While we're waiting for permitting after such an extensive time for getting to this stage, can the minister assure the public that all water leaving the site is being treated and that there is nothing going into the groundwater that is untreated? Further he asked: Is the water sampling and data available to the public in a transparent manner so that people living in the area can have access to it?

In repose, in the letter, I said that it's worth noting that due to improvements in overall water quality, water discharged from the Mount Nansen mine site has not required active treatment since 2005. At this time, water quality is closely monitored and reported to Little Salmon-Carmacks First Nation in Canada. In addition, requests for data made by other interested parties are dealt with an as- and when-needed basis.

One of the final questions asked by the member opposite was with respect to how much money the Yukon government has spent on behalf of the Government of Canada getting to this stage in the 10 years of implementation. He referenced specifically Mount Nansen as well as the costs of Faro and Clinton Creek. I did provide in the letter to the member opposite project expenditures to date with respect to those three projects as well as the total of the three. It should be

noted that Yukon government's expenditure at type 2 sites since 2004 does not represent the entire amount expended against each project. In the case of Faro, up to 2008, the majority of project expenses for care and maintenance activities and site investigations/design flowed from Canada through the interim receiver.

In 2009, on discharge of the receivership, Yukon took over lead responsibility for ongoing care and maintenance and development of an overall remediation plan. The monies received by Yukon for the Faro project increased accordingly at that time, and the member opposite will be able to see that by referencing the table that was provided in the letter.

In closing the letter, I invited the member — if he would like copies of specific reports or data sets — that I would be happy to instruct staff and officials to make these available, on request.

Before we get back into questions from members opposite, at the close of debate on April 14 — I believe that was the last time we were in Energy, Mines and Resources — there were some questions specific to the Onek 400 adit and the water treatment facility at the Keno Hill silver district mine.

In a letter that I sent the member opposite April 8 and tabled in the Legislative Assembly, I think it just bears repeating that the Onek 400 adit is part of the historic liabilities in the Keno district, and these liabilities are the responsibility of the federal government — the Government of Canada — as described under the devolution transfer agreement. An agreement between Canada and the Elsa Reclamation and Development Company — ERDC — is in place to allow ERDC to conduct the reclamation on Canada's behalf. The important part is that, during the water licence public commenting phase for the care and maintenance licence amendment, Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada — or AANDC — stated that the water treatment system was not needed to protect human health and the environment at this time and thus should not be a requirement of the care and maintenance licence. Further, the Yukon Water Board agreed that the construction of a water treatment plant at Onek 400 was not required, but authorized it in the future if necessary.

It's important to remember that the historic Onek workings were developed in the 1950s. Water discharging from the 400 adit has been elevated in cadmium and zinc for many decades — as I mentioned — as the member opposite I think referenced during debate on the 14th. The water discharges directly to ground and the groundwater flows are away from the community of Keno City as confirmed recently by a groundwater study conducted by Alexco.

ERDC is currently authorized to discharge untreated waste water from the Onek 400 adit, as long as all discharges are to ground or to drainages that report to ground. If the wastewater treatment system at Onek 400 begins to operate, ERDC will no longer be permitted to discharge untreated wastewater from the adit.

Again, just to reiterate that the federal government Department of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development,

as well as the Yukon Water Board, determined that that water treatment facility was not needed at this time.

With that, I look forward to further questions from members opposite.

Mr. Tredger: I thank the minister for his letters and his answers. I would reiterate that these are important matters of public concern. The minister has provided answers to most of my questions, and I much appreciate that. However, I just received them and I haven't had an opportunity to go through them, so you may not get your follow-up questions today — hopefully, or maybe not hopefully, EMR lasts past today, depending on how you look at it.

I will have further questions on a cursory glance. The other aspect to that is that I raised the issue in the Legislature. I believe the Member for Klondike also raised his issues in the Legislature, and I would ask that, when responding to issues raised in the Legislature, the minister ensure that all members of the Assembly receive copies of the correspondence. I know the Member for Klondike and I are interested in all the questions that are asked, and many of our questions are related, so it would be important that, when answers are given in written form, they are tabled in the House so everyone has access to them.

I thought I'd begin today on just a slightly different area of Energy, Mines and Resources. Agriculture has been something that's critical to the future food security development of the Yukon, so I would like to ask a number of questions around that. I see the policy of agriculture is to provide policy and program support to enhance productivity, profitability and sustainability of the agriculture industry.

As we heard all members of the House say last week in the debate on food opportunities in the Yukon, we do have a wonderful opportunity here in the Yukon to build a growing, sustainable and viable food industry, one that nourishes and sustains our citizens, provides us jobs and economic opportunities and diversifies our economy.

However, we are limited by topography and social conditions where we can grow food. In the past, many agricultural leases were released or were awarded. Does the minister have a breakdown of how much agricultural land has been allocated, and how much of the allocated land and leased land is in production that is either actually growing food or creating an agricultural product?

Hon. Mr. Kent: Absolutely I am happy to provide copies of the correspondence that I sent to the Member for Mayo-Tatchun, as well as the Member for Klondike. I know there were separate pieces of correspondence, but I wanted to ensure that those members had that — in as close to debate on Energy, Mines and Resources as I possibly could. I just received those today.

I will instruct my executive assistant to provide copies of both pieces to both parties, rather than table it and provide it to all members. I trust that will meet what the member opposite is looking for, as far as copies, as long as they are provided to both Opposition parties.

When it comes to agriculture, absolutely, our government and the previous Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, as

well as myself, are keenly interested in ensuring that we promote agriculture and the opportunities for that industry to continue to grow and provide local food to Yukoners and increase the opportunities for local food to be available in the markets. Again, when we look back to the 2011 Yukon Party election platform, “Moving Forward Together,” there were five specific bullets with respect to promoting agriculture.

The first was to: “Work with farmers and industry associations including the Yukon Agriculture Association and the Growers of Organic Food Yukon to implement the Yukon Agriculture Multi-Year Development Plan with the goal being “to increase and sustain production, sales, and profitability in the Yukon agricultural and agri-food industry.”

I know the previous minister was very keen and active with respect to the agriculture industry and, since taking over the portfolio this past August, I personally have had the opportunity to meet with several farmers and farm groups, including the Growers of Organic Food Yukon, as well as looking forward to attending the Yukon Agricultural Association annual general meeting on Saturday, May 3, of this year. I, along with several members of the Legislature, had the pleasure of attending events, such as the agriculture banquet last fall. I met personally with the Agricultural Planning Advisory Committee at a meeting that was held this past February.

Madam Chair, when it comes to land dispositions for agriculture, obviously that’s something that’s extremely important to the industry and important to the government. There are a number of current agricultural land initiatives that are underway, including planning in the Golden Horn area. One non-soil-based lot is being planned for Gentian Lane. In the Hamlet of Mount Lorne, there are four to 10 non-soil-based lots planned for the McGowan lands. There are a number of other planned agriculture lot sales being offered in Upper Liard, as demand occurs. There’s work on directed spot land application areas taking place in both Na Cho Nyäk Dun and Selkirk traditional territories to meet anticipated future demand, with the cooperation of local First Nations.

Since 2002, approximately 90 spot agriculture applications have been approved. There have been a number of land sales that I could perhaps summarize that go back as far as 1982, up to January 1, 2014.

