



Yukon Legislative Assembly

Number 161

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HANSARD

Monday, October 27, 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. Darrell Pasloski	Mountainview	Premier Minister responsible for Finance; Executive Council Office
Hon. Elaine Taylor	Whitehorse West	Deputy Premier Minister responsible for Education; Women's Directorate; French Language Services Directorate
Hon. Brad Cathers	Lake Laberge	Minister responsible for Community Services; Yukon Housing Corporation; Yukon Liquor Corporation; Yukon Lottery Commission Government House Leader
Hon. Doug Graham	Porter Creek North	Minister responsible for Health and Social Services; Yukon Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board
Hon. Scott Kent	Riverdale North	Minister responsible for Energy, Mines and Resources; Yukon Energy Corporation; Yukon Development Corporation
Hon. Currie Dixon	Copperbelt North	Minister responsible for Economic Development; Environment; Public Service Commission
Hon. Wade Istchenko	Kluane	Minister responsible for Highways and Public Works
Hon. Mike Nixon	Porter Creek South	Minister responsible for Justice; Tourism and Culture

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

Liberal Party

Sandy Silver	Leader of the Third Party Klondike
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**Yukon Legislative Assembly
Whitehorse, Yukon
Monday, October 27, 2014 — 1:00 p.m.**

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

Prayers

Speaker: Before we begin, I would like to express appreciation for the Commissioner being able to accept our invitation to join us today for the tributes in light of the presentation of the first poppy and the raising of the poppy flag to signal the week of remembrance.

Mr. Commissioner, it is our honour to have you here today.

Applause

DAILY ROUTINE

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

Tributes.

TRIBUTES

In recognition of Royal Canadian Legion poppy campaign

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: I rise today on behalf on behalf of the Legislative Assembly to pay tribute to the members of the Royal Canadian Legion as they launch their annual poppy campaign.

I've just returned from a ceremony at City Hall, which was particularly well-attended this year. Over the weekend, as you know, Corporal Chris Cassia stood guard at the cenotaph here in in downtown Whitehorse. In Haines Junction the Ranger Patrol and the Junior Ranger Patrol laid two wreaths at the memorial that is located there. The scene was repeated at cenotaphs across this country as veterans, cadets and members of the forces stood guard.

Canadian citizens by the thousands also brought flowers and wreaths to memorials and cenotaphs from coast to coast to coast in a heartfelt show of Canadian resolve. The guards have also returned to the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier at the war memorial in Ottawa. Of particular significance, Mr. Speaker, is that it was Master Corporal Bianca Toledo and Corporal Gabrielle Porter who stood at the first post.

Given the ruthless, freedom-hating misogynist ideology exhibited by ISIL, all Canadians are especially proud of these dedicated, brave Canadian women soldiers. Master Corporal Toledo and Corporal Porter are only two of the more than 10,000 Canadian women who proudly and nobly serve in the regular and reserve forces. In every corner of our country, Canadians are united in their respect and gratitude for those who defend our precious rights and freedoms and keep us safe.

The poppy is the official symbol of remembrance and each year, for two weeks before November 11, Canadians

wear poppies as a pledge to never forget fellow Canadians who have fallen in war and military operations.

Worn as close to the heart as possible, the poppy is a powerful and instantly recognizable tribute to those who have served. This year, Canadians have been asking for their poppies early, and with good reason. Our friends in the United Kingdom have been asking for Canadian poppies as well.

It was just a short time ago, Mr. Speaker, that Canadians were devastated by the senseless, unprovoked murders of two members of our Armed Forces. Taken from us in an act of cowardice on Monday, October 20 as he walked in a St-Jean-sur-Richelieu parking lot was warrant officer Patrice Vincent. Warrant Officer Vincent had served this country loyally and honourably for 28 years. He was a dedicated firefighter who always sought to improve his knowledge and skill, an avid cyclist and a quiet man known for his good-humoured nature.

When Canadians don their poppies this year, many will do so appreciating the service, loyalty and dedication of Warrant Officer Vincent.

Taken from us in another act of cowardice on Wednesday, October 22 as he stood guard over the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier at the War Memorial of our nation's capital was Corporal Nathan Cirillo. Corporal Cirillo was just 24 years old. Along with Corporal Branden Stevenson, he stood guard that Wednesday morning over an unidentified Canadian soldier who fell 97 years ago in the battlefields of France. As a reservist with the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders out of Hamilton, Corporal Cirillo was the second in command of his regiment's weapons detachment.

When Canadians don their poppies this year, many will be doing so appreciating the service, loyalty and dedication of Corporal Cirillo. The intention of the poppy campaign is to remind us of the sacrifice of Canadians who gave their lives in global peacekeeping missions as well as the 111,000 Canadians who died in the two world wars.

The poppy campaign serves another important purpose. It is the primary annual fundraiser for the Royal Canadian Legion. The Legion is one of this country's largest service organizations with programs that contribute to the lives of hundreds of thousands of citizens every year. The Legion assists and provides services to veterans, ex-service members and to their families.

Mr. Speaker, you and I are both active members of the Legion and personally know the value of this organization in our community. Yukon Legion's Branch 2 and Branch 254 support Yukon communities through donations to the Hospital Foundation and sponsorship of youth organizations.

Yukon's legions also work closely with all Yukon veterans to ensure that they are aware of the services available to them through Veterans Affairs.

Together in this Legislature, it is important to acknowledge and support the Royal Canadian Legion's poppy campaign to show our respect for the hard work of our Legion members and of our veterans. Let's proudly display our own poppies on our left lapels and donate generously to the poppy campaign.

Mr. Speaker, while I stand here, I would also like to recognize in the gallery today that we have four veterans and members of the Legion, Mr. Wayne Wannamaker, Mr. Lorne Woodier, Mr. Red Grossinger and Joe Hewitt. I would invite all members of the Assembly today to join me in welcoming them here today.

Applause

In recognition of Patient Safety Week

Hon. Mr. Graham: I rise in the House today in honour of Patient Safety Week, which runs from October 27 to 31 each year. This annual campaign was started by the Canadian Patient Safety Institute in an effort to focus attention on improving patient safety and quality of care. The theme this year is “Ask. Listen. Talk.” We are all being encouraged to ask questions, listen carefully to the answers, and talk about our concerns as a way of improving safety.

As patients, we must ensure that we understand what our health care providers are doing for us. We must ask questions until we understand and, when we have concerns, we need to share them with our health care providers. When we are not in a position to ask, we must rely on advocates, whether in the form of friends, family or in the form of institutions that are tasked with our physical well-being.

It’s clear to anybody who has read or listened to the news lately that Yukon takes patient safety very seriously. The coroner’s inquests that have taken place into some recent deaths point out the importance of identifying what, if anything, has gone wrong in patient treatment and what health care providers can do to improve patient safety and care. While most of the recommendations issued from these inquests are not directed at my department, nevertheless we reviewed them very carefully to see if we can use them to help improve our own services.

Yukon Hospital Corporation, our community health centres, continuing care facilities and home care workers follow best practices to ensure the best possible health care outcomes for patients and clients. When adverse incidents do occur, all members of our extended medical community take them very seriously and make every effort to improve the systems to ensure better patient care in the future. As an example, continuing care undergoes regular accreditation reviews by Accreditation Canada. Most recently, our continuing care achieved exemplary status, which is a notable achievement much envied by the health care community and something of which we are very proud.

If you have ever had a flu vaccination, Mr. Speaker, you will have been asked to stay in the waiting room for about 15 minutes after your shot. This is so the health care nurses can assess whether or not you’re having an adverse reaction, however unlikely that may seem. It’s a small step, but it’s a very important one and it’s an example of how we all need to work together to ensure patient safety.

Ms. Stick: I too rise on behalf of the Official Opposition and the Third Party to pay tribute to Canadian Patient Safety Week. I thank the minister for his remarks on

the goals of the Canadian Patient Safety Week. Of particular interest this year — and the focus that the Canadian Patient Safety Institute is bringing forward — is hand hygiene, which might seem a very simple and straightforward precaution but it is one that needs to be reinforced and remembered at all times. Washing our hands — simple, but we can reduce health care, associated infections in our homes, our schools, our workplaces and, most importantly, in our health care facilities. An estimated 220,000 Canadians are affected each year with health-care-associated infections — things they pick up in hospitals, seniors homes and continuing care facilities.

Having personally spent many months and a lot of time on a particular ward where infection control was critical, I have become a real advocate of handwashing. It was so important on this particular ward that they had video surveillance to ensure that every single person coming and every single person leaving that particular ward washed their hands. It didn’t matter who you were.

We hear more and more these days about, and are aware of, superbugs and antibiotic-resistant bacteria. At one time we only associated these with hospitals. We didn’t believe they existed outside of them, but we know better now that these are all in our communities. It’s reinforcing — reminds us to wash our hands. As the minister mentioned, with the flu season coming, it’s even more important.

A simple reminder: if we are going to or are visiting anyone in any health care facility, including hospitals, seniors residences, continuing care, please wash your hands before and after you visit. Remember, 15 seconds or as long as it takes you to sing, *Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star*. Wash your hands.

Speaker: Introduction of visitors.

Order please. Please stand for the departure of the Commissioner.

Commissioner Phillips leaves the Chamber

Speaker: Please be seated.

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?

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 80: Domestic Water Well Program Amendments Act — Introduction and First Reading

Hon. Mr. Cathers: I move that Bill No. 80, entitled *Domestic Water Well Program Amendments Act*, be now introduced and read a first time.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Minister of Community Services that Bill No. 80, entitled *Domestic Water Well Program Amendments Act*, be now introduced and read a first time.

Motion for introduction and first reading of Bill No. 80 agreed to

Speaker: Are there any further bills to be introduced?
Are there any notices of motion?

NOTICES OF MOTIONS

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to support recycling and waste diversion by:

(1) making all beverage containers subject to a recycling surcharge and sharing the increased revenue with recycling processors and community depots;

(2) requiring a recycling fee for all sizes of tires sold in the territory;

(3) expanding the designated material regulation to implement a recycling fee at the time of purchase for electronic and electrical products; and

(4) working with the City of Whitehorse and rural municipalities to identify and implement sustainable, long-term and cost-effective solutions for processing recyclables in the Yukon.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to promote the Yukon tourism brand that markets Yukon as an attractive year-round destination by:

(1) promoting local tourism and increased economic opportunities for northerners;

(2) increasing Yukon's funding for overseas marketing initiatives by \$590,000;

(3) developing new tourism products such as the Millhaven Bay project;

(4) enhancing Yukon's cultural products;

(5) supporting Yukon museums and cultural organizations;

(6) promoting events; and

(7) fostering new and emerging events.

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

THAT this House urges the Yukon government to continue to support the Canadian Rangers and their Yukon Patrols in local exercises that provide skills and abilities so they can help support local functions such as the Yukon Quest, among many others.

Ms. Moorcroft: Mr. Speaker, I rise to give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to provide its full cooperation to the Yukon Human Rights Commission to investigate human rights complaints at the Whitehorse Correctional Centre and to ensure that the Correctional Centre's practices and operations are consistent with the Yukon *Human Rights Act*.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to review the overuse of solitary confinement at the Whitehorse

Correctional Centre and assess the impact of its use on the physical and mental health of inmates detained in Yukon's jail.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to protect whistle-blowers by implementing the suggestions made by the Yukon Ombudsman regarding the anticipated public interest disclosure of wrongdoing legislation and by giving the proposed position of the Public Interest Disclosure Commissioner the authority to order, rather than recommend, a remedy rather than a reprisal against a whistle-blower.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to make the temporary two-year tourism marketing funds announced this summer a permanent part of the Department of Tourism and Culture's marketing budget.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to invite officials from the Yukon Development Corporation and Yukon Energy Corporation to appear as witnesses in this Legislature this fall.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Canada to delay passage of Bill S-6 *Yukon and Nunavut Regulatory Improvement Act* to allow for genuine consultation with Yukon First Nations.

Speaker: Is there a statement by a minister?

This then brings us to Question Period.

QUESTION PERIOD

Question re: YESAA process

Ms. Hanson: Last week, the Premier was unable or unwilling to tell Yukoners under what circumstances he thinks the federal minister should give binding directions to the independent, arm's-length Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Board. The ability for a federal minister to give binding directions to YESAB is one of the most controversial changes in federal Bill S-6. This element of Bill S-6 was added after the consultation with First Nations had already occurred. Yet the Premier continues to give his blessing to the federal Conservatives' bill even though First Nations have indicated they would resort to legal action if these controversial provisions are maintained.

Can the Premier explain how more lawsuits will encourage economic certainty in Yukon?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: As I have explained in the House already, policy direction will ensure a common understanding between the government and the board to help reduce uncertainty and delays. Any policy direction that would occur would have to be consistent with the *Yukon Environmental*

Socio-economic Assessment Act, needs to be consistent with the UFA, consistent with individual land claims and also consistent with other Yukon legislation. Policy direction is in fact common in other jurisdictions as well, and, as I also explained, Yukon government has the ability now to provide policy direction to the Water Board. Any direction in policy must pertain to the exercise or performance of board powers, duties and/or functions.

Ms. Hanson: He says it has to be consistent with YESAA. We're talking about a fundamental change to YESAA through this bill.

Mr. Speaker, it seems the Premier does not understand what the word certainty means when it comes to investment in our territory. Before Bill S-6, YESAA provided certainty. Investors knew that when they completed the YESAA process, they would have the support of First Nations and the public. That is certainty. By changing YESAA without the support of First Nation governments, investors will no longer have a clear path to social licence for their projects.

Does the Premier understand that the changes to YESAA contained in Bill S-6 will create less certainty for investors by harming their ability to get social licence for their projects?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: The amendments to the *Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Act* through Bill S-6 will, in fact, provide consistency and certainty with our legislation — to be consistent with other similar legislation across the country, including the other two territories. This allows us to be competitive and that is a priority for this government — to ensure that we are consistent, to ensure that we do create opportunities for Yukoners and Yukoners to be able to have more jobs. That is a priority for this government.

There have been almost seven years of consultation through this process. We support the amendments that the federal government is moving forward. As I said, they are consistent with similar pieces of legislation across this country — the ability for the federal government to provide direction to ensure that common understanding occurs between the government and the board.

Ms. Hanson: The Premier is incorrect when he says that this was a subject of consultation over seven years. Yes, the five-year review did occur.

These amendments were never part of it. The secret, unilateral and underhanded approach to governing that the Harper government and the Yukon Party government have adopted is only creating more conflict around development projects in this territory.

Mr. Speaker, the signing of the *Umbrella Final Agreement* 21 years ago signified a new direction in Yukon when it came to our relationships with Yukon First Nation governments. This agreement — the UFA — was negotiated in good faith. The five-year review was in good faith; S-6 was not. The Yukon Party government's absolute disregard for the final agreements and the institutions they create have taken their toll on a once-strong government-to-government relationship.

Does the Premier realize that economic certainty requires strong partnerships with First Nations, and how does he plan to rebuild its broken relationship with First Nation governments?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: As I said, the amendments were the result of almost seven years of consultation. Certainly they are consistent with Canada's action plan to improve the northern regulatory regimes and the northern strategy, and, in fact, it also conforms with the northern premiers' northern vision document as well.

These amendments will enhance environmental protection by allowing potential effects of likely future projects to also be considered when doing an assessment.

YESAA is not just about resource projects. YESAA is a process that assesses all development in this territory. Whether it's a recreational facility, whether it's a road, or whether it's a new bridge or water treatment plant, it affects all of us. Of course, we know that Bill S-6 passed through the Senate with unanimous support of all members, including the Senate Liberals, with no amendments.

Question re: Affordable housing

Ms. White: At last count, there is still more than \$11 million of northern housing trust funding that the Yukon Party government has been sitting on since 2006. In a letter addressed to some housing stakeholders last week, the minister indicated that Cabinet has approved using some of this money toward expanding the Salvation Army shelter.

Can the minister tell Yukoners how much money will be allocated to the Salvation Army, what project it will support and how many people he expects will benefit from the services provided?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: As I noted earlier, the details of that will be announced very shortly. The funding has been committed to support the Salvation Army. I can tell the member that it supports their project that is a shelter replacement and transitional housing, but the specific details will be announced very shortly.

Ms. White: Word in the community is it is \$3 million toward the Salvation Army. The Salvation Army expansion project will help address some social housing issues but that's not a solution to the pressing need for affordable rental housing for many families in the Yukon.

Last week, organizations were invited to a meeting held this morning to get input on how to use the rest of the northern housing trust money. Of the four options presented by the minister for discussion, only one mentions affordable rental housing.

Does the minister understand that social housing is only part of the equation and his continued inaction on affordable rental housing is affecting families, employers and the Yukon economy?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: The member, as should come as no surprise to anyone, is not accurately describing the discussion this morning or the range of potential options that were discussed.

I wrote in an invitation to the groups, as well as to the members of the community advisory committee who were invited to this morning's meeting with an indication of some of the potential areas that Cabinet was thinking of for, not just the northern housing trust remaining money, but also the new investment in affordable housing agreement that is a federal funding agreement I signed with Minister Bergen this summer.

We provided them with a range of the potential areas that government was considering, sought their input and had a very thorough and robust discussion that went about half an hour over the time that we allocated for it. Although there was a diversity of opinion, there were also many areas of commonality. I look forward to sharing that feedback with my Cabinet colleagues and to making decisions informed by what we heard this morning.

Ms. White: The need for affordable rental housing affects a broad spectrum of people from seniors to families. We're talking about friends and neighbours who have to spend more than 50 percent of their income to meet their housing needs. When the minister cancelled the 75 rental units planned for Whitehorse this summer, he sent the message to our friends and neighbours that they are not a priority of the Yukon government. With three of the four new options put forward by the minister not even mentioning affordable rental housing, is the minister telling Yukoners that the remainder of the northern housing trust money could be spent without creating a single affordable rental unit in the City of Whitehorse?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: We hear again the NDP standing in favor of multi-million-dollar grants to developers and touting that as the solution to the problem.

As I reminded the member before, the majority of Whitehorse area landlords are little landlords who own one or two rental units. We've seen a significant shift in the housing market. We've seen the rental market starting to shift. Compared to early last year when the vacancy rate was a mere 1.5 percent, the vacancy rate as of early this year is 7.1 percent on the rental market and it goes as high as 13.9 percent, according to stats branch, in the duplex market.

As I should again emphasize to the member, those people are the people who depend on that rental income to continue to be able to afford the mortgage on their home. Government is very concerned about protecting those citizens and not undermining their largest investment and their families' future.

Question re: Affordable housing

Mr. Silver: I have a question for the Premier. Many Yukoners have lost confidence in the minister responsible for Yukon Housing Corporation. Here is what the Yukon Chamber of Commerce had to say about the dealings with the minister: The decision to scrap the plans for 75 affordable housing units in Whitehorse could — and I quote: “erode the trust” in the request for proposals process. Here is a quote from the chair of the Chamber of Commerce — and I quote: “You really run the risk of having businesses ask the question

of whether these government RFPs are worth bidding. What does it mean if they can simply overturn them? That's not dealing in good faith.”

