



Yukon Legislative Assembly

Number 252

1st Session

33rd Legislature

HANSARD

Tuesday, April 12, 2016 — 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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NAME	CONSTITUENCY	PORTFOLIO
Hon. Darrell Pasloski	Mountainview	Premier Minister responsible for Finance; Executive Council Office
Hon. Elaine Taylor	Whitehorse West	Deputy Premier Minister responsible for 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
Kevin Barr	Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes
Lois Moorcroft	Copperbelt South
Jim Tredger	Mayo-Tatchun
Kate White	Takhini-Kopper King

Liberal Party

Sandy Silver	Leader of the Third Party Klondike
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**Yukon Legislative Assembly
Whitehorse, Yukon
Tuesday, April 12, 2016 — 1:00 p.m.**

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

Prayers

DAILY ROUTINE

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

TRIBUTES

In recognition of the Rotary Music Festival

Hon. Mr. Graham: Mr. Speaker, it is indeed a pleasure today to rise on behalf of all members of the Legislature to speak about an annual event that has become a major highlight of our performing arts scene and to pay tribute to the organizers and volunteers who make it happen every year.

I speak of course about the Rotary Music Festival, which starts tomorrow at the Yukon Arts Centre here in Whitehorse. The festival began in 1969 as an initiative of the Whitehorse Choral Society and, not surprisingly, with a focus on local music. Two years later, the newly established Rotary Club of Whitehorse became involved, working in partnership with the choral society for the first few years and then, in 1975, taking over full responsibility for organizing and administering the festival — a role they have continued to fill for the past 40 years.

That first festival in 1969 took place over a two-day period and involved about 60 performers and one adjudicator. The 2016 festival will last nine days and will involve nearly 1,500 participants and seven adjudicators. By any measure we wish to use, Mr. Speaker, it's indeed a tremendous success. It's also a testament to the powerful influence the festival has had on the growth of the performing arts scene here in the territory. From its early focus on vocal music, the festival program has expanded over the years to include instrumental music, including flute and other wind instruments, violin, guitar and of course the ever-popular piano.

I note that the category of piano duets, trios and quartets are once again included in the program this year. The two piano quartets' description from the festival's syllabus reads, "Eight hands, two pianos." I don't know about other members of the House, Mr. Speaker, but that description immediately creates a most delightful image in my mind and we have to marvel at the logistics involved in seating four musicians and two grand pianos on the same stage, never mind coordinating the actual musical scores.

Much of the music performed at the festival is in a classical vein of course, but the scope has expanded over the years to include jazz and pop styles as well.

As I noted last year, Mr. Speaker, the festival now also includes several modern dance categories, and I know there is a member on the front bench on this side who has a son in one of those modern dance categories. It ranges from traditional

ballet to modern and contemporary dance. As Minister of Education, Mr. Speaker, I'm particularly pleased to notice the student choreography category, which strikes me as a forward-looking and youth-empowering category.

One of the wonderful benefits of the Rotary Music Festival is how it nurtures young musicians and fosters music appreciation among all ages. I know, Mr. Speaker; I had two children of my own who participated in the Rotary Music Festival over the years, and I really take this opportunity to salute and thank the many music teachers who provide instruction, encouragement and inspiration to their students. I would also like to take the opportunity to thank teachers and administrators in Yukon schools, who make allowance during the school day for their students to participate in the festival.

I recently learned that, every year, festival organizers invite Yukon youth to participate in the program cover art contest. This year's winner is Ona Toews-Cardona, a grade 10 student at F.H. Collins Secondary School. Her work, *My Musical Roots*, was chosen to grace this year's program cover. Congratulations to Ona and to all the young artists whose work over the years has graced the cover of this musical program.

An annual event of this magnitude cannot happen without a strong organizational structure and the work of many hands and many minds. Year after year, dozens of volunteers offer their time to perform the many tasks involved in such a complex venture as this wonderful festival.

Today I would like to take the opportunity to acknowledge the work of the Rotary Music Festival committee, which is comprised of Rotarians, music and dance educators and community representatives — all of whom are volunteers. The committee is chaired by Rod Hill. I would like to acknowledge Mr. Hill's considerable ongoing commitment to the festival and thank him for his leadership over the past many years. Mr. Hill was honoured with the City of Whitehorse volunteer of the year award in 2005 for his involvement and, 11 years later, he is still volunteering for the festival.

I would also like to thank and acknowledge long-time committee member Joanne Lewis who has worked on very many aspects of the festival over the years, including five years as festival chair. The festival's continuing success is due in no small part to Ms. Lewis's contributions.

Festival treasurer Frank Curlew has served on the committee for several years as well, bringing his financial acumen and his persuasive abilities. Judging from the impressive list of corporate organizations and individual sponsors who support the festival, Mr. Curlew has clearly proven to be a go-to person and a person who is very difficult to say no to.

I encourage all members also to take a look at the program or visit the festival website to take a look at the people who sponsor this important event. I would like to take the opportunity to ask all members to acknowledge Mr. Hill and Ms. Lewis, both of whom have joined us this afternoon and are seated in the gallery. Thank you very much for your work.

Applause

Hon. Mr. Graham: In closing today, I would once again like to thank the Rotary Club of Whitehorse for continuing to make the Rotary Music Festival the centrepiece of its annual service project activities. The club states with well-deserved pride that their principle satisfaction comes from the compliments received each year from the visiting adjudicators, who invariably comment most favourably on the exemplary organization and outstanding calibre of the young musical talent they find in this territory.

Speaker: Are there any visitors to be introduced?
Are there any returns or documents for tabling?
Are there any reports of committees?
Are there any petitions to be presented?
Are there any bills to be introduced?

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 98: *Miscellaneous Statute Law Amendment Act, 2016* — Introduction and First Reading

Hon. Mr. Cathers: I move that Bill No. 98, entitled *Miscellaneous Statute Law Amendment Act, 2016*, be now introduced and read a first time.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Minister of Justice that Bill No. 98, entitled *Miscellaneous Statute Law Amendment Act, 2016*, be now introduced and read a first time.

Motion for introduction and first reading of Bill No. 98 agreed to

Speaker: Are there any further bills to be introduced?

Bill No. 200: *Technical Amendments Act, 2016* — Introduction and First Reading

Hon. Mr. Cathers: I move that Bill No. 200, entitled *Technical Amendments Act, 2016*, be now introduced and read a first time.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Minister of Justice that Bill No. 200, entitled *Technical Amendments Act, 2016*, be now introduced and read a first time.

Motion for introduction and first reading of Bill No. 200 agreed to

Speaker: Are there any further bills to be introduced?

Bill No. 21: *Third Appropriation Act, 2015-16* — Introduction and First Reading

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: I move that Bill No. 21, entitled *Third Appropriation Act, 2015-16*, be now introduced and read a first time.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Hon. Premier that Bill No. 21, entitled *Third Appropriation Act, 2015-16*, be now introduced and read a first time.

Motion for introduction and first reading of Bill No. 21 agreed to

Speaker: Are there any further bills to be introduced?

Are there any notices of motions?
Is there a statement by a minister?
This then brings to Question Period.

QUESTION PERIOD

Question re: Investment in infrastructure development

Ms. Hanson: Mr. Speaker, Yukon's municipalities and local governments are the closest level of government to Yukon citizens. They are responsible for water, sewer, sport and recreation and solid-waste management. They intimately understand the needs of their communities, and that is why when they were tasked with providing the Yukon government with their priorities, the AYC had no problem coming up with a list. They actually understand the basis of the Yukon government's new-found, results-based management. However, as we heard last night at Whitehorse City Council, there are concerns that the real infrastructure needs of Yukon communities are not being heard by this government.

In the interest of transparency, will the Premier table the prioritized infrastructure request made by the Association of Yukon Communities and the response made by the Yukon government?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Mr. Speaker, beginning with my predecessors, the former ministers of Community Services, and beginning with me as minister early last year, we began a process of engagement with Yukon municipalities, Yukon communities and other groups, including First Nations, throughout the territory to gauge their priorities for the next round of what has yet to become federal infrastructure spending. To that end, we have had meetings both at the official and political levels between officials of those municipal governments and mayors and councils and me over the last number of years. What we have done is taken that input, considered it and gathered it into a single document, which is available to interested parties on the Community Services' website.

Through those discussions that I have individually with mayors and councils and through engagement as recently as this morning with a number of mayors and CAOs, I can note that, by and large, the infrastructure plans that we are developing are aligned with their priorities; that they have appreciated the early, consistent and ongoing engagement with my department and me; and that the projects that we have completed or that are underway are needed, welcomed and appreciated by those municipal governments. I look forward to continuing to work with the municipalities to deliver on their infrastructure needs by tapping into federal infrastructure funding and, of course, providing the necessary funding on our part as well.

Ms. Hanson: Mr. Speaker, the interest of transparency is really important because Yukon communities do express concerns — we have heard this time and again — about the process with which infrastructure decisions are actually made.

Yukon communities have been tasked with asset management planning. They identify projects, not based on political reasons, but based on evidence and need. When they

submit the request to government for much-needed waste management infrastructure, for example, and their requests are passed over while this government appears poised to allocate millions to build a sports complex in Whistle Bend, they're rightly upset. It's a simple question of transparency. The money should be allocated based on the needs of the communities.

To avoid the public perception that this Yukon Party government makes politically motivated, rather than evidence-based, spending decisions, will the government release the criteria used to establish its funding for Yukon community infrastructure?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Mr. Speaker, we've been very clear with Yukon municipalities and with the public about the priorities and criteria that we use when assessing these projects. Obviously when we ask all communities what their priorities are, we receive a lengthy, expensive list of priorities. The total amount that has been requested is well over a billion dollars. Somebody at some point has to apply some criteria.

We have done that; we have communicated that with municipalities and communities alike. Of course, our first priority is dealing with outstanding regulatory issues. For instance, if a community is not meeting their drinking water standards — as has been the case in a number of communities, we've stepped in and provided the necessary water treatment facilities to ensure that they're meeting that regulatory standard.

The next criterion is what we call core infrastructure. If the municipality is seeking to provide what their core municipality infrastructure is, naturally there are a number of discussions about what those are, but they tend to be in the categories of water, waste water, solid waste and a number of road projects.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, the third criterion we have applied is whether or not a project will improve the lifecycle costs of a particular piece of infrastructure that will not only help the municipality with the cost of that infrastructure, but will offer the opportunity to enhance some green energy alternatives. For instance, I know in Burwash we applied some solar panels to the treatment plant there and were able to reduce some of the operational costs for that First Nation and for the Yukon government.

So Mr. Speaker, that's —

Speaker: Order, please. Final supplementary.

Ms. Hanson: I thank the minister for laying out some of the criteria used, as this government should be able to explain how the priorities of the communities fit with the government's overall infrastructure plans. After all, this is a government that says it's committed to results-based management.

I can tell you, though, Mr. Speaker, that when we visited Yukon communities, municipal and government leaders consistently brought up concerns about how their requests for much-needed infrastructure projects are being ignored without reason or rationale provided.

Perhaps, Mr. Speaker, it's a communications issue. This government seems to have a few of those. This government

needs to explain to Yukon communities why the priorities they identified do not show up in the budget and work with them to assure them that there is a list of priorities and when their needs will be met.

Will the government commit to working with the AYC to link their priorities with Yukon government's spending plans?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Mr. Speaker, we're already doing exactly that, and conversations with mayors and CAOs throughout this territory confirm that.

Now, Mr. Speaker, it's important to recognize that, as I've noted earlier, we can't do everything for everyone all at once. We know that we need to plan for the future, we need to allocate funding over a number of years, and that's what we've done. What you see before us right now, Mr. Speaker, is a budget that contains a number of very important municipal projects that have funding provided by the Yukon government, as well as the Government of Canada through their new Building Canada fund. That list is available to all of us, as legislators, and to the public — whether it's a new waste-water treatment plant in Burwash Landing, a new sewage lagoon and drying beds for Faro, or whether it's the lift stations that will be developed in Haines Junction, or any of the important projects that were announced a few weeks ago by me and our MP, Larry Bagnell, through the small communities fund.

A number of those projects are right here in Whitehorse, Mr. Speaker — improvements and protections for our groundwater here in Whitehorse; the McLean Lake road connector is a project that was funded through that particular fund as well. These are all priorities that were brought up by the municipalities through this process. These are projects that are supported by municipalities and supported by Yukoners because they know that we need to make these infrastructure investments for the well-being of all Yukoners.

Question re: Faro mine site

Mr. Tredger: Mr. Speaker, when devolution occurred, the federal government committed to cleaning up the existing historic mining liabilities in Yukon. Basically, they provide the money and we conduct the cleanup. Now, 13 years after devolution, there is little apparent progress on the remediation of these mine sites. Faro is the worst of these. With millions already spent, another \$150 million in spending is expected for Faro starting in 2017. After 13 years, Mr. Speaker, all we have is a partially completed closure plan.

Will the minister inform this House of the progress to clean up the Faro mine site and exactly how much has spent to date toward its remediation?

Hon. Mr. Kent: When it comes to the Faro mine site, I think all members who have been on-site — I know a number of members from this side of the House have toured the site and would recognize the complexities of that site and the contamination. Care and maintenance, of course, is critical to protecting human health and safety and the environment in the near term. The previous care and maintenance operator installed a new \$16-million water treatment plant that replaced the aging and unsafe converted mill base treatment process.

The overall remediation design has been advanced from the feasibility stage to an approximate 20-percent level of design. There have been changing environmental conditions. As I've noted, they have impacted remediation priorities and forced a change to the remediation schedules. Current site efforts are focused on developing a permanent solution for water quality challenges in the north fork of Rose Creek. This would translate into construction of a new dam and diversion system worth over \$100 million in the next three to five years.

Mr. Speaker, as the member opposite noted, we have been in charge of managing the care and maintenance for remediation on behalf of the Government of Canada for the past number of years. I don't have the total amount with me on what has been spent there, but I can provide that to the member at a later date. Again, this is a very complex situation that occurs at Faro and officials in the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources and Canada are doing their best to —

Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Tredger: The constantly moving goalposts and evolving priorities for all of Yukon's type 2 sites are worrisome. If any other government were to spend hundreds of millions of dollars with little to show, it would be a scandal, Mr. Speaker, but because this government doesn't have to dip directly into Yukoners' pockets to clean up these sites, it seems that they are content to let the money flow without any concrete timelines or firm goals.

To be clear, this is federal money. I am certain that the federal government is just as disappointed with the results as Yukoners are.

How much patience does the minister think the Government of Canada has for the hundreds of millions of federal dollars being spent with few results?

Hon. Mr. Kent: Of course we're concerned. Canadian taxpayers' dollars are our taxpayers' dollars as well. We contribute, obviously, to the Government of Canada. In this case, the Government of Canada does fund this historic liability as it was permitted under their watch.

As I mentioned, there have been some changing environmental conditions on the site that have impacted the remediation priorities and forced the change to the schedules. The Government of Yukon is working very closely with the Kaska First Nations and the Government of Canada to develop a revised governance and management approach that maximizes the conditions for project success.

Again, Mr. Speaker, for those who have had the opportunity to tour the site, it is a very large and complex site. As I mentioned, the north fork of Rose Creek is an emerging challenge that the officials who are involved in the remediation are facing. We're certainly working hard on the care and maintenance aspects as well. As I mentioned, the remediation design has advanced to an approximate 20-percent level of design, given the different priorities. Mr. Speaker, I'm confident that the government officials — not only from the Yukon government, but also the Government of Canada — are working hard to ensure that the conditions at the Faro mine site, and indeed all of our type 2 sites, get resolved and that we move toward a level of

remediation, but again, as I mentioned, these are very complex situations and complex sites to manage.

Mr. Tredger: This should be a good news story, but the constant setbacks and lack of transparency make it an embarrassment for this government. Promised water-quality test releases are no longer available, and the website that was intended to keep Yukoners updated about progress has been down for several months now. The lack of transparency for what is one of Yukon's biggest yearly expenses is unacceptable.

A Yukon NDP government would make it a priority to get the Faro mine site cleanup back on track and ensure that the public is informed and local businesses are involved in the cleanup.

What evidence does the minister have to show Yukon First Nations whose traditional territory is affected and the communities downstream that cleaning up the Faro mine site is a priority?

Hon. Mr. Kent: Of course this is a priority. We have identified a significant amount of money in the current budget for the remediation of the Faro mine site. It's a priority not only for us, but it's a priority for the Government of Canada.

As I mentioned, Mr. Speaker, there have been some changing environmental conditions, obviously beyond the control of anyone in this Legislative Assembly, including the government. The north fork of Rose Creek — there is some significant water-quality challenges that have emerged there over the past number of years. That has become a focus. We're looking at the construction of a new dam and diversion system for the north fork of Rose Creek that is going to cost over \$100 million in the next three to five years. We're working with the Government of Canada and Kaska First Nations to revise the governance and management approach that will hopefully maximize the conditions for project success.

Again, Mr. Speaker, as I have mentioned in previous answers, this is a very complex site that we're dealing with at Faro. As a major economic driver for the territory back in the 1960s, 1970s and into the 1990s, it certainly served a purpose then. Unfortunately the permitting at the time and the environmental scrutiny at the time was not what it is today and we're left with a site that Canada permitted and is responsible for providing the dollars to clean up, but, as I have mentioned, Canadian taxpayers include Yukon taxpayers. We're concerned with this and we're doing our utmost to ensure there is success with the cleanup of the Faro mine site.

Question re: Economic growth

Mr. Silver: Mr. Speaker, in early March, the Yukon government had taxpayers foot the bill for a flyer that was mailed across the territory. It was a *Report to Yukoners* that boldly stated this government is — and I quote: "growing our economy".

The Conference Board of Canada recently confirmed our economy shrank last year and has in fact shrunk three years in a row. In a few months' time, the territory's last operating hardrock mine will be shutting its doors. The government's

own forecast says — and I quote: “Real GDP is expected to contract for the third consecutive year” for 2015 — so much for the claim that the government has successfully been growing our economy.

When is this government going to admit that its economic record is actually one of failure?

Hon. Mr. Hassard: Of course the Government of Yukon continues to invest to strengthen infrastructure and to contribute to the diversification of the economy. It's very important to us. We see this government continue to spend millions of dollars investing in everything from infrastructure such as roads to infrastructure in fibre. We continue to invest in education. We take the economy very seriously. We continue to invest in tourism. We've seen from the Minister of Tourism — she has spoken at length about all of the great investments we've made there.

We do understand that the global markets are in a downturn and we continue to work to make the Yukon a great place.

Mr. Silver: When the Yukon Party 2.0 came into office in 2011, there were three operating hardrock mines in the Yukon, and in a few months' time, there will be none. The government has had successive billion-dollar budgets at their disposal. Transfer payments from Ottawa have increased every year as well. Despite this, we have just completed our third year in a row of economic decline — the worst performance, Mr. Speaker, in all of Canada.

Now, the Yukon Party loved to take credit when things were going good, but they are singing a different tune now that things are bad. Here's one of the bold statements from the archives — and I quote: “The boom-and-bust swings of the past will be largely mitigated by sound economic planning and investment attraction efforts.”

Why has this government delivered three years in a row of “bust”?

