



Yukon Legislative Assembly

Number 191

1st Session

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HANSARD

Tuesday, April 7, 2015 — 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 Tourism and Culture; Women's Directorate; French Language Services Directorate
Hon. Brad Cathers	Lake Laberge	Minister responsible for Justice; Yukon Development Corporation/ Yukon Energy Corporation
Hon. Doug Graham	Porter Creek North	Minister responsible for Education
Hon. Scott Kent	Riverdale North	Minister responsible for Energy, Mines and Resources; Highways and Public Works
Hon. Currie Dixon	Copperbelt North	Minister responsible for Community Services; Public Service Commission
Hon. Wade Istchenko	Kluane	Minister responsible for Environment
Hon. Mike Nixon	Porter Creek South	Minister responsible for Health and Social Services; Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board
Hon. Stacey Hassard	Pelly-Nisutlin	Minister responsible for Economic Development; Yukon Housing Corporation; Yukon Liquor Corporation

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Yukon Party

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Jan Stick	Official Opposition House Leader Riverdale South
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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
Tuesday, April 7, 2015 — 1:00 p.m.**

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

Prayers

Withdrawal of motions

Speaker: To start, the Chair wishes to inform the House of a change which has been made to the Order Paper. Motion No. 888, standing in the name of the Member for Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes, has been removed from the Order Paper as it is outdated.

DAILY ROUTINE

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

TRIBUTES

In recognition of Yukon First Nation final and self-government agreements

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: Mr. Speaker, two years ago, in the presence of many past and present First Nation leaders, I rose in the Legislature to acknowledge the signing of the first four of Yukon's final agreements and self-government agreements. Today I rise to pay tribute to the 20th anniversary of the coming into effect of these agreements.

On February 14, 1995, Champagne and Aishihik First Nations, Teslin Tlingit Council, Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation and Na Cho Nyäk Dun led the way to a new, modern era of governance in the Yukon.

When Chief Elijah Smith and Yukon aboriginal leaders travelled to Ottawa more than 40 years ago to negotiate with the federal government, they saw a settled land claims as the only way to regain the pride, self-respect and economic independence that was lost over the previous 100 years.

This road to self-governance was long and challenging at times. It involved 20 years of difficult negotiation, hard work and commitment by leaders who were indeed visionaries. This led to the first four groundbreaking final and self-government agreements. Today these agreements are the foundation of how we organize ourselves politically, how we do business and how we manage Yukon's natural and cultural resources.

Today Yukon is at the forefront of aboriginal land claims and self-government in Canada. The 11 self-governing First Nations represent almost half of such agreements in Canada. Yukon First Nations and the Yukon government can continue to play an important leadership role as aboriginal peoples across Canada work toward self-determination.

The positive impacts of these agreements can be seen and felt across the territory. The return to community-level decision-making, the priority placed on health and education and increased economic opportunities are just some of the visible indicators.

First Nation youth who are growing up today have a future that is full of opportunities. They are empowered to make decisions about their future and about the future of their communities. They have a renewed sense of pride in their rich and diverse culture and heritage.

These agreements have brought many benefits to Yukon, for First Nation citizens and for all Yukoners. The agreements provide a foundation on which to work together to build capacity, strengthen our economy and find innovative solutions to shared issues.

As governments, we share common interests and responsibilities. We want to ensure that Yukon continues to prosper and we want to build healthy and sustainable communities. I am confident that together we are moving toward successful outcomes and we are making positive strides forward.

To Chief Smith and the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations, to Chief Sidney and the Teslin Tlingit Council, to Chief Kyikavichik and the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation, and Chief Simon Mervyn and the First Nation of Na Cho Nyäk Dun, may the future continue to bring you and your citizens prosperity, strength and happiness.

I look forward to the next 20 years, as our communities thrive and prosper and as these agreements continue to bring lasting benefits for all Yukoners.

Ms. Hanson: I am honoured, on behalf of the Yukon New Democratic Party, to recognize the 20th anniversary of the February 14, 1995 coming into effect of the *Umbrella Final Agreement* and those first four final and self-government agreements. The public celebration of the 20th anniversary was on March 19 at the Kwanlin Dun Cultural Centre. It was an evening marked by joy and shared pride, of humour and music, from the youngest jigger from Old Crow to the ever-popular Klukshu Flats Boogie Band.

The evening was jam-packed with conversation and with recognition of the achievements by the men and women who dedicated their lives to fulfilling the commitment to negotiate just agreements — agreements that will stand the test of time and will serve the interest of all of our children, now and into the future.

The words that come to mind, as we reflect on the achievement of Yukon First Nation peoples and as we collectively celebrate the new relationships forged by land claims and self-government agreements, are perseverance and patience — perseverance in the determination that justice would and will prevail, patience rooted in the deep knowledge that they are helping to create a Yukon society made up of peoples who have chosen freely to live and work together in a new relationship based on trust and respect. There have been many milestones along the path toward the coming into effect of Yukon land claims and self-government agreements — and many roadblocks.

History does not cast a soft light on the treatment of Yukon First Nation peoples by the thousands of gold seekers who came north in the Klondike Gold Rush. There were no socio-economic benefits or environmental impact assessments

in those days. History tells a grim tale of how Yukon Indian people were treated and ignored. Chief Jim Boss from the Lake Laberge area put it very straight. He said, "Tell the King very hard we want something for our Indians, because they take our land and our game." That message not only went ignored, Canada actually made it illegal for First Nations to raise issues related to treaty or land claims.

In retrospect, it's no surprise that when the Supreme Court of Canada issued its January 31, 1973 decision on the Nisga'a case, Yukon's First Nation leadership was quick to act. Under the leadership of Elijah Smith, they flew to Ottawa and presented *Together Today for Our Children Tomorrow* on February 14, 1973, to Prime Minister Trudeau.

Mr. Speaker, there is no version of Yukon land claims history that speaks to it being an easy road. There were numerous setbacks in negotiations — a failed ratification in 1994; subsequent changes to federal policy that included recognition and negotiation for the first time in Canada of self-government as an integral part of a land claims agreement. Yukon First Nations' patience began to be rewarded. The May 29, 1993 signing ceremony for the UFA and the first four First Nation final and self-government agreements was followed by months of hard work by representatives on all sides as the legislation necessary to give effect to the negotiated agreements was drafted. It took over a year. The June 1994 Parliamentary Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs — the hearings on Bill C-33 and Bill C-34, which were the self-government land claims pieces of legislation — were a disappointing experience for many, as the opposition, Reform and Conservative members of the committee, made no secret of their disapproval of the notion of aboriginal self-government. It was an opposition that seems not to have dissipated 20 years on. After an overnight filibuster of the bills in committee, they were voted on by Parliament on June 22, 1994. The *Yukon First Nations Land Claims Settlement Act* and the *Yukon First Nations Self-Government Act* received royal assent on July 7, 1994.

The February 14, 1995 effective date for the first four agreements was chosen by Yukon First Nations to mark the historic significance of Elijah Smith's and the Yukon First Nation leaderships' tabling of that historic document *Together Today for Our Children Tomorrow* on that date, 22 years previous — 22 years, Mr. Speaker.

Looking back on what was actually said in *Together Today for Our Children Tomorrow* gives a sense of the persistence and the patience that drove Yukon First Nations.

They said that with a just settlement of our claims, we feel we can participate as equals and then we will be able to live together as neighbours. As respected Tlingit elder and former Speaker of this Assembly Sam Johnston put it, we want the rest of Yukon to know that we didn't trigger land claims so that we could take over. The real thing was that we wanted to become involved so that our young people, both native and non-native, could all work together.

As Dave Joe from Champagne and Aishihik First Nations, one of the first four — also one of the Yukon First Nations' legal architects and negotiators — said when he

described the *Umbrella Final Agreement* as a partnership, he said it was an attempt to rationalize how we share lawmaking in Yukon. He went on to say that we can celebrate these agreements that were premised upon partnerships and our common understanding to do good for all people.

The 20th anniversary of the coming into effect of the first four — the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation, the First Nation of Na Cho Nyäk Dun, the Teslin Tlingit Council and Champagne and Aishihik First Nations — is an opportunity to recognize — and I quote: "... the signed agreements crystallized a moment in Yukon's history when Yukon First Nations and non-First Nation citizens joined in a shared vision of a future of Yukon where the institutions of public government would be open and inclusive and would incorporate Yukon First Nation interests and participation directly in governing the territory."

It comes as no surprise that many Yukoners think we have fallen short in realizing the great opportunity presented to Yukon by the *Umbrella Final Agreement*, the final agreements and the self-government agreements. The current debate over proposed changes to YESAA demonstrate how important it is to reinvigorate and empower public involvement in government decision-making, using the framework established by the *Umbrella Final Agreement* and Yukon First Nation final and self-government agreements.

I noted earlier that Yukon First Nation people are patient and they have persevered. First Nations have worked hard to establish new governments and to live up to the terms of a new relationship that is signified by the *Umbrella Final Agreement* and, through it, the First Nation final and self-government agreements. Canada and Yukon are also signatories to these agreements. Now we must collectively honour and give effect to this new relationship.

Mr. Silver: It's with great pleasure that I also rise on behalf of the Yukon Liberal Party to pay tribute to the 20th anniversary of recognized First Nation self-government in Yukon.

On February 14, 1995, the first self-government agreements were signed by the Na Cho Nyäk Dun First Nation, Champagne and Aishihik First Nations, Teslin Tlingit Council and the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation. The date also coincided with the anniversary of the 1973 presentation of *Together Today for Our Children Tomorrow*, a foundation document for today's self-government agreements.

I had the honour and privilege to attend the celebration event on March 19, 2015 at the Kwanlin Dun Cultural Centre. The tone that night was both celebratory but also a reminder of the work that still needs to be done. Even still within governments, there are those who do not recognize the legitimacy of Yukon First Nations' ability to govern. Just last year the federal Minister of Aboriginal Affairs told Yukon First Nation chiefs that they were not governments.

The Yukon First Nation governments should be saluted for all they have accomplished. Other governments and we ourselves need to understand that we either need to make relationships and partnerships or get out of the way, as I am

certain that the next 20 years will be even more fruitful than the last 20 years.

Yukon First Nations have been leaders in implementing self-government agreements. Today, 11 of Yukon's First Nations have signed self-government agreements. These will form the cornerstone of our economic and societal development for generations to come. These monumental agreements have benefited all Yukoners by providing a voice through boards and committees and councils, thus increasing communication among all levels of government.

In closing, I would like to congratulate all Yukon First Nations on what they have achieved and I look forward to what you will achieve next. In closing, I would just like to say that self-government is leading the way.

In recognition of World Health Day

Hon. Mr. Nixon: I rise on behalf of my government caucus colleagues to tribute April 7 as World Health Day, a date chosen to mark the anniversary of the founding of the World Health Organization in 1948.

This year the focus of the World Health Day is on food safety. Every human being should be provided food that is free from chemicals, microbes and viruses. This does not even address the availability of food — only the safety of food we consume.

The reality is that over 200 diseases are caused by bacteria, parasites, viruses and chemical substances that make their way into food all over the world. The World Health Organization estimates that over two million people die every year from contaminated food or drinking water. The WHO works in various countries on projects that teach people how to grow food, cook it and keep it safely.

Canada has a strong tradition of legislation, industry education and public awareness campaigns that aim at keeping our food safe from field to plate. In Yukon, the government's Environmental Health Services program protects Yukoners thanks to regulations and the inspectors who enforce them.

Environmental Health Services helped protect our food and water through licensing, inspection and enforcement, not to mention public education. Thanks to the work of the staff of EHS, we know that restaurants are inspected, that temporary food permits ensure that food will be served safe and that sewage disposal systems are not at risk of contaminating drinking water. We know which foods are safe to donate to charitable organizations. We know why it's so important to wash our hands often when dealing with food. We know the best ways of washing dishes in public food establishments.

Keeping our food safe from microbes, parasites and chemicals does not happen by itself. It takes the concerted effort of individuals, inspection agencies and government regulations to ensure that the food we eat is healthy and it is safe.

I encourage all members of this House to educate themselves about food safety. The Government of Yukon's Environmental Health Services website is a great place to start.

Mr. Tredger: I rise today on behalf of the NDP Official Opposition and the Third Party to pay tribute to World Health Day. The theme for 2015 is "From Farm to Plate, Make Food Safe." I would like to begin by acknowledging our Yukon food producers — our farmers — the Environmental Health Services, the inspectors and the Department of Agriculture for working together to ensure safe, healthy, local foods. Especially, I would like to thank the food inspectors for working with our restaurants, our retailers, our institutions and our local suppliers and producers to ensure safe secure food for all Yukoners.

We know that the Yukon is particularly vulnerable, as the majority of our food consumption is reliant on an international global network, transportation system and supply chain. Every day, people all over the world get sick from the food they eat. The sickness is often referred to as food-borne disease and is caused by micro-organisms and/or toxic chemicals. Most food-borne disease is preventable with proper food preparation and handling.

Food-borne disease is a problem in both developing and developed countries. It is a strain on our health care system and disproportionately affects infants, young children, the elderly, the sick and the vulnerable. Food-borne disease hurts the national economy and the development of international trade. The other aspect of food-borne disease is around food security. Our food security does equal health. Food security is an essential social determinant of health; among the top four as identified by the Canadian Medical Association earlier this year. It is estimated that about 1.1 million households in Canada experience food insecurity. According to a Canadian community health survey in 2011, 16.8 percent of Yukon households identified as being food insecure. A further 22.7 percent of Yukon children were identified as being food insecure.

Heart disease, diabetes, high blood pressure, stress and food allergies are more common among families unable to ensure a stable food supply. Improving socio-economic factors from poverty to housing to food security will have a positive impact on lifestyle choices, health outcomes and community development and well-being. The more people have to struggle to obtain their food, the less likely they are able to ensure the safety and the quality of that food. For those Yukon citizens who are food insecure, especially the children and the seniors, their health is already compromised and they are especially vulnerable to chronic disease caused by poor nutrition. As well, they are more susceptible to food-borne illnesses.

I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the Whitehorse Food Bank and the Yukon Anti-Poverty Coalition for the work they are doing to ensure all Yukon citizens have access to safe and reliable food. I would also like to acknowledge the work of Yukon College research centre for northern innovation for the research and pilot projects around growing and producing food in the north. At the same time, I would acknowledge the Department of Agriculture, local farmers and producers, local community markets and co-ops for working together to ensure a growing food supply that is

locally affordable, healthy and reliable. The more we are able to produce and support locally grown food, the less we are dependent on global supply chains and the more control local consumers have over the safety, quality, freshness and reliability of our food.

I would urge all of us to be mindful of the food we are eating, where it is coming from, and most importantly, to support local food producers and retailers. We must work together to ensure all Yukon citizens have secure access to safe, healthy food. Thank you.

In recognition of Yukon Biodiversity Awareness Month

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: I rise today to ask members of this House to join me in recognizing Yukon Biodiversity Awareness Month and in paying tribute to its many organizers. Biodiversity Awareness Month takes place throughout the month of April and incorporates the Celebration of Swans, National Wildlife Week and International Mother Earth Day among other observances.

Biodiversity is the variety of life on this planet, from the tiniest soil organism to the biggest mammal. This includes ecosystems, genetic and species variations, as well as how they all interact with each other. Earth's ecosystems require many different kinds of plants and animals to remain healthy here in the Yukon. Our biodiversity includes, believe it or not, four amphibian species, 38 fish species, 71 mammal species, 249 bird species, over 450 types of lichen and fungi, more than 2,000 plant species and well over 6,000 insect species. The Government of Yukon recognizes the importance of maintaining biodiversity, both here and around the world.

We are committed to ensuring that the territory's natural environment is protected, maintained and secured for the sustainable use and enjoyment of present and future generations. Protecting key habitats is one approach.

A highlight of the Yukon's Biodiversity Awareness Month is the Celebration of Swans. This premier bird festival, arriving on the wings of the trumpeter swans, brings residents and visitors alike to the great viewing areas to welcome spring to the north. I just want to put a big thank you out to Scott Cameron and Carrie McClelland, who are our wildlife viewing folks at the Department of Environment. Listening to Scott on the radio this morning, I think the trumpeter swans are early and there are about 1,200 of them, so residents will flock to this event around the southern Yukon.

Approximately 10 percent of Yukoners join in activities or visit the Swan Haven Interpretive Centre each year. This makes the Celebration of Swans the largest birding event in the territory. By now, every home has received a copy of the 2015 spring events calendar. This guide, which is also available on the Department of Environment's website, outlines the many activities taking place around the territory. These activities aim to help foster an appreciation for wildlife and habitat.

I would like to close my remarks by recognizing some of the many who make Yukon's Biodiversity Awareness Month possible by hosting or promoting or coordinating activities big

and small. Some of these are: l'Association franco-yukonnaise, Carcross-Tagish First Nation, City of Whitehorse, Ducks Unlimited Canada, Environment Canada, Girl Guides of Canada, Kluane First Nation, Marsh Lake Community Society, Society of the Yukon Bird Observatories, Town of Faro, *What's Up Yukon*, Whitehorse United Church, our wildlife viewing program that I spoke of earlier at the Department of Environment, Yukon College, Yukon Energy and the Yukon Wildlife Preserve and, of course, the Yukon Fish and Game Association.