Does the Premier agree with the criticism from the chamber, or with his minister who says everything is fine on the affordable housing issue?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: It should come as no surprise to this House again that the Liberal Leader chooses to spin the facts in a manner that do not reflect reality. I would remind the member that we do appreciate that the chair of the Yukon Chamber of Commerce did express concern both on behalf of his organization and the company that he is president of and who did bid in that process. We have continued through the housing action plan and through discussions as recently as this morning involving stakeholders, including both chambers of commerce, to talk about the future needs within the housing spectrum. As I emphasized to all who participated this morning, the remaining amount of money is relatively small. We are committed to making investments.

We also recognize that there are areas that require further, ongoing dialogue and are committed to working with all the stakeholders to hear their input and to discuss future actions.

Mr. Silver: The point is the business community has lost faith in the minister. Here's more from the business community: “Why would I waste my time and my money knowing that somebody is going to change their mind after all this process is completed?” “We entered into these things with the understanding and the assumption that this is going to happen. If someone had said, ‘Well, we're not quite sure this is going to go ahead’ ... I would have never submitted in the first place.”

This is from another one of the developers who did respond to the RFP.

Once again, Mr. Speaker, why does the Premier continue to back this minister, instead of the territory's business community?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: What the member is failing to reflect in his comments is, of course, a developer who went through the process and thought they were going to get a multi-million-dollar grant would be disappointed that Management Board made the decision not to approve any projects in Whitehorse. But again, as I've stated on a number of occasions, the decision made by this government is based primarily on the fact that the rental market had shifted significantly from a vacancy rate of 1.5 percent in March of 2013 to a vacancy rate in April of this year — as per the release in the summer of that data — of 7.1-percent vacancy rate in the rental market, and the vacancy rate in the duplex rental market — 13.9 percent.

Those people who own duplexes are Yukoners who depend on that income to continue to be able to pay their mortgages in many cases. This government will stand on the side of those Yukon homeowners and we will continue to recognize the importance of not undermining their investment and putting them and their families in financial peril.

Mr. Silver: The minister's stats are disturbing. He is comparing oranges to apples and he knows that.

Mr. Speaker, it is very clear that the business community has no confidence in this minister and it is clear that the Premier intends to ignore the business community and defend the indefensible. It is also clear that housing advocates have no confidence in this minister either. The cancellation of the latest housing initiative resulted in quite a storm of criticism in many NGOs in this field.

In late June, the minister stepped in and cancelled the affordable housing project after saying for months that it wasn't going to be a political decision. Just days later, in early June, the Premier made the following statement — and I quote: “Western premiers recognize that access to stable and affordable housing is fundamental to a strong economy and to the health and well-being of western Canadians.”

Mr. Speaker, why is the Premier letting the minister do anything but use this money for affordable housing?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: What the member of the Liberal Party is really upset about is the \$100 million that this government has spent since 2008 on housing in this territory. That is really what this minister is upset about. Of course, we can talk about things such as Whistle Bend and the expansion of lots you are able to buy at the counter — as we have done in many of the other communities, Mr. Speaker.

But we know what the member opposite's record is on each one of those investments. The Liberal Leader voted against them — as he did on the hospital in Dawson City, as he did on McDonald Lodge that we are building right now. The Liberal Leader voted against them.

Of course, we have done things, such as the down payment assistance program as well, that have moved a lot of people out of rental housing and allowed them to be able to invest in their own equity and their own home. We continue to invest in home owners' repairs — the investments that we have made in Kaushee's Place, with Options for Independence to house adults who are living with FASD, the many senior housing projects that we've done throughout this territory, and youth shelters as well.

I am very proud of the record of this government in what we have done in terms of land and housing availability. We have more work to do and we will continue to do it.

Question re: Teacher staffing

Mr. Tredger: In last year's Spring Sitting, I asked the Minister of Education several times about how she planned to manage the overuse of temporary teachers' positions within the Department of Education.

Temporary teachers are employed by the department on a year-to-year basis. They have no certainty that they will be employed the following year. This makes it very difficult for them to settle down in the Yukon and become an important part of our communities. In an arbitration settlement, the arbitrator made it clear that temporary teachers could not be employed beyond two consecutive years unless there were exceptional circumstances.

Has the minister rectified this long-standing problem within the Department of Education and moved all temporary

teachers who have been employed for more than two years into permanent staffing positions?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Mr. Speaker, as I articulated, or at least I attempted to last sitting for the member opposite, temporary teachers are hired for a variety of various reasons. They're hired for specific periods of time, of course, to replace permanent teachers who are on long-term leave. They could also cover off individuals who are on sick leave, personal leave without pay, salary leave, deferred salary leave, parenthood leave and educational leave. There are a variety of reasons why temporary teachers are utilized.

We continue to review our hiring protocol. As I mentioned last year, in fact the last change to the hiring protocol was made earlier this year, which elevated the status of a temporary teacher to second in place.

Mr. Tredger: There remain many teachers in this position. Teachers are a central part of our communities. We trust them to care for and educate our children. They go above and beyond their profession to give back to the community. They are an integral part of our communities. When they are employed temporarily it makes it hard for them to settle down and invest where they are teaching. Many cannot qualify for a mortgage.

The act states that temporary teachers cannot be employed as temporary teachers beyond two years. Why does the minister use exceptional circumstances to justify continually employing people as temporary teachers? At what point will the minister admit that there is nothing exceptional about these temporary teachers' employment situations other than this government's exceptional overuse of what should be a rarely used section of the *Education Labour Relations Act*?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: I'm not entirely sure what the member opposite is referring to or if he is perhaps saying that the Government of Yukon is not following the letter of the law. In fact, the member opposite refers to the *Education Labour Relations Act*. We continue to follow that act. We continue to follow all of our hiring protocols and continue to work with all of our respective stakeholders to ensure that fairness is instilled and continues to be implemented within the system.

As I mentioned before on a number of occasions, and I will continue to reiterate: temporary teachers continue to be used for a variety of reasons, for very important reasons.

We will continue to work with our stakeholders to ensure that all teachers — are very much followed according to the letter of the collective agreement, according to the *Education Labour Relations Act* and according to each and every one of our protocol hiring staffing changes — and continue to tweak accordingly.

Mr. Tredger: I would remind the minister that there remain many outstanding grievances on this very issue. The government's attempts at muzzling teachers over the years, and their treatment of temporary teachers, show a pattern of lack of respect for our teachers. The way they are treating temporary teachers has a significant impact on their livelihoods and the communities where they work.

Temporary teachers provide us with a vital service and it is our duty to them to ensure that if they put in the work, they will get the certainty they deserve. This government talks about certainty for investors. What about certainty for our educators? This government needs to stop taking advantage of the good faith of Yukon's temporary teachers and implement a solution to this problem.

Will the minister commit to working with the Yukon Teachers Association toward a permanent solution that would create certainty for all our teachers, enabling them to, in turn, commit to in turn commit to our community —

Speaker: Order please.

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Again, temporary teachers are members of the Yukon Teachers Association and they are covered by all of the benefits of our collective agreement with the Yukon Teachers Association.

As I mentioned, temporary teachers are hired to meet temporary programming needs in all of our schools. They're very important members of our community and we will continue to utilize them in times of replacing permanent teachers who are on long-term leave and a litany of other leaves provided under the collective agreement.

Under the Yukon Party government, over the last 12 years, the Yukon government has continued to increase the number of full-time equivalent teachers and of course, the paraprofessional members, as well, of our teaching community. Again, we take this matter very seriously. We'll continue to implement and execute resources in each and every one of our classrooms in support of our student population.

Question re: Whistle-blower legislation

Ms. Hanson: When the Yukon Party was re-elected in 2006, they pledged to create whistle-blower legislation to ensure that public servants who observed wrongdoing in the workplace could come forward without fear of reprisal.

Since then, there have been two legislative select committee reports that set out what would be in the whistle-blower protection legislation. Last spring, the government released an information package highlighting how they planned on crafting this legislation.

Protection for whistle-blowers in Yukon is long overdue. Being able to speak about wrongdoing is vital to our democracy. As legislators, we have a duty to provide protection to public servants who, in good faith, reveal practices of wrongdoing.

Can the minister confirm that whistle-blower legislation will be tabled this sitting, as he committed to last spring?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Mr. Speaker, the member opposite is correct that this issue has been one that has been on the mind of the Legislature for some time now. Of course, a number of select committees over the years have looked at this issue and we take the recommendations made those select committees very seriously.

The most recent report of this Legislature is the one that has guided us to date, and we have full intentions of bringing

forward legislation at some point in our mandate with regard to this issue.

Ms. Hanson: Well, goodness, you would assume, judging from the level of rhetoric this government produces about their support for public servants, that this legislation would be a priority for them. You know, the information package that was released by government was not consistent with the recommendations of the select committees. The government information package did not include authority for the Ombudsman to order remedies for reprisals against whistle-blowers. The Yukon government is only prepared to allow the Ombudsman to recommend, not enforce, remedies when reprisals occur. The Ombudsman has been clear that any legislative approach that does not guarantee protection from reprisals for whistle-blowers will not work. Worse, it places public servants in jeopardy.

Will the minister commit to providing the Ombudsman with the authority to make sure whistle-blowers in the Yukon are protected from reprisal?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: There is a reason why we do these consultations, and that is to get feedback on potential legislation and to hear from Yukoners, whether they be in the unions or whether it is the Ombudsman herself, on these important issues and this specific issue as well. So of course, when we take something out for consultation, it doesn't mean necessarily that that's our end outcome. It means that this is our intention and this is what we want to hear from Yukoners about. So we take the input we receive from the Ombudsman very seriously and, of course, have incorporated all of her comments into our work.

We look forward to bringing forward legislation in due course, and I'm sure, at the time we bring forward that legislation, the Ombudsman will be satisfied with the fact that her comments have been incorporated into that work.

Question re: Ambulance volunteers

Mr. Barr: Last week, we heard more disturbing news from the volunteer ambulance service in Haines Junction. During the month of July, only two shifts had full coverage, and two-thirds of the time the ambulance wasn't staffed at all. Now, it is important to note that Haines Junction is the third most called-upon volunteer ambulance in the territory. As a result of this understaffing, there were 12 medevacs to Whitehorse. Only two of those were medically necessary. This could have been avoided had the Haines Junction volunteer ambulance been properly staffed but, until now, the government's response has been that the volunteers are responsible for finding more volunteers.

Why does the government refuse to take action to support the Haines Junction ambulance?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: I need to begin by correcting the member and by noting he indicated that the response had been that volunteers are responsible for finding more volunteers. I have never said that and do not agree with that statement. It's a partnership between government and the community members to work and find and recruit people, where there is a need for additional volunteers. Of course, for those volunteers

we do have in Haines Junction and throughout the territory, we work with them in understanding their needs, their priorities and their challenges.

As I pointed out to members — I believe recently — one of the things that I did last year, shortly after taking over responsibility as Minister of Community Services, was sit down last fall with all of the rural volunteer ambulance supervisors. I did that again earlier this year and again on Friday. We will continue to work with them in addressing their needs and their priorities.

We've already acknowledged that the additional steps that were taken this year in Haines Junction did not work as well as were hoped and have offered and committed to sending out senior staff of Protective Services branch to sit down with the EMS crew in Haines Junction to talk about what next steps should be taken to further support them.

Mr. Barr: Speaking specifically of Haines Junction here, and also what Haines Junction feels they need, the ambulance volunteers themselves contend that a lack of volunteers isn't the problem. The ambulance volunteers have ideas for how to solve this problem, but there are many stakeholders involved in this work. The Haines Junction ambulance volunteers have asked for a meeting based on the community development team model to find solutions to this problem. That's all the Haines Junction volunteers want: a discussion on how to ensure that Haines Junction has the ambulance coverage that it needs.

Will the minister commit to adopt the community development team model to find a solution to these gaps?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: The member is completely out of the loop on what is going on in this situation. I appreciate him bringing this issue forward.

As I noted, this is an area where additional steps were taken by EMS to support Haines Junction this year. Those steps did not work as well as had been hoped. We have already engaged, both at a senior departmental level and me directly, with the supervisor and others to offer and commit to sending out senior staff to talk to them about next steps and discuss a range of options. I spent time during this last week — on Friday I met with the supervisors of rural EMS units, including Haines Junction. On Saturday I spent a good part of the afternoon attending and talking to volunteers at the skills competition, and Saturday night I spent the evening at the EMS volunteer skills banquet until after 10:00 p.m. talking directly with supervisors and other volunteers from our community.

Again, I very much appreciate the valuable work that is provided by supervisors and all of our rural EMS volunteers. We have taken additional steps to support them, and this government recognizes and will continue to take further steps to support all of them, as well as Haines Junction directly.

Mr. Barr: Only now the minister is starting to hear what has been sounded in Haines Junction for some time now. The minister himself admitted to the press this week that the Haines Junction ambulance won't be offered any support beyond what is available to other volunteer ambulances in the communities.

The minister doesn't seem to understand that Haines Junction — the largest community without a hospital — has the highest level of ambulance calls in the territory. We are talking about public access to adequate levels of medical treatment, Mr. Speaker. An expensive medevac to Whitehorse, in lieu of a well-staffed volunteer ambulance, is neither sustainable nor cost-effective.

The sirens have been wailing since early this summer. When will the minister heed the warning, and can we have a timeline on this meeting he speaks of?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Mr. Speaker, the member really does not do a service to anyone by framing this in the manner that he has. In fact, the member's statement is absolutely wrong in his interpretation of what I said during interviews this week. We have in fact said very clearly that we are committed to considering the possibility of unique solutions to address Haines Junction's needs.

However, I will again reiterate that, as we consider Haines Junction's needs, we also have to be mindful of how it compares to what is done in other Yukon communities and we want to ensure that our support is consistent with and comparable with what we provide to volunteers in other Yukon communities while considering whether there are specific additional steps that are necessary to address the Haines Junction situation and further improve the coverage there.

Again, this summer, we did implement additional supports to Haines Junction. Those supports were not as effective as we had hoped, and we have already recognized — and both senior officials and I have committed directly to the supervisor and to other volunteers that we will follow up on those areas and that senior staff will travel to the community and will engage directly with the volunteers to talk about what steps should be taken next.

Speaker: The time for Question Period has now elapsed.

We will proceed to Orders of the Day.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT BILLS

Bill No. 15: *Second Appropriation Act, 2014-15* — Second Reading

Clerk: Second reading, Bill No. 15, standing in the name of the Hon. Mr. Pasloski.

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: I move that Bill No. 15, entitled *Second Appropriation Act, 2014-15*, be now read a second time.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Hon. Premier that Bill No. 15, entitled *Second Appropriation Act, 2014-15*, be now read a second time.

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: Before I begin, I would like to first acknowledge the constituents of the riding of Mountainview who I have the honour and privilege to serve. I thank them for their ongoing support.

Two important financial documents were presented on October 23: the 2013-14 Public Accounts and the first supplementary estimates for 2014-15.

With the tabling of these documents, Mr. Speaker, allow me to take the opportunity to speak about our government's financial record.

Over the past three years, I have observed on a number of occasions here in the Legislature that the Yukon government's budget has reached the \$1-billion threshold. I can imagine how this might be downplayed, even criticized, by some with comments such as: \$1 billion is just a number. Why all the fanfare? Isn't \$1 billion simply an arbitrary threshold? Yukon's budget has exceeded \$1 billion now for six consecutive years. What's the big deal?

I completely understand these observations, and perhaps a billion-dollar budget is not specifically worthy of fanfare, and perhaps a billion-dollar budget can be considered just an arbitrary threshold. However, it is a big deal. It is significant. It is significant because this billion-dollar spending threshold speaks volumes to the services, to the programs and the infrastructure that's delivered by our government on behalf of Yukoners.

Having managed the government's finances over a multi-year horizon since 2003-04, a period of 12 years, our government has delivered effective, responsible and disciplined spending initiatives and investments on behalf of Yukoners. Allow me to provide some context of where we were, where we are, and where we are headed.

Let's consider Premier Fentie's first budget, tabled 2003-04, with total expenditures of \$550 million, of which approximately \$98 million was allocated to capital investments. I recognize that our operational expenditures represent significant spending on programs and services for Yukoners, and I certainly do not wish to diminish their importance here. However, I also recognize that one measure of government budgets is the amount allocated to capital or infrastructure investments.

In 2003, approximately 18 percent of the budget was allocated to capital spending initiatives. Back in 2003, Yukon's population was just under 30,000. In fact, in June 2003, it was 29,976. Basic arithmetic tells us that Yukon government budgeted expenditures totalled approximately \$18,350 per Yukoner for the 2003-04 fiscal year.

Moving to the present, members will note the summary financials provided in the *Supplementary Estimates No. 1* document identified total budgeted expenditures for the 2014-15 fiscal year to be just under \$1.34 billion, of which \$287 million — or approximately 21.5 percent — is allocated to capital. In absolute terms, current capital spending is \$189 million greater than it was a decade ago.

Yukon's current population — and that's in March of 2014 — is at 36,623. Again, basic arithmetic tells us that the Yukon government's budgeted expenditures totalled approximately \$36,590 per Yukoner for the 2014-15 fiscal year. These basic metrics are telling. Over the past decade, our government's program, service and infrastructure investments have increased significantly. Total budgetary investment has

increased from \$550 million to \$1.34 billion, an increase of 144 percent. Total investment in capital has increased from \$98 million to \$287 million, an increase of 192 percent — almost three times greater. Expenditure per Yukoner has increased from \$18,350 to \$36,590, an increase of just under double.

Think about it, Mr. Speaker — Yukon's annual budget is now greater than \$1 billion. It has been greater than \$1 billion for six successive years now. This represents significant annual investment in Yukon on behalf of Yukoners. It highlights, with emphasis, the financial demands facing our government on an ongoing basis.

I have spoken in this Legislature previously about our government's rigor and discipline with respect to financial management. At the three-year mark of our current five-year mandate, we remain committed to pursuing planned, disciplined and affordable expenditure initiatives on behalf of Yukoners. Our past and continued efforts have put us in good stead as we move forward. In an environment where many other Canadian jurisdictions are working toward achieving balanced budgets and reducing their net debt, Yukon is there.

Our successive budgets have built financial capacity and we continue to build on that capacity with our forward-looking financial plan. Our fiscal position provides us with the capacity to be responsive to Yukoners' needs, to be responsive to emerging pressures without breaking the bank, as we continue through our mandate.

Fiscal discipline and sustainability has been a virtual principle of our mandate. Our 2014-15 budget contained a number of capital initiatives, particularly in the areas of education and health, that are of significant importance to Yukoners, including the F.H. Collins replacement, Macdonald Lodge replacement, Sarah Steele replacement, Whitehorse hospital expansion, Salvation Army redevelopment and long-term continuing care facility.

Investing in infrastructure developments and initiatives is not a one-off exercise. Once built and commissioned, facilities such as these I've just highlighted require ongoing funding support. Whether it is funding for general operational expenses, such as utilities and maintenance, or funding for programs and services, there are ongoing budgetary requirements that must be considered for every infrastructure development.

This bears repeating: our past and continuing financial discipline has afforded us the opportunity to make significant infrastructure investments on behalf of Yukoners.

In addition, our commitment to prudent fiscal management has ensured that our government is well-positioned to manage the ongoing operational, program and service requirements associated with these facilities.