Sold and titled lands equal 13,565 hectares, or 33,505 acres. Approximately 342 parcels are involved there, the average size being 40 hectares. There are currently 60 agreements for sale for agricultural land. Land sales are predominantly in the Whitehorse area, with over 70 percent of agriculture lands within 60 kilometres of the City of Whitehorse.

There are a number of other aspects with reclamation of over 290 acres of farmland, looking at our support for the Fireweed Community Market in Whitehorse and other community gardens and greenhouse projects in communities like Old Crow, Carcross, Carmacks, Pelly Crossing, Dawson City and Haines Junction. There are a number of initiatives underway that this government has committed to and has mentioned during last Wednesday’s debate — about a week ago yesterday — with respect to a motion brought forward by

the Member for Klondike. We continue to look for other opportunities to assist local farmers in increasing their share of the local market when it comes to providing their goods to local stores and restaurants.

I know that during debate last week we did talk about the increase in agricultural Yukon-grown products that are on the shelves of our grocery stores and in our restaurants. I think that’s a real testament to the industry and what they are providing to Yukoners.

Growing up here in the 1970s and 1980s to now what we have in the Yukon on our grocery store shelves has been a tremendous improvement for local products. Through the development of a Yukon-grown food policy that we also committed to, we are looking to significantly increase the production and use of locally grown vegetables, meats and food products.

Like all members of the House, I am excited about the opportunities that exist within our agricultural sector, and look forward to its continued growth.

Mr. Tredger: I thank the minister for his answer.

Is there any plan to conduct an audit of agricultural land to ensure that land designated for agricultural purposes has remained or will remain as designated, and any land obtained under these auspices remain under production? Are we going to audit and release that?

Hon. Mr. Kent: There are no plans at this time to audit the disposition of agricultural lands. When I spoke earlier, giving the summary of land sales from 1982 to January 2014, many of those agreements were done in a pre-devolution era, so obviously the Yukon government has been in control of this process post-devolution.

While I say there are no plans to audit the disposition of agricultural lands, perhaps it is something we could consider with respect to the post-devolution aspects — the last 10 or so years since we’ve been in charge of land disposition in the territory.

Mr. Tredger: I would encourage that. I know the Agriculture branch is working hard to get farming land into the hands of farmers, and anything we can do to assure the public that farming land is, indeed, being used for farming land or agricultural land, would provide social licence to do so.

One of the challenges facing our agricultural community, many of whom are small-scale farmers — and we’re looking to the next generation of farmers to take control or become involved — is the cost of purchasing land and beginning operations, which is becoming increasingly expensive. I know in discussions around agricultural ideas, there has been talk of incubator farms to encourage new or potentially new farmers to almost apprentice in farming. What is the government doing to ensure that the next generation of agricultural people can afford to get on to land, especially I guess right now in the Whitehorse area, but eventually into more of the outlying areas? Is there any program in place that would assist potential farmers getting into the industry?

Hon. Mr. Kent: We certainly recognize some of the challenges that younger farmers or individuals who are

looking to break into the industry have with respect to the price of land. I know that department officials — and I've heard that personally as well and I'm sure that the previous minister has heard about the cost of getting into farming. When it comes to the price of land, we are looking at a number of different options, including perhaps some options for leasing, which may provide a more affordable way for young Yukon farmers to get into the industry. Again, there are a number of aspects that we are looking at, but obviously ensuring that we can provide more farmland for soil-based and non-soil-based farming is incredibly important. Yes, we are looking at some options and working with the Yukon Agricultural Association and Yukon Young Farmers to try to make that initial investment more affordable for them when they're trying to break into the agriculture industry.

Mr. Tredger: We can learn from other jurisdictions that have designated certain areas as agricultural and have them remain agricultural, so that the potential buyers do not have to compete what we would call a "country residential" market.

At one point, the Stewart River Valley, the Pelly Valley and the Yukon River Valley were the breadbasket of the Yukon, and there is much potential there.

They are far from the market, or a long way from the Whitehorse market right now, so that poses a challenge. Has there been any mapping done of potentially fertile areas or areas that are potentially valuable for agricultural purposes, and have there been any discussions with First Nations — with land use planning — to ensure that such areas are set aside for potential agricultural development?

Hon. Mr. Kent: As I mentioned in a previous response with respect to the traditional territories of Na Cho Nyäk Dun and Selkirk First Nation, there has been work on directed spot land application areas taking place to meet anticipated future demand with the cooperation with those local First Nations. I would assume that those areas would take into account the Stewart River valley as well as the Pelly River valley that the member opposite referenced.

When it comes to overall planning for agricultural subdivisions, a lot of that gets covered off in local area plans as well as regional land use plans, so that is all being managed through the land development program that we have. We are continually looking to balance off land uses and ensure that we can continue to grow the amount of land available to our Yukon farmers and, as I mentioned, those who would like to start farms or get into the business.

Mr. Tredger: As part of our land use planning process, have areas of the Yukon been mapped out and surveyed as to the potential for agricultural production?

Hon. Mr. Kent: The two regional land use plans that have been completed are the north Yukon and Peel regional land use plans. I don't believe that there are any agricultural lands set aside in either of those areas for various reasons. A lot of this gets done at the local area planning level. Not having the details in front of me, I would be able to look into that for the member opposite — some of the plans that are underway or have been completed, such as the one in Dawson.

The Sunnydale plan, I believe, is one that has taken place, and perhaps that does include some agricultural land set aside. A good example is the agricultural development that took place at Marshall Creek, which is between here and Haines Junction. For specifics about this, I'm happy to provide members opposite with a more detailed answer if they would like one — as far as what specific agricultural packages have been identified or set aside in either plans that have been completed, whether they're regional plans or even some of the plans that are underway.

The Dawson regional plan is underway. The commission is considering options on that, and we anticipate a draft plan followed by a final recommended plan coming within the next year or so — of course, depending on the timelines set forth by the commission. That's my understanding of what they're planning to do. We look forward to that.

Again, if I can provide any information with respect to what agricultural lands have been set aside in either local area plans or regional land use plans, I'm happy to do so if the members opposite would like that.

Mr. Tredger: I guess I'm referring to an overall survey. I know the Yukon Geological Survey has done extensive mapping throughout the Yukon and has done a fabulous job of that. It's well-received by people in that industry. I know it would be very helpful for potential farmers, or for people looking for agricultural land, to have a similar kind of surface survey of the potential for the various valleys and areas and where they might begin to look for land. It doesn't necessarily have to be set aside, but it certainly should be done prior to land use plans for an area so that particular areas could be designated as such. I was thinking more from individual people who are looking to make a spot application — to use the processes we have in place so they can become part of our agricultural industry.

There was no question. It was more of a comment.

I would like to recognize the Agriculture branch for their contributions, and I know I have talked to people from different agricultural venues from across Canada and they all speak very highly of our Agriculture branch — the innovation and the way they work with our agricultural industry. At the same time, I would like to recognize the Growers of Organic Food Yukon and the work that they are doing.

I recently attended a food talk symposium and they were looking to build the industry and grow the industry while working with consumers and producers. It was a rather exciting time and there were a lot of innovative ideas.

I know the minister set aside some land on the Mayo Road for the development of agriculture. That was a couple of years ago. I know that there have been some discussions and talks. Can the minister tell me if there are any parameters around that? What are the goals for that piece of land? Is any direction being given for the development of that? When will we have some plans to develop that?