I invite all members to take the time to enjoy some of the events taking place this month. I had the opportunity to spend some time on the land and enjoy it over the Easter weekend.

Ms. White: I rise on behalf of the Official Opposition and the Third Party to celebrate the beauty and fragility of biodiversity. The Earth is a fragile and intricate place. Everything is interconnected. What affects one thing will inevitably affect another.

Biodiversity encompasses ecosystems, genetic and cultural diversity, and the connections between all species on Earth. Imagine a woven carpet. When you pull on a loose thread, it might only affect that thread or those threads closest to it, but maybe if you pull a little harder, it can unravel the whole, entire carpet. Here's the problem: We've pulled on far too many threads. Our planet is facing a biodiversity crisis.

We know that human impacts from ongoing development, deforestation, pollution and climate change are destroying the homes and habitat of wildlife around the world. At least 16,000 species across the globe are currently threatened with extinction. This includes 12 percent of all birds, 23 percent of all mammals and 32 percent of all amphibians. It doesn't have to be this way. Knowing how we harm biodiversity will help us make better decisions in the future.

We have been able to reverse this trend of destruction. There was a time when populations of the great whales, bald eagles and whooping cranes were in rapid decline, but strong legislation, habitat protection and international agreements have helped these populations bounce back. In Canada alone, despite our extraordinary legacy of animals and plants, we have more than 500 species that are either extinct or at risk of extinction.

In 1996, the federal government and our provinces and territories signed an *Accord for the Protection of Species at Risk*. We each made a commitment to establish compatible legislation that, together, protects species at risk in Canada. That means that each province and territory has its own obligations to protect wildlife. Sadly, in Yukon, we've been told that we don't need our own species-at-risk legislation because we can depend upon the national *Species at Risk Act*. That very same act abandons much of Canada's iconic wildlife, such as the polar bear or the Atlantic salmon, leaving them off the very list that's designed to protect them.

For the majority of species that are lucky enough to make that list, the federal government has chronically failed to identify and then protect the habitats that they need to survive

and recover. Mr. Speaker, I look forward to the day that the Yukon government fulfills its commitment to creating stand-alone species-at-risk legislation that will help protect the valuable biodiversity of the territory and of the planet.

Speaker: Are there any visitors to be introduced?

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Mr. Cathers: I would like to acknowledge and ask members to join me in welcoming to the gallery today some of the stakeholders who participated in the stakeholder advisory committee that led to the development of the *Condominium Act*, which I will be tabling shortly. If members will join me in acknowledging in the gallery Pat Ross from the City of Whitehorse, Rick Karp for the Whitehorse Chamber of Commerce, Sonny Gray from the Yukon Condominium Owners Association and Serge Lamarche from the real estate portion of the legal community. I would like to thank others who participated who are not present here today as well as also welcoming to the gallery the assistant deputy minister for Courts and Regulatory Services, Lesley McCullough. I would like to thank her and her staff and all in the Department of Justice who worked on this substantial piece of legislation, for their excellent work in developing this.

Applause

Ms. Hanson: It's my pleasure to introduce to the House today Éline Michaud, Member of Parliament for Portneuf - Jacques-Cartier and I invite everybody to welcome Éline to the Yukon.

Applause

TABLING RETURNS AND DOCUMENTS

Speaker: Under tabling returns and documents, the Chair has for tabling the *2014 Annual Report of the Yukon Ombudsman*, which is tabled pursuant to subsection 31(1) of the *Ombudsman Act*.

The Chair also has for tabling the *2014 Annual Report of the Yukon Information and Privacy Commissioner*, which is tabled pursuant to subsection 47(2) of the *Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.

Are there any further 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. 85: *Condominium Act, 2015* — Introduction and First Reading

Hon. Mr. Cathers: I move that Bill No. 85, entitled *Condominium Act, 2015*, be now introduced and read a first time.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Minister of Justice that Bill No. 85, entitled *Condominium Act, 2015*, be now introduced and read a first time.

Motion for introduction and first reading of Bill No. 85 agreed to

Speaker: Are there any further bills for introduction? Are there any notices of motions?

NOTICES OF MOTIONS

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

THAT this House urges the professional staff of the art curators and the director and the chief executive officer of the National Gallery of Canada to give favorable consideration to include in the National Gallery's collection the work of an iconic and important figure in Yukon and Canadian art, the late Ted Harrison.

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

THAT, in light of provisions that force Canadians to choose between security and our civil rights, this House calls on the Government of Canada to withdraw House of Commons Bill C-51.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to extend the consultation period beyond the May 15, 2015 deadline for the \$202-million Alaska Highway corridor project in order to give Yukon residents and businesses more time to scrutinize the plan and its supporting documents and provide their feedback.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to release the Stantec Architecture report and the Ernst & Young report on a second fibre optic link.

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 made his annual Budget Address, and what a difference a couple of years makes. In his 2012-13 budget speech, the Premier's take on Yukon's environmental assessment process and its contribution to the success of Yukon's mining industry was in stark contrast to his current publically stated views.

He quoted the Yukon Chamber of Mines saying — and I quote: “the establishment of a single assessment authority on behalf of all responsible authorities has greatly simplified the assessment process and provides for more certainty and transparency”.

Then, out of nowhere, YESAA became a burdensome assessment process that was holding Yukon back. Four amendments were unilaterally added to Bill S-6, two of which

were proposed by this government. This Premier made a complete 180 on YESAA in just two years.

So, Mr. Speaker, what changed his mind? Why the switch? Who is really calling the shots when it comes to running this territory?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: As I have stated, Mr. Speaker, Bill S-6 is good for Yukon and, through a bilateral accord, we can find a way to make this work. Not only is this good for Yukon's economy, but it will strengthen Yukon's environmental, social and economic assessment system. We stand by that.

As I have stated in this House earlier, we believe that we can find a way through this with First Nations. It has happened in the past and, as leaders, I believe that we can sit down and find a way to move forward to find an agreement on how we can implement these amendments on the ground to work for all Yukoners.

Ms. Hanson: The Premier seems to forget that these emanate from Yukon land claims agreements that he was touting earlier today. The only person who still believes that Bill S-6 is good for the Yukon is the Premier. First Nation governments, industry and the Yukon public can all see the writing on the wall. At no point has the Premier offered any coherent argument to Yukon First Nation governments for why the four contentious amendments to YESAA are necessary. He simply says, "Let it pass."

Now the Premier is asking Yukon First Nation governments to trust him, to accept his offer of a bilateral agreement and allow a bill to pass that they have clearly stated they cannot and will not support. For some reason, the Premier sold out Yukon First Nations and created this problem. Now he is asking them to come to the table and fix it for him.

Why does the Premier think that Yukon First Nation governments would want to help solve the Premier's problems by throwing away the hard-won compromises that created independent, arm's-length bodies like YESAA?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: There is broad support for the amendments. Clearly we heard that at the recent hearings of the House of Commons committee here in Whitehorse, where the Chamber of Mines spoke up quite clearly. The Klondike Placer Miners' Association as well spoke up very clearly. Let's also remember that these amendments are not about the resource industry alone. These amendments affect projects right across this territory, whether it's municipal projects or whether it's someone who simply wants to see if they can have a power pole put in on their property. These amendments will ensure that our environmental assessment process is consistent with other jurisdictions. That allows us to remain competitive to allow us a great opportunity to attract investment that creates great jobs and great futures for Yukoners.

Ms. Hanson: The Premier popped the idea of a bilateral accord at the parliamentary committee hearings. He apparently realized that he had been caught out and was trying to divert attention away from the fact that it is his government that is undermining YESAA. He is also belatedly recognizing

that if he doesn't do something, Yukon's economy will implode because of his actions. The Premier's proposed bilateral accord is like the emperor's new clothes — there is nothing there.

He is asking First Nation governments for a blank cheque. The Premier has eroded any basis for trust between Yukon government and First Nation governments and now he is asking them to come to the table and make more compromises. This government has shown no willingness to give, when it comes to their relationship with Yukon First Nation governments. Mr. Speaker, First Nation governments are right to be skeptical of the Premier's offer.

Can the Premier explain exactly what he is offering to First Nation governments in this proposed bilateral accord?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: Mr. Speaker, we all know this in this House — at least I thought that the member opposite and the Leader of the Official Opposition knew this — but Bill S-6 is federal legislation. This has gone through the Senate. It was passed unanimously by all members of the Senate. It's now sitting at the committee stage in the House of Commons.

What we can do — as I have spoken to First Nation leadership — is control what we can control, and I have offered out to First Nation leaders the ability to sit down. Let's sit down and find a path forward that works for everybody. We have done it in the past with the devolution transfer agreement. We've done it in the past with oil and gas agreements. Leaders can step forward. Together we can find a way to implement these amendments here on the ground that will work for everybody.

Question re: Hydraulic fracturing

Ms. White: Last month, Yukoners were presented with more proof that this government will spare no effort to sell fracking to the territory. There was barely enough time for the ink to dry on Yukon's select committee report on fracking before the Yukon Party government proceeded to develop a plan to push forward fracking in the territory. People know where the Yukon NDP stands on fracking. We're on the side of First Nation governments, on the side of the science and the vast majority of Yukoners who say that fracking threatens our land and our water and doesn't belong in Yukon.

Just last week, the Energy, Mines and Resources minister refused to come clean and tell Yukoners where the Yukon Party stands on fracking. Mr. Speaker, who gave policy direction to the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources to proceed with the leaked document's position on fracking?

Hon. Mr. Kent: Mr. Speaker, with respect to the document that was mistakenly sent to a member of the local media by an official at Energy, Mines and Resources, that document was meant to formulate a caucus presentation with respect to a response to the select committee. The select committee included three members of the government side and three members of the opposition side. I'll repeat what I did last Thursday and thank the committee for their work. I recognize the amount of time and effort and resources that the committee put into the work that they did and respect that.

Of course, the day that the committee report came out, the NDP already had their position; the Liberals had their position with respect to the report. In government, we have to take time. We have to do the work necessary to respond to those 21 recommendations and that's what we're doing. Mr. Speaker, that's what that document was meant to formulate the position on. As I've mentioned, I'll be bringing forward a response to the select committee during this current sitting of the Legislative Assembly, at which time I'm sure that we'll be entering into further debate with respect to hydraulic fracturing.

Again, Mr. Speaker, what we are going to do is take a zero-tolerance approach to misinformation, giving full and fair consideration to the facts and to the science, as well as to the concerns of Yukoners.

Ms. White: Yukoners have a zero-tolerance policy for government spin on fracking and ministerial secrecy. The minister ignores this at his peril. The government documents that were accidentally leaked to the media show how the Yukon Party government can proceed with fracking. It's pretty detailed planning for only a month's work. The documents describe how the Yukon government can sell fracking to Yukoners regardless of the clear opposition from Yukon First Nation governments and the public throughout the select committee process. The documents are clear and they say — I am quoting: "...it is recommended that YG focus on: multi-stage horizontal fracking".

Mr. Speaker, my question is simple: Does the Energy, Mines and Resources minister intend to focus on multi-stage horizontal fracking? Yes or no?

Hon. Mr. Kent: The immediate thing that we're focused on is providing a response to the 21 recommendations that were brought forward by the select committee.

One of those recommendations was to continue public dialogue with respect to this practice, and that is something I know Yukoners are interested in. They are certainly interested in knowing the facts.

Again, we will not tolerate any misinformation with respect to fracking. We're going to give full and fair consideration to the facts and to the science. We're going to cut Hollywood out of this picture, whether it's *GasLand* or *FrackNation*, or whatever program you choose to watch with respect to this practice. We're going to focus on the science, the facts, and how this industry is perceived and regulated in other jurisdictions.

Most jurisdictions around the Yukon, including Alaska, British Columbia, the Northwest Territories, Alberta and Saskatchewan, all currently have active hydraulic fracturing projects underway in their jurisdictions. Again, there are none in the Yukon. There are none in the queue to be done here, but the immediate focus will be responding to the committee report, and that's the work that's underway right now by the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources — of course, coming forward to my caucus and Cabinet colleagues and to this Legislature during this Spring Sitting.

Ms. White: I would feel better about the minister's dismissive tone were it not for the troubling news that the

government is planning a pilot project in the Kotaneelee gas fields. An e-mail that appears to be from the Deputy Minister of EMR clearly indicates the minister's intention to go ahead with it — I'm quoting: "... a pilot fracking/science project in the Liard Basin with EFLO ..."

The minister has told us that there aren't any applications to frack, but why won't he tell us that he is pushing a fracking pilot project behind the backs of Yukoners? Despite leaked documents and tightly scripted talking points, the Yukon Party is determined to force fracking onto a community that has clearly said no.

Mr. Speaker, is the Yukon Party government planning to implement a pilot project to introduce fracking to the Yukon? When were they planning on making that announcement public?

Hon. Mr. Kent: Fracking is an important issue for Yukoners and for our government, and we're working diligently and carefully on our response to the committee report. We're not going to rush; we're not going to panic; we're not going to spread false information. We're not going to make ill-informed decisions.

We are taking a zero-tolerance approach to misinformation, giving full and fair consideration to the facts and to the science, as well as to the economic benefits that this industry has contributed to the Yukon over its existence here and that it could potentially contribute in the future.

Again, Mr. Speaker, we recognize that there are concerns of Yukoners with respect to this practice. They can expect to hear our response to the select committee during the current sitting of the Legislative Assembly.

Question re: Mental health services

Mr. Silver: I've already noted in this sitting the fact that Yukon is one of only two jurisdictions in Canada without a mental health strategy. Just over a year ago, the Department of Health and Social Services released a report called *A Clinical Services Plan for Yukon Territory*. One of the key findings of the report was quite blunt, Mr. Speaker — and I quote: "Mental health services are in a significant deficit outside of Whitehorse ..."

Mr. Speaker, what has the government done in the year since it received the \$200,000 report to address this lack of mental health services in rural Yukon?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: I thank the member opposite for his question. Of course, this government has invested heavily in mental health services over the last decade. We only need to look at programs, such as what we're doing in the area of FASD, the investments that we're making in this budget for the St. Elias group home and the investments in the Salvation Army with the facility that was just announced a short time ago.

We will continue on with these investments. There is lots of work to be done in this area. We are certainly working with the local mental health association and the good work that they do. I would certainly recognize the hard work from people in the NGO community and government community

around the territory, both in Whitehorse and rural communities.

Mr. Silver: I can see it is hard for the minister to list some of the rural strategies because there really aren't a lot. Let's go back to the government's own report. This is what I heard from its own employees about mental health services — and I quote: "The input from health centres also provided insight into care gaps of concern: Mental health and addiction services are not well resourced in communities." It went on to warn — and I quote again: "Not addressing ADS and mental health services in Yukon Territory risks failure for a clinical services plan. Central to a clinical services plan of value to the residents of Yukon Territory is the expanded resourcing of ADS and mental health services, especially in the communities. There is no greater need."

I will ask again: What action has the government taken on this issue in rural Yukon since it received the report more than a year ago?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: What we clearly have here is a failure of the member opposite to really pay attention to what this government has been working on over the last decade. We have two hospitals, one in Watson Lake and one in Dawson City, with services for people with mental health issues, both of which the member opposite has voted against. We have money in the budget and have had money in the budget for Many Rivers to provide services within Yukon communities, expenditures the member opposite has voted against each and every time.

We will continue that good work. Again I thank the department and the NGOs for reaching out to the communities. The member opposite mentioned alcohol and drug services and those services, which, with the expansion of the Sarah Steele Building, will continue to be provided in Yukon communities — again, another project and services that the member opposite has voted against each and every time.

Mr. Silver: It is very unfortunate that clearly the failure here is the minister's inability to comprehend the actual problem. The overwhelming message from the government's own report is that things need to change. Yet the minister stands in this House and continues to defend the status quo. "We are doing a good job," he says, and refuses to acknowledge that more needs to be done.

Let's go back to the report — and I quote: "No provider or service interview conducted during the study was silent on the enormity of the problem with, and impact of, the management and challenges of mental health services in the Yukon Territory. The full spectrum of mental health issues is prevalent and generates a huge burden on available resources and family members." It continues: "...not a single interview during this study was silent on the critical need for expanded and re-tooled MHS to be central in service planning."

Mr. Speaker, I will try again. How does this government plan to address these shortcomings?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: Clearly, what we have here is the inability for the member opposite to really understand what the facts are and understand what the services in the territory

are. The member opposite should be ashamed of himself for voting against a budget, and previous budgets, that provided mental health services within all of the communities through the Sarah Steele Building, through Drug and Alcohol Services and through Many Rivers.

The member opposite should be ashamed, and I look forward to the member opposite voting in favour of this 2015-16 budget with expanded services for mental health in all Yukon communities.