Our prudent and disciplined approach ensures the sustainability of the programs and services provided on behalf of Yukoners. Yukon is in an enviable fiscal position, a position for which my colleagues and I are extremely proud. I have spoken previously at some length on our government's approach to planning, budgeting and decision-making, about how our government proactively manages to ensure and to

allow for appropriate legislative consideration of our proposed expenditure initiatives.

Indulge me once again, Mr. Speaker, as I cannot emphasize enough the importance of strong planning, strong budgeting and decision-making processes. In its basic form, planning and budgeting is about decision-making. It is all about identifying priorities, then considering, developing, resourcing and implementing appropriate actions to provide the best services possible to Yukoners.

At its core, planning and budgeting requires decision-makers to make choices. The budget process supports us as decision-makers to consider all issues and identify appropriate solutions. In this regard, the development of a budget serves us both as a planning tool and as a control tool. Decision-making is an ongoing, frequently evolving process. Decision-making is not an isolated event. It remains the prerogative — more so the obligation — of our government to consider emerging issues and priorities and to recommend effective and appropriately resourced solutions and actions to the Legislative Assembly.

This has resulted in the adopted practice of the Yukon government to in-year adjustments tabled as supplementary estimates for the Assembly's consideration to the original budget plan. This approach has served Yukon well, offering significant opportunity within the context of the multi-year fiscal framework to consider resource requirements for competing priorities and make sound recommendations for scrutiny, debate and approval by the Legislative Assembly.

I apologize for taking us on a tangent. My colleagues and I take very seriously and respect the importance of a strong and effective basis in process and procedure in support of our decision-making responsibilities.

I believe it is important for me to once again confirm with all members of the Legislative Assembly our commitment to prudent, responsible and ultimately accountable decision-making.

Thank you for your indulgence.

Mr. Speaker, I started out today noting that I had presented two important documents for consideration by this Legislature. First, we have the 2013-14 Public Accounts, representing the final accounting for the 2013-14 fiscal year. I will take this opportunity to briefly identify a number of highlights from the 2013-14 fiscal year-end report.

The 2013-14 Public Accounts are presented with a clean opinion from the Office of the Auditor General of Canada. Members of the Assembly will note that we are not tabling a final appropriation bill and final supplementary estimates for 2013-14. For the third consecutive fiscal year, all departments managed within their approved appropriations, and I would like to recognize and thank the ministers and their departments for their due diligence.

The summary financials on an unconsolidated basis for the year ended March 31, 2014, are an annual surplus of \$57.873 million, net financial assets of \$194.654 million and accumulated surplus of \$1.284 billion.

The Yukon government's financial position remains very strong. We are truly in an enviable position, where we can

make significant infrastructure investments — such as those I previously noted — and continue to provide financially sustainable, ongoing programs and services on behalf of all Yukoners.

The second document tabled today is the 2014-15 *Supplementary Estimates No. 1* and the accompanying appropriation bill, which is Bill No. 50.

The first supplementary estimates of a fiscal year provide us with two opportunities: first, incorporating the results from the 2013-14 fiscal year, as reported in Public Accounts. It provides us the opportunity to present to the Legislature, and to the general public, an update on the financial position of the government. It is important for us as legislators to understand the issue of timing. I'm confident that members can appreciate that at the time the 2014-15 budget was prepared and tabled, the audited results for the 2013-14 fiscal year were not finalized. Therefore, the summary projects for 2013-14 may have been subject to change. This is the case every fiscal year.

Now that the results for 2013-14 have been finalized, *Supplementary Estimates No. 1* represents the first opportunity to provide the Assembly a financial update for 2014-15, inclusive of the 2013-14 final results.

Second, and more to the point of seeking required spending authorities, this first supplementary estimate details the proposed expenditure changes that require legislative appropriation authority, in addition to the spending authorities previously granted by the Legislature when the main estimates were approved.

Individual ministers will be pleased to provide members of the Legislature with complete details of their respective portfolios in general debate.

Although I defer to the individual ministers on details, I would like to take a moment to comment on our summary financials reported here today.

After incorporating the 2013-14 final audited results, as well as the expenditure and revenue changes identified through the first supplementary estimates for 2014-15, our government continues to be in a very healthy fiscal position. *Supplementary Estimates No. 1* presents a forecast annual surplus of \$45.689 million, resulting in an estimated accumulated surplus for March 31, 2015 of just under \$1.33 billion. Continuing to avoid net debt, our year-end net financial asset position is projected at \$176.819 million.

I wish to emphasize to all members the significance of having net financial assets as opposed to net debt. This is a very significant indicator of our financial health, as it means that the government is not relying on future revenues to provide current services. This is an enviable position for Yukon, as only Alberta is in the same position. My colleagues and I are very, very proud of this accomplishment.

The 2014-15 mains were tabled back on March 25 with a budgeted gross expenditure of \$1.318 billion, of which just under \$1.025 billion was allocated to O&M and \$293 million was allocated to capital. Building on our 2014-15 main estimates, the *Second Appropriation Act, 2014-15* and accompanying first supplementary estimates for 2014-15 provides for increased spending totalling \$21.44 million. Of

this total, \$27.56 million represents an increase in gross O&M expenditures and \$6.118 million represents a decrease in gross capital expenditures.

I did acknowledge I would defer to the individual ministers regarding the details of their respective portfolios. However, I do wish to comment on the net reduction to capital identified. It does occur where project implementation is delayed and funding previously allocated is not required in the current fiscal year.

We see that here in these supplementary estimates, where projects have been delayed and lapsing funds deferred to be included in our 2015-16 budget. While there are a number of smaller projects, deferral is identified under the Building Canada and the gas tax programs, as well as under the land development portfolio. Significant specific examples include McDonald Lodge and Atlin Lake campground.

I take this opportunity to confirm to the Legislative Assembly and to the Yukon public that these projects have not been cancelled. Project delays necessitate a review of required cash flows, and appropriate adjustments have been recommended to the Legislature through the supplementary estimates.

As I just noted, this supplementary budget provides for an increased O&M and capital expenditure of just over \$21 million. This increase results in total government expenditures of almost \$1.34 billion. Of this, just over \$287 million is allocated to capital for infrastructure improvements throughout Yukon and \$1.052 billion is allocated to O&M support of the many ongoing programs and services provided to Yukoners. As always, individual ministers will be pleased to provide members of the Legislature with the complete details of their respective portfolios when we reconvene to discuss the *Second Appropriation Act, 2014-15* in general debate.

As I have stated in previous comments before the Legislature and as I have repeated here again today, my colleagues and I take very seriously and respect the importance of effective processes and procedures in support of our decision-making responsibilities.

We prepare and table budgets based on the best and most current information at the time. Notwithstanding, the best-laid plans are subject to change. Changes to the budget plan through supplementary estimates allow us to be responsive to emerging pressures and priorities of importance to Yukoners. Changes to the budget plan through supplementary estimates maintain accountability to the Legislative Assembly and to all Yukoners.

As I wrap up, Mr. Speaker, I advise the Legislature that individual members would be pleased to provide members of this Legislature with the complete details of their respective portfolios when we reconvene to discuss *Second Appropriation Act, 2014-15* in general debate.

Members will have observed that my focus here has been on the commitment to solid planning, decision-making and budgeting and the strength of our fiscal framework. Our government is in a very strong financial position. We continue to target balanced budgets, with 2014-15 projecting an annual

surplus, and we continue to maintain a very healthy net financial asset position and avoid net debt.

The strength of our fiscal position and our government's ongoing commitment to fiscal discipline allows us to continue to make resource-allocation decisions such as those identified in *Supplementary Estimates No. 1* on behalf of all Yukoners. These are significant expenditures made for the benefit of all Yukoners. We continue to provide significant investments and expenditure initiatives on behalf of Yukoners while maintaining our commitment to fiscal discipline. We do this through a prudent and practical approach to planning, decision-making and budgeting.

We have a solid fiscal plan, and it continues to serve Yukoners very well. I am proud of the programs, the services and the infrastructure investments we provide for the benefit of all Yukoners. I'm doubly proud that we are maintaining a strong fiscal position, allowing for a government to be responsive to emerging issues and priorities on behalf of all of us.

I look forward to discussing the supplementary budget in further detail when we reconvene to discuss it in general debate.

Before I sit down, I would also like to acknowledge and thank all the department staff in their preparation of putting together this bill. In particular, I would like to acknowledge and thank the hard-working people in the Department of Finance.

At this time, I would like to acknowledge the work that has been accomplished in the past by the former Deputy Minister of Finance, David Hrycan, who, as we speak, is now enjoying the fruits of his retirement in the Okanagan of British Columbia. I would also like to acknowledge and welcome the new Deputy Minister of Finance, Stephen LeClair, and his leadership of that department.

Ms. Hanson: It is my honour to stand here as the Member of the Legislative Assembly for Whitehorse Centre, a riding that, in its diversity — as it stretches from Marwell in the industrial area to the south access — really represents the full range of Yukon interests of Yukon's citizenry in terms of the very, very advantaged economically and socially, and the very disadvantaged economically and socially.

As I stand here as the member representing this diverse riding, it is with that mind that I listen to the Premier as well as bring forward comments I make as a Member of the Legislative Assembly because it's my job to represent, not just the members of Whitehorse Centre but, as the Leader of the Official Opposition, it is in our parliamentary democracy, the role and responsibility of the Official Opposition, to hold the government to account with respect to the decisions that it takes and with respect to the manner with which it stewards the financial resources that are placed at its disposal on behalf of all citizens of the Yukon. It's a role that I take — and that we take — very seriously.

It is my intention to keep my comments relatively brief with respect to the supplementary budget. I believe that once we've had an opportunity to be briefed by representatives of

the various departments, we'll be able to then to move into a more focused discussion on each of the areas where there have been both increases and decreases from what was approved in the budget process last spring.

There are a few comments that the Premier made in his opening remarks that I just wanted to reflect upon. I think it's important — and the Finance minister has made it clear, and I agree — that budgets are about priorities. I think it has become increasingly clear that the Yukon Party priorities are not in line with what Yukoners expect from our government.

There are a number of examples that come to mind. We've seen an agenda, for example, without the endorsement of citizens, without the expressed acceptance by citizens — an aggressive agenda with respect to oil and gas extraction, which is in stark contrast from the repeated calls from Yukoners who are focused on renewable energy. That's an agenda that's visible in both trade and popular magazines and other advertising venues.

We've heard the Minister of Finance say that the fiscal position of this government allows the government to be responsive to demands as they arise in the territory, which begs the question: Why? Why has there been such inaction on affordable rental housing? We heard again this afternoon — it's the echo this afternoon of the comments and the statements made over the last number of months and, in fact, the last number of years, if you think about it. It's the government that created a housing crisis by not making land available for housing — watched as prices escalated and then uses the rationalization that those highly escalated prices are now the reason why this government will not take action to support those working Yukoners who are looking for affordable rental housing, who can never, ever afford to get into the housing market.

We've seen where these choices — the chamber of commerce, Yukon Anti-Poverty Coalition, the City of Whitehorse and employers of all backgrounds have indicated that the shortage of affordable rental housing has serious consequences for our economy. Our economy — that's what will be driving Yukon in the future — a good solid economy, a stable economy.

We've just gone through a boom, and I know the Minister of Economic Development attended a recent speaking engagement from an investment advisor brought in by the Chamber of Commerce, and he brought forward some really important messages for us as legislators with respect to the need to be looking out a few years as the boom has now slid — and the commodity prices do have an impact on this economy. They do have an impact on the fiscal position of this territorial government.

It's one thing to say that we have a variable surplus. It's another thing to say that we respond, that we have the ability to be responsive. The proof is in being responsive. We will continue to hold this government accountable for their inaction on affordable housing. There are many other needs in our communities that a responsive government would be listening to and doing something about. The fact that there is a systemic issue of inequality and poverty, evidenced by empty

food shelves at the food bank and the increased use of the food bank by people who are forced to pay between 50 and 60 percent of their income on accommodation.

That's a serious situation, and this government refuses to act — or when we see a choice made not to provide support for ongoing funding for a safe place for women that is threatened because of lack of funding; or when we see NGOs like the Boys & Girls Club having to crowd-source to offer their after-school programming; or mothers and newborns programs cancelled because there is no public funding, despite the evidence that has been documented for many, many years — evidence that the Yukon has led — evidence with respect to the implications of support for mothers and newborns with respect to early childhood development. The EDI index is in this with respect to child development in this territory — serious, serious issues. The benefits — the long-term benefits to society by those investments — they speak to opportunities for government to be responsive.

The fact that a government that talks about having a long-term view and talks about having the ability to plan and project has neglected and/or refused — because I'm not sure which it is — to take seriously or go beyond the words and the rhetoric that it uses when it talks about climate change and when it talks about the notion of recycling; when it was forced — dragged kicking and screaming — to diversion programs and has not renewed the approach to how we deal with recycling and diversion in 22 years — the fact that Raven Recycling, which handles 85 percent of the territory's recycling, in terms of diversion, has been forced to close their drop-off for non-refundables because of the lack of sustainable funding for recycling in this territory.

If we're responsive to emerging needs in this territory, there's a gap here. There's a gap between what is said and what is going on. These are clear needs in our community and it's clear that the government is not stepping up and taking responsibility to address them.

The Minister of Finance is correct that a good government does demand — with respect to how we manage our resources — the expectation that we do it with prudence, probity and effectiveness, and that when we make decisions, I would like to suggest — as the minister speaks about decision-making processes and the control mechanisms, it was interesting — public admin 101 — which I think we heard last year. When you add to the decision-making process, I think the key part that's really imperative is that we talk about making decisions based on evidence — evidence-based decision-making — as opposed to the approach where decisions are taken and then there's an attempt to find — a desperate search, oftentimes — to find evidence to back up the decisions that have been already taken by government.

We have seen this demonstrated time and time again by the government to justify flip-flops on various capital projects, for example, from schools to housing. The Finance minister spoke to the fact that there are about \$12 million, I think, in lapsed — or more than that — \$15 million in lapsed capital expenditures. We will be interested to hear more of the details about that.

There are serious issues that have been identified — not just by the Official Opposition or the Third Party — with respect to how this government manages capital budgets — we hear it throughout the business community.

Mr. Speaker, I want to reiterate the importance of our highly skilled professional public service. And I say this as a past public servant, because I do recognize the challenges that there are for public servants to try to anticipate — to deal with a government that changes direction and changes its mind as often as this one does with respect to direction, priorities and the basis for ever-changing decisions, to say nothing about what decisions that were made and to whom this government is listening, as it twirls the roulette wheel to pinpoint whatever the latest announcement is going to be.

I think we know that public servants who serve all Yukoners across the broad spectrum of services do so with dedication, with diligence. They deserve our respect and they deserve a government that is willing to demonstrate that genuine respect by ensuring that public servants who witness, or are subject to, wrongdoing in the carrying out of government activities can safely — and without reprisal — take the cover of secrecy off.

We know that abuse thrives where there is secrecy, where there are overt or veiled threats. We cannot afford to have an atmosphere of secrecy when we are dealing with the public trust, and the largest public trust that we have is the stewardship of the resources of this territory.

As legislators, we are charged with the public stewardship, as the Minister of Finance said, of an excess of \$1.34 billion. Once the political affirmation of the amounts are voted for in each area, our public service is charged with delivering the identified programs and services in the most efficient, economical and effective manner possible. They should be able to do this without fear of reprisal, without fear of interference. They should also be able to present policy options based on evidence, based on best practice, and not to have their views and expertise overridden by the behind-closed-doors lobbying of special interests.

The irony is that, in a parliamentary democracy, the notion is that legislators, like each of the MLAs in this Chamber, are charged with the overall management of fiscal renewable and non-renewable resources of Yukon. Decisions in a democracy are supposed to be made by those elected to represent the citizenry. Decisions made based on an open, transparent and vigorous debate are the hallmark of democracy. Increasingly, we have seen that tradition eroded to the point where this Chamber is presented with a fait accompli, maybe a little discussion — that, for the most part, the real discussion has already taken place elsewhere with select unelected stakeholders.

As the Official Opposition, it is our responsibility to hold the government to account for the decisions that it says it has made and to how it accounts for the decisions made with respect to the overall financial management of Yukon's fiscal resources. This supplementary budget has identified a need for a net of about \$21.4 million of new money. As we move forward into the debate, we will have questions, both about

what the new requirements are that have necessitated new expenditures and, at the same time, we will have many questions about the approximately \$15 million or \$16 million of planned expenditures almost exclusively in the capital area that were not or will not be delivered this fiscal year.

As I mentioned, once the departmental briefings have been scheduled, we as the Official Opposition look forward to debate on supplemental estimates and the opportunity to scrutinize both the government's choices and their capacity — or, in certain clear cases, the demonstrated lack of capacity — to carry out planned and approved expenditures.

I remind the ministers opposite that the Legislative Assembly gives approval for the expenditure of public funds, the administration of Yukon citizens' money and the expectation that the monies so voted will be spent in the best interests of all citizens of Yukon.

We will want to focus on those departments where there have been changes and we will be scrutinizing the performance of ministers' records over the past three fiscal years with respect to their ability to deliver on the programs, initiatives and the resources approved by this Assembly.

We look forward to getting on with the business of discussing the supplementary budget and to discuss the key issues and the differences presented in this first supplementary estimate from the mains from last spring.

Mr. Elias: It always an honour and a privilege to address this Assembly as the Vuntut Gwitchin MLA and respond to another supplementary budget estimate and Bill No. 15 and the corresponding speeches as it outlines additional direction and an agenda for Yukoners to consider.

I would like to begin with a heartfelt mahsi' cho to the people of Old Crow for their incredible and unwavering support and faith in me over the years that I've been your MLA. I do care about each and every one of my constituents, and words cannot express how I feel sometimes when I speak on their behalf. I am honoured to be their representative in the Yukon Legislative Assembly.

I did have the opportunity to travel to almost every community over the summer, and it was wonderful to engage with my fellow Yukoners and speak of so many issues and topics, and witness so many good works going on and listen to the innovative ideas Yukoners think would be wonderful to implement. I thank each and every one of you.

So many wonderful things are happening in my riding, and that's what I am going to focus my comments on today. I would like to share some of those with my fellow members of the Assembly.

It is with great pride that I mention to the Assembly that there was a vision by our elders that one day all of our students would graduate from grade 12 in our community of Old Crow. That dream for our people was realized and began on June 18, 2014.

History was made that day, and congratulations go out to Miss Sheila Kyikavichik. Sheila is Old Crow's first-ever Grade 12 graduate from the Old Crow alternate high school. Through our elders' vision, commitments from Sheila's

family, our minister of Education, the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation education department and chief and council leadership and, of course, Sheila's teacher, Ms. Frances Ross, you have made our community so proud.

It was an emotional moment for me to watch Sheila walk across the stage at the Chief Zzeh Gittlit School and accept her diploma. Congratulations again, Sheila. All your hard work has paid off and your community is so proud of you.

Mr. Speaker, the 2014 Biennial Gwich'in Gathering was hosted by the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation on July 21 to 26 this past summer, and it was a resounding success. I would like to offer my thanks to all the organizers and participants in the 2014 Biennial Gwich'in Gathering. Everyone I spoke with said they really enjoyed themselves. The organizers did a great job. It was inspirational to see all of our people and visitors come together and celebrate our culture, our history and to open our homes.

The Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation was successful in their application to the community development fund to help ensure that the 2014 gathering was a success. The Yukon government provided \$20,000 to build needed infrastructure, including bleachers, benches, floor sections and a stage to enable Old Crow to host this great event. The project created 100 hours of employment for three people, and I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Minister of Economic Development for that support.

July 29 was an excellent day at the 2014 Biennial Gwich'in Gathering. It was a special moment for me to witness the signing of the contribution agreement and partnership between the Government of Yukon and the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation government to support the construction of a community multi-use complex in Old Crow.

This initiative will support sport, recreation, healthy living and capacity building in our community. The Government of Yukon is contributing \$2.7 million toward the \$7.2-million complex. The Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation is contributing approximately \$2.1 million and is hoping to access federal funding for the remaining funds. The complex will include a space for elder and youth activities, community gatherings, child care, which will include a language nest, and will include an industrial kitchen, communication centre, multi-purpose room, and weight training and fitness studios. I can't thank the Premier and my caucus enough. It was a pleasure to sign as a witness to this \$2.7-million contribution from the Yukon government to this long-standing, demonstrated community need. I want to take this opportunity to thank our community of Old Crow for their steadfast direction and patience as well — great job to everyone.

I also want to take a moment to mention a nice and thoughtful gesture that occurred on July 23 this past summer, when Premier Pasloski and our Member of Parliament Leef gave out some fresh Arctic char to the elders in Old Crow, Mayo and Alaska at the Biennial Gwich'in Gathering. Believe me when I say that the Premier and our MP made our elders so happy that day because the Gwich'in gathering assembly was speaking about the state of the salmon stocks across the Gwich'in nation when the Premier and our Member of

Parliament showed up from Herschel Island with the Arctic char treats. Thank you again.

I would also like to share with the Assembly that, on that salmon note, it was a general consensus of the Biennial Gwich'in Gathering that our countries cannot allow the salmon to ever be removed from the ecological tapestry or else the entire health of the watershed could unravel. The North Yukon water monitoring program is alive and well. This summer, at the request of Old Crow residents, the Yukon government Water Resources branch began monitoring water quality in the river surrounding our community.

In June, the branch trained a local water sampler and reactivated sampling stations that are now tested monthly. Branch technicians have revisited the upper Eagle basin in late July and the results will be forthcoming. There will also be three year-round hydrometric stations monitoring baseline stream flow on the Eagle River, McParlon Creek and DalGLISH Creek, which will better help understand the relationship between baseline water quality data and natural fluctuations in seasonal flow.

A fourth station monitoring Glacier Creek to measure the impacts of drinking water demands in the Eagle Plains area is also being monitored. The water quality is sampled at 16 sites across the Eagle Plains Basin several times per year to determine baseline water quality in the primary oil and gas basin.

On a related note, the Northern Cross (Yukon) Limited application is presently before the Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Board. Northern Cross has submitted a YESAB application for exploration drilling of 20 new wells in the Eagle Plains Basin. The work is planned to take place over the next eight-year period in the area where Northern Cross recently completed their 3D seismic program. The Water Resources branch has been working with the Yukon Water Board secretariat and the Oil and Gas branch to identify water licence requirements, and the Fish and Wildlife branch will be reviewing the application to assess the application's impacts on wildlife and traditional harvesting access.

There has been and still will be an opportunity for the public to comment throughout this YESAB Dawson designated office assessment.

Page 4-2 of the *North Yukon Regional Land Use Plan* speaks to the proposed new Summit Lake-Bell River territorial park. The Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation and Yukon government approved the *North Yukon Regional Land Use Plan* in 2009. The approved plan recommended the creation of the Summit Lake/Bell River territorial park with a specified area of approximately 1,525 square kilometres, but with no defined boundary. Environment Yukon has worked with the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources to develop a proposed boundary. The Parks branch is currently beginning a process with the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation to discuss the park boundary, the park designation and a park management planning process. The process will also include consultation with the Tetlit Gwich'in and the Gwich'in Tribal Council, as the park falls within the Tetlit Gwich'in secondary use area.

I'm going to move on to speak about the Vuntut Gwitchin heritage and oral history project. Fifteen years ago, the community of Old Crow partnered with Parks Canada, the Yukon government and several universities in Canada and the United States to embark on the Vuntut Gwitchin Oral History Project. It is now coming to a conclusion. This project focused on the oral history research of our Vuntut Gwitchin elders, past and present, for four years. They then focused on cultural technology for three years, cultural geography for three years and finally navigation systems for four years. Over a decade and a half, the leaders of this important initiative successfully recruited and retained Vuntut Gwitchin youth to participate in the project from start to finish, which was so important, because I have seen those youth who have participated grow in a deep appreciation for our Gwitchin history, language and traditions.

In this final year, the planning will begin on how we as a community and partners will share, develop and teach the knowledge that has been learned and collected during this exemplary project.

Sharing with the world our Vuntut Gwitchin living culture, language and traditions is but one of thousands of reasons as to why we, as an isolated community, felt it necessary to present our aboriginal ancestry to the diversity of our country's fellow citizens of Canada, and to show some of what we as Vuntut Gwitchin have to offer the history and strength of our nation, as our community wants to be prudent partners in business and governance and the general social fabric with the rest of our country.

I want to speak about the Old Crow *Helicobacter pylori* project — *H. pylori* for short. I have offered to assist the Member for Klondike and the Member for Mayo-Tatchun with this project because some of their citizens have approached me over the years to begin a discussion about how this type of project can be initiated in their various communities.

The *H. pylori* is a bacterium that affects the human stomach lining. This issue became a community health concern due to the awareness of the bacteria's link to stomach cancer. In 2008, I contacted the Canadian North *Helicobacter Pylori* — or CANHelp — Working Group from the University of Alberta to inquire about developing a local *H. pylori* research program in Old Crow. Later that year, a resolution was passed by the Vuntut Gwitchin General Assembly that a project be carried out in the community of Old Crow.

In late 2009, the Old Crow *H. Pylori* Project Planning Committee was formed and planning meetings took place throughout 2010. The Old Crow *H. pylori* project was launched in December of 2010. In January of 2012, a University of Alberta gastroenterologist travelled to Old Crow to offer project participants upper gastrointestinal endoscopy at the Old Crow Health Centre. To date, 200 residents of Old Crow have consented to participate in one or more components of the Old Crow *H. pylori* project.

Some of the community's results so far are that, of the 186 breath test participants, 68 percent tested positive for *H. pylori*. Three percent were mild cases, 32 percent were

moderate cases, and 65 percent were severe cases. The treatment's success rate was 65 percent for sequential therapy and 95 percent through quadruple therapy.

I want to talk for a moment about the muskrats' environmental change and traditional use of the Old Crow Flats study that has been ongoing since 2007. Because of the importance of muskrat to the Vuntut Gwitchin people and to the Old Crow Flats ecosystem, our community of Old Crow developed a partnership with McGill University and the Department of Environment to study them and to better understand and predict changes that may occur in their abundance, diet, body condition and gene flow. The goals are to figure out where muskrats are, what they are eating, what condition they are in, and how they are related to each other across the Old Crow Flats. We gather this information by doing aerial surveys of muskrat push-ups in spring, which provide estimates of muskrat numbers, and collecting muskrat carcasses from community trappers to examine their body condition, health and DNA.

To gain better insight into factors responsible for lake-to-lake variation and muskrat abundance and condition across the Old Crow Flats, muskrats were studied on the same lake studied by other International Polar Year research teams. Some of the things being studied include: the plants' isotopic signature on the Old Crow Flats; the isotopic signature and protein content of submerged aquatic vegetation and the mercury in muskrat meat. Three hundred ninety-seven liver samples were also collected from across the Old Crow Flats and were examined for signs of bacterial diseases and parasites. Six hundred and sixty-nine muskrat carcass samples have been collected from 72 different lakes to examine muskrat nutritional condition and genetic diversity.

The annual population estimates of muskrat numbers in the Old Crow Flats from 2008 to 2013 were collected and the most recent muskrat population estimate is approximately 230,000 animals.

Environmental change in the Old Crow Flats was also studied and researched. One piece of that study found that, on average for the past 25 years, the spring temperature in the Old Crow Flats has been warming by one degree Celsius per decade, which is of grave concern to our community.

Very briefly, I would like to touch on some other works in Old Crow that are well on their way as we speak. Completion of the Old Crow community plan — this is essential for new housing applications. Galvanized aluminum foundations for the triodetic frame, or space frame, that move and adjust as one unit in responding to shifting permafrost were used on Freddy's and Lawrence's new homes. I know they are excited to move in soon. That is the first time we have actually used that type of space frame in Old Crow for residential homes.

Our community church foundation pad is complete and ready to build upon. We have six new houses and one duplex that are also scheduled to be completed early in the new year. Our new arctic co-op store is well on its way; the foundation is complete, the shell and the roof are up and the doors are scheduled to open in early January, 2015. Our community

member team that worked on this project are Winnie, Donovan, Rick and Marvin Junior, Vernon and Harlan. I thank them very much for their work.

We have hauled in a new high-tech distribution tank farm that will be in operation a year from now. Calculations suggest that it will save the Vuntut Gwitchin government \$300,000 a year when it is on-line. This great work was done by Jim, Dylan and Norman. Thank you very much.

Yukon Electrical has completed building its new gen-set and operations compound in Old Crow, providing safe and reliable power to our citizens. The Chief Zzeh Gittlit School has a new principal and three new teachers for the start of the new year. A welcome goes out to Eleanor, our principal and teachers, Adam, Andrew and Monica. The chinook and chum salmon sonar and radio tagging project is almost complete. The new RCMP member has settled in so welcome to Old Crow, Chris. Our Gwich'in language verbs dictionary is now complete and being used at the Chief Zzeh Gittlit School.

The Rampart House restoration project has completed another successful season, so congratulations to the workers, George, Joseph, Donovan, Tammy and Winnie. Your work is very much appreciated.

The government also trained two community members for the new water treatment facility.

It's so important to recognize the partnership between the Vuntut Gwitchin government and the Yukon territorial government that agreed to build a 2014 winter road from the Dempster Highway to Old Crow last January, February and March. Fifty-four semi-truckloads were hauled in and 34 were hauled out. This partnership between the Vuntut Gwitchin government and the Yukon territorial government precipitated many of the projects in Old Crow and resulted in so many Yukoners and businesses going to work.

In closing — I say this with a sense of responsibility. I'm running out of time here. Every generation has a legend and every journey has a first step and every saga has a beginning. On behalf of my constituents, I want to thank all of my colleagues on this side of the Legislature for recognizing the importance of the priorities, capital works and partnerships I have just spoken about today and for many years in this Assembly. We rarely do work in isolation to get the job done in Old Crow; it's almost always a team effort.

As the Member for the Vuntut Gwitchin and a member of the government caucus, I believe strong leadership is always necessary when one must make decisions inclusive of everyone. Our goal is to act in the interests of all Yukoners and the interest of the Yukon as a whole and, most importantly, we do not rest on our success. We must keep moving forward for a prosperous, healthy and strong territory, and we will never shirk or shy away from criticisms — empty or otherwise. We will simply find a way to succeed in our territory — a territory that is the best in the country in which to live, work and play.

Mr. Silver: I would like to start as well by thanking my constituents for the privilege of being their representative in this chamber. To my friends in Dawson, I want to thank them

for their continuing understanding. I hear all the time that I need to spend more time being just a community member — more time going to Thanksgiving dinners, birthday parties, playing music at the pit or at Gerties. Last week, for example, I missed participating with the Old Crow-Dawson City basketball team — the OCDC, great name — that came down to Whitehorse and was undefeated and won the basketball tournament last week. If it wasn't for volunteering for events like the Dawson City Music Festival or the Dawson highland games or Canada Day parades or economic development forums, I don't think I would have much opportunity to catch up with the lives of my friends. I'm very, very thankful because my constituents understand the importance of holding this government accountable. I am thankful for their encouragement and for their trust.

I would also like to publicly congratulate Roberta Joseph on her recent election as the new Chief of the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nation. I would like to also send my thank you to outgoing Chief Eddie Taylor, and also outgoing Deputy Chief, Jay Farr, for their years of service in the community.

I have been working very hard to prepare for the Legislative Fall Sitting. As part of this process I have been talking to Yukoners about their hopes and concerns. Part of my job is to ensure the government is held accountable and I have outlined several areas where the government can do better and I will highlight some of them now.

In the spring I warned the Yukon government's unilateral approach to amending YESAB legislation would further strain the relationships between the territory's public and the First Nation governments. Now the government faces the prospect of yet another lawsuit stemming from its failure to cooperate with others. The Government of Yukon should be wielding its influence that it claims to have in Ottawa to see that these legislative changes withdrawn until they have had more discussions with the Yukon public and with the First Nation governments. Unfortunately, instead the government seems to be content to take direction from Ottawa for their support on this bill and it is despite the fact that there has been inadequate consultation with the Yukon First Nations and no consultation with the general public.

Affordable housing — this summer we saw several Whitehorse projects get kiboshed by the Community Services minister. The northern housing trust money has sat for eight years — that's a full housing cycle. We need to plan, not wait until the next crisis before we start building affordable housing. People involved with this entire housing process have lost confidence in our government due to last-minute political interference.

Let's move on to intergovernmental relations. The government's three years in office have eroded relationships with other levels of government. We have seen this repeatedly with Yukon's First Nation governments and, more recently, with the City of Whitehorse.

Another priority is the Yukon's energy future. After another summer of feasibility studies, is the government any closer to deciding how it will meet the rising demands for power, or have they made any progress on securing a

renewable energy future? That valuable time planning for our energy future was lost in an attempt to privatize our energy future. Is the plan now to simply stall until the next election?

Finally, to our economy — a stable, diverse economy is my number-one priority and I have a number of questions about our economic future and where this government is heading. We know in the last fiscal year, the government relied on Ottawa for 81 percent of its revenues. Despite talk of the government increasing the role of the private sector, we remain as dependant on Ottawa as we ever have.

On the legislative front, I will look forward to debating whistle-blower legislation, if the government decides to bring it forward this fall. After three years of delays, I hope the government is ready to proceed. If there is money in this budget before us to implement this new legislation, it is very well-hidden.

There seem to be specific items in the budget that have been left out of the budget, and I will flag those now for the ministers, as I will be asking questions on these as we get into departmental debate. There is very little information on funding for the hospital expansion, for example — \$72 million was announced earlier this summer. Since that time, there has been very little information about timelines or when this money will flow. Is it coming directly from the government surplus or additional borrowing?

It will be great to get some answers from the Hospital Corporation when they appear this fall. It would be helpful if the government could provide the date of that appearance now, instead of waiting until the last minute.

Type II mining sites — there is a \$10-million increase in funding from Ottawa. I am very pleased to see this funding continue. There is a reduction in funding to the Dawson recreational centre — over a half-million-dollar reduction. I will have questions on this as we get into departmental debate, absolutely.

Similarly, there is a huge reduction in the Shakwak funding — over \$7.3 million. There has been no real update on the Premier and his lobbying attempts to Washington to try to get the U.S. to honour their obligations to Shakwak. From the budget before us, it appears that the trip was not much of a success.

The cancellation of the Nisutlin Bay bridge project is recorded in the budget documents before us as well. Yukoners will remember that this project was cancelled this spring because of the government's inability to work in cooperation with the Teslin Tlingit Council. If I recall correctly, it was cancelled before we even had time to debate it in the spring budget. That is probably a record, Mr. Speaker.

There is a reduction in the McDonald Lodge replacement project of \$5 million. I will have questions on this and the foundation work that was done this summer.

Unfortunately the northern housing trust remains unallocated and continues to sit as part of the surplus.

Congratulations have to go out to the Tourism Industry Association for their lobbying on new tourism marketing funds that appear in this budget. It is unfortunate that the

government had to be dragged kicking and screaming into this funding program. Now they are happily taking credit for it.

We would like to see a commitment from this government to make this a permanent part of the department's core budget and not just a one-off to see a run-up to the next election.

It is too important to be handled as an application-to-application basis with Ottawa, and it should absolutely become a permanent fund.

Unfortunately, there is no funding to begin paving the runway at the Dawson City Airport or funds to support work being done to achieve a World Heritage designation for Dawson City in the supplementary. These are just a few examples of what we are looking forward to as we get on to the debate in the departments, and I look forward to that opportunity.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity to speak.

Hon. Mr. Nixon: It's a pleasure to speak to Bill No. 15. Our government campaigned on a platform of "Moving Forward Together". We committed to Yukoners to build a better quality of life, to protect and manage our environment, to continue to develop our economy, and to provide good governance. Our budgets reflect our commitments to Yukoners and we are using our budgets to deliver on the vision we shared with Yukoners.

The budget before us today is one piece of how we are accomplishing our vision. We are addressing the needs of students across the territory with programming support for individuals and communities. We have invested in the F.H. Collins replacement project. We contribute to Yukon College's operations so that students may access the Yukon grant and other opportunities through training, employment, apprenticeship and skills development programs.

I'm so very pleased that the work toward increasing educational options available at Yukon College continues to evolve.

We have improved housing options by modernizing the *Residential Landlord and Tenant Act*, by helping first-time buyers and by increasing the supply of developed lots. We are addressing Yukoners' medical needs by recruiting physicians and other medical professionals and by financially assisting Yukoners' training in those fields.

Our government has invested in building a better quality of life for Yukoners. We are providing education and medical services, protecting and supporting our families, promoting the arts and sharing our culture, and supporting sports and recreation. We are investing in infrastructure like schools, hospitals, seniors facilities, arenas, treatment centres and housing for those most in need. We are indeed moving Yukon forward together.

I would like to take a moment to thank my constituents in Porter Creek South for continuing to have the confidence in me to represent them in this Legislative Assembly. I speak to my constituents in many different places — in fact, many of us do. I see constituents on their doorstep, at the grocery store,

retail stores; I see them at the gym and so on. I've been fortunate to become good friends with many of my constituents over the past few years. Friends often ask me if it's inconvenient to go shopping or go to the gym or just out in the general public because people always want to stop and talk. Indeed it is the very opposite. I thoroughly enjoy when constituents — when friends — take their time to stop and talk to me. It is through those conversations that I'm able to get a sense of what's important to Yukoners. I'm able to get a sense of what steps we need to be taking as a government to ensure that we represent Yukoners in this Legislative Assembly.

Many of my constituents are business-minded, are hard-working professionals within our community. Many of my constituents appreciate that this Yukon Party government continues to provide them with a healthy, stable economy, whether it be through mining, oil and gas, tourism or other opportunities.

People often commend the Yukon Party government on the work that has been achieved on the social side of the ledger as well.

It is no secret that the level of support for families and individuals affected by autism increase substantially through the support of this government. It certainly gained my attention as a parent of a child with autism and led me to become more involved with the Yukon Party executive followed by my involvement as a candidate.

As a result of this government's positive actions for people with disabilities, my son can now read and use an iPad to communicate his wants and needs. I'm sure he can now type about 40 words a minute using one finger. His frustration level, because of his lack of ability to communicate when he was younger, has decreased to almost nil. He can go shopping, swimming or to a restaurant with his family, all the while enjoying that experience. These are things that in 2002, when Jack was first diagnosed with autism, I never thought I would hear myself say.

