



# Yukon Legislative Assembly

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## HANSARD

Thursday, April 14, 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**

## CABINET MINISTERS

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

## GOVERNMENT PRIVATE MEMBERS

### Yukon Party

<b>Darius Elias</b>	Government House Leader Vuntut Gwitchin
<b>Hon. David Laxton</b>	Porter Creek Centre
<b>Patti McLeod</b>	Watson Lake

## OPPOSITION MEMBERS

### New Democratic Party

<b>Elizabeth Hanson</b>	Leader of the Official Opposition Whitehorse Centre
<b>Jan Stick</b>	Official Opposition House Leader Riverdale South
<b>Kevin Barr</b>	Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes
<b>Lois Moorcroft</b>	Copperbelt South
<b>Jim Tredger</b>	Mayo-Tatchun
<b>Kate White</b>	Takhini-Kopper King

### Liberal Party

<b>Sandy Silver</b>	Leader of the Third Party Klondike
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## LEGISLATIVE STAFF

Clerk of the Assembly	Floyd McCormick
Deputy Clerk	Linda Kolody
Clerk of Committees	Allison Lloyd
Sergeant-at-Arms	Rudy Couture
Deputy Sergeant-at-Arms	Doris McLean
Hansard Administrator	Deana Lemke

**Yukon Legislative Assembly**  
**Whitehorse, Yukon**  
**Thursday, April 14, 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 Parkinson's Awareness Month

**Hon. Mr. Nixon:** Mr. Speaker, today I ask my colleagues in this House to join me in recognizing April as Parkinson's Awareness Month. Parkinson's disease was first described by English physician Dr. James Parkinson in 1817. However, it was only four decades later that Dr. Jean-Martin Charcot finalized Dr. Parkinson's excellent clinical description and attached the name "Parkinson's disease" to the syndrome. Parkinson's is a chronic, degenerative neurological disease that is characterized by a loss of dopamine in the brain. The symptoms include resting tremor, slowness of movement, stiffness of muscles, difficulty with balance and walking, and changes in voice volume and speech.

Some individuals diagnosed with the disease might also see changes like depression, loss of sense of smell, sleep disturbances and cognitive changes. Currently there is no cure, but people can live with Parkinson's for years with a combination of physical and occupational therapy, speech therapy, exercise and medication. For some, surgery is also an option to manage the disease. Parkinson's disease is the second-most common neurodegenerative disorder after Alzheimer's disease in Canada. A 2011 study from Statistics Canada estimated that 55,000 Canadians live with Parkinson's disease, and it is anticipated that, by 2031, the number of Canadians diagnosed with Parkinson's will double to more than 163,700 people.

Parkinson's can progress at different rates for each person, and as symptoms change, medication is changed as well. People living with this disease have the highest rate of prescription drug use compared to other neurological conditions. This can put a significant strain on the family socio-economic situation and also on caregiver stress. It is not an easy disease to live with nor to watch.

Yukoners are not exempt from this disease. It touches families and individuals here as well. By asking my colleagues to take a minute today to recognize what these individuals and their families are going through, I hope to start to create a better understanding of the full impact of this disease so we can look for a better and more efficient use of the health care system to improve the quality of life for Parkinson's sufferers.

**Speaker:** Introduction of visitors.

Are there any returns or documents for tabling?  
 Are there any reports of committees?

## REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

**Hon. Mr. Hassard:** I have for presentation the 21<sup>st</sup> report of the Standing Committee on Appointments to Major Government Boards and Committees.

**Speaker:** Are there any further reports of committees to be presented?

Are there any petitions to be presented?

Are there any bills to be introduced?

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

### Bill No. 96: *Act to Amend the Income Tax Act, 2016* — Introduction and First Reading

**Hon. Mr. Pasloski:** I move that Bill No. 96, entitled *Act to Amend the Income Tax Act, 2016*, be now introduced and read a first time.

**Speaker:** It has been moved by the Hon. Premier that Bill No. 96, entitled *Act to Amend the Income Tax Act, 2016*, be now introduced and read a first time.

*Motion for introduction and first reading of Bill No. 96 agreed to*

**Speaker:** Are there any further bills to be introduced?

### Bill No. 202: *Act to Amend the Education Act* — Introduction and First Reading

**Hon. Mr. Graham:** I move that Bill No. 202, entitled *Act to Amend the Education Act*, be now introduced and read a first time.

**Speaker:** It has been moved by the Minister of Education that Bill No. 202, entitled *Act to Amend the Education Act*, be now introduced and read a first time.

*Motion for introduction and first reading of Bill No. 202 agreed to*

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

## NOTICES OF MOTIONS

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to amend the *Vital Statistics Act* to remove discriminatory provisions that require trans people undergo sex-reassignment surgery in order to have their gender designation changed.

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

## QUESTION PERIOD

### Question re: **Climate change action plan**

**Ms. Hanson:** Yukoners have become used to this Premier's refusal to seriously engage in action to combat climate change. In a recent First Ministers' Conference, the

Premier jumped to a no-carbon-tax position. He shut the door on Yukon's participation in the conversation about Canada's transition to a low-carbon economy by refusing to engage in a level-headed, mature and collaborative discussion.

As he so often does, the Premier has said what he would not do but did not offer any suggestions or solutions about what he would do. The Premier has withdrawn Yukon from the national conversation about transitioning to a low-carbon economy before it has even begun.

What measures will the Premier be proposing to support Canada's plan to transition to a national low-carbon economy?

**Hon. Mr. Istchenko:** I do thank the member opposite for the question.

Of course, Yukon government fully supports action to address climate change, and we've outlined that in our Yukon energy strategy and our climate action plan. The majority of the original 33 commitments in our climate change plan have been completed, and we have set out 28 new commitments in the 2015 climate change progress plan.

Our work includes the expansion of Yukon's hydro grid with reduced community reliance on diesel, the adoption of a territorial biomass strategy, the conversion of some of the Yukon's backup power to LNG from diesel, the development of new technology at the Cold Climate Innovation centre — and you just need to look in my riding with wind power with Kluane First Nation and some of the progress that we've made on next generation hydro, so the list goes on and we're doing our part.

**Ms. Hanson:** You know, Mr. Speaker, there is the difference. The Yukon NDP is prepared, along with Canada's industry leaders, to be part of the transition. Yesterday, Canada's largest mining association, which represents a number of industry players with interests in Yukon, said that they support the establishment of a broad-based carbon price. Industry leaders from all sectors across Canada have agreed that we need to transition off fossil fuels to move toward a low-carbon economy. Yukoners are eager to take part in this conversation, but this Premier has shut the door on our participation.

Why does the Premier disagree with the Canadian mining association when they say that we need to put a price on carbon?

**Hon. Mr. Pasloski:** I guess the NDP was not listening on the radio this morning when, on the CBC morning show, they did in fact host the CEO of the Mining Association of Canada and he said — and I quote: “Actually, I just listened to what your Premier said and I'll be honest. I have trouble disagreeing with him, and what you just quoted him saying, and our principles, I think, speak a lot to the issues that he was making in your Legislature.”

We do talk about it in our principles — the importance of recognizing the sort of geographic circumstances, and the premiers and the Prime Minister, when they met in Vancouver, made the same recognition.

Mr. Speaker, this government will not stand for ideology. We'll stand for real solutions for Yukoners and not make sure

that everything costs more, which is exactly what the NDP and Liberal governments would do.

**Ms. Hanson:** The next thing that Mr. Gratton said: “I'm not saying ‘exempt’” — is what he said. He said that it was clear that Yukon shouldn't be exempt from doing our part.

You know, this Premier is channelling his inner Harper. Just as the former Prime Minister embarrassed Canada internationally as “fossil of the year”, this Premier is intent on doing the same across this country.

The difference between Canada's mining leaders and this Yukon Premier, Mr. Speaker — maturity. All across Canada there is a recognition that we need to have this conversation, but the Premier is unwilling to engage. Blind ideology has no place in this conversation. The reality is that carbon does have a price, whether the Premier likes it or not. Climate changes costs Yukoners millions every year, and anyone driving Yukon's roads in the spring knows it. Like the Canadian mining association, Yukoners want to be part of the solution, to engage with Canada.

Will the Premier commit to consulting Yukoners about how Yukon can participate in a transition to a low-carbon economy or —

**Speaker:** Order, please.

**Hon. Mr. Pasloski:** Mr. Speaker, we certainly are doing our part, and our climate plan is working — where we provide more efficient energy systems, reduce emissions in government as we can see with what's been going on in the main administration building, and provide energy incentives to Yukoners. We will look for real solutions to Yukon's challenges. We do need to do our part and that is exactly what we're doing through our plan, but what we won't do is make food, gasoline, home heating fuels, diapers, milk and everything else cost more money. That is exactly what an NDP or Liberal government would do to Yukoners.

#### **Question re: Internet connectivity**

**Ms. Hanson:** You know, to date, the government has spent over \$600,000 on three reports looking at the options for a second fibre optic link in Yukon. Based on those reports, the Dempster option was chosen as the preferred route.

In this year's budget, the government has allocated an additional \$500,000 for another report and engineering study on the preferred route. This is expected to deliver the detailed breakdown of the costs and should be completed this summer.

The innovative budgeting initiative that this government presented mentions the application of available third-party funds for infrastructure projects in Yukon. What third-party sources of funding is the Yukon government pursuing to build the fibre optic link, and is the project contingent on receiving those third-party funds?

**Hon. Mr. Hassard:** Mr. Speaker, of course this government understands the importance of fibre optic to the Yukon. You know we have talked about fast, affordable and reliable Internet service for the Yukon for a few years, and we realize that you don't get it all at once. We have to break it down and figure out which part needs to be done first for the

other two parts to follow. Of course the reliability part is the key component in starting.

We looked at options — what is the best way to do it — and we have determined that the Dempster route is the best. It is the best for Yukon; it is the best for northern Canada. The member opposite talked about the costs of engineering. We have to do the engineering; we have to do the studying; we have to do the planning. We don't just decide one day that we are building a fibre optic line across the country and go ahead and do it. We need to do the planning. We have to spend the taxpayers' dollars in a fiscally responsible way.

We will continue to do the good work and we will continue to plan for the future of Yukon.

**Ms. Hanson:** Mr. Speaker that was not an answer. I asked what sources of funding the minister was seeking. Maybe he will come back to it in his answer to this question: Initial cost estimates on the Dempster option as presented in the Stantec total cost of services report, dated September 2015, put the capital cost of the link at \$61 million. Where is it coming from? The Dempster right-of-way is also well-documented for sections of discontinuous permafrost. Does this cost estimate take into consideration the implication of building the fibre loop in areas of discontinuous permafrost? Is building this fibre optic link contingent on third-party sources of funding? If so, what are those third-party sources of funding?

**Hon. Mr. Hassard:** Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned in my first response, we have to plan for these things.

The member opposite talks about the permafrost on the Dempster. That is all part of the engineering and the planning phase. I can't tell the member opposite which kilometres of the Dempster Highway we are going to run into permafrost. That is why we do the due diligence in moving forward. We have to engineer; we have to plan; we have to determine exact costs.

Yes, we have gone to the federal government looking for funding options, and I hope that we hear back very soon with some very positive results on those talks.

Like I said before, this is a very important subject to many Yukoners. We understand how important the IT sector is to the economy of the Yukon, and we cannot move the IT sector — well, it is much more challenging to move the IT sector forward without this diverse fibre link. We have listened to the people and we will continue to do the good work and we will continue to plan and engineer and figure out the best way to move forward.

**Ms. Hanson:** Good to hear that we're looking for sources of funding. He has not answered the question: Is the building of this fibre optic link contingent on getting that funding?

Let's go on to another area. In February of 2016, CBC reported that the public attention was brought to the serious construction issues on the Mackenzie Valley fibre link, to which the Dempster route would connect. Exposed cable in creeks, eroding trenches and segments of cable poking above ground are examples. A subsequent report in March reported that Ledcor, the main contractor on the project, has dismissed

its subcontractor responsible for laying the cable for mismanagement of the project.

Given the track record of the Yukon Party government in mismanaging projects, what assurances can this government give Yukoners that the Dempster link project will not have the mismanagement issues of the Mackenzie Valley fibre link?

**Hon. Mr. Hassard:** As I said in my first two responses, the planning stages are very important. We need to do the engineering; we need to plan.

We have committed to working with Northwestel on this project. We have not said that Ledcor or anyone else will be doing the construction of this project. I think it's also important that it's not my place to say whether Ledcor has done a good job or a poor job, and what has gone on with the Mackenzie Valley fibre link. Fortunately, by the sounds of it, that's not our project, and so I'm not willing to comment too much on what the Northwest Territories is doing with their project.

#### **Question re: Midwifery regulations**

**Mr. Silver:** I have a question for the Minister of Health and Social Services. Last year, the Premier said the government had accomplished all it was going to do in its mandate. I think Yukoners recognize that there's a host of projects and issues that this government has plenty of work left to do on. One is midwifery.

After nearly 14 years in office, the Yukon Party has failed to move forward on regulating this practice. This highlights the lack of planning and leadership shown on this topic by the Yukon Party. Over a year ago, the Minister of Health and Social Services told this House — and I quote: that the "... government is currently considering regulating the practice of midwifery in the territory." A year later, it's obvious that this work will be left to the next government.

Mr. Speaker, why has the Yukon Party failed to regulate midwifery after 14 years in office?

**Hon. Mr. Nixon:** I thank the member opposite for this question. The relationship that we have built with the midwifery organization and those stakeholders that are involved is important. Mr. Speaker, as you know, the Yukon government struck a midwifery stakeholder working group to examine the practice of midwifery here in our territory, and we've provided funding to support a midwifery symposium which, I understand, will be held later this month, unless dates have changed — but I believe it is later this month.

We've had some great dialogue with the individuals who are involved in that working group and I look forward to the symposium, and we've provided funding to ensure that it happens. Perhaps the member opposite would be interested in attending that. We've created a great working relationship with the stakeholders and with the working group, and look forward to the symposium later this month.

**Mr. Silver:** I would love to attend the symposium, but there's a part there that I'm not allowed to attend, and that's where the government talks about how we can do this.

The minister did mention the symposium. I would love to go to that part — absolutely. For the record, Mr. Speaker, a

Liberal government would regulate the practice of midwifery. We wouldn't spend another 14 years talking about it.

Yukon is one of only two places in Canada that has no regulations or funding in place. There is currently no government funding for midwives as part of our health care system so mothers have to pay out of pocket for this service.

Will the minister confirm these regulations will not be ready before the next election?

**Hon. Mr. Nixon:** Again, I thank the member opposite for the question. Midwifery, as I indicated in my first response, is certainly something that is very important to look at in the territory.

I did mention in my first response — and the member is well aware — that we have struck a midwifery stakeholder working group and that we have provided funding for a symposium that I can confirm is on April 24. Regulating a new profession requires time and resources. Yukon government introduced nurse practitioners into Yukon's health system just in 2012 and is currently undergoing the review of pharmacy and pharmacists legislation at this time.

As I mentioned in my first response, we're grateful for the working relationship that we have with the midwifery stakeholder working group and look forward to putting on this symposium on the 24<sup>th</sup> of this month.

**Mr. Silver:** It stands to be said that we will not be debating new legislation in this session of the Legislative Assembly. Women and families will be out of pocket for the entire time and midwives have to live with the stress and uncertainty of operating in an unregulated environment. This is a topic of importance especially for Yukon communities.

It highlights a lack of planning and leadership by the Yukon Party on this topic. After 14 years of doing nothing, in the last year of its mandate the government is trying to appear supportive on this issue. Unfortunately, many questions remain unanswered because this government is dragging its feet on the issue.

Here are some questions: Where is the money in this year's budget to actually work on these regulations? Are doctors supportive? Finally, how will rural communities be addressed if midwives must be within a close distance of a hospital?

**Hon. Mr. Nixon:** Again, I thank the member opposite for bringing this to the floor of the Legislature.

As I indicated in my first response, Yukon government struck a stakeholder working group pertaining to midwifery in the territory. Yukon government has provided them with funding in order to move forward with a symposium that they requested on April 24. Over the last number of months, we have created a very positive working relationship with the stakeholders who are involved and certainly look forward to hearing the thoughts and concerns from those individuals at the symposium.

As I had indicated in my second response — and the member should well know this — regulating any profession takes time, it takes resources and it takes planning, and that's what this government is committed to do.

### **Question re: Yukon Housing Corporation programs**

**Ms. White:** We know that the Yukon Housing Corporation manages a number of grant and loan programs that provide funding to qualified Yukoners to improve their homes or rental units. This budget contains a number of references to housing and rental unit funding schemes.

I would like to ask for the minister's response for the Yukon Housing Corporation for some background information. Can the minister explain to the Legislative Assembly the process through which the corporation disperses grant or loan funding?

**Hon. Mr. Hassard:** There are many different types of funding programs out there, so it would be beneficial to know which program in particular the member opposite is talking about.

I certainly don't know all of the programs off the top of my head with the exact process to go through for each one. I guess if the member opposite has a particular question and would like to forward that to me I could certainly go to the department and find out any answers that she may require.