Question re: RCMP body-mounted cameras

Ms. Moorcroft: Recently a British Columbia legislative committee recommended that the provincial government aggressively pursue providing police with body-mounted cameras. The committee was unanimous in their recommendations, noting that other jurisdictions in Canada had implemented body-worn video cameras because their use — and I quote — "benefit law-enforcement and citizens alike."

Police body-worn cameras have not been adopted in Yukon. However, when *Sharing Common Ground*, a comprehensive report on policing in Yukon, was completed, it recommended RCMP look into the potential use of police body cameras in Yukon.

Is the minister familiar with the 2010 *Sharing Common Ground — Review of Yukon's Police Force* and does he support the recommendations that Yukon consider implementing body cameras for RCMP use?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: I thank the member for the question. As I think the member is well aware, the *Sharing Common Ground* work that was done involved many stakeholders. It involved leadership from the Department of Justice, as well as input from First Nation governments, from the community, from women's groups and many, many other stakeholders who came together to try to modernize and strengthen the relationship between Yukon's police force and the community. There has been a significant amount of work done since that time, including, most recently, the joint announcement by me and the Minister of the Women's Directorate of the implementation of the funding for a women's legal advocate position, which was another of the recommendations out of *Sharing Common Ground*. Most of the recommendations of *Sharing Common Ground* have in fact been implemented, but there are others where work is ongoing.

In answer to the member's specific question about cameras, there are some issues around the storage of that information that need to be addressed and that the RCMP is working on at a national level. We look forward to continuing to work with them on assessing when we can implement body cameras and what needs to be done to address privacy concerns around that.

Ms. Moorcroft: The use of body-worn video cameras has been successful across Canada and the United States. It has been shown to make interactions between police and the public safer for all parties involved. More than 20 police forces across Canada have done pilot projects and some have

implemented more permanent policies on body camera use, so the issue of security is being addressed. The 2012 year 1 progress report of *Sharing Common Ground* tells us that the RCMP national pilot project is ongoing and that the Yukon division is monitoring the use of personal video devices.

Are Yukon RCMP officers taking part in the national pilot project and, if so, how many body cameras are being used in Yukon?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: As I believe the member is aware, while the Minister of Justice, based in part on the advice of the Yukon Police Council — another important action item out of *Sharing Common Ground* that was implemented — does provide very high level strategic direction to the RCMP about the policing priorities for each year, the specifics of the operations of the RCMP are matters that the Minister of Justice cannot get involved in.

In answer to the member's question about the nature of participation in the national work, I will have to look into that and get back to the member. I don't have the information to answer her specific question at this point in time.

Ms. Moorcroft: I thank the minister for that. The Yukon government, along with the RCMP is, however, responsible for implementing the recommendations of the *Sharing Common Ground* report.

The police are on board when it comes to using body cameras. It protects them from frivolous complaints and it makes prosecution easier as there is video evidence. It also protects the public from abuse for the same reason. It helps remove the "he said-she said" problem that so often occurs from police public interactions. This is a great opportunity for the government to show leadership and work with community partners and develop a plan that benefits law enforcement officers and the people they interact with.

Will the minister partner with Yukon's M Division, which hopes to use body cameras in the future, and figure out how to make this happen?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: As the member opposite has just articulated, there were a series of over 30 recommendations out of the *Sharing Common Ground* report, which really started back in 2010 at a comprehensive policing review, first of its kind, and this government takes very seriously implementing each of those respective recommendations. I'm very pleased to report that the majority have in fact been implemented and others require further consideration.

In terms of implementation — specialized response unit, of course, working with service providers, key stakeholders for enhanced interagency collaboration when it comes to addressing violence against women and children. There have been changes to their domestic violence policy with the support and input from all of our community partners when it comes to the RCMP.

Additionally, through the Northern Institute of Social Justice — and the RCMP have received specialized training in terms of First Nation history and culture focused on the unique history of First Nations along with cultural protocols and, of course, Together for Justice, a justice initiative through the collaboration with Liard Aboriginal Women's Society.

So, Mr. Speaker, again just to articulate, we are very serious about implementing each and every recommendation and we look forward to the further collaboration with the RCMP.

Question re: Recycling services

Mr. Barr: Recycling services in this territory are reaching a critical point. Anyone who has been to the Whitehorse landfill has seen the overflowing recycling bins. Yukoners want to recycle but the government's ham-fisted approach caused Raven Recycling to shut their public drop-off. Meanwhile the last recycler standing is buckling at the knees to meet the increased demand on its services.

We know that the government is increasing diversion credits this year, but this isn't a sustainable situation. There is no long-term commitment to finance recycling in Yukon. Pardon the pun, but this issue has reached a tipping point.

When will the government provide sustainable and predictable funding to recycling services in Yukon?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: I have to disagree with the member opposite's characterization of the events that have occurred with regard to recycling over the past few years. I disagree with his synopsis of the current situation, both with regard to the closure of Raven's public drop-off as well as the characterization that the other recycler is buckling at the knees. I will be happy to inform the recyclers that he has such a low opinion of them.

Mr. Speaker, what we've done thus far is provide precisely what was asked of us by the recycling processors. Over a year ago, we provided diversion credits to both processors at the amount they requested. Now just last week, we announced that we would be providing an enhanced diversion credit to meet the needs of those processors as well. We don't know ultimately if this will mean that Raven will reopen their public drop-off; that's a decision that their board will have to make. My understanding is that they'll make that decision later this month.

Mr. Speaker, we continue to invest in recycling throughout the Yukon. We continue to invest in community infrastructure to provide solid-waste services in all Yukon communities, making sure that Yukoners understand the importance of recycling. We've been making these investments and the NDP has been voting against them.

Mr. Barr: The Community Services minister has a lot to say about his one-year plan, but it's time to look a little further down the road. Again, Yukoners want to recycle, but this government just doesn't seem to think it's a priority. I would like to remind everyone that, last year, there was sustained open-pit burning in one of our community landfills. It's 2015, Mr. Speaker, and this government needs to get with the times and develop a long-term recycling strategy for Yukon.

Will the minister take a departure from his predecessors' inaction and show us how he is going to make recycling accessible in Yukon for the next generation?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Mr. Speaker, what we've done over the past number of years is make considerable investments in

infrastructure throughout Yukon to provide solid-waste services in all Yukon communities. We invested in community landfills and transfer stations throughout the territory. We've enhanced the ability of Yukon's processors to do the work that they need to do by providing these enhanced diversion credits.

Again, I should point out that each one of these investments and each one of these actions that we've taken over the past number of years have been voted against by both the NDP and the Liberals, so of course one has to question their commitment to this issue when they not only fail to bring forward their own plan or alternative, but they vote against the measures taken by this government.

We will continue to do what we've been doing, which is making our recycling system more financially sustainable. We are making changes to the beverage container regulation and designated material regulation to ensure the long-term fiscal sustainability of the recycling industry. We'll continue to provide those enhanced diversion credits throughout this year to bridge the gap that exists for the long-term financial sustainability of the recycling industry in Yukon.

Mr. Barr: The Yukon Party government is short-sighted; it's long-term vision that we're speaking of. It has missed its own goal of diverting half of the Yukon's waste by 2015. That was a Yukon Party election promise that has been thrown to the curb like so many others. This broken promise conveniently coincides with a slew of pre-election spending that kicks the discarded can down the road, and one year of recycling funding is no exception.

Mr. Speaker, other such services have the luxury of three- or five-year plans to offer stability. Why not the Yukon's recyclers? With 2015's 50-percent waste diversion target out of reach and no long-term recycling funding in place, when is the minister planning to reach this modest goal?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: I appreciate the bravado and sort of self-righteous indignation that the member brings to the floor.

Some Hon. Member: (inaudible)

Point of order

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

Ms. White: Standing Order 19(i): "uses abusive or insulting language ... in a context likely to create disorder". That was disrespectful, in my opinion.

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

Mr. Elias: I don't have a dictionary in front of me, but I'm pretty sure the remarks from the honourable minister weren't disrespectful at all and I believe this is a dispute among members. Thank you.

Speaker's ruling

Speaker: On our first sitting day, we had a similar point of order and I ruled that it was not a point of order, but I did try to caution members — all of you — that the use of words like this in this context will lead to discord, and individual uses will come back to you.

Once again, I caution you on the use of your words. Be careful what you say. I can guarantee that it will come back to you and, as you push the line, one of you will step over it and that person will pay. Pay attention.

Minister of Community Services, please finish your statement.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think it goes without saying that the comments that have been made are certainly hyperbolic and not reflective of the current state of affairs.

We brought forward exactly what has been asked of us by recycling processors in Yukon, which is for an enhanced diversion credit that is based on the type of material and tonnage of material. We've done exactly what was asked of us. Now what we're doing is turning our attention to a longer term, financially sustainable model for Yukon recyclers, which includes the changes that we're bringing forward to the beverage container regulation and includes changes that we're bringing forward to the designated material regulation that will enhance the BCR rate and will also add products to the designated material list.

This is a step forward for Yukon's recycling industry, it's a step forward for Yukon solid-waste management, and I'm looking forward to bringing forward the budget that includes significant investments in solid waste and recycling throughout the territory.

Speaker: The time for Question Period has now elapsed.

Notice of government private members' business

Mr. Elias: Pursuant to Standing Order 14.2(7), I would like to identify the items standing in the name of government private members to be called on Wednesday, April 8, 2015. They are Motion No. 896, standing in the name of the Member for Watson Lake, and Motion No. 894, standing in the name of the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin.

Speaker: We will now proceed to Orders of the Day.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT BILLS

Bill No. 18: First Appropriation Act, 2015-16 — Second Reading — adjourned debate

Clerk: Second reading, Bill No. 18, standing in the name of the Hon. Mr. Pasloski; adjourned debate, Ms. Hanson.

Ms. Hanson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker; I was just taken aback.

Some Hon. Member: (inaudible)

Ms. Hanson: Absolutely, and I'm pleased, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased also to be standing in this House today as the leader of the Yukon's Official Opposition, the

New Democratic Party, here initially on behalf of my constituents, to respond to the 2015-16 budget.

I also speak as Leader of the Official Opposition on behalf of many Yukoners throughout this territory. As the Official Opposition, we take seriously the responsibilities entrusted to us by the citizens of Yukon to hold the government to account and to work with the government to ensure that there is true accountability for the resources entrusted to this Legislative Assembly.

As part of holding government to account for the expenditures contained in the budget, it is important to have open and transparent access to the process of public policy decision-making with respect to decisions taken or not taken that have an impact on the land, resources and citizens of Yukon.

So Mr. Speaker, my focus today is a response to choices made by this government through its Budget Address, delivered on April 2. However, before I do so, I would like to extend my thanks to the citizens of Whitehorse Centre, the riding I've had the privilege of representing since December 2010 in the by-election of that time.

Living and working in my riding, I am at times taken aback by how much actually goes on in this relatively small corner of our vast territory. Unlike the huge, spread-out ridings of so many of my colleagues in this House, Whitehorse Centre is geographically concentrated, flowing as it does from the south access along the Yukon River to the Marwell area.

Whitehorse Centre, to quote the *Vinyl Cafe* owner, is small but big — big in terms of the people who live and work here, and big in terms of the scope of activities carried out here. Whitehorse Centre is home to some of the richest and poorest citizens. It is the seat of government for the Yukon government, the Ta'an Kwäch'än Council and the City of Whitehorse. Whitehorse Centre is also home to at least half a dozen and counting First Nation development corporations, the Yukon and Whitehorse chambers of commerce, along with the Yukon Chamber of Mines, the francophone association of Yukon, l'AFY, the Canadian Filipino Association of Yukon, seven banks, numerous construction companies, technology firms and other small businesses in all sectors of our economy.

The Tourism Industry Association of Yukon along with the Yukon Outfitters Association are located here, as are the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board and the Yukon Land Use Planning Council, to name a few of the entities that arose from land claims agreements.

There are the Yukon Federation of Labour, the Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board, the Yukon Employees Union, and Public Service Alliance too. Many NGOs serving a broad range of community needs, from the Yukon Council on Aging to Blood Ties Four Directions to Kaushee's Place to Music Yukon to the Boys and Girls Club, call Whitehorse Centre their home. The ongoing collaborative efforts among the City of Whitehorse, Yukon government and Kwanlin Dun First Nation to develop the Yukon River waterfront in a way that both respects the history of that area

and invites people to celebrate it as a gathering spot have seen festivals like Adäka grow in prominence and promise.

Whether it is noodles, nails or tattoos, Whitehorse Centre has it all. As you can see, I am proud to serve such a diverse riding. With diversity, though, comes challenge, which makes serving its citizens and interests an ongoing learning experience. I thank them for the privilege they have granted me to serve them.

In preparing to review the 2015-16 Yukon budget, I took some time to go back and review the previous three budgets tabled by the Finance minister. By doing so, I was able to crystalize the differences that distinguish the Yukon NDP from the Yukon Party. As the years have worn on, those differences become ever more clear. They can be summarized in fairly simple form. On one hand, we have the Yukon Party, which goes with the headline "government approach". If it's flashy, that's it. With the New Democratic Party, it's solid and sustained leadership.

The Yukon Party takes an antagonistic stance against Yukon First Nation governments. The NDP has been involved with Yukon First Nation governments in developing and working toward reconciliation, knowing that that is ultimately the outcome of agreements that we negotiated on behalf of all Yukon First Nations.

The Yukon Party government can be characterized by an ad hoc, quick fix — some would call it the "squirrel approach", jumping to the next thing after the next thing — as opposed to a sustained and responsible approach to governance.

A recent community tour throughout the territory — our third tour as the Official Opposition caucus — has reinforced for the opposition that the Yukon Party government has become increasingly out of touch and that the community-driven approach that was the hallmark, and is the hallmark, of the New Democratic Party is what Yukon citizens are striving and reaching for.

The Yukon Party government has demonstrated over the last 12 years increased unaccountability. The importance of accountable, responsive government is so important and has been reinforced to us as the opposition as we talk with Yukoners, not to them — the importance of an equitable approach involving all Yukon in decisions, avoiding the perception that has tainted the Yukon Party increasingly over the last few years about an old-boys club that makes the decisions.

To provide a sense of the inconsistencies that mark this Premier and his government's ad hoc approach to governance, just let me highlight a couple of areas. In each budget, the Finance minister, since 2012-13, has boasted a surplus.

In 2013, he had a \$72 million surplus. Surprisingly, each year it's been \$72 million, \$72 million. In fact, at the end of last year — 2014-15 — although he said it was \$72 million, it was actually \$49 million. And then this year, we're down to \$23.2 million. The Finance minister has not even tried to hide the fact that he is spending down the surplus as fast as he can — so much for the prudent stewardship of Yukon's rainy day fund.

In 2012-13, the Budget Address was highlighted by the Premier's boisterous claim, "So goes mining, so goes the Yukon." With rose-coloured glasses firmly in place, the Premier touted the 107 active mining companies in Yukon, three operating mines and six more in the queue. Fast-forward to 2015-16 — one operating mine — and fears that the Yukon government's threat to pass Bill S-6 threatens that mine. One mine recently closed, leaving behind as-yet-unknown environmental liabilities.

Yukoners can only hope that the much-touted Yukon-Shaanxi sister-province agreement, signed by the Premier in September 2012, will give him the opportunity to call upon the state parents to Yukon Zinc to do the right thing. I remind the Premier that he said of the Yukon-Shaanxi sister-province agreement, when he signed it on September 18, 2012, that it provides an opportunity to take our relationship to the next level. Well, Mr. Speaker, Yukoners are looking for that next level.

Let's look at what the Premier said in 2012-13 in his Budget Address, when he was talking about YESAA. He quoted and he said — and I'll read this from the Budget Address of 2012-13. The Finance minister said, "The Yukon Chamber of Mines attributes the success of the mining industry in Yukon today to three key factors: (1) the devolution of land and resource management to the Government of Yukon by the Government of Canada in 2003; (2) the comprehensive land claims agreements reached with 11 of 14 Yukon First Nations; and (3) the establishment of a single assessment authority on behalf of all responsible authorities — that's Yukon, Canada and First Nations — that has greatly simplified the assessment process and provides more certainty and transparency in all the permitting processes."

Or we could look to the announcements made in 2012-13 and 2013-14, in which the Premier said that they would be adding more money to home care. Both budgets, 2012-13 and 2013-14 — and I quote: "So that Yukoners can remain in their homes longer and to reduce or replace the need for expensive acute or long-term residential care."

Funny how that policy direction morphed into a decision in 2014-15 to begin work on a 300-bed continuing care facility — rather contradictory, don't you think?

These are but a few examples. No doubt we will come back to these and to others as we delve into the budget documents.

Mr. Speaker, we've talked a lot over the last couple of years about the importance of strong relationships. It is the foundation of government and intergovernmental relationships are incredibly important. Today, we paid tribute to the fact that 20 years have passed since the four First Nation final and self-government agreements came into effect. With effective and respectful relationships, these 20 years represent an enormous opportunity. Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, this Yukon Party government and the Premier have needlessly pitted themselves against Yukon First Nation governments time and time again to the detriment of all Yukoners. The Yukon Party government continues to alienate First Nation

governments with their paternalistic and colonial approach to government-to-government relationships.