Hon. Mr. Kent: I too would like to recognize some of the positive supports that the Agriculture branch provides to industry. We have spoken about the release of agricultural land and planned agriculture land sales through multi-lot

subdivisions and infill projects. There are meat inspection services including operation and maintenance of the mobile abattoir and animal health and testing programs.

The delivery of the Canada-Yukon Growing Forward 2 policy agreement will provide up to \$1.48 million per year on a 60:40 federal/territorial cost-sharing basis to deliver programs that target three strategic outcomes: first is innovation; second is competitiveness and market development; and third, adaptability and sustainability. The branch also provides extension services that provide professional education and technical services to farmers, and research and demonstration projects designed to improve the economic delivery of northern agriculture.

I believe the member opposite, in his question, was referring to the parcel on the Mayo Road. I believe it is a 65-hectare parcel. We are still working with the Yukon Agricultural Association to develop a plan for that parcel of land, so once that work is complete, we will be able to speak more about it and make the findings publicly available.

Mr. Tredger: I know that it was a very popular decision and there was a lot of excitement around the development of that parcel. It seems like there hasn't been any apparent direction from that. I was wondering if the minister had given any parameters to it. What is the purpose of it and what does the minister see coming out of that piece?

I know a number of people have talked about it possibly housing an abattoir or a feedlot so that people from outlying areas could bring their animal to market and have them processed where they can be properly identified and ticketed. The other options that I heard were around storage. This is another area that many of our small-scale farmers can really succeed in. I guess the next part of my question is that there are many people involved in both the consumer and agricultural industry in the Yukon who are very interested in that. In what way could they have a say? When will they be consulted or how will they get involved in determining the eventual use for that parcel of land?

Hon. Mr. Kent: As I mentioned, this land was secured for the Yukon Agricultural Association to develop priority infrastructure projects for industry and that's been fulfilled through the lease of this Mayo Road site. As I mentioned earlier, the Yukon Agricultural Association is involved in strategic planning, not only for the association, but also for the lease sites. We in the government are looking forward to working with the Yukon Agricultural Association further to support these objectives. I would make the assumption that there would be further engagement with members of the Agricultural Association and the public as to the use of that, but I don't want to prejudge the outcome of the planning process that is being undertaken by the Agricultural Association with respect to that lease site that is underway at this moment.

Mr. Tredger: So in order to be involved in the decision-making around that, any agricultural person must join the Yukon Agricultural Association?

Hon. Mr. Kent: The Yukon Agricultural Association — we work with a number of industry associations, not only

in the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources but also throughout the government, and with a number of NGOs that represent their specific industries. I wouldn't anticipate that you would have to be a member of the Yukon Agricultural Association, but certainly they're the ones that we have tasked with leading the planning for this lease site. Anyone who is interested in providing input at an appropriate time will be allowed to do so, I'm sure, by the Agricultural Association. But again, I think it's premature at this point to determine when this work will be conducted.

I guess this gives me an opportunity to encourage anyone interested to attend the Yukon Agricultural Association's annual general meeting that is being held on Saturday, May 3, 2014, at the Coast High Country Inn here in Whitehorse to get further information at that time on what's being done with respect to the strategic planning for the association and the lease sites. I'm sure the times — although I don't have them in front of me — would be available on the Yukon Agricultural Association website for that annual general meeting.

Mr. Tredger: Yukon is very fortunate to have a very saleable brand of food — Yukon grown.

More and more, it's nice to go into the grocery stores and find Yukon products in them. Each year, there seems to be more. Are there any plans to increase or incentivize not only grocery stores but Yukon government — either internally through key institutions like the hospital — to buying more Yukon food? Is there a plan to get more Yukon food into the stores? Has the minister been working with industry and consumers as well as government agencies? To me, it would be a ready-made opportunity for some of our larger institutions to be able to purchase Yukon-grown foods. If there's an incentive in there, that even makes it better and it allows our agricultural industry to develop a sustainable market that they can depend on.

Hon. Mr. Kent: As I mentioned during debate on the Member for Klondike's motion last week here in the House, there is the outstanding commitment that we have in our platform with respect to promoting agriculture and to develop a Yukon-grown food policy aimed at significantly increasing the production and use of locally grown vegetables, meat and food products.

Then in the motion brought forward by the Member for Klondike last week, we also looked to investigate the merits of introducing something similar to the Ontario *Local Food Act*, I believe, is what we were talking about — so looking at opportunities there.

As I mentioned last week, there are a number of initiatives that are included in that Ontario food act that the Agriculture branch is currently undertaking, but there were some aspects that are components of that bill that are worth taking a look at. I know members opposite were disappointed with the amendment that we brought to that motion, but I hope that, upon reflection, they see it as perhaps strengthening the motion as it was by including our Yukon-grown food policy and also investigating the merits of investigating something similar to the Ontario foods act, without referencing — I think

there were four bullet points that the member included in his motion last week. If those were captured — and I believe they were in the Ontario food act — we'll certainly take a look at them. I know he has brought forward a couple of motions, subsequent to last week's debate, that reference agriculture.

Certainly we take it seriously when motions are not only brought forward for debate in the House, but when they are introduced by members opposite. I know that when there is something with respect to anything going on with Energy, Mines and Resources, I take note of it and consider it on its merits, just as we look to do with reviewing the Ontario food act and the specific issues that are contained within it.

I guess one of the other things that we do to promote the use of local farm products is the annual publication of the Yukon farm products guide by the Agriculture branch, in partnership I believe with the agricultural association.

Again, there is plenty of opportunity for us to increase the reach of local food to the community as a whole. I know the one program that has been very successful — I don't have details with me here — is the fundraising program that has been initiated by a number of schools, using local food products to raise money rather than some of the traditional fundraisers that many of us growing up here took part in. Prior to one of the fast-food restaurants coming in, we used to bring in hamburgers from the closest fast-food restaurant. I guess I'll say the name — McDonald's — and sell those. That was a popular fundraiser back in the early 1980s — or, of course, the chocolate bar and candy fundraisers that used to take place back in my school days here in the territory. I'm pleased those have gone by the wayside for the most part. We're looking at opportunities to provide locally grown Yukon vegetables as part of school fundraisers.

Again, we're looking for innovative ideas. I don't want to be dismissive of the Member for Klondike's motion of last week. I think we can incorporate what he was looking for into the motion, as amended. Perhaps he will beg to differ on that, but I think there are opportunities to explore what Ontario and other jurisdictions are doing. It's a great opportunity that we have in a small jurisdiction — that we can adapt quickly to good ideas from other jurisdictions in the country and come up with some opportunities that are made-in-Yukon and reflect the environment here that we deal with.

I think there are great opportunities to explore many of the things that the Member for Mayo-Tatchun asked about, and I look forward to doing that. As I mentioned, that development of the Yukon-grown food policy is in Energy, Mines and Resources' 2014-15 annual plan and we look forward to delivering on that and working with our partners in the agriculture industry to ensure that industry has access to the local market and encourages the local production of food.

Mr. Tredger: I thank the minister for his answer. Yes, I was disappointed by the amendment, but we'll see. The proof will be in the pudding. I will take the minister at his word that he does have the political will to ensure that there is follow-through on the promises made so that indeed we do build a sustainable food economy in the Yukon.

I'd like to move on to a little bit of a discussion around energy. We've had some debate around energy and I think all members of the House recognize the fact that the world as we know it is changing. We are experiencing climate change. It is having a magnitude of effects upon everyone on this planet, whether they're from a small town or a big city, whether they're from the north or from the south.