**Ms. White:** Mr. Speaker, I am going to get right to the point. In 2012, I retrofitted my own home using funds from the home repair program to make it more energy efficient. This program currently lets you access up to \$35,000. The terms of the loan program allowed my project's technical officer to claim reimbursements directly from the Yukon Housing Corporation on a weekly basis. The two-year accessibility enhancement program disburses grants of up to \$25,000 for approved projects, but Yukon Housing Corporation will only pay out the program's fund in two payments: one when 50 percent of the project has been completed; and the second when the rest of the project is completed, and only to the person who owns the house.

Why is the government asking Yukoners who are applying for accessibility grants to overcome the extra hurdle of fronting half the cost of up to \$12,500 of their accessibility improvement project? Does this seem fair and equitable?

**Hon. Mr. Hassard:** Mr. Speaker, of course when the department goes about implementing any new program, they talk to stakeholders and speak to people to determine what will work and what won't work. Obviously, the department did their due diligence and have done the studying in determining how to best move forward with a loans program such as the one the member opposite is speaking to. I guess if the member opposite doesn't agree, well, I apologize and I can certainly take it under advisement and bring it to the department. I am certainly not going to commit on the floor of the House here today to start changing loan programs in Yukon Housing Corporation.

**Ms. White:** Mr. Speaker, it shows a lot right there when the minister was referring to a loan program, which is easy to access, and your technical officer can then get reimbursed weekly. My issue is with the accessibility grants, which means that the homeowner has to front up to \$12,500 until they meet the halfway point of the project before the money can be disbursed.

The accessibility enhancement program offers Yukon a \$400,000 envelope for projects costing up to \$25,000. That is about, in my experience, the cost of a covered wheelchair ramp. If you do that math, that means that only 16 households, or maybe more if the projects run underbudget, could access that money. I have heard from Yukoners with disabilities who need help now with the barriers they face accessing their own homes.

Does the Yukon Party government believe that this one-off program will do enough in two years to reduce barriers to accessible housing in Yukon?

**Hon. Mr. Hassard:** Mr. Speaker, as I said earlier, the department has worked with NGOs and different organizations to determine what are the best programs to provide and how best to roll those programs out. I apologize for saying the loans program rather than the grant program.

I appreciate the member's concern, and I am certainly willing to go forward to the department and have a look at this, but as I said earlier as well, I am not willing to make changes to any grant or loan programs here on the floor of the Assembly.

#### **Question re: Rights of trans Yukoners**

**Ms. Moorcroft:** Mr. Speaker, on April 6, this government announced policy changes that will allow Yukoners to self-identify their gender on their drivers licences and other ID.

Progressive policy changes are good, but amendments to discriminatory legislation would be better. This government has continually resisted making amendments to the *Vital Statistics Act*, which requires a person to produce two separate affidavits from two medical practitioners, stating that the anatomical sex of the person has changed.

Mr. Speaker, it should be left to the individual to decide what surgery and what treatments they want. When will the minister direct a legislative change to the *Vital Statistics Act* to remove the discriminatory sections that require a person to go through surgery in order to affirm their gender identity?

**Hon. Mr. Cathers:** I would note for the member opposite that, as she knows, this is an area of human rights law that is emerging across the country and is developing. The Yukon is assessing how other provinces and territories are addressing the issue of the rights of trans people. As we've indicated before, if there are specific situations that Yukoners run into within the current legislative framework or with policies, we would encourage them to contact either the department or ministerial offices. We may be able, as with the change that was made to the policy around drivers' licences, to address those individual matters while the broader review is taking place.

We do very much appreciate that it is an issue that needs to be addressed in a thoughtful matter. We are assessing what is being done across the country and are very committed to ensuring that we are reflecting human rights law across Canada in any changes we make to our legislation.

**Ms. Moorcroft:** I would like to thank the minister for his answer and thank the government for making those policy

changes, as it is a step that does deal with immediate discriminatory measures. However, yesterday in Newfoundland and Labrador, members of the House of Assembly unanimously agreed to changes to the *Vital Statistics Act, 2009* and the *Change of Name Act, 2009*. The changes mean sex-reassignment surgery is no longer required prior to changing the gender marker on birth and marriage certificates in that province. Ontario, British Columbia, Alberta, Manitoba and Nova Scotia have all taken similar steps, and the government has known about this for months.

The Yukon *Vital Statistics Act* is discriminatory against trans individuals. Why did this government decide to make a policy change instead of amending the *Vital Statistics Act* to remove its discriminatory provisions?

**Hon. Mr. Cathers:** What I would note for the member is that she just pointed out, by referencing the fact that the legislation — she's referring to the legislative change in Newfoundland and Labrador that was made just yesterday. This is something that is an emerging area of human rights law across the country. It is an area where we are certainly monitoring what is going on and, as we've said consistently, if there are specific issues within the current legislative framework, before changes are made to any piece of legislation that may be affected, and if there are specific issues that individuals who identify as trans run into, I would encourage them to contact either the department or the minister responsible. We may be able to resolve those in a shorter timeline, just as happened with the change to the driver's licence policy.

With regard to the member's specific question about why we changed the policy, the reason for changing the policy was not only to reinforce the decision made by the registrar last fall to issue the licence to the person who had submitted the complaint, but in fact it was a condition that flowed from settlement of their complaint to the Human Rights Commission. Government had an obligation to change that policy and to update it because that commitment had been made.

#### **Question re: Whistle Bend continuing care facility**

**Ms. Stick:** Mr. Speaker, this government has committed \$67 million in this fiscal year for the building of the 150-bed continuing care facility in Whistle Bend. This was a project that was decided on prior to any clear public consultation, without the input of Yukon elders and seniors and without seeking the expert opinion of Yukon health care professionals. The current projected total cost of the three-year project is already estimated at \$146 million. This government has requested \$109.5 million in infrastructure investment from the federal government for construction of this facility.

Mr. Speaker, how will this government finance the construction of the continuing care facility if their request from the federal government is denied?

**Hon. Mr. Dixon:** Yukon has yet to receive successfully any application under what is called the national portion of the Building Canada fund. It was our understanding, prior to the

budget, that the current federal government was interested in exploring new types of infrastructure for that funding — including, what they called at the time, social infrastructure. That was something that we didn't have clarity around — what exactly would be included — so we thought it would be worthwhile to apply for the funding under that particular type of funding that could have come out, with a letter from me to the federal Minister of Infrastructure and Communities.

We haven't heard back from the federal government on that request yet, but of course we provided a number of other projects under that national component of the infrastructure funding as well. Those included the fibre optic project that we discussed earlier today, some other road projects and a number of other projects throughout the Yukon, Mr. Speaker.

So when we hear back from the federal government about what exactly is included in that new type of funding for social infrastructure, we'll know better if this particular project will fit.

In the meantime, you'll see a significant amount of funding in this budget for the development of the continuing care facility in Whistle Bend, a project that we're very proud of and look forward to moving forward for the benefit of all Yukoners.

**Ms. Stick:** It sounds like we might be borrowing more money.

The operation and maintenance costs for continuing care in the territory is estimated at over \$40 million in this fiscal year. This budget accounts for program management, home care, and 190 beds in different residential care facilities. With the addition of 150 beds at Whistle Bend, we know these costs will skyrocket. The 100-bed facility was decided upon without analyzing seniors' health care needs across the continuum of care and without costing out other care options to support the health and well-being of our aging population.

Mr. Speaker, what will the annual projected costs of operations be for this new Whistle Bend continuing care facility?

**Hon. Mr. Nixon:** I certainly appreciate the member opposite's question and the fact that she has highlighted the investments that we've made in health care, specifically around continuing care and home care.

Certainly the member opposite will be well aware that we've increased our home care budget over the last decade by some 350 percent. We have certainly increased investments in the continuum of care for seniors in our territory and we've been very good at planning for the future with respect to this 150-bed facility that we very much look forward to the completion of in Whistle Bend in 2018.

We'll continue on down that road of investing in Yukoners and investing in seniors. The government is being proactive in planning for the care needs of seniors and of our elders and the significant number of individuals who will be living with dementia in the near future.

Again I thank the member opposite for her question and just the fact that she has highlighted the significant investments we have made for our seniors.

**Ms. Stick:** What I didn't hear is what the O&M costs are going to be for this. It's an ongoing project. It seems to me the government would want to know that before they start building.

This facility is going to require not only major capital investment but a huge, ongoing commitment to fund the O&M and those costs will go on indefinitely.

The excessive costs of running a facility of this size will drain the budget of funds for seniors and elders who want to remain in their communities. This is not going to be sustainable.

How will this government ensure that there is money in the annual continuing care budget to support Yukon seniors and elders who might want to remain in their communities but who might require a higher level of support?

**Hon. Mr. Pasloski:** Let's be very, very clear to Yukoners out there. Both the Liberals and the NDP have stated that they would cancel this facility. The Liberal leader has gone even further to say that not only would he cancel Whistle Bend, but he would create long-term care facilities in the communities. He will say anything — make any promise — to get elected.

There are only two outcomes to such a promise. One is to drive this territory into bankruptcy, or two is to just simply break his promise.

**Some Hon. Member:** (Inaudible)

### Unparliamentary language

**Speaker:** That is out of order. I don't care whether it is heckling in debate or not. Retract that statement, sir, right now.

### Withdrawal of remark

**Mr. Silver:** I will retract the statement.

**Hon. Mr. Pasloski:** I think the only thought that comes to my mind was how the Liberal Leader stood up here in front of all these children in the gallery one day making this pledge about how he was going to act in this Legislature. Congratulations — shame on you.

**Speaker:** The time for Question Period has now elapsed.

### Government House Leader's report on length of Sitting

**Mr. Elias:** It is my pleasure to rise pursuant to the provisions of Standing Order 75(4) to inform the House that the House Leaders have met for the purpose of achieving agreement on the maximum number of sitting days for the current Sitting. The House Leaders have agreed that the current Sitting should be a maximum of 28 sitting days, with the 28<sup>th</sup> sitting day being Thursday, May 26, 2016.

**Speaker:** Accordingly, I declare the current Sitting shall be a maximum of 28 sitting days with the 28<sup>th</sup> sitting day being Thursday, May 26, 2016.

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. Kent.

**Hon. Mr. Graham:** My friend to my right here has decided that he had completed his comments, so I would like to begin by first of all thanking the residents of Porter Creek North, whom I have had the pleasure of representing for these last four and half years.

Porter Creek North — which I believe should be more properly named “Porter Creek North and Crestview” — is a fairly large riding, and it’s becoming even larger. It’s probably the second highest growth of any other riding in the territory — second only to Mr. Speaker’s riding, which has seen the Whistle Bend growth. It’s a very diverse riding. Just recently — as folks are aware — we have had a great deal of condo development there, as well as a low-cost housing development in the Crestview area, and we’re very proud of the fact that our growth is planned growth and it’s excellent for the City of Whitehorse.

Today, Madam Deputy Speaker, it’s a pleasure for me to rise and speak about education — specifically education. Today’s children are our future. We’ve heard that over and over and over again, but it is true. Today’s children are our future. One of the things that I mentioned to the Department of Education when I took over as minister was that, whenever we had discussions with senior management at the department, I wanted to make sure that our focus was on the kids. Education is about the children — not only the children who are in the school or the students who are in the schools at the present time, but it’s about the kids who will be coming after them. It’s our responsibility to invest in the children, make sure they grow into adults who are ready to take on the world, get well-paying jobs, have families of their own and hopefully remain in the territory.

That is why, Madam Deputy Speaker, this budget includes a number of new spending initiatives around the Department of Education.

One of the first was questioned in the Legislature just the other day — that was with respect to a budget item of \$520,000 to defray the cost of school supplies for every single school-aged child in the territory. I understand that there was some misunderstanding about how that money would be distributed, and I wanted to make sure that everybody understands. That money will be distributed to school councils throughout the territory. Those school councils are currently meeting with the Department of Education and they will determine the parameters of this funding, they will determine when the funding will be available to school councils and to the schools, and they will determine how that funding will be dispensed.

We see this \$100 for school supplies for every child in the system being utilized by school councils in order that no child in the territory is left without or left with inferior equipment compared to other children in the territory. We only had to listen to the Member for Mayo-Tatchun and the Member for Whitehorse South talk about how their spouses or themselves had to pay for children to either go on trips or outings or to supply essential school materials to children who were less than fortunate — and I agree with them that that shouldn’t be necessary.

That was one of the reasons that we took this step, and it was one of the reasons that, at the Association of Yukon School Councils, Boards and Committees meeting on Friday, I was told by the vice-chair that school councils had been lobbying for this exact budget item, and they were very pleased that we had provided it, and they looked forward to the discussions to determine where the money would go. I think that they were very concerned about people who struggled to afford supplies, and they felt that it was one of those small things that parents shouldn’t have to worry about.

Beyond these kinds of smaller investments that our government is continuing to invest in, I want to talk about a couple of other items as well, one of which came up — I think it was the Leader of the Official Opposition who talked about a new vision of education and how we had not seen anything being done in the new vision for education. Well, we are well on our way to making our new vision for education a reality. We have allocated this year an additional \$190,000 to plan and to address challenges in four priority areas: mental health, career planning, flexible pathways for secondary students and early learning. We are working with all of our partners in education, including rural students, staff and school communities to build this new vision for education.

The goal of this process — I know I have said this over and over in this Legislature — is not to create another report or another document, it is to build a new vision and it is to take concrete action to move forward together to support the success of all Yukon students from early childhood to adult learners. We met with all of our partners on October 7, 2015, to begin this process and to hear their ideas and input through focus group discussions. Based on feedback from that meeting, we have done the following: we have established a steering committee to guide the process; we have reviewed past reports and recommendations about education in the Yukon; we have discussed identified items for priority actions, such as curriculum, early learning, mental health initiatives, ways to engage students in this process and supports for teachers.

The Deputy Minister of Education is also meeting with every school in the territory, every community and First Nation this year as part of this process to discuss their specific concerns and their ideas about education in the Yukon and their feedback for the steering committee. I have also had the opportunity to take part in many of these meetings. I have met with a number of First Nations. I have met with, as I have said before, all of the school councils at the association’s meeting, and I try to engage with as many of the schools as I possibly

can during my travels around the territory. It is always an interesting experience, and I think that one of the really great things that I saw was that the steering committee gave us very specific instructions. They set an initial three-year term for meetings of this committee. They wanted to ensure that representation was from a very broad spectrum so we invited teachers and the Yukon Teachers' Association; we invited parents and school councils; we invited CSFY; we invited the Council of Yukon First Nations; we invited the Catholic Education Association of Yukon; we invited Yukon College for their expertise in curriculum and curriculum development; we invited Advanced Education Public Schools branch; and we invited the Department of Health and Social Services.

The committee has met a number of times. The minutes are posted as quickly as possible, although on checking yesterday, I see that we may be behind a meeting or two, but the minutes are posted on the Department of Education website for anyone who is interested.

Our new vision for education in the Yukon is rooted in the collective values and aspirations of all these partners to equip Yukon students with essential skills, knowledge and personal qualities they need to thrive in life beyond school as well. We continue to welcome ideas from all of our partners, as we move forward together, and all new vision materials are intended to be living documents that will be revised over time.

Approaches to learning and learners are shifting from what students learn to how they learn. Canada's highest-performing regions in education — BC is one — are moving away from content memorization to skill development. We know that, to facilitate learning for everyone, we must look at the learner holistically. This includes the social, cultural, emotional, physical, spiritual and intellectual elements of each student.

To move forward, the education system in Yukon, as a whole, must become collaborative and action-oriented, and it must include all people in the system. It must be strategically experimental to create the conditions that improve outcomes for all learners.

So we have developed a number of principles — the steering committee did. The principles are to: meet the diverse needs of all students and foster development of the key skills and competencies that students need for life in and beyond school; ensure all students have the foundational skills of reading, writing, speaking, mathematics and problem-solving; use a holistic approach to acknowledge and support the individual strengths and needs of each student, school and community; be accountable, using research and evidence to ask questions, make decisions and celebrate successful practices in the territory; integrate northern perspectives and Yukon context into the kindergarten to grade 9 learning opportunities and in individual courses for grades 10 to 12; embed more understanding of First Nation cultures, perspectives and the work of reconciliation into all grades and all curriculum documents; build capacity for staff and students to work together in a process that identifies student strengths and areas for growth and sets learning goals, offering

feedback and assessing progress; and engage students in their learning by providing more choices and options.

We know that these changes will take time but, by working with our partners, we will shift Yukon's education system over the next three to five years to improve learning outcomes for early to adult learners.

Yukon schools will progress at different paces and different areas for this shift, but we have specified areas that we are addressing since our October 7, 2015 meeting and these include mental health, increased choices and early learning. Implementation of the new vision in support of early to adult learners will begin in June. We will begin by identifying three educators per grade to work with the department on kindergarten to 12 curriculum changes. A deeper discussion, specifically about curriculum changes with grades 10 to 12 will begin next year. We know we're building a system that every Yukoner can take pride in.

Last year alone, our government signed memoranda of understanding with four First Nations: Kluane, Kwanlin Dün, Carcross/Tagish and Selkirk that either focused solely on education or include education as a major part of the memorandum. These agreements will help us work in partnership with First Nations to address issues as diverse as language proficiency to student attendance to staffing.