Hon. Mr. Kent: I'll respond to the member's questions about the mining industry. Of course, it's something that has been one of the cornerstones of our economy for well over 100 years. The placer mining industry itself is continuing to grow over the past number of years, employing a number of Yukoners in the Klondike region and throughout other regions in the Yukon as well, including Mayo, Carmacks and the Kluane region. We're seeing tremendous success and growth in that industry — and largely family-run operations that employ many Yukoners and spend in those Yukon communities.

On the hardrock side, we see projects like Kaminak's Coffee property moving out of the exploration and advanced exploration into a permitting phase — very excited to see that happen. The privately owned Kudz Ze Kayah property by BMC will see the largest exploration expenditures in the territory this year — I believe close to \$14 million US.

I spoke to the chair of the Yukon Minerals Advisory Board this morning, and he is optimistic about the markets and the fact that during the period between Roundup and PDAC, companies were able to raise money for exploration

opportunities — his very own project at Eagle — Victoria Gold — there's exploration activity there as we speak.

Again, we're seeing tremendous activity in the mining industry.

Mr. Silver: I agree that we have a lot to thank for with the placer mining industry, and the fact that they can sell their product in American dollars.

Mr. Speaker, this government has developed three years of negative growth in the economy — the single-worst economy in all of Canada — yet it has the nerve to produce brochures with taxpayers' money that claim that it's growing the economy. The federal budget even singled out Whitehorse for needing extra help for people with EI. The Yukon Party has blamed low mineral prices, they've blamed YESAA, and they've blamed the new federal government, but is unwilling to admit its role in how we got to the bottom of Canada's economic barrel. Coasting on high mineral prices, refusing to address the regulatory uncertainty, and a habit of meeting First Nation governments in courts are all things that this government has control over that are not making a difference.

Mr. Speaker, this is bad for the economy. When is the government going to accept that it's part of the problem and not part of the solution when it comes to our economy?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: We've heard the ministers of Economic Development and Energy, Mines and Resources talk about many of the things we're doing during an economic downturn to ensure that this territory is in the best position to move forward very quickly when the economy turns around. We don't live in a bubble.

The member opposite knows that this is a situation that is occurring not only Yukon, but in fact in all jurisdictions that have a resource industry as the primary driver of their economy. We only have to look to the east to the Northwest Territories or to Nunavut as well.

We are continuing to focus on doing what we can. To add to the comments the ministers made, there's a \$3-million increase in our IT investment this year — from \$6.5 million to \$9.5 million. That money will put many Yukoners to work with high-paying jobs. The reality when it comes to the parties opposite is that, when it comes to mining, as I've said many times, the NDP supports mining so long as it's done somewhere else, and of course the Liberal Party supports everything, but sadly stands for nothing.

Question re: Erik Nielsen Whitehorse International Airport maintenance

Ms. Moorcroft: Mr. Speaker, last fall the Minister of Highways and Public Works said that deficiencies in the Whitehorse airport apron panels were being addressed and that the government planned to hold the contractor liable. The new concrete apron panels were cracking shortly after they were built. However, the contractor asserted that he had identified problems with the soil underneath the apron panels, stopped the work and then informed the government that there could be deficiencies in the work if the soil issues weren't addressed. He then stated the Yukon government told him to go ahead with the project anyway.

The fact is that whatever these deficiencies were caused by, they need to be fixed. Mr. Speaker, can the government provide an update on the condition of the Whitehorse airport apron panels?

Hon. Mr. Kent: First of all, the Erik Nielsen Whitehorse International Airport has an excellent safety and security record. There are very few flight delays or cancellations each year due to weather conditions or aircraft mechanical issues, and there have been no known cancellations due to poorly maintained runways. We have a rigorous runway inspection system in place at the Whitehorse airport. They're inspected on a regular basis. Detailed engineering inspections are conducted every two years in accordance with our surface management system.

That said — just to update members of the House on the apron panel project — we are still working with the contractor's bonding agency to resolve the issue and the deficiencies that are occurring with the apron panels.

It's anticipated that the negotiations on a resolution will continue for a number of months; however there are no immediate dangers with the apron panels to equipment or the safety of the planes is my understanding from officials at Highways and Public Works, the Aviation branch.

Again, as this continues to emerge and go forward, I will continue to provide updates for Members of the Legislative Assembly and the Yukon public.

Ms. Moorcroft: I think that the airport safety record is better than this government's record of managing capital projects.

Mr. Speaker, the contractor suggested the cracking in the airport apron panel may require the entire project to be redone. If true, this is a colossal failure of the government to manage the infrastructure project. Late last year, a Yukon government spokesperson was unable to say in a radio interview whether the entirety of the airport apron panel would have to be removed. We do know that repairs will be costly and that they will also inconvenience airport users of all types during the busy summer months.

Can the minister say whether the project will need to be completely redone to repair the deficiencies in the airport apron panels?

Hon. Mr. Kent: Again, as minister, we rely on the expertise and the professionalism of our officials when it comes to this. There are several deficiencies related to the concrete and construction quality. As I mentioned, there are some disagreements between us and the contractor with respect to who has responsibility for those and we're working with the contractor's bonding agency to resolve those issues. As I mentioned, it is anticipated those negotiations on a resolution will continue for the coming months. Once there is a change to that, I will be able to inform the House and/or Yukoners with respect to the changes but, again, we're working with the contractor's bonding agency to resolve this issue.

Ms. Moorcroft: This project was mostly funded through the federal government's airports capital assistance program with a portion being provided by the Yukon

government. When this issue first flared up, the question the Minister of Highways and Public Works refused to answer was who would bear the cost of the repairs. At the time, the contractor had stated that the government had waived his company's liability when they ignored his concerns and told him to resume work on the panels. It is unclear whether the federal government would provide additional funding if Yukon government had mismanaged the project. The minister said that they are negotiating for a resolution.

Can the minister tell the public whether the Yukon government and, by extension, Yukon citizens are responsible for footing the bill for repairs of the Whitehorse airport apron panels?

Hon. Mr. Kent: As I mentioned in previous responses here today there are disagreements with who is responsible for the deficiencies in the apron panels. We're working with the contractor's bonding agency to resolve this issue.

The member's question also reminded me of some questions raised during the Fall Sitting where the member opposite referenced a report by the Government of Canada at the time. At that time, I did ask her to table the report, so this is just a reminder to the member opposite that this request is still outstanding. I know that she did identify a report. If indeed it doesn't exist, I will give her an opportunity to stand on her feet and correct the record — as I would if I made an erroneous claim on the floor of this House.

Again, Mr. Speaker, we're working with the contractor's bonding agency to resolve the issue. Once there is a resolution reached, I will be able to communicate it to this House and/or the Yukon public.

Question re: National Aboriginal Day as a Yukon statutory holiday

Mr. Barr: Mr. Speaker, late last year the Yukon Legislative Assembly unanimously passed a motion to make June 21 National Aboriginal Day a statutory holiday for all Yukoners. Making Aboriginal Day a statutory holiday recognizes the contributions of Yukon's indigenous people and supports efforts at reconciliation and understanding between aboriginal and non-aboriginal people. During the debate, the minister responsible for undertaking this project amended the motion to allow for consultations before amending the necessary legislation.

Has the minister started the consultation process with Yukon First Nations, Yukon's business community and Yukon's unions to make National Aboriginal Day a statutory holiday?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Mr. Speaker, as I and my colleagues indicated in motion debate on this subject last year, of course we very much support National Aboriginal Day as a celebration of First Nation culture, language and accomplishments, and through a number of ways provide funding and support to groups who participate in this type of event. When it comes to the specific question of whether or not to create a statutory holiday for National Aboriginal Day, we were pretty clear last year that, in order to do that, we would need to make legislative changes, and before we do that

kind of legislative change, we would want to consult broadly as indicated in the content of the motion that was passed last year.

The next steps for that will be to reach out to groups as listed by the member opposite. We have not begun that process yet, but hope to in a matter of weeks. It is my hope that we will be in consultation by the end of this calendar month, and we look forward to hearing back from those groups listed by the member opposite about this important issue.

Mr. Barr: It seems that this government wrote off making Aboriginal Day a holiday for this June 21 from the get-go from the sounds of the response from the minister. I understand that this kind of consultation cannot be done all at once, and I understand that amending legislation is not a simple process. However, it is important that this government show that it is following through on the Legislature's vote to make National Aboriginal Day a statutory holiday by getting straight to work conducting the consultation and laying the groundwork for the legislative amendments. I would have hoped that would have already begun.

Can the minister give Yukoners a firm timeline for how he plans to implement National Aboriginal Day as a statutory holiday?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned in my last response, the necessary change will require legislative change. That is something that is the prerogative of the Legislature to make, obviously. I don't think that will be possible in this current Sitting and, as such, it will have to be done in a future legislative Sitting. I need to note that the motion we passed last year indicated our willingness to consult on the issue. It did not bind us to undertaking that specific legislative change. That is something that we will have to consider going forward.

What we need to also remember is that, while we very much support National Aboriginal Day and the celebration and promotion of First Nation culture, language and accomplishments, it does need to be remembered that the creation of a new statutory holiday comes at some cost. It is not necessarily a cost that is borne by government or by us as legislators, but it is borne specifically by Yukon businesses. Whether a Yukon business has two employees or 200, there is a significant cost that comes with the creation of a new statutory holiday. That is why we thought it would be only fair to ask the business community what they thought about the possibility of creating a new statutory holiday.

As I've mentioned in my last response, we plan to begin consultation on that very soon. I indicated that we hope to begin consultation by the end of this month. I know that's not as fast as what the members opposite are shouting off-mic, but that's the course we've taken and we look forward to hearing from the business community and Yukoners about this important issue.

Mr. Barr: Adopting National Aboriginal Day as a territorial holiday would be an important step toward honouring the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. We hear that the government is

going to do this. I again state that I wish the government would have already taken the steps. We were happy to go with the amendments and I trusted that it would be.

Why has the government not started to this date in good faith with proceeding with its consultations?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Mr. Speaker, we are moving forward with consultation. I hope to have that consultation launched by the end of this month. With regard to the timing, we felt it was appropriate to bring it forward as soon as possible and that of course is by the end of this month.

Mr. Speaker, as I have indicated, we support National Aboriginal Day. We support it in a number of ways, whether it's through funding or through other types of support for groups celebrating National Aboriginal Day. Of course the question of whether or not to create a new statutory holiday is an important one — one that would require legislative change — a change that is not going to be able to be done in this current Sitting. As such, we hope to consult with the business community, with union groups, with First Nations and the public alike in the coming weeks to gain an understanding of what the impact of the creation of a new statutory holiday would be.

As I've mentioned, Mr. Speaker, this type of decision is not one that should be taken lightly. Of course there are costs that are borne by the Yukon business community as a result of the creation of a new statutory holiday. We need to understand what those costs will be and whether or not it's appropriate to put those costs on the Yukon business community at this time.

I look forward to moving forward with consultation and we'll do so in the coming weeks to hear from Yukoners about this issue.

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 13, 2016. They are Motion No. 1133, standing in the name of the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin, and Motion No. 1134, 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. 23: *First Appropriation Act, 2016-17* — Second Reading — *adjourned debate*

Clerk: Second reading, Bill No. 23, standing in the name of the Hon. Mr. Pasloski; adjourned debate, the Hon. Mr. Nixon.

Hon. Mr. Nixon: As I spoke yesterday, I would also like to take this opportunity again to thank my friends, my family, and the constituents of Porter Creek South for

supporting me, for believing in me and for encouraging me in my endeavours as a Yukon Party MLA. Those people certainly remind me and reinforce the importance of a stable, diverse economy, first-rate health care and high-quality education. I believe that the Yukon Party government has done an incredible job at addressing each of these areas. We know the stronger the economy, the stronger our health care and the stronger our education systems will be.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to take the opportunity to thank our Yukon Party caucus support staff, our EAs and our policy advisors for their long hours and their hard work to support us with our daily scheduled tasks and ensuring that we are organized and ready for constructive debate in this Legislature. I would also like to thank the department staff in Health and Social Services, who work day in and day out to ensure that Yukoners' health care, continuing care and social service network is functional and meeting the needs of Yukoners. I would be remiss to leave out my appreciation of each and every one of my Yukon Party colleagues. It has certainly been a pleasure over the years working with all of them and I do believe, Mr. Speaker, that we have an amazing team.

I would like to extend my thanks to the Leader of the Official Opposition for highlighting, during her reply to the budget speech, the investments that we've made over the last decade pertaining to the recruitment and retention of doctors to ensure Yukoners have access to health care.

I feel, as I mentioned yesterday, that it is incumbent upon me, as a Yukon Party MLA, to remind our constituents exactly what their choices are and the harm that policy choices from the opposition parties can have on our economy and on our territory as a whole. Our clear vision for moving forward together and our solid leadership from the Premier maintains our path to support our commitments to each and every one in the territory. This Yukon Party government will continue down the path to improving upon achieving a better quality of life, building a prosperous, diversified Yukon economy, managing and protecting Yukon's environment and wildlife, and practising good government.

The Yukon Party government has, again in this budget, made considerate and strategic investments. In fact, under a Yukon Party government, our territory and our economy continue to grow. The Yukon Party has demonstrated that we can deliver growth with prosperity.

Mr. Speaker, moving on into the Department of Health and Social Services, we are finalizing the clinical services implementation plan, which will serve as a guide on how the department will act and move forward on the accepted recommendations. Through the territorial health investment fund mental wellness project, we will also be piloting a new telemental health system to assist counsellors with a more efficient process to connect with clients in rural Yukon communities through a face-to-face option. Increasing the use of telehealth and other types of technologies to enhance service delivery and access in communities is certainly a priority for this government and a priority for the department.

These are a few of the highlights for Health and Social Services, which demonstrate how we continue to provide excellent core services to all Yukon residents and also shows how we are working to improve their lives and to support families. As you can see, Mr. Speaker, we have made considerable improvements to our health care system that have made it more effective and more responsive to the needs of Yukon citizens.

In addition to our investments, though, it is important to recognize that Yukon citizens themselves have an important role to play in their own health and in the health of their families. To help recognize this, we continue to help implement the active living strategy. The vision of that strategy is a Yukon that is active and where health, well-being and physical activity are viewed as an investment in the quality of life for every individual for a vibrant, healthy and sustainable Yukon community.

To quote our Premier, he said: "I can say with confidence that our health care system is stronger, more flexible and better suited to the needs of Yukon citizens than it was when we took office in 2011." I talk with my constituents regularly about issues that are important to them — issues such as a healthy economy, including resource extraction, natural gas and tourism, private sector businesses, the knowledge sector and trades. The constituents of Porter Creek South speak to me about health care and how they recognize that Yukon's health care is arguably one of the best in Canada. In fact, as I pay more attention to health care across our country, I consider myself very fortunate to live in a place where the level of care for my friends, my family and my constituents is truly second to none. As I have stated before, we are lucky; we are not entitled.

The budget tabled before us speaks to a healthy economy. The budget speaks to investments in the resource sector. It speaks to investments in our tourism economy. It speaks to investments in the knowledge sector and trades, and it speaks to solid leadership. Your Yukon Party government has very proudly made Yukoners its priority.

Yukoners often reflect upon how fortunate we really are to live, work, play and raise a family in the best part of Canada, and perhaps the best part of the world. We truly have it all. We have resources beneath the ground that can support us for generations to come. We have a solid tourism product that the world wants to see. We have infrastructure that supports trades, IT and other knowledge-based sectors. We have a private sector that is motivated and eager for more growth, and we have a Yukon Party government that can commit and deliver to Yukoners. In Yukon's history, I would argue, as many others would, that we've never seen this from Liberal or NDP governments.

I recently recorded a tribute to Autism Awareness Day and the Light It Up Blue campaign. As a father of a child with autism, I'm very aware of the many benefits that we, as Canadians and truly Yukoners, enjoy. I'm certainly grateful for the assistance that this Yukon Party government has provided to my family and many other families over the last number of years.

When I was first elected, a number of families did connect with me. Some were single parents trying to raise a child with special needs; some were couples; some had more than one child with special needs. I'm pleased that this Yukon Party government, due to its fiscal prudence, has been able to step up to the plate and provide supports to those families.

I've often thought to myself: How would a family cope if they didn't live in a country like Canada and didn't live in a territory like Yukon? How would they manage if they had to raise all that money for themselves to care for their children with disabilities? For me, a budget that focuses on putting Yukoners to work is a budget that enables the government to help families who have children with special needs.

Mr. Speaker, recently we rolled out a news release, talking about how Yukon communities will soon have access to a \$1-million innovation pot, subject to legislative approval, to help them meet the mental health needs of their citizens. I quoted in this press release: "This fund will support the principles and concepts of the Yukon Mental Wellness Strategy, which will be released in the next few weeks, and will help communities tailor capacity-building initiatives to meet their specific needs".

Mr. Speaker, the fund will be time-limited and cannot be used for core funding. Communities and individuals will have to submit proposals that support community capacity building. The government is currently working with communities, stakeholders and service providers to determine how best to use this fund. It is anticipated that these details will be finalized to coincide with the release of the mental health strategy and, as I have indicated, will be tabled in this Legislature in the coming weeks.

I will read a quote in relation to this press release from the Mental Health Association of Yukon and Ray Wells went on to say: "Yukon communities will benefit from having access to more resources and this fund is one way of providing them the support they need". I have said it before and I will say it again — providing mental health services and supports is not only a government responsibility and it is not only the responsibility of a municipality or First Nations. It is everyone's responsibility to address mental health and mental wellness in our territory.

I would also like to take the opportunity to highlight some of the work that has been done by our incredible Yukon social workers. We all know that social workers are professionals whose primary focus is helping children, Yukon families, our youth, our seniors, groups and communities to increase their individual and collective wellness and well-being. Yukon social workers are employed in a variety of fields, including mental health, education, health, social services and justice, both within government services and professional community partners. They are counsellors — family, group or youth justice conferences and family support workers, family service workers, child-in-care workers, foster care workers, adoption workers, probation officers and educators. They are our families, they are our friends and they are our neighbours. They work for First Nation organizations and communities, government, hospitals, care facilities, schools, custody

centres, non-governmental organizations and other non-profit societies, and certainly in private practice.

In Yukon, regional social workers provide integrative services in communities, working collaboratively with First Nations in areas of community development support, child welfare, recruitment and support of foster homes, probation and senior supports. Social workers in Whitehorse provide a range of services in more specialized branches and units by working collaboratively with First Nation partners in areas of child welfare, adoption, counselling via Child and Adolescent Therapeutic Services, probation, senior supports, and services to family with children with disabilities. Social workers also work in hospitals as members of treatment teams that provide a link between the team and family and community resources, and in schools where they help students adjust to the school environment. They work as probation officers and in custody centres. They also work for First Nations and other community agencies and provide counselling to children, youth, adults and families and as community developers.

In private practice, they offer their services on a fee-for-service basis to individuals, families and organizations. Social workers also work at Yukon College, teaching and supporting students. They are also involved in policy analysis, policy development and planning and federal, provincial or social planning departments or councils.

The Association of Social Workers in Northern Canada provides a regulated professional organization for Yukon, Northwest Territories and Nunavut. This voluntary organization represents social workers practising in Canada's three territories and in the far north. As the Minister of Health and Social Services, and on behalf of this Yukon Party government, thank you to all social workers working in our incredible territory.