We also know that those effects are magnified the closer you get to the poles. It's important — as the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change said, we are facing a crisis and the time to act is now. The good news is that the report shows that our future will not be determined by chance, but by choices we make. We have a choice to reduce carbon emissions and the report says it's still possible that we can escape the worst impacts of climate change if we make some important changes.

That's rather heartening, given much of the news that is out there. We hear of disasters and storms. The Member for Vuntut Gwitchin talked about changes that he has observed in his home territory. I know people from around the Yukon — whether they are biologists, hunters or people just driving up and down the roads — have noticed significant change. It's important that we as a government, and we as a people, come to grips with that and begin to take that into account. We know that, in the Yukon, 55 percent of our carbon emissions come from the transportation industry.

Has the minister entered into any talks as to ways — or innovative ways — that we can work with the transportation industry to reduce our dependence on fossil fuels in the transportation sector? It may be through increased public transportation; it may be through public transportation that would go to the communities. There are many different ideas out there.

What I am hoping is that the minister can tell me of some interdepartmental conversations and ideas that are going on that might lead us to some hope that we are beginning to address the fact that a full 55 percent of our carbon emissions in the Yukon Territory are directly related to transportation.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Mr. Kent: Before I respond to the member opposite, I would like to ask members to join me in welcoming a friend of mine and a constituent, Mr. Connor Whitehouse, to the gallery. He is obviously taking in the proceedings here this afternoon, so if we could just welcome him, that would be great.

Applause

Hon. Mr. Kent: With respect to the climate change aspects that the member opposite raised, I think we are in a very enviable position when it comes to our electrical generation, having over 95 percent — I have mentioned it a number of times on the floor of the house — of our energy being derived from hydro, with a small portion of that coming from the windmills that we have as well. Obviously something that we as Yukoners can be very proud of and we should be very thankful to those past generations that saw fit to put in

the hydro-electric dams, as well as past members of this Legislative Assembly who have contributed to better infrastructure and more hydro projects, such as the Mayo B and improvements at Aishihik, as well as improvements and expansions at Aishihik and at the Whitehorse Rapids facility.

When it comes to the *Climate Change Action Plan*, it sets the priorities for action to promote a healthy and resilient Yukon in a time where climate is changing.

The Department of Energy, Mines and Resources is responsible for eight actions under the *Climate Change Action Plan*. I will quickly list those here for the benefit of members.

The first is to develop an inventory of permafrost information for use in decision making — that work is in progress; conduct a Yukon forest health risk assessment — that work has been completed; conduct treatments to reduce forest fuel loads — that's ongoing work; conduct a forest tree species and vulnerability assessment — that work has been completed; develop best management practices for industry to reduce greenhouse gas emissions — in progress; develop pilot projects to demonstrate home and commercial energy efficiency and heating technology — that work is ongoing in partnership with the Yukon Housing Corporation. We need to undertake an extensive study of the transportation sector and recommend options to reduce emissions. I'll get into details on that because that was the member's specific question, but that work is ongoing with the Climate Change Secretariat. The eighth thing that EMR has responsibility for is to develop opportunities for residential and institutional wood heating. That work is in progress.

When it comes specifically to the transportation sector, and undertaking an extensive study of the transportation sector and recommending options to reduce emissions, as I mentioned that work is in progress. Just by way of an update for members, there's available transportation information and data has been examined by the Energy Solutions Centre and published to YG's website in the form of an information paper. The Climate Change Secretariat is currently undertaking a follow-up study with the Energy Solutions Centre's assistance, which looks at potential opportunities to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the sector.

I'm sure as members can appreciate, most of the emissions from the transportation sector come from the private sector. Through Highways and Public Works, we're working to make our buildings more energy efficient, including the main administration building that houses the Legislative Assembly. I know that there have been a number of newsletters put out by the Department of Highways and Public Works providing updates on what's going to be taking place over the next couple of years to enhance this facility and improve the energy efficiency.

I know another building that we have in the inventory of the Yukon government that is not very energy efficient is the F.H. Collins Secondary School. I'm pleased to see the fencing going up in Riverdale at the new site — the contractor is putting it up. Fencing is going up as we speak, and I'm sure construction will proceed shortly on that project — again,

looking to a LEED silver standard with respect to that particular building.

So there are a number of things, obviously, that we're looking at internally to increase energy efficiency and address climate change, but again, when it comes to the transportation sector, we do need to work with the private sector and try to come up with options that will help to reduce emissions. I know there is work being done by the Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment that I'm sure the minister would be happy to talk about at a later time.

There is cross-departmental work going on in a number of fronts to address climate change.

Mr. Tredger: I guess in light of what I read from the IPCC and how rapidly we are moving toward having to make some critical decisions, I was looking for some targets for a concerted effort to reduce. I appreciate that much of our energy comes from hydro. That's a legacy project that was some 40 years ago and my concern is that we've watched our use meet our production capacity and right now we are on the very edge of it.

I see this government making decisions like abandoning the geothermal at F.H. Collins, which may have reduced — or by all studies, would have reduced — our carbon footprint significantly. That was, I guess, abandoned, despite fiscal reports that showed the viability of it, the economics of it and certainly the carbon footprint of it. When I hear talk about further studies and further things, I am concerned because what I'm looking for are targets. If we are burning 55 percent of our energy on transportation, what's our target? Where do we expect to be in a year? Where do we expect to be in 10 years? How do we measure that? If we can't measure it, we can't manage it. The message — loud and clear — is we have to begin managing our carbon footprint or it will manage us.

Does the minister have any targets around transportation and reduction of our carbon footprint in the transportation field? Has he consulted with the municipalities about public transportation? Has he looked at incentivizing private ownership of a bus line? Has he looked at helping the City of Whitehorse to expand their excellent bus system? Has he offered some way to the people in Watson Lake or Dawson to run bus lines?

This is a critical issue and transportation is big in the Yukon. We are looking for some leadership.

Chair: Would the members care for a recess?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

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

Recess

Chair: Committee of the Whole will now come to order. We're going to resume general debate in Vote 53, Department of Energy, Mines and Resources.

Hon. Mr. Kent: Just prior to the break, there were a number of questions raised by the Member for Mayo-Tatchun with respect to our commitment to climate change and a few of the different projects.

I know he spoke about setting targets. Just to draw the member's attention to a news release that was issued in August 2013, just a few weeks after I was appointed Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources — so a lot of this work is owed to the leadership of those ministers who went before me. The title of the news release is “Government of Yukon on track to exceed renewable energy targets.”

I'm just going to read some excerpts from the news release into the record. “A progress report on the implementation of the 2009 *Energy Strategy for Yukon* has determined that the Government of Yukon is on track to surpass its target of increasing Yukon's renewable energy supply by 20 percent by 2020... Released in 2009, the energy strategy reflects the government's vision to improve energy efficiency and conservation, produce more renewable energy, meet electricity needs, responsibly develop oil and gas, and make good energy choices. The 2012 Progress Report provides an update on these priorities which are being researched, explored and developed by the Government of Yukon and its partners within the Government of Canada and the private sector.

“Highlighting that the vast majority of electricity generation in the territory comes from renewable sources, the report states that in 2012, 95 percent of electricity demand was met by renewable energy, and nearly 20 percent of heating demand was met by renewable wood-based heating. Per capita, this is greater than any other jurisdiction in Canada.