In the years ahead, we'll be including Yukon context and First Nations culture — as I said previously — in every grade level from kindergarten to 9, as well as course work for grades 10 to 12. Beyond curriculum, we are investing in educational assistants in every Yukon community. Since 2011, we have increased the number of assistants from 159 to 220 and we have increased funding for educational assistants by over \$3 million. That means children are benefitting from an extra 60,000 hours in the classroom.

Current achievement data indicates that almost one-third of the students in the system are not as successful as they might be — as they might be, Madam Deputy Speaker — with appropriate interventions and supports. The gap between those students who move successfully through the system and those who do not is most significant when we look at First Nations students. Additionally, the gap begins with the first assessments in kindergarten and extends to graduation rates. In order to combat this, we have budgeted \$450,000 for an early intervention pilot project in seven Yukon kindergarten classes at four different schools — Takhini, Jack Hulland, Elijah Smith and Tantalus — to strengthen the literacy skills of our early learners.

In a joint effort to address the challenges in the development of literacy skills, the current collective agreement between the Yukon Teachers' Association and the Yukon government was an agreement through a letter of understanding. YTA and Education agreed to undertake this pilot project to strengthen the literacy skills of early learners. A key priority in the Yukon is to have an education system that focuses on success for each learner. It's inclusive and demonstrates organizational excellence through alignment and accountability.

In addition to these initiatives, our government is also investing \$2.98 — almost \$3 million — in site development where the new F.H. Collins Secondary School currently sits. Some site development was done last summer, including new turning lanes at the Hospital Road intersection and other items with development on property. With this \$3 million, main elements of the project include additional parking and bus area modifications to unload students in a safe manner. We'll also work on paving of the loop. We'll build concrete curbs and sidewalks for the loading area, but we also need a new sidewalk from the school to the shop wing. As most people are aware, the shop tech wing will remain as it was and we need an area or a method for the students to get between the two areas. This work is planned for the summer of 2016 following the demolition of the old school, which is now well underway.

We have allocated \$400,000 for planning a new francophone high school. The Department of Education and the francophone school board's settlement committee continues to meet regularly to address outstanding issues raised during the recent court case. I understand that the francophone school committee put on an informal meeting or had an informal meeting with members of the opposition. I think that some of the things that the CSFY probably informed the members opposite about is that we've asked the court to put off all proceedings for a potential new trial until May 3, 2016, at which time we'll have a case management meeting with the judge and this will give the committee an opportunity to make progress on outstanding issues.

The settlement committee, as members probably know, is made up of six members — three from CSFY and three from the Department of Education — and the parties have agreed to keep negotiations private and out of the public eye, and when we make announcements they are joint announcements. To date, we have been very successful in that endeavour and these discussions have been very fruitful.

The committee is examining other areas that both sides agree are not as high a priority. This includes: management of staff; a French first language educational policy framework; issues related to CSFY's forecast growth of École Émilie Tremblay; participation in collective bargaining; management of buildings and property; finances; and disposal of funds from the Canada/Yukon bilateral agreement.

All of these will take a backseat to the three main priorities, such as construction of a French first language high school, which I have committed to in this House and for which we have put an additional \$400,000 for further planning in the budget. This is our government's priority. We also are looking forward to the clarification to the admissions policies and responsibilities for non-rights holders and I think we're very, very close to an agreement. We are also working on the clarification of policies and procedures for French first language distance education.

As members are aware, we made a commitment that CSFY should be in charge of distance education for their learners. We made changes to the legislation last year that were unanimously accepted by the Legislature, and I think

that, in part, helped to show CSFY that we're very committed to working with them to resolving all the outstanding issues.

The parties have formed a construction subcommittee that will oversee planning for the new school. A draft functional plan has been completed. I know the department and CSFY are working very hard with the draft functional plan. They'll be working toward finalizing that plan in the very near future.

The Education department has also submitted a proposal to Heritage Canada for funding for the community aspects of the new school, and I've recently had a discussion with our federal MP, and he's also committed to working with CSFY and the Department of Education to have Heritage Canada work on the funding for this new school. We believe it's a high priority here in the territory.

The City of Whitehorse has also been engaged, and I know they've hired a firm to assess the feasibility of CSFY's preferred site and what impacts that preferred site will have on traffic and the community of Riverdale.

In working on the issue of clarifying the admissions policies and responsibility for non-rights holders, it was determined that the French language instruction regulation gives the Minister of Education the authority to approve all French first language student admissions. However, we don't currently enforce the regulation. We are not asking CSFY to provide documentation of applicants for admission, and this minister, at least, is not determining eligibility.

The department and CSFY are negotiating the delegation of this authority for permission for non-rights holder student admissions. Any delegation and any agreement that we reach would clearly state the minister's power to take back this authority, should he have concerns that the French first language nature of the school has been under threat from non-French first language students. This has not been a problem in the past. CSFY has done an absolutely excellent job and we have every confidence in their ability to carry on well into the future.

In 2013, Education and CSFY, as I said, signed a memorandum of understanding giving CSFY authority over French first language distance education admissions, and that has been going well ever since.

Mr. Speaker, now I would like to move on to other issues in the Department of Education, one of which is the First Nation partner involvement in developing a new vision for education. We are working with Yukon First Nations constantly to develop and improve our delivery of Yukon First Nation culture, language and other programming in Yukon schools.

The Department of Education, in partnership with Yukon First Nations and Canada, has created a joint education action plan. This joint education action plan enables us to continue to work on improving educational outcomes with individual First Nations, and we have signed a number of intergovernmental accords, as I said previously.

We also work with CYFN to support the tripartite memorandum of understanding process on educational partnerships with the Yukon Native Language Centre and the CYFN education branch. The Department of Education also

works with individual First Nations on almost a daily basis to respond to the identified needs in their communities and in their schools. The First Nations Education Summit was held in March 2016 and shared the Yukon government First Nation student achievement report. CYFN Education reported on its educational initiatives, including policy and parental engagement, and working sessions were held on developing ideas for a Yukon First Nation engagement protocol and a Yukon First Nation cultural inclusion standard. Model partnership programs include the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations Southern Tutchone bicultural program and the Old Crow experiential education project.

As I said, we have educational agreements with a number of First Nations, but we also have informal partnerships with many other Yukon First Nations such as Little Salmon Carmacks First Nation, Selkirk First Nation and Na Cho Nyäk Dun. We have these partnerships to facilitate educational resource material development, working in cooperation with these various First Nations. The First Nation policy and planning department in Education is providing services at the Northern Tutchone schools to use their resources. We have developed a data-sharing strategy and policy protocol within the joint education action plan initiatives.

When our children graduate from public schools, we want to make it easier for them to pursue post-secondary education, and we want to be able to make it easy for them to do it closer to home. We know that when students study here, they are more likely to stay here. They are more likely to raise a family here, start a business here and give back to the economy of the territory. That is one of the reasons we are contributing \$1.5 million over three years to Yukon College. We want to help them develop into a Yukon university.

We realize that this isn't a quick process, and the member opposite the other day asked a number of questions, or made a number of observations, about the college. I thought I would just say a little bit about the transition to Yukon university over the coming years.

We are working with the college at the present time to establish a quality assurance process that will ensure that degrees offered at Yukon College and conferred by the institution when they become a university are transferable within Canada and, indeed, internationally. Beginning in 2017, the college hopes to offer a made-in-Yukon, three-year bachelor of policy studies in indigenous governance.

When I have spoken with the college on a number of occasions and said that we may not have the process for you in place by 2017, they have said that they would still like to go ahead with this bachelor of policy studies and they would do it in association with another university. Mr. Speaker, I say that especially because I know the member opposite the other day asked about the six programs that we're currently offering through other universities. Yukon College has every intention of continuing every partnership and every agreement that they can with universities and colleges, not only throughout Canada, but throughout the world. By doing that, they will provide their students with the best possible opportunity, not only to stay at home and learn but, if they so desire, to transfer

to other universities in Canada or other universities in other countries.

It's important for people to know that this has been a long process. Since 2011, Yukon College has been exploring the development of a post-secondary model. Indeed, Mr. Speaker, I know that when I worked there prior to 2011, there was talk even then about how this process would be and how long it would take.

Yukon College is inspired by the Yukon's unique culture, economy and environment and they want to serve the north — not only the territory, but the other two territories as well — and that's why the Yukon Party platform during the last election included the following commitment: create a Yukon university by developing Yukon College into a northern university, and we would do that by exploring models and identifying which model is best suited for Yukoners and northerners.

We also knew that there were a number of phases necessary for the college to become a university. We don't want to rush through any of those phases. We need to complete a university report that outlines options for post-secondary models. They have done that. When I heard the member opposite yesterday say, "Where are the needs assessments?" — the college has been working on this since 2011, and there have been a number of reports completed that clearly show that a university in this territory is something that all people should aspire to.

The second thing that the college has to complete before becoming a university is to establish a quality assurance regime to ensure that newly created Yukon College degrees are transferrable. We worked first with Alberta. There was a change in government in Alberta, and I think that the current government has many things to do and they probably don't need to get into changing the universities act in Alberta, allowing their quality assurance group to look after a Yukon university, but it's still a possibility. In fact, as recently as this week we've had discussions with Alberta, and they believe that they've found a way around the requirement for a change in legislation, so we are working with them. We've also started work with the Saskatchewan government to implement an interim process, which will evolve over time, and it will require legislation here in the Legislature as well.

So then the college will have to establish Yukon College degrees. They have already completed, in part, an economic impact study and a business case for the university. We will need to develop legislation to create the university and, finally, we'll establish the university. I think that's a goal that we all look forward to. I know I do. I realize it's not a quick process, but it will transpire eventually here in this territory.

One example of the reasons we believe we have to continue this process is that, at the present time, we've allocated \$593,000 to extend the practical nursing program. This is part of our commitment to improving Yukoners' access to health care, preparing Yukoners for jobs and to improve Yukoners' access to higher education.

The practical nursing program is one that is run through Bow Valley College and, each year, the college must pay

Bow Valley a number of dollars for the curriculum for the practical nursing program. It's one of those things that — once the university is developed, we will have the ability to do this on our own.

I really look forward to the continuation of the practical nursing program, because nursing is the heart of our health care system. This program will help us provide the human resources needed to provide the best possible level of care. With this funding, up to 32 additional graduates can look forward to careers in a respected and rewarding profession.

The funding overall is \$1.95 million; it's effective July 4 of this year to May 29, 2020. The transfer agreement will allow time for the college to prepare and submit final report documents for expenses. This is a two-year program — the PN program. There will be two intakes over the course of this four-year agreement, and each intake can take up to 16 students.

As I understand it, Mr. Speaker, the last two graduating classes of the practical nursing program at Yukon College have been hired 100 percent by the Department of Health and Social Services. We not only have students taking the education here, but almost guaranteeing them jobs when they're completed.

I'm going to skip over a couple of others, which was the \$50,000 to expand the apprenticeship trades and school. The course registrations and the work being done by the college in the communities to ensure that, during this transition to a university, nothing is lost in the communities. In fact, the college was very clear to me in about four pages of notes that they have given me that they have actually expanded services to all of our small communities, and that will be part of any agreement that the Yukon government has with the college. We know how vital those college campuses are to each of our small communities around the territory.

The other issue I really wanted to speak about was mental health. Young people who experience mental health problems often struggle to succeed academically as well. According to the healthy behaviours of school-aged children survey in 2014, between 50 and 60 percent of Yukon students are feeling depressed or low at least once a week and their self-confidence was also reported to be quite poor.

There is a growing recognition, not only in the territory but across Canada, of the critical nature of improving mental health of young Canadians with a particular emphasis on positive mental health.

Toward that end, Yukon government combined with Bell Let's Talk and Northwestel, contributing \$500,000 to support the launch of the FRIENDS cognitive behaviour group-based intervention program throughout the territory. Positive school climate measures such as self-regulation and stress management initiatives have also been rolled out in Yukon schools. Physical activities are also promoted through Yukon schools. They're offered throughout the school as well as movement in classes through self-regulation initiatives. We've also provided training for our educators and students in the area of suicide prevention and intervention and mental health first aid. We've also got a number of policies related to

student health and wellness — the daily physical activity requirement safe and caring school policies — and a number of other initiatives that the Department of Education will announce and are completing throughout the territory.

We will soon have access to the \$1-million innovation pot, subject to legislative approval, to help meet the mental health needs of all of our citizens, including our young people. We're looking forward to taking advantage of that funding, because we think Yukon schools will benefit from having access to more resources and this fund is only one way of providing them with the support they need.

Mr. Speaker, I could go on for hours about the Department of Education and the initiatives that we're beginning and the wonderful things that are happening. We also realize that we're not doing everything that needs to be done in many of our schools because of limitations of one kind or another, but we're making the attempt and we will continue to work with all of our partners: First Nations, school councils, communities — all of our partners — parents, and students to make the school community in this territory a better place for all of our learners.

**Ms. McLeod:** It is my great pleasure to rise today and speak in support of this bill.

As the MLA for Watson Lake, I would really like to thank my constituents for their support and for their dedication to our community. It has been my honour to represent all of the residents from southeast Yukon. I see so many people in Watson Lake who work hard to make our town the best it can be — from our many volunteers, to the citizens who have stepped forward to seek election in municipal government and to those people who spend countless hours working with our youth. To them, I say thank you; we're lucky to have you.

I want to extend my thanks to Sergeant Cam Lockwood and his team of RCMP members. They work extremely well with the people of southeast Yukon. They are well respected and they are involved in the community in a lot of ways. It has had a really positive influence.

I would like to take this time to thank the Premier and all our caucus for the time they've spent putting this budget together. The deputy ministers and all their staff deserve our heartfelt thanks, as well, for their careful deliberations. As challenging as it is to decide where funding should go and what projects should advance, I believe this budget has Yukoners' best interests at heart.

It's not always easy living in rural Yukon, with the bulk of the population of the territory centred in Whitehorse. As I've heard personally during our community budget tours this winter, rural Yukon is faced with aging infrastructure, higher cost of replacement, higher transportation costs for goods, thousands of kilometres of highways to maintain, difficulty in recruiting health care professionals, teachers and other employees, along with an associated shortage of housing. There are many challenges.

I believe our government has done a commendable job over the years in addressing these challenges. Health care in

rural Yukon has improved steadily; 2013 saw community hospitals open in both Dawson City and Watson Lake. These hospitals not only provide a higher level of health care to different regions in Yukon, they also enable health care services to be provided more collaboratively. They see services, such as home care, public health, in-patient care and laboratory services housed under the same roof.

There was an announcement last week to secure doctors and medication dispensary services in Watson Lake hospital by relocating Parhelion Medical Services there. The people of Watson Lake have seen this as a positive move, and I want to thank the Minister of Health and Social Services and the Premier for all their support. The government will continue to work with Parhelion to recruit permanent doctors to Watson Lake.

The Watson Lake Chamber of Commerce has also been involved in helping locum doctors become familiar with our community and the many opportunities there. The Minister of Health and Social Services has worked very hard with his department and they, with the Public Service Alliance of Canada, continue to make strides in the recruitment and retention of community nurses.

As you've heard, Mr. Speaker, a new community addictions program has been developed to address areas of concern to our communities through Alcohol and Drug Services. This program was developed with the good work of Mental Health Services and Community Health Programs, along with First Nation health programs, Many Rivers and the Department of Justice. This program provides enhanced supports within communities to help address prevention, pre-treatment, counselling and after-care. There are now three community addictions workers working out of Haines Junction, Watson Lake and Dawson City.

There are two more workers based out of Whitehorse to serve the surrounding communities, and all these workers will travel to neighbouring communities to ensure that services are available throughout the Yukon.

The community addictions program uses a collaborative outreach model and works with existing service providers. The McDonald Lodge continuing care facility was rebuilt and just recently opened in Dawson City. The new facility is next to the hospital to allow for shared resources and additional assistance for residents.

We have significantly increased the amount of funding allocated to home care, with another increase this year. Since 2002, our government has increased the investment in home care by 364 percent from \$1.5 million to over \$5.5 million. We understand that seniors do not want to leave their homes and their communities if they don't have to. Investing in home care helps Yukoners age in place and reduces the chances that they will have to leave their communities sooner than necessary.

Our government has made many investments in affordable housing throughout Yukon, both for seniors and low-income renters. Recently a community housing project to build a six-plex was funded through the northern housing trust, and that was built in Carmacks. Through the northern

housing trust, we have also provided \$235,000 to the Carcross/Tagish management corporation for the construction of two affordable housing units. There was a new seniors housing complex in Mayo opened last year. Affordable housing for seniors is very important in all Yukon communities, and we will continue to work with First Nations and other groups on partnership opportunities for affordable housing options.