Constituents in Porter Creek South who either have children with a disability or work with an individual with a disability take notice of the support that has been provided to them over the last 12 years. On behalf of my family, my friends and my constituents who are affected by disabilities in some fashion, I thank the Minister of Health and Social Services for this good work. I thank past ministers of Health and Social Services and the department staff who have been so incredibly helpful to ensure that proper and appropriate services are provided.

I would like to shift my focus to some of the areas of responsibility I have. I will just mention a couple items included in the fall supplementary budget. My intention is to discuss these in more detail when we get to Committee of the Whole for the departments.

When I think about the services that were available to victims of crime in 2002 and compare that with what we have now, I am so impressed with what we have achieved. In partnership with the Yukon Women's Transition Home Society, we funded the construction and ongoing operation of

Betty's Haven. We have partnered with the Canadian Centre for Child Protection to assist parents and children to stay safe in an increasingly on-line world.

I was just at the Justice FPT where I saw a very powerful on-line tool for parents and children called "WordsHurt", and you can see this at www.youtube.com/WordsHurt.

We have incorporated many of the *Substance Abuse Action Plan*, Yukon initiatives into the daily business of government. Yukon is leading the nation in responding to FASD. Recent initiatives include a supported housing facility and a prevalence study at the Whitehorse Correctional Centre. A decade ago the government undertook a major correctional redevelopment program that resulted in corrections consultations held over 160 meetings and received feedback from approximately 1,000 Yukoners.

Informed by that feedback, we developed a new philosophy of corrections that emphasized public safety, offender accountability and the importance of rehabilitation. That new philosophy led to a new act and the new facility to support those principles. Today we are further ahead than we were six months ago, and six months ago we were further ahead than we were a year ago. We continue to see correctional services evolve and develop.

We are also working with other departments in government and with First Nations to address how offenders transition from our secure facility to the community. Year after year I see continued improvement in this area.

On Friday, we were at the Correctional Centre for a badge presentation ceremony. I know how proud our correctional officers are of the often thankless work they do. They have one of the hardest jobs in all of Yukon and they do it with professionalism and with pride.

Our Justice appropriation reflects adjustments for expenses as a result of the Judicial Compensation Commission. We're also including here increases to the judges' pension plan. We're also investing in upgrades at the Law Centre to improve the safety and security of our clients and staff. I would like to thank the staff of the Department of Justice for their hard work and commitment to our community.

As Minister of Tourism and Culture, it is a privilege to be able to represent the best part of the best country in the world. On the tourism front, we are continuing to share with the world why Yukon is the best place to visit. It is the best place to work, live, play and raise a family.

We committed to enhanced marketing of Yukon as a quality travel destination through general awareness campaigns, especially in relation to Yukon's traditional markets in the U.S., Canada and Europe. Along with officials and trade representatives, I was recently in Germany and Holland. German-speaking Europe is the largest overseas market for Yukon. In February, we were also in Australia, and we will carry out a tourism trade mission to Japan and China in early 2015.

We committed to work with industry, with communities and First Nations to promote the Yukon tourism brand that markets Yukon as an attractive year-round travel destination. I

highlight the Tourism branch and its recent successes, particularly in the marketing of Yukon as a larger-than-life tourism destination.

In 2014, in recognition of the growth opportunities this industry provides, we are making the single-largest investment in marketing the government has ever made in the tourism sector. In September, the Yukon government and Government of Canada announced joint funding of \$3.6 million over two years to increase our marketing efforts and draw more visitors from Canada and around the world. This historic investment has already generated several very exciting and innovative marketing projects that are captured under the program named Yukon Now. We committed to enhance marketing of Yukon as a quality travel destination through general awareness campaigns, especially in relation to Yukon's traditional markets. Mr. Speaker, we have delivered. We are grateful for Canada's participation and accomplishing this commitment.

In our platform, we committed to utilizing the tourism cooperative marketing fund to build partnerships with industry that improve marketing efforts for both industry and government, and we have delivered. The Industry Services unit has been allocated \$2.1 million for its work to support businesses in the development and enhancement of tourism experiences. The funding includes a revote of \$176,000 for tourism cooperative marketing fund agreements, which are in place but not claimed by the applicants before year-end. TCMF provides matching funds for businesses. In other words, we assist businesses as they market their products.

In response to industry concerns, we had a look at the length of our tourism season. The \$1.9 million allocated to Visitor Services includes the additional \$70,000 required to extend the visitor information centre season to September 30.

The Minister of Environment and I announced the visitor information centre extended season and Environment Yukon's extension of full services in 10 key campgrounds. As we know, Yukon government's visitor information centres play an important role in increasing tourism revenues for Yukon businesses through the provision of high quality travel counselling services to hundreds of thousands of visitors every year. Beginning in 2015, all visitor information centres will open their doors to the travelling public May 1 and stay open until September 30. The VIC in downtown Whitehorse will continue to stay open year-round.

Mr. Speaker, one of the exciting areas for me is the exceptional work that is being done by Cultural Services branch in its mission to preserve and interpret our heritage, and support and promote the arts. We are promoting Yukon's arts and culture by supporting both organizations and individual artists. Organizations may apply to the arts operating funds and the arts fund. Individuals may access the touring artist fund and the Advanced Artist Award. We committed to continue to support the arts fund and the arts operating funds and we delivered.

We committed to continue funding programs such as the touring artist program and the Advanced Artist Award to provide assistance to visual and performing artists to enable them to conduct tours and compete in the southern markets.

The Arts section budget of \$4.2 million enables continued support of Yukon's dynamic arts community.

In July, I was pleased to announce a \$70,000-increase in funding available to individual artists through the Advanced Artist Award. The annual budget for the Advanced Artist Award is increasing from \$80,000 to \$115,000 this fiscal year and then to \$150,000 in 2015-16 and beyond. Support for artists at this level ultimately contributes to a vast array of events, exhibitions, tours, literary works and concerts. Together, these concerts make up Yukon's vibrant art scene and benefit Yukoners and visitors alike.

The arts fund supports a variety of creative community projects throughout Yukon. A few recent projects supported through arts fund included the Yukon Film Society's media arts programming project for the Available Light Film Festival and the Yukon Educational Theatre Society's plans for events highlighting the arts as a vehicle for community building.

The \$50,000 New Canadians Event Fund, which was announced in March of this year, has been accessed by three organizations to date to host cultural events that help promote multiculturalism and diversity in our great territory. These events include "A Night of Africa" showcasing African traditions and cultures, a Chinese culture show and a Chinese New Year celebration planned for February 2015. This fund supports newcomers in sharing their unique culture, which in turn helps reduce the potential for isolation of new Canadians and strengthens the expanding cultural fabric of our territory.

Perhaps one of Yukon's best kept secrets is the fact that Yukon produces the most abundant and significant ice age mammal fossils in Canada. The paleontology program continues to provide enhanced presence in the Klondike goldfields, where seasonal staff from the paleontology field office work with placer miners to ensure the territory's incredible fossil heritage is managed for the benefit of all Yukoners.

In cooperation with placer miners, the paleontologists acquired over 3,000 new fossils during the summer of 2014 for the Yukon paleontology collection. Thanks to our miners for doing their part and bringing forward new fossils and the important work they continue to do with the department.

The field office is one way the department is fostering a positive working relationship with placer miners and the Klondike Placer Miners Association. At the annual general meeting of the KPMA last month, the association voted unanimously in favour of a resolution supporting the development of a paleontology facility in Dawson City. The resolution also supports the development of a program to voluntarily report fossil finds in the goldfields and to legitimize the ownership of woolly mammoth ivory. The government is presently considering these requests, which would support scientific research while celebrating and preserving Yukon's rich fossil heritage.

I would like to thank the staff of the Department of Tourism and Culture for their dedication and commitment to their clients and stakeholders. Initiatives such as Yukon Now, the Advanced Artist Award funding increase, the Yukon

paleontology field office and the extended visitor services season are just a few examples of the many activities the department undertakes to foster a prosperous tourism industry, rich heritage resources and vibrant cultural communities.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: It is a pleasure to rise and speak to this budget bill, the *Second Appropriation Act, 2014-15*, for this year. There are a lot of things I want to discuss with regard to this bill as it relates to my various departments.

I wanted to first start by saying a few words about the unexpected passing of a constituent — a dear friend and great Yukoner, Rick Cusick — earlier this summer. Rick was the father of my close friend Tyler, and his tragic passing was an incredible loss to Tyler and Rick's wife Carrie, as well as Rick's whole family. I committed to the family that I would say a few words about Rick in the Legislature and pass on those words to them afterward.

I was just going to read briefly, with members' indulgence, the brief obituary that appeared in the newspapers in August earlier this year: It is with great sorrow that we mourn the passing of Richard (Rick) Leslie Cusick. Rick was born in Dawson City, Yukon, on April 5, 1958. His road to retirement began shortly after he graduated high school in Dawson. He began working with Yukon government's Department of Highways in 1976 and, after years of hard work, he was promoted to road foreman. He later moved to Whitehorse and became the foreman of the Whitehorse grader station. His love for fishing and camping was only surpassed by his love for his wife Carrie Ann, who he married on January 30, 2011. Rick will be missed deeply by his wife Carrie Ann, his son Tyler, his sisters Sandra and Donna, his brother Bob, his many nieces and nephews, and many of Tyler's friends — myself included — who flocked to Rick's house to learn about life, women and hockey.

Upon the passing of Rick, one of his friends had an excellent quote that was included in the obituary as well. He said that heaven better get organized because there's going to be a lot of rip and reshape going on up there.

In concluding on speaking about Rick, I just wanted to say a big thank you on behalf of Rick's family to the officials of Highways and Public Works and the Whitehorse grader station, who flew the flags at half-mast the day after he passed. Thank you very much to those officials. We'll miss you, Rick.

With that, I would like to turn to some of the goings-on of the Department of Environment, the Department of Economic Development and the Public Service Commission. It has been a fairly busy summer season for the Department of Environment for a number of reasons.

A lot of very rewarding initiatives going on, but a lot of challenging files as well, and a few challenging cases and circumstances the department faced throughout the summer that I would like to mention.

First of all, on a very bright note, of course, we were very pleased — I know that many of the staff within the Department of Environment were very pleased — to see the launch of the new water strategy for Yukon. The water

strategy promotes water for nature and water for people. The strategy recognizes the work that is already underway and identifies more than 50 new or enhanced actions the Yukon government will undertake to: (1) better understand and manager Yukon's groundwater; (2) plan for water needs now and into the future; (3) improve water management programs; (4) maintain or improve access to safe drinking water; (5) promote the sustainable use of water; and finally (6) improve the sharing of information about Yukon's water.

So, Mr. Speaker, this strategy, in its implementation, will see the government invest an additional \$2.7 million over three years on projects, including enhancing and formalizing Yukon's groundwater program, installing 25 new hydrometric monitoring stations, and hiring a hydrogeologist.

This investment is designed to provide economic benefits to local communities in the private sector, as well as use training to increase the capacity of water managers.

Mr. Speaker, that's something that I wanted to note about the water strategy — that one of the directions that we had given to the department with regard to the implementation of this strategy was the importance that was going to be associated with the involvement of communities throughout the Yukon in developing the new stations and monitoring them. It's very important that we note that there are a number of other governments that have roles to do with water — the territory is large geographically and a small population as we have — and that we work together to ensure that we don't have an overlap of duties and that we work together in partnership to ensure that we are all moving in one direction.

One of the focuses that the department will have will be engaging with water managers in the communities to provide training and to look to them for partnerships in the implementation of the deployment of new water monitoring stations throughout the Yukon.

In addition to the new infrastructure that's going up throughout the territory, one of the important features of the water strategy and one of the important action items is the hiring of a hydrogeologist for the government. The government has never had the type of hydrogeologist that we would need to implement the kind of groundwater monitoring program that we'd like to see developed in the territory, so that required us to go out and begin the hiring process. My understanding as of last week was that we had a short list of prospective candidates and that a decision will be forthcoming as to who the new hire would be in the coming weeks.

That is something that is very positive and I look forward to discussing the water strategy and some of the work being done in that branch of Environment Yukon.

I got a little bit ahead of myself, Mr. Speaker. I forgot to mention that one of the first things I wanted to talk about was, among the changes that Environment Yukon has faced recently, the arrival of a new deputy minister. Earlier this year, the Premier announced that our former deputy minister, Kelvin Leary, would be moved over to the Department of Community Services and that Jim Connell, who was most recently with the Executive Council Office, would move into the deputy minister role in Environment.

I want to take the opportunity to thank Mr. Leary for his years of service as Deputy Minister of Environment, most particularly those years when I was minister. For the past two and a half years, I had the chance to work with Kelvin in that capacity and really appreciated his professionalism and expertise in helping me transition to a new role as minister.

I am really happy to have Jim Connell aboard, and I am really looking forward to working with Jim in the coming years to advance some of the priorities we have expressed on behalf of the government and to do some of this excellent work that I am going to discuss here today.

The Member for Vuntut Gwitchin mentioned the trip that the Premier and I had the chance to do this summer, to Old Crow. Beyond that, what he didn't mention was that we carried on — well, he made reference to it at least — to Herschel Island. This is the second time that I've been to Herschel Island now since becoming the Minister of Environment. It was an excellent opportunity for me to reconnect with our officials who do the work managing that park on Yukoners' behalf. I wanted to particularly note Richard Gordon, the senior park ranger for Herschel Island. He has an exceptional team there and he did a great job hosting us. It was the first time I had stayed overnight at Herschel Island and I had a really good introduction to what life is like on Herschel Island throughout the summer months when the park is open and when tourists, researchers and government officials visit throughout the summer months.

The Parks branch, aside from Herschel Island, was a busy one this summer as well. As the Minister of Tourism noted, we announced earlier this summer that we would be extending the days of operation for 10 campgrounds in the general Whitehorse area until the end of September. This is, I think, an excellent step forward for the Parks branch and for Yukoners who enjoy participating in the camping lifestyle that Yukon is so famous for. The usage of many of these campgrounds that have extended services has been robust to say the least.

The extension of the services at these campgrounds, I think, will be well-received by Yukoners, many of whom have indicated to me in the grocery store, on the street and in various fashions that they want to see increased opportunities for camping and extending the season to a later date is something that accommodates that. I for one don't like to do too much camping late in September. It's a little bit cold for me, but I know that many Yukoners do like to do that sort of fall camping, which sometimes sees some snow on the ground in some parts of the Yukon.

Along the same vein as that, I did want to speak a little bit more about the need for increased opportunities for camping in Yukon and to comment briefly on the development of the Conrad campground, which is being currently developed. The most recent information I have suggests that we're still in the YESAA process and that we've been working closely with our partners in the Carcross-Tagish First Nation to see that project be assessed and ultimately go forward.

I know that the Carcross-Tagish First Nation is eager to see that project advance, as their final agreement requires

them to receive the right of first refusal on any of the construction contracts that will be pursuant to the passage of that through YESAA. I know the CTFN is looking forward to seeing that project go forward, as am I.

There are a few Yukoners who have approached me and mentioned that there are some challenges with that site, given the fact that it is a heritage site and that there are some heritage resources in the area. I wanted to mention that, as a part of advancing this campground, we are obliged by the final agreement to concurrently develop a heritage resource management plan for the site. So that plan, which will be done in conjunction with the First Nation, will include the preservation and protection of many of the historic sites and historic resources, including cabins, artifacts and various other pieces of heritage that exist on those sites.

Moving on, I would like to say a few words about the conservation officers with the department. They've had both — I think two events highlight the spectrum of reward and challenge that these officials face in the course of their duties. On the very positive side, we had a very interesting case this summer that saw two orphaned bears come into the stewardship of Yukon government and then ultimately the Yukon Wildlife Preserve. This was a case where a bear in the Copper Ridge area unfortunately had to be dispatched and the orphaned cubs of the bear were left unattended. Government stepped in — the conservation officer stepped in and took care of the bears. We were able to secure a place for them at the Yukon Wildlife Preserve and ultimately, an agreement was reached with the Calgary Zoo to see those bear cubs shipped down to Calgary to their new home at Calgary Zoo.

While it's a fairly positive story at the end, it is a cautionary tale to Yukoners about the need to properly manage our garbage and our waste to ensure that we don't produce attractants to bears, especially in the more urban areas of the territory like Copper Ridge or other parts of Whitehorse. But in the end, it was a fairly happy ending to what could have been a very challenging situation.

At the other end of the spectrum, we had a very unfortunate incident not too long ago with regard to a bear near Johnson's Crossing — an attack that proved to be fatal for a Yukoner.

I won't say too much about the case itself, as it's still ongoing, but I did want to commend the conservation officers who responded to that. I know that's a phone call that no C.O. ever wants to receive — that there's been a fatal attack. I commend them for their competence and professionalism in dealing with those very, very challenging issues.

I also should note, before I move on from Conservation Officer Services, that the new district office in Watson Lake is approaching the completion of construction. I know that the site is looking pretty good and the building seems to be coming along quite well. So I look forward to getting down there and visiting the new district office there in Watson Lake as soon as I'm able and as soon as it's open for business.

In the Environmental Programs branch, there are a number of things that are keeping our officials very busy. Those all tend to relate to changes in our various regulatory

regimes. First of all, in the summer, we announced changes to the *Environment Act* permitting regime, which were aimed at doing three things. The first was eliminating the fee for *Environment Act* permits, as well as extending the maximum amount of time that permits could be issued.

I see you're indicating to me that my time is limited and I do want to cover a few other things, so I'll move on.

Included in that work are the reviews of the beverage container regulations and the designated materials regulations that are underway right now.

I think this is an excellent step forward for Yukon's recycling regime and an excellent step forward for the department in taking that next step as a regulator, with regard to the recycling regime. I look forward to getting input from Yukoners, stakeholder groups and other levels of government, including municipalities, about those changes, and ultimately look forward to seeing those changes come into force as soon as possible.

On the climate change front, there's a lot going on as well. The Climate Change Secretariat is busy these days implementing the *Climate Change Action Plan*, with a focus, of course, on a number of very exciting research projects that are going on. In June of this year, I had an opportunity to announce — sorry, not June; in September, I had the opportunity to announce that we would be sending yet again a youth ambassador with our climate change delegation to the COP conference in Lima, Peru. Last year's youth ambassador was Mr. Bradley, and he did an exceptional job, and both Yukon and Mr. Bradley, I think, benefitted from the experience, and I'm sure the youth ambassador this year, Ms. Aletta Leitch, will very much benefit from her trip to Peru later this year with the Yukon delegation, and I look forward to hearing how that experience goes for Ms. Leitch and for our delegation.

I should also note that, earlier this summer, we announced a number of new investments in climate change adaptation research that we're doing in partnership with the Government of Canada. That included a number of projects — six projects, in fact — the first of which is one that I'm particularly proud of the department for doing, which is the Arctic adaptation web portal, vis-à-vis the Arctic Council.

This project is a web-based information portal that will improve access to information about adaptation research and actions in the circumpolar north.

This is an instance of the Yukon government leading a project at an international scale on behalf of Canada and through the Arctic Council. It is a really exciting step forward for the Climate Change Secretariat and the staff and officials who are leading that work.

There is also a number of other projects going on under that general aegis that includes the compilation of energy sector case studies, the assessment of temperature, trends and impact on energy demand, permafrost and risk assessment in Ross River, the mine access roads in northern Canada project and public health as it relates to climate change initiatives that are all funded under that same pot through the Adaptation Platform of Natural Resources Canada and AANDC.