“Additionally, the Aishihik third turbine and Mayo B projects have increased Yukon Energy Corporation's renewable generation capacity by 22 percent, already exceeding the territory's target of increasing renewable energy by 20 percent by 2020.”

When the member opposite spoke about some of the legacy projects — there were Whitehorse Rapids, Aishihik and Mayo that were brought in about 50 years ago, but there has been substantial work done to those projects since then, and I think it is worth recognizing not only what the leaders of the 1950s and 1960s had in mind for the future of Yukon's energy future, but also subsequent leaders of all political parties. I'm certainly not just hanging the hat on the work of the Yukon Party. There were infrastructure investments made by all political parties to ensure that we can lead the country, when it comes to meeting our electricity demand, by renewable sources.

With respect to the transportation industry, of course, I did mention before the break the work that is being done by the Energy Solutions Centre and the Climate Change Secretariat on addressing some of the transportation issues, but again, in large part, the transportation emissions are being done through the private sector. Obviously we need to work with our partners. There are a number of projects that we anticipate coming on-line in the next number of years with respect to mining that will increase the amount of transportation emissions simply by increasing the number of trucks that are on the road.

I know the previous government conducted an ALCAN rail link study — a feasibility study — to examine heavy haul rail between Alaska and British Columbia. This is a very worthwhile document to take a look at because if that was something that was available to Yukoners, it could be something that cuts down on transportation emissions significantly.

I think a companion document to that piece was also the Yukon Short Track Report, which looked at options for extending the White Pass and Yukon rail into the interior of Yukon to perhaps provide an opportunity to haul some of the resources to port through rail, which would have significantly reduced the emissions. This is something that we need to work on with our partners in municipalities as well as the private sector partners to determine goals that are attainable and make sense so we can continue to grow our economy but do it in a way that cuts down on our emissions.

As I mentioned previously in the House, I had the opportunity to attend a new gas summit last September in Calgary. They talked about the use of natural gas in long-haul vehicles, such as trucks and trains down south, to cut down on the greenhouse gas emissions, as it is a much cleaner burning fuel. Those are options that the private sector is looking at. My understanding is that it works better for long-haul vehicles and trains than it would perhaps in buses or vehicles of that nature that travel over a much shorter distance. I think there are innovations that industry is coming up with that we can look at as far as reducing greenhouse gases in the territory, but still allowing our economy to grow and some of these new projects to come on-line as well as some of the other opportunities that exist within the territory.

The Minister of Health and Social Services informed me that the Yukon government actually provided a third of the dollars to purchase the buses that they currently use for Whitehorse Transit. That is another positive development where the Yukon government has partnered with the municipality to ensure that they have a fleet that meets the needs of transit users here in the City of Whitehorse.

Members will also know that the Department of Education has provided bus passes for city transit to a number of students. I'm not sure of the exact number that have been provided, but again it was a pilot project that was started by the Yukon Party government and continues to grow with the opportunities to have students ride municipal transit rather than the school buses. Again, it is another positive thing moving forward within the Department of Education to reduce the greenhouse gas emissions that we have from our transportation sector.

I would also like to address one of the questions that the member opposite asked with respect to the F.H. Collins project. There will be an opportunity to follow-up with the Minister of Highways and Public Works once we get to his department, but when it comes to the heating system, it's the goal of the government to provide an efficient and sustainable source of heating for the new facility. To this end, there is a review currently underway of all available alternate heating options. This research will be done during the construction

phase, and construction will be managed to allow for a possible future integration of what's determined to be the successful alternate heat source. It certainly isn't correct when the member opposite asserts that the geothermal has been abandoned. That's one of the alternate heating options that is currently under review. When the school was moved away from its previous site to its current site, it was moved away from the well that was going to be used to provide the geothermal heat, so it changed the parameters and what is why these studies need to be done. I know the Yukon taxpayers certainly want to make sure that if we are providing geothermal or some other alternative heat source, it actually works.

So that is the research and the work that the Department of Highways and Public Works is doing right now with the Energy Solutions Centre to develop a tool to assess various heating sources to ensure the appropriate primary and secondary heat source for not only F.H. Collins, but any government building. Redundant capacity for heat is always a critical element in the design of any new facility and that includes the new school.

Again, as I mentioned, I know the Yukon taxpayers will want to ensure that, while looking at different options for providing heat to that facility — just to repeat what I said earlier, it must be a heat source that works. Again, that's why that research is underway. So just again to correct the member opposite, the geothermal has not been abandoned for F.H. Collins. It's merely a study that's being conducted through the construction phase, and construction will be managed to allow for that possible future integration of geothermal if that's determined to be feasible on the site given the new location of the school.

There are a number of initiatives being undertaken, not only by the Energy Solutions Centre, but also the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources, the Department of Environment and a number of departments — I mentioned Education and Highways and Public Works — through their policy and program directives. We're looking at reducing greenhouse gas emissions and continuing to be the envy of the country when it comes to the amount of energy that we produce from renewable sources.

Mr. Tredger: I thank the minister for his answer. It was quite interesting.

When the Yukon Party came to government 12 or 13 years ago, we had three windmills. We have been promised windmills — wind energy. We've talked about it. We've studied it. We've had studies start, studies stop. We still have no new windmills and no new wind energy. We have shovel-ready projects but they are not being brought forward. I guess our shovel-ready projects are still on the shelf. We've had talk about geothermal projects. At one point, Whistle Bend was going to be developed with geothermal and area heating.

F.H. Collins — the first study and the one that I read said that it was less expensive to plan for it ahead of time. Now we've been planning for F.H. Collins for 12 years. Surely the heating system is already planned. It seems kind of irresponsible to still be planning the heating system on a

building where they're digging the hole. I'm sure that the heating system is planned, or it should be. It's rather late. We have been looking at it for many, many years and we're still looking at it.

Does this government have any plans to proceed — any timelines — with either wind or geothermal, or is it all on the shelf and in planning? Do we have any timelines? Do we have any priorities? Is it a priority of this government to look at alternative energies?

Hon. Mr. Kent: Members will recall a motion that I introduced in the fall of last year on the floor of this House with respect to developing a clean power future for the territory. Obviously one of the anchor pieces to that is our legacy hydro project that we're looking forward to. The directive was issued to the Yukon Development Corporation to lead the research and planning for that.

I've committed a couple of times on the floor of the House this sitting that, once that workplan is ready, I will make it public either by tabling it or releasing it with some sort of media release, depending on the timing. I'm anticipating it being available before the House rises, and if it is, I certainly will be tabling it for members to look at as well as all Yukoners to consider.

We're looking forward to getting that work underway. There is \$2 million in this budget currently to assist Yukon Development Corporation with that work and get to the point where we have a business plan ready with respect to that legacy hydro project.

That's the long-term vision for a clean power future for Yukoners. There are a number of projects in the Yukon Energy Corporation's resource plan that could be brought on-line. I know some are a little bit more controversial than others — with respect to water levels in the Southern Lakes, for instance. These are some of the things that the Energy Corporation is looking at in the shorter and medium term to ensure that we can increase the clean power generating capacity here in the territory.

There are, of course, a number of other projects that are being investigated — the wind energy concepts at Mount Sumanik and Ferry Hill are a couple of them. There are ongoing activities being undertaken that demonstrate the viability of developing Yukon's renewable resources and promoting energy efficiency, including a wind resource assessment program for off-grid private sector clients. Demonstrations of renewable electricity generation, including a grid-connected photovoltaic system located on the roof of the YG main administration building; a grid-connected wind-solar system at Yukon College; solar beacon at the Faro airport; the use of solar electricity for agricultural water pumping with Little Salmon-Carmacks First Nation; and the Klwane First Nation solar microgeneration project.