In conclusion, I would be remiss to leave out an important announcement that we just made today. This government is committed to providing equitable access to health care services for all Yukoners and is consistently analyzing programs that will benefit our citizens. The Premier announced to the Yukon Medical Association last November that this government will introduce a colorectal screening program this year. Colorectal cancer is the third-most common cancer diagnosed in Canada, but treatment is highly successful if the disease is diagnosed and treated early. There is strong evidence that screening tests substantially reduce incidents and mortality due to colorectal cancer. The introduction of this program brings Yukon into step with other jurisdictions, all of which either have a program in place or in development. I am very proud that this government, my caucus colleagues and the Premier supported us moving forward on a system that provides a different and perhaps better screening procedure for Yukoners.

In conclusion, this budget is for Yukoners. It is about the confidence that Yukoners have in this Yukon Party government and it is truly about making Yukon the best place to work, live, play and raise a family.

Mr. Tredger: Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased and honoured to speak on behalf of the people of Mayo-Tatchun. I would like to thank them for their continued support and for their efforts to keep me informed and involved in their communities and in their lives. It has been an interesting four, going on five years. Together we have made new friends, attended celebrations, meetings, and planning sessions and grieved our losses. I want to thank my constituents for including me in their lives, for showing me true hospitality, for sharing with me the value of community, for talking, and for their ideas and concerns. I have learned much and been inspired.

I would like to also thank all members of the Legislature for their dedication and contributions to Yukon, Yukon citizens and, through them, to the wider Canadian community. I have learned from all of you. Thank you.

The people of Mayo-Tatchun — the people of Carmacks, Pelly Crossing, Mayo, Stewart Crossing and Keno — have a deep sense of commitment to their families, to their neighbours and to their communities. They live on the land and in their communities. They care deeply and are committed to each other. They know they are part of the land, part of the water, and they are committed to being stewards of the land. It has been an honour to get to know them, to share their stories, their hopes, concerns and dreams. These resourceful Yukon citizens, like citizens in other Yukon communities, can teach us a thing or two about resilience and working together, about sustainability and stewardship, about water and forests, about mining and tourism, about roads and rivers and communication — but, most of all, they can show us the way to work together respectfully to build family and community and to build a rich, robust and diverse economy that is committed to the now and to the future — our children.

I have said it before — the strength of the Yukon lies in our people. They must have a voice — our friends and neighbours, the people most affected by the decisions made, the people most able to get results effectively and efficiently.

Yukon citizens and leaders came together to sign the *Umbrella Final Agreement* and the subsequent self-government agreements. The cooperation, the respect and trust among our leaders also enabled the devolution transfer agreement. These agreements were seen as a way forward, a process built on respect, trust — neighbour to neighbour — and a deep, deep understanding of the value of our land and water. The spirit of these treaties and agreements was intended to build trust and cooperation, to share resources and knowledge together in the spirit of land claims and self-government agreements, to bring municipal governments, First Nation governments, advisory councils, and our boards and committees to the table together for all Yukon.

However, the promise of the UFA has been sidetracked. This Yukon Party government has spent more time in costly legal wrangling than any other government in Yukon's history. The last 12 years of Yukon Party government has seen an ever-increasing acrimony and legal wrangling, an ever-increasing expenditure of time, resources and money —

time, resources and money better used to build a diverse, robust economy and to build community wellness.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission's report gives us another opportunity to reset the table. They have issued calls to action and recommendations that provide direction and hope, but they must be taken respectfully and they must be taken seriously. Our government must show our commitment by our actions, by our legislation and by adequate funding. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission is more than words. There is no quick fix. We must involve all Yukon in meeting the recommendations and actions.

Many knowledgeable and involved citizens feel that they are not being heard. The Premier talks of going to communities but, as one resident told me, the Premier came to our community but he didn't listen.

Another who attended a meeting described the Yukon Party's community tour this way: they came in a hurry, they talked a lot and they left in a hurry.

Maybe the Premier and his Cabinet colleagues were playing a game of broken telephone where they whispered in each other's ear as the story went around the room. Now, like when we were children, the resulting words have little resemblance to what was originally said. The Association of Yukon Communities cited the fact that the voices of Yukon, the priorities of our municipalities, were not reflected in the budget. Yukon citizens want to be part of the solution. They want to lead, to voice their concerns, their solutions and their priorities, yet many are disappointed — disappointed that once again, we have a \$1.3-billion budget that does not reflect their priorities and their hopes and that does not use to the full extent our human and natural resources — to use them respectfully with an eye to the future.

Residents and municipal councils are raising the alarm and want community infrastructure made a priority. Municipal and Yukon government buildings are aging. Many nursing stations and recreational facilities are woefully inadequate to meet current needs, let alone future needs. From swimming pools to fire halls, ambulance stations to recreation centres — facilities that are vital to our communities' well-being are being neglected. Strategic planning and action is needed. One of my constituents said that we need more democracy and less politics.

Solid-waste management is an increasing concern. Local areas and municipalities want to be involved in creating workable, efficient and environmentally sound solutions. Now is not the time for a government flyby — but the time to come together to consult and to listen and to act. Now is the time to engage all Yukon. We need all the expertise and the involvement of all Yukon citizens.

According to the Auditor General, in their report on education in 2009 — true now as it was then — “Strategic planning is a management tool that focuses on the future. It helps a department set priorities and goals and develop a plan to meet those goals. It also helps a department to assess how resources are to be allocated and gives it the scope to adjust its direction in response to a changing environment.” A common theme of the Auditor General's report remains this Yukon

Party government's lack of comprehensive collection of data and long-term strategic planning. Strategic planning is now more important than ever; strategic planning that involves our civil service and the Yukon public.

The Yukon Party Premier talks about balancing the budget and not running a deficit. This Premier speaks as to how we are the envy of other jurisdictions. That is rather rich to talk of our sister jurisdictions when we receive in the neighbourhood of \$1 billion — that's billion with a "B" — from the federal government. Yes, the Yukon government receives more than \$1 billion — with a "B" — in revenue directly from the federal government. That is approximately \$37,000 per person. To talk of balancing a budget is, at best, disingenuous. We should be talking of careful planning, sound management and preparation for the future, when every day we see the opposite: poorly done needs assessments; projects started, cancelled and started again; costly reviews and studies that sit unread on shelves; quick fixes and grandiose schemes; and auditors' reports that continually speak to the lack of planning, lack of evaluation, lack of data collection and lack of direction.

The Premier conveniently doesn't mention the dollars owed by our corporations. According to the most recent Public Accounts, we have a debt of \$127 million through the Yukon Development Corporation. We have a debt of \$45.8 million through the Yukon Hospital Corporation. Yukon Housing Corporation has a debt of \$7.8 million, bringing Yukon's total debt to almost \$200 million. This is in the form of bonds almost entirely deferred to our grandchildren 40 years' hence — deferred to our grandchildren.

It is disappointing to note that, rather than strategic planning and setting aside funds to finance future projects, like the 300-bed institution in Whistle Bend, this Yukon Party's ongoing solution is to first ask the federal government for yet more money. If that fails, the next step is to ask our corporations to go further in debt.

It is easy to brag about balancing a budget when we get over \$1 billion from Daddy. Seriously, I think Daddy would be much happier if we managed the money we received more judiciously. Also, a word of caution, after years of Conservative mismanagement, Daddy is broke. The annual national deficit is projected to be over \$29 billion — that again is billion with a "B". Worse still, the projected federal net debt is estimated to rise to over \$700 billion. Again, that is billion with a "B". Yet we get the same old, tired answer from the Yukon Party — ad hoc requests for more funding from the federal government. In the words of the minister responsible for Economic Development, we are eagerly awaiting a response from the federal government. That is not a plan for diversification; nor is it a plan for independence. It is a plan that will only increase our vulnerability and our dependence on federal transfers.

We are entering a critical time for the Yukon. We have to adapt to ever-increasing climate change — change that is already affecting our land, our water, our air, our seasons, our wildlife populations and indeed threatening our sustainability. Each year, costs associated with climate change are becoming

more evident monetarily as roads, buildings, crops and forests are challenged — but also environmentally. We are a small jurisdiction, but we need to step up to the plate. It's not very Yukon to say we don't make a big difference. It is like Yukon people to step up and say we want to be part of the solution.

The Secretary General of the United Nations said, "The time has come to acknowledge that national interests are best served by acting in the global interest." Now is the time for us to come together for environmental stewardship, for our waters and for our land, to protect what we have and to maintain it now and for future generations.

Yukoners have been very clear and First Nations have been very clear that fracking has no place in our territory. In fact, since the select committee on fracking has delivered their report, fracking has been proven to contaminate water supplies, has been instrumental in causing earthquakes and seismic events and fracking wells continue to leak methane. Dr. Cherry from the Council of Canadian Academies restated that wellbore integrity remains an unresolved challenge. Yet, we see the Premier and the Yukon Party government continuing to advocate and use public funds to promote and subsidize an outdated industry. Just when the rest of the world is recognizing the need to transfer from a carbon-based economy, the Yukon Party is speculating on a temporary resurgence in the oil and gas industry.

The world does not need more oil. The world is awash in oil and gas. Science tells us that we cannot burn what we have already discovered. Just next door, productive wells are being shut in, decommissioned. There are tens of thousands of unemployed skilled oil and gas workers. Investing almost \$3 million in fossil fuels when the rest of the world is divesting is wrong-headed. The economy of the 21st century and the jobs of the 21st century will be based on green, renewable industry. The science is clear, the economics are clear, and the people of Yukon have been clear.

It is becoming ever more evident that time is scarce. We must redouble our efforts to move from a carbon-based economy to renewable and sustainable sources of energy. This is not a policy decision; it is a scientific truth.

Yukoners want to be part of the solution. There is a challenge. It won't be easy, but the science again is clear. The longer we wait, the harder it will be. Yukon citizens and our leaders, like the rest of the world, must put our time, our ingenuity and our knowledge to move from our dependence on fossil fuels. I am proud of Yukon citizens — Yukoners who want to be part of the solution. They want to develop small-scale hydro. They want to take advantage of diverse opportunities to build a green economy, to develop and produce local energy, energy that takes advantage of locally available technologies — geothermal, wind, small-scale hydro, wood gasification — the list goes on. These are industry developments that provide local jobs that contribute to our need for a carbon-free future. It can be done; it must be done.

An interesting fact I heard the other day is that Whitehorse receives more usable sunlight than Berlin, Germany; yet Berlin, Germany, is a leader in the solar energy

field. Jurisdictions around the world are benefiting from jobs and safe, reliable, renewable energy.

Green energy investments and jobs are the fastest growing segment of the world's economy. There were 7.7 million direct and indirect jobs created in the renewable energy sector in 2014. It is time to diversify, to build a lasting and sustainable base of energy for the Yukon. Yukon small businesses and industry are struggling while this government engages in costly, time-consuming and losing battles with other levels of government. This government engages in unnecessary and costly legal battles and disputes with other levels of government, all the while hiring more communications officers and Outside ad agencies to cover their inadequacies. Land use planning — a key part of the UFA and a means to provide certainty for residents and for industry — remains mired in costly legal dispute. In Justice Ron Veale's decision, he stated that — and I quote: "... the process adopted by the Government of Yukon..." — in approving the *Peel Watershed Regional Land Use Plan* — "... was not based upon a contextual interpretation of..." — the final agreements. The plain reading interpretation endorsed by the government does not "... enhance the goal of reconciliation..." and is inconsistent "...with the honour and integrity of the Crown." Yet we have seen no apology, no attempt to undo the harm caused by this Yukon Party government's actions.

We have a dedicated, informed and knowledgeable civil service. It is time to trust our civil service, to use their expertise, to remove the gag orders and allow them to do what we hired them to do — work for all Yukoners, advocate for all Yukon, now and in the future — and to use their science and their expertise and their passion to advocate, advise and help build a healthy, sustainable and diverse economy. Again, we need more democracy and less politics.

It is time to diversify. The mineral industry has a role to play, but it is not the only player. It is to all our advantage to build a robust, diverse economy together. When I reflect over the last four years, I realize that many of the issues remain the same — roads and buildings damaged by increasing melting of permafrost; roads by heavier industrial traffic need repair. Our system needs some strategic planning, but what we get is a patchwork of makeshift repairs each spring.

Housing and land availability remain an issue in many communities. We hear of government workers having to work from another community due to a lack of housing in the community where they have been employed. Housing in communities greatly impacts the ability to recruit and keep YTG employees in those communities. I've heard stories of teachers beginning the year with no home, bunking out in others' spare rooms, moving from one room to another, instead of being able to focus on their teaching and students.

Health and nursing care in communities has been limited by temporary staff and by policy decisions. Rural residents want to age in place, yet in the Yukon Party government's apparent haste to build a 300-bed institution in Whistle Bend, there has been little recognition of the value and role that seniors and elders bring to families and to communities.

Health facilities are not being kept up. Carmacks Health Centre is woefully inadequate. Pelly Crossing airport is still unable to land medical flights. Keno is in dire need of a safe community well, and the recommendations of the health impact assessment done in 2009 by Dr. Hanley are still not being met.

What was once almost universal dental care provided to all Yukon children has languished to the point where many children do not take part, especially in a critical preventive aspect. I would like to acknowledge Little Salmon Carmacks First Nation for their recognition of this lapse and their building of a preventive dental care program for their children.

Many First Nations are struggling to create land-based treatment facilities for after-care and for programming.

When it comes to recreational facilities, Carmacks has been without a skating rink for two years. Dawson City rec centre is, after all these years, still not functioning as intended. Community swimming pools are patched together. Many communities are missing much of a short summer season for repairs to their rinks. I've heard tales of EMS buildings not serving the needs, fire trucks and ambulances that don't fit, the lack of central storage for search and rescue and the lack of meeting and training facilities or a place to meet and train for our emergency responders. I've heard of the need for government buildings to be upgraded for licensing and service to community people. As I mentioned earlier, despite years of warning and calls to drill a new well in Keno, the well was finally shut down with no alternative except to truck water from Mayo.

The people of the Selkirk First Nation are still waiting for this government to follow through on memoranda and agreements around a Fort Selkirk buffer zone around the Dhaw Ghro management area years later. The Dhaw Ghro management area holds a special place in the hearts and minds of the elders of the Na Cho Nyäk Dun and Selkirk. Much time and effort was put into that, yet nothing, years later. The elders who worked on that are passing. When I talk to them, they ask: When will that be resolved? I've asked in the House: When will that memorandum be signed? When will that agreement go forward? But nothing. Where are this government's priorities?

The infrastructure — where is the local planning input; where are the partnerships? It's time for more democracy and less politics. It's time to build with and to support small businesses or entrepreneurs. We owe it to the citizens of Canada who are investing over a billion dollars — with a "B" — in Yukon and Yukon people. We owe it to the citizens of Yukon, our friends and our neighbours, and to our First Nation partner governments, to the business community, to build a better, more robust, more prosperous and diverse Yukon.

I will have further questions for the ministers who are responsible for various requests for appropriation to ensure that the funds are spend appropriately and that they will help and support the people of Yukon, and specifically the citizens of Mayo-Tatchun.

Thank you for your attention.

Mr. Elias: Once again, it's a privilege and a pleasure to rise in the Assembly and respond to Bill No. 23 in second reading to this 2016-17 budget. It's a good budget.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I begin, as always, to send my heartfelt thanks to the people of Old Crow and my family for their incredible hard work and support over the years. No matter what the issues or concerns are, my constituents are always there at the forefront, giving direction, participating and solving problems and implementing our decisions.

[Member spoke in Gwich'in. Text unavailable.]

Change is upon us once again in north Yukon and we all will be called upon to reaffirm our values and commitments to a brighter future and to hold them up against the hard realities we face on a daily basis in our community and to see how we are measuring up to our forebears and the promises made to future generations.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I have consistently affirmed the grandeur of our community and north Yukon over the years when I speak on my constituents' behalf.

I tell people that our strength does not come from our creeks being filled with gold or the buried treasures under our lands, but because of the true richness of our community, our people and the strength of our families to always strive to be and do better for those yet unborn. We are rich in heritage and cultural diversity and the vastness of our lands, the purity of our waters, our ever-wondrous fish and wildlife, and our young people — the currency of our great wealth. I say to my constituents today that we have every reason to be thankful, to be optimistic and hopeful and to be determined and focused on the future. We have been and will always be together today for our children tomorrow, because our plan is working.

Madam Deputy Speaker, my constituents should be proud of what we have achieved in the last few years as a community in partnership with all levels of government, non-government organizations and industry. We have secured 4G and high-speed Internet upgrades. We ensured that no hydraulic-fracture stimulation will occur in north Yukon. We started a *Helicobacter pylori* bacterium study in Old Crow that has helped so many and continues today. We have successfully received a \$2.9-million investment into a new community and recreation facility from the Yukon territorial government and \$2 million from the Vuntut Gwitchin government, and we now patiently await the federal government's promise of an additional \$2.7 million as committed to our community of Old Crow by two different members of Parliament.

We just received a wonderful commitment to begin the planning for a new health centre in Old Crow. I am very pleased, as are my constituents, to see a line item valued at \$250,000 to begin the planning for this wonderful project in Old Crow. Thank you to the honourable Premier and my Cabinet colleagues. Our community is excited about this investment and ready to begin the hard work of planning a new replacement for the health centre in Old Crow.

We have a reinvigorated land and water monitoring program in north Yukon, something that is very important to

my constituents. It's good to see a budget announcement of conducting baseline studies on water quality and groundwater in the Eagle Plains region, something that was a specific ask from my community. More specifically, in the Eagle Plains region, the Water Resources branch is conducting both long-term and baseline water monitoring for groundwater and surface water quality and quantity in the area spanning part of the Yukon River Basin and the Peel River Basin. Long-term monitoring stations include, for groundwater, one site at the Northern Cross camp. Snow surveys are being done at three sites: at the Eagle River, in the Eagle Plains Basin and Riff's Ridge. For the hydrometric sites, there are four sites on the Eagle River, at the Dempster Highway, McParlon Creek, Dalglish Creek and Peel River above the canyon, and two additional sites are planned for installation this year. There are two sites for water quality planned on the Ogilvie River and Eagle River for this year as well.

Old Crow has been very successful and proven that land-based experiential education programming works in achieving elementary learning outcomes. As a community, we have worked to upgrade and build new roads and complete drainage infrastructure.

When the Nutrition North Canada program became defunct in achieving its objectives in Old Crow, our community just didn't stand around and complain. We sought out partners to invest in our community and fix the problem by opening a new Arctic cooperative store that is operating quite well.

We have protected our community from the mighty Porcupine River by completing the community's riverbank stabilization effort.

The investments in social services and mental health and our elders programming has doubled, and there is more to come.

I know that every day our community appreciates and is proud of the new water treatment plant and the workers who ensure every single household has clean, safe drinking water every day. Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, this is something that many communities across Canada simply cannot say.

This government has more than doubled the investment in our community's sports and recreation and healthy living funding — something that is so appreciated. I have witnessed the benefits of this funding to the health and well-being of our youth especially in Old Crow over the years.

I am pleased to see the smiles on our families' faces, who enjoy having their secondary students at home in Old Crow for Easter holidays and during Thanksgiving.

The building of a winter road a couple of years ago has paid tremendous dividends for our community and continues to bear fruit with jobs, infrastructure, housing, and programs and service deliveries.

We are cleaning up the contaminated sites in Old Crow thanks to this government's investments and partnerships with the community and the Vuntut Gwitchin government.

Through the departments of Tourism and Culture and Economic Development we enjoy the continued restoration of

our historic sites and Vuntut Gwitchin traditional trails throughout the Vuntut Gwitchin traditional territory.