I would also like to give credit to the current and former ministers of Community Services. Between 2007 and 2015, there was \$265 million in infrastructure projects in Yukon funded through the Building Canada fund. With \$183 million from the Government of Canada, \$57 million from the Government of Yukon, and almost \$25 million in contributions from other partners, the Building Canada fund has had a big impact on Yukon infrastructure and Yukon jobs. \$152 million of that infrastructure funding was spent in rural Yukon, in both municipalities and unincorporated communities. This funding has enabled communities to replace aging water, waste-water treatment and solid-waste infrastructure. There have been energy upgrades such as the contributions to the Carmacks-Stewart transmission line that have been funded through the Building Canada fund. There have been road upgrades throughout all of Yukon on multiple highways. My riding has benefited from water, waste-water and road upgrades as well as a \$7.5-million investment in a new water treatment facility. This facility should be online within a very short period of time.

Just a few weeks ago, we received confirmation that some new projects under the Building Canada fund — small communities fund — were approved. These projects include \$2 million for the sewage treatment plant in Carmacks and over \$1 million for road and drainage work in Teslin. Also funded will be \$1.5 million for solid-waste improvements in the communities of Faro, Watson Lake and Haines Junction. These projects are so important in rural Yukon. Not only do they address outdated and failing infrastructure, but they also provide economic benefits and employment.

We have made, and are continuing to make, investments in the safety of Yukoners. Basic 911 service should be available in rural Yukon by the end of this summer. Along with that, there have been many communities undergoing the civic addressing exercise in order to ensure that they can be found easily in case of an emergency.

Carcross will see a new fire hall built within this budget. Beaver Creek recently opened their new fire hall in the fall. Dawson City, Ibex Valley, Tagish and Hootalinqua have received new fire trucks in the past few years. Initiatives like these provide our rural communities with much-needed resources.

I would like to take this time to thank the current and former ministers of Highways and Public Works. There have been huge investments made in the Robert Campbell Highway in my riding. Just last week, the minister announced almost \$11 million in funding to improve two more sections of the Campbell Highway. This highway is a very important transportation route in Yukon. Not only does it serve a very

mineral-resource-rich area, but it also allows transportation of goods to other rural Yukon communities from the south. I've heard from constituents just how much they appreciate these improvements.

Although mining is on a downturn right now, southeast Yukon remains mineral-rich, with many active claims and the potential for many large projects once the price of metals rises. Our government has put a lot of effort into ensuring that rural communities don't get forgotten.

Another welcome investment will be the building of the new living units at the Swift River grader station. This will allow employees to reside closer to their place of work and ease a shortage of staff housing units.

There are many projects coming that will increase economic opportunities in the communities. In Watson Lake specifically, we will see a new roof for the Watson Lake high school and fire alarm system upgrades for the Watson Lake high school as well. Painting in the Johnson Elementary School and the visitor information centre, and work on various heating and electrical systems throughout government buildings — while all of these projects may seem small when looked at individually, they amount to more contracting opportunities for businesses within communities.

During the community budget tour, we heard how much of a difference these smaller contracts can make to a local economy. From FireSmart to the community development fund, these projects and funds all provide jobs and other benefits in rural Yukon.

Just a word about the community development fund — I want to thank the ministers of Economic Development and Community Services for their continued support for this program. It has proven to be of great importance to all of Yukon. This is a program that is fully subscribed to, and I'm pleased to note that the Town of Watson Lake recently received funding in order to make improvements to our pool.

Just before I wrap up, I want to convey to the Minister of Highways and Public Works how much the residents of Upper Liard and all those driving through Upper Liard appreciate his and the department's support for the installation of additional lighting on the Alaska Highway. This stretch of road is so much safer. I look forward to improving the safety along the Campbell Highway with additional street lighting as well. My thanks go out to Mayor Justin Brown and his council for their willingness to move forward with this project.

I am proud to stand here today and support this budget, as this government has continually supported rural Yukon.

**Hon. Mr. Hassard:** It's truly a pleasure to rise today to speak about the 2016-17 budget that we have before us today. Of course, I would like to begin first by thanking my family first and foremost, of course, for their continued support and patience — yes, patience — and also to the constituents of the riding of Pelly-Nisutlin. You know, people have been so supportive and they really make the job much more pleasant.

I guess I would like to first thank the Premier for tabling another record budget, a budget that I believe is good for Yukon and good for Yukoners.

At almost \$1.4 billion — that's billion with a "B" in case anybody's wondering — and in excess of \$3 million in capital and still having an over \$9-million surplus — all of that without any rise in taxes and not even a whisper of a carbon tax. It's not bad, I say — good job, team.

As the MLA for Pelly-Nisutlin, I am very proud of what we see in this budget. It's very good for the great riding of Pelly-Nisutlin so I would just like to run through some of the highlights for my riding in particular.

In Ross River we see money for phase 2 of the Ross River suspension bridge and, let me tell you, there won't be many people happier than me to see that thing finished once and for all.

\$2.2 million for waste-water treatment — \$600,000 for the solid-waste facility and it's very much needed. The waste-water situation in Ross River is long overdue in getting fixed and replaced. I certainly welcome seeing that money in the budget of Community Services to look after that.

\$3 million for a six-plex for staff housing — and this project is duly beneficial in the fact that not only will it create new staff housing, but it will free up existing stock that could potentially be turned over to RRDC so that they can use that housing for their own citizens. I think the people in Ross River will certainly be happy to see that project move forward.

A few of the highlights for Faro include \$1.66 million for a new lagoon system and sludge-drying beds. I thought about how I could take some time to talk about that project, but it is probably best just to leave it at that and you can determine for yourselves what that's all about.

As well, \$1.255 million for Drury Creek living quarters and, Mr. Speaker, there aren't many places that are in more dire need to be replaced than that building, that's for sure, so I'm very happy to see that in the budget as well.

Some budget highlights for my hometown of Teslin include \$1.1 million for road and drainage upgrades, as well as \$100,000 for planning and development of residential lots and \$50,000 for design and permitting and geotechnical work for the Nisutlin Bay Bridge. With that, I hope to see the reconstruction of the bridge begin in 2018-19.

As the Member for Watson Lake already mentioned this — even though Swift River isn't in my riding, I try to tuck it under my wing every once and while and try to steal it back from her. I am really happy to see that Highways and Public Works has just over \$1.3 million for the replacement of the living quarters for those highway workers down there at Swift River. I am sure that they certainly will be appreciative of that as well.

A few other projects that I would like to make note of include some projects under the Community Services budget, and I would like to thank the minister responsible for Community Services for his input in that. We see a waste-water treatment plant in Burwash, a new reservoir in Mayo and more money in the minister from Kluane's riding for some new lift stations in Haines Junction. Carmacks will be seeing a new sewage system and improvements to their solid-waste management, and solid-waste management

improvements in Faro, Watson Lake and Haines Junction as well.

Of course, there is \$15 million for planning phases 3 through 7 of the Whistle Bend subdivision. I believe somebody mentioned it earlier as well, but I had it on my list that there is \$3 million for a new fire hall in Carcross. I am sure that the Member for Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes will be happy to see that in the budget because I know he has mentioned it on more than one occasion here in the Legislature over the last couple of years.

We also see continued support for sports and recreation. There is \$300,000 for four different organizations: Sport Yukon, Special Olympics Yukon, the Yukon Aboriginal Sport Circle and Recreation and Parks Association of the Yukon. As well, there is \$250,000 over the next two years for the 2017 Men's World Softball Championships; \$75,000 for Team Yukon to compete in the North American Indigenous Games in Toronto in 2017; and \$150,000 over two years for Team Yukon to attend the Canada Summer Games in Manitoba in 2017. Those monies are really invaluable. The experiences that the youth receive being able to attend functions like that are invaluable.

There are some items in the budget that I would like to bring your attention to that I have found to be — one item in particular that I found very beneficial to Yukoners is the continued support for the domestic water well drilling program. The Member for Lake Laberge and I have certainly done our fair share of work on getting this project implemented. I have spoken to so many Yukoners who have either taken advantage of the program or plan on taking advantage of it. They certainly are very grateful for it. I would like to again thank the Minister of Community Services for ensuring that we were able to continue on with that program.

There are so many things and so many department budgets. I'm just trying to highlight some of the ones I thought were very important to me and my constituents. I don't want anybody to be offended if I don't mention something that they find to be very beneficial.

A few things in the Department of Education I would like to bring your attention to — they continue to make those very important investments and I thank the minister responsible for Education for his continued support. We see \$368,000 to support the Aurora Virtual School and \$190,000 for the new vision. I believe it was just this afternoon that the Minister of Education was talking about that during Question Period.

That money is to address education challenges in four priority areas: mental health, career counselling, flexible pathways for secondary students and early learning. Also in Education, there is \$593,000 for the practical nursing program and \$450,000 for an early intervention pilot project in seven Yukon kindergarten classes to strengthen the literacy skills for early learners. As I mentioned, those are all very important initiatives.

EMR has allotted \$4.08 million for rural land development programs. I find that very important for all Yukoners, but for rural Yukoners in particular. We see \$75,000 for Carcross and Tagish access road; \$325,000 for

residential, country residential and industrial lots in Carmacks; \$425,000 for Dawson for city, urban, country residential and industrial lots and planning for that community; \$1 million for residential and industrial lots in Mayo; and Watson Lake will see \$150,000 for planning and development of urban and country residential lots.

An item in the budget that we don't see a lot of is agricultural lot development. I was very happy to see the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources has \$420,000 in this budget for agricultural lot development in Ibex Valley, Sunnydale and Marshall Creek.

Mr. Speaker, it's important to recognize that lot development in rural Yukon is very vital to the communities. In order for communities to grow — or for any community to grow, for that matter — if you don't have somewhere for the community to grow to, obviously it's pretty hard to grow. So I thank the minister for that.

Probably the most exciting item out of the lot development is the 11 proposed recreational lots near Dutch Harbour. That was done in conjunction with the Kluane First Nation.

We've heard from so many Yukoners about the importance of creating some recreational lots where they can buy a piece of property, own a piece of the Yukon out in the wilderness and be able to call it their own, and take their families out there and enjoy the weekends and just enjoy a few of the wonderful things that the Yukon has to offer.

I'm also pleased to see \$1.4 million to promote and enhance mineral prospecting exploration in the Yukon. Madam Chair, as you well know, mining certainly is the cornerstone of the Yukon's economy and it's important to continue to support the mining industry in any way we can.

We also have \$5.5 million for the development of the forest sector trust, and that's with the Yukon First Nations. I'm happy to see that, as well, Madam Chair, especially for your riding and for the Member for Kluane as well, where the forest sector really has an opportunity to thrive.

I'm happy to see that the Department of Environment — the minister over there — has continued to listen to Yukoners and has allotted \$350,000 for campground and facility improvements. I definitely thank the minister in the department for that. We've heard that from many Yukoners on our trips around the Yukon about the importance of being able to take their families, go camping for the weekend and enjoy life a little bit.

As well, there is \$3.5 million for Yukon contaminated site cleanups. That's another very important initiative I believe.

We can't forget about the Department of Finance of course that we spoke about here in the Legislature here yesterday — the children's fitness tax credit and the children's art tax credit, so thank you to them.

As I mentioned earlier, I'm just trying to hit some highlights in the budget and I don't want to delve too far into Health and Social Services or Highways and Public Works, because it will take up my entire 40 minutes and I want to get to talk about other good things.



I would be remiss not to mention the \$244,000 in Health and Social Services to meet the growing demand for home care services to support keeping people in their own homes as long as possible. That's so important to citizens in my riding and probably all of the rural ridings in the Yukon here, so thank you for that.

Highways and Public Works — I have to thank the minister responsible for Highways and Public Works for the \$9.5 million in the IT envelope this year. That's more important to me than normal, I guess, because my Department of Economic Development works very closely with that IT sector and so thank you for that.

I would also like to recognize the Department of Tourism and Culture and their continued support for the museum and cultural centres — 11 museums and seven cultural centres. I'm very proud to say I have a cultural centre and a museum in my own home town and I know the importance of those facilities, so thank you to the minister for her continued support in that regard. If any of you here or anyone out there listening has not had the opportunity to visit either the George Johnston Museum or the Teslin Tlingit Heritage Centre, they're both worth the drive to Teslin to see. They are world-class facilities. I have to get a little dig in for Teslin whenever we can.

I would like to take a few minutes to talk about some of the great things in my own departments. I'll begin with the Yukon Housing Corporation. The first project is with the Ta'an Kwäch'än Council and the Da Daghay Development Corporation. I would like to begin by just thanking Ben and everyone involved with the Da Daghay Development Corporation and Ta'an Kwäch'än, and their patience and understanding and dedication to the River Bend project.

The River Bend project is a 42-unit affordable rental housing project in Whistle Bend. Da Daghay has had a design unveiling on Monday evening and, Mr. Speaker, you were there. It's quite an impressive-looking project — so very happy to be there and help them celebrate the unveiling of that. The development corporation will continue to raise finances and move forward in constructing the building this summer. It really is a great project with the fact that not only is it creating more housing units in the city and in the territory, but there are opportunities for training. They've spoken at length about all of the possibilities and the mentorship and the training programs, as they move forward in building the project. It's a great thing to see.

The joint venture part of the project with Yukon Housing Corporation is that we have committed to enter into 30 rent supplements for a period of three years. It obviously helps Yukon Housing Corporation with their wait-list as well with 30 more units available to us, so it's great.

I mentioned briefly the \$3 million we have budgeted for construction of a six-unit residential staff building in the community of Ross River. There's almost \$10 million for Yukon Housing Corporation loan programs, including \$2.3 million for home repair programs, \$4 million for mortgages, \$500,000 for down payment assistance,

\$2.65 million in the owner-build loans program, and \$525,000 for secondary suite loans.

As well, there is: \$7.264 million for the investments in affordable housing; \$450,000 for rental assistance to help working households paying more than 30 percent of their household income toward shelter, which includes children in the household; \$400,000 to provide landlords with access to capital to assist with critical upgrades that will improve the quality of rental housing for the benefit of tenants and prolong the life of the assets; \$400,000 for accessibility enhancement grants for homeowners and landlords alike, with access to capital to improve accessibility of their homes and it helps enable seniors to age in place; \$416,000 for housing improvements and programs that benefit the victims of violence; \$250,000 for rent supplements to enable tenants to better access private market rentals; \$2.5 million for the municipal matching grant rental construction program — and this is to increase the number of purpose-built rental housing. This particular program, I'm happy to say, just continues to gain speed as time goes on. When we first put this program in place, I really liked it. I thought this was great. The unfortunate part was that a lot of municipalities — except Whitehorse, I guess — didn't have the bylaws and policies in place to take advantage of this program. As time goes on, several communities have seen the advantage to such an initiative and they are now getting everything in place to utilize this program, so I really anticipate seeing quite an increase in uptake in this over the next year.

We also have \$800,000 for renovations and rehabilitation for existing staff housing and \$240,000 to continue with the prioritization of action items identified in the housing action plan.

If I could, I would just like to take a moment or two to thank the numerous people who helped in developing this housing action plan. First, the community advisory committee, the Association of Yukon Communities, the Council of Yukon First Nations, the City of Whitehorse, Options for Independence, the Yukon Anti-Poverty Coalition, the Yukon Chamber of Commerce, the Yukon Residential Landlord Association, the Yukon Real Estate Association and, of course, the Yukon Housing Corporation. As well, the working group committee members included Aboriginal Affairs, the Association of Yukon Communities, the Bank of Montreal, Blood Ties Four Directions, the CMHC, Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce, Carcross/Tagish First Nation, Challenge Disability Resource Group, Champagne and Aishihik First Nations, City of Whitehorse, Council of Yukon First Nations, Grey Mountain Housing Society, Kobayashi and Zedda Architects, the Kwanlin Dün First Nation, Old Way of Seeing, Options for Independence, Royal Canadian Mounted Police "M" Division, Scotiabank, Yukon Agricultural Association, Yukon Anti-Poverty Coalition, Association for Community Living, Yukon Council on Aging, Yukon Council on Disability, Yukon Real Estate Association, Yukon Status of Women Council and, of course, the many Yukon government employees from various departments throughout government who were involved — and a special mention to

Mary Cameron from the Yukon Housing Corporation, who put numerous hours into this project.

I hope I didn't miss anyone in that. It's quite a lengthy list, I know, but I apologize in advance if I forgot anyone in that list.

The point of identifying all of those people is just to kind of show the commitment and the broad spectrum of people who helped to develop this housing action plan.

I made a commitment at the unveiling of the action plan to ensure that this document didn't just become another document on the shelf collecting dust somewhere, and I'm certainly happy to see that this is not happening at all.

A few other things in housing that I would like to talk about — the 48-unit, accessible seniors social-housing complex on Front Street — we had the grand opening a few weeks back. It's a wonderful building. I believe that it's probably just about to capacity now. The building was designed with 10 barrier-free and 38 fully accessible units to accommodate a range of needs for independent-living, low-income seniors.

It's interesting to note that in the past two years alone with that 48-unit complex — that brings up to 88 units built for seniors social housing in the Yukon in the last two years. That is quite impressive, I think.

On that note, I would just like to mention a few of the achievements since the conclusion of the 2015 fall legislative Sitting back in December. Yukon Housing Corporation has conducted a series of open houses in most communities in the Yukon and they met with residents, local governments — both municipal and First Nations — to get a better understanding of what the housing needs are in each community.