Starting again, let's look back to 2012-13 in the Budget Address when the Premier began the process of dismissing arrangements established under land claims agreements. He began then to make it clear — despite the fact that they had not disclosed to Yukoners their true position on the Peel watershed land use plan. He began to lay it out his rationale.

The next year, the Premier invoked his inner Joe Oliver and used the Budget Address as a platform to attack the integrity of Yukoners who support the Peel planning process, as well as those who express concern for environmental issues. When the Peel Watershed Planning Commission presented its final recommended plan, the Premier and the Yukon Party had the opportunity to accept the plan the vast majority of Yukon citizens agreed upon. Instead, he chose to go down the path of confrontation and litigation — an antagonistic approach — as opposed to building strong relationships.

First Nations had already made a compromise from their original position on the Peel and, just like Bill S-6, were forced to go to the courts to protect their rights. Then in the 2014-15 Budget Address the Premier noted, without details, the idea of amendments to YESAA. Ominously, he also noted a desire to make changes to the Water Board. This year, when speaking about the four unilateral amendments to YESAA — two of which, I remind the Premier, were proposed by this government and so fundamentally undermine Yukon First Nation governments' rights that they will be forced into costly litigation that will create economic and political uncertainty — the Premier simply said to the First Nations, "Let the bill pass. Let it pass".

Then he has added insult to injury by suggesting that he will offer a bilateral arrangement of some sort to work out the details of implementing the unacceptable amendments. It is difficult to overstate how out of touch with reality this approach is. First Nation governments have made it clear that in raising objections to the four proposed Yukon and federal amendments, they do this on behalf of all Yukoners. Yukoners and the courts are on their side. The Yukon Party government's "my way or the highway" approach to Bill S-6 is hurting our relationship with First Nation governments.

The Official Opposition is officially on the record as being concerned that, if not corrected, this will have a long lasting negative impact.

The negative impacts will be felt throughout the economy. The Finance minister is correct when he said YESAA does not deal solely with mining. Unfortunately, the direction with respect to the contentious amendments was clearly made by the Premier and by the conservative members of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs, and those contentious amendments had in fact arisen from the mining industry through YMAB, the Yukon Minerals Advisory Board.

It became clear that the leadership of the mining sector in this territory — those based in the Yukon and those based elsewhere — have realized that upon reflection and upon

seeing the deep, deep concerns expressed by Yukon First Nation governments about the fundamental shifting of the structure of YESAA and the fundamental shifting of the understanding of how the public government bodies in this territory would work. They have had the grace and the leadership to say to the Yukon government and the federal government, hold off and let's take some time here.

We've heard two of the representatives last week — one who is very concerned that the active and positive working relationship that they've established with the community of Dawson City and the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nation is in jeopardy. The potential contribution to the Yukon economy by Kaminak, seen by many as an excellent corporate citizen, is in jeopardy because of these proposed changes. They will not be able to develop that mining operation.

We heard from the only operating mine, Capstone Minto mine. When asked what the implications would be for his mine should Bill S-6 proceed and should there be litigation, he was unequivocal, Mr. Speaker. He said that it's not just the end of mining for Capstone, he said it is the end of mining for Yukon. That's a serious legacy. I'm not sure that the Finance minister, the Premier of the Yukon Territory — that's the legacy he wants to leave here. He's heading that way.

Those two companies are not alone. There is correspondence to the Premier and to the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs from other mining sectors, other mining companies.

In contrast, I just want to be clear that the NDP supports government-to-government relationships based on reconciliation. We will work with First Nation governments as equals and respect the spirit of reconciliation in the long-term relationship building envisioned in the First Nations final agreements.

The court cases that are being launched by First Nations over Bill S-6 and the Peel are not occurring because they did not get what they wanted. They are occurring because this government's actions are fundamentally undermining the rights that they worked so hard to win through the final agreements, and they undermine the shared vision of a Yukon where institutions of public government would be open and inclusive.

Mr. Speaker, it's hard enough to envision a government that would choose to take on First Nation governments. We also have a government that appears to view Yukon's municipalities as an inferior form of government. Somehow the Yukon Party has determined that the relationship that exists between the two governments is a mere formality with Yukon always having the deciding voice.

Let's look at a couple of examples. The City of Whitehorse spent several years consulting and planning to create an official community plan, including plans for the new Whistle Bend subdivision. Out of the blue, the Yukon government announced its plans to build two megaprojects in the subdivision that are contrary to the plan: the 300-bed care facility and the outdoor sports complex. The consultation with the City of Whitehorse was minimal, as the city's key role is zoning. Their concerns were about the appropriateness of

either project and those concerns were overruled by the territory. They have been forced into rezoning their OCP to allow for Yukon government's projects. They rezoned the areas identified in the OCP, Mr. Speaker.

Each of these projects raises significant issues. On the one hand, when we look at the sudden emergence of the proposal to build the artificial-turf soccer field and track and field facility, what evidence was gathered to determine that the building of this was warranted at this time? Where is the business case? Has the Yukon government, through this, set a new benchmark for support to NGOs for O&M?

My colleague, the MLA for Riverdale South, will no doubt raise many questions about the 300-bed facility. Ironically — it's interesting the little mantra here, Mr. Speaker. I guess they can't read their own press releases that speak to a 300-bed facility with the initial phase being 150 immediately followed by another 150. I add 150 and 150 and I get 300. What do you get, Mr. Speaker? Does that come to 300 for you?

Speaker's statement

Speaker: Order please. I would remind the member not to try to drag the Speaker into the debate. Thank you.

Ms. Hanson: So, ironically — and I said it before — despite the fact that the Premier in his Budget Address of 2013-14 said that the Yukon government would be increasing home care to allow residents to remain in their home to avoid long-term residential care, you have a flip-flop. This is a government that goes flip-flop. We're just there — we don't believe in home care anymore. We're going to put it into big institutions.

There has been no public debate, consultation or even public information centres on the need for a 300-bed continuing care facility and this is suddenly a new priority for this government.

As we know all too well, this is a government that makes decisions and then tries to build evidence to support that decision. The Auditor General of Canada has pointed this out time and time again over the last 12 to 13 years. When you consider that, in light of the plans for Whistle Bend, the decision to place this major, three-storey institution in an as-yet-to-be-completed new subdivision not only requires rezoning, it really begs the question of what kind of vision there is for dealing with and recognizing the rights of individuals to choose where they live.

How about another example in terms of how the territorial government has worked with or directed its municipal partners? Members will recall last fall when documents came out that the Yukon Party government had purchased land that it already owned from the Mountainview Golf Course to cover their debt load and the government tried to pass the buck to the City of Whitehorse. The Yukon Party said that the land purchase was motivated by the City of Whitehorse's request for additional land for the Whistle Bend subdivision. However, on the contrary, City of Whitehorse officials had told the Yukon government several times that

they had no interest in the land because it did not fit into the OCP for that area. The Yukon government tried to shield itself with the City of Whitehorse when it was caught in a scandal.

The 2014-15 Budget Address committed to bringing forward amendments to the *Municipal Act* in the spring of 2015. I have no idea whether this will happen. However, we do know that over the course of several years of discussion about the *Municipal Act*, it has all been internal to government, internal to government with municipal governments, with the Association of Yukon Communities. There has been only one public consultation session. I know that because I attended it at the MacBride Museum. The *Municipal Act* is a fundamental piece of citizen engagement. It also fundamentally reflects democracy at the grassroots.

The Yukon *Municipal Act* of 1998 was a model of citizen participation, and we will be watching to ensure that the principles enshrined in that act are maintained as the review goes forward. We will be calling upon the minister to ensure that there is broad public consultation before the bill is tabled.

On a broader scale, the Yukon government continues to ignore the implications of trade deals such as CETA. As many municipal governments have pointed out, if this agreement is ratified, municipal spending decisions will be constrained by the procurement rules contained in it —

Some Hon. Member: (inaudible)

Ms. Hanson: The minister is incorrect.

Some Hon. Member: (inaudible)

Ms. Hanson: Right.

One of the things that is really important is the notion of respect for other levels of government as partners in Yukon's future. The Yukon NDP has demonstrated this in the past, and has worked respectfully alongside Yukon municipalities to achieve goals for the future. We need to do that. We need to focus on that in a more proactive relationship that engages and plans and implements strategies with municipalities, not over top of them.

Time and time again as we went across the territory and around to communities, Mr. Speaker, the concern was being expressed that local governments are being told what was good for them, or what was coming to them, as opposed to being engaged in respectful conversation about how we could jointly work together to achieve objectives.

I think I've made it clear over the last few years that we fundamentally believe that municipal governments, as well as First Nation and territorial governments, should not lose the power to use our local spending to encourage social and economic development. Positive procurement criteria on infrastructure projects, such as local content requirements and job training, are important local economic drivers. There may be a blind adherence to these investor-state agreements on the other side, Mr. Speaker, but there is not on this side.

The importance of working effectively with local businesses cannot be overstated. Actions speak louder than words. The Yukon Party government says they are pro-business, but they have repeatedly and aggressively acted to undermine Yukon industry and business. Bill S-6 may prove to be the starkest example, and the Premier is true to his word.

He's right — it does not just affect the mining sector; it affects all sectors of our Yukon economy.

The result is a broken relationship with a Yukon Party government that has relied on direct awards, cronyism and overseeing gross mismanagement of every phase of public procurement and supply chain management. The Yukon Party government approach to dealing with Yukon business is often seen, and reported to us, as being unilateral and devoid of meaningful communication or partnership.

We've just witnessed the unveiling of the largest capital budget in Yukon's history. Yukon businesses — from the construction sector to labour, suppliers, et cetera — face an onslaught of simultaneous major project rollouts. The Yukon Party has not demonstrated if it has worked with local industry, suppliers and contractors, or coordinated with the City of Whitehorse, to ensure that local capacity and benefits are maximized over the medium to long term.

More local businesses are being precluded from bidding on any of the numerous capital works projects — including the pet \$330-million, 300-bed, long-term care institution — and left to wonder who this budget is intended to benefit. If history has any say in the matter, it will be largely Outside businesses, industry and employees.

Mr. Speaker, the Finance minister had made comments about reviewing and upgrading the *Agreement on Internal Trade*, but it's important to recognize that to date there have been no formal consultations with local industry, business or other local associations.

The AIT is not just freedom of movement of persons, goods and services and investment; it's about ensuring Yukoners can compete on a level playing field. It's a question of equity for Yukon businesses.

For a jurisdiction of 36,000, competing against much bigger jurisdictions such as B.C. or Alberta needs to be taken into consideration. Yukon NDP believes the Yukon Party failed to work with industry and business to ensure that Yukon interests were protected in those discussions. On the contrary, we know that we must value our relationship with small businesses. They are the backbone of our economy. That's why an NDP government introduced the small business tax credit and why the NDP continues to place small businesses at the centre of our economic strategy. By working with Yukon small businesses, among the most talented, innovated and creative in the country, and maintaining open and respectful dialogue, the Yukon NDP continues to support Yukon-based businesses to survive and thrive.

There is a whole other area that is affected by the 2015-16 budget, and given passing reference — the whole area of our relationship with non-government organizations. Unfortunately we see again this dichotomy — a difference of approach depending on who you are and which side you're on, I guess.

I use the example — when we look back and we see that when Mount Sima was in financial trouble, the Yukon government and the City of Whitehorse required them to open their books to the public and argue their case for further funding. Similarly, when Raven Recycling was in need of

funding, Yukon stated that they needed to provide a comprehensive business plan to carry on the services they provide.

Now contrast that with the outdoor sports complex being pushed by the Yukon Outdoor Sports Complex Association and the Yukon Party. This organization, a newly formed society, has not provided any business plan but the Yukon government has indicated it will appropriate in excess of \$7 million for the complex. Furthermore, the sports complex has removed several lots from the City of Whitehorse's tax base, but apparently the Yukon government is going to promise to cover those costs. As well, the Yukon government has promised the City of Whitehorse that they will underwrite the association if they fail to have an adequate O&M budget. That's certainly a different treatment for one class of NGO over another.

What we've seen over the last few years is that the government has increasingly off-loaded the delivery of essential services on to our NGO community, often with little support.

We seem to be content — the Government of Yukon seems to be content — to let the NGOs take on complex socio-economic projects that actually fall under the purview of the government — an example might be A Safe Place at the Victoria Faulkner Women's Centre. But then the government is forcing these NGOs to fight over every single dollar and insisting that projects only get funding on a pilot-project basis — so no sustained funding, but pilot project by pilot project by pilot project. So what we are seeing is a myriad of innovative community-based and locally responsive projects being terminated by one organization and then being revived by another at a later date. This does a lot of things, not the least of which is being unsustainable. What it does effectively do is prevent NGOs from coordinating their services with one another.

When the Yukon Party government decides an already off-loaded service is no longer needed, or could be housed elsewhere, they unilaterally yank the funding with little or no notice to the organizations themselves — a curiously hostile tactic that they would never dream of pulling with their business or industry partners. Certainly they didn't do it with Yukon Zinc.

The NDP believes that we have to have a fair and level playing field in funding NGOs in our community. Many of the NGOs' staff and volunteers are experts, as I said, in complex socio-economic issues in community capacity building and development, and in the research that they have done over the years on social determinants of health and environmental management. We recognize their essential role in program and service delivery in the Yukon and when we sit down with these groups, we recognize them as incredibly valuable and talented partners, not as a group to simply trot out for public consultation brownie points, all the while disrespecting their time and resource power by baulking and rejecting mutually agreed upon projects — for example, the mental health transitional housing project — at the last minute.

The last 10 years — we step back 10 to 12 years of this Yukon Party government — have been marked by wasted opportunities to build and grow a sustainable and prosperous local economy. Contrary to what the Finance minister would have Yukoners believe, Yukon is farther from becoming a net contributor to the Canadian economy than we were before the Yukon Party came into power. In fact, dependence on federal transfers has grown under the Yukon Party's direction. It has increased more than threefold over the past 15 years. It has increased 1.3 times since 2011.

It's a fact that our own-source revenues have decreased as a proportion of the total revenues over the same period. It is a sad commentary that our own-source revenues have decreased by one-third compared to 15 years ago — 21 percent in 2000; 14 percent in 2014. Put differently, own-source revenues is only two-thirds of what it was 15 years ago, kind of a contrary picture to what the Finance minister has painted.

Meanwhile, the Yukon Party government's failure to support a strong diversified economy leaves the territory in an increasingly precarious position with little-to-no safety net as we ride the "bust" slope of the boom-and-bust mining cycle. What we have experienced is that the real GDP growth rate has declined steadily over the course of the Premier's tenure — year over year, a decrease in real GDP growth rates since 2008. The Conference Board of Canada's provincial and territorial ranking of the GDP growth said — and I quote: "...dependence on mining is precarious for two reasons: it is often difficult to obtain financing to develop new mines and prices fluctuate sharply due to the changing conditions in the global economy. This is apparent from the volatility in the grades earned on GDP growth for the territories over the past few decades. Grades of 'A' followed by abrupt changes to 'D's are common, and this unpredictability is attributable to the ups and down of economies depending on the mining industry for much of their GDP growth. In this sense, the territories face similar challenges to many emerging markets and other resource-dependent regions, where a heavy reliance on natural resources for wealth and employment creation leaves the economy susceptible to swings in commodity prices". A singular focus on a singular pillar of the economy leaves the economy susceptible to swings in commodity prices.

You know, Mr. Speaker, if we look at the government's own *Yukon Economic Outlook* for 2015, you'll see that it says — and I quote: "Unlike recent years, the mining sector will not be an economic growth driver in 2014." While remaining a significant component of what is Yukon's overall GDP, this sector is anticipated to decline.

They further go on to say that projected or higher growth in 2015-16 is contingent on expectations of increased mineral production and higher development activity related to the mining sector and, Mr. Speaker, we have seen the evidence over the last couple of years and the projected implications and impact of litigation on that one-out for this economy, if we're relying on the mining sector only — contingent on expectations of increased mineral production and higher development activity related to the mining sector. The

message has been delivered loud and clear to the Yukon Party by this mining sector. Not just in the Yukon, but across this country, there is no money to invest in a jurisdiction that cannot get its own house in order; that creates uncertainty, political and economic; that creates friction and that forces litigation.

As I noted, our annual surplus, or what the Yukon is saving, has started to fall off. In 2011-12, the annual surplus was \$71,348,000. In 2015-16, the annual surplus is projected to be just \$23,242,000. The annual surplus has fallen to a third of what it was when the Premier took office. At this rate, the Yukon Party will have spent the surplus at a time when, in the Premier's own words, finances are getting tight.

Successive NDP governments operated in the black with substantially smaller federal transfers and with significant planned investments in community infrastructure. After 10 years of Yukon Party leadership, despite a record level of federal transfers and despite the opportunities presented during the mining exploration boom, Yukon's economy is not as sustainable or prosperous as it could or should be.

The Yukon economy is stagnating in the absence of a coherent economic strategy. The Yukon Party was either blind or did not see the writing on the wall of the boom-bust resource economy. The pre-election announcements that we have been subjected to over the last number of weeks of \$312.8 million in capital spending displaces one boom-bust economy for another. This ad hoc response confuses spending money with having a plan.