We thank the Executive Council Office for its invaluable contributions to the Porcupine caribou education effort — a support that has been going on for decades.

Last but not least, our community looks forward to the creation of the new Summit Lake-Bell River protected area very soon, as envisioned in the *North Yukon Regional Land Use Plan*.

These are but a few accomplishments, so I hope we all take some time to reflect on the good things and be proud because we have come a long way to ensure jobs are provided and people can make an honest living and provide for their families.

Once again, I thank my government colleagues and the federal and Vuntut Gwitchin governments for their investments in Old Crow over the years. Our citizens work hard every day, and the fruits of their labour are what make our territory so great.

I want to take some time here to thank our health care providers across the territory for their commitment to excellence in patient care across our territory. Thank you to all our educators who, day in and day out, work to nurture and educate our youth. To the people who swing the hammers and build our precious infrastructure: thank you. To the RCMP, the volunteer firefighters and emergency services personnel, men and women who are on patrol and help keep us safe: thank you.

To the front-line service providers or the people behind the counter ringing up the sales and to our hunters and trappers and fishermen and farmers: thank you for being our eyes and ears out there. To our miners and drillers and oil and gas service men and women: thank you for your work.

To all the private businesses that make our economy go around: thank you. To our transportation industry and long-haul truck drivers, who ensure goods get to our great territory every day: thank you.

To our waitresses and waiters, mechanics and pilots and to everyone who works behind the scenes in all levels of government and non-government organizations, and our boards and committees in the public service: mahsi' cho.

Mr. Speaker, if I can use an iceberg analogy of success that I actually saw on Facebook the other day — and I thought, you know, this is pretty true actually. An iceberg analogy of success — all that most people see, the majority of times, is the tip of the iceberg, or the success, and they don't see what really happened to get there, like the sacrifice, the rejections, the adversity, the disappointments, the criticisms, the doubters, the courage, the discipline, the persistence, the little setbacks, the struggles, the late nights, the risks, the hard work, and the impact on our families. That's all below the surface and it's the bulk of what was experienced; but many just see the tip of the iceberg — the successful part. I thought that was appropriate to mention.

It's our working citizens who keep and ensure that this territory — our home — is the best place to live, work, play, raise a family and do business.

I will change gears here a bit here. Under the direction and leadership of our Hon. Premier, I had the pleasant opportunity to participate in the Yukon government's community budget tours. Thank you so much to all of our staff who worked so hard to make this happen. Your work is recognized and appreciated. I would like to also take this opportunity to thank each and every citizen who came out and communicated with us — personally, via e-mail, Facebook, Twitter, social media, written letter, or in the grocery store or hockey rink — their issues, concerns, or comments on how to make our Yukon that much better. I personally enjoy the face-to-face discussions because it represents an unhindered access to the decision-makers that so many other Canadian citizens never get a chance to experience. Mr. Speaker, it's important to note that every community I visited realized that their public government simply cannot do everything on its own, but they were very thankful that they were afforded the opportunity to be listened to about what was important to them.

Mr. Speaker, in Beaver Creek, the current community club building was built in 1967 and the community members would like to work with the White River First Nation to build a cultural community centre that would meet the community needs and possibly accommodate services such as a daycare, and community members would also like to see housing for another teacher.

In Haines Junction, members would like to expand on a partnership between Tourism and Culture and the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations to further market the Haines Junction area.

In Mendenhall, our discussion related to work being done on the Mendenhall roads, ditches and culverts that need fixing, and community members were interested in working with contractors and they want to be a part of the planning for the road works.

In Carmacks, Mr. Speaker, a new skating rink and curling rink building came up in talks, and the town communicated that they have \$1 million saved to go toward a new skating rink and curling rink complex and they are presently seeking additional funding partners to make this project happen. In Mount Lorne, the citizens were concerned about their comprehensive land planning review and the importance of civic addressing for emergency services.

In Tagish, the citizens there expressed the fact that their community is growing and their needs are changing. Case in point, they said that their community has a diverse population that includes permanent residents, people who commute to Whitehorse to work, a growing number of seniors and recreational residents. They mentioned that the population of Tagish has grown and they feel that the services and infrastructure haven't kept up. They also mentioned that their community has made five proposals to the Building Canada fund and asked for a new community centre, new water well and skating rink. Specific issues came up around the community centre, like a second access route to the community centre for various reasons, and they wanted to stress that the community centre property is an emergency

gathering site for residents of the area. Residents were also concerned about the speed limits on the highway near the community centre and would like the speed limits through Tagish reviewed, with an opportunity to participate in that review. They spoke about a FireSmart program around the community centre, a new septic system and water tank because they feel like the existing septic system is too small because they hold regular community events and numbers can be around 100 people in attendance.

In Mayo, the community felt that they were lacking resources to hire much-needed social workers and drug and alcohol workers. They also spoke of a fire protection plan for the subdivision, and they are still seeking three components to finish the new subdivision: to complete water and sewer upgrades, another road access to address safety issues, and a fire protection plan that includes a fire truck, fire hydrants and a new fire hall.

In Pelly, they strongly felt the need to have some sort of elder-care home program because they do not want to send their elders to Whitehorse if it's not absolutely necessary. With regard to education, many residents in Pelly felt that language loss and traditional skills and knowledge needed additional financial support to maintain their culture and language. They expressed that many elders are passing on and, as a result, they are losing their language and need more help to support the youth to learn life skills in the bush. Residents of Pelly also spoke about their airport and associated medevacs. They said that their airport needs to be upgraded. It needs to be extended, resurfaced and it needs lights on the runway so planes can land safely because currently they have to drive people to Mayo or to Whitehorse.

Mr. Speaker, this is obviously not an exhaustive list, but just some of the things that I heard.

People in the communities appreciated being listened to. Some of the 2016-17 budget highlights in my riding in the Vuntut Gwitchin include \$600,000 toward the Old Crow community centre, and Old Crow Health Centre replacement planning of \$250,000, as mentioned before. It's an understatement to say that I have some very happy constituents and we look forward to the hard work ahead and partnership in making this project a reality.

The Old Crow airport is going to be receiving \$291,000; Old Crow sports and recreation, \$118,201; north Yukon regional economic development is going to receive \$150,000; the north Yukon water monitoring, \$130,000; Old Crow health programming, \$69,000; Rampart House historic site restoration, \$60,000; the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation caribou education effort, \$50,000; the Dempster fibre optic project, \$500,000; Dempster Highway improvements, \$3.2 million; the Herschel Island visitor improvements, \$500,000 — all, of course, pending this House's approval.

So on behalf of my constituents, I thank this government for these investments because they are greatly appreciated.

I want to speak to something that's near and dear to my heart, and that's sport and recreation. Participating in sport and recreation, Mr. Speaker, saved my life — that's case-

closed. That's why I say it's near and dear to my heart. I want to read something into the record that I wrote about hockey.

We were in a sudden-death shootout in the annual Native Hockey Tournament, and we said, who wants to shoot? And as we witnessed many little arms shoot up in the air, we realized Old Crow's hockey program was a success. Just give a kid a chance — that was our motto right from day one when we decided to do our part in building solid young citizens and to ensure that our youth reached their true athletic potential. We also agreed that the cultural values of respect, patriotism, discipline and equity had to be integrated into the program as well and were crucial components.

Over the years, we have had new talents and different heroes, and it became well-known that any youth were welcome to help fill our roster, regardless of skill. It has been such a pleasure for us to watch them learn about the strength of teamwork, what it means to persevere, to look adversity in the eye and smile right back, to never give up, and that there's nothing like having the responsibility of winning for your team in a sudden-death shootout to build some character.

Hockey has taught the players about dealing with pressure, and that alone teaches responsibility and, most important to us, hockey has taught them not to be afraid of failure, which results in a more positive self-image. In our opinion, there is no better place to teach children about the world than on a sheet of ice. Many of our leaders of tomorrow will be molded through participating in hockey. Investing in hockey is investing in their quality of life now and for the future. Growing children need inspiration and physical activity, and hockey is a great way to develop those youths' mental, physical, emotional and spiritual well-being.

In 2008, we gave a young, shy, 10-year-old boy a chance to win the Yukon Native Hockey Tournament for us. He had never played hockey before and he scored. A few months later, his parents came up to us and said "You don't know what that goal did for my son. It changed his life, and thank you for giving him a chance to play." If medals and trophies are a measure of success, all one has to do is visit the Old Crow youth centre and have a look at the trophies that have accumulated over the years. But we know that it is more than just those medals that measure our success. It is how the game changes lives for our youth and arms them with the skills to manage both success and defeat. It's about preparing them to reach their full potential.

To the parents, our sponsors and our community of Old Crow: whether in victory or defeat, we all have cause to be proud of our players who have brought so much glory and we salute you.

I would be remiss if I didn't mention the annual Native Hockey Tournament this year, where the North Yukon Eagles from Old Crow and the Gwitchin Braves from Old Crow once again did our community proud. The Eagles battled — did they ever battle — to a silver medal and we took home top defence, top score and most valuable player awards, and the Braves came in fourth and won the top score awards. Job well done, boys and girls, and I'm very proud of you all.

I guess my point is that when I see our Premier and our Cabinet led by our minister of sport invest the largest amount of money ever into sport and recreation in our territory, I support this investment wholeheartedly because I know firsthand the value of such investments, not just to the individual, but to our society as a whole. I thank my fellow colleagues for these investments.

In closing, over the years, I have used these responses to the budget speech to lift hearts in dark times, to help give some hope in times of despair, to inspire new feats and to help give courage to the weary, to honour the dead and to welcome the newly born and to make a difference in the day-to-day lives of the people I represent. It is my hope and desire that my time in this Assembly will become a lasting resource for those MLAs of the Vuntut Gwitchin yet to come in the knowledge that my time as their representative has made it just a little bit easier to accomplish their goals, dreams and aspirations on behalf of citizens in north Yukon.

I will in the very near future be responding to the significant requests from my constituents to keep the Vuntut Gwitchin riding and their representation in this Assembly in good hands.

I commend this budget to the House. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Merci beaucoup and mahsi' cho.

Ms. Moorcroft: Mr. Speaker, I would like to start my response to the 2016-17 Budget Address by thanking the constituents of Copperbelt South. I am proud to represent the residents of this growing electoral district of urban, country residential and agricultural neighbourhoods connected to Whitehorse along the Alaska Highway corridor. Copperbelt South has a variety of industrial, commercial and home-based businesses. Services there range from: gas stations; building supplies — with a new, larger store recently opened at Kilrich Industries; the Winterlong microbrewery, which has been successful enough to plan an expansion this summer; a new restaurant just opened at the Carcross Cut-off; and many other large and small operations. Mount Sima ski hill operations have been wildly successful. This season, they sold over 1,000 passes, and they have repaid their loan. Just this weekend, with great weather and awesome bands, the Simapalooza was a rocking event on the hill.

I also want to extend my congratulations to the Golden Horn Elementary School students on their participation in the Yukon Sourdough Rendezvous spelling bee again this year. Veronica won second prize for the second year in a row. Golden Horn Elementary School also had strong participation again this year at the 2016 Yukon/Stikine regional science fair. Students in grades 4, 5 and 7 won awards for their projects, which included the Student Choice Award and two BC Agriculture in the Classroom awards, once again demonstrating the remarkable achievements of students at Golden Horn. The Golden Horn outdoor experiential school model makes our parents and community members extremely proud of its success.

The Wolf Creek campground is located in Copperbelt South. Last fall, this Legislature unanimously adopted a

motion I put forward about developing accessible campsites, trails, cookhouses, outhouses and other facilities. I am pleased that the plans the minister committed to then appear in this budget, and I hope that the upgrades at Wolf Creek, Marsh Lake and Teslin campgrounds mean that people with disabilities will have more opportunity to enjoy camping in Yukon parks. This is a priority for my constituents, for Yukoners and for visitors.

The Yukon Party government, over the last four and a half years has received unprecedented cash flows from the federal government. They took northern housing trust funds but failed to implement a Yukon-wide plan to alleviate homelessness.

In his Budget Address, the Premier asserted that there would be no debt for future generations. However, he failed to mention that there is more than \$150 million of debt on the books for Yukon Hospital Corporation, Yukon Energy Corporation and Yukon Housing Corporation.

What else do we see in this budget? We see a commitment to support local business — late in the game, but it is good that the government has recognized the need to improve. Over the years I have heard many complaints from business owners that government procurement could do more to support the local economy, and that they are failing to do so.

The Northwest Territories, with its *Agreement on Internal Trade*, supports local businesses. They do more to support local business. Provinces understand the need for exemptions for small northern economies, so it's no wonder that the Yukon businesses are critical of this government when the Yukon government did not consult with the chambers and businesses about the *Agreement on Internal Trade* prior to negotiations. This is one of many ways that government has alienated businesses throughout their term in office.

At the second annual industry conference Whitehorse Business Connect held in March at the Yukon Convention Centre — a small business conference to network and support each other and receive economic updates from government organizations — there were project updates from the City of Whitehorse, Energy, Mines and Resources, Property Management and Community Services. The new procurement centre talked about selling to government and the green procurement initiative, which built on the *Climate Change Action Plan* that came into effect in May 2010. The new procurement centre offers training for government staff, advises departmental officials and houses the government's capital project updates.

The procurement advisory panel, which accepted submissions up to December 2015, will make recommendations to address concerns raised by Yukon businesses. I have to say, Mr. Speaker, that some of those businesses are cynical about what they will see and whether there will in fact be strong action. This budget speech is late to promise the flow of benefits from government to local businesses. We hope to see the procurement practices at Yukon government meet the Budget Address promises for a

flow of benefits from government to local businesses, which will generate more local employment.

Over the past four and a half years, there has been some notable contract mismanagement — and indeed throughout the term the Yukon Party has been in government prior to its current iteration. The Auditor General has been critical of many of those. We saw a hospital in Watson Lake that was framed and then the shell left to deteriorate, exposed to the weather and, as the Auditor General pointed out, there was no prior needs assessment, and then finally it was completed. We saw the arrest processing unit attached to Whitehorse Correctional Centre. Again, government built the floor, complete with wiring, and then determined the building footprint would have to be smaller to reduce the costs and they had to rip out the floor. There were untold numbers of change orders at Whitehorse Correctional Centre during the construction of that facility and, since it opened in 2012, we've seen a budget for renovations at \$80,000 per year.

The fundamental failure of this government is that it makes decisions about significant and costly capital infrastructure projects without talking to Yukoners. The Whistle Bend continuing care facility was a 300-bed, now a 150-bed. The Yukon Party started consultations after there was public outrage and the government has now halved the scope of the project. Seniors want to age in place. They want to see home care expanded. They want to be able to live at home. Seniors in rural communities don't necessarily want to move to Whitehorse. Many of them are strongly opposed to moving to Whitehorse. Not everyone will need care in a facility, so we need to have alternative housing models and care models for seniors.

The Yukon government failed to include the Association of Yukon Communities' project priorities in the Building Canada funding submission to the federal government. That's an example of this government's approach of alienating people, whether it's the business community, municipalities or First Nations.

Other capital project mismanagement is the Whitehorse airport. There were a number of problematic projects there — the apron panels, which are damaged and may have to be rebuilt. I have met with disability rights advocates. There are problems with the accessible parking lot and the ramp to the airport terminal building. I've heard complaints about the water and sewer extension project.

Mr. Speaker, last spring the Yukon Party government released their Whitehorse corridor functional plan and options to upgrade the Alaska Highway from Gentian Lane south of the Carcross Cut-off to the northern municipal boundary, a distance of some 40 kilometres. The multi-year plan was to spend up to \$200 million twinning the Alaska Highway. The government then released their plans for public comment.

Late last year, the government released the Whitehorse corridor functional plan public engagement report. This "what we heard" document assessed what Yukoners thought about this government's approach to Alaska Highway corridor planning in the Whitehorse area. The results were mixed,

understandably, for a \$200-million project that would significantly affect lives and businesses.

Yukon residents, constituents of Copperbelt South and people in the business and transportation sector have questioned whether the case for twinning the Alaska Highway has been met and whether the proposed \$200-million price tag has been justified. The public is divided on the proposed changes. Forty percent of respondents agree and 40 percent of respondents disagree that the proposal on addressing traffic congestion and travel times met the needs. Overall, more respondents disagree than agree that the draft plan reflects a balanced approach between community, environmental and economic considerations.

The public consultation also identified further areas of concern, such as the Mayo Road turnoff and the need for dedicated merging lanes, different speed limits throughout the corridor being problematic, and passing lanes needed in certain areas of the corridor. Work is supposed to commence this summer, but there is not a consensus that all the proposed changes are necessary.

We have heard from Yukon businesses along the corridor that have stated that the plans do not reflect the reality on the ground. They have formed the Alaska Highway Corridor Business Association, which is organized to "... protect, maintain and enhance the integrity of Whitehorse corridor businesses in proximity to the Alaska Highway."

The City of Whitehorse expressed concerns that the proposed Alaska Highway corridor changes do not encourage the use of walking, cycling, public transit and other forms of active transportation, and might reduce tourist visits to downtown. There was a good turnout at a town hall meeting I attended, where the City of Whitehorse mayor and council invited people to speak about municipality issues, and the Alaska Highway corridor was unquestionably top-of-mind for people there. This government has failed to provide a sufficient rationale for twinning the highway along the Alaska Highway corridor in the Whitehorse area. There's serious concern that they haven't done their due diligence.

I would like to thank the Highways and Public Works officials for the departmental briefing this morning. They indicated the work being done this summer is to add a northbound passing lane between Pioneer RV Park and the Miles Canyon intersection. I have asked for more current data on traffic in this corridor, as the functional plan report on traffic collisions was dated from 1996 to 2009. I think that, when we're contemplating as much as a \$200-million expenditure over a number of years, there should be more current traffic collision information taken into account before those plans move ahead. This project affects the daily lives of constituents commuting to work, businesses along the corridor and all those concerned about traffic safety on the highway, when it comes to them and their families, and I will be following it closely.

Turning to the Justice budget, the public wants to see more personal interaction between police and citizens, so we support additional RCMP members in Whitehorse. There will be four added this year, one on each of the watches in

Whitehorse. I wonder whether the new members will be on the street. Will they expand foot and bike patrols?

The public also wants to see a police force that's more representative of the population. There is a need to recruit more women and First Nation members. That's an ongoing need, first brought into the public arena in the 2010 report, *Sharing Common Ground*, following a review of the Yukon police force.

There are a number of initiatives there, including the new specialized response unit that has just been established to respond to major crimes of violence, particularly sexualized assault and violence against women. I've had a discussion with the outgoing commanding officer, Peter Clark, who has been with the Whitehorse detachment since 2010, about ensuring that the expertise of the specialized response unit will continue to be made available to all RCMP members in all communities, because we know about the high rate of violence against women in this territory.

I recently met with the Kwanlin Dün First Nation about their new community safety protocol. I hope the recent Kwanlin Dün First Nation, City of Whitehorse, Anti-Poverty Coalition and non-government sector's conversations and the initiative to respond to poverty reduction, racism, inequality and homelessness have been heard and that the RCMP and the government will make progress on improving safety and promoting safety.

My responsibility as a critic is to propose approaches that I believe better reflect public values and the needs of the community. My hope is that the Yukon government Department of Justice, in its operation of correctional facilities, can work collaboratively with Yukon First Nation justice programs and develop culturally appropriate rehabilitative programming.