We have partnered with Health Canada and coordinated November as Radon Action Month for the promotion of having homes tested for radon and subsequent mitigation if required. The home ownership preparedness education program, or HOPE, was delivered for the second time and had 14 participants. As the course goes along, it continues to be refined as it is delivered, and plans are to provide it online so that maybe more rural Yukoners will be able to take advantage of that program.

I am going to skip to some stuff in Economic Development so that I don't accidentally run out of time. I can always go back if I have time.

Some highlights in the budget for the Department of Economic Development are: we have \$717,000 for a new investors relations unit, and that is to help promote Yukon investment opportunities; \$150,000 a year for the next three years for the Yukon Chamber of Mines; just over \$300,000 a year for three years to support the Yukon Mining Alliance's investment attraction strategy; \$150,000 for the north Yukon regional economic action development initiative — I like to say "READI", as it is a whole lot easier and shorter. I believe I have mentioned before that this project is a pilot project to provide support and advisory services to north Yukon. By north Yukon, I mean the First Nations of Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in, the Vuntut Gwitchin and Na Cho Nyäk Dun, as well as the City of Dawson and the Village of Mayo.

As we talked briefly about in Question Period today, we continue to proceed with the northern fibre diversity project. That is in conjunction with the federal government as well as the Northwest Territories. As I mentioned in Question Period, this government understands the significance of this project, not only to the Yukon but to Northwest Territories and Nunavut as well. I am also happy to report that the portion of the fibre link from Stewart Crossing to Dawson is actually out for tender right now. Hopefully we will see some progress along there in the near future.

I just about have too many notes here, Mr. Speaker. As you know, the CDF, or the community development fund, falls under the guise of Economic Development. I do have to admit that it ranks right up there as one of the favourites in the department. Just a note — from April 1 of 2015 until March 1 of this year, we approved 82 projects at just over \$3.7 million. It's really quite significant to the communities that Yukon is funding this, because it's direct to the communities. It's things to keep programs going and create programs, so it really is an important initiative.

The CDF consists of three tiers, and just last week I had the pleasure of being one of the three partners going through the approval process for the latest tier 3 proposals. I'll just take a minute or two to officially announce those here in the Legislature today.

We have two playground proposals this time around — and not just small playgrounds, but actually quite significant playgrounds. One was put forward by the Teslin Tlingit Council for a playground at Fox Point. Those of you who don't know, that's a residential neighbourhood just a few miles out of town — a TTC neighbourhood, or subdivision. It has been there for well over 20 years, so it's great to see that we can finally move forward with putting something out there. There are quite a number of families with small children in that particular subdivision, so it'll be great to see a playground going in out there.

The other playground is in Carcross, and it's quite an interesting project, actually. The proposal is to be right in the middle of the Carcross Commons. I've had discussion with Jeff Barrett and a few others about the Carcross Commons. I said, you're trying to promote tourism in the Carcross Commons. If you're getting older travelling citizens off the boats or off the train, what the heck do you want a playground in the middle of this Carcross Commons for? When he showed me what they propose to do and talked about it, it really made sense. It's so much more beneficial for the tourists to be able to interact with locals when they come into a community. It just makes the experience of being in the community that much greater. It's the only time they felt they could give the locals more reason to be in the Carcross Commons and it brought that much more value to the experience of the visitor, so we're happy to see that one move forward as well.

There are: Kluane First Nation's project to build an exercise gym and change rooms with attached storage for the second phase of the Burwash skating rink; renovations and heating system upgrades for the Dawson City Arts Society —

I'm sure the Member for Kluane will be happy to hear this. There's \$186,000 to help replace and repair the aging heating and ventilation system at the Klondike Institute of Art and Culture.

As well, Mr. Speaker, the Town of Watson Lake will be receiving \$268,000 for upgrades to the Dennis Ball Memorial Pool. The Member for Watson Lake will be happy to hear that. Another one for Dawson City — and the Member for Klondike referenced the Dawson City Sled Dawgs yesterday, I believe, in his tribute to Volunteer Day, so I'm sure he will be happy and they will be happy as well to see \$254,512 toward the replacement of a snow cat groomer, so that they can continue to provide Dawson and surrounding area with trail development and maintenance, so I'm happy to see that move forward as well.

Another one for Dawson City — Dawson is pretty lucky on this intake, I think — the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in — and that was money to help them apply for nomination of the Klondike area as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Of course, it was two years ago that we had quite a lengthy debate about that here in the Legislature one fine Wednesday afternoon.

Finally, tiny houses, fencing and indigenous garden planning for the Kwanlin Dün Cultural Centre — just about \$81,000 for that — and I'm happy to provide funding to that great building down there on the riverbank.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker for your indulgence in listening to my CDF spiel. I see I'm running out of time, so I'll try to pick up the pace here.

I guess what I want to say is Economic Development certainly isn't the largest department in government by any stretch of the imagination, but just from pointing out those few departments and those few projects, we understand just how important Economic Development is in creating opportunities here in the Yukon and helping diversify the economy in this great territory.

Mr. Speaker, I'll get my notes in order before you cut me off.

In four and a half years in this job, I certainly have learned a few things and one of them is that you cannot please everyone all of the time. That being said, I have heard from members opposite about all of the things that they see wrong with this budget before us, but the reality is that we once again see a balanced budget — a record budget, I might add — no net debt and a surplus of over \$9 million. All of that, as I mentioned at the opening, with no raising taxes and no carbon tax —

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

Does any other member wish to be heard?

**Hon. Mr. Cathers:** It's a pleasure to rise here this afternoon and to speak in support of this year's budget and all the things that are contained within it. I would like to just first touch on a number of areas here.

I may run out of time — and I should note for other members that I'll save some of the remarks about specific departmental initiatives until debate in those departments.

I would like to begin, first of all, by thanking my constituents in Lake Laberge for the continued opportunity to serve them, to represent them and to work with them on their issues and concerns. That is something I very much appreciate, and I appreciate the fact that many people continue to contact me when they're looking for solutions to problems or simply have questions about government.

I would like to also thank all my colleagues, the Premier and all our Cabinet colleagues and caucus colleagues, for their support for a number of things, not only in departmental budgets, but also responding specifically to the needs of my constituents. I'm pleased to see a number of initiatives moving forward that benefit Yukoners across the territory, as well as in my riding of Lake Laberge.

A few of the highlights I'm pleased to see and pleased to have seen delivered recently include the work that's being done toward the expansion of basic 911 territory-wide. I would like to thank the Minister of Community Services and his department, as well as the Department of Justice and other partners, including the RCMP, for the work that has been done in advancing this project.

I was pleased to have the opportunity, on behalf of the government, to officially open the new 911 call centre in the Whitehorse Emergency Response Centre earlier this year, along with the RCMP. I should note that the centre is an important part of being able to expand basic 911 territory-wide. That also comes with the increase we announced previously within the Department of Justice budget for funding five new RCMP positions for operators at the 911 call centre. That, in addition to the new ambulance station that was built on the hospital campus, is as a result of the expansion of Whitehorse General Hospital, which the government is committed to and is proceeding with.

There was a need to move the existing ambulance station and I was pleased, on behalf of the Minister of Community Services, to have the opportunity to officially open the new ambulance station, which also includes a new EMS dispatch centre that is equipped with a modern dispatch system. They've replaced the old equipment with a modern integrated computer-assisted dispatch system that also is designed to work well with the 911 call centre.

Improving that communications equipment is something that — although the effect it has may not be immediately apparent, one thing I've heard consistently from Yukoners who work in those areas — including paramedics, police and firefighters — is the importance of a communications system that works well and works quickly, because minutes truly can make a difference in any type of emergency, whether it's a police matter or a fire, or probably most especially in the case of a call for an ambulance. Delay can have a major effect.

Both new facilities are replacing previous call centres that were not as well-equipped. There is new computer equipment and, in the case of EMS, a new dispatch system, which also has the capacity in the future to expand to accommodate other coordination needs within the territory. It coordinates not only the ambulances — and is set up to have the potential to

coordinate EMS service across the territory — it coordinates medevac and patient transfers in the territory.

With that second ambulance station, the Yukon went from having one ambulance station five years ago to building the new emergency response centre at the central location at the top of Two Mile Hill, as we committed to in our election platform. It provides a base for more rapid response to all areas around Whitehorse because of being more centralized than a facility at Whitehorse General Hospital. Through replacing that facility at Whitehorse General Hospital, we have not only provided a more modern equipped facility but continued to serve the needs of Riverdale and downtown Whitehorse and provide service out of that second area.

Those are investments that I am personally pleased to see, because those are ones that I firmly believe will at some point — and we will probably never know who is affected by it but it, probably will make the difference when somebody's facing an emergency and it will save someone's life at some point in the future by having those facilities well-equipped and well-located to serve the needs of Whitehorse and all areas around Whitehorse, including my constituents.

As I think you know, Mr. Speaker, there are investments contained in this year's budget, as there have been in the budgets over the last several years, to continue to upgrade and modernize our equipment within the ambulance fleet and within the fire halls that are managed by the Yukon government across the territory. That has seen the replacement of equipment that was quite old. In the case of fire trucks in my riding, there were two tanker trucks — I should just back up a bit for those who may not be familiar with how fire halls are equipped. With the rural fire halls within the area around Whitehorse, including the two in my riding — the Hootalinqua fire hall and the Ibex fire hall — they are equipped with a pumper and a tanker truck.

When I was first elected, one of the tankers that was at one of the fire halls in my riding was, I believe, a year younger than I was and it was simply a tank on wheels, very similar to a water-delivery truck. The other one — I can't recall the exact age of that. But both were decades-old trucks that had their issues from a maintenance perspective and were certainly antiquated in terms of their age and their ability.

Through increased investments, which we have made in increasing both the operation budget for the Fire Marshal's Office, which funds the fire halls and provides the equipment for them — through increases to that budget, we have seen the equipment for fire response improve significantly. Over the time that I have had the opportunity to serve as MLA for Lake Laberge, we have seen the fire trucks for both Hootalinqua and Ibex Valley fire halls completely replaced. Earlier on, first we saw newer, but still old, tanker trucks put into those fire halls and then, through investments in this mandate, we have seen the replacement of three of the four trucks at those two fire halls, which are part of the \$2.9 million in new emergency vehicles that the Yukon government has spent in the past several years across the territory. That includes \$1.83 million for fire trucks throughout the Yukon and over \$1 million for new ambulances. That has seen the situation where that

previously led to fire halls having their rolling stock being a pumper truck and a tanker that had no capacity other than to haul water — now the Hootalinqua fire hall, the Ibex Valley fire hall and others near Whitehorse have a pumper tanker truck, which replaces what was previously just a tanker. They also have pumper trucks, and we have seen those new, state-of-the-art pumper tanker trucks placed at fire halls throughout the territory, including, as I mentioned, Hootalinqua, Ibex, Golden Horn, Tagish and another one that I am forgetting at the moment. They are also being considered by municipal fire departments to replace their vehicles.

In the case of the Ibex Valley fire department — an area where fire response was one of the main things that I have heard as a priority from constituents in that area — we saw not only a new pumper tanker and a new pumper truck delivered, but the fire hall renovated to have the addition of water-storage capacity because of the poor production rate of the well at that hall. The previous capacity was, I believe, roughly 1,000 gallons in their tank. In the case of a fire, it was not an adequate station for reloading with any significant amount of water. Now, with the addition of two tanks and a new building on there, it has significantly increased the capacity of that facility to, I believe, 6,000 gallons in total. That is intended to avoid, when trucks are responding out in that area, them having to come back to the top of Two Mile Hill to use the City of Whitehorse's facility.

Also, the Deep Creek/Grizzly Valley well project was modified for a similar reason to include larger storage tanks of the community well and the capacity for fire trucks to hook up and reload. That significantly improves fire response, particularly in winter months, within those areas. There was a house fire several years ago that demonstrated the fact that, even for a fire that would have been half an hour outside of town, because of the poor refill capacity of the Hootalinqua fire hall — in that case — the trucks were having to come back into the facility at the top of Two Mile Hill to refill their tanks and go back out to put water on the fire.

Again, having that additional capacity is beneficial for my constituents, but it's also helpful for the City of Whitehorse, particularly the northern part, because the dependence on the city's Two Mile Hill filling station is one that, if there were a problem at that or an accident around it that prevented fire trucks accessing it, could pose an issue for a fire, either outside of Whitehorse or within Whitehorse, and would not have left fire trucks with a suitable alternative to refill.

So those are investments that I'm proud of and believe that they go a long way toward improving the safety of Yukoners' homes and to responding in an emergency, as well as toward supporting our fire halls in the territory.

Other investments — although I'll leave them largely to the Minister of Community Services to talk about — that we've made in fire response on the other side of Whitehorse include the new Carcross fire hall being put in and improvements that were made in Tagish to their community well to improve the fire response and ability to access water in the community of Tagish.

Through the investments that we've made just in the last several years, in addition to what's in this year's budget, we've already, in the past four years, replaced over a third of Yukon government's fleet of ambulances within Yukon Emergency Medical Services. Eight new state-of-the-art ambulances have been purchased to modernize the fleet of 23 ambulances in service across the territory. Anyone who has seen the ambulances will see the significant improvement in equipment in everything from scene lighting to the iPads that are in the front — and the list goes on.

This is because of listening to what we've heard from our paramedics and volunteer emergency responders across the territory about the importance of helping them to do their jobs. With this better equipment, it can have an absolutely vital role in responding to a situation when someone is facing a medical emergency.

In addition to the investments made in health care facilities across the territory and the investments at Whitehorse General Hospital, including the new MRI facility and emergency room expansion — these are all part of how the Yukon government is responding to what we've heard from Yukoners and from health professionals to improve not only our facilities, but also our response capacity and equipment and ensure that when Yukoners need it most, the people who are putting themselves out there in responding to those and putting themselves potentially in harm's way, potentially have the best equipment they can have and are able to do their jobs with the best equipment they can get.

Mr. Speaker, I would also note that other investments I am pleased to see in this year's budget include the domestic water well program. As my colleague for Pelly-Nisutlin noted, something he heard from constituents — inside municipalities in his riding as well as outside — was the importance of expanding that program into municipalities. As you will recall, Mr. Speaker, through changes that we made in the tabling of Bill No. 80, which I brought forward as then-Minister of Community Services in this Assembly, we, after consulting with Yukon municipalities on which option they preferred for extending this very successful and popular rural domestic water well program into municipalities, we went with the option municipalities had indicated they supported. We changed the legislation and then, through the work of the current Minister of Community Services and his department, we saw the agreements concluded with all Yukon municipalities to extend the rural domestic water well program into municipalities and so, as a result, last year was the first year that the program was made available inside municipal limits, including for my constituents in Hidden Valley and McPherson, after — as I mentioned — all Yukon municipalities signed on to the new municipal component of this popular program.

My understanding is that 31 new home water well projects inside Whitehorse were approved last year under the program. The program — as you probably recall, Mr. Speaker — allows homeowners to finance the cost of drilling a home water well over a period of up to 15 years at low interest rates. Loans are fully funded by the Yukon government, but

municipalities are required to agree to collect the loan from the property owner using a local improvement charge. Also, through that mechanism, it ensures repayment of those loans. The model is based on the successful rural electrification program, which had been in place for many years. It's all about helping Yukoners put in infrastructure for their homes, but doing so in a way that ultimately they pay the costs of this infrastructure. Government just helps them with the up-front costs and with amortizing it with a low interest rate over a longer period of time than bank financing will allow.

Under the domestic water well drilling program, over 250 water wells have been completed since it was implemented in 2004, for a total government investment of over \$5.7 million, with an additional \$1.2 million in this year's budget. Fifty-eight new well projects were approved for funding last year, bringing the total number of home water wells to date, supported by this program to over 300.

One thing I would just note to my constituents and others that are listening is that this program has been popular and the municipal portion was popular as well, and the program is structured to keep the portion for rural programs and municipal programs separate for the first part of the year, just to ensure that neither overwhelms the other.

Once they reach, I believe, the end of June — I could stand to be corrected on the date — if one portion of the program is fully expended and the other has additional applicants, they transfer the money to the other part of the program.

I would just encourage those interested in the program to check it on the Department of Community Services website and to contact staff for information about it and, if they are interested in putting in a well this year, ensure that they apply for that early rather than leaving it late in the season, as the program is limited within the \$1.2-million budget, even though, as you know, Mr. Speaker, the size of that budget represents a significant increase from the previous size of the budget for the rural well program, which used to be at roughly \$700,000 a year and now overall is \$1.2 million in total.

I will just try to regain my spot in my notes here.

A few other things that I am pleased to see particularly within this year's budget as well — I guess I will talk a little bit more about some of the ones specific to my constituents before moving on to other areas. I would just like to thank the Minister of Highways and Public Works as well as the Premier and our Cabinet and caucus colleagues for their support for the \$150,000 that is in this year's budget related to the Takhini River bridge. Seeing that funding in place to take the next steps in improving safety is something that is one of the things that I have consistently heard from many of my constituents — their concern about safety at that bridge, due to in part the narrowness of the bridge and in part simply the angle of approach. The \$150,000 contained in the Highways and Public Works budget for a walkway design and an options study is something that I'm very pleased to see.