I see that I'm down to my last minute. I am unfortunately not going to be able to cover all the ground I had intended to, but there is a lot of exciting work going on in the Department of Economic Development as well as the Public Service Commission that I am happy to discuss later on when we get a chance to go into the individual departments.

With that, recognizing that my time has elapsed, I will conclude my remarks and commend the bill to the House.

Hon. Mr. Kent: It's my pleasure to rise today in response to the supplementary budget and provide some comments. Like other members, I too would like to thank my constituents, those in the riding of Riverdale North, for their support and the confidence that they have shown in me to represent them here in the Legislative Assembly.

Like all of us, it truly is an honour to be one of those fortunate few who are able to sit in this House and represent Yukoners on a day-in, day-out basis, whether we are in this Chamber or in the communities. I commend all members of the House for the representation that they provide to Yukoners and for the job they do on behalf of their constituents.

Mr. Speaker, on a personal note, there is a new constituent in Riverdale North that I would like to particularly welcome — a young boy that my wife Amanda and I were successful in adopting out of foster care here in Yukon. The young man has Inuvialuit heritage. We are so very pleased and proud to welcome him to our family. I expect some time — perhaps as early as this week — for Amanda and him to come to the gallery, where I will make a proper introduction. Just be forewarned that he may not pay attention to the rules and procedures of those attending the gallery, but I told Amanda that perhaps he'll have to sit in the back row in case they have to make a quick exit.

A big thanks to all my friends and family and especially a big thanks to my wife Amanda Leslie for all of her support as we journey through this adoption process together — a very long process that has led to a successful conclusion. As mentioned, we couldn't be prouder of our young son and everything that he is and everything we hope he becomes.

When it comes to the budget and the budgets we have presented as the governing party in this Legislative Assembly, I commend the Premier — the Minister of Finance — and my colleagues for their strong commitment to the sound fiscal management that we have been able to attain over the successive budgets that we have brought forward.

One of the things, of course, that I ran on was to ensure that we had a strong, diversified economy that would allow us to make those important investments to Yukoners in fields such as education and health care. Just looking at the 2014-15 budget highlights, I think many of those investments are reflected in that budget and, subsequently, in the supplementary budget that we're going to debate this fall.

Investments such as a new McDonald Lodge for residential and home care nursing, phase one funding for a new continuing care facility here in Whitehorse, design funding for a new Sarah Steele Building to house Alcohol and Drug Services, as well as multi-million dollar funding toward

the replacement of F.H. Collins Secondary School — something located not quite in my riding, but that very much services the people of Riverdale North when it comes to providing a long-term school that has been there in that area for an awfully long time. Those who live in Riverdale and are able to go over there can certainly see the progression toward the replacement facility.

We continue to make investments in sports and athletics, such as the building of a six-lane track and soccer field at that F.H. Collins site on the lower field, support programs at the Heart of Riverdale Community Centre in Riverdale — \$420,000 over three years invested in that — as well as \$250,000 in the current budget to create an outdoor sports complex in Whitehorse — something that I know all Yukoners will be excited to use. Once it's complete, it will include an artificial turf soccer field and a proper eight-lane rubberized running track, among other things.

I know that it's very much in the design process, but a big congratulations to those organizations that brought forward the concept and a thank you to our colleagues for supporting the funding to see that project carry on.

Mr. Speaker, we know here in Whitehorse that the Alexander Street seniors' facility is nearing completion. I would expect that the minister responsible for the Yukon Housing Corporation would provide more detail, but perhaps as early as next month, we will see that facility transferred over to the Housing Corporation from the contractor. As well, with that coming to completion, the work has started on the 48-unit seniors housing complex in downtown Whitehorse. It's located on the corner of Front Street and Ogilvie. The excavators, I believe, are on-site as we speak. That's another exciting development in providing housing for seniors in the Whitehorse area. Again, the six-unit seniors housing complex in Mayo — construction has started on that as well and we look forward to seeing that project completed.

We've seen some upgrades to social housing in the 2014-15 budget as well — \$1.6 million. I know that some of that, of course, went to upgrades in some of the existing stock that we have. As the previous minister responsible for the Housing Corporation, I visited many of those facilities as I'm sure the current minister has — very much needed expenditures to provide the upgrades to those units that we're able to invest.

Those are a few of the investments that the Yukon Party government is making that will make a difference in the lives of Yukon residents on a day-in and day-out basis. Of course there are significant investments in education and training as well as work to protect and preserve our environment and wildlife. Practising good governance is another key pillar of our government's work. We continue to make significant investments and see the significant surpluses that allow us to make expenditures where they will matter the most to Yukoners, particularly in education and health care.

There are two projects that are close to my riding, or in my riding, that I think reflect these values. One is the F.H. Collins Secondary School replacement. Construction is well underway, and many contractors and employees from the Yukon are working on that project as we speak. I know the

Minister of Highways and Public Works has details of the number of Yukoners who are employed there. Driving by, one only has to look at the construction fence to see names of local contracting companies that are involved in that project, from Castle Rock to Arcrite to Stantec to many others — a big congratulations to those subs, as well as Clark Builders, who are endeavouring to hire local people to provide the jobs and complete the work on such an important piece of infrastructure.

Something that I've heard from my constituents with respect to that particular piece of property which is bounded on the south side by Selkirk Elementary School and Gadzoosdaa residence and includes the Teen Parent Centre as well as the trades wing, and over to the skateboard park on the north side of things, is: How will that property be developed?

I'm very pleased, in conversation with the Minister of Education, that she has instilled confidence in me to chair a multi-stakeholder committee that will provide recommendations to the government on how that campus or education reserve should be planned going forward. I know a number of letters have gone out to stakeholders, and I'm looking forward to conducting that work as the MLA for Riverdale North and as former Minister of Education. I look forward to hearing from those stakeholders and providing that advice to government on how that education reserve should be developed in the future.

Another important project that is being undertaken is the work at the Whitehorse General Hospital, a facility that is located in my riding of Riverdale North. It has been mentioned that funding of \$72 million has been approved for the Yukon Hospital Corporation for this multi-year project, which includes the cost for a temporary location for the MRI that is going to be completed this fall and winter. I know we got into some debate in the Spring Sitting on what that means, but the building itself will be repurposed for something else after the MRI is potentially relocated into another part of the expanded hospital.

Of the funding required, \$2 million was raised by the community through the efforts of the Yukon Hospital Foundation and matched by the government for a total of \$4 million, which will be offset against the cost of this project. We're looking forward to the Emergency department expansion and the MRI construction project and their target completion date in 2017-18.

Of course, the MRI will be ready much sooner. Work is underway on that facility right now, and I know that officials at the Hospital Corporation are quite excited to see that work completed and for the first MRI north of the 60th parallel in Canada to be offered. Big congratulations to all of those involved in fundraising and seeing that project through.

Two very important projects — one education-related and one health-care-related — that are located in or close to Riverdale North and we look forward to delivering on in the very near future.

I am going to talk a little bit about some of the accomplishments in the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources as well as some of the Yukon Development

Corporation initiatives that are underway that I know members of the Legislature will be very interested to hear about.

When it comes to EMR, I too would like to welcome the new deputy minister to the post in Energy, Mines and Resources. Mr. George Ross joined Energy, Mines and Resources on October 1. He has a very long and distinguished career as a public servant in Ontario — most recently the deputy minister of Northern Development and Mines for the Government of Ontario. We're very excited and fortunate to have a high calibre individual such as Mr. Ross join the team at Energy, Mines and Resources. He is certainly making an impact already, and I couldn't be more pleased with the leadership that he is showing for the officials at Energy, Mines and Resources.

I should also thank Shirley Abercrombie, who acted as the deputy minister for a number of months prior to the arrival of Mr. Ross. Shirley provided excellent leadership as well, and her work and commitment to EMR allowed us to continue to move forward in those months prior to Mr. Ross' arrival.

When it comes to the details that are in the supplementary estimates, I look forward to getting into the details of those once Energy, Mines and Resources is called. We'll speak about some of the Growing Forward 2 initiatives that are in this budget. Type 2 mine sites are referenced by the Member for Klondike — investments in the Energy Solutions Centre, as well as the study of an inter-tie between Yukon and southeast Alaska.

We've seen significant increase in the Yukon Geological Survey. Their budget has been increased by \$950,000 this year. Again, we'll get into these details when we discuss specifics related to the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources.

This does give me an opportunity to highlight some of the accomplishments of Energy, Mines and Resources when it comes to delivering on our government's mandate and some of our key platform commitments, as well as the commitments highlighted in the mandate letter that I received from the Premier.

They've worked very hard in Energy, Mines and Resources to provide land for Yukoners. Urban land in Whitehorse has become available through phase 2 of the Whistle Bend project. As well, country residential and commercial lots have been made available in Carmacks, and country residential lots were developed and made available most recently in Teslin on Sawmill Road. Lots continue to be available in Dawson City, Haines Junction, Carmacks, Destruction Bay and Grizzly Valley. Approximately 83 rural residential lots have become available as a result of new subdivision policies for the Hot Springs Road, Ibex Valley, Golden Horn, Mayo Road and Mount Lorne.

In March 2014 we made amendments to the Mount Lorne zoning regulation, which has the potential to add an additional 93 rural residential lots over the next few years if all of those that are now eligible for subdivision of their privately owned rural residential and agricultural lots choose to seek that subdivision.

For the first time in a number of years, the government was able to put out waterfront land, titled land, available for Yukoners. Nineteen lots on Tagish and Bennett lakes were developed and approved as part of the joint MOU between the Yukon government and Carcross-Tagish First Nation. There was an incredible amount of interest in those lots. I believe over 60 applications were received and the lots were all spoken for at the lottery process. As we move through the agreement for sale, we'll be able to find out if all 19 recreational lots were taken, but I think it shows the interest that Yukoners have in owning waterfront land of their own here in the territory and how exciting that is.

I see that you have given me a four-minute warning and I know there are a number of things that I wanted to continue to talk about, such as the inter-tie and the study that is going on in partnership with the Alaska government to investigate the viability of a southeast Alaska and Yukon economic development corridor. If constructed, it could increase telecommunications and transmission capability to Yukon and Skagway, as well as make some of those renewable projects — smaller hydro projects — along the way much more feasible and accessible if the transmission line were located in proximity.

Of course, the West Creek project that the Government of Alaska and the community of Skagway are looking at, located close to Dyea — they are looking for additional power in the summer months but would have that excess capacity to sell back to us in the winter months when it is needed here. Of course, we would have excess in the summer to sell down there, particularly for the cruise ships that dock and currently run their diesel engines to provide power to the ships. They're looking forward to potentially taking them off diesel and ensuring that they can run off of electricity when dockside.

I want to touch briefly on Yukon Development Corporation. There's an awful lot of work underway, important work for Yukon's energy future. For the Next Generation Hydro work that is underway, we have two contractors — one looking at the technical aspects, and the other engaged in the public and First Nation engagement piece — so there will be much to talk about in the coming weeks with respect to this project here on the floor of the House.

The LNG facility is progressing, as we heard in local media here this morning from the new president of the Yukon Energy Corporation. I should have welcomed Andrew Hall to his position as the new president taking over from Mr. David Morrison.

I should also reiterate the commitment that I made in the spring sitting that officials from the Yukon Development Corporation and the Yukon Energy Corporation will appear as witnesses before the House this fall. I have given the heads-up in recent meetings with the Yukon Energy Corporation and Yukon Development Corporation chairs and officials to be prepared. We're still setting a time, but they will be appearing prior to the House rising for Christmas. I know the Member for Klondike brought forward a motion today, but I will reiterate that commitment that I made in the Spring Sitting.

All sorts of exciting things are happening in mining, oil and gas, forestry, agriculture, lands and energy, and with the Yukon Development Corporation and Yukon Energy Corporation. It's a very diverse department that I'm pleased and proud to be the minister responsible for, and I look forward to debating it during Question Period and at other opportunities throughout the current sitting of this Legislative Assembly.

Ms. McLeod: It gives me great pleasure to rise today in response to the 2014-15 *Supplementary Estimates No. 1* as presented by the Premier.

I would like to take just a minute to thank the great people of southeast Yukon, though, for their continued faith in me to represent them in this Legislature. It is such an honour.

Our community in Watson Lake is a busy one and I am proud of everyone who takes the time to embrace that great community spirit in all of the events that take place and in our daily lives.

We have had some great events take place this year in Watson Lake, and I would just like to share some of them with you today. On June 5, 2014, the Yukon government and the Watson Lake Historical Society held a dedication ceremony to designate the Watson Lake Sign Post Forest as a Yukon historic site. Thank you to the Minister of Tourism and Culture for taking the time to join us in recognition of this landmark. The Sign Post Forest is world famous and really puts Watson Lake on the map. It is wonderful that we got this type of recognition.

I would like to recognize Watson Laker Britanee Laverdure. Britanee was part of Team Canada at the Commonwealth Games this past summer, where she made us all very proud. This fall she also went to the World Wrestling Championships in Uzbekistan. Our other national athlete, Watson's Lake own Zach Bell, also had a great summer as part of Canada's Commonwealth Games team and countless other cycling events over the summer. They both continue to make Watson Lake proud and they are very well remembered.

I would like to just talk a bit about the volunteer groups in Watson Lake — and there are many of them — and most go about their business on a daily basis running their programs. A good deal of them are funded in whole or in part by the Yukon government. I would like to recognize a group that works very hard in Watson Lake and it is the riding association.

Its real name is the Watson Lake Riding Association, but I don't want it confused with any kind of a political party because it's all about horses actually. However, in addition to the horses, it's also a 4-H group, which does such amazing work with the youth and teaching them all about community spirit and responsibility. The Riding Association is a group of very hard-working volunteers. I would like to give them a special thanks for their work in helping to make my community barbeque a great success. I would like to thank everyone from Watson Lake who came out, as well as my colleagues from this side of the House who were in attendance — and a very, very special mention to the Member for Pelly-

Nisutlin, who is a very highly regarded chef. As I understand it, he is available for almost any barbeque.

No community is complete without its special events and Watson Lake is no different. Discovery Days is a big event for Watson Lake and, again, the Riding Association volunteers were crucial in making sure things ran smoothly. They are the primary movers and shakers for the ball tournament, and I was very happy to spend a couple of days flipping my own burgers. Part of what we do on Discovery Days is to produce a number of events. There is, of course, the ball tournament to which a lot of Yukoners and northern B.C. people are invited to attend, and they do.

There was a golf tournament that folks really enjoyed, and I had the opportunity to be a judge at the parade, with Jeanne Lassen. I'm sure we must be very famous for our parades. They're well-attended by the public, anyway.

It was a really great summer down in Watson Lake. For the most part, I thought it was quite warm. I'm happy I could share some of that with you.

In regard to the budget, I think this is another great budget and I continue to be very proud of this government's work to meet their commitments to Yukoners. The people of Southeast Yukon are very appreciative of their hospital. We've had a hospital for a very long time and we're happy to have a new, modern facility. I know we've had some challenges with doctors and other matters, and I would like to congratulate the Minister of Health and Social Services for his good works — he and his department and the Hospital Corporation — making sure we have doctor coverage.

The supplementary budget carries on the good work that this government did in the spring. I want to thank the ministers and all their respective departments for all their hard work. For most of us, I think we can't really imagine the work it takes to pull this kind of work together.

I was very pleased to see that the community development fund has done some great projects in my riding this year. I want to thank the Minister of Economic Development for supporting these important projects. The Liard Aboriginal Women's Society received \$16,648 to co-host a forum with the Yukon Advisory Council on Women's Issues on the topic of community lateral violence based on aboriginal resistance to violence and racism. This annual forum happened in September and was themed, "Beyond violence: Responding to interpersonal violence at work and in the home and community". It was open to women from all Yukon communities and offered opportunities for developing shared understanding and collective action to address violence in all its forms: in the home, at work and in the community.

The Town of Watson Lake received \$6,570 to purchase an ice-edger for skating rink maintenance. The Watson Lake Daycare Centre Society received \$17,375 to upgrade playground equipment at the Watson Lake daycare.

The museums contribution program provided \$30,000 to the Northern Lights Centre in Watson Lake and the special projects capital assistance program provided \$8,566 for a new colour photocopier. I want to thank the Minister of Tourism

and Culture for his contributions to our wonderful Northern Lights Centre.

One of the things I have brought up on behalf of my constituents is extra street lighting along the Alaska Highway at Upper Liard and along the Robert Campbell Highway to the subdivision of Two Mile. I want to thank the Minister of Highways and Public Works for moving this project forward with the support of the Premier and caucus and an investment in this budget of \$200,000. This installation will be well-received and will bring added safety for the drivers and pedestrians who use these routes.

I am very pleased to know that Highways and Public Works is planning to tender projects in the fall to give contractors more time to submit their bids and have contracts awarded well in advance of the construction season. This is something that contractors have discussed with me and I'm sure the minister will have more to say on that, but I really am looking forward to seeing that move forward.

Over the coming year — or years — I'm really looking forward to working with the Town of Watson Lake and my colleagues to move forward on a number of initiatives. I'm very happy to say that we have had some dialogue and I do see some of these issues moving forward.

Of particular note — and something welcomed by small businesses that operate in Southeast Yukon — is the decrease in the corporate tax rate. I've said it before and I say it again, despite any ups and downs, when a Yukon Party government is managing the territory we see population growth, economic growth, new jobs and sound fiscal management. This is a good budget — good for rural Yukon and good for all of Yukon and I thank the Premier for bringing it forward.

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: I was just putting a few things together here, Mr. Speaker. I'm happy to be here to speak to this in this session again. First of all and foremost, I would really like to thank my constituents of Kluane. We had a very interesting and pretty awesome tourism summit — economic summit — and my fellow colleagues helped me organize this. I worked hard to push this forward — because tourism is a big issue in our area — and to promote it. Out of that — first steps moving forward — is that Kluane is now extra larger than life. I'm pretty proud of that. You just have to look at our largest mountain in Canada being in the riding of Kluane.

I also really would like to thank my family. This morning, I had to leave early because, as Minister of Highways and Public Works, I did five radio ads, speaking to Yukoners about maybe leaving a little bit early if the weather's not so good and it's snowing — it could be slippery — so I did leave early. My young teenage boy was still sleeping, so I gave him a quick peck on the cheek and said bye to the wife. We're back in session and I do really want to thank my family for their patience, being that we have to be here in the capital city.

I also want to talk a little bit about this tourism summit and I want to thank Parks Canada and the local First Nations. You just have to look at our cultural centre out there, the Da Ku building. I would like to throw a big thank you or congratulations out to the new chief of Champagne and

Aishihik First Nations, Steve Smith, and their councillors, and especially their Elder Councillor, Mama Buzzell — I call her Mama, because she's like my second mama. I'm really proud of her. Her direction is really going to be great within Champagne and Aishihik First Nations. At the Da Ku building on November 1 is the chief and council potlatch, so I really do look forward to being there for that.

That hard work between Parks and the First Nations is really going to work toward a better product in Kluane — more product in Kluane getting out there so tourists spend more time in Kluane, which goes toward economic development.