The Auditor General reported that the Yukon government is missing two key opportunities in corrections — first, to improve offenders' chances for rehabilitation and, second, successful reintegration into the community.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission recommendations 30 and 31 come into play here. The TRC calls upon governments to commit to eliminating the overrepresentation of aboriginal people in custody over the next decade and to issue detailed annual reports that monitor and evaluate progress in doing so. It also calls on federal, provincial and territorial governments to provide sufficient and stable funding to implement and evaluate community sanctions that will provide realistic alternatives to imprisonment for aboriginal offenders and respond to the underlying causes of offending.

The Yukon government could work with First Nation justice programs toward developing land-based healing programs for inmates — for example: addictions treatment; building traditional skills, language and dance; healing from the cultural genocide of residential school; and eradicating residential school practices that continue in institutional models of today need to be priorities. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission report findings and calls to action are building a profound change in how members of the settler

community and governments interact with the indigenous peoples of Yukon who have inhabited their traditional territories from time immemorial.

I also want to make note of the FASD study that has been underway since this government came into office — or shortly after. The interim final report of June 2015 on *Yukon FASD Diagnosis and Case Management in Adult Corrections Population* was done for the Public Health Agency of Canada, one of the funders. There was very little solid information in that report. The bulk of it was a collection of appendices.

The final FASD final report was supposedly being released last weekend at the second national FASD biennial conference in BC. I look forward to the minister tabling that in the House if he is willing in fact to share it with the Legislature and the public. We look forward to seeing the final results.

I want to speak about missing and murdered indigenous women. We are seeing improved police and social responses to women reporting violence and sexual assault. Improvements to sexual assault law are also needed. In Yukon, as elsewhere in Canada and around the world, women don't trust the criminal justice system enough to report sexual assault to the police and to testify in courts that allow humiliating exposure of the personal and discriminatory practices at trial. These undermine public confidence in the administration of justice and in the justice system.

Over the years, Yukon has had strong active women's groups who have been calling out failures in the justice system in response to violence against women. We've seen letters to the editor. We have seen rallies, marches, petitions and law reform. Yukon women's groups' participation in the review of Yukon's police force, women's groups and First Nation negotiation of agreements with the RCMP of the *Together for Justice Protocol* in Watson Lake and the *Together for Safety Protocol* in Whitehorse demonstrate leadership. These formal agreements between the RCMP, women's groups and First Nations are something that we can highlight nationally and internationally. The Whitehorse Aboriginal Women's Circle and the Yukon Aboriginal Women's Council work on *Stolen Sisters* and identifying missing and murdered women in the Yukon has expanded our understanding of this crisis and has produced a lot of public attention.

This Legislature was one of the first to unanimously adopt a motion for a national public inquiry into missing and murdered indigenous women. I acknowledge that Yukon government continues to play a strong role in supporting community groups and working with other governments to address missing and murdered indigenous women. I'm proud that violence against women is one issue on which we have been able to achieve all-party agreement in this House. We tend to focus on the divisions between opposite sides of the House, but there are many areas where we do accomplish things by showing we have common ground and support actions that will benefit all of the community.

I want to turn to the Yukon College, which has community campuses spread throughout the territory, making it a unique place to deliver excellent post-secondary

education. Modern technologies and Internet connections can expand what is offered throughout the territory. The Centre for Northern Innovation in Mining presents an opportunity to take mobile training to communities and to recruit students for a number of trades that provide good paying jobs and skills that are transferrable to the renewable energy sector. Yukon College could become a leading and respected institution in the environmental management of mining activity.

I think about the Caring for the Land program that was offered and that trained Teslin Tlingit Council citizens in environmental monitoring and environmental management, which resulted in many of the graduates finding work.

While it's great to see expansion of northern studies and indigenous studies at Yukon College, developing a university is much more costly. This government has \$1.5 million over three years to help Yukon College develop into a university, and that amount simply isn't enough to deliver on the promise. The cost of library services alone for a university isn't covered. What the library has now is not enough to support a university.

There are seven university programs offered through Yukon College: Master in Educational Leadership at Simon Fraser University; Master of Public Administration through the University of Alaska Southeast; Bachelor of Science at the University of Alberta; Master of Education from the University of Northern British Columbia; Bachelor of Education and Bachelor of Social Work through the University of Regina; and Bachelor of Circumpolar Studies through the University of the Arctic.

For many years, Yukon College, Yukon government and the federal government have worked hard to recognize the links across the circumpolar north. Will this project abandon the liaison with the University of the Arctic? What about all seven degree programs that are offered at Yukon College through six different universities? Will a long-term plan be developed and will it meet the community's needs and its population statistics? Is there funding for faculty, teaching and research contemplated?

Universities Canada requires prospective members to have 500 full-time equivalents for at least two years before joining. Here's what the Yukon College student numbers look like, and they don't meet that criteria. In 2012-13, there were 63 students in degree programs, and then another 190 in university transfer. Those 190 students wouldn't necessarily want to take a program at the college for the full four years, and it would take many years to be able to offer seven different degree programs — and that's not even contemplating university transfer to programs other than the seven that are offered here.

In 2013-14, for full-time degree and post-graduate programs, there were 60 students and 55 part-time; in 2014-15, the degree and post-graduate programs enrollment was 49 part-time and 56 full-time.

So where is the needs assessment that proves the need for a university? University accreditation is premised on degree programs being the core teaching mission of the institution. Is that what Yukon government is proposing? There is a strong

need for Yukon College to offer the career and technical programs, the trades programs, the academic and skill development programs, and non-credit programs. About a quarter of the students at Yukon College are in the access program, which is designed to help students who have not graduated from high school achieve that level so that they could then consider moving on into post-secondary education.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission calls for providing funding to post-secondary institutions to educate teachers on how to integrate indigenous knowledge and teaching methods into classrooms. It calls upon ministers to build the student capacity for intercultural understanding, empathy and mutual respect. Those are goals that we are trying to achieve not simply for students, but for teachers and for citizens. I am concerned with the cost of libraries alone at a university, the subscriptions to online journals. The community needs and the population statistics do not show a demonstrated need and the possibility of achieving a number of university programs. We need to continue to focus on continuing to improving the numbers of students, especially First Nation students, who graduate from high school and continue on to post-secondary education. That is why I have linked it to those recommendations from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

We have seen this government's failure of vision when it comes to the Peel and land use planning. We have seen this government seeming to cultivate bad relationships. I want to repeat how important it is for Yukon government to listen and lead on implementing Yukon's final agreements. We have seen an unfortunate number of legal battles where the Yukon government has forced First Nations and others, even local businesses, to go to court to find solutions.

The development of a regional land use plan is an unfulfilled promise of chapter 11 of the final agreements. Yukon First Nations gave up the bulk of their land base in exchange for a new and respectful relationship and a commitment to deal with land disposition issues in cooperation between Yukon and First Nation governments. It is in the public interest of all Yukon residents to develop these big-picture land use plans before further work is conducted on local area plans. Yukon NDP would work with all parties to put land use planning back on track for all eight regions in the Yukon. That is a missed opportunity. Regional land use plans would provide economic certainty for future development.

The *Final Recommended Peel Watershed Regional Land Use Plan* was a contentious issue in the 2011 election campaign, and with the clock ticking on an election call, it seems likely to be so again in 2016. The Yukon government has argued that the Peel court case is not in the national interest and that the Supreme Court of Canada should not hear an appeal. First Nations and environmental NGOs argue that the government's new unilateral land use plan for the Peel River watershed is a betrayal of final agreement obligations and that the fate of the Peel watershed and of land claim agreements in Yukon is of national, and indeed, international significance.

Most of us are now aware of the imperative to change our fossil fuel consumption patterns. We must make the shift to renewable energy and create a green economy. There is no doubt that we can make this shift and that we must develop a sustainable energy future. Liquefied natural gas and big hydro are not renewable energy. Wind, solar, geothermal and small hydro are renewable energy sources.

Estimates of the annual subsidy to the fossil fuel energy industry in Canada range from \$37 billion to \$46 billion. That's billion with a "B".

Worldwide, the annual subsidy to fossil fuel resource extraction industries is estimated at \$550 billion. We could choose to subsidize renewable and sustainable energy instead of a carbon-based fossil fuel energy economy. Renewable energy economy creates good jobs.

We do see in this budget money for cleaning up contaminated sites that are found at highway camps, at air fields, at the site of World War II Alaska Highway construction, at old resource extraction industrial sites. That's a good expenditure, but let's stop creating contaminated sites.

The Yukon would not accept a carbon tax. That was a bold action of the Premier to opt out of doing our part to fight climate change.

I want to remind members of the keen public interest at the fracking committee hearings held throughout Yukon. The public doesn't support hydraulic fracturing because of the harm it causes, and we heard a lot of scientific evidence about that.

My colleague, the Member for Mayo-Tatchun, spoke a short while ago about the wellbore integrity being a challenge — that all wells leak over time. Since participating in the all-party Select Committee Regarding the Risks and Benefits of Hydraulic Fracturing, I have continued to monitor ongoing research. Pennsylvania landowners have now been awarded millions of dollars for contaminated drinking water that was caused by hydraulic fracturing drilling adjacent to their properties.

It deeply concerns me that this Yukon Party government has not met the recommendations of the all-party Select Committee Regarding the Risks and Benefits of Hydraulic Fracturing, which they promised to do. They made that commitment on paper but, by their actions, they are ignoring it. We have not seen the records capturing baseline environmental data for water, for air. We have not seen sufficient climate change research. This government has not conducted an in-depth study of the failed economics of hydraulic fracturing.

The government needs to provide leadership. Governments should bring forward creative solutions that benefit all Yukoners. We need to build constructive relationships with the Yukon public and tap the potential of Yukon people. I fail to see this government meeting that need in this budget.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: It is a pleasure to rise today and speak to this budget, the 2016-17 budget. I want to go through a number of things today, but I thought I would just begin by

acknowledging my appreciation for my constituents for being here today. It's a great honour and privilege to represent members of my community as their MLA, and I appreciate their ongoing support. Of course, in doing that, I can't forget to thank a number of other people as well.

First and foremost, I would like to acknowledge and thank my family for the immense support that they have provided to me over the years. Of course, first on that list is my wife Brittany, who has been an exceptional source of support for me over the years, and our daughter, London, who is two now, as of about two weeks ago — which is a bit of a startling fact for me, Mr. Speaker, as that makes me very much aware of how quickly time goes by.

I also should note — I haven't done it previously in the Legislature, but I should have earlier — both of my sisters, who live here in Whitehorse, have each had children as well in the past little while, and I wanted to offer my congratulations to them. My youngest sister, Lindsey, and her partner Kyle, had a beautiful baby girl last year. Her name is Aliya Isabella Anderson and she was born on March 15 last year, so she just celebrated her first birthday a few weeks ago as well. My sister Bonnie Dixon had a girl as well — Harlyn Eva Dixon — who was born October 22 last year, so she is of course a growing young girl as well. In my family of course, three very young girls all within about 18 months — I know that the three of them are going to enjoy themselves growing up. Of course my parents, Don and Linda Dixon — I would be remiss if I didn't thank them as well for their support over the years.

I am very proud, Mr. Speaker, of this budget for a number of reasons. Obviously we go through this every year and debate our budgets and discuss them, but I did feel that this budget was unique and special for a number of reasons, not the least of which is it's likely to be our last budget before the next election, and so the last opportunity for us to talk about — the last budget. That was a coincidence that I had to wipe my nose at that point, Mr. Speaker.

It was an important budget, I think, because of the effort that my colleagues and I put in this year, given the unique situation that we were faced with — a challenging economy, some declining investment from the federal government, which has led to some difficult choices for us to make over the last number of months in preparation for this budget.

Nonetheless, we were able to complete the budget and have it tabled last week. Despite those challenging conditions that I noted earlier, we were able to come up with a budget that achieved a modest surplus — essentially a balanced budget — with significant new spending on key infrastructure projects. There are no new tax increases and, of course, very important to all of us, no net debt. These are all important features of the budget, but I think they are all the more important when we look around the country and see what the situation is in a number of other regions in the country.

The fact that we have no net debt is something that is very important and something that we will talk a lot about over the coming weeks, I am sure. I know that others have pointed out that there is in fact debt on the books for some of

the corporations, and that is true, but the important thing is that our financial assets outweigh our obligations, and that means we have no net debt. That is a unique situation to be in the country and, given its current trajectory, the only other province or territory that can say that is Alberta, but, given the current trajectory that they are on, it is likely that by this time next year we will be the only jurisdiction in the country that can make the claim to have no net debt. That is an impressive accomplishment, and I think that it is something that we should all be very proud of. Certainly, we are on this side of the House.

With this budget, despite just having a modest surplus, no tax increases and no net debt, we have found ways to make numerous increases in a number of important programs and projects. I am going to talk a little bit about some of those that are both relevant to my riding and relevant to my departments as minister. I will get into those in a few moments.

Before I do, I wanted to as well — in noting my thanks to my constituents earlier — give a special thanks to the members of the Copper Ridge Neighbourhood Association. They are a relatively small group of people in the Copper Ridge neighbourhood who make a very large difference for our community in Copper Ridge. I know my colleague, the Member for Whitehorse West, also thanked this particular group. It is a group that the Member for Whitehorse West and I share, as we split Copper Ridge, but I wanted to add my voice to hers in thanking them for the work that they have done, not only in the past year but in the past several years, making a number of wonderful improvements to community.

A few weeks ago, the Copper Ridge Neighbourhood Association had the opportunity to send out an e-mail update to residents in the Copper Ridge area and noted a few excellent accomplishments that I will read from. First of all, they noted that the new Winze Park has had a very successful winter season, and I will quote from their update here: “With the unusually warm winter the family friendly rinks in Copper Ridge seen many families take advantage of the ice to teach the wee ones to enjoy the joys of skating outside, including the most recent addition at Winze Park! Many neighbours stepped up and ensured that the rink was shoveled for weekend play and for the once a week flooding.” It was also noticed that a number of neighbours stepped up and were either plowing the rink or tying skates of kids at the rink who needed a bit of assistance.

So, Mr. Speaker, I would like to offer thanks to those members in the community who come together around the rinks to help either shovel it off or help — as Copper Ridge Neighbourhood Association notes — the wee ones to tie skates and enjoy some good fun on the ice.

Also deserving of thanks is the City of Whitehorse for the dedicated O&M work at the neighbourhood parks throughout the city. The parks and rec staff at the city have been fabulous to work with and they’ve been very helpful for the Copper Ridge Neighbourhood Association in not only preparing the park for development, but also for the ongoing support and ongoing things that they do.

This summer, Winze Park will see phase 2 of the park’s redevelopment take place with the inclusion of basketball nets at either end of the rink, a pump track for skateboarding and scooters and other activities like that, as well as some adult exercise equipment that will be added in the public spaces there in that park.

Castle Rock Enterprises was the successful bidder and contractor that did the design and build work, and they will complete the work with the inclusion of a light post for evening winter skating to be in place for next winter.

This project was one that was supported by the community development fund. I know that it wasn’t lost on my neighbours and friends around the neighbourhood that this government came through with this significant investment in this park, particularly the Department of Economic Development through the CDF. It was very much appreciated by my community and the fruits of that labour have been realized at the beginning of this winter by the excellent use that Winze Park has received.

Mr. Speaker, of course there’s Lazulite Park, which has seen a lot of use and development over the years as well. According to the Copper Ridge Neighbourhood Association, there will be no new work this summer, but there was a significant amount of work done last year to finish up with that park. That park offers a number of features for both young and old to use and access, whether it’s children living on Lazulite Drive or residents of the Copper Ridge continuing care centre. I’m advised that park is well-used by folks in my neighbourhood as well.

Again, I just wanted to thank the members of the Copper Ridge Neighbourhood Association for their work on both those parks, as well as FireSmart, WildWise, Crime Stoppers and a range of other programs that they work with others to provide.

Mr. Speaker, if I can, I would like to turn now to some of the features in this budget that are relevant to my department. First of all, with regard to the branch of Sport and Recreation in the Department of Community Services, there are some significant initiatives and investment in this budget that I think bear discussion.

First and foremost was the considerable announcement of increased funding for a number of sport groups in the territory. Late last year, I received a letter from Sport Yukon requesting, not necessarily an increase in funding, but a restructuring of some of the funding that they received. They noted that while they receive funding from a number of different sources, it would be beneficial to them if we could provide them with some additional certainty and consistency with the way they are funded. Without being too prescriptive, they made that request.

In considering that request, I had the chance to talk to a number of sports groups about how they receive funding and what sort of funding they receive, and ultimately we came to the decision and were able to achieve in this budget a considerable increase and change in the structure of funding.

What the new system will look like is that four particular sports organizations will receive funding directly from the

Department of Community Services Sport and Recreation branch. Those groups are Sport Yukon, Special Olympics Yukon, the Yukon Aboriginal Sport Circle, and the Recreation and Parks Association of Yukon.

The reason we chose those four organizations was because of the fact that they are all each — and they each have their own unique features, but each of them is an umbrella organization that deals with a number of other sports and in some cases delivers programs directly on behalf of the department. For instance, RPAY, of course, is a significant delivery body for a number of programs that Yukon government provides.

The intent was to take the amount that they normally have to apply for from the YRAC fund and give that to them directly through a contribution agreement. While this would appear to only benefit these four groups, I think it's very important to note that, by making this new funding available to those four groups, it frees up considerable money in the YRAC fund that will now be available for all other sport-governing bodies who apply to YRAC to access.

That's a very important step forward, I think, for the way that sports are funded in our territory. If you ask any one of these four groups, I know that they're all very excited about the opportunity that they will have, not only because of the funding but because of the time they will have now saved for them. My understanding is that previously they would have to spend anywhere from 10 to 15 hours preparing a YRAC submission in order to access that funding annually. Naturally, even though they have been successful in accessing funding over the years, there was always the question of whether or not they would be successful in getting it, and because it was an annual application, it made it challenging for them to recruit staff and made it challenging for them to be relied upon for consistent program implementation.

These four groups will, of course, benefit in terms of the consistency and clarity of funding. They will know exactly what they will get each year and they will be freed up to a certain extent to do other important things, like focus on their own sports or focus on their own programs.

For the other 20- or 30-odd Yukon sport governing bodies, there is an additional \$300,000 in the pot to apply for. Now it has been indicated to me by a number of sports groups that, while they appreciate the annual funding they get from YRAC, they rarely get all that they ask for and no group is ever successful in getting everything they need, so I think that this will be a positive step forward for all the sport governing bodies that seek YRAC funding, as there will be a whole bunch of new money available in that pot. So that is one important feature of the budget that I wanted to highlight.

While on the subject of sport, Mr. Speaker, I wanted to take an opportunity to discuss the Arctic Winter Games that recently occurred in Nuuk, Greenland with some of the sports — hockey — occurring in Iqaluit, Nunavut. I had the opportunity to attend those games, along with Team Yukon and it was an exceptional experience, I think, for everyone. We flew over to Greenland on Air North charters, beginning departures on midnight on the Friday before the games began,

and flew right over the Arctic, landing in Kangerlussuaq, Greenland the next day. There were three flights out of Whitehorse, going to Kangerlussuaq and the intention when we arrived there was we would continue on to Nuuk by way of what they called an air bridge, which was a series of Dash 8 planes that would fly us, and all other teams from Canada, from Kangerlussuaq to Nuuk. The reason of course we had to land in Kangerlussuaq was that it is the only airfield in Greenland that had the sufficient size to allow a 737 to land.