Large capital projects can be good stimulants for economic growth and job creation when they are phased in, in a managed way, to maximize local capacity, local benefits and local economic development. Headline government with little or not focus on strategic planning or responsible government does not achieve maximized local benefits or opportunities.

The Yukon Party government's roll-out of capital projects will outpace the capacity of Yukon — and I emphasize "Yukon" — enterprises to benefit and the availability of local people to take jobs. It amounts to stealing profits and jobs from Yukoners.

Mr. Speaker, 25 percent of the territorial budget is procurement spending. That is 25 cents for every territorial dollar. Public sector purchase of goods and services has a significant opportunity, and it has a responsibility as a publicly funded entity — we have a responsibility to support local enterprises, societal interests and local economic development.

The Yukon NDP supports capital project planning that maximizes local capacity and benefits over the medium to long term and prioritizes Yukon businesses, industries and workers. Support for small businesses can help build a strong economic base to support and anchor other local enterprises.

There are multiple independent and international analyses that confirm our long-held position that there is a real economic advantage when the public sector purchases from local suppliers. This is because local companies hire more local labour, buy more goods and services from local suppliers, recirculate more of their profits locally and give

more to local charities. Local suppliers do the same and a virtual cycle is born. This is the premise of the economic multiplier effect.

When a business is owned locally, profits and earnings stay local and are more likely to recirculate and to grow. One Canadian study that examined the economic impacts of government procurement found that there was a 77- to 100-percent economic advantage from buying local and an 80- to 100-percent increase in jobs per million spent.

The Yukon NDP supports and will defend Yukon-based policies that will empower and enable local businesses to capture a bigger share of the regional market and provide more significant benefits to the Yukon economy. It's time for a government that understands a capital works budget to be part of a long-term economic development plan that will better allocate public money to support local businesses, local economic growth and employment.

Mr. Speaker, absent, in terms of the overall economic — well, I guess this is no strategy, so it's spending — is any reference to date, except in passing, I guess, by the Finance minister to the tremendous impact on Yukon's economy of First Nation development corporations.

First Nation development corporations are involved in companies that employ hundreds of Yukoners. It's generally thought that the combined revenues of the businesses that the various First Nation development corporations participate in could be as high as, or exceed, \$500 million a year. They are involved in all sectors of our economy, from the resource industry to hospitality, retail, tourism, real estate and more. First Nation development corporations also have a significant investment capital that needs to be attracted to and retained in the Yukon, yet this government has not seized this opportunity to work in collaboration and strengthen our economy. You know, Mr. Speaker, First Nation development corporations are becoming a significant player in all sectors of our economy, yet they're not a focus for this government. For instance, I don't think I can think of any of the government's trade missions that First Nation development corporations have been a party to. Have they been partners? I'll look to the Finance minister to answer that one. Have they been invited?

You know, Mr. Speaker, Outside investors want an understanding of First Nation communities and business environment to the Yukon. When we're doing these international trade missions, you would think that you would want to have the people who could speak to that most directly, first-hand, and that would be the development corporations.

First Nation development corporations can play a key role in showcasing the benefits of investing in the Yukon, but they need to be invited to the table by this government.

In 2013-14, the Yukon Party government begrudgingly began to acknowledge the importance of the tourism industry to the territory's economy. The 2013 Yukon business survey indicated that Yukon businesses attributed approximately \$250 million of their gross revenue to tourism in 2012. That's about four percent of our GDP in 2012 — of the total 2012 GDP.

Imagine what that could be if we do invest in it properly, because the reality is that the Yukon Party has underinvested in opportunities to build a sustainable and prosperous mainstay of our economy. I only use the example because it comes to mind based on the release this year of a portion of the domestic marketing program.

You'll recall that several years ago the Tourism Industry Association of the Yukon asked the Yukon government for \$5 million over two years, subject to review, to develop a domestic marketing program. This was in lieu of the fact that the federal government had abdicated the field. Elsewhere in the world people are trying to market — to tell people to come to your jurisdiction. Canada decided to get out of it.

The domestic marketing program envisioned by the TIA would have seen some set goals, a review, and then ongoing, sustained funding. In response, the Yukon Party government has provided \$3.6 million over two years, not \$5 million. So far there are no discernible criteria to determine what would be the basis for the decision to continue or not, and there is no commitment beyond this fiscal year — again, short term, ad hoc. Where's the long-term strategic thinking and plan with respect to domestic tourism marketing?

We know that tourism has a significant potential to help build a strong, diversified economy that benefits all Yukoners. We heard this, time and time again, as we went across the territory in the various regions of the Yukon. The tourism potential in each region of this territory is diverse and exciting.

A huge area of our responsibility as legislators is a responsibility for the effective stewardship and management of our resources. It has become increasingly apparent, not just in the Yukon — globally — that the fossil fuel industry is an unprofitable sector to invest public funds. We only need to look at our neighbours to the south of us. Alberta's recent experience has given us the perfect case study to examine the unpredictable and volatile nature of oil and gas development.

On the other hand, renewable energy can provide a long-term sustainable option that is not affected by volatility of the international commodity market. The fossil fuel industry is an archaic industry that has already been exploited. The Yukon Party government is chasing an industry that is past its prime. Renewables offer a strong alternative and are growing in cost effectiveness.

Mr. Speaker, we've already seen that the Yukon Party's approach to pitting the economy against the environment is a zero-sum game. To view the abundant natural wealth of the Yukon — our land, our resources, our wilderness and people in communities — as a get-rich scheme, where they seek an immediate boost to our GDP at the expense of stable, long-term economic growth and well-being, is not sustainable and it has not been effective in boosting real GDP growth which, as I said earlier, has declined, year over year, since this current version of the Yukon Party took office.

Yukoners have watched our resources and wealth flow through our fingers and out the door, instead of being strategically reinvested in our land, our people and our economy. The Yukon Party has nothing to show for it. On the

contrary, the resource boom-and-bust cycle has become a price for Yukon government and Yukoners. The result has been the depletion of our territory's stock of natural wealth — land, natural resources, wilderness and people in the communities.

The Yukon Party mismanagement of resource development has been bad for the Yukon economy, for the environment and for our communities. We only need to look at the recent example of how the government has managed Yukon Zinc — the Wolverine mine. We were promised, as Yukoners, a new way of mining that would be done sustainably and to the benefit of Yukon businesses. What we got was a failure to pay securities, disregard for a mine closure plan and \$4.3 million in unpaid bills from a mining company \$647 million in debt.

This was a direct result of the Yukon Party government failing to take its own responsibilities for responsible and sustainable mining seriously. Yukoners have seen the results of poorly managed mining projects before.

Mr. Speaker, after the Faro mine operator declared bankruptcy in 1992, the public was left with an additional — at minimum — \$900 million in environmental liabilities, including a four-kilometre long toxic waste tailings pond endangering the Pelly River, and 320 million tonnes of waste rock that could produce acid-rock runoff.

For some reason, the Yukon Party has chosen to take a course that has led it to be unable to prevent history from repeating itself. Ironically, that leadership is not missing from the public sector, because it seems to me that it appears the Premier has turned a deaf ear to the Yukon public sector, as he has done to the public — the citizens of the territory.

The authors of the Yukon Department of Economic Development's 2013 mining sector profile report knows and shows a sustainable path is the right and best way forward for the Yukon. As they state so concisely, "For a mining project to meet the values of sustainability, the overall contribution of the project must be positive to both human and ecosystem well-being over the long term. If it's good for one and not the other, the fundamental values of sustainability are not met." It's time for strong leadership on sustainable resource development in Yukon.

Again, you know Mr. Speaker, it is curious to track the Premier's position on oil and gas development in Yukon. Since 2012-13, when the Premier announced that Northern Cross and CNOOC — this is from his Budget Address — are working to develop a natural gas reserve in the Eagle Plains property, through the 2013-14 address referencing both Northern Cross and South Yukon interests, to the 2014-15 announcements of the Northern Cross 3-D seismic program, to this year's revelation of support for collaboration between the Vuntut Gwitchin Development Corporation and Northern Cross to examine the feasibility of building and operating a petroleum refinery in the Eagle Plains area, it is clear that the reliance on fossil fuels is in direct contradistinction to the international experts, the IPCC and others. It just draws a stark contrast between an effective long-term view and leadership.

We have heard the Premier making announcements across Canada and the United States as well about his support for the oil and gas sector — the gas sector particularly in the Yukon. I just want to be clear that pursuing hydraulic fracturing presents a barrier to renewable energy and it is an extractive industry that removes our non-renewable natural resources from the ground at a faster rate than the local economy and workers can keep up with.

This Premier apparently does not respect sustainable, responsible development or the right of Yukoners to demand it. He cannot understand the word “no”. As I have said, he announced internationally that Yukon is open for business in the LNG sector, well in advance of the Select Committee on the Risks and Benefits of Hydraulic Fracturing’s report and long before he made his pro-fracking position known at home, even if it was through the inadvertent release of government documents to the media.

Yukoners know there is no scientific evidence proving that fracking can be done safely and they make their opposition to fracking known at every possible turn. We know that the price of fracking is too high for our environment, our families and our future, despite whatever short-term benefits the Premier and his Wild West friends may think.

I think it all boils down to governance. The Yukon Party’s approach to governance has proven to be ineffective and costly. The lack of planning and mismanagement caused by their ad hoc approach leads to massive cost overruns and it doesn’t meet the real needs of Yukoners. The boom-bust cycle they are reproducing in capital spending and the constant change in focus and the contradictions between their stated goals and their actions has harmed relationships — whether it be with First Nation governments, businesses or NGOs.

The lack of accountability of this government has broken the trust of many Yukoners in their government. The NDP is committed to restore this trust by putting forward a vision of responsible governance. We are committed to this vision, where the government would truly consult with the public and its partners and reflect what we hear — in the direction an NDP government would take — because we’re committed to planning processes that aren’t centred on the need for photo opportunities but on the needs of Yukoners.

We are committed to leadership that is fair to all Yukoners, not just the well-connected old boys club. We are committed to reconciliation as it is the only way forward to strengthen our community. As the Official Opposition, we are proud to stand for this kind of responsible governance. We know it’s the way to build a sustainable and prosperous Yukon.

Some Hon. Member: (inaudible)

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

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: I would invite all members of the House to join me in welcoming Darren Parsons. He has been around a few times over the last few years and I would invite all members of the gallery to join me in welcoming him here today.

Applause

Speaker: Leader of the Official Opposition, the floor is yours.

Ms. Hanson: And it was before I was — I will just say thank you.

Speaker: So you’re done? Perfect timing.

Hon. Mr. Kent: It’s indeed my pleasure to respond to the budget that is currently being debated, the 2015-16 budget. I would like to start of course by again thanking the constituents of Riverdale North for their continued trust in me to represent them in the Legislative Assembly. I hear from a number of them on occasion, both those who support the direction of our government and those who have some suggestions for improvement, so I appreciate all of the advice that I get from those that I represent here in the House and I continue to take each and every one of their concerns very seriously.

I would also like to thank the Premier for showing the confidence in me to remain at the helm of Energy, Mines and Resources. Of course, with the Cabinet shuffle that occurred in January, the Yukon Development Corporation and Yukon Energy Corporation responsibility is now with the Member for Lake Laberge and I know those two corporations are in great hands. I would like to wish Joanne Fairlie and the Board of Directors for the Yukon Development Corporation well, as well as Kells Boland, who is the new chair of the Yukon Energy Corporation. I know that there are a couple of other new board members there with Mr. Boland and I know that they’ll do a great job in guiding the energy requirements and needs of Yukoners, both now and in the short, medium and longer term.

I would also like to thank the Department of Highways and Public Works. I have been the minister there for a little over two and a half months. The previous minister did a fantastic job at the helm there. Whether it’s Transportation or Property Management, folks in ICT or others, this is truly a department that affects each Yukoner on a day-to-day basis no matter what activity they’re undertaking, whether it’s driving on our roads or using our airports or in the buildings or the IT capacity of the territory. It’s a tremendously important department.

I’ve had the privilege of making it up to Eagle Plains and visiting the Klondike and Ogilvie camps along the Dempster Highway. I look forward to visiting a number of the other maintenance areas and officials that work in Highways and Public Works both here in the City of Whitehorse, as well as the camps and the communities that are outside of Whitehorse.

I am going to start by highlighting some of the activity that is taking place in Riverdale. There are quite a few aspects in this budget and projects in this budget that are funded and are located in Riverdale — of course close to downtown Whitehorse here.

I am going to go on as well to talk about some of the initiatives and projects in Energy, Mines and Resources as

well as Highways and Public Works that are important to Yukoners and are important to developing the private sector economy that the Premier spoke about during his budget speech, because I too believe that growth of the private sector is going to be key to drive the economy here in the territory going forward. Whether it is private sector development in our resource industries or tourism or IT or construction or any number of the industries that we have here in the territory, the private sector will be the key to ensuring a long-lasting and sustainable future for the economy of the territory.

When it comes to the riding of Riverdale North, and the community of Riverdale in particular, there are a number of investments being made. I know that these will be of particular interest not only to my constituents, but some of the facilities over there in Riverdale also service the broader population of Whitehorse and indeed the Yukon. Starting with investments in education, F.H. Collins — in this budget there is \$7.478 million to complete the project. My understanding from Highways and Public Works officials is that we can expect substantial completion of the F.H. Collins Secondary School project in August and we will anticipate students and staff moving into that facility sometime this fall once the fit-out and final commissioning is done. Part of that fit-out is the purchase of \$2.97-million worth of operational equipment. This will include furniture and desks and other things to fit out the school and ensure that it is indeed a modern facility for 21st century learning. The tech education wing will be receiving \$3 million in this budget to complete the work there. F.H. Collins is located in Riverdale, but it is a project that, through a dual-track school with both English stream and French immersion, services students and people from right across the territory and right across the City of Whitehorse.

A few of the other schools in Riverdale will also be receiving some much-needed upgrades. We have fuel tank replacement at Grey Mountain Primary this year, and as well Vanier high school will be receiving a new fuel tank. Vanier high school will be receiving a new PA system in their school. Grey Mountain Primary will be getting painting as well as library flooring replacement. Christ the King Elementary School will be getting flooring as well for an investment over there.

Macaulay Lodge, which is located in Riverdale North, will also be getting a \$63,000 investment in operational equipment.

The health care facilities in Riverdale are important to the entire Yukon, so when it comes to the emergency room and the MRI expansion, there is \$22.316 million in this budget for that important piece of infrastructure that is in Riverdale and services everyone across the territory — or is utilized by everyone across the territory. I think it's obviously an extremely important facility and the investments made by the government continue to improve that facility.

The MRI investment that was made by the government in partnership with the community through the Yukon Hospital Foundation is tremendous, and it provides a piece of medical infrastructure here that allows Yukoners to receive quality health care right here at home without having to travel outside

of the Yukon for that important diagnostic tool so that they can lessen the stress that they have from travel and being away from the Yukon for what can be done in a relatively short time. Congratulations to the Yukon Hospital Foundation and a thank you to the previous Minister of Health and Social Services as well as the current minister for their continued investment in the hospital and making sure that that quality health care can be delivered right here in the Yukon Territory.

Mr. Speaker, I'm going to turn my attention now to a few of the highlights with respect to Energy, Mines and Resources as well as some initiatives that are taking place in that department, as well as some of the projects that are being delivered and/or managed by Highways and Public Works that are contained in this budget. Time permitting, I'll conclude with reference to housing, because I know that everyone in the Legislature recognizes the importance of that issue from the 2011 election and I think it's important to highlight the continued investments that this government makes in that sector and indeed across the housing continuum.

When it comes to the Energy, Mines and Resources department, I'm going to start out by talking about the importance of regulatory efficiency and improving our regulatory and permitting regime. There is an investment of \$841,000 with \$370,000 flowing to First Nations to implement the mine licensing improvement initiative or, as it is affectionately known as, MLII. It's going to clarify the rules of regulatory agencies and provide certainty for companies who want to do business in the Yukon. Beyond that, there will be continued work on the mineral development strategy, which will be covering the business climate, regulatory streamlining infrastructure, First Nation engagement, environmental stewardship and workforce training.

Mr. Speaker, I think that I was able to include this in an answer to a question from the first day of this current sitting. The Yukon Minerals Advisory Board report that was tabled in 2014, but it was actually the 2013 annual report — the Yukon Minerals Advisory Board is a collection of individuals who represent companies or organizations such as the Chamber of Mines and the Klondike Placer Miners' Association that are active in the mineral industry here in the territory. They provide tremendous advice to me, as minister, as well as some of my colleagues, whether it's the Premier or the Minister of Economic Development or the Minister of Environment. Many have been included in the recommendations that have been brought forward.

The recommendations from the 2013 report included adequacy review timelines for YESAA and the Water Board, the YESAA reassessment process clarity, consolidation of mine project oversight and coordination, as well as establishing a formal process for trilateral board meetings.