Some of my fellow colleagues have spoken a little bit about CDF funding and the support that the local organizations get, and that is very important to our communities. I encourage and I support them all the way when they put in these applications.

I also want to put a little bit of a thank you out to our Community Services minister. Solid waste — back in 2011, we stopped burning so dumps had to change and things had to happen. I am really positive and thankful for the direction we are heading in solid waste and in recycling.

I also had some key meetings with the local municipality talking about some upgrades in some of our infrastructure. I would like to support some better economic development in Haines Junction, but also better active living. I've been hard on the file for the community clubs in the past three years, and it was just brought to my attention some of the things that we are going to be moving forward on and I look forward to making some announcements in the future here.

Going back to the actual department that I am responsible for, I want to speak just about some of the different branches. I'll talk a little bit about Corporate Services first. There are some interesting facts and statistics and it's kind of neat to put out that our coordinated planning and reporting of over 695 capital projects totalling \$344 million — that's in our department and that's in the 2014-15 kind of five-year capital plan. We advise and support the department in managing the department's budget. In 2013-14 — that fiscal year — our Central Stores sold 293 items valued at over \$166,000, but that's locally manufactured furniture to client departments. I think that is really important that we have some local product here. Central Stores stocks over 131 environmentally-preferred items.

In the 2013-14 fiscal year, the Procurement Support Centre handled 1,924 bids and proposals in response to 378 public tenders — so very busy in that department. The basic idea is to provide the government's departments support with contracting and tendering, acquisition assets management, stores, publishing, travel, vehicles, mail service, risk management and insurance services. That department keeps very busy.

In that department, the Procurement Support Centre — I have encouraged and I have worked as the minister to make sure that we increase our contact between the centre and the businesses who bid in the Yukon so we can better develop

procurement and also look at procurement documents so that they are more standardized.

In the Information and Communications Technology — the ICT — portion, we have about 230 buildings, and over 4,000 computers are connected to the government's computer network. Our ICT hosts over 200 servers, using 500 GBs of storage. Interesting fact — if the Yukon government were using technology from the 1990s to accommodate the storage needs today, the infrastructure would stretch from Whitehorse to Dawson City and back again. The Member for Klondike could follow his information there and back and it would consume 30 times the electricity that Yukon Energy produces.

Some of the stuff within that department is to keep the understanding of government departments' business needs and to develop solutions that make it easier for them to serve the public while doing so more efficiently. It is also to provide leadership and management, storage and protection of our government information assets and to facilitate public access to government records while protecting the privacy of our individuals and also to develop and manage essential information and communications technology infrastructure.

This includes our Yukon-wide mobile radio service that our government uses and our Highways employees use on a day-to-day basis. Another interesting fact is that we're working toward introducing support for iPhones, Androids and smartphones so we can enable bringing your own device with some of the new technology that we see out there. We have a virtual desktop to enhance access and productivity for employees including — which is a good thing — remote working, which will enable telecommuting and flexible work environments, which reduces space requirements resulting in lower property lease costs for the Yukon government.

One of the priorities is the creation of our e-services branch. This is a priority and a platform commitment that we had to increase the mobile access to Yukon government services. In the spring you will see that we're on track with some of the stuff and you will be able to get your angling and camping permits on-line, with more work to be done with more e-services.

We're also helping develop a new module within our Energy, Mines and Resources lands branch, which will accommodate class 1 notifications in our continuing work and collaboration with Yukon First Nations. I hear a lot in the House here that we don't work with Yukon First Nations. I think we're pretty busy working with Yukon First Nations on a regular basis.

Our property management division employs over 200 staff who are responsible for the operation and maintenance of more than 350 buildings across the Yukon. Capital maintenance is delivered by Property Management division across all the departments — it doesn't matter what department you're in. There are over 10,000 work orders processed each year. We provide the project management services for Yukon government capital building development, and I am proud to say that we ensure the provision of good facility space through acquisition, construction and recapitalization, or sometimes demolition. This will ensure

that government services are provided from facilities that meet the building code, health, safety, energy efficiency and sustainability standards. You just have to go across the bridge there and have a look at what is happening over at the new F.H. Collins.

Our Property Management division provided project management services for more than 270 projects, with a budget of over \$125 million, and successful project management of the new Canada Border Services Agency. The Canada Border Services Agency offices at the Dawson City Airport — I know the member from Klondike was probably very surprised. That airport, for those passengers flying directly from the United States, was completed by May 2014, in time to screen the 15,000 passengers who wanted to spend money in Dawson City. The success has four companies planning the repeat for the flights in 2015. The key thing with this is that we got this done in a hurry, and we got it done on time and on budget so that we could benefit the businesses and those folks in the riding of Klondike.

Some of the priorities are to develop and implement an updated and integrated government-wide portfolio management strategy. We ensure that Yukon government's buildings are sustainable over time and are designed to meet primary program needs and optimized for building operation and maintenance. This will reduce the energy consumption and environmental impacts of our Yukon government infrastructure, assets and operations, and this will reduce costs and support our climate change objectives.

The last big branch that we have is the Transportation division. Not a day goes by where someone isn't touched by this division. They have to drive or they have to fly. Across a bridge, there are over 132 of them and there are over 238 multi-plates. We do manage four airports and 25 aerodromes, and we have just about 5,000 kilometres of road — some paved, some BST and some gravel.

We're also the regulator when it comes to Transport Canada, their systems and infrastructure. That's a key point, because this is ongoing stuff that we get from the federal government. I work in close collaboration with our federal minister and the industry on this to try to mitigate concerns and issues as we try to move forward to maintain our transportation infrastructure and all our related equipment.

Continued major work and construction programs on the Atlin Road and the Campbell Highway, some major road rehabilitation program on the north Alaska Highway — I'm sure I'll be getting some questions about permafrost and the Shakwak. I'm happy to say I'm very busy on that file, as is the Premier.

We've done some continuing crushing and surfacing programs on the Silver Trail and the Dempster Highway. Of course, with the increase in traffic that headed up the Dempster to work on the road to Tuk, we saw a lot of increased traffic last winter. Anybody who went up to Dawson in the spring — our BST took a bit of a hit, but I was up there about a month ago and the crews sure did a fine job replacing that. That's just part of doing business when you become the warmest place in Canada in January.

Continued major bridge upgrade program, with the new bridge construction at Tatchun Creek — I had the opportunity to stop by there and look at the guys who are working there. Those guys are putting food on the plates of their families, spending their money in the Yukon — maybe at a local snowmobile dealer or down at a bike shop or at Canadian Tire, and there are people working there too.

Some of our upgrades to our gravel runways through the application of an environmentally friendly dust suppression and binder are key. I know the industry is very happy to see this.

Some of our priorities that I spoke to a little bit earlier are to continue to work with Alaska and Washington and Canada — all of those officials on Shakwak, the agreement between Canada and the United States. I want to see the continued reconstruction on the Campbell Highway, work closely with local First Nations to make sure that we can move this forward and see the completion of the Atlin Road, and also, the rehabilitation work associated with the degrading permafrost on the north Alaska Highway in some of the areas and other permafrost areas on our highways.

I'm looking forward to seeing some more resurfacing improvements on the Silver Trail and back up on the Dempster Highway. The other thing looking forward and looking into the future — being a little bit proactive — we talked about the Whitehorse corridor and the functional plan for that, but also the Klondike Highway, Freegold and Nahanni Range roads. Those are roads that need to be identified and we have to look into the future. As the territory grows, we have to be ready for them. I'm proud to say that the department is working on some functional planning for those so we can be ready.

One of the things, I guess, that was near and dear to my heart a little bit was the Ross River footbridge. I didn't know much about the Ross River footbridge before I got elected, Mr. Speaker — watching that file move forward, seeing the love of that bridge with the residents in the MLA for Pelly-Nisutlin's region and the hard work that the MLA for Pelly-Nisutlin did to work with myself and the Community Services minister.

We found a solution for that bridge. We met with the chief and council on many occasions and had many conversations. You need to just go to the Facebook page and look at the positive comments that are in there. That's this government, committed to working with communities and local First Nations.

I guess in closing I just do really want to say that working with industry to improve processes in government is something that is key and it's near and dear to my heart, and that falls within my department — such as multi-year capital planning and looking at getting some of these projects out in the fall — like the Member for Watson Lake spoke to earlier — so there's a little bit of stability within our industry, whether it's building or whether it's road construction, so these people can keep some people working in the wintertime because they realize they have some big jobs in the summertime. This is successful, multi-year capital planning

and some of this stuff is linked to a steadier, more robust local economy. Our government does continue to make Yukon — and you've heard this and you're going to hear it over and over because this is what I hear from the residents of my riding — the best place in Canada to live, work, play and to raise a family.

Hon. Mr. Graham: I was going to present some highlights of the supplementary budget for Health and Social Services, but prior to doing that, I listened very carefully to the Leader of the Official Opposition's response to our Premier's speech. I was struck by a couple of issues that the Leader of the Official Opposition brought forward. One was a shortage of affordable housing and how we should be doing more in that area.

Mr. Speaker, I know you and I probably represent two of the fastest-growing ridings here in the territory — Porter Creek North and Porter Creek Centre. I was struck, because I went and visited one of the developments in my riding. The development already had a number of condominiums built — a number of row houses. They also had some mobile home units put up there — all of which were sold, by the way — during the summer months when I was there. I saw about 20 of the condos that were built there at that time. They were being built in groups as triplexes. I toured them, actually. I took some time and spent some time with the builder there. Each of these triplexes had two of the units with a modest, we'll say, rental suite attached or directly part of the condominium. That meant, Mr. Speaker, when this whole project is built, they anticipated roughly 120 new homes. It means that, in that one development, there will be a total of 80 new rental units. These are modest rental units. I asked for some idea of where in the spectrum they fell in terms of rent, and I received some numbers that I won't repeat, because it was in the summer and things may have changed since then. I notice that in many areas in the city, rents are decreasing. It was interesting.

Each of the people occupying these homes, Mr. Speaker, is depending on that rental income. So those 80 rental units that will be constructed by the time the development is completed — these 80 people will be relying on that rental income to help them pay their mortgage. I guess that is what the Minister of Community Services was trying to articulate in many of the answers that he provided, both today and previously.

I was also struck by the Leader of the Official Opposition's evident passion about evidence-based decisions and how employees in the territory should be able to carry out their programs without fear of interference. I would assume that the member opposite meant without interference from political offices. I was struck by the apparent contradiction in terms, because just recently — last session — I fielded a huge number of questions with respect to the Coroner's Office about an inquiry and how we should be taking the initiative here and calling an inquiry and doing a number of different things to ensure patient safety in the Yukon Hospital Corporation. There is a very clear outline of how the coroner

operates and the fact that the coroner is independent — that position, even though a part of government, is independent, or should be independent of political interference. That is what we tried to do.

We tried to stay away from those decisions being made because the coroner's office is independent and we believe that we have a good coroner and that we have a coroner who is doing the right thing. Obviously members opposite didn't agree with our stance. I assume from what was said that members opposite would love to get up there and get their little fingers involved with the Coroner's Office and give specific direction. We don't believe that should be done and that's what we tried to do. As it turned out, it may have taken a little longer than people would like to see in some instances, but the system worked. We did the same thing with the Yukon Hospital Corporation.

Yukon Hospital Corporation immediately — when an adverse event occurs in any of their facilities — carries out a patient safety review. That patient safety review is, by legislation, private and cannot be used in future proceedings. The reason that is done is very simple: they want to ensure that the best possible information comes out in those patient safety reviews without fear of recrimination or without fear of any of the medical practitioners or hospital staff being implicated in any future actions. That is done primarily to ensure that if there are issues identified, they're identified honestly and quickly. The Hospital Corporation then has the ability to go out and correct those safety concerns.

Those were two of the things. The other was when the member opposite talked about programs being cancelled because no public funding was available. I'll assume that she probably meant the program that has been somewhat in the news lately. I know I received a number of petitions or a number of signatures on a petition for the mothers and babies program formerly run by Many Rivers. I thought it was interesting that the member opposite spoke about this program and how we should have jumped in to fund it. I thought that even though we did not receive a request to jump in and fund that program — even had we received that request, we would, as part of our due diligence, evaluate the programs, find out how that program would fit with current Health and Social Services programs that we already offer through Public Health or other facilities — Family and Children's Services. I thought it's interesting that we're being criticized because we don't jump in and fund these programs and yet, if we did, I would then be criticized for running off and spending money without paying due diligence.

I think of all of the times that I hear from members opposite that we're not doing it properly. Then we take the time to do our planning and to do our due diligence, and then we're criticized because it takes us too long. To me, it's much like funding of capital projects. We come up with what they call a "class D estimate" and that class D estimate could be plus or minus 40 percent.

That class D estimate is given as a result of a question or as a result of some publicity being taken. That then becomes the number that you're held to, even though it's a class D

estimate and it's plus or minus 40 percent, and it won't be able to be refined any further until there are a number of dollars spent.

I look at the F.H. Collins school. There was an estimate there — it wasn't refined until there were quite a few dollars spent, because you must get architectural drawings and you must get engineering reports, and all of those other things that have to be done in order to get a refined cost for a project we are criticized for, because we're spending money without the project being built. However, if we don't spend the money, we are then criticized because we can't follow a budget. So it's — I'm really — I find it difficult sometimes to answer questions and, at other times, I find it difficult not to criticize.

Mr. Speaker, the member for Dawson came up with an interesting motion the other day that you should be able to criticize us for not answering questions appropriately. I thought this would be a wonderful committee that would discuss that, and I want to be on that committee, because I want you to also be able to call members opposite to task when they ask stupid questions.

I guess, enough said on that one.

Some Hon. Member: (inaudible)

Point of order

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

Ms. White: We can either go with 19(g), which imputes false or unavowed motives to another member, or we can go 19(i), which uses abusive or insulting language.

Some Hon. Member: (inaudible)

Ms. White: We'll go 19(i) please, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker's ruling

Speaker: I have to agree. The use of the word was unnecessary, and I would please ask you to apologize to the members at this time.

Hon. Mr. Graham: Mr. Speaker, of course I apologize. It was a purely hypothetical observation, but I apologize for inferring that any member opposite would ask a stupid question. Some other kinds of questions perhaps we can do as well.

Anyway, I'm also pleased to present some highlights in the supplementary budget for Health and Social Services. I would like to update the Legislature on many of the important priorities identified in the spring 2014-15 budget. A number of revotes are included in this budget so that we can proceed with some previously identified priority issues. One of the big ones was a revote of funds necessary to complete e-health projects within the department, within the hospital and in the medical community here in Whitehorse. One of the difficulties we've run into with this project is hiring people who are necessary to implement the e-health and records system. Consequently, it has been delayed for a while. We've now managed to work out some programs or some exchanges with some other jurisdictions. Consequently, we hope that we will have computer technicians and programmers in place here

in the very near future and that we will make significant progress on our e-health project in the very near future.

One of the other priorities for this government continues to be program supports and prevention for people with fetal alcohol spectrum disorder. We are requesting a revote of \$105,000 for the fetal alcohol spectrum initiative that supports the development of a common case management approach and also the development of a local adult diagnostic team. The revote will be used to carry over funds needed to finalize training events and to complete the development of an evaluation framework. This funding is 100-percent recoverable from Canada and we should spend that total amount in the upcoming months.

Health and Social Services department requires the largest increase in Health and Social Services O&M supplementary budget. The main drivers for this increase are increased physician costs and coverage for some services following the termination of the territorial health system sustainability initiative, or THSSI, which ended on March 31, 2014. Over \$4 million — and I have to thank all members of my caucus for this support, because over \$4 million was required to enable a smooth transition from activities that were previously funded with THSSI to the new budget, which meant that we no longer had that \$4 million in THSSI money. The transition period, March 31, 2014 to March 31, 2015 required a one-time increase of \$1.6 million toward medical travel costs.

Services in communities have been strengthened, as we all know, with the addition of our facilities in Dawson and Watson Lake, but medical travel expenses remain a fact of life. We are also continuing to focus our efforts to recruit and retain qualified physicians and we are requesting an increase to fund these activities.

However, the good news was that there was also a decrease of over \$1 million under the Yukon Hospital Corporation to reflect the fact that the pension solvency requirement was nowhere near as bad as initially thought and an actuarial assessment lowered the requirement from \$5 million to — I believe it was — \$3.6 million, or very close to that. Consequently, \$1.4 million — or almost \$1.4 million — was returned to government coffers and we were extremely pleased to see that.

The major capital budget items are in Corporate Services, which involved the e-health system. So not only did we have revotes in operation and maintenance, but we have revotes also in the capital side of the budget.

We also have several increases that require increases in funding. Because one of our platform commitments was addressing the housing needs of Yukoners, one of our goals related to this is working with the Salvation Army to replace their existing homeless shelter in Whitehorse.

As one of our most valued community partners, the Salvation Army is well-known for providing the disadvantaged with excellent support and services. We are only too happy to see that continue and increase in the next years with the funding that we will be providing for them in the next little while.

Creating a better quality of life for Yukoners was also one of our commitments and it included addressing substance abuse. Part of this mandate means that our Alcohol and Drug Services must always respond adequately to the many needs of individuals with addictions. The Sarah Steele Building replacement project has now begun. The new building will be located on the existing site and will incorporate the three additional lots to the rear of the existing building. Construction is slated to begin this spring with completion slated for July 2016. The supplementary budget will be allocated to match the construction schedule.

Replacement of the McDonald Lodge in Dawson is also a very high priority for the department and we anticipate the completion of the project in late 2015 with occupancy in 2016. There are a number of other items that I'm very happy that the department is going ahead with and we'll look forward to discussing them further, but seeing my time is almost elapsed, I will end with that. Thank you very much.

Mr. Hassard: It's always a pleasure to stand before the Assembly to respond to Bill No. 15, *Second Appropriation Act, 2014-15*, on behalf of the people of Pelly-Nisutlin. I would like to start by thanking all of my constituents for their continued support.

The riding of Pelly-Nisutlin has seen a very busy summer. Some of the highlights include seeing the repairs to the historic Ross River footbridge. These repairs were very important to the community and I was very pleased to have been able to help see these repairs proceed. I would like to thank the chief and council of the RRDC for their continued help and support on this file. I would also like to thank the many, very passionate members of the community who never gave up. They all know who they are, of course: Ivan, Clifford, Kitty and the rest.

We have two new water treatment plants in Faro — one is at the Faro mine site, as well as one for the municipality. I was fortunate enough in the last week or two to be able to travel with the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, and we were able to do another mine site tour at Faro and had the opportunity to see the new water treatment plant in operation.

If I could, I would just like to thank Cam Malloch, a young engineer for CH2M Hill. He took us through and explained the operations and the workings of the plant, and it was very interesting, so thanks to him.

The municipality had their own water treatment facility completed. This was a Building Canada fund project. I recently had a discussion with the public works foreman and he was very happy with the way it was working. He said the power consumption has fallen dramatically compared to the old system that they had, so that was good to hear.

As well, I was fortunate enough to be able to participate in the annual Faro golf tournament again this year. It was a huge success and, in case you're wondering, no, we did not cheat. It was an honest third-place finish, so thanks to my team of course — not so much to me.

Teslin had a very busy summer as well, with just over \$2 million in street upgrades through the Building Canada fund.