I know the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin often speaks of his First Nation's government's commitment to ensure that solar power is incorporated into all of the newly constructed buildings that are in his community.

Again, with respect to the F.H. Collins project, I have to clarify for the member opposite that the primary goal is to

provide an efficient and sustainable source of heating for the new facility. To this end, we are undertaking a review of all available alternate heating options, which of course includes geothermal. This research is being done during the construction phase and construction will be managed to allow for the possible future integration of the successful alternate heat source.

Even the F.H. Collins “one” project, or the initial design that was determined to be fiscally not responsible to proceed with, included an alternate heat source, as well as geothermal. I believe it was propane that was being considered for that project. Alternate heating like geothermal and biomass — there’s still time to consider it for the F.H. Collins option, as I mentioned, and as I’m sure the Minister of Highways and Public Works has spoken to it and can continue to speak to it.

The research will be done during the construction phase and construction will be managed to allow for possible future integration of a successful alternate heat source. As I mentioned, biomass or geothermal — whatever is determined to be the best option for an alternate heat source for F.H. Collins will be determined. It’s not too late, even though the member opposite would think so. Obviously I’m not a heating expert or a construction expert, but officials within the Department of Highways and Public Works and the professionals we rely on have indicated it’s not too late to include an alternate heat source for F.H. Collins. That again is something we’re looking at doing.

As I mentioned, there are a number of renewable energy sources that we’re looking at. We want to ensure that we can continue to have a clean power future for Yukoners and take advantage of all the opportunities there are with respect to other renewable sources, not just hydro. As I mentioned, there are wind energy concepts that the Yukon Energy Corporation has advanced.

The member opposite referenced the two windmills on Haeckel Hill that feed electricity into the grid. I think all Yukoners have driven by on the Alaska Highway and criticized in the past whenever the turbines weren’t working or didn’t seem to be spinning. But again, there are two turbines up there. One is 13 years old and the other one is 20 years old. There are some issues with respect to them but, when they are functioning, there are 660 kilowatt units from the 13-year-old windmill that was installed in 2000, and a 150-kilowatt unit was installed in 1993, which is the older of the two.

The Yukon Energy Corporation continues to study potential sites for commercial-scale wind generation at Ferry Hill near Stewart Crossing and Mount Sumanik near Whitehorse. Twelve months of continuous wind-monitoring data is currently being collected from Tehcho — or what was formerly called Ferry Hill. Because wind is an intermittent energy source, backup energy capacity is required so that there will be enough electricity to meet demand at any given time. Often the windiest times of the year are in the winter when we need the excess capacity, so this is something that we’ll look at and consider based on the merits. Obviously there are a number of other aspects that we need to consider,

such as reliability and cost of these types of projects. But again, where the case exists and where they make sense, we’ll certainly look to move on those types of other wind projects.

Just before I sit down, I should mention the microgeneration program that has been initiated as an opportunity for small renewable energy sources to power homes and feed excess back into the grid. That program has been implemented and we look forward to some successful results from it.

We, like all members of this House, are proud of the clean energy that we have in the territory and are looking to continue to lead the nation in ensuring that we can continue to have clean power delivery for Yukoners, not only now, but well into the future.

Mr. Tredger: It seems that 12 or 13 years ago, Yukon was on the cutting edge of alternate energy. We had windmills; we were looking at geothermal. The world has passed us by; we are still looking at it. I can drive through southern Alberta and see row after row of windmills. It is a concern, and I would urge the minister to garner the political will to make it happen. It is not the technology that is holding us back. The technology, we know, is very doable. It is the political will.

A couple of years ago, Energy, Mines and Resources, in conjunction with Yukon Energy, did an audit on the electricity use at the Alexco mine in Keno.

It proved to be very, very successful. Has the minister considered making that the criteria for all new mines coming on stream — that they do an energy audit, thereby reducing their carbon footprint?

Hon. Mr. Kent: The Yukon Energy Corporation has worked with Alexco, as the member opposite referenced, but also with the Minto mine to help identify ways to improve electrical efficiency of current and future operations. The energy audit that was completed last November identified some potential projects that could lead to energy efficiency at that mine. Currently there are some community energy audits underway. I believe the one in Faro has been completed and perhaps the one in Old Crow is underway, but I could stand to be corrected on that. I know that both of those communities have either undergone or are in the process of undergoing these types of audits.

Just a little bit more detail on the Capstone project — on July 5, 2013, Yukon Energy Corporation and Capstone announced that they were partnering on an energy audit to determine ways for the mine to reduce its energy consumption and reduce its energy peaks.

Capstone is now reviewing the final audit report and this was a cost-shared initiative of the audit equally, with an additional 25 percent of costs to be reimbursed by Yukon Energy should Minto implement energy conservation measures that result in a reduction of current annual consumption.

While the Energy Corporation is conducting these types of audits with mines that are connected to the grid, it’s not anticipated that the Energy Corporation would do so with mines that are coming onstream that are off-grid. I should say

that many of those off-grid mines that are currently burning diesel are anxious to look at what is happening in Watson Lake with Yukon Electrical Company Ltd. and their biofuel project to have a natural gas and diesel mix, as far as that project goes. Should the Yukon Energy Corporation's project of replacing the diesel and converting to natural gas be determined to be environmentally and socio-economically sound to move forward as well as the review of the Yukon Utilities Board, then I know that many mining companies are anxious to check the success of that project as well. When it comes to those mines that are off-grid, I think as high as 40 percent to 50 percent of their operating costs right now are with respect to power generation and the cost of diesel, so they are anxious to see those numbers decrease for, obviously, business and operating reasons.

As I mentioned, they are looking to the natural gas projects that are currently underway in the Yukon, one by the privately owned Yukon Electrical Company Limited and the other potential one being run by the Yukon Energy Corporation.

It's obviously in everyone's best interests to ensure that these projects and these mines, whether they're existing or new, are taking advantage of energy efficiency and reducing cost. I know that from a private sector side of things, the companies I've spoken to are looking forward to the proving-up of the viability of the natural gas projects that are currently underway or being planned, again looking to increase energy efficiency.

If a mine does come to us with the suggestion to conduct an energy audit, we would certainly consider it on a case-by-case basis.

Mr. Tredger: The viability of natural gas for reducing greenhouse gases is not as certain as the minister would imply. There is quite a bit of controversy around that and jurisdictions around the world are beginning to question whether or not natural gas is, indeed, a cleaner-burning fuel, as the claim has been made.

But what is certain is that conservation of energy is the cheapest and most significant way to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions. I'm rather concerned when, earlier in the day, we were talking about reducing the greenhouse gas emissions and meeting targets for the Yukon and then hearing the minister sing the praises of natural gas as a replacement fuel.

I would mention that it is a carbon-burning fuel. It does contribute to greenhouse gases and this is a serious problem in our world today.

I would like to move on from that and talk a little bit about some of the issues that we talked about last session. We spent a fair bit of time talking about the duty to notify First Nations of activities that are going to be on their land. I know that the minister has had a few conversations with the Ross River Dena Council. There are some issues around capacity and land use planning arising from that.