Unfortunately, weather, as it does sometimes in the north, had different plans for us and we ended up having to spend about a day and a half in Kangerlussuaq. When I say "we" I mean the entirety of Team Yukon, the majority of Team Alaska, the majority of Team Northern Alberta and some folks from the Northwest Territories as well. So some 1,000 or 2,000 people were stuck in an airport in a community the size of about 400 and we had to find a way to stay entertained and keep our athletes from Team Yukon engaged as well. During that day and a half of being stuck in a very small town in northern Greenland, I had the opportunity to witness how wonderful our mission staff and coaches really are. Each respective official or coach was able to find things for their athletes to do, keep them engaged and keep them busy and the whole time absolutely everyone was in great spirits. Nobody was upset; nobody was concerned about the fact that we were delayed. Everyone just took it in stride and rolled with the punches and it was excellent, Mr. Speaker.

I also should note the incredible hospitality that was exhibited by the volunteers and residents of Kangerlussuaq. For a very small community to take in thousands of people and house them and, in some cases, feed them, was very much appreciated by everyone certainly on Team Yukon.

I didn't have the stomach to try the muktuk that they offered us in the airport. After a day and a half in an airplane and an airport, I was a little queasy to begin with and a giant box of muktuk, frozen and left to thaw out for us to eat, didn't quite hit the spot for me. I had to resort to some pizza from the airport, unfortunately. But I know that some of our young athletes were brave and tried some of the fresh muktuk. I don't think anyone actually enjoyed it, but they certainly enjoyed the experience.

When we eventually got to Nuuk, it was a phenomenal experience there as well. Team Yukon did wonderfully in a whole range of sports. Of course, as members will be aware, Team Yukon earned 100 ulus in 14 events, including futsal, alpine skiing and snowshoeing. Meanwhile, the cultural contingent, composed of six young performing artists, wowed the crowds with original music and dance at the 2016 gala show.

Throughout the games, fair-play pins were distributed to participants who best demonstrated sportsmanship, fair play and a positive attitude. Yukon recipients included 11 athletes and one coach. Those were Alice Frost, Maggie Brook, Prism Saswirsky, Karyin Qui, Colin Hickman, Emily Gaw, Emily King, Peyton Twardochleb, Grace-Anne Janssen, Allen Mark, Kuduat Shorty, Sofia Bond and Tyler Milton. So I wanted, in addition to congratulating all of Team Yukon, to highlight

those individuals who received fair-play pins during their time in Nuuk. Of course, the fair-play pins were certainly well-deserved. Each has their own story and each has their own background for why they got the pin — I don't have the details of that — but I know that each one of them is very deserving.

On my way back, I had the pleasure of stopping in Iqaluit to watch a little bit of hockey. Again, unfortunately, due to the weather, I wasn't able to stay for as long as I planned in Iqaluit and was only able to watch a little bit of one game. But the hockey teams that were in Iqaluit, I know, enjoyed the competition and enjoyed the opportunity to join the rest of Team Yukon over in Nuuk for the closing ceremonies.

Anyone who followed the *Rant N' Raven* — which is the publication put out by Sport Yukon — during the games, would have heard some of the interesting stories. But there was one — and I won't repeat the entire story, Mr. Speaker, but I would encourage interested listeners to seek out the story about the lost pins. Our chef de mission en route to the games had an unfortunate circumstance in Seattle where he lost all his bags and that included all of Team Yukon's pins. Through a very interesting series of events, those pins were actually returned by some bystanders in Seattle who happened to find the pins at a bus stop after they had been stolen. So it's a remarkable story and worth visiting the website to read. I hope that we find a way to thank those individuals in Seattle who were able to return those pins in time to give out during the games — one day, Mr. Speaker.

While there are so many mission staff and coaches to thank — and I won't be able to do that all today — I did want to highlight the work of Team Yukon's chef de mission, Trevor Twardochleb. Trevor was amazing. I don't think he actually slept once when he was in Nuuk. He may have for a couple of hours one night, but every single night there was something going on that required him to go rummaging through bags at the airport or seeking out changes in venues, et cetera. His work was phenomenal and it was very much appreciated by everyone who was there. Of course, the athletes each deserve commendation and congratulations for their wonderful representation of Yukon at the games. I will leave it at that for the Arctic Winter Games but, needless to say, it was an incredible experience.

The next sport aspect I wanted to mention, just because it's very relevant and recent, is the Special Olympics. Our athletes from Yukon participated in the nationals in Newfoundland this year and did quite well. They participated in the Special Olympics Canada Winter Games in Corner Brook, Newfoundland, and competed in cross-country skiing and figure skating. I should note, Mr. Speaker, that those games in Newfoundland were qualifiers for Team Canada to participate at the 2017 Special Olympics World Winter Games in Austria. While they didn't know it earlier on Saturday night, it was announced at the Special Olympics banquet on Saturday night that two of our athletes from Yukon had been selected for Team Canada. So Tijana McCarthy and Mike Sumner were selected to represent Team Canada at the Austria games next year in 2017. That announcement was

made by the executive director, Serge Michaud, on Saturday night, and I think everybody who was in attendance — many members were there — really appreciated the surprise on the faces of Mike and Tijana, who learned that night they were going to Austria next year to represent not only Yukon, but all Canada, at the world games. Congratulations to them on their performance in Newfoundland, and for all the athletes who participated, and a special shout-out to those two athletes who will head off to Austria next year with Team Canada.

I was going to wrap up my comments on sport, but there was one other piece I wanted to mention — and I was reminded of it listening to the Member for Copperbelt South talking — and that was Mount Sima. Mount Sima had a wonderful year this past winter. It concluded this Sunday with Simapalooza and a number of events, including the Slush Cup, which the Premier and I had the opportunity to witness and take in.

Since 2013, Yukon government has provided support to the Friends of Mount Sima Society, whose tremendous efforts took over operations of the hill in 2013-14. This facility plays an important role as a home to three of our territorial sport governing bodies that provide both recreational and competitive opportunities for many youth in Yukon. Sima has been supported by businesses, the community and other sport organizations for the benefit of all Yukon. It can also provide a future hosting destination for both summer and winter sports and will continue to provide recreational health, social and economic benefits for all Yukon.

Yukon community members supported the hill in the winter of 2013-14 by purchasing over 900 season passes. In 2014-15, 850 season passes were sold, and this past season the sale of passes exceeded 1,000. We have seen considerable support from the community for Sima. These sales were combined with a very successful effort to promote and secure Mount Sima as an early season training facility for provincial and national teams. The pre-season training program not only brought new revenue to the hill, but also very good opportunities for local athletes to train. This program was so successful that many teams have already signed up to come back next year, and a few new teams have been added to the mix as well.

We of course are very proud to have been part of the solution to ensure that the hill remained open for the past two seasons and, last year, provided funding in support of that initiative to open Sima for some pre-season training. That was a collaborative effort between the departments of Community Services, Tourism and Culture and Economic Development, and that support helps to ensure hill operations in the pre-season training program continue. This helps our athletes by providing a great facility for training and hosting events in alpine skiing, snowboarding and free-style skiing, and also creates a unique tourism opportunity for Whitehorse. Bringing in over 100 athletes in November is an excellent source of revenue I know for a number of the hotels, restaurants and others in the service industry who appreciated the influx of people in the off-season.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I will conclude my remarks on sports and move on to a few other important issues in the Department of Community Services.

One important initiative that we have underway is the expansion of basic 911 for the territory. To simplify public access to emergency help, Protective Services is leading the Yukon government's efforts to expand basic 911 emergency call service. Once in place, Yukoners and visitors will be able to dial the same easy-to-remember emergency number used across North America. Protective Services has worked closely with the RCMP to expand the capacity of the 911 call-taking centre and police dispatch operation in Whitehorse to prepare for the expansion of basic 911 to rural Yukon.

The RCMP has managed the 911 call-taking centre since basic 911 first came to the Whitehorse area in 1995. This arrangement will continue as basic 911 extends into rural Yukon by the end of the summer 2016. As part of this initiative, the 911 call-taking centre and police dispatch service moved from the RCMP headquarters in Whitehorse to the emergency response centre communications suite specifically designed for the Yukon-wide expansion of service.

Yukon government committed more than \$1 million in 2015-16 to support both the move and the hiring and training of additional 911 call centre staff. The RCMP call-taking centre has been operating out of the emergency response centre since February of this year and updated rural emergency service response maps have been delivered to response agencies and RCMP dispatch to support 911. I also need to note that an important partner in the development of this project has been Northwestel, as it is they who will have to make the application to the CRTC for the necessary changes. As well, this change has resulted in a new agreement with the RCMP around 911 and, between Yukon government, the RCMP and Northwestel, we remain on track to see 911 expanded here in the territory.

Another important initiative that will be very important, not only to the Protective Services branch of Community Services, but will be very important to the community of Haines Junction as well is that, later this year — in August — Yukon will host, yet again, Operation Nanook. Yukon government of course is committed to constant improvement in Yukon's emergency management. In addition to supporting Yukon's emergency first response organizations, Protective Services coordinates resources for scenario-based emergency management exercises. In 2013, the Government of Yukon hosted the Canadian Armed Forces Operation Nanook 13, a northern sovereignty and disaster relief exercise. It was the first time such an operation was held in the territory. Operation Nanook rotates through Canada's north about every three years and Yukon will again test its emergency preparedness when the operation returns in August of this year to Haines Junction. Exercises like this, and other smaller scale training initiatives help us practise our response to and improve our preparations for natural- and human-caused disaster events. They are key to Yukon's emergency preparedness model.

I want to particularly thank the mayor of Haines Junction, as he has personally sat on the committee that is preparing for Operation Nanook and has provided significant input into the process with regard to the availability and accessing of services and products from Haines Junction. It's very important that we try to maximize the economic benefit that can come from these sorts of initiatives and the contributions of the mayor and others from the community of Haines Junction will certainly ensure that those benefits are maximized.

Mr. Speaker, in discussing the expansion of 911, I forgot to note some important new infrastructure as well. While the RCMP dispatch moved to the emergency response centre on Two Mile Hill, I should also note that EMS of course is based there as well, and as a result of some changes going on at the Whitehorse General Hospital campus, the ambulance station there has seen changes as well. As a result of the changes to the Whitehorse General Hospital emergency area, a new ambulance station was built and, as of a few months or weeks ago, EMS has moved its operations to the new building.

The new building is an excellent facility that I had the chance to tour a few weeks ago and I was very impressed by the upgrade from the previous building. I know that a number of the EMS professionals who work there certainly appreciated the upgrade from the old building, which was rather old. I've heard there was some celebration in the demolition of the old building, but I won't get into in detail. Needless to say, Mr. Speaker, having the new ambulance station at the Whitehorse General Hospital campus as well as the relatively new building up on Two Mile Hill means that both of our Whitehorse-based ambulance stations are very new, very modern and will certainly improve the services that are available to Yukoners as well as make for a better place to work for those professionals who work there on our behalf.

I recognize that my time is quickly elapsing, Mr. Speaker, so I will move on briefly. I did want to note and have some discussion a little bit on infrastructure, but I don't think I'll be able to, given the time. I did want to note that a few weeks ago I had the opportunity to announce with our MP, Larry Bagnell, that a number of projects had been approved under the small communities fund. Of course, the small communities fund is a small piece of the new Building Canada fund. It's for communities under 100,000 — of course, which would apply to all Yukon communities.

The five projects that were approved under the small communities fund were the first projects that had been approved under the new Building Canada fund, which was a significant milestone. Those projects included: ducted sewage system in Carmacks; solid-waste upgrades for Haines Junction, Faro, and Watson Lake; a project in Teslin to improve drainage and improve some roads; and of course, two projects right here in Whitehorse, which are very relevant to those of us who live here in Whitehorse. The first was the Whitehorse groundwater protection program. That project will consist of improvements to protect the Selkirk aquifer under the Riverdale subdivision, which supplies 100 percent of Whitehorse's drinking water. The upgrades include:

decommissioning of abandoned wells, improving drainage around active water wells and monitoring well sites and improve monitoring systems.

In conjunction with that project, I should note that Public Works is in the process of removing a number of old underground tanks in Riverdale as well, I believe, at Macaulay Lodge and at one of the schools in Riverdale, so we're seeing some improvements to the protection of Yukon's groundwater and drinking water through these initiatives.

As well, relevant to my riding, of course, was the McLean Lake connector road, which was a project that will create a new road link between the McLean Lake area, completing work envisioned in the planning of the Hamilton Boulevard extension that began in 2009. The project will improve traffic flow on the Alaska Highway by rerouting heavy truck traffic away from the old highway access and through the controlled Alaska Highway/Hamilton Boulevard intersection. The project will include base preparation, ditching and BST work or asphalt surface. That project will be important for people in my neighbourhood as well as those who are coming in from south of Whitehorse in the morning, as those big trucks that used to have to turn left at the road at McLean Lake will now have the opportunity to go through the controlled intersection.

Mr. Speaker, I realize I'm out of time, so I will conclude my remarks by noting that I'm again very proud of the budget put forward by this government, by my colleagues, beginning, of course, with the Premier — the Minister of Finance — and my colleagues in Cabinet.

I look forward to seeing some debate on the budget in the coming weeks and look forward to passing this budget, as I believe it does a good job of setting us up well for the future.

With that, I commend this budget to the House and thank my colleagues yet again. Cheers.

Mr. Silver: I would like to begin as I always do with a heartfelt thank you to the constituency of the Klondike for the privilege of representing them here in the Assembly. I want to thank Dawson City for all of the support that I have received over the past five years. It has been an honour representing the Klondike in Whitehorse. For the record, I will be seeking the support of Dawson residents for another term as the Klondike MLA in the next territorial election whenever that might occur. I'm waiting for some other announcements here, but haven't heard them. I announced this the day before the session began and I'm excited about the campaign that will happen sometime later this year. No nods from the people across the hall.

Since we met last fall, I had a great deal of time in the Klondike talking with people about issues and also just enjoying all that Dawson has to offer. There is never a dull moment in this vibrant northern community and I would be hard-pressed to find a community that has so much to do in the winter months. Judging by the number of out-of-towners who were welcomed to the Klondike during the Thaw di Gras festival we held a few short weeks ago, clearly this is no secret.

We had Sourdough Sams and Rendezvous Queens come up for our lip sync. Many people actually stayed along for the Sunday chili cook-off, which, this year was, won by Dennis Dunn and Kyla MacArthur. Congratulations to those two. They have been in it every year for at least — I won't say how many, but this is the first time that they have actually won it.

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Mr. Silver: I just so happened to volunteer that weekend and I was a judge.

Getting down to the budget, it is interesting to note that we are already into the 2016-17 fiscal year as we begin debating on the budget. This is the second year in a row that the government made a conscious decision or choice to begin the Spring Sitting after the fiscal year had already begun. The normal course of events is to begin the Sitting, as you know, in late March or earlier to allow time to pass an interim supply bill before the fiscal year actually begins. That didn't happen again this year for several reasons — one of the main reasons being the government's inability to make a decision on whether or not to call a spring election and another one would be the astounding turnover in the ranks of deputy ministers in this government. It's hard to pull together a budget when we need to consult the phone book to find out who has been fired and who is still employed. The amount of money needed for severance packages also kept changing right up to the last minute.

The late call has resulted in the government once again bypassing the Legislature for spending authority by relying on special warrants. It demonstrates a lack of respect, in my opinion, for this Chamber and for democracy. I was critical of this approach last year and here I am again this year.

I want to read from you what Robert Ascah, a fellow in the Institute for Public Economics at the University of Alberta had to say, and I quote: "Special warrants should typically be used only in exceptional circumstances — for instance, when a new government has just been elected and needs more time to bring in a budget, and unanticipated emergencies like floods or fires might also require extra spending when the assembly isn't sitting."

But he said he doesn't understand why a government would routinely convene the Legislature so late that they would have to issue special warrants for that. I am going to quote again: "The problem with the use of special warrants is that cabinet avoids the scrutiny of the legislative assembly. I just don't think that's a good way of running governments." He said democracy demands that any money from the public purse must be debated. Ascah was skeptical of the Yukon government and their explanation that the late federal budget meant it needed more time to finalize its own finances. He said provincial and territorial finance ministers typically meet with their federal counterparts well before the end of the fiscal year, and get a pretty good sense of how to plan for their budgets.

Anyone who watched the Premier's speech to the Conservative think-tank in 2015 at the Manning networking conference got an early look at a line that the Yukon Party often has been repeating in the last little while. The Premier

told Canada's leading Conservatives, whom he does not want to be associated with as of late, that his goal was to make Yukon a net contributor to Canada. If Yukon were to judge this government on what progress has been made toward achieving that goal — and they should when they go the polls this October — the government would certainly get a failing grade. We still receive the vast majority of our funding from Ottawa, and we are certainly no closer to being a net contributor to Canada than we were 14 years ago. That has not changed in all of the time that the Yukon Party has been in office.

Now according to the government's own budget documents, the Yukon continues to generate only 12 percent of its own revenue. The rest still comes from the Government of Canada and other sources. There is lots of talk about growing the private sector, but it is not matched by the numbers. When the government came to power, approximately 80 percent of expenses were paid by federal transfer; now, 88 percent of our expenses are paid with other peoples' money. Because of our economic situation we are less able to stand on our own than we were when the Yukon Party was elected. We raised \$114 million in taxes and general revenues in 2011-12. We are expected to raise only \$112 million, according to the budget tabled last week. We are paying less and less of our own freight since the government came into power five year as ago.

After five years, the government is doing exactly what the Yukon Party government has always done and that is to spend federal money. The year the Premier was elected, they spent \$745 million of someone else's money — I believe somebody called it "Daddy" today. This year they are spending \$925 million of someone else's money. Now, I get it — we live in a unique place with unique challenges and federal money is key to sustaining the north. But everyone will agree that we should be able to spend it more wisely.

I am quoting here again: "If you don't stand up for a debt-free Yukon, you don't stand up for Yukoners." That was the Premier last week, and it is quite a line. I think the Premier's speech-writer should take a look at the Public Accounts, which detail the \$190-some million in debt that is on the books for the Crown corporations that are part of this government. We have ministers responsible for the Crown corporations; the Crown corporations are part of this government. The lion's share of the debt has been built up over the last 14 years of Yukon Party rule.

We do not have net debt and we haven't had net debt since the mid-1990s, I believe. It's pretty rich to hear the Yukon Party government criticizing any government who does create debt. This government should look in the mirror. It was only a couple of years ago that this government was forced to make a one-time payment of \$27 million to the Hospital Corporation to cover some of the costs of the massive debt that corporation ran up under the Yukon Party government 1.0. If this isn't their debt, why are they paying it down?

The speech also said — and I quote: "... other provinces and territories pay interest on that debt." Well, Mr. Speaker,

so do we. The Yukon Development Corporation, for example, paid \$5 million a year to cover the costs of the \$100-million bond it issued a few years ago. Now the Premier clearly just glossed over that fact in his speech.

Let's move to another dubious claim that the budget speech makes. The top of page six of the budget speech says: "Growing our Economy". In early March, the Yukon government had taxpayers foot the bill for a flyer that was mailed across the territory. It was a report to Yukoners that boldly stated this government is growing our economy. Now, Mr. Speaker, the Conference Board of Canada recently confirmed that our economy shrank last year and in fact shrank for three years in a row. In a few months' time, the territory's last operating hardrock mine will be shutting its doors. The government's own forecast says — and I quote: "Real GDP is expected to contract for the third consecutive year in 2015." So much for the claim that the government has successfully grown the economy.