We saw many, many residents working seven days a week for about nine weeks. It was a great boost for the community. I would like to thank the CAO and the town council for all of their hard work on this project, as well as Teslin Tlingit Council for their tremendous support and input and working with the Deslin Development Corporation that oversees the project. It was really a great community project.

Unfortunately, the Minister of Environment wasn't very willing to work with the community, so a lot of work was done in the rain — that's federal, sorry.

As you know, I'm the chair of the community development fund, and I very much enjoy my role over there. The team at CDF is great to work with, as we continue to financially support many great projects throughout the Yukon. The tier 3 submissions that came due in January — we've seen over \$870,000 for six projects. It was almost \$300,000 for the church of St. Christopher in Haines Junction; \$90,000 for the Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Society Yukon; \$200,000 to the Hillcrest Community Association for their trails; approximately \$111,000 to the Lorne Mountain Community Association; \$100,000 to the Village of Mayo for their swimming pool upgrades; and \$73,500 to the Whitehorse Baptist Church.

For the May intake of the tier 1 applications, we saw 15 organizations receiving about \$206,000, with \$6,245 for the Alpine Ski and Snowboard Association of Yukon; \$9,116 to the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations; \$19,500 to the Council of Northern Economic Developers; \$14,672 for the Council of Yukon First Nations; \$14,022 to the Freedom Trails Therapeutic Riding Association; \$13,320 for the Grey Mountain Housing Society; \$2,200 for the Humane Society Dawson; and \$20,000 to the Humane Society Yukon; \$16,648 for the Liard Aboriginal Women's Society; \$17,000 to the Sacred Heart Parish; \$12,731 to the Town of Faro; \$20,000 to the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation; \$8,498 to the Yukon Association for Community Living; almost \$16,000 to Yukon College; and \$17,000 to the Yukon Comic Culture Society.

The May intake of tier 2 saw approximately \$972,000 spread throughout 21 community organizations for historical, cultural, recreational and other incentives throughout the Yukon. These tier 2 level projects will provide approximately 11,000 hours of employment to about 81 people throughout the Yukon. The Alaska Highway Heritage Society received \$51,461; Biathlon Yukon received \$70,000 for upgrades to the firing line and target line at Biathlon Yukon; the Dawson Childcare Association received \$30,000 to conduct a feasibility study to determine best how to address challenges surrounding inadequate facilities with the intent to ensure that they are able to meet community demand; \$32,625 for the Dawson Shelter Society; and \$25,803 to the Granger Community Association — that was to implement phase 1 of the Granger park plan and develop and design of phase 2.

The Klondike Snowmobile Association received \$44,048 to upgrade the network of multi-use trails in the City of Whitehorse, located between the areas near Fish Lake Road and the Klondike Highway. The Kwanlin Dun Cultural Society — \$35,455 to enable elders of the Kwanlin Dun First

Nation to record visual and biographical portraits and oral histories for future exhibits and programs at the Kwanlin Dun Cultural Centre. Kwanlin Dun First Nation received \$68,202 to remove the old asphalt rink surface and replace it with a smooth level concrete pad.

The Marsh Lake Community Association received \$25,215 for improvements to walking trails. The Raven Recycling Society — \$41,500 to create a plan for a community gathering conference to develop a zero-waste event toolkit. The Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nation — \$57,173 — this was to develop a network of single-track mountain bike trails on the Dome.

The Village of Teslin — \$29,480 to install new outhouses at Friendship Park and at the ball diamond; Volunteer Bénévoles Yukon — \$35,810 to review the organization's communications tools and processes and also to improve the offer of on-line resources and training. The Whitehorse Baptist Church received \$75,000 to do upgrades at the main building at the Marsh Lake Bible Camp, as well as to build an addition on the wash house. The Yukon Avalanche Society received \$28,732 to deliver youth-targeted avalanche awareness events and outreach programs throughout the winter.

The Yukon Church Heritage Society received \$45,240 to undertake conservation, restoration and repairs to the exterior of the old log rectory. The Yukon Council on DisABILITY received \$46,272 to develop a Yukon framework and implementation for the Canadian Convention to the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

The Yukon Freestyle Ski Association received \$74,984 to build a summer ramp at Mount Sima. This was to allow freestyle athletes in Yukon and from across Canada to train during the summer months. I will not be participating. The Yukon Historical and Museums Association received \$27,869 for coordination and planning services that will support a major international conference on the role and contributions of women in the north and World War I.

The Yukon Transportation Museum Society, \$58,705 — this is to improve interpretive ability, revenue generation potential, security and curbside appeal for the Yukon Transportation Museum. YuKonstruct Makerspace Society received \$75,000 to empower Yukon innovators by assisting with funding to launch the PowerUp project.

As you can see, Mr. Speaker, the community development fund is definitely a Yukon-wide fund. It touches many Yukoners in many ways. Once again, I would just like to commend the great crew over at Economic Development for their continued hard work on this CDF file.

As well, Tourism and Culture continues to support organizations such as the Teslin Tlingit Heritage Centre and the George Johnston Museum, to the tune of about \$138,000 again this year. This government continues to deliver on our 2011 election platform promises. We have amended the *Landlord and Tenant Act*, developed land for residential lots in Whitehorse, as well as in many communities throughout the Yukon. That was very important for me. I think it was one of

the things that I had really hoped to do in our time here, so I'm happy to see that.

We've built Betty's Haven, expanded on the Options for Independence, the Alexander Street Residence is now nearing completion and we're working with the Salvation Army to expand their capacity. As well, this government continues to collaborate with other local organizations to enhance housing solutions across the territory.

We have committed to grow, support and diversify the economy. We are funding the largest tourism marketing investment in Yukon's history, upgrading Yukon's transportation infrastructure and improving cellphone coverage. As you can see, this government continues to work hard for the people of the Yukon. I would just like to thank the Premier for bringing forward this supplementary budget.

In closing, I would just like to once again thank my constituents for entrusting me with the privilege of being able to speak on their behalf here in the Assembly.

Hon. Ms. Taylor: It's my privilege to be standing before the Assembly and to speak to the supplementary estimates, second reading. I too would like to also join my colleagues in just thanking my respective constituents — the constituency of Whitehorse West — for their contributions over the previous years since I was first elected as the MLA for that particular riding.

It gets busy, and as the Minister of Education and a number of other portfolios, it can be difficult at times to find your way to the doorstep, but I did commit to do just that in the month of August.

I found myself on the doorsteps in my riding and, of course, it's a good reminder of just how important those door-to-door visits are — touching base with your constituents — to seek their input, their contributions as to what matters the most to them, and how I can lend my support and be of assistance in moving forth those issues of respective importance.

Indeed, the constituency of Whitehorse West has grown in leaps and bounds over the past number of years. In fact, there have been a couple of boundary adjustments since I was first elected back in 2002. There continues to be considerable growth in the riding as we speak, and it has contributed to a very diverse population of individuals within the riding. I am very honoured. That is my first and foremost job in this assembly — to represent my riding. I want to thank all of my constituents for taking the time at the doorstep when it was raining or when it was a beautiful evening — and, to be clear, those evenings were few and far between this past summer here in the Yukon. I also want to thank members of the Copper Ridge Neighbourhood Association for their ongoing work in support of our riding and in support of Copper Ridge and surrounding area.

In particular, I want to thank Damien Burns. Damien is not only one of my neighbours in the area, but has been a long-standing member of the association. I was very grateful to have his company in taking around a proposed plan on proposed improvements to the Lazulite Drive neighbourhood

park. That has been one example of an initiative that has come a long way. In fact, there wasn't a park in existence some 12 years ago, but slowly it evolved as a result of grassroots community individuals like Damien Burns, and many others along the way, to be sure.

Today you will see a great rink that is heavily utilized by the neighbours for skating, for hockey and for just a place to go. It has increasingly also evolved into a children's neighbourhood park, thanks to the goodwill of the City of Whitehorse, working in collaboration with the neighbourhood association. Now we are looking at enhancing those improvements to the park and working with our partners in the Yukon government and the City of Whitehorse to make it a more generational theme park for all to enjoy, particularly with residents of Copper Ridge Place situated right across the street. We want to make it an even more welcoming environment for those individuals, as well as the neighbouring residents, to come and enjoy and to sit and be able to play.

Again, I want to thank my colleagues in the neighbourhood association for their ongoing work on that particular initiative, which is important to our particular area in the neighbourhood, but also on all the other initiatives that they're heavily involved with.

I also just want to extend my thanks to my colleagues for their ongoing work in putting forth this supplementary budget and for their work throughout the summer. Indeed, I was able to travel to a number of communities over the course of the summer. In fact, I would also be remiss if I didn't mention that my colleague, the Minister of Health and Social Services, and I took up the challenge and we were able to actually complete with dignity the Klondike Road Relay. Mr. Speaker, that was a tremendous feat for me — I had not run since the day I literally ran for office some 12 years ago. For me, that was a tremendous feat as I said. Almost 20 kilometres later, I did finish it without tears and with dignity. So too did my colleague — he ran the first leg of the Klondike Road Relay and did it gracefully and actually did our team proud. Thanks to all of our team members for their efforts. Again, just another example of healthy active living here and how important it is for each and every one of us to partake in those activities.

I too would like to take a few moments and speak to a number of my different files. Of course, we'll get into further detail as we speak to the budget department by department.

I do want to first start by recognizing and acknowledging the national Aboriginal Women's Summit that took place in Membertou, Nova Scotia just recently — last week. I had the privilege of accompanying nine other women — First Nation women — from Yukon, representing a number of Yukon aboriginal women's organizations, representing youth from our territory and representing elders and various First Nation governments. It was a tremendous opportunity for us to be able to travel to Nova Scotia and to be able to join delegations from coast to coast to coast in this country and to be able to really reflect on those original recommendations that came out of the original national Aboriginal Women's Summit back in Corner Brook, Newfoundland, back in 2007.

I was very humbled to be part of that original delegation back in 2007 and, as members may recall, we had taken those recommendations from the national summit — the first ever — and we had taken them back to the Yukon and we had held our own two individual summits here in the territory — one in Watson Lake and one in Whitehorse. From there we were able to share the national recommendations and put the Yukon lens on it. From there came our own made-in-the-Yukon action plan and recommendations. Ever since 2007, we have been working to implement many of those recommendations. Just recently we had a subsequent round of Yukon aboriginal women's summits to be able to report progress and to be able to renew our priorities, renew the priorities of aboriginal women in the territory.

Again, our government has helped fund these organizations and their work in specifically implementing many of these recommendations to almost \$1 million by the end of these next three years, all inclusive of the last six years.

For me, it was a very rich experience to be able to hear some very empowering stories from women from all corners of the country and very inspiring to hear our own representatives from the Yukon speak to the significant work that they have been undertaking at the grassroots level and in working with their communities to come up with some culturally relevant community-based initiatives developed by and for aboriginal communities.

I just want to highlight some of the work. The Liard Aboriginal Women's Society, for example — the Together for Today project has been a tremendous success, and so too has their work, which has led to a renewed respect and understanding relationship between the RCMP and other agencies, in terms of the prevention of violence and also supporting victim-based programming within the community of Watson Lake.

The Sisters in Spirit initiative was another initiative that was spoken to. Of course, that originally started with the National Aboriginal Women's Association of Canada. It too was continued on by Yukon Aboriginal Women's Council and, in fact, it has been a tremendous initiative that has helped lead to the identification and working with respective families whose aboriginal women — sisters, mothers, aunts and daughters — have tragically been lost to violence in our communities.

Likewise, organizations like the Whitehorse Aboriginal Women's Circle have also been working on the aboriginal women and leadership project. There is more to come in the New Year — also, engaging men and boys through the Brothers in Spirit and the Sisters in Spirit project, which is another initiative that has been worked on by the Yukon Aboriginal Women's Council.

All of these are but a few initiatives in which these organizations have really shown leadership. I was very honoured and I was very proud to be part of the delegation that was there. During the summit there was also a meeting of respective representatives of the national aboriginal organizations accompanied by ministers and also Premier Robert McLeod of the Northwest Territories, who also holds

the file of the status women and also aboriginal affairs in his territory.

It was a tremendous opportunity to really speak to the issue of murdered and missing women. In particular, the purpose of the meeting was really to talk about coming together, building on the commitment between the premiers and the national aboriginal leaders that was made in P.E.I. back in August earlier this year to support convening a national round-table discussion with the federal government on the issue of missing and murdered aboriginal women. This is in the absence of a national inquiry. It is something that has taken shape. This particular meeting that was held in Membertou last week really helped set the actions leading up to the meeting of the national round table, looking to see that happen in the new year in Northwest Territories. The purpose is to really bring all of the respective parties together to build on those actions, to implement solutions addressing the root causes of why so many women remain vulnerable. This is absolutely essential as we move forward.

It continues to be treated as a very urgent matter that requires a collective and collaborative response by individuals and governments and organizations alike across this country. I did want to make mention of that. The Women's Directorate was very proud to be able to help sponsor our delegation — one of the largest in the country — that occurred last week. Again, I thank each and every member of our delegation for their leadership and for their strength in moving issues such as these forward on our behalf.

I also wanted to move on and say a few words about Education. In particular, when we look to the supplementary estimates, there are a number of expenditures that really reflect increased expenditures in support of the college's ongoing important work, including the Yukon Research Centre funding announcement and also in support of other initiatives, such as the ongoing funding announcement for the Northern Institute of Social Justice.

It was about a week and a half ago already that we were able to speak to these initiatives. We, as members of the Assembly, last year alone had celebrated some 50 years of Yukon College and how it has evolved as a post-secondary institution in the territory. We have really gone to work to be able to develop and expand a diverse range of programs offered at the college — with the college — designed for the academic and training needs of our students and the labour market in our territory. We are working to expand the trades training at the Centre for Northern Innovation in Mining, working to expand professional development at the Northern Institute of Social Justice, and to expand our cutting-edge cold climate technology studies at the Yukon Research Centre.

Yukon College continues to be a leader in education and it continues to be poised to continue to grow in a responsive manner.

An initiative I wanted to make reference to — and I see my time is running out slowly but quickly — is that, among just over \$26.5 million that we are providing in support of the college, we continue to support their ongoing evolution of the college into a university. As we've seen over the past number

of years, that evolution is a logical step along the path of natural growth. It's a commitment our government made during the last election.

So building on the college's strengths, we have and continue to work toward the creation of a university for Yukon, based on a model that is best suited for Yukoners. In addition to all those programs I've listed, we have also expanded the land reserve for the college in support of that long-range planning that will guide the growth and further development of the campus, as it transitions to university.

One important milestone along that very path, of course, is that of creating and delivering a degree program. We were really pleased to co-announce on October 14 at Yukon College that, for the first time ever, Yukon College will, by 2017, be offering a couple of different programs. One is the first-ever made-in-Yukon degree and post-degree certificate program — specifically a three-year bachelor of policy studies in indigenous governance and a one-year post-degree certificate in climate change and public policy. These are going to be the first-ever programs to be developed, delivered and issued by Yukon College as a stand-alone institution.

Both programs build on the excellent comprehensive work the college has been undertaking over the last number of years in support of research and indigenous governance. Again, we're very pleased to be able to again support the college as they move forward with these two new programs.

I know that my time is running short here, but I did want to make reference also — and just to mention, of course, some of the ongoing initiatives in support of bridging the gap between rural and urban education here in this territory. I make reference to, for example, the rural experiential model. I just want to thank and congratulate all the many partners involved in that particular session just held in Dawson City. It was a record high number of 105 grade 10 to 12 students who were registered from eight schools from across rural Yukon — tremendous success — and builds upon our Rural Equity Action Plan, which speaks to a number of programs, in terms of building capacity in our rural schools by being able to better support our teaching professionals in our schools in support of student learners being very successful.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I know my time is due so I look forward to debating this budget as we move forward.

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

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: Mr. Speaker, what we've heard today from the government side of the House is a little bit about the accomplishments that this government has achieved through this mandate and some great discussion about what we have yet to do in front of us.

The Yukon Party government has been working diligently to deliver what we promised to Yukoners in our 2011 election platform. Budget by budget, our Yukon Party government continues our work to make Yukon the best place in Canada. In 2011, we committed to addressing the housing needs of Yukoners. We established a youth shelter, amended the

Landlord and Tenant Act, developed land for residential lots in Whitehorse and Yukon communities so that Yukoners can now again buy a lot at the counter, built Betty's Haven for women in need of second-stage housing, expanded Options for Independence for adults with FASD and constructed seniors residences across this great territory.

We are currently completing the Alexander Street seniors residence, working with the Salvation Army to expand their capacity and collaborating with other local organizations to enhance housing solutions across the territory.

We committed to care for Yukoners and improve their access to our health care system. We have opened hospitals in Watson Lake and Dawson City, increased bursaries for students in medical fields, developed physician recruitment and retention strategies that have resulted in more doctors practising in the territory than ever before, established funding for Jackson Lake Healing Camp run by the Kwanlin Dun First Nation, and established a caregiver tax credit for Yukoners caring for a family member with a disability.

We are constructing a space to house our new MRI, expanding the Whitehorse General Hospital to include a new emergency room and expanded medical imaging facility, replacing the Sarah Steele detox facility, replacing McDonald Lodge in Dawson City and are planning a continuing care facility for Whitehorse that will meet our current and our future needs.

We've committed to enhance education and support youth in Yukon.

We're taking steps toward establishing an Yukon university by building the Centre for Northern Innovation in Mining at Yukon College, funding the mobile trades training trailer and working with the college to develop the first made-in-Yukon degree program that the Minister of Education just described.

We are building a replacement for F.H. Collins that will be a beautiful school for Whitehorse students, which is being built cost effectively.

To support our youth, we funded the Heart of Riverdale Community Centre, rebuilt the Ross River arena and provided a new school bus for Old Crow. We are funding the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation's new recreation centre, planning an impressive new soccer and sports complex in Whistle Bend and bringing forward tax incentives to improve Yukon families' access to sports and recreation.

We are committed to care for our environment. We have created the Yukon water strategy, implemented the Porcupine caribou management plan, ended open burning in Yukon landfills, enhanced funding for recycling processors in Yukon and modernized the *Environment Act*. We are implementing the Yukon climate change action plan and establishing a new campground at historic Conrad near Carcross. Since this government was elected, we have come to enjoy the largest percentage of protected land in any jurisdiction in Canada.

We committed to grow, support and diversify Yukon's economy. We are funding the largest tourism marketing investment in Yukon's history, upgrading Yukon's transportation infrastructure, improving cellphone coverage in

Yukon communities, developing municipal infrastructure across this territory, streamlining assessments in permitting and we've reduced the small business tax rate by 25 percent. We are developing a plan to build an alternate fibre optic cable to the south, continuing our work to reduce red tape and securing our energy future by investing in LNG backup generators and embarking on Yukon's next generation hydro project.

The Yukon Party government has been clear that we are committed to growing our private sector economy, creating employment opportunities for Yukoners, protecting our close connection to the land and providing the best quality of life for Yukon families. We will continue to do what we committed to do on behalf of all Yukoners. Our vision is a strong, vibrant private sector economy that allows Yukoners to move forward and prosper in the best place in Canada to live, to work, to play and to raise a family.

Motion for second reading of Bill No. 15 agreed to

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

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

Motion agreed to

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

The House adjourned at 5:21 p.m.