We are entering into another season of staking. Has the minister entertained any further discussions and come to a conclusion with the Ross River Dena Council, or can he update us as to where we are in that situation?

Hon. Mr. Kent: I should take the time to thank the Minister of Environment for providing me with a bit of an update on something that is primarily his responsibility — the climate change action plan. One of the aspects of that is to develop an energy audit service to assist mines and industrial clients. I do stand corrected that it is something that is underway through the climate change action plan. I thank the minister for providing me with that information.

When it comes to the Ross River Dena Council court declarations, there were two declarations.

We amended the *Quartz Mining Act* and the *Placer Mining Act* through the adoption of Bill No. 66 during the fall legislative sitting. These amendments provide the ability to designate areas where notification for low-level or class 1 mining exploration activity would be required. We also made the necessary amendments to the placer and quartz mining land use regulations to support the act amendments and to define how the notification would work, what we would need to know, how long we need to consider a notification, and if we need to collect security. The Ross River area has been designated as an area where the new class 1 notice provisions are required. There has also been designated protected areas, restricted-use wilderness areas and integrated management areas 7 and 10 in the Peel plan as areas where the class 1 notification provisions apply to support the management plan guidance in that area.

These amendments were developed in direct response to the Yukon Court of Appeal directions, so these notifications for class 1 are underway in the Ross River area. Perhaps if the member opposite is referring to the other declaration that speaks to what are ongoing discussions with the Ross River Dena Council with respect to the establishment of the temporary staking ban until areas can be identified that would be made off-limits to staking, I should remind members that, with respect to that declaration, that work is being led by the Executive Council Office, so perhaps those questions would be better directed to the Premier in his capacity as minister responsible for the Executive Council Office.

Mr. Tredger: In the situation of Ross River Dena Council, you have made the changes to the *Quartz Mining Act*. Have you come to an agreement with the Ross River Dena Council about whether staking will proceed now? How is the notification going to take place and how will it be dealt with? I assume from your statement that the minister has been in consultation with the Ross River Dena Council and you have come to an agreement.

Hon. Mr. Kent: With respect to the class 1 notifications, which are the responsibility of the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources, and why we made the changes to the *Quartz Mining Act* and the *Placer Mining Act*, there is a system in place that was spelled out in the act. Since this legislation came into effect, there have only been two applications for class 1 activities in the Ross River area that has been designated.

Again, with respect to negotiations with the Ross River Dena Council, the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources, while it does provide some advice to negotiators,

they are being led by the Executive Council Office. I would urge members opposite to refer their questions with respect to that particular court declaration to the minister responsible for the Executive Council Office.

The class 1 notifications that led to the changes in the *Quartz Mining Act* and the *Placer Mining Act* do provide a set amount of days for notice with the ability to extend. I believe the set amount of days for notification and response is 25.

Just to give members the information — to repeat it — there have only been two in the Ross River area where this primarily applies. I did mention a couple of areas in the Peel watershed, but there have only been two class 1 activities that we've had to provide notification to the First Nation about.

Mr. Tredger: So it wasn't clear from the minister's response whether or not the Ross River Dena Council has agreed to the way the court case is being interpreted, so could the minister clarify that?

The other question I have is — he mentioned class 1 notification in the Peel River watershed. It's my understanding that the government's proposed plan for the Peel watershed is under legal dispute. How does that relate to class 1 notification? If the affected First Nations don't recognize the revised plan that the government has come up with, who gets notified?

Hon. Mr. Kent: When it comes to the declaration with respect to notification for the low-level or class 1 mining exploration activity that's required in the Ross River area currently, there have been two instances where we've had to provide notification to the Ross River Dena Council with respect to class 1 activities in that area since that legislation has come into effect.

We believe we've met the spirit and intent of what the court has asked us to do with respect to making those changes to the *Quartz Mining Act* and the *Placer Mining Act* that we did in the fall of 2013, and there is notification that it is being undertaken with respect to the Ross River area where that work is applying.

There is a little bit more work that needs to be done with respect to class 1 criteria table amendments. We need to sit down with the parties around setting appropriate thresholds for class 1 work in designated areas. Class 1 work on claims outside of designated areas continues to be administered as per the requirements of the acts. I look forward to continuing discussions on these and other details this spring or summer. This class 1 activity is the responsibility of the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources. The other declaration is the responsibility of the Executive Council Office. They're leading those discussions with the Ross River Dena Council. This is what we've determined to be the path forward. Again, as I mentioned, we believe it has met the spirit and intent of what the court asked us to do, and that's why we brought forward those changes to the *Quartz Mining Act* and the *Placer Mining Act* last fall.

Mr. Tredger: I thank the minister for that. I didn't hear anything about the Peel River watershed.

Hon. Mr. Kent: Could I ask the member to repeat that aspect of his question?

Some Hon. Member: (inaudible)

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

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

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: I would like to take this opportunity to have members of the House recognize Grant Macdonald who has joined us now. He is a long-time Yukoner and a local barrister. I invite everybody to welcome him here today.

Applause

Mr. Tredger: I understand from what the minister said that there are certain areas of the Peel River watershed that, according to the government's revised plan, are now open to staking. There was a requirement for class 1 notification. My concern is that, of course, that is under dispute and many of the affected First Nations don't recognize the government's revised plan and instead refer to the final plan of the Peel Watershed Planning Commission. If the minister is contemplating opening the area to staking and class 1 notification, who is being notified?

Hon. Mr. Kent: On January 21 of this year, the Yukon government approved a regional land use plan for the non-settlement land in the Peel watershed planning region. The plan that was approved was a modified version of the final recommended plan from the Peel Watershed Planning Commission. We proceeded in compliance with section 11.6.3.2 of the final agreements: "Government shall then approve, reject or modify that part of the plan recommended under 11.6.3.1 applying on Non-Settlement Land."

The plan approval concluded the extensive consultation with affected communities and Yukon First Nations on the final recommended plan and YG's proposed modifications to the final recommended plan.

There are a number of areas within the Peel watershed that are currently open to activity and there are also a number of areas within the Peel watershed where no new claim staking will be allowed. Again, we feel that we have met and exceeded the consultation requirements of chapter 11 and its decision to approve a modified plan for non-settlement land is fully within the authority as envisioned by the First Nation final agreements.

Madam Chair, it would be speculative to answer a question with respect to class 1 notification, because, as I mentioned, there have not been any applications for class 1 in any of the areas of the Peel watershed where that is required at this point. Should we receive that from a proponent to provide notification, we will follow the legislation and the existing process that was set out in the amendments that we made last fall to ensure that this is covered off.

Mr. Tredger: It would seem to me that it is rather presumptuous and certainly dismissive of the legal process to go ahead with any activity in a disputed area. I would encourage the minister to withdraw the area from development until such time as there can be a legal or negotiated settlement in the area.

I'm also very concerned — and I understand it is ECO, so I hope we do get an opportunity to get to ECO, because when the government brought forward their amendments to the *Quartz Mining Act*, virtually every First Nation in the Yukon expressed outrage at the manner that it was done, the lack of negotiations and the way they felt they had been treated. I hope that when we get to ECO, the Premier will let us know what is happening and what he has done to work with the First Nations.

I do have one last question and then I'll give the Member for Klondike a bit of time. Sorry about that, I was somewhat taken aback by the questions.