When Yukon Party 2.0 came into office in 2011, there were three hardrock mines and, in a few months' time, there will be none. The government has had successive billion-dollar budgets at their disposal, transfer payments from Ottawa have increased every year as well. Despite this, we have just completed our third year in a row of economic decline — the worst performance in all of Canada.

This government has delivered three years in a row of negative economic growth — the single worst economic record of any place in Canada — yet the Yukon Party has the nerve to produce a brochure, with taxpayers' money, that claims that it's growing the economy. The recent federal budget even singled out Whitehorse for extra help for people on EI.

Now the Yukon Party has blamed low mineral prices; it blamed YESAA and the new federal government, but it is unwilling to admit its own role in how we got to the bottom of Canada's economic barrel. Coasting on high mineral prices, refusing to address regulatory uncertainty, and a habit of meeting First Nation governments in court are all things under this government's control that could have made a difference with a different approach. It's a fact that we have the worst-performing economy in Canada and we are producing less and less goods and services each year. Our GDP went down in 2013. Our GDP went down in 2014 and it's going to go down in 2015. We are the only place in Canada to see our economy shrink three years in a row.

Now we know what happens because of these types of situations: people leave — and people are leaving. We know a growing population grows our economy, but unfortunately the Yukon was the only place in Canada whose population went down in the first quarter of 2016, according to Statistics Canada. Now it will be interesting to watch our population grow or fall, moving forward.

There was another item that I wanted to note from the Premier's Manning speech last year. He praised our — and I quote: "proven regulatory and permitting process" when it comes to mining. We had the Premier telling a national audience of Conservatives that everything was great with our

permitting system. Here at home, it is a different message entirely. In this year's budget speech, the Premier said that we need to — and I quote: "... modernize our mining regulations to create greater certainty, regulatory streamlining and a more integrated approach to permitting..." So nationally in front of Conservatives, everything is blue sky; a year later in the budget speech, it's a totally different message.

Our regulatory system is broken, and we have just managed to avoid a court battle because the new federal government is committing to fix the mess of the former Conservative government in Ottawa and this government. The Yukon Party government likes to present itself as a defender of mining. When it was elected, Yukon was one of the most attractive regions in the world. Since then, we have tumbled down the Fraser Institute rankings, and who does that hurt? Well, it hurts Yukon companies. Under this government, we have lost the Keno mine, the Wolverine mine and the Minto mine. We are coming out of a commodities supercycle, seen once in a generation, and we don't have a single operating hardrock mine with a long-term future here. Now, as an election looms, the government is scrambling to develop a mineral strategy and starting to ask the Government of Canada to fund new infrastructure projects that have been drawn out, frankly, on a napkin. Speaking of the mineral development strategy, we know that it was scheduled to go to Cabinet recently and was pulled from the agenda at the last minute.

We know that one of the defining accomplishments of this government has been to ratchet up uncertainty for investors, particularly in the resource sector. That uncertainty is reflected in the latest rankings in the Fraser Institute mining report. It was also reflected in the mineral exploration in the territory, which is down by 18 percent again this year. It has dropped almost every year that Yukon Party 2.0 has been in the office. Ongoing court battles with First Nations and regulatory uncertainty have tarnished our relationships and have tarnished our reputation as being a good place to do business.

A perfect example of this is the Yukon Party's botched attempt to amend Bill S-6, or YESAA. Regulatory uncertainty is a huge problem right now in our resource sector. It comes up when I meet with mining companies and oil and gas companies that want to do business here. It is one of the reasons our economy has shrunk for three years in a row. It is one of the reasons we continue to drop in the Fraser Institute mining rankings. It is one of the reasons exploration has dropped almost every year since the government took office. It wasn't that long ago the Premier was singing the praise of YESAA. This is him in 2013 — and I quote: "Frameworks like YESAA enable us to harness the momentum of the past decade and turn it into sustainable economic growth."

Mr. Speaker, three years ago, this government was praising YESAA to anyone who would listen. Now, as it tries to duck responsibilities for the role it has played in creating the only economy in Canada that has shrunk for three years in a row, there is no love for YESAA from this government.

With regard to a government blaming low mineral prices, here is a quote from Yukon Party 1.0: "... Yukon's climb to

the top of the rankings has absolutely nothing to do with world mineral prices; it has everything to do with us — this government — making the changes necessary to restore investor confidence in Yukon."

I've said it before and I'll say it again: when things are going well, the Yukon Party will take the credit; when things are going bad, it's YESAA or it's the world mineral prices. Last week, the new federal minister was here to start cleaning up the mess left by this government after its YESAA review.

Before the last election, this government and all Yukoners were aware of problems in our mining regulatory system. The Yukon Party platform stated it would — and I quote: "Continue to work with the Government of Canada to resolve the issues pertaining to the problems with the Yukon Environmental and Socio-Economic Assessment Act and the Yukon Waters Act."

Despite that, the government is now only getting around to working on resolving those issues. Unlike the Premier, who now blames low mineral prices, the Fraser Institute does not even mention this — instead pointing the finger squarely at this government and its regulatory problems.

Yukoners know the government holds the Fraser Institute survey in high regard. They couldn't stop talking about it when the Yukon was moving up in the rankings. Now that the Yukon is sliding down the rankings, the world mineral prices are all to blame; YESAA is to blame.

There is money in the budget to work on a mine licensing improvement initiative, which, according to this government, will clarify the roles of the regulatory agencies and make sure that the many levels of our regulatory system work well together. This project has been mentioned a few times in recent months but, strangely enough, there has been no information about it on the government's website. There's a brief outline of it on the Water Board's website, for some reason. It is work that should have been done five years ago but, nonetheless, it is now underway. I wish the government every success on this project, and I hope it avoids the approach that it took with regard to Bill S-6 and the participation of Yukon First Nations.

I'm afraid that, when you add it all up, it's a little too late for this government to help the mining industry. The damage in our industry is already done; the regulatory uncertainty and the antagonistic approach to First Nation relations mean that it's too late for Yukon Party's mining vision.

I'm going to move on to the speech delivered last week. It is clear from the blueprint announced last week that an election is definitely coming. The Yukon Party government's plan is to try to buy Yukoners' hearts and minds with their own money. This is the main theme of the document.

As our economy falters, the government is throwing every dollar it can into public circulation. A look at the long-term plan, however, shows a huge spike in the capital spending for this year and it drops off dramatically after the next election. What the territory needs is a consistent project-building schedule that ensures local contractors receive the lion's share of the work and keeps those dollars in the Yukon.

Mining is boom-and-bust; government spending should not be.

The only thing holding the government back from spending even more on capital in the lead-up to the election is the massive growth in operation and maintenance costs of the government itself. A look at the historical increases show that, since 2016, O&M is up \$234 million, while capital spending is only up \$69 million. Once again, this is the party that is continually trumpeting its private sector beliefs while the reality is something very different — larger and larger governments, more and more spending on itself. In the last 12 months, the number of private sector jobs in the Yukon dropped by 900 — so much for the private sector growth the government likes to hang its hat on. Our economy is once again being driven by how much money comes out of Ottawa and, luckily for this government, that number continues to grow every year.

The document also shows the Yukon Party government has spent down the surplus. They spent it down from \$223 million to \$52 million in just the last two years alone as it ramps up spending. This has become the typical cycle with this government. As an election approaches, they begin building more new projects than local contractors can handle, resulting in employment for larger firms in the south. This kind of pre-election spending leads to rushed, poorly planned and overbudget projects. Trying to cram a great deal of spending into a short window will also result in more jobs going to Outside contractors. I met with business groups last week that had been watching this approach being tried over and over again. The result is always the same, they say — Outside contractors coming up and picking up the extra work with no extra benefit going to Yukon workers or the Yukon at all. The short-term political goals of the government are the top priority, not properly managed and well-timed spending.

Mr. Speaker, the largest project in the budget — the continuing care facility for seniors in Whistle Bend — is being built by an Outside contractor; we all know that. This is a project that wasn't even mentioned, by the way, in the Yukon Party's platform. The second-largest project, the new hospital, is also being built by an Outside contractor. The latest contract for Faro cleanup was just awarded by this government to a company from Alberta.

Another large project, the overbudget F.H. Collins school, was just completed by an Outside contractor. Now, the Premier was busy telling Yukoners to buy local on budget day. If only this government practised what it preached. These three projects alone total over \$200 million, and many of the jobs have been and will be filled by Outside residents. Most of the profits will also flow outside the territory.

Speaking of F.H. Collins and given this government's poor record when it comes to managing these capital projects, I was not surprised to see that another \$4.3 million has been added to the cost of F.H. Collins school, bringing the total to \$55.3 million. In the last year, the government has been forced to return to Management Board to ask, yet again, for more money on this overbudget project. This is an example of a project that was rushed before the 2011 election. We all

remember the Premier and a former Minister of Education with their golden shovels out before the last election to mark the beginning of the construction of the new school. Two and a half years later, construction had not even started and the contract for the building of the school was finally awarded to a company from Alberta. This was done on purpose, I might add, because of the way the government wrote their tender. It made it virtually impossible for a Yukon company to win the bid.

Now we know at least \$6 million was spent on a now-scraped design. This money was wasted and lost. Next to the overbudget and behind-schedule rural hospitals, this project is the poster child for what happens when government tries to ram projects through based on political, and not practical or well-reasoned, deadlines. When the dust settles, we'll see what the total cost is for this project.

Mr. Speaker, years late and millions of dollars overbudget, F.H. Collins did get built. The same cannot be said about the new rec centre in my home community of Dawson. I was disappointed to see that the entire term of this government will pass without the Yukon Party 2011 campaign promise to build a new rec centre being fulfilled. That broken promise has left my community once bitten, twice shy when hearing claims about the Yukon Party planning to pave the runway in Dawson — not in this budget, but after the election. Dawson is too smart for that, Mr. Speaker. All we heard was the commitment to pave the Dawson Airport runway was left out of this budget. It is another broken promise.

This is one of the projects on the government's growing IOU list as we head into this year's election. The budget fails to deliver on promises of a new francophone school, a mental health strategy or a fibre optic line. These are all now just political promises that voters will be left making a decision on. The fibre project is especially interesting considering that the government announced that this project was ready to go last fall.

With all the Premier's talk about the private sector, I'm sure the business community was looking for an update on the red tape review announced two Budget Addresses ago. Anyone looking will be disappointed because there is no mention of this in the entire budget. In fact, there hasn't been any word of this for almost two years now. Mr. Speaker, we support this red tape review.

Just for the record, I'll let the government know where the Yukon Liberals stand on a few other issues that we've heard in this reply so far. The Yukon Liberals — we support the free-entry system for mining. Yukon Liberals also support hydro development. Yukon Liberals support the use of LNG as a diesel alternative. We do not support fracking in the Yukon. The Yukon Liberals support oil and gas development and always has.

We know the NDP opposes fracking. We're not too sure where it stands on conventional oil and gas development. We will find out very soon, I'm sure, as we all start going into platform mode.

There are several things that I wish were in this budget, and the mental health strategy is one of those examples. We

will draw down on that new money that has been announced, but I must say that \$1 million over a five-year period does not make a mental health strategy. Having more services for mental health outside of Whitehorse is another thing that we absolutely need — a long-term solution for recycling instead of the stop-gap measures that have been announced so far.

Another initiative that the Premier mentioned in his speech is the so-called reconciliation agreements with Yukon's unsigned First Nations. This could be a great idea. It's hard to tell, given how little the government has divulged to date about what is on the table. There has been very little information made public about the mandate of these talks, the budget, the goals and the objectives, how the talks are proceeding, et cetera. Perhaps in ECO debate the Premier can shed some light on these decisions.

The major item in this budget area of Highways and Public Works is Shakwak funding, or lack thereof. The budget before us contains \$12 million in funding for part of the Shakwak highway project. That's a far cry from the \$40 million spent in 2006 and even the \$25 million spent in 2012.

In recent years, this funding from the United States government for this project has dropped substantially. It gets worse. The funding for the project for future years was cut off by the United States in 2012. Since then, the government has been lobbying unsuccessfully to have this fund reinstated and has almost spent down what monies had been banked over the years. This reserve is now almost empty.

The Premier confirmed in his budget speech last year that the future of this money remains — and I quote: "in limbo". The Premier himself travelled to Washington to make his case on this funding and said — and I quote: "We will know in two or three months whether or not this work has been successful." Two years later and there has been no news at all. The Yukon Party's failure to keep an eye on the ball means that this valuable source of revenue has all but dried up. The lobbying efforts since 2012 have produced no results.

I want to move on now to health care and the government's plan for a 300-bed Whistle Bend institution for our seniors, but given this government's poor record when it comes to managing capital projects, I am alarmed to see \$67 million set aside to begin construction of this facility. The first phase is for 150 beds, but the building is being constructed so it can expand to 300 beds. With almost no consultation, the Government of Yukon has decided to proceed with this facility in Whitehorse. It will centralize continuing care in a one-size-fits-all kind of way.

At the same time, the government just completed the replacement of the McDonald Lodge in Dawson. There were plans to make this a 20-bed facility. Those have been scaled back to only 15 beds. People I have spoken to in my community and other rural centres are interested in staying in their communities. They don't want to move to a one-size-fits-all facility hundreds of miles away in Whitehorse.

The number 300 — where did that number come from? Not just Whitehorse. That number is from all of the Yukon. We're not sending our seniors and elders to a one-size-fits-all institution. They are asking why this government is pursuing

this centralized approach, instead of focusing on keeping our seniors in their home communities. In my view, the government missed an opportunity to have more beds in rural Yukon. It did so because it seemed to think the solution was one-size-fits-all in Whitehorse.

We can all agree that the demand for continuing care is growing. The Liberal caucus, however, disagrees fundamentally with this government on how to manage that growth. I would like to see the demand in rural Yukon being met in rural Yukon. The government's approach is to funnel all of our seniors into Whitehorse. One of the planning studies the government is relying on, as it proceeds with the continuing care decision, says that the only new beds built in the future will all be in Whitehorse. We have already heard the concerns of First Nation elders who will not be comfortable in such a large institution. The lack of consultation on this facility speaks volumes about how little this government has learned in its office in five years.

I'm going to change over to Education here. Last year's budget speech devoted four entire pages to announcing yet another new vision for education. The entire final section of the budget outlined yet another attempt of this government to redesign our education system. It is the third try in a decade, by my count, and it follows the New Horizons project that was just implemented in 2014.

Yukoners, I'm sure, will follow with interest and plenty of scepticism as yet another master plan for education looms. This year's budget speech barely mentions the new plan. It makes no mention at all of the complete K to 12 curriculum that was promised just a year ago.

It's hard to put a dollar figure on the relationship of the Yukon government with First Nation governments, although it seems to be the most important measurement this government relies on. We hear regularly of the money that this government says it is giving to First Nations and how we should understand that this means that they are getting along just fine. It is hard to measure distrust in relations with First Nations, but I don't think anybody will disagree that this government's willingness and ability to walk side by side with First Nations has been nothing short of a failure. The record is marked by battlegrounds and broken relationships. The Peel case, the Ross River case, Bill S-6 — Mr. Speaker, we need to do better. I am pleased to see actually that the Ross River waste-water treatment facility and the expansion of our water-monitoring network are both included in the estimates before us. Ross River housing is a whole other issue.

I only have 40 minutes for this response, so there are many items I won't be able to get into, including the government's position on fracking, the new dam project, the proposed Keno power line, land use planning and the future of the Dawson waste-water treatment facility. We will get to that as the days tick on here in the spring Legislature.

Over the past decade, the politics and policies of successive Yukon Party governments have disrespected First Nation governments and they can now add municipal and federal governments into that mix. They have put their economic eggs into one basket and now, as mineral prices

drop, our economy is slowing down. With our resources, our natural beauty and our bright, hard-working citizens, we all have the potential to be a model of success for the entire country. I believe that the potential is not being harnessed, and I also believe that we need a new form of leadership. We need leadership that empowers First Nation governments and consults openly and fairly. We need leadership that listens to our public servants instead of muting them and interfering with their decisions. We need leadership that enables our private sector instead of entangling them in red tape. We need leadership that brings about a better type of politics in the Yukon instead of this us-versus-them approach. The polarizing divides us and ignores our common bonds.

In closing, I want to thank the public sector employees for all the work that they do in preparing this budget, but on behalf of Yukoners, I would like to challenge the Yukon Party government to do better. Yukoners deserve better planning. They work too hard for their money to be wasted, and Yukoners deserve better listening. They are too important to have to fight to be heard.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Mr. Kent: Mr. Speaker, I know that the Premier and other ministers will have an opportunity to respond to the Member for Klondike as we get into specific departments as well. The Premier will of course close debate here at second reading on the budget, but I do have to note one thing. Here we are, April 12 of the final Sitting. We are in the third day of the final Sitting of this Legislature. There has been a lot accomplished by members of this Legislature over the past number of years and I think we should all be very proud of it.

One exciting thing, I guess for us, is that finally we had some positions put forward by the Liberal Party. I think I counted five or so. Four of them were ours and one of them was the NDP's. Nevertheless there were some positions put forward. Previously I referred to — and I guess this was something that is timely — given the Timbits hockey tournament that took place over the weekend, that the Liberals reminded me of the Timbits hockey players, all chasing the puck around with no real plan and that is certainly something that we see.

With respect to the New Democrats, certainly I know they've put forward a number of positions over the past five years. I don't agree with very many of them and we've put forward positions that they don't agree with. But the Liberal Party here, as we work toward the next election, will perhaps be able to come up with some positions of their own. They won't continue to try to be on everybody's side, as they have over the past number of years — as this leader and the previous leader of the Liberal Party certainly did to essentially chase me and other members of the Liberal Party out of that party over the past number of years — and are now proud members of the Yukon Party or perhaps even proud members of the New Democrats.

So Mr. Speaker, with that, I know the Member for Klondike once — we had a gallery full of schoolchildren here and he talked about being kinder and gentler, so I will move

into that kinder and gentler type of response to the Premier's budget speech.

I too would like to thank the constituents of Riverdale North. It has been a pleasure representing him here in this Legislature over the past number of years. It's very enjoyable obviously; a subdivision that I share representation for with the Member for Riverdale South across the way. It's a very exciting place to live and an awesome place to live. I've been in the Yukon for 43 years and have spent all but 10 years of that time living in the Riverdale subdivision, but of course time moves on and circumstances change. My wife and I and my young son will be relocating to the riding of Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes in early June. We're excited for an opportunity to live on the shores of Marsh Lake and raise our son there on a beautiful piece of property. I'm looking forward to moving out there and certainly continuing as a representative for the riding of Riverdale North and making sure that their issues are adhered to as we move toward the next election.

It's an opportunity as my last response during this current Legislative Assembly to highlight some of the riding initiatives that have taken place over the past number of years that I think are extremely exciting and are great opportunities for things that we should be proud of in Riverdale. Of course the MRI at the Whitehorse General Hospital — the first MRI in Canada north of 60. A lot of blood, sweat and tears from volunteers and individuals involved with the Yukon Hospital Foundation have gone into the purchase of that machine over the past number of years, and the Yukon government worked with the foundation to install that.