I should also note that I have heard the question from constituents about the radar sign that was put in place last year, which is one of the short-term improvements that the

Minister of Highways and Public Works and his department assisted with. The radar sign is not there, but I have been advised by the Minister of Highways and Public Works that it will be back and was out, I believe, due to repairs at the time.

I would like to again thank the minister for the support for that next step in responding to safety issues there and thank him as well for the short-term actions that he and his department took in response to concerns that I had heard and that they heard from my constituents last year after an accident at the bridge

The addition of the centreline rumble strips, the cat's eyes, the painting of a centreline on the bridge that had not had one and the installation of a radar sign were all much-appreciated improvements to respond to safety concerns of my constituents.

I'm also pleased to see funding in this year's budget for design, permit and geotechnical work at the Fox Creek bridge, which I understand, for structural reasons, is nearing the point where it needs to be replaced.

I would like now to move to talk about a few things within the Department of Justice that I'm pleased to see in this year's budget, including the \$385,000 for adding new front-line officers for the Whitehorse detachment of the RCMP, along with civilian support services — that's four new front-line positions, as well as administrative support to enable those constables, as well as others, to spend more time out on the street or on the road, instead of dealing with paperwork at the office.

As well, the \$21,000 contained in this year's budget to support the re-establishment of Crime Stoppers is also something I'm very pleased to see and to be able to announce in this year's budget. The increase in RCMP resources and the re-establishment of Crime Stoppers flow from discussions with the RCMP, as well as with the business community, including the Whitehorse Chamber of Commerce and the Yukon Chamber of Commerce and the Association of Yukon Communities. One of the things that I did last year, along with department staff, is sit down with the business community, including both chambers of commerce, and sit down with the Association of Yukon Communities, to talk to them about some of the ideas that had come up with the department and the RCMP to tackle the spike in property crime and doing more to target drug trafficking. After discussions with them, we came to the conclusion that there seemed to be support from everyone for increasing RCMP resources, as well as the re-establishment of Crime Stoppers. Through the good work of the chambers of commerce and members of the business community who have stepped forward to create that new volunteer board to form Crime Stoppers, we are pleased to see that this is in the process of being re-established.

As I believe you know, Mr. Speaker — but just to explain to members and others who may not be clear — the reason for having volunteers involved in Crime Stoppers is that it's the model that's used across the country because of the fact that they allow for somebody to receive a reward for tips. The structure right across the country is that government money and police money don't go to pay for those rewards, so it does

require volunteers. It also requires donations from volunteers or from businesses to help cover that. That program had become defunct here in the territory a number of years ago, and we're very pleased to see it in the process of being re-established quite soon.

The budget also contains funding for moving forward with the new RCMP detachment in Faro. I'm pleased to see that occurring.

I should also just recap for members the fact that the reason it wasn't actually already under construction was due, unfortunately, to the fact that last year we ran into a situation where we were informed by the RCMP nationally that the cost of the bids that had come in for the project were all over what they had financial approval for and they needed to seek Treasury Board approval. Unfortunately, we were advised by them that we could not issue that contract at that point. We are now proceeding with the RCMP to attempt to get that detachment built as early as possible.

I should also note a few other areas within the budget that I am pleased to see. In partnership with Women's Directorate, the Department of Justice has supported the continued operation of Victoria Faulkner Women's Centre's A Safe Place program with \$84,000. This program has only been in operation for a little while, but has demonstrated itself to be a useful program to date. It is an after-hours program for women and children that provides access to peer and professional supports, referrals to other community services and access to basic amenities. It fills that gap in services for women in Whitehorse by providing a place to connect with other resources evenings and weekends when other service providers are closed.

I am pleased to have the opportunity, along with the minister responsible for the Women's Directorate and Victoria Faulkner Women's Centre, to make that announcement just a few weeks ago and to see funding in the budget for that this year. That, in addition to the announcement that the minister for the Women's Directorate and I jointly made last year regarding the creation, funding and ultimately issuing of a contribution agreement for the new women's legal advocate position run by the Skookum Jim Friendship Centre. These are parts of how we are attempting to enhance our existing services and build on the good work that has been done to date. The funding for the women's legal advocate is intended to help women better understand their rights and navigate the legal system.

Moving on to an area not directly related to the budget, I would just like to briefly note changes recently made to the National Building Code of Canada. I would like to thank the Minister of Community Services and the department for the work done to implement the modifications to the National Building Code that are related to energy efficiency. The new energy efficiency requirements in section 9.36 of the National Building Code were automatically adopted when the National Building Code was changed several years ago and came into place, I believe, in 2012. After hearing from a number of Yukon homebuilders and citizens in rural Yukon, including within Lake Laberge, who were very concerned about the

building code requirements, and especially about their effect on affordability particularly for log home construction, the government suspended this section of the building code for first one year and then a second year, while we did work in this area.

I would like to thank the invited experienced log home construction contractors and other stakeholders who sat on an advisory committee that reviewed each part of section 9.36 of the National Building Code and provided recommendations. We had asked them to provide advice on whether these energy-efficiency standards or any portion of them should be brought back into effect, and the committee recommended that section 9.36 of the National Building Code be adopted with modifications, including some intended to ensure log home construction continues to be an affordable choice for Yukoners. That modified regulation came into effect April 1, 2016 and is available under the Yukon government website under the *Building Standards Act*, entitled OIC 2016/49.

I would like to thank all of the Yukoners from across the territory who served on that advisory committee or who contributed comments. I would like to, as well, acknowledge the work of the Minister of Community Services and his staff on this and acknowledge the work of my colleagues on this, including the MLA for Pelly-Nisutlin, the MLA for Kluane, the MLA for Watson Lake and the MLA for Vuntut Gwitchin, all of whom brought forward issues on behalf of their constituents about the effects of these changes and delivered the message loud and clear, which we heard and listened to, that log home builders were having trouble meeting these new energy-efficiency standards. They believe, and we believe, that the log home construction should remain an affordable option for Yukoners and is, in fact, a very responsible choice in building materials if those materials are sourced locally from renewable sources in a responsible manner. Building a log home has been a Yukon tradition and way of life for many for over 100 years and should always remain an option for Yukoners, particularly when compared to constructing with vinyl and other materials imported from the south — which, in comparison, log home construction certainly should not be looked down on. It is something that in fact Yukoners who build log homes, whether themselves or through the work of contracting a log home builder, can and should continue to be proud of their homes as being both environmentally responsible and, in many cases — in my personal opinion — log home buildings are one of the nicest forms of home construction and very much a Yukon tradition here for many people.

I would like to note also the other area that I'm pleased to see funded through this year's budget includes the financial support for continuing the work being done under the Minister of Health and Social Services with the Community Midwifery Association of Yukon and the doctors, nurses and other health professionals who are forming part of the working group looking at regulating midwifery here in the territory.

I am very much looking forward to the midwifery symposium on April 24 that we've financially supported and looking forward to hearing from doctors, nurses and midwives

across the country who will be there to share their experiences and help us better understand how to successfully integrate midwifery into the health care options available here. That's something that I've heard from many constituents who see the value of this health profession and are very interested in seeing it added to the range of health services here in the territory. I'm pleased to see the work continue in looking at how to responsibly regulate it and integrate it into Yukon's health care system.

I would also like to note — one thing I meant to mention earlier — I would like to thank the Minister of Education for funding continuing improvements at Hidden Valley School, which is in this year's budget. There are some improvements in capital maintenance there as well as new playground equipment, which was put in last year.

I would like to also thank him for the work that he did in seeing the afterschool program put into place there. I have heard positive comments from constituents about that and I have had people approach me after the previous program run by an NGO ceased to provide service there. I approached the minister — I was very pleased with the response that he and the department did in that situation. I have heard very positive reviews from constituents about how well that program is working.

Through that and the improvements that the current Minister of Education and the previous Minister of Education made to the bus routes in my constituency, I would note that these have certainly made things better for many parents and families. I would like to thank both of them, as well as the department, for their work in those areas.

Mr. Speaker, I believe you're signalling that I should be wrapping up my remarks here.

A few others I would just like to touch on that I am pleased to see in this year's budget include increased support for recycling efforts throughout the territory and continued supports for the licensed practical nursing program at Yukon College and, as well, investments in the completion of the Sarah Steele building and the increased alcohol and drugs services at those areas. That again is an area that was a platform commitment and I am pleased to see that occurring.

I would like to also acknowledge the Minister of Environment and the Department of Environment for the increased investment in the water strategy to expand our water monitoring network in total of \$1.5 million. That of course is an important part of having a better understanding of water throughout the territory, where in the past we have not had as

**Speaker:** Order. Order, please.

**Ms. White:** I just want to thank my family to start. A lot of people in the Chamber and outside of the Chamber will know different parts of my family, but maybe not all the pieces together.

We've heard this week about my mom being honoured in Ottawa for her volunteerism, and that's just a really small part of who she is. My mom has, probably for the last four, five or six years — I don't even know how many years — hosted a

family dinner at her house every Sunday. “Family” has different meanings for all of us. At my house, “family” is those who you were born with and those who choose you and those you choose. Family dinner at my mom and dad’s house is probably 16-plus people every Sunday. That dinner is the highlight of most of our weeks and it’s definitely what helps keep me centred. So thanks to my mom, my dad, and my sister and her husband, my older brother, my younger brother and all the nephews. They’re definitely what make this job easier. I want to thank my friends who are always a sounding board. They are definitely stability in sometimes unstable times.

I want to thank all the people in my riding. The seniors complex at 600 College Drive has continued to be easily one of the best things that have happened to me since 2011. My grandma lives in Edmonton, and I have access to an entire building of grandmas and grandpas. When we’re not in the Sitting and I have the time, I go up for Wednesday afternoon bingo, which is pretty exciting — but I can tell you, if you play bingo with seniors, don’t think that you’re going to be good at radio bingo, because they’re way more patient at Wednesday afternoon bingos than radio bingo. I was set up for failure, I think, by them, by feeling like I knew what I was doing for bingo.

The seniors — in the last four years of getting to know people of that age and stuff has been really spectacular. I’ve been incredibly lucky to know people at their best times and at the worst times, and have become quite the expert in some federal paperwork, which it has been really helpful to offer that to my friends up there. So the seniors complex — I thank them.

I had to drive up to my riding today to get some paperwork. I’m reminded always by how cool it is, because there were two gentlemen with small dogs on leashes and they were having a conversation by the mailbox. There was an older woman who was walking back to her house. I live in a part of the community that’s still very community-based. There is no time that you can be in my neighbourhood without seeing people out and about.

I live across the street from a community garden, a community park and a skating rink, and no matter what time of year, there are always people there. I really want to thank the people in my riding, because it’s with them that I come to work every day. It’s with them in mind. Since 2011, it has been really incredible to get to know people better. I feel really privileged that this job allows us to get to know that many people on that level, and for that I’m truly grateful.

I also want to thank the people in all the communities I have visited. Since 2012, I’ve had the privilege of driving everywhere, just about, that you can drive in the territory for community meetings. It is always really fantastic to be welcomed in and the conversations at the gas stations, hotels, motels, cafes or the community meetings themselves — and the fact that people are open to those conversations and are willing to share is really phenomenal. I want to thank them as well.

Mr. Speaker, it’s surreal to be standing here in response to this last budget to be tabled in the last Sitting of the 33<sup>rd</sup> Legislative Assembly. It’s surreal because I had totally forgotten that, in my early teens, I had been a page in this Assembly and hadn’t remembered until the day I was signing my papers on the floor after being elected. Surreal because I still remember feeling so separated from the political process in my 20s that I didn’t even consider exercising my right to vote because I felt like it had no worth. Understanding now that people in other countries are willing to risk their lives for the ability to vote, I shake my head at my younger self who did not understand the incredible power that being able to participate in the democratic process allows.

I am happy to say that times are changing. We have seen organizations like Apathy is Boring, which was started by Yukoner Ilone Dougherty, empower youth across the country to participate in the democratic process. In the last number of years, we have seen youth embracing the power they hold as voters and exercising it. It has been a truly beautiful thing.

In the last four and a bit years from right here in this Legislative Assembly, we have had a front-row seat to an awakening in the Yukon. We have seen by the numbers of people in the gallery, and heard the drums and chants from outside these walls, that a record number of Yukoners have been pushed too far by decisions that they are being told are being made on their behalf, and they are no longer sitting idly by. These Yukoners have shaken off any apathy that they may have had and are fully participating in civil society. We have seen it time and time again. It was during the first three and a bit years that we came to work that there were galleries full of people. They would come in to try to make their opinions known to those of us who have the privilege of being on both sides of the floor.

I want to thank them for strengthening, participating, engaging and making democracy a living, breathing, thriving entity. I want to especially thank those people who by their regularity in attendance have become fixtures in the gallery. It is almost as if we have been participating in a daily take-an-activist-to-work program. Now, it is their absence we notice. Your presence has been an honour and a privilege to behold. You are a reminder that each and every one of us in this Chamber works for citizens like you whether we see them here or not. It is with the faces and the stories of the people I have met that I enter this Chamber each and every day.

I think that because we, the elected, are in the bubble that is the Legislative Assembly, we have a hard time reining in our thoughts, criticisms and hopes for the Yukon and the Yukon government. I think that rings true for both sides of the Chamber. As the opposition, we often get told by government that we haven’t offered up ideas or solutions to the issues we have identified. That is always brought up during Question Period, and that is perfectly true. During Question Period, it is our duty as members of the opposition to question the government so that we ensure that Yukoners are benefiting from the programs and services proposed by them. It is up to them, the government, on how they choose to answer, and it



has been pointed out by a great number of visiting students that direct answers to questions are in short supply.

I think that maybe if the government side paid closer attention to our budget responses and to the questions we raise during budget debates or motion debates — like the one we had yesterday where they spoke of tax credits from the federal government and we spoke about increasing the amount that is accessible to families for the kids recreation fund — they would hear the solutions and ideas we are offering. Our responses and our questions about budget spending are based on our belief that things can be done differently. They reflect our values, they reflect our ideals and they reflect how we view legislation differently. This is no different from the legislation that the government brings forward, their motions and their programs. It highlights our differences, the difference in our belief systems, and like we have said in those conversations, that is okay, because if we didn't have that back-and-forth conversation, our democracy would be weaker for it.

I can assure the government side, however, not to worry — for when we are sitting on that side of the Legislature as government, we will have many ideas on how to better offer the services and programs presented by government.

Sometimes this whole dynamic of us-versus-them leaves us, on this side of the House, in a position, when we are working on our budget speech, of trying to figure out how to start, of what we should say and then just asking ourselves “Where do I even start?” We've chatted a lot about this in our office, and I want to thank Noah, a man far wiser than his years, for talking this out with me.

My answer to this budget speech is to try to ask a more high-level question that would help me get down to the bottom of what we really see as really wrong with government in the Yukon right now and what we, as the Yukon NDP, would do differently if we were in their position.

I think the million-dollar question is: What is the point of government and elected officials? We ask ourselves what kind of legacy the Yukon Party thinks they are leaving behind, and what they would point to as their achievements.

To me it would be two things, because this is what we've heard them repeat over and over: building capital projects, and managing the economy in tough times. To be fair, from the perspective of many — including those in financial circles — the Yukon Party hasn't been doing too well at managing the economy as we enter our third year of GDP contraction — which, by economic definition, is a recession.

I think that both of those achievements, however, are false winds, so to speak, because the design, management and selection of capital projects is conducted by the bureaucracy, not the politicians. At the end of the day, the Yukon's economy is really nearly entirely based on transfer payments from the federal government and a small portion from the extraction of minerals that are subject to the whims of international commodity prices.

The reason that these achievements are false is because the Yukon government — and I really mean the elected leaders in this case — have very little influence on the

outcome of these two issues. The result would likely have been the same because it is the public servants who are making the calls and doing the legwork on capital projects. We have heard this government take credit when the commodity prices were high, but now that they're at a low, we've heard them say it isn't their fault.

This is the truest statement yet, because how on Earth could this government possibly hope to influence world commodity prices? How could that even happen?

If not the economy and managing money, what is the role of elected officials? We on this side of the House believe it is to be leaders, to bring people together, to listen to the people you represent and come up with creative solutions to problems that you have identified.

I appreciate that in their final year of their mandate this government took to the road to speak to the people they represent. I appreciate this because, since 2012, we on this side of the House have been to nearly every single community in the territory each and every year. Personally, I have driven to Beaver Creek, Watson Lake, Teslin, Dawson City and all points in between no less than twice and in most cases three times. That's just me.

My colleagues have had different communities that they have travelled to and all for the benefit and the privilege of listening to community members speak to issues that affect them and issues that they think are important.

It was really great to hear some of those issues we've been championing on behalf of communities reflected in this year's budget responses from government members, because now that they've heard them first-hand themselves, it has become more real. Maybe these communities will get the results that they've been hoping for. I wonder, and I ask myself, if this government caucus had made those community tours more of a priority, like we have on this side, if many of the concerns raised by communities would still be the problem they are today.

Mr. Speaker, I came to this job with an open heart, with the belief that integrity, compassion and humanity all belong here in this Chamber. I stand here now, nearing the end of this 33<sup>rd</sup> legislative session, a couple of years older and a little worse for wear, but without any less conviction about the traits I wish to embrace as a politician.