A year ago, we transferred water inspections from Environment to Energy, Mines and Resources. At the time of the transfer, the Grand Chief of the Council of Yukon First Nations and its member governments signed a joint letter to the Premier — and this is what they wrote, and I'm quoting: "Although we understand that the government wants to establish integrated resource management. However, the protection of waters and natural resources of the Yukon cannot be subordinate to the objectives of mining development and interests of mining proponents." Given that EMR's mandate is to promote the development of mining — and mines — in the Yukon, the CYFN maintains that mine inspections, enforcement and security under the *Waters Act* must not be the responsibility of the EMR minister.

The government has gone ahead, despite that, and moved it to the Energy, Mines and Resources sector.

Can the minister let me know or let the House know what has been accomplished and how have the concerns of the First Nations been dealt with? Have there been negotiations? Have there been discussions around this? How have they been assured that indeed, the water systems in the Yukon are not compromised?

Hon. Mr. Kent: When it comes to the inspections that were transferred from the Department of Environment to Energy, Mines and Resources, the responsibility for conducting water use inspections related to mineral exploration and mining was transferred from Environment Yukon Water Resources branch to the Department of EMR Compliance Monitoring and Inspections branch. The transfer formalized the long-standing responsibility of EMR for placer inspections and expanded the department's scope to include water use inspections related to quartz mining, mineral exploration and mining camps. The transfer allows the seamless integration between inspections under water use licences and quartz mining licences and greater clarity and consistency in communications with mine operators.

Environment Yukon continues to provide water quality, hydrology and geotechnical technical support to inspectors and will contribute to mine licensing at the assessment and regulatory stages.

Just to give some of the figures that are out there, compliance monitoring inspections did approximately 1,380 inspections in the 2013-14 fiscal year. Roughly 580 were related to mining and 800 were related to quarries, lands, land use and timber — obviously a very busy and very competent

branch of Energy, Mines and Resources. I am very proud of the work that they do and they continue to provide the professionalism when conducting these types of inspections.

I know that prior to my time, when I was Minister of Education, the members opposite characterized this as the fox guarding the henhouse, and those types of disparaging remarks to those employees are unfortunately something that we have come to see as commonplace from the NDP Opposition, whether it is oil and gas, employees — disparaging remarks made by the Leader of the Official Opposition in her budget reply when it comes to this. She touts this strange thing of ministerial responsibility — of course we are responsible as ministers.

When the Minister of Education has principals who run schools that are in charge of those types of activities, the Minister of Economic Development relies on the economists to provide forecasts. We have seen disparaging remarks from the Leader of the NDP on that. It is something that we have come to see as commonplace from the New Democrats in this House. It is disappointing to me as a minister and it's disappointing to all of my colleagues on this side of the House that those remarks and those characterizations would be made of the fine public servants who provide services to Yukoners.

I'm proud of all the staff working in Energy, Mines and Resources and hold in the highest regard their professionalism to conduct these types of inspections and assessments. I know all ministers are proud of those public servants who go to work on behalf of Yukoners every day. I certainly can't say the same for the NDP, unfortunately.

Some Hon. Member: (inaudible)

Point of order

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

Ms. White: Standing Order 19(g) — imputes false or unavowed motives to another member. We never doubt the ability of the public service. We doubt the ministers.

Chair's ruling

Chair: There is no point of order. That's your interpretation of the facts and either side has their own interpretation of the facts so it is a dispute among members.

Hon. Mr. Kent: Seeing the time — and I know we are expecting the Commissioner of the Yukon to come in to grant assent to some legislation — I move that you report progress.

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

Motion agreed to

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

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

Motion agreed to

Speaker resumes the Chair

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

Chair's report

Ms. McLeod: Mr. Speaker, Committee of the Whole has considered Bill No. 14, entitled *First Appropriation Act, 2014-15*, and directed me to report progress.

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

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Speaker: I declare the report carried.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Ms. White: Just before we have royal assent, I would like the House to recognize both Charles and Sandra Behan in the gallery and thank them for being here, for seeing the law that they helped change come to pass. Thank you for being here again.

Applause

Speaker: Seeing as how we introducing people, I would like to introduce John and Deb L'Henaff, very good friends of mine. John is a very accomplished auctioneer and a volunteer all over the community. It is nice to have them here.

Applause

Speaker: We are now prepared to receive the Commissioner of Yukon, in his capacity as Lieutenant Governor, to grant assent to bills which have passed this House.

Commissioner Phillips enters the Chamber, announced by the Deputy Sergeant-at-Arms

ASSENT TO BILLS

Commissioner: Please be seated.

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

Clerk: *Act to Amend the Government Organisation Act; Act to Amend the Fatal Accidents Act.*

Commissioner: I hereby assent to the bills as enumerated by the Clerk.

Before I leave here today, I would like to say a few brief words. As you all know, April is Cancer Month. I would like to make a couple of comments about that. I think many of you are also aware that I've been absent my office for about three and a half months. I've been receiving treatment for cancer that I discovered on Christmas Eve. This setback has made me realize several things: first of all, how lucky we are in the Yukon to live here. Our Yukon has some of the highest quality medical care and immediate attention by our health care workers in the country. I met several other Yukoners at the BC Cancer Agency and back home here in Whitehorse who share my thoughts on this.

I personally and other Yukoners owe a great deal of thanks to our Yukon health care professionals.

Publicly, I'd like to thank Dr. Brown, Dr. Naylor, Dr. Samuelson, Dr. Knowlen and especially Dr. Storey for their attention during my journey. I also want to thank Kristy, our local chemo nurse of the Whitehorse General Hospital for her personal caring for each and every patient she deals with from the Yukon. It's really something special. These people are truly amazing. I also would like to thank the BC Cancer Agency. I was blown away and I think anybody I've talked to who goes to that place feels the same way about how they treat you. You're not just a patient. They're not just treating you with their professional expertise, but they personalize it. They want to know what you're doing on the weekends that you're not getting treatment, and when you arrive back on Monday, they want to know how the hockey game was or how the event was that you went to, or just if you went for a walk around Stanley Park. These people really, really care about their patients.

I also want to thank Dr. Hay in Vancouver, my doctor who took care of me there, and my practical nurse Minette. Last, but not least, I want to thank our family and friends who have helped all cancer patients through the initial shock and stayed by our sides during the very grueling treatments. Our families — and this is sometimes hard to talk about, but they are the most important people in our lives. Dale was my angel. I'd like to thank the many Yukoners who called, sent e-mails, cards, and in some cases, stopped by our little apartment in Vancouver.

Your words of encouragement and your continued support were the energy that I and other cancer patients needed to continue to be optimistic, and we Yukoners who have cancer certainly couldn't get through this without that support.

Life is kind of interesting. You may have noticed that I've lost a little weight since you saw me last. In fact, I lost 30 pounds, but in fact today, after gaining a bit of it back, I've reached the weight that I was when I was in high school. Unfortunately the mistake I made is I tried to compare the two looks when I was in high school to now. It's not a very useful exercise. All the stuff that I had then seems to be in different places.

In closing, I would like to thank Speaker Laxton and former Commissioner Van Bibber for their efforts on behalf of Yukoners to raise the awareness and support of the needs of Yukoners who are fighting cancer, and also supporting their families. I feel that more strongly than ever, now that I've been one of those patients.

I would urge all members of this House and all Yukoners to get involved in this very worthwhile cause. Thank you very much.

Commissioner leaves the Chamber

Speaker: I will now call the House to order.

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

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

Motion agreed to

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

The House adjourned at 5:23 p.m.