Two more — pardon me, Mr. Speaker — with respect to YMAB's reporting relationship — and establish a greater accountability for YESAA delivery within the Yukon government.

Again, two of these recommendations should sound familiar to members, because adequacy review timelines for YESAA, as well as YESAA reassessment process clarity, are

two of the additional four amendments that are being considered by the federal government in their legislation, Bill S-6, which was tabled in the Senate and is currently making its way through the House of Commons.

When you read the conclusion of this report that I tabled in this House last May, one of the things that stands out for me — and it should stand out for all members — is that YMAB chose to focus on what industry has determined is the key issue negatively impacting the industry: the deterioration in the efficiency and reliability of the assessment and licensing of mining projects in the territory.

The system has become more costly, cumbersome and protracted, and the Yukon's mineral industry is developing an increasingly negative image as an attractive investment destination. One of the Yukon's three producing mines is on an interim shutdown and a second has recently undergone the layoff of 44 employees. Again, Mr. Speaker, this is a snapshot of last May, when this report was tabled.

It concludes in that paragraph by saying that there is a clear urgency for the Government of Yukon to act.

Again, Mr. Speaker, when we hear members of the opposition saying that regulatory certainty and increasing the timeliness and effectiveness of our permitting regime isn't warranted, that simply isn't the case. When the Minerals Advisory Board, the Yukon Chamber of Mines and the Klondike Placer Miners' Association all get together to support aspects of Bill S-6, we hear loud and clear from industry that they're supportive of what we're trying to accomplish.

This isn't the only thing that we're looking to accomplish. The mine licensing improvement initiative that is currently underway is being led by Executive Council Office, as they have responsibility for overseeing the Water Board. The Water Board reports through the Executive Council Office. We recognize that water licensing, as well as quartz mine licensing, is the responsibility of the Yukon government, and we can make some improvements there. There's work that needs to be done. There's engagement with First Nations at the officials level when it comes to improving the licensing regime here in the territory, and I think it's extremely important work that we need to continue to do because we're competing for investment dollars that are very mobile and can travel anywhere in the world.

We certainly sympathize with some of the companies that are at different states when it comes to the assessment process, but we have to take the holistic view of the entire industry, whether it's those that are prospecting and finding these new deposits, to those that are currently going through the assessment and permitting regime, to those mines that have been operating in this regime for some time.

I think it was the CEO of Alexco, or perhaps the COO of Alexco, who said that they had been through the YESAA process 10 times since they started operations. Certainly that number is something that leads to that costliness and cumbersome nature that our process is currently creating. It is something that we — in response to the minerals advisory report where they say there is a clear urgency for the

Government of Yukon to act — recognize that, and that is what we are doing through MLII and, as mentioned by the Premier, through our support for the amendments to the YESAA process in Bill S-6.

I am going to talk a little bit about the annual economic benefits of the resource sectors. I know that colleagues will talk about the other sectors that they are responsible for, such as tourism and IT and others, but I am going to focus on those that are housed within the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources. This is a bit of a snapshot on what we can expect. These are just estimates that are put together by department staff for consideration so that we have an idea of what type of activity we can anticipate in the territory in the coming season. For quartz mineral production in 2015, the estimate is \$200 million to \$250 million. The mineral development itself is estimated to be about \$60 million, in part due to anticipated development of Alexco's Flame and Moth project. That may or may not happen this year. There are a number of other factors that will influence the decision of Alexco, but if they are able to do that development work, we do estimate the development expenditures to be at that \$60-million mark.

Mineral exploration was estimated to be \$80 million in 2014. The forecasted estimate for 2015 is \$100 million. The majority of mineral exploration in the Yukon is conducted by junior companies that contribute significantly to Yukon's economic development and growth.

Government incentives such as the Yukon mineral exploration program will remain at the enhanced \$1.4-million mark for this upcoming year. In 2014, there were 55 exploration projects funded, leveraging over \$3.9 million in additional exploration commitments. An important seed project that will continue to lead to the development of projects and perhaps even producing mines such as — I believe the initial hole that was drilled at the Coffee Gold project that is owned by Kaminak was funded through a YMIP grant.

Placer gold production is something that is also important. In 2013, there were 177 placer leases and close to 60,000 crude ounces of gold produced, valued at \$69.4 million. 2014 production is expected to be similar to 2013, and the forecast for annual placer gold production is to remain stable over the medium term, averaging 50,000 crude ounces for the 2015-19 period.

When it comes to employment from this important industry, it has a track record of providing economic benefits to Yukon, providing employment and business development opportunities. In 2012, over 900 people were employed at operating mines in Yukon and another 1,700 were employed in mineral exploration projects and support services.

Although it decreased in 2013 and 2014, the long-term outlook for employment in the mining industry continues to be strong and that's why, through the Department of Education, we continue to invest in training Yukoners for these opportunities through the Centre for Northern Innovation in Mining. I know that there were a number of individuals who were sponsored by the private sector to attend the training that we've shared with the Alaskans at Delta

Junction, sponsored by private sector companies, as mentioned, as well as those that have chosen that line of work and agreed to pay their own way for that type of training. Again, there's a capital project I believe we'll get underway this year at Yukon College to enhance the facilities that we have at the Whitehorse campus and the mobile trades trailer continues to provide training to communities. I believe it's in Ross River currently and spent some time last year in Dawson City.

When it comes to our rankings with the Fraser Institute, the Yukon is number one in the world for mining industry perceptions of our geology. We were ranked number six in 2013. We're number nine in the world for investment attractiveness, a drop of one spot from 2013, and we've dropped for attractiveness of mining policies from 19th in 2013 to 26th. Again, this really emphasizes the importance of the work that is underway with respect to the mine licensing improvement initiative and the mineral development strategy.

Oil and gas has been around in the Yukon since the 1950s when the earliest wells were drilled. The estimated capital expenditure by Northern Cross in 2013-14 was \$19.2 million. Some of these benefits flow out of the territory because of the lack of capacity here in the territory to provide the full spectrum of oilfield services, but if we can continue to develop the oil and gas industry, that service and supply sector — much as it has in the mining sector — will continue to develop and those types of services will be offered here in the territory. There was no on-the-ground activity after Northern Cross' 3-D seismic program last year. Northern Cross is currently in the YESAA process.

EFLO Energy has come out of the YESAA process with respect to work at the Kotaneelee gas fields in southeastern Yukon and again we would anticipate some positive economic benefit from the Kotaneelee fields. Of course the Kotaneelee fields have hosted producing wells since the 1970s. Royalties from those wells that have accrued to the Yukon government have been close to \$50 million. I've mentioned that number on the floor of this House previously. Again, that's \$50 million that we're able to share a portion of with Yukon First Nations. I believe \$10 million of that was transferred to Yukon First Nations. The rest was used in general revenue to fund important initiatives in education and health care and infrastructure investment.

The oil and gas industry is an important component of the overall economic mosaic here in the territory. I know the New Democrats don't like to hear that, but again, it's an industry that has existed here in the territory for a long time and we hope it has a long and prosperous future.

As I have mentioned, I will be responding to the select committee report on the risks and benefits of hydraulic fracturing within this current sitting and I look forward to having more debate on the floor of the House with respect to our response to those 21 recommendations that were brought forward by the three opposition members and three government members that comprised that committee.

We continue to see investments on the energy side — geothermal — and we recently announced, in partnership with

CanNor, that we will be conducting geothermal favourability mapping from December 14 to March 2016. CanNor has also contributed a further \$124,000 for geothermal energy exploration to the Kaska Dena Council. There were an estimated \$230,000 in expenditures in 2014 on solar in the Yukon territory. This estimate is for on-grid and off-grid projects that EMR has been involved in through the microgen production incentive program and other work. Wind expenditures in 2014 were estimated at \$100,000. The wind industry is in the very early stages of development in the territory. I know we have heard announcements from the Energy Corporation on bringing forward a wind project that will be shelf-ready sometime within — I believe the number is 18 months — and can generate significant amounts of energy.

I have mentioned on the floor of the House before, though, that we need to ensure that we have reliable backup to these renewable energies, whether it is hydro or solar or geothermal or wind, if they are contributing to the grid, because people need to be safe and secure in the fact that the electricity will continue to flow when those sources of energy aren't as reliable as they could be.

Energy rebates in 2014-15, through the Government of Yukon, were budgeted at \$400,000 and those included rebates for energy-efficient products and services and renewable energy systems. The number is expected to increase to \$1 million in this current fiscal year, due to the addition of incentives for improving the energy efficiency of residences and buildings.

Agriculture continues to be an important contributor to the Yukon economy. There is an estimated \$4 to \$5 million in economic benefits annually from that sector, but we know that we can do better and we will continue to explore opportunities to increase the land base that is available for agriculture, as well as the work that is underway now with our partners in the industry and the stakeholders on the local food strategies. We look forward to having something to report back to the House with respect to that strategy as soon as it is complete.

Forestry, Mr. Speaker, is another industry that I believe has significant growth potential. There are currently an estimated \$3.3 million in economic benefits annually, related to the commercial fuelwood industry. This estimate is based on 30,000 cubic metres harvested, which equates to 13,215 cords at an average of \$250 per cord. I think that through the development of a biomass strategy — which again is underway right now and I'm hoping will be completed sometime in this calendar year — we can see some of those forestry products incorporated into the industry and build jobs and opportunities from the ground up, helping to deliver on a cleaner, more affordable, locally sourced fuel supply for energy production here in the territory.

Mr. Speaker, I'm going to turn my attention now to some of the highlights that are in the budget, which are either directly related to Highways and Public Works or are being managed by Highways and Public Works. This, of course, includes — of the approximately \$312.8 million capital budget, which, again, is the largest in Yukon's history. This budget is designed to put Yukoners to work building major

public infrastructure at a time when other sectors of the economy, such as the Yukon's resource-based economy, are experiencing a bit of a downturn or challenges. Many of these capital projects and capital expenditures would be going to those sectors of the economy. Through the strong fiscal management of the Yukon Party government, we're able to introduce a capital budget that has projects from Watson Lake to Beaver Creek and as far north as Old Crow and everywhere in between.

Of course, the \$60.687 million transportation budget has a number of highlights, including almost \$10 million for Shakwak to rehabilitate sections of the north Alaska Highway; \$2.265 million of remediation work on other sections of the Alaska Highway; and \$1.3 million for the planning study of the Whitehorse corridor section of the Alaska Highway. I should take this time to congratulate the previous Minister of Highways and Public Works and the officials at the department for putting together such a comprehensive consultation package as well as using some new and innovative consultation tools, such as the website and the animated flyover. I note that it did receive international attention from an NGO, I believe it was, in Washington, D.C. that talked about how effective that tool was and how effective that tool could be. The consultation closes on that in mid-May, but there are a series of open houses planned for later on this month that individuals can attend. Congratulations to the previous minister and the staff at HPW for putting together such a great package for consultation.

Mr. Speaker, \$9.73 million will be allocated in this budget to reconstruct the remaining unimproved sections of the Campbell Highway, terminating at kilometre 190, which, I believe, is the Tuchtua camp or the turnoff to the Nahanni Range Road. Almost \$3 million for rip-rap on the side slopes of the Dempster Highway, along the shoreline of the Blackstone and Ogilvie Rivers and Engineer Creek; \$750,000 to restore and rehabilitate the Dempster Highway's infrastructure; preventive maintenance on the Klondike Highway, \$770,000; \$3.325 million to construct staff living quarters for maintenance camps at Swift River, Stewart Crossing, as well as a bunkhouse at the Klondike camp on the Dempster Highway — something that was very important to the foreman of that camp when I visited there with my deputies earlier this winter; \$1.5 million to replace the bridge deck approach and guardrail at Partridge Creek; and, \$350,000 to design the replacement of the Nares bridge on the south Klondike Highway in order to handle the transportation of bulk hauls from some of the Yukon mines that exist now, as well as some of those that are contemplated in the future. This is located in the community of Carcross, and it's one of only two bridges in the territory that still have a wooden deck on them.

We have \$200,000 to complete the work on the Tatchun Creek bridge; \$1.8 million to provide pavement overlays to the parallel runway on taxiway A and E, including the development of 20 lease lots on the south side of apron 2 at the Whitehorse airport; and almost \$4.9 million for upgrading

of community aerodromes, including Dawson City and Watson Lake.

We have \$13.5 million in this budget to provide maintenance and upgrading of government buildings, including energy-efficiency upgrades to the main administration building and the Legislative Assembly, which I think will be very important, as this is one of the least energy-efficient buildings that we have in the overall building envelope that the government owns.

There's \$11 million going to be invested in technology infrastructure, of which \$4.8 million is for e-health and \$2.1 million for school-based IT. There are a number of initiatives that the Yukon government is investing in with respect to our own assets, as well as investing in buildings across other departments that are being managed by the Property Management division. I'm sure other speakers will highlight many of the initiatives that are underway within their respective departments, whether it's the continuing care facility or Sarah Steele Building, or the St. Elias Residence, which is a very successful partnership between the Yukon and Kwanlin Dun First Nation as part of the YACA agreement, where they will be building that piece of infrastructure for the Yukon government to use to replace the existing St. Elias Residence.

I'm going to conclude by focusing a little bit on housing. It's certainly a Yukon government priority, and the remaining amount of the northern housing trust funding that we have is being allocated as follows. Members will know that, of that initial \$50 million that was transferred to the Yukon government, \$32.5 million was transferred to the various First Nations for projects within their communities. There were a number of other successful projects that were invested in, and now, through the leadership of the new minister responsible for the Yukon Housing Corporation, as well as the work of the previous minister, we'll see approximately \$1.4 million for affordable rentals in Carmacks and Carcross; \$3.5 million for a new municipal rental construction program, which will allow us to partner with municipalities to increase the supply of rental housing in Yukon communities; \$1 million for the rental housing allowance for families; \$800,000 for rental-quality enhancement grants; \$800,000 for accessibility enhancement grants; \$480,000 for a housing action plan implementation; and \$250,000 for planning of the Fifth and Rogers parcel, which is a significant piece of mostly vacant land located in the downtown core of Whitehorse. We want to ensure that we maximize the private sector investment and partner with the City of Whitehorse to ensure that their needs are met.

These are some of the exciting new initiatives that are underway in this budget, on top of projects that are underway or have been completed, such as the Alexander Street housing project, the 48-unit housing project that is currently under construction. Members can see that down on Front Street, here in Whitehorse. I was in Mayo earlier this year as well, and work is nearing completion on the six-unit seniors building in that community.

Again, there are significant investments that continue to be made in housing by this government. I think those are really reflective of what we heard on the doorsteps in 2011, in ensuring that we can meet the needs of Yukoners across the housing continuum, whether it's those who require supportive services such as those the Salvation Army homeless shelter will supply, to social housing — I again reference the Alexander Street and 48 units and investments in many of the communities by this government and the previous Yukon Party government.

Home ownership and making land available is something that is crucial, and making recreational lots available will also be very important to Yukoners, no matter where they reside on that housing continuum. I'm looking forward to the implementation of these new initiatives when it comes to housing.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I'm going to wrap up my remarks by, once again, thanking my caucus and Cabinet colleagues for all their work, thanking all the officials across the Yukon government for their work in putting this budget together. I know it's never a small undertaking, and it's something that requires an awful lot of their work and time and effort. It is very much appreciated by me and my colleagues on this side of the House.

Again, I'm hopeful that all members of this House will recognize the important investments that are being made in this budget and support this budget as we move through Committee and departmental debate. I look forward to being able to highlight many of the more exciting investments being made by Highways and Public Works and Energy, Mines and Resources when we get to departmental debate in the not-too-distant future.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I will conclude my remarks.

Speaker: Does any other member wish to be heard?

Ms. Stick: I want to start off by thanking all of my constituents of Riverdale South. It's a diverse community, from many new and young families to seniors who have lived there a long time. We have long-time homeowners, some in the original homes they built when Riverdale was just being developed, to many new families with young children and infants who are moving in and learning to enjoy the many amenities of Riverdale South.

I have the fortune of having five very active schools in the riding and I commend the supportive staff and school councils who work hard to provide the best service for children and who include parents and families in many of the activities and planning that go on in their schools.

As well in Riverdale South, we have a variety of businesses serving not just the local community, but also all of Whitehorse and recreational programming in our schools, in our fitness facilities, in our dance studios and in the Heart of Riverdale.

I want to thank the Minister of Finance for his budget speech in the delivery of the new budget for 2015-16. On our community tour this winter — and throughout the year — we

in the Official Opposition have heard many concerns from citizens when completing community tours or when they come into our office and speak to us. I will speak to many of these concerns that I have heard and the priorities that Yukoners feel are often missing in this Budget Address.

One of the things that I paid more attention to was the heading, "Making the Yukon the Best Place to Raise a Family", and I was looking for some real clear programming and ideas that would support that. But, instead — or more often than not — it was a list of capital projects — nothing about collaborative care, patient family-centred care, expanding access to primary care — all things proven to improve health outcomes for people and the well-being of our communities. But those things were not highlighted there. I did not note access to service. I just wanted to note that access to service is about whether or not services are available, accessible, accommodating, affordable and acceptable to the communities, but we didn't hear a lot of that.