Elected government has the ability to be bold, they have the ability to set a course for the territory — but I would argue that we have seen very little of that leadership in relationship building from this Yukon Party government. Issues like the Peel — we've had hundreds of people outside this Chamber. We've had a petition that was circulated that the government discredited and said it didn't matter what people from Düsseldorf thought.

We have issues like the future of land use planning. We are supposed to have eight land use plans in the territory and, so far successfully, one has been completed to date. Respecting First Nation final agreements — no Yukon government in the history of Yukon government so far has had so many court cases brought against them by First Nation governments as this one we have now. The amendments to

YESAA, setting and meeting waste diversion goals and negotiating things like the *Agreement on Internal Trade* — these are all areas where the Yukon government could not only have had an influence on the outcome, but has the duty to provide leadership and creative solutions that benefit all Yukoners.

From my perspective, these are all areas where the Yukon Party government has not only shown a lack of leadership, but also where they appear to have actively worked to undermine the progress and outcomes of these processes. When we criticize the government on issues, we often hear them repeat lines like, “it’s out of our control”, or “we’re a small jurisdiction”. In fact, that is almost exactly the line that they took for not lobbying harder for Yukon for provisions that favour us, as Yukoners, in the *Agreement on Internal Trade* — “because we’re just too small”. But that isn’t true, because they have lobbied for Yukon on much larger stages. As government, they have taken a firm stance on sticking up for Yukon, but maybe in ways they wish to forget. I think it has actually happened twice — first when they pushed and lobbied the federal government to advance their agenda to streamline the YESAA process by putting forward their two contentious amendments to S-6 — amendments that had First Nation governments ready to go to court, yet again, to defend the integrity of their constitutionally protected final agreements — I think that was one example — and most recently, when the Premier organized the other northern premiers to go to Vancouver and state emphatically that Yukon would not accept a carbon tax.

It’s interesting that the only two bold actions this Premier has taken in his tenure were to undermine the intent of our First Nation final agreements and then to opt out of doing our part to fight climate change; to even be part of that conversation on a national scale.

The real failure of this government has been to not actually create goals, listen, lead and propose solutions to issues that they actually had influence over. In 2011, like others I’m sure, I listened to parents speak about their worries around access to childcare — parents who are forced to make the tough decision of wanting to work, but needing to stay home because they couldn’t afford the early childhood education offered through daycare. We all lose in this situation. We lose the early intervention to lifelong learning, we lose all the economics of earning wages and paying taxes and spending what comes along with wages, and we lose the skills that aren’t being shared by the person who has to choose to stay home because they had to make that decision.

In 2015, I met a single mother who couldn’t afford childcare, pad rent and her mortgage. To be clear, she is fierce. She sacrifices everything for her child. When she lost her childcare subsidy, she got help from her mom, but that can’t last forever. She’s done everything in her power to better the life of her family. She was, and still is, suffering because the calculation of the childcare subsidy is rigid, because there is no flexibility. There absolutely needs to be an appeal process. She needs to be able to go and she needs to put all her cards on the table and then it needs to be recalculated. It needs

to be looked at, but that process doesn’t exist. So what did she do? She turned to social assistance because that was the last thing she had. Then she was denied at social assistance because she had an RRSP and she was told that unless she liquidated the only small savings that she had, they could not help her. So right now she is still in this quandary. Right now she is worried about what she’s going to do with her son this summer. So she has to worry about two and a half months of childcare. Her solution to full-time childcare this summer is to sell her home, and if her home doesn’t sell by June 1, her next step is to quit her job.

I ask you how, in 2016, is that even acceptable — that she’s gone to every department we have, she’s gone down every avenue she can, and right now she is faced with selling her home because she figures that is the only way that she’s going to be able to afford childcare for the summer?

Last week, Mr. Speaker, this issue hit even closer to home because my little sister and her husband have a beautiful family. They’re a little quirky and a little rough and tumble, but I think that’s probably to be expected because they have three sons. They both work full-time on what the government would say are good-paying jobs and they live within their means. There aren’t a lot of extras at their house, but there’s an awful lot of love. In 2011, Kemper — that’s the oldest nephew I have — he was four and a half years old and he was the only little guy that they had in daycare, and he turns nine this May. Aason and Lennox had yet to make their world debuts. Lennox turns two this summer and Aason turns four. Faced with a cut to their childcare subsidy that they can appeal and facing an upcoming increase to the cost of daycare — an increase that they don’t begrudge because of the level of care they receive — they have had to make hard decisions.

After talking to my parents, after talking to his parents and after putting all their financial cards on the table, they have had to come to this decision: My little sister is quitting her job. She will leave behind full-time employment that she likes, working with people who she likes, offering services to people in the community, because she and her family cannot afford the cost of childcare. What does that mean for them? It means that she will be home during the day and she will be looking for a part-time job in the evenings so she can still contribute to the household finances.

When we are asking about our solutions, here is the solution I have for this: affordable childcare for everybody. This isn’t a feminist issue and this isn’t just a family issue; this is humanist issue. We should have affordable childcare for everybody. Let’s make sure that families can make the best choices. Let’s make sure that a family, when they are making the decision — that it is not based on the finances, but is based on the will of what they want. If someone wants to stay home with their kids, I think that is fantastic, but if someone wants to go to work and that is what they want to do, I want to make sure that they can. I want to make sure that families have equal access to early childhood education. I want to make sure that no kid gets left behind because their family could not afford the cost of childcare.

In 2011, I was told more than once by people living in mobile homes that it did not matter if they voted or not. No one cared about what they thought anyway — and really, let's be honest, who could blame them? Even after the new *Residential Landlord and Tenant Act* was finally enacted this past January, these homeowners have been treated only as renters under the law, given no more protection than someone who rents an apartment.

I asked about this question in Question Period, and I was told by one minister that if they did not like the situation, they could move out of town. I asked about it again during budget debate and I asked about it again during Question Period. Our solution from this side — well, I went door-to-door, first with a request for letters. I handed out a piece of paper with the then-minister's e-mail address and his contact information, and it had mine and I asked them to send letters. Tell them what your reality is; share what it means for you; share our experience. You know what happened? People sent letters. They really did.

Then I was told that I was the only person who was worried about the issue. It didn't matter that people came into the gallery. It didn't matter that there were people around. So I took it further. I took a petition to every single door in every mobile home park in Whitehorse, because it is that important to me. After spending hours in mobile home parks, I can tell you with confidence that the opinions and experiences of mobile homeowners really do matter; that their collective life experiences need to be at the forefront of legislation that oversees their futures.

I asked mobile homeowners for help. I asked them to write letters and to sign a petition; a petition that, when I tabled it, had nearly 400 signatures. But the real clincher about this, Mr. Speaker, is that this petition was signed by every single person in mobile homes that I spoke to. There was not one single person to whom I spoke who did not sign the petition. I asked them to believe that they mattered, and now we get to see a change.

I want to thank the current Minister of Community Services for his willingness to address this oversight and to begin the process of righting the wrong. I am pleased to say that after nearly four years of lobbying for change, the consultation has finally begun where mobile homeowners are being asked about two major issues that affect them — that of pad rent increases and evictions without cause.

Earlier today I had concerns, because currently you can't access an online survey but you could print a PDF. I talked to the minister responsible and I have been assured that the survey will be available online tomorrow. I want to thank him for that because he has just told people in mobile home parks that they matter and that's important. Thank you very much.

I can say with confidence that an NDP government would protect the rights of mobile homeowners. I can say with confidence that an NDP government would make sure that families weren't faced with that tough challenge of whether to work or not to work — childcare or no childcare.

Mr. Speaker, I could go on at length about the solutions we've offered from this side of the House since 2011, but I'm just going to share those two examples.

Yukon government can't magically make the economy rebound, but they can create conditions for success when it actually does. They can create land use plans so mines and industry can get moving more quickly and with certainty that they have the social licence to get to work once that commodity's price comes back.

They can engage with First Nations so businesses have certainty before investing in Yukon. They can meet with the stakeholders and the public to create creative solutions to climate change issues and renewable energy. This is where we should be leading the country, not in the number of court cases against us by First Nation governments.

I have been to conferences on the opportunities of biomass, the emerging advances of photovoltaic and the potential of pump storage to address our energy needs in the future. That's just what I can remember recently.

I have been to town halls and community meetings that are focused on finding solutions to tough social issues. This is where we should be going for ideas and solutions — to the people who are champions and experts in their field and they have their feet on the ground.

Yes, Mr. Speaker, it's true — we don't think the current government has been showing leadership in these areas. Yes, it's true that, under the watch of this government, Yukoners are facing tough economic times. We're in recession.

But it's also true that Yukon has so much potential. We have some of the best mineral potential in the world. We have the most well-educated population per capita and some of the most enabling modern land claims agreements in the world. This potential exists in the Yukon and it is really the key to our success. Unfortunately it has not been fostered or tapped into adequately by this Yukon Party government.

I can tell you that the Yukon NDP will continue to build these relationships and that we look forward to tapping into the unlimited potential of Yukoners because we believe that is what Yukon government is supposed to do. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** Hon. Premier, your closing statement, as all members have spoken.

**Hon. Mr. Pasloski:** It is indeed a pleasure and an honour to rise to end second reading debate on the budget for 2016-17 — the fifth budget presented by the Yukon Party caucus, the fifth surplus budget presented. We continue to be in a very strong fiscal position.

I would like to start by acknowledging all the constituents and all the residents of the riding of Mountainview. That includes the communities of Granger, McIntyre, Valleyview and Hillcrest. Through the last number of years, mostly with my wife Tammie, we have been up and down those streets many times, have spoken to probably most of the people who live in the riding of Mountainview. I will continue to say that it is always an honour to serve the constituents who have

bestowed their trust and responsibility on me to represent them in this House.

I would also like to thank my family, as well, for their support, their understanding, their patience and their willingness to do many things without me, because either the husband or their father is too busy doing the work of the people. To them I extend my gratitude for the understanding of the responsibilities that go with the position.

I'm very proud of the record that we have delivered to Yukoners. We have heard mention in this House of one of the information pamphlets that has gone out to Yukoners, because I think it is important for government to communicate with the citizens. We know the other parties continue to do the very same thing to ensure that their message is communicated to their constituents as well.

That document, for me, was very personally satisfying. As I have said in the past, when people approached me to look at throwing my name in the ring and moving forward to possibly become the Leader of the Yukon Party, one of the concerns I had — not about the Yukon Party, but about politics in general — was how much I was really upset at political leaders and political parties promising the world to people to get into power, but then finding all the excuses in the world, blaming the previous government or whatever the reasons were to not deliver on their platform. I'm very proud to say that we have either accomplished or we are currently doing everything that we put in our platform, and that is a feat that I will stand up to — against any political party of any government, wherever you want to look.

We've done that; we've moved forward and we've accomplished a tremendous amount, and we've done that without creating deficits. More importantly, we've not created any net debt, and truly that is an envy in this country and in probably most of the developed world — that we continue to do this, but we live within our means.

Families and businesses have to live within their means, and they expect their government to do the very same thing.

I'm very proud of the priorities that we are addressing for Yukoners in this current budget. Just to sort of highlight a few of the things that we're talking about — \$3.3 million for a new fire hall in Carcross and \$250,000 planning money for the replacement of the Old Crow Health Centre. The new building will become more than a health centre — a daycare facility that will access and provide many different services to the citizens of Old Crow on behalf of the Government of Yukon.

I am very proud that we have found new money — \$228,000 this year — to go toward implementing a colorectal screening program — one of the highest incidence of cancers that exists in this territory. More home care nurses — I believe that our investment in home care, since coming into power as a party in 2002, has gone up 350 percent, and we continue to invest more and more in home care to allow people to live in their homes for as long as possible.

\$15 million capital funding for the Whistle Bend subdivision — I'm very excited. It seems that every time I go down to Whistle Bend, it continues to change and to grow.

Almost all the lots in phase 1 are now gone. We're quickly already filling up phase 2. We've partnered with the Ta'an Kwäch'an and the Da Daghay Development Corporation on their affordable housing unit. We have the continuing care facility, and now we're working together to ensure we're making investments for not only phase 3, but I think recent discussions with the city were to talk about phases 4 and 5 and forward. We're very excited and proud of that.

We're very excited about the additional money for the IT sector, increasing by \$3 million additional dollars, up to \$9.5 million. We recognize that strategic investments in various sectors can have a very positive long-term effect on this economy, and we believe very firmly that this is an investment that will pay off with great dividends for this territory in the long term.

We're very proud to be: increasing the funding for the student financial assistant plan, or the Yukon grant, by \$376,000 this year; providing \$385,000 in funding to fund five new RCMP positions here in the city; start-up money to start up a new Crime Stoppers program in this community; \$3.9 million for assessment and remediation work at contaminated sites here in the territory.

I know that we'll be proud to be moving forward with a mental wellness strategy during this session, and we've already put forward a budget of \$1 million to be able to quickly move forward with the implementation of that strategy; \$1.1 million for land titles modernization — we worked very closely with the Kwanlin Dün First Nation. Their First Nation is ecstatic with those changes. We worked with the Government of Canada and with the Kwanlin Dün First Nation. They have to make some changes, as well, to their agreements, but soon we'll see the dream and the plan that always existed for Kwanlin Dün, and that was to be able to utilize their property, as the largest landowner in the City of Whitehorse, to be able to generate revenues from commercial or residential leases on their land, and more than \$1.5 million to expand Yukon's water monitoring and water strategy that this government put forward a couple of years ago.

We're very excited about the \$300,000 in core funding to support Special Olympics Yukon, Yukon Aboriginal Sports Circle and Recreation and Parks Association of the Yukon. These organizations provide incredible services to our community. I know a number of us on this side of the House were at the Special O fundraiser last weekend, as we are every year. It's tremendous to see that these investments that we have made in sport and recreation have resulted in real tangible differences in people's lives — not only the athletes, but also the coaches and the board and all the people around them. It is truly wonderful.

There is \$350,000 to develop new campsites and improve facilities in government campgrounds; more cottage lots — these are two things that we've heard from people — and we're very proud to be delivering expanded campgrounds. We'll be opening the new Conrad campground next month and we'll have more fee simple cottage lots coming out around Kluane Lake, and that's about listening to Yukoners and delivering for Yukoners.

For the second year in a row, we are increasing investment in Yukon museums and First Nation cultural centres, this year totalling in excess of \$1.8 million, Mr. Speaker. That is an increase of over 300 percent since the Yukon Party came into power — an increase since the last Liberal and NDP governments. Of course, how can we not mention the Yukon Now program — the largest marketing investment in this territory's history for tourism? We partnered with the federal government for two years. We've now committed just under \$1 million a year for three subsequent years and we're hoping that the federal government will live up to the commitment that they made previously, but we have stated multiple times that if they don't, we will ensure that this industry also receives the funding that they need to thrive.

I mentioned what we've done with Da Daghay Development Corporation and Ta'an Kwäch'än. I want to recognize the leadership of Chief Kristina Kane and Deputy Chief Michelle Telep and their development corporation board of directors in getting this very important project off the ground. The design looks great. It's an opportunity to create employment and build on that economy right now. It's an opportunity for training, apprenticeship opportunities and also for capacity building for them.

Of course, I think some of these projects are making a difference in people's lives. Our commitment to partner with the Yukon Hospital Corporation and the creation of Canada's first MRI north of 60, which is now benefitting so many Yukoners in not having to displace them to go south for exams. Of course, tied to that as well is the current hospital expansion — another commitment that we've made.

Delivering of hospitals in Watson Lake and in Dawson City — sadly the record will show that the opposition was not supportive of these facilities, not just by voting against funding for them, but publicly not supporting them. I venture to ask those people to ask the people who live in those communities today — the Leader of the Liberal Party — how many people don't think that hospital is a great idea in his community?

McDonald Lodge — brand new beautiful facility expanded from 11 to 15 beds or units with the ability to expand further in the future if needed.

Of course, we look at the work that is being done at Sarah Steele. There were a number of things in the last election. Only one party identified this as part of their platform. The whole aspect of addictions was something that was prominent in the Yukon Party campaign, recognizing addictions as not a justice issue, but a health issue. We've made commitments to change detox — it's now a medical detox. We'll soon be opening new expanded programming with continuous input for both men and women and also new substantive alcohol and drug service programming for youth as well. I would acknowledge the previous and the current Health ministers for the work that they've done to get us to where we are on those. That will be a very exciting day when we deliver.

Every day, we drive down Fourth Avenue and we see the work that is going on at the new facility that we're partnering

with the Salvation Army on that is not only going to provide more beds and larger dining areas but, for the first time, transitional housing in this territory for people who are ready to take that next step.

I think of all the seniors residences that have been built, either by the previous governments or during this mandate: Haines Junction, Teslin, Watson Lake, Faro, Mayo and two recently in Whitehorse. In fact Mayo and the one on Front Street and the one on Alexander Street are 88 new units in just over two years that we have opened — new units providing housing for seniors who need it.

Of course, we're very proud of our long-term care facility. I will talk a little bit more about that later.