Of course, we've seen some other improvements taking place at the hospital. We do have an ambulance station in Riverdale that has been secured and will continue to service not only my constituents, but Riverdale South constituents and members in the immediate vicinity. I think that's an important piece of infrastructure that needs to be recognized. It's something that I'm happy is included on the hospital campus as well to service those who live in the downtown and Riverdale areas.

The Emergency expansion at the hospital, as well, is of benefit to my constituents and constituents from across the city and the territory. It will be a tremendous addition to what we already have at the hospital and what we have for quality health care here in the Yukon.

I'll speak in a little more detail about the F.H. Collins project, but again, F.H. Collins is open — 639, I believe, students attending the new school in Riverdale. It's certainly an exciting opportunity for them as we approach the inaugural graduating class from the new F.H. Collins. Of course, many of us in this Legislature were graduates of the original F.H. Collins as well. We're happy for those students to be able transition out of the older school into the new learning facility.

I haven't had the opportunity to get over to the school. I was through there a number of times during construction and the lead-up to fit-out. But I did run into the vice-principal today and she made a point of inviting me over to do a tour.

I'll of course check with my colleague, the Minister of Education, and arrange an opportunity to get into the school.

There are a number of smaller projects that have taken place in Riverdale over the past while, but they're good projects for the community. The Yukon government invested in 18 Yukon schools for new playground equipment. Installations took place in 2014-15 and 2015-16 fiscal years. The approximate budget for Yukon government was \$1.57 million, and I'm happy that a couple of schools in the Riverdale area received new playground equipment. Selkirk school received new equipment, as did Christ the King Elementary School. I know they're very well-utilized by the students who run around there. My son's favourite playground is at Selkirk, so we get down there quite often. I will note that there is a playground close to our new place out at New Constabulary as well, so we're excited about that.

The Liard park in Riverdale — the Riverdale Community Association put forward a CDF application and was accepted. A lot of hard work — I'll single out Mr. Matt Ball, who is a Riverdale North constituent. I know he was one of the leaders in getting the Riverdale Community Association to put forward that application. Now they have a hockey rink with a hard surface in the Liard park that I understand gets an awful lot of use — again, another excellent recreational infrastructure addition to what we have in Riverdale.

Below the ground in Riverdale at some of the government-owned facilities have been some oil tanks that have been replaced over the past number of years — Selkirk school, for instance. I think Vanier is up this year; Macaulay Lodge will be getting a new oil tank. Of course, that's important from an environmental standpoint, as the Riverdale aquifer provides a lot of the drinking water for the City of Whitehorse. As we continue to reduce our environmental liabilities, removing those oil tanks and replacing them with above-ground modern oil tanks is something that's also very important.

Mr. Speaker, I'm just going to mention one other thing. Mr. Matt Ball and his wife, Michelle Ball — perhaps it's Michelle Boleen, so I apologize if she still goes by her maiden name — approached me and the Minister of Education — I think it was last year at some point — about French immersion and the challenges they were having getting their children into the kindergarten. Very quickly the Minister of Education moved to expand the French immersion program and add a classroom to Selkirk Street School. I know it's something that has been very well-received at the school. They added a kindergarten class. I believe this upcoming fall there will be a kindergarten and a grade 1 class, and we'll move through the grades to expand the French immersion program — something that's extremely important to my constituents. I believe Michelle actually has joined the Selkirk school council as well, so a big thank you to that family for making additional French immersion opportunities available in the Riverdale area.

Mr. Speaker, as Minister of Highways and Public Works and Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, I'm going to spend a little bit of time highlighting some of the new

opportunities and perhaps addressing some of the accomplishments if I have an opportunity when it comes to both of those departments. Property Management Division has produced a document that I'll be tabling here in the next week or so in the Legislative Assembly with respect to some of the projects and some of the new initiatives that they've undertaken.

When we look at the top 15 major capital works contracts that were awarded between 2010-2011 and 2014-2015, over 70 percent of the dollar value of those were awarded to local companies — that's just over \$77 million. A little bit less than 30 percent were awarded to an Outside company — that being the F.H. Collins contract. It had a value of \$31.14 million approximately, but the project averaged 75-percent local labour participation over the course of construction. So again, this is different from the narrative being put forward by the Member for Klondike, the Leader of the Liberal Party.

That's a project that not only those students are benefiting from — those who will be attending it this year and for years to come — but there were also local labour components that benefited from that project.

When it comes to some of the other opportunities and activities that are being set up by the Property Management Division, there are a couple that I would like to highlight as priorities for 2016-17.

The first is a client service unit that is being set up at PMD. Of course the PMD clients are many departments within the Yukon government. As we look at the evolution of the Property Management Division within the government — for those long-time government employees, it started out being housed within Government Services more than 15 years ago, then reorganized as the Property Management Agency through the end of 2008, and now the Property Management Division remains a unique service organization within our government where nearly all of its clients are government employees and departments. This new client service unit that will be formed is going to be utilizing a data-driven and evidence-based approach to enhance PMD service delivery.

Starting this spring and continuing through the rest of 2016, PMD client service unit will begin working with departments to identify areas of both strengths and weaknesses in the current relationship and target areas where improvements can be implemented to create shared-value outcomes. This will include refreshing service level agreements and service standards with all departments.

PMD prides itself on walking the talk of exceptional client service and intends to demonstrate that commitment. Our goal is to ensure that we deliver our programs and services while meeting our clients' needs with full accountability, integrity and respect. From space renovation requests to capital maintenance projects, PMD has begun simplifying and improving access to all of its core client services.

This is something that I look for — I've communicated this to my Cabinet colleagues and I know that at the deputy minister level and at the assistant deputy minister level, it has also been communicated. I would like to recognize the

leadership of the ADM of Property Management Division, Mr. Paul McConnell and his team in bringing forward this opportunity for a client services unit. It's something that I think is necessary and will prove very strong.

The other priority initiative that PMD has identified is a sustainable energy management team. As a three-year pilot project, PMD will be launching an energy unit within the division, guided by a multi-year sustainable energy management plan. The plan includes projects and other action items focused on the implementation of energy-efficiency and conservation measures.

With more than 65 percent of all annual YG greenhouse gas emissions stemming from buildings in the portfolio, PMD aims to leverage its facility and project management expertise to drive meaningful and measurable climate action. Look for PMD to continue building on the progress of recent successful energy performance projects like the new F.H. Collins and the renovations that are currently underway at the main administration building here, which will reduce annual heating costs by more than \$225,000 while reducing greenhouse gas emissions by more than 400 tonnes each year.

Mr. Speaker, I think that gives us an opportunity to be a leader in this country when it comes to energy efficiency and climate change action. There are a number of initiatives underway across departments that will lead to better energy efficiency so that we don't have to put a price on carbon, as the opposition parties would like to do.

We know that we are doing our part. We are doing our heavy lifting. Ninety-five percent of our electricity is derived from renewable sources. The transportation and space heating sectors are the next ones we need to tackle. These energy-efficiency initiatives and the work of the Property Management Division on the sustainable energy management plan will certainly help out as we move forward.

Mr. Speaker, there are a number of other priorities and new initiatives that we've set out in both Highways and Public Works and Energy, Mines and Resources that I will speak to now, starting in HPW. The Vimy Place functional plan is being led by the Yukon Housing Corporation, and HPW is assisting the Vimy Heritage Housing Society with a functional plan covering space and structural considerations for the proposed supportive independent housing facility. I know this project is something that we identified in our platform and we've been working with representatives of the housing society for a number of years. My colleague, the Minister of Health and Social Services, spoke recently at their AGM and talked about this functional planning. There has been a kickoff meeting with the organization. I know, Mr. Speaker, that this is something that you too are extremely interested in as an MLA and a representative of that community. We're excited to see this advance. Again, I would like to thank all of those volunteers, board members and others who have put in an awful lot of work in getting us to this stage. This is similar to what we've accomplished with CSFY with respect to the francophone high school and other functional planning exercises that are moving forward.

Some of the other new initiatives when it comes to Highways and Public Works include making strategic investments in Yukon's infrastructure. We have a functional plan for the Alaska Highway. This project involves the provision of engineering services to develop a functional plan for the Alaska Highway from the British Columbia border to approximately Golden Horn subdivision, for HPW to use in prioritizing improvements. The value of this is estimated to be \$368,000 in this fiscal year.

We will see renovations to the Burwash air terminal building. The project involves renovations to that air terminal building valued at \$500,000. This is an initiative that I am very excited about because it is something that I think has been asked for by the community of Carmacks for quite some time, and that is the initiation of the environmental assessment on the Carmacks bypass. I know we have heard that from many community members in Carmacks, and I think they will be quite excited for us to do that. It certainly will give us the opportunity to bring to a shovel-ready state a bypass that will divert industrial traffic from the Mount Nansen Road and the Freegold and Casino roads around the community of Carmacks and outside of the residential areas that it currently uses. That is something that I am extremely happy with. I have informed the Mayor of Carmacks and the Chief of the Little Salmon Carmacks First Nation via letter that we would be putting forward in this fiscal year an application for the environmental assessment, going through the YESAA process.

The other environmental assessment that we will be undertaking this year is with respect to the Dawson Gold Field Road. As members will recall from the Fall Sitting, we spoke about access through the Dawson Gold Field Road to Kaminak's Coffee property as one of the northern accesses into the Dawson Range. There are existing public roads in that area — the Dawson Gold Field Road — and we will also be in this fiscal year going through the environmental assessment for that as well so that we can get it to shovel-ready.

Members know that we have approached the federal government looking for a funding partnership and investments in these resource roads, this one being one of the ones that will benefit not only the hardrock properties and exploration plays in the northern part of the Dawson range, but the many placer mines and placer operations in the Dawson gold fields. This is something that we heard directly from representatives of the Klondike region last year at a meeting that we had, and I continue to hear from Klondike Placer Miners' Association representatives about the importance of upgrading those roads.

Mr. Speaker, the Dawson airport development plan — this project includes assessing current infrastructure, including the surfaces, runways, taxiways, aprons, vehicle access, as well as the buildings — both existing ones and required ones — to determine the level of investment required to meet the identified needs and prepare construction sequencing plans.

That sounds very bureaucratic, but I did have a discussion last week with the members of the Dawson City Chamber of Commerce, and we talked about the functional planning for the Dawson airport. There are a number of requirements there,

but the thing of interest to the Dawson City Chamber of Commerce is, of course, paving the runway. That's something that I wrote a letter to Mr. Dick Van Oostrom from the Dawson City chamber about — our plans to pave in 2017. Again, he recognizes that there's work to be done, but even as late as this week, we still haven't received the written sign-off from Transport Canada with respect to the approach for the jet service in there.

I understand there has been some information requested from Air North and through one of the representatives of Air North that's on the Dawson City chamber, he has mentioned to me that he will be taking a lead role on behalf of Air North in addressing the approach issues that are still outstanding. I mean, again, we've received verbal assurances from Transport Canada but nothing in writing. This was something that I actually discussed with the new Minister of Transport Canada in Ottawa when I was there in early February, Mr. Marc Garneau. He identified that there was still some outstanding requirements — and I believe, at the time, he did identify something with Air North and they're working to get it resolved — exciting news for them. Of course, they will be flying in this summer and next summer, I believe, Holland America passengers from Fairbanks. The other thing that we have to be mindful of with paving the Dawson runway — the example that HPW officials have used is that we had to shut down the Whitehorse runway for 14 days when we paved it. Thankfully, it was an auxiliary runway and we still had the main runway to use. That's not a luxury that we have in Dawson, so scheduling will be extremely important so that we manage the disruption at the Dawson City Airport and make sure that it's minimized for not only Air North, but for the other people who use it, including of course the very important medevac service that requires the use of that runway.

I'm happy to report that since we spoke in the fall the geotech assessment proved that there's very little permafrost underneath the existing runway, so something that could have been a challenge is now something that we don't see as an impediment any more.

Again, I'm happy to be working on it and have offered the Dawson City Chamber of Commerce to be a full partner on the functional planning, given their vested interest in seeing the improvements to the airport and, in particular, the paving. We look forward to answering all the questions that we need to during the development plan and getting on with paving, barring any showstoppers in the 2017 season.

Mr. Speaker, we're planning to replace a number of bridges. Fox Creek bridge replacement will be undertaken this year. There is some rehabilitation work on the Nahanni Range Road; the Silver Trail will be receiving rehabilitation and culvert replacement; we have functional plans for a number of other roads, including the Tagish Road; Top of the World highway and of course we have \$1.5 million set aside for renovations at the Whitehorse air terminal building. This project is a suite of upgrades selected to improve the passenger experience and the operational

efficiency of the building. The scope of the work includes renovations to the washrooms and the check-in area and increasing the capacity of the main hold room, which are the major aspects, as well as repurposing the second floor vacant shelf space in the new terminal. We look forward to that project proceeding once the substantive tourism season is over in the fall, as I understand is the sequencing for that project.

Two highway maintenance camps will be receiving new living quarters — Swift River and Drury Creek — both of which will be replaced at a combined estimate of \$2.558 million. We are seeing significant investments in other airports and aerodromes. Additional investments of \$2.444 million at the Whitehorse airport include: developing lease lots on the south and north sides of apron 2; design work for the ATB baggage handling system upgrade; and rehabilitation of the north apron and pavement patching. Projects in the communities include: repairing drainage issues at the Dawson Airport; resurfacing and dust control at the Faro aerodrome; resurfacing at the Pelly aerodrome; and a fencing extension and dust control at the Old Crow aerodrome. The value of those community aerodromes is \$2.99 million.

There will be Alaska Highway rehabilitation and restoration valued at just over \$2 million for a number of locations on the Alaska Highway that continue to develop sections of settlement due to permafrost degradation and consolidation of soft soil. The Shakwak project of course was mentioned earlier here today with just over \$12 million invested in the northern part of that highway. Building maintenance and space planning, \$3.57 million; building overhead is just over \$1 million; corporate information technology, \$5.2 million. These funds will support the information and technology requirements and meet the business needs, including network infrastructure, systems development and workstations. This initiative includes Highways and Public Works systems development projects, further development of e-services and improvements to the mobile radio system and telecommunications network.

We are continuing to invest in reconstruction and rehabilitation of the Robert Campbell Highway. The Dempster Highway erosion control will see just over \$3 million; Klondike Highway erosion control and rehabilitation, \$1.2 million; \$1.5 million for the Nares River bridge replacement in Carcross; \$50,000 in this year's budget for design, permitting and geotech work at the Nisutlin Bay bridge rehabilitation with construction expected to start in 2018-19; \$5.4 million in transportation planning and engineering, so a variety of projects that will be undertaken under that; and the main admin building upgrade, enhancing the energy efficiency of this building — I spoke about it earlier — \$4.484 million in this budget for that activity as well.

Again there are quite a few initiatives that are underway in Highways and Public Works. These are some of the new initiatives that are underway. It doesn't touch on all of the expenditures, but I'll look forward in debate when

we get into Highways and Public Works to discussing that further.

I'm going to touch briefly on a few of the new initiatives in Energy, Mines and Resources.

The oil and gas action plan is designed to fulfill our government's responsibility to manage and support the sustainable development of oil and gas. The plan also addresses the recommendations of the Select Committee Regarding the Risks and Benefits of Hydraulic Fracturing. As I have done in the past, I would like to thank the members from the government side of the House as well as the three members from the opposition side who put forward those recommendations that we accepted last year.

The plan will comprise four components carried out over a number of years: engagement strategy, First Nation government-to-government engagement, technical projects, and the regulatory regime. Again, some of these funds will be used to drill wells for monitoring water in the Liard Basin. We have baseline work being done on seismic in the Liard Basin as well. Mr. Speaker, unlike other jurisdictions, we're out in front of any potential shale gas activity, as we've mentioned in the past. Our government is open to shale gas activity in the Liard Basin, provided we have the support of the affected First Nations.

I know this certainly sets us apart from other parties in this Legislative Assembly — that we want to explore the opportunities associated with shale gas done in a responsible way. Part of that responsibility, as I mentioned, is that we have baseline information being gathered prior to any activity. I think we may be one of the only jurisdictions in North America or, indeed, the world that has had the opportunity to do that.

Of course there was the recent announcement as well that the Liard Basin has shale gas potential — one of the top basins in the world. I think it's the second-highest basin in North America. I would like to thank the Yukon Geological Survey, as well as the other provincial and territorial geological agencies that participated in that. I believe the National Energy Board as well participated in that study. I would like to thank them for bringing science to the fore and giving us a proper assessment of what the shale gas potential is in the Liard Basin.

Mr. Speaker, this year Yukon will be hosting forestry ministers from across the country. It's scheduled for early June and gives us an excellent opportunity to discuss important matters affecting not only Canada's forest sector, but also to increase the profile of Yukon and its forest industry to a national audience. We will be hosting this in Dawson City, as I mentioned, in early June.

The late Bill Bowie of course was a very strong and tireless advocate for the forest industry here in the territory. His mill, I believe, still supplies the chips to the biomass facility that we have in Dawson City and I was able to tour that last year and was very excited by the opportunities that exist there and helped to inform the biomass strategy that EMR has put together as well as space-heating opportunities that we'll be identifying in two rural communities —

Haines Junction and Watson Lake — and looking for opportunities to heat government buildings. These are space-heating opportunities in government with the potential for private buildings as well to be added on in those communities.

The wind turbines — I know the Member for Kluane mentioned those in his response. EMR is providing \$1 million over the next two and a half years to the Kluane Community Development Corporation to install three wind turbines. Electricity will be supplied to the communities of Burwash Landing and Destruction Bay via the existing microgrid.

Another exciting thing that we've established here in the past number of months is the Strategic Initiatives Division. The new unit in EMR is dedicated to working on strategic initiatives, including the devolution transfer agreement protocol, mine licensing improvement initiative and the mineral development strategy. I look forward to getting into details on all three of those initiatives, once we get into EMR debate later on in the session.

When it comes to land development — Fifth and Rogers — a joint news release between us and the City of Whitehorse went out last week. There is a master planning exercise underway for future development at that site in downtown Whitehorse. A further \$300,000 will be allocated in this budget to complete that work.

The rural land development program, as members will know, transferred over to Energy, Mines and Resources a number of years ago. We have land development protocols signed with Watson Lake, Carmacks, Dawson City, Faro, Haines Junction, Mayo and Teslin. What they do is outline a proactive and collaborative approach that fosters plan development to meet community needs for affordable lots. We will see rural land development occurring in this budget year in Carcross, Carmacks and Dawson City.

I just announced urban and country residential lots in planning, industrial lots in Faro, additional lots in Haines Junction. The largest expenditure will be \$1 million in Mayo for country residential and industrial lots. Teslin will receive \$100,000 in additional development and planning of residential lots. Watson Lake — planning and development of urban and country residential lots. A number of different areas — Ibex Valley, Sunnydale, and Marshall Creek — will receive money for agricultural lot development.

I guess the other land piece that I want to touch on before I conclude remarks is the cottage lots close to Dutch Harbour on Kluane Lake. I know that's another exciting opportunity for us to provide titled recreational lots to Yukoners. It's something that we did at Bennett and Tagish lakes last year. It is something that we are looking forward to moving on this year as well.

Motion to adjourn debate

Hon. Mr. Kent: Mr. Speaker, I move that debate be now adjourned.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Minister of Highways and Public Works that debate be now adjourned.

Motion to adjourn debate on Bill No. 23 agreed to

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

The House adjourned at 5:28 p.m.