We didn't hear a lot about mental health services or alcohol and drug services and after-care, but in the communities we heard a lot in particular about those things. We heard that people in the communities, individuals, families, governments are concerned about after-care for the individuals going through treatment and for their families. How will after-care be extended to communities when ADS workers and counsellors are there only on a visiting basis?

It is good to hear about the Sarah Steele Building. That is great for Whitehorse and for those coming for treatment, but it does not address the concerns of the communities.

We heard in the communities about the need for enhanced services for seniors in their communities where they live, including increased home care provision. This is what we heard in the communities.

The NDP heard about the lack of affordable and accessible housing for families, for individuals, for workers and for government employees.

There were concerns expressed about the lack of social workers in the communities. Some are only able to attend the communities on a once-a-week basis — once a week — one day. In those same conversations, we heard about a lack of appropriate office space and workspace. This is vital if we're to provide safe and secure places for our professionals to meet with individuals.

But this should not come as news to the government. We've heard about the confusion and lack of social workers in communities from the Auditor General a year ago. He highlighted it in his report on Family and Children's Services. To be clear, this isn't a complaint about workers, Mr. Speaker, but it's a complaint about the lack of resources and a lack of full-time workers in communities. It used to be that most communities had a social worker who lived there, who was part of the community and participated in and complemented what was going on in the community.

Too often we have seen that decisions are being made in isolation of the people who they're going to impact the most and the 300-bed facility is a prime example. It is a plan that is reactionary decision-making to a problem the government saw

coming years beforehand but did not address. If we look at the government's own statistics, it appears that the number of Yukoners being served by home care has fallen as our population of elders and seniors continues to grow. The decision to build a 300-bed facility flies in the face of health and community expert opinions, including those of the Canadian Medical Association, the Canadian Nursing Association and the Canadian Association of Retired Persons, to name a few.

This facility was not part of any reports that have been tabled in this Legislature over the span of this government's rule. None recommended a large facility such as this — not the health care review completed in 2008; not the clinical services plan completed in 2014; and not the *Health and Social Services Strategic Plan* and accompanying performance measure framework that were intended to guide our health care planning and decision-making from 2014 to 2019.

This facility was decided on without consultation. Seniors and elders were not approached before this plan came out. Medical professionals — people who we will be asking to provide staffing and direction — were not consulted. Communities weren't consulted — other levels of government. When we were in the communities, many people had not even heard of this plan. We spoke to citizens, seniors and elders and we spoke to the professional medical organizations. They are very concerned.

This has huge impacts. A needs assessment and a business plan were completed for a 300-bed institution but not without looking at other options. There are many, many to choose from across this country, but none were considered. It has been suggested that this is the most economical, but that's not true. The Canadian Institute for Health Information, a respected non-profit organization, has been clear that facilities with anything over 200 beds are the most costly and take up the most of our health care dollars.

Across this country and globally, people, professionals and governments are looking at and creating better models of care for seniors that respect their rights to choose, their ability and opportunities to age in place with the supports they require. It's about making choices. It's about seniors deciding what they want.

The suggested cost to build this is over \$300 million and that's today's cost. Is this really the most effective and affordable, or even the only option Yukoners have? I don't think so. This does not even touch on the O&M that will be required. What portion of our health care dollars will be taken up by the O&M that it will take to operate such a large facility? Instead we should be looking at how to improve the health and well-being of our seniors and elders who are ending up in long-term or continuing care at a younger and far higher rate than their Canadian counterparts. The information is available; it's there. Our seniors and elders are ending up in long-term or continuing care at a younger and far higher rate than Canadian counterparts, but instead this government is repeating history by forsaking health systems planning and health promotion in favour of another large capital project.

Nowhere in the business plan has there been a suggestion of how many workers, how many individuals will be required to staff such a large facility. Doctors, nurses, LPNs, janitors, cooks, laundry — the list goes on. The numbers will be huge and where are we going to find those professionals? Even now, governments and hospitals struggle to find doctors, nurses and health care professionals. There is a shortage, but imagine what we could do or what could be created with those same dollars that would serve Yukoners in Whitehorse and communities. Imagine if we were to give more funding to the college to offer home support worker and LPN programs, not just in Whitehorse but at community campuses across the territory.

Community members could gain the knowledge, the skills and, ultimately, jobs without having to leave their communities, and they would be able to work and provide supports to elders and seniors living in their communities.

Imagine if we took some of that money and increased funding to home and community care to offer a broader, more comprehensive range of services in every community and to every senior needing them. To me, that sounds like a better way to spend our dollars.

Imagine a range of senior residential services in the continuum of care that meets their needs. There are many seniors I have met and spoken to who would like to move from their homes that have become, perhaps, too unmanageable, too large. They are over-housed, and they would like to move into something such as assisted living — an apartment, a suite, able to live independently but, perhaps on the same premises, meals are provided, there's a common dining room, a common recreational and shared social space. We don't have that. We have plenty of apartments that are available for seniors, but we don't have that level of assisted care. This is what seniors are looking for — not a move from their own home to Copper Ridge or to a 300-bed facility. They would like to see a range of services. Why weren't those considered?

Imagine if we were able to provide more tangible supports to the informal caregivers, including family members and friends who may be required to take time from their jobs or from their own families to care for an aging parent or a friend. We will need more continuing and long-term care, but putting so much of our health care dollars into one 300-bed facility is not what Yukoners are saying they want. They want a range of options. They want choice.

It's not just the elders and seniors I'm hearing from on this project — it's also local contractors. They're telling us that they're being shut out of the current tendering that is being managed by Partnerships B.C. They are shut out by the scope, but they're also feeling they're not able to access information that would be available through our own procurement process, such as information with regard to who is looking at this project and whom they might partner with. It's not open and accountable, as our own procurement process is.

Moving on, this government takes a lot of credit for the services to individuals with fetal alcohol spectrum disorder. I

am interested to hear what has happened with the adult diagnostic clinic that has been a year in the making. I'm going to be interested to find out how many assessments have actually been completed by this new team in the previous fiscal year.

In this year, we have heard from individuals and families and caregivers who are frustrated that they are not able to have those assessment services available. In 2013-14, FASSY, a local NGO, was able to coordinate and complete seven assessments. This was done in cooperation with Health and Social Services. It was an important service that was provided and it gave many individuals a clearer understanding of their own strengths and needs and a direction for what kind of services they required. That funding was withdrawn from FASSY in favour of this in-house team. I am not against an in-house team. I believe it is important, but have there been any assessments completed in this last year or did we lose ground?

We heard mention in the budget speech a comment about McDonald Lodge in Dawson City and we heard that this new 15-bed facility will have an option to expand. I was surprised at that, because just this fall, in the last sitting, the minister made it very clear that this was to be a 15-bed project and only a 15-bed project, but already we are talking about expanding it. We are pleased to hear about the rebuild of the St. Elias group home. It has been long overdue, but what are the plans? Who will it provide support to? Is it transitional or is it permanent? Are there independent suites or just rooms? Where will people move to if they are no longer appropriate for that service?

Back to the Sarah Steele Building and contractors: currently a request for proposals is open for the building of the new Sarah Steele replacement building. In a matter of weeks from that request for proposals coming out, there have been eight addendums, including pushing the date for proposals out by an additional week, still leaving only seven weeks for businesses to complete their work. But the question should be: Why so many addendums? Why so much confusion on a project that has been in the planning stages for so long? This is costing contractors time and money. They seem to move forward on what they are doing and go backwards two steps when another addendum is provided to them. I believe that in listening to Yukoners, to businesses, to contractors and to citizens.

Another project going forward is the transitional housing residence for individuals with mental health issues. Again, this is a project that speaks to transitional housing, but transition to where? What is the plan, Mr. Speaker? To what affordable and accessible housing options will these individuals be able to move? Are we just setting these individuals up to complete something, tell them they're done and not have appropriate housing available? For many, many, affordable rental housing options remain out of their grasp.

We've heard a bit of talk this week about mental health services in the communities and it continues to be a huge concern to citizens. Right now we have two mental health nurses who are required to cover all of the communities,

Mr. Speaker. As you can imagine, some might get a visit once a week, others not so often, and certainly not when there's a crisis. It's difficult to provide services when we don't have the resources or the people in the communities to provide those. We know that Many Rivers and the workers we have now are stretched, restricted by hours, travel and what they're able to do. I've heard from parents concerned that they have made referrals or asked for support from Mental Health Services for their children. It's a gap. They're on a waitlist and not getting the supports that they request.

We know there are long waits for mental health counselling and support and, again, this is not the fault of the mental health care professionals, but I would suggest a lack of resourcing and, more important, a clear mental health strategy for the Yukon. This has been talked about, has been studied and has been promised. There have been recommendations made through many plans, but still we are without a clear plan, clear goals and measurable outcomes and the public is left wondering when these services will be available throughout the Yukon.

I always come back to the social inclusion and poverty reduction strategy. How is that coming? Have we seen improved conditions for families and individuals — children? Are the numbers coming down for those requiring social assistance or support from the food bank, whether in Whitehorse or in the communities? Are we measuring the gains that citizens have made? I can't find that information anywhere.

We know that poverty, poor housing and lack of nutritious food all have long-term impacts on children, on their brain development and on their health outcomes further down the road. These have impacts on our health care system. These have impacts on people's health and susceptibility to chronic disease, such as diabetes, obesity, heart disease and poor overall health. Yet these social economic determinants of health are poorly represented in this government's current budget.

In fact, over the last decade, the Yukon Party government's approach to health and social services has left many Yukoners with a poorer health status on a national basis than our fellow Canadians on many key indicators.

Health decisions have not been anchored in tenets of responsible government, such as comprehensive, coordinated, strategic planning, program management and accountable decision-making. Rather, they seem to be characterized as a series of ad hoc, frequently contradictory, public announcements and top-down actions. They have been overwhelmingly inappropriate, ineffective, inefficient and costly, not just in terms of dollars, but in individuals' health and in the health and well-being of our communities and of our children.

The Yukon NDP know that we can improve the health and well-being of all Yukoners by listening to what our community members want and are asking for, by working with our health and wellness professionals and service providers, and by listening to the wealth of expert advice available to us within our public sector and across Canada.

We believe that improving our health and social services planning and outcomes will be supported by evidence-based decision-making, rather than decision-based evidence-making, which seems to be the norm. There are a lot of questions and a lot of concerns of Yukoners that I intend to bring forward in Question Period and during the budget debate at the department level. The NDP will continue to ask and to listen to Yukoners' concerns.

I just want to end this by thanking all the Yukoners who welcomed us in the communities, who spoke to us, who shared their concerns and have continued to visit our offices, e-mail us or stop us in the grocery store. We are listening, Mr. Speaker, and we thank them for speaking to us.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: It is a pleasure to rise and speak to this year's budget and respond to the Premier's Budget Address, which was done last Thursday on the first sitting day of this Spring Sitting. I have a number of things I want to cover with regard to the budget, with regard to my current responsibilities as Minister of Community Services and minister responsible for the Public Service Commission. I also want to touch a little bit on some of my previous roles as Minister of Environment and Minister of Economic Development, but first I did want to touch on a few riding matters that relate to my riding of Copperbelt North.

As I try to do from time to time, I would obviously like to thank the residents of Copperbelt North for their continued support as a member of the Legislative Assembly on their behalf. I would like to thank them for their interest and willingness to express their thoughts and opinions to me in various meetings over the course of the last several years.

I did want to make mention of one particular individual who we unfortunately lost this year from my riding. I know we'll hopefully be able to do a tribute to her later in the sitting, so I won't say too, too much now but, earlier this year, Jean Jamieson, who was a constituent of mine — a very good friend, better known as "Nanny" to those of us who knew her well — unfortunately passed away at the tender age of 101. She was only a few months shy of 102 and passed away in the company of her family earlier this year. As I said, we will hopefully be able to do a tribute to her later this year, so I won't say too much about Nanny's life, but simply that she will certainly be missed, that she was an exceptional woman, and that it was an absolute honour to have known her over my life.

Mr. Speaker, also with regard to my riding, I want to take note and mention the hard work of the Copper Ridge Neighbourhood Association, which does a lot of great work around our neighbourhood to build a sense of community in the Copper Ridge area. They operate a number of programs in Copper Ridge, including administering the FireSmart program, which has seen a lot of activity in the areas adjacent to Copper Ridge and Granger in the last few years. It has been a welcome program there.

They also operate the Snow Angels program, which offers the opportunity for residents who feel that they have the capacity or willingness to help out and shovel somebody

else's driveway, should somebody need to. They offer the matchmaking program there called Snow Angels.

In particular, Mr. Speaker, I should note the tremendous amount of work that has gone into the development and proposed changes to the Winze Park area. It's an open space on Winze Lane that a number of folks from the neighbourhood have expressed an interest in seeing improved or developed in some way. To date, it has been simply an empty lot. It's fairly large. It has been seeded at certain times in its past and has, at various times, gone to weed; but, more recently, we've seen some trees planted on that facility. There has been some vision articulated by the community, vis-à-vis the Copper Ridge Neighbourhood Association, and some desire expressed to see some other activities hosted at that site. I'm looking forward to seeing what the neighbourhood association will come up with and I'm looking forward to working with them to secure funding to try to see that site developed or improved to the needs and to the wishes of the community.

Earlier this year, of course, we had our Cabinet shuffle, and this is our first sitting since then. You know, Cabinet shuffles are always interesting for ministers, I think, because, on one hand, you do regret leaving the department that you've become very closely associated with and interested in, and you miss the fact that you get to work with those departments; but, on the other hand, there's a certain degree of excitement about the new opportunities that a new department brings.

I wanted to say just a few words about my previous departments — first of all, Environment. It was an absolute pleasure to serve as the Minister of Environment for the last three and a half or so years. A number of the initiatives that we were able to get going during my time as minister there have either concluded or are underway and continue to be supported by the current minister — not the least of which, Mr. Speaker — I mean, there are a lot of things and I don't want to list all of the initiatives under Environment, but there are a few things I did want to mention that I was particularly proud of.

Of course, the first one that comes to mind is the work on the Conrad campground. I know that the minister shared with me the most recent updates on that and it is very promising and very exciting that we have a new campground being constructed. It is the first campground being constructed in the Yukon since the mid-80s, so quite a long time — over 30 years, perhaps even closer to 40 years since we have seen a new campground constructed in Yukon. So that is exciting to me, and not only because it's a new campground and Yukoners love campgrounds, but the way and location of the campground being developed at Conrad is of particular interest.

The partnership with the Carcross-Tagish First Nation is a wonderful example of partnership across governments, and the location is very important as well — the historic relevance of the Conrad site, as well as the fact that it ties in very nicely with some of the work that has been done in that area with regard to the mountain biking trails around Carcross. The community, in particular the First Nation, has really done a

fantastic job in developing some of those trails over the years, and I think that the campground will serve as a very nice addition to that network. It is right at the end of one of the trail networks, I understand, and the campground is being constructed in a way that will accommodate group camping or group activities with those trails in mind.

As well, Mr. Speaker, as members are very familiar with, we initiated, developed and ultimately brought forward a water strategy for the territory, something I was very proud of. I thought it was an excellent piece of work, and I would like to take a moment to thank the Department of Environment and the staff who worked on that strategy over the years. It was a lot of work, involved a lot of consultation, a lot of meetings and a lot of ground work by staff to go out to communities and spend a lot of time on the road, working on that strategy but, ultimately, I think we ended up with a product that was fantastic and is something that is going to benefit our territory for years to come.

Alongside that strategy, of course, was the implementation of it through the expenditure of considerable resources, both in terms of human and financial resources. We saw an increase in both of those as a result of the water strategy and, as a result of that work, we will know considerably more about Yukon's water resources than we did when we started, which is ultimately the goal.

As well, with the Department of Environment, I really valued my time — not to focus too much on the department, but also on the relationships developed with other non-government organizations, like the renewable resources councils and the Fish and Wildlife Management Board. The Fish and Wildlife Management Board is probably one of the more under-rated boards in the territory, I think. They deal with some very serious issues that are of great importance to a lot of Yukoners and issues that raise a lot of interest and passion among Yukoners. Those can be challenging issues in a small community like Yukon, but they are able to navigate those and deal with those issues very astutely.

I would like to thank the members of the board, who are there now or who were there previously over my time as minister, for the strong working relationship we had between me, the department and the board. I am expecting very much that the current minister will continue with that relationship, and I know that, having served as a member of a renewable resources council, he knows all too well the importance of the relationship between renewable resources councils, the Fish and Wildlife Management Board, the department and the minister, so I sure he will continue on with that strong relationship.

With regard to the Department of Economic Development, there are a number of projects that were initiated or underway when I left the department that I look forward to seeing continue on, not the least of which is the diverse fibre optic project. It is one I found to be tremendously interesting and really appreciated the work of the department on that. Of course, a lot of the work had been done by the new telecommunications branch of the department, which came into existence under my tenure as minister, and so I was

naturally very proud to see that directorate extended in our current budget.

As well, I certainly appreciated the staff in Economic Development who dealt with the investment attraction work. They have come a long way in a fairly short period of time, in terms of promoting Yukon in a very concerted, very organized way throughout the world. These folks spend a lot of time on the road, unfortunately, and thus away from their families, but they do very important work on behalf of all Yukoners in raising the profile of Yukon as a jurisdiction for investment and for economic opportunities, whether they are in mining, oil and gas, tourism or any other sector in the territory. The folks at Economic Development in the investment attraction area have done work that I am very proud of.

Moving now toward my current role as the Minister of Community Services, I have, over the past number of years, been very familiar with the Department of Community Services from the outside, as a minister in other departments, but to enter into the department just over two months ago, I have really gained an appreciation of the breadth and extensiveness of the department. There is such a wide variety of issues that Community Services deals with. They are very diverse and they are very important and are often overlooked.

In Community Services, there are over 70 pieces of legislation that fall under the aegis of Community Services, so the department is, and now I am, responsible for over 70 pieces of legislation. It is a tremendous amount of work. There are pieces of legislation out there that I had never heard of until being briefed on them by Community Services recently — everything from the second-hand sellers act and the *Dog Act* to a number of lists of what sound like obscure acts but are actually fairly important in their own right. I really gained an appreciation for the breadth of the department when I learned about all the pieces of legislation that we are responsible for.

I'll walk through some of the initiatives that are underway in the department and how the budget that we're discussing today influences, or contributes to, those initiatives, but the first thing I wanted to mention was the Sport and Recreation branch in the Department of Community Services. My personal background is one of considerable involvement in the sport community in Yukon. I've been involved in a variety of different sports throughout the territory throughout my life, both as a player, a coach, an athlete, an official and an organizer. I've certainly had a fair share of experience with a number of the sports but, entering into the Sport and Recreation branch, you realize that however many sports you think you are involved with, there are about 100 other ones that you have never been involved with. Yukon has such a robust sporting community that I'm amazed by what goes on in the territory with regard to sport.

I wanted to take note of a few particular points of interest of mine with regard to sport. The first one was that, soon after the shuffle that saw me become the minister responsible for Sport and Recreation, I got to attend the opening ceremonies of the Canada Winter Games held in Prince George. I got to see the full contingent of Yukon athletes in their Team Yukon

kit and see them take part in what was, by all accounts, a phenomenal opening ceremony in Prince George.

Not only did they look great at the Canada Winter Games, they performed exceptionally well. Yukon was able to, at the end of the games, end up with eight medals across a variety of sports. We had three golds, one silver and four bronze. When you hold those against some of the totals of other provinces, it doesn't seem like that much, but to finish as we did, eighth in Canada, I think is a tremendous feat and a strong testament to the passion and skill that the athletes we have in Yukon have for their sports.

We finished just behind New Brunswick and ahead of provinces like Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia, P.E.I., as well as the other two territories, N.W.T. and Nunavut. For a small territory like our own to outperform provinces like Newfoundland and Labrador, like Nova Scotia and like P.E.I., I think is a phenomenal accomplishment. I think all our athletes should be very proud.

I don't mean just the athletes who got medals. I think we should be proud of all the athletes who participated in the Canada Winter Games, regardless of how they finished. To be selected to participate in the Canada Winter Games is a tremendous honour, and I know that all the athletes, parents and coaches who participated found it to be a very rewarding experience.

At those games, one of our gold medals was by a young lady by the name of Rachel Pettitt. The Pettitt family is very well-known in Whitehorse. Rachel's mother, Trish, taught me — and I think probably other people in this House — how to skate a number of years ago. She has been involved in both hockey and figure skating for many, many years, as are her sons and Rachel's brothers. It was phenomenal to see Rachel accomplish what she has accomplished.

The week that we had the Cabinet shuffle, when I was brand new as minister responsible for Sport and Recreation, Rachel won the nationals. She had the best free program at nationals, and that was the first time that a Yukoner had ever won that level of figure skating.

For a young lady who is only 15 years old, she has gold medals from Canada Winter Games, and she has won nationals, and we can only imagine what lies ahead for Rachel as a young athlete coming from the Yukon. We obviously have high hopes as well a great deal of pride in her accomplishments to date.

As well at the Canada Winter Games, we took note of the medals that were won by Nadia Moser, our flag-bearer at the opening ceremonies. Nadia won silver and two bronze, I believe, in biathlon. The reason I take note of those is that they were the first — they were won on, I believe, the first or second day of the competition and they were the first medals by anybody from the territories, so Nadia really put us on the map when it came to medals at the Canada Winter Games and so I would like to offer my congratulations to her as well.

Mr. Speaker, the Canada Winter Games are very exciting and fantastic for Yukon athletes to participate in, but I think all Yukoners and all northerners have a special place in their hearts for the Arctic Winter Games. As members of the House

are aware, the 2016 Arctic Winter Games are right around the corner and they will be held primarily in Nuuk, Greenland, with some events also being held in Iqaluit, Nunavut. I was very pleased to see in this budget that has come forward \$1 million that will be allocated to support our athletes to participate in those Arctic Winter Games next year in Nuuk and Iqaluit.

Of course, I would be remiss if I didn't mention the Arctic X Games that we will be hosting concurrently with Arctic Winter Game here in Whitehorse. There is a long story with this that I think we're all familiar with — we've passed motions and discussed this issue in the House previously — and I think all members are aware of the great effort and work that was done by previous ministers, the MLA for Whitehorse West as well as the MLA for Lake Laberge, who did a considerable amount of work to ensure that these games happened. We wouldn't be announcing the \$100,000 that we have in this budget for the Arctic X Games if not for the work of those of my predecessors so I would like to of course thank them for that.

As well, I have to note that while we always focus on the athletes in these events, whether they're the Canada Games or the Arctic Winter Games, we can't forget to note the important roles of parents and friends who support our athletes when they go to these types of events. Parents often put in as many hours as the kids do and as many hours as the athletes do.

We certainly appreciate the great amount of time, money and effort that goes into having a young athlete in the house and having an athlete participate in the kinds of games like these.

I can't begin to tell you how fascinating it is to see the number and breadth of sports events that are hosted in Whitehorse and in the Yukon on what seems like a weekly basis. Just last week we had the national masters curling in town, here in Whitehorse. There were teams from across Canada participating in that and there are many more events like that to come, whether they are for kids, whether they are for adults, whether they are for seniors, whether they are focused on any number of different groups, Yukon is constantly hosting sporting events both here in Whitehorse and in the communities.

Also in the budget this year, I should take note of the fact that we, of course, are continuing with the increase to the community recreation assistance grant funding for unincorporated Yukon communities to support community recreation, wellness and active living. That was a decision that was put forward by my predecessor as well to increase that CRAG funding, so all of those unincorporated communities that receive support from the government will see a substantial increase in the support they receive. In most case, I believe, The CRAG funding is being doubled for most communities, but it is based on the various communities.

As well, speaking of successful athletes, I almost missed one that is very near and dear to my heart. Earlier this year, the Bantam Mustangs won the B.C. Provincials. That was a phenomenal accomplishment. I participated as a Mustang in at

least three different provincials and I think the best we ever did was sixth. I know that a few years ago — probably close to eight or nine years ago — we got second at one point, when we had a really strong team and that was a fantastic accomplishment. I remember when we got second and we lost the final game, I remember that a lot of the local media were very happy that we got second, as was I, and they said that for a team from Yukon to even get second was such an accomplishment. Well, I think the Bantam Mustangs from this year have shown us that doing not bad for a team from the Yukon is actually first place. We are very proud of the Bantam Mustangs in their accomplishment of winning the B.C. Provincials.

I am a little bit jealous. I wish it would have been me that had done it when I was playing, but I am very happy to see that this year's squad was successful. I know that there are a number of younger players on the team too, so I think that the Mustangs have a bright future over the course of the next few years, both in the Bantam and going into the Midget levels.

I should also note that the budget contains \$325,000 for Yukon's participation in the Western Canada Summer Games in Alberta this August. That will be a great opportunity for our summer athletes to participate in the Westerns. I have to admit a small amount of bias toward winter sports, but Yukon has a very robust summer sport community as well and it is evidenced by the strong contingent of athletes that we are sending to the Western Canada Summer Games this August.

Turning if I could to the infrastructure development associated with sports, I know that there has been some interest of late in the proposal for a new soccer field — or two new soccer fields and running track in the Whistle Bend area. I wanted to take a few moments to talk about that proposal. Obviously, the budget contains some money that's allocated toward that project. This initiative was announced originally in last year's budget in April of last year. Since then, there have been a number of meetings between City of Whitehorse officials and Yukon government officials, as well as meetings directly between mayor and council and the previous minister. Obviously, those meetings included the initial proponents, which were the Yukon Outdoor Sports Complex Association group themselves.

The project is, of course, being led now by Yukon government, but it's being led in partnership with YOSCA, the group that is advocating for the project. That group is a diverse group of individuals who come from a variety of backgrounds, including soccer and other sports. They have done a lot of work in terms of developing the needs component of the facility. I think it's pretty well understood that there's a strong degree of demand for this type of development and the need has been well-expressed by the groups that have been coming out in droves to city council to express their support.

As we know, the Yukon government is planning to develop two artificial turf soccer fields and a rubberized track in the Whistle Bend subdivision of Whitehorse, which to this point has been referred to generally as the "Yukon outdoor sports complex". Yukon government had issued a request for

proposals earlier this year for the design of the fields and track, as well as necessary supporting infrastructure, such as lighting, a utility building and viewing stands. Once Yukon government has selected a design and construction plan, we will, of course, budget the appropriate funds and issue a tender for the construction of the complex. The final design will be based on experience from other community installations of a similar nature, built in similar conditions across North America. We are doing this work with the Yukon Outdoor Sports Complex Association — YOSCA — pursuant to a memorandum of agreement. I should note that while the RFP did contemplate conceptual planning for the development of future components, we are currently only planning the development of the infrastructure noted in the RFP, which of course is those two fields and the running track. While we think there is value in conceptual planning for future development, additional phases or additional facilities are not being pursued at this time. If we ever plan to do anything more, we will, of course, consult with the City of Whitehorse and other groups before we do that.

We expect, obviously, to pay for the construction of the sports complex and will own the facility. We expect to enter into a lease agreement with YOSCA, allowing them to manage the operation and maintenance of the complex. Charging appropriate user fees will be among the methods employed by YOSCA to cover these costs. Additionally, we anticipate YOSCA will seek support from other potential user groups and may raise funds through advertising or sponsorships. I want to note there are currently no expectations on the City of Whitehorse for the operation and maintenance of the complex.

Of course, we are not requesting that any fees or taxes be waived. As is the case with other YG-owned properties in Whitehorse, Yukon government will pay a grant-in-lieu to the City of Whitehorse. In general, this funding arrangement is consistent with historical practice for O&M for recreational infrastructure adjacent to public schools.

While the design of the field and track will be site-specific, there are design elements that could be used elsewhere, should it become necessary to consider another site. That being said, I believe the field and track would be an ideal addition to a burgeoning neighbourhood like Whistle Bend.

While various sports organizations would probably be better suited than I to comment on the needs of their specific sports, I am pleased to provide a little bit of general information about the need for this facility. Despite the fact that Yukon has sent numerous teams and athletes to national and international soccer tournaments and competitions, Yukon has never — and I repeat, never — had a full-sized competition-level soccer pitch. Over the years, our athletes have played and trained on schoolyard grass fields of inadequate dimension and of quality that is determined by the whims of Yukon weather.

The field nearest to meeting regulation was that at F.H. Collins, which is now the site of the new school. The situation is similar for track and field athletes who need access to a

quality running track. My understanding is that access to artificial turf fields will extend the soccer season considerably. They will also allow sports organizations to have access to playing surfaces comparable to those used by their competitors in the rest of Canada.

Put simply, the proposed infrastructure will be a welcome addition to Yukon's recreational infrastructure and will improve the ability of Yukon's athletes to train and compete in a manner comparable to the rest of Canada. This will be of great benefit to Yukon athletes and Yukon communities.

As currently contemplated, the sports complex will be fenced and gated. At the very least, this is necessary to protect the artificial turf of the fields, which are vulnerable to damage from improper use. This type of controlled access is not unusual and is the practice at many other sports facilities in Whitehorse, such as the broomball rink, Mount McIntyre Recreation Centre and the Canada Games Centre. As we all know, the sports complex is deliberately being proposed adjacent to a site planned for a future school. The lease agreement with YOSCA will contain the terms required to ensure this complex is available for public use in the future. There are many factors that will be considered before moving forward with that school, and that is not being contemplated currently, but of course this is a facility that will be needed by the school eventually, once it is constructed.

As I have mentioned, Yukon participates in a variety of summer and winter games around the country. While we aren't currently considering or don't currently have any bids forward for summer games, a facility of this nature would put us into a position to consider applying for such summer games. We would be in a better position to host regional, national or international summer games with this facility.

As is common practice, if we were to consider hosting one of those types of games, we would consult and partner with the City of Whitehorse on any such bid.

I am pleased to provide some of that information about that facility. I think it will be a wonderful addition to the community. Obviously, city council has had a number of questions about it, as it is their job to ask questions about rezoning applications before them. We look forward to a positive response from city council. I believe tonight is the first vote on that rezoning.

Let me turn now to the municipal — that offers me a nice segue to the next aspect that I wanted to touch on with regard to the Department of Community Services, and that is the Municipal and Community Affairs branch of the department.

In my short time as minister, I have had an opportunity to work with and discuss issues with a number of community leaders, including the mayors of the various municipalities. In my first week as minister, I was able to speak with somebody from every municipality in the Yukon to discuss some of their interests and priorities, and to introduce myself and offer my willingness to engage in a meaningful way and discuss matters of importance to Yukon communities. I have to say that I've been blown away by the amount of work that goes into all the municipalities. Of course the expenditures that are made by Yukon government are considerable, but also the

time, effort and passion that folks either in the positions of municipal leaders like mayors and councillors, but also administrative support as well from the staff like the chief operating officers or chief administrative officers — it is commendable.

The AYC of course is an important feature of that relationship between Yukon government and all Yukon communities. There is a lot of work going on between our government and the AYC. I look forward to attending their annual meeting this year in Haines Junction. I know Haines Junction is looking forward to hosting the AYC later this year and I believe the agenda features functions that involve a number of members of this House, including the Leader of the Official Opposition and the Leader of the Third Party, so I look forward to hearing from those folks at that venue about their vision for Yukon's communities. I look forward to working with the AYC on a number of issues that are of importance to them, not the least of which of course — I'm running out of time, Mr. Speaker, thank you — are the changes that are being proposed to the *Municipal Act* that we've been working very closely with all the Yukon municipalities on. The working group that is doing that work on those proposed changes has done a considerable amount of work and we really appreciate the work that they've done.

As well, we're doing some considerable work on the solid-waste file. We've re-engaged the Solid Waste Working Group at AYC. As well, we have a number of initiatives underway with regard to recycling throughout the territory.

One initiative that was undertaken late last year was the passage of the legislation to allow the rural well program to be applied in municipalities and I look forward to working with interested municipalities to implement that program within their municipal boundaries if they are interested in it. I know that the AYC will offer an opportunity for us to extend those discussions further.

Mr. Speaker, unfortunately I wasn't able to get to much of what I wanted to talk about. I see that my time is running down, so I will use my last few minutes to note that I'm really looking forward to working with all of the groups in the Protective Services branch, as well as with Corporate Policy and Consumer Affairs, the Employment Standards and Residential Tenancies branch of the Department of Community Services.

In my introduction to the department, I was really blown away by the EMS folks in the Protective Services branch. I admittedly had a poor understanding of how EMS worked in the territory, and I have become enlightened by the conversations I had with the officials in our EMS facilities. The EMS folks do such an incredible job. They are such an important part of our health care system, and they often go under-recognized and I want to make sure that I get on the record my appreciation for the work that they do, as well as the fact of my sincere level of appreciation and respect. I was very impressed by what they did. Part of it was because I don't think I could do that job, and that is a testament to the fact that only certain people are cut out for that job and we really appreciate that they do it.

I wasn't able to get to fire or search and rescue, unfortunately. These are all important aspects that I'm sure I'll have the opportunity to talk about in the future, as well as a number of the investments we make in drinking water, solid waste management, land development and, of course, property assessment and taxation in the Department of Community Services.

I see that my time has ticked away. I would commend this budget to the House and I look forward to implementing the considerable investments that are made in this budget throughout the Yukon Territory. Whether it be in municipalities throughout the territory or in unincorporated communities or in other areas of the territory, I think this budget offers a tremendous step forward for the territory, and I look forward to supporting it and ultimately to implementing the vision that is articulated within it.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I will commend the budget for this year to the House.

Speaker: Does any other member wish to be heard?
Are you prepared for the question?
Motion for second reading of Bill No. 18 agreed to

Mr. Elias: 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 4:57 p.m.

The following sessional papers were tabled April 7, 2015:

33-1-155
2014 Annual Report of the Yukon Ombudsman (Speaker Laxton)

33-1-156
2014 Annual Report of the Yukon Information and Privacy Commissioner (Speaker Laxton)