Of course, Jackson Lake was another area that we committed a million dollars to and, with investments from the federal government as well, we're seeing some incredible work. I would like to acknowledge the work of Jeanie Dendys and all of the people at Kwanlin Dün who are focusing on making a difference for people who would truly benefit from an after-care program that is land-based.

In the last decade, we've seen about a 20-percent increase in population and, with that of course, a corresponding increase in our labour force as well. I can remember very clearly as a business owner in this community the previous NDP and Liberal governments between 1997 and 2002, where we saw a mass exodus of people during that time — people who were in their prime working years who were leaving. I remember double-digit unemployment. I remember the Liberal government using their credit card to pay for wages in this territory.

In the last four and half years, I have listened to a lot of complaining. I believe there have been deliberate attempts to create fear, no regard for facts and, most importantly, no plan or no alternatives.

We have seen a significant drop in commodity prices, affecting not just this jurisdiction but all jurisdictions that rely heavily on a resource-based economy. While the Leader of the Liberal Party doesn't think that Yukoners understand that, sadly, I believe he will find that they do understand what that means. We continue to make significant investments now to help the economy, but not to be the economy. That is really what distinguishes Yukon Party from the Liberals and the NDP.

Through our budget tour conversations we heard what Yukoners wanted. They want us as a government to provide a helping hand when times are like this and to prepare us for the future. That is what we heard very clearly. As we have mentioned, these budget tours involved 60 meetings in every community; literally hundreds of Yukoners participated in these. Again, I would like to acknowledge that and I would like to thank them for their input because they helped us shape this budget.

Year after year, we continue to invest around \$300 million in capital. I know that the Liberal leader tries to imply that we have spiked it up for this year. In fact, it was interesting to read his post-budget comments. The comments were exactly the same for the last three years that he has done.

We have been pretty consistent, recognizing at a time of economic downturn, that this government needs to continue to provide as much investment as it can to put money into the economy and create jobs today, but building facilities that we will use for years to come. We are investing in infrastructure, roads, bridges and airports. We continue to work toward a creation of new hydro and, as I mentioned, the strategic investments in the knowledge economy through IT. We are creating jobs now. We are creating opportunities for training for our younger people, but we are building for the future.

We are streamlining our permitting and our regulatory regimes. With that, we are engaging the Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Board. We are engaging the Water Board. We are looking at mine licensing improvements, and we are working with First Nations and industry on that.

Education is not just a social policy; it is a very strong economic policy. I have said that many times. We have our new vision that has been led by the Minister of Education. We have our mobile trades training trailer. We have created the Centre for Northern Innovation in Mining and, of course, in our last platform, we continue to move toward the creation of a Yukon university. We understand the significant economic benefits that this will derive for this territory as well. We continue to support and fund research at the Yukon Research Centre, such as the Cold Climate Innovation and climate change adaptation. You only have to talk to Stephen Mooney briefly to see the energy and the opportunities. I have met with a number of those companies that have utilized the resources and the expertise that exists in the Yukon Research Centre. I encourage all entrepreneurs and inventors who have an idea to certainly talk to them, because they have some great advice, and a lot of times some funding opportunities to go along with that.

I have mentioned Yukon Now in Tourism and Culture. I look at our investments in film and sound and the capacity we are building. I remember having conversations with some of the film and sound guys who said that as a result of the work doing those commercials for Yukon Now that they have built that capacity and experience so that they are now going out and competing for private sector work as well. That's exactly the type of strategic investment that this government is focusing on.

Of course, arts and culture — I think what we need to do — we've talked about a lot of different investments, but I think now, more than ever, we need to support our resource sector. That is critical. That's another area where we delineate ourselves, we separate ourselves from the Liberal Party and from the New Democratic Party. We will continue to work by setting the stage, by doing the things that I've just been talking about, to help us move toward that vision that this party has, which is to see this territory become a net contributor to our great country, to pay our own way, so we don't have the ability to have a federal government come up to us and say, we're just going to give you less money on our transfer payment. That's what separates this party from the other party.

I wanted to just talk a little bit about the feedback that we've received from the Yukon Chamber of Commerce about our budget. They did a number of categories and they gave us an overall grade of B+. Investments and infrastructure — they say that the improvements to roads, airfields and fibre optic and cellular infrastructure are excellent. Investments identified are all beneficial to the economy and the prudence of the government in both identifying and investigating capital expenditures should be commended.

Investments in communities, A — the Yukon chamber is pleased with the level of capital investment in Yukon community facilities, from water and sewer systems to subdivision planning and fire halls. Taxation, A — no tax increases for families or businesses. Let me say that again, Mr. Speaker: no tax increases for families and businesses. This is where we truly differentiate ourselves from the Liberals and the NDP. The Yukon currently has some of the lowest corporate rates in the country, which is positive for attracting and retaining businesses.

Procurement, C. Even though I heard some of the media reporting that as a failing grade, for the record, they listed C. They say that the government has recognized it has a problem here and is undertaking to do something about it. That's their comment. I'll talk on that briefly right away.

Training funds, B. Housing, B — where they say the chamber is encouraged by projects currently proposed and underway. Balanced budget, A- — the chamber is pleased with a budget that does not raise taxes, does not assume any debt, delivers a surplus and includes significant capital expenditures. Developing the private economy, B — the government explicitly stated the value they see in a vibrant, competitive and local economy. What a surprise, Mr. Speaker — they too think that striving to become a net contributor is a good idea. I am not surprised by that as well.

Let's talk a little bit about procurement, as I said. When I was talking to the chamber recently, I told them that we're taking steps to make the procurement system more fair for their businesses. We're taking steps so that the local companies have every opportunity to compete openly and fairly. In fact, we did, last year, through the leadership of the minister, create a procurement panel of local and national experts. We'll be looking forward to their recommendations very shortly.

As in business, there's a saying that says that time is money. What I told them — there are some changes that are already in the works that will benefit our local contracting community — for example, tightening up requirements on defining what a Yukon company is. I think that is very important to us. We believe that those standards became too lax on what it means to be local and our government will fix that.

We're going to build more benefits into tenders to being local. We're going to eliminate tender provisions that block locals from bidding and we're going to replace the bid challenge committee with something that actually works.

A lot of people who were in attendance — and I have to admit, it was a packed house; it was the most I have seen for

the chamber speech yet. I used to go to that speech as well; I used to go to those meetings when I was a chamber member and a businessman in this community.

For a lot of them, it's really the purchasing that the government does day in and day out that helps them keep money in their tills and their doors open, so that's why — I also told them about another initiative that I did, and that was sending a message to every single Yukon government employee that essentially says to buy local.

In fact, just for the record, I brought a copy of it, where it says, "I'm writing to you directly today to ensure you hear from your Premier about our role, and your role in keeping our economy strong."

"The Yukon is a wonderful place to call home, and we are all working to make it an even better place to live, work, play and raise a family. A big part of that is supporting local business. That's not just a benefit for business, that's a benefit for all of us. We all want to be assured that when we need to purchase high quality goods or services, they're available quickly, at a competitive price, right here at home, when and where we need it.

"The Whitehorse Chamber of Commerce has launched its 'Look Inside' campaign to encourage Yukoners to buy local. For this campaign to be a success, the Yukon government must be an active participant. As an employee in the public service, you can help us keep our local businesses strong.

"One chair, some school supplies, or one event may not seem like much, but it's our collective buying power in government, and the total of those purchases, that make a difference. All purchasing decisions, big and small, that our government makes day in and day out can help local businesses fill their tills and keep their doors open.

"My message to you is simple. If it can be bought locally at a competitive price and you're the one making the purchase for government, buy local.

"The Yukon government and the private sector are important partners in Yukon's economy. I thank you in advance for helping us support our local businesses.

"Thank you" — from me.

I think that what I have heard in knocking on doors in my riding is a lot of appreciation from government employees and from local businesses for that letter, for the initiatives that we're taking. In fact, I had some of the government employees telling me how that letter was posted in their staff room and highlighted to make sure that everybody was aware of that.

I wanted to touch for a brief moment also on First Nations and recent work on collaboration — in spite of the innuendos from the two opposition parties, which neglect to recognize the tremendous work that happens on a day-to-day basis. So I just started scratching a list. Yukon Forum: intergovernmental forum that we just held last week — it was a very positive meeting. It was a meeting that everybody found to be very productive and we will look forward to the next one.

Mineral development strategy, mine licensing, land titles, the Kwanlin Dün First Nation, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the work that we are doing with the First Nations: I know that this House is aware that, very quickly

after the calls to action were issued, we asked the government departments to do an evaluation of some of the work that's being done. We recognize there's more work to do, but we shared that with First Nations. I asked the First Nations to lead us in this territory through the process of developing a plan to the calls to action. To that, Mr. Speaker, I was proud to join the First Nations in presenting a proposal to the federal government on a path forward.

As I've also mentioned many times, that path forward is not a responsibility solely of the public government or First Nation governments. This is a path, a journey, that all of us will take as individuals, as organizations, as service groups.

The murdered and missing indigenous women and girls — I do want to recognize the incredible work that has been done and the leadership that has been exhibited in this territory on the TRC and on murdered and missing indigenous women and girls: the minister responsible for the Women's Directorate, the Deputy Premier, Chief Doris Bill, Doris Anderson, all the leaders of the Yukon aboriginal women's organizations; Chief Carl Sidney, RCMP — everybody who has been involved. We have had two regional roundtables, we've actively participated in two national roundtables, and we've had a family gathering. We all acknowledge the impacts this has had and the link to TRC, but we also have to acknowledge, especially when we go to the national stage, that really there has been some tremendous work accomplished here.

Intergovernmental accords — a number of them, Mr. Speaker — recently the Kwanlin Dün First Nation and Carcross/Tagish First Nation — renewals with Vuntut Gwitchin and Kluane First Nation — of course, a Kaska framework for a reconciliation agreement. We continue to work with White River toward a reconciliation agreement. The support for the First Nation Chamber of Commerce — we just increased their funding by \$100,000 a year, from \$60,000 to \$160,000. Our support — no, I'm sorry. This is the First Nations Culture and Tourism Association — for the record, a \$100,000-increase to the First Nations Culture and Tourism Association annually, from \$60,000 to \$160,000, but we do also continue to support the First Nation Chamber of Commerce. I've mentioned the tremendous support, not only in the funding of the museums and cultural centres, but the creation of how many new museums and cultural centres that we have seen.

Vulnerable people — the work that's being done, that has been initiated, by Chief Doris Bill and the Kwanlin Dün First Nation and the City of Whitehorse. We have come in as a funding partner to do the work and move forward with a plan regarding vulnerable people.

The north Yukon regional economic action development initiative — that is a partnership between Yukon government, Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in, Na Cho Nyäk Dun and the City of Dawson City; Kluane First Nation wind turbines; youth gatherings that we've seen in the last couple years — one at Brook's Brook, the last one at Jackson Lake facilities, a tremendous gathering for youth, a tremendous opportunity to

share and gather strength by being together and sharing stories among each other.

We're very proud to be partnering with that. There are other things, like the tiny buildings, big future projects that we've done with Kwanlin Dün and the Carcross/Tagish development corporations.

I just would mention that the Little Salmon Carmacks First Nation is building a six-unit apartment with the affordable housing money. These are just some of the things we continue to do with First Nations.

How much time do I have, Mr. Speaker?

**Some Hon. Member:** (Inaudible)

**Hon. Mr. Pasloski:** Okay, let's talk about carbon tax. Ultimately the end user, the consumer, pays. Any time there's an increase in price, it just gets transferred to the end user. That's why the consumer will see everything cost more money in this territory. We have 95-percent renewables in our energy. I've said that Alberta's goal by 2030 is to get to 30 percent. Our climate plan is working by creating more efficient energy systems, by reducing emissions from government and providing energy incentives for Yukoners.

Our plan is to partner with the government where we could retrofit buildings — commercial buildings, residential buildings — that will reduce greenhouse gas emissions by reducing the need for how much fuel we need to keep these buildings warm. The beauty of our plan is that it doesn't make everything cost more money and we create a tremendous number of jobs.

When we move forward with our new hydro, we can replace people who are using carbon-based fuels to heat their home with electric heat. One size doesn't fit all and we will continue to say that. We don't live in downtown Toronto. You can't take a subway to get to work.

I am proud of the work that, at the recent First Ministers meeting, we did get a carve-out for the north — ourselves, with the premiers of Nunavut and Northwest Territories — to recognize the unique circumstances that exist in Arctic and subarctic regions. I quoted the CEO of the Mining Association of Canada today, who validated and agreed with our position that, in the north, a carbon tax does not make any sense.

Let's talk about long-term care. I know now that the two opposition parties went scurrying out of the House today to say no, they wouldn't kill this project, but we both know that they've said it in the past. We've even seen some stuff on Facebook from candidates who have spoken about this as well. Regardless, the creation of multiple, small long-term care facilities in the communities is nothing more than making promises to try to get elected.

As I've said, there are only two options that can occur from this strategy. One is to bankrupt this territory; the other is to just break a promise. I've heard that those parties have maybe done that in the past.

Many times, the Liberal leader has chastised the public service — the increase in the public service. We've very proud — as we've seen our population in the last decade grow by 20 percent — that we continue to invest in more education assistants and in more nurses in this territory. I have to say

that the public servants are very eager to hear which positions will be eliminated in the Liberal renewal 2.0. They want to know where they will fit in that.

In closing, I just want to say that have opened the *Income Tax Act* approximately 15 times. Each time has been to lower taxes for individuals or for small businesses. We are very proud of that, but let's just compare our economic record to their plan. We have reduced taxes for small businesses and we have reduced taxes for families. I said at the chamber that the average family of four will now pay up to \$777 less in taxes than they would have just five years ago.

On the other hand, we know that the Liberals' and the NDP's economic plan will be simply to force a new tax, a carbon tax, on Yukon families. A carbon tax will increase the cost of gas, groceries, milk, diapers, home heating fuel and everything else. Not only that, it will drive away business from this territory. That is our record and that is their high-tax plan. We will continue to keep taxes low while investing in our economy.

Just an interesting comment or late development — I see the newest Liberal provincial government just tabled their budget — a \$1-billion deficit, increase in taxes and job cuts. That is what we just heard, and we just hear that the new Alberta budget says that they are tapping out their credit and they will have to, by next year, be paying significantly higher costs to borrow money. Of course we know that the Liberal Government of Ontario, with their latest budget, has a \$315-billion debt. Servicing that debt in this fiscal year with low interest rates will cost their taxpayers \$11.4 billion. They will only spend more money on health and education. It will be the number three expensed item in their budget. We are very proud of this budget. I am very proud of the individuals who we have in our Yukon Party caucus. We are looking forward to the next five budgets that we will table in this Legislative Assembly.

**Speaker:** Are you prepared for the question?

**Some Hon. Members:** Division.

#### Division

**Speaker:** Division has been called.

#### Bells

**Speaker:** Mr. Clerk, please poll the House.

**Hon. Mr. Pasloski:** Agree.

**Mr. Elias:** Agree.

**Hon. Ms. Taylor:** Agree.

**Hon. Mr. Graham:** Agree.

**Hon. Mr. Kent:** Agree.

**Hon. Mr. Istchenko:** Agree.

**Hon. Mr. Dixon:** Agree.

**Hon. Mr. Hassard:** Agree.

**Hon. Mr. Cathers:** Agree.

**Hon. Mr. Nixon:** Agree.

**Ms. McLeod:** Agree.

**Ms. Hanson:** Disagree.



**Ms. Stick:** Disagree.

**Ms. Moorcroft:** Disagree.

**Ms. White:** Disagree.

**Mr. Tredger:** Disagree.

**Mr. Silver:** Disagree.

**Clerk:** Mr. Speaker, the results are 11 yeas, six nays.

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

*Motion for second reading of Bill No. 23 agreed to*

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

*Motion agreed to*

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

*The House adjourned at 5:06 p.m.*

**Bill No. 22: *Interim Supply Appropriation Act, 2016-17* — Second Reading**

**Clerk:** Second reading, Bill No. 22, standing in the name of the Hon. Mr. Pasloski.

**Hon. Mr. Pasloski:** I move that Bill No. 22, entitled *Interim Supply Appropriation Act, 2016-17*, be now read a second time.

**Speaker:** It has been moved by the Hon. Premier that Bill No. 22, entitled *Interim Supply Appropriation Act, 2016-17*, be now read a second time.

**Hon. Mr. Pasloski:** I am pleased to introduce Bill No. 22, entitled *Interim Supply Appropriation Act, 2016-17*. This act requests spending authority that, in total, is not to exceed \$338,736,000. The purpose of this spending authority is to defray the various charges and expenses of the public services of Yukon for the two-month period from April 1, 2016 through May 31, 2016. Of this total amount, \$248,533,000 is provided for operation and maintenance and \$90,203,000 is provided for capital.

The full details of these expenditures are included in the main estimates and will be fully discussed and debated during general and departmental debate on the 2016-17 main estimates.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, I move that Bill No. 22, entitled *Interim Supply Appropriation Act, 2016-17*, be now read a second time.

**Ms. Hanson:** I have very little to say about Bill No. 22, entitled *Interim Supply Appropriation Act, 2016-17*. I think it's important to note that the need to introduce an interim supply bill, which is a special warrant to provide legislative authority for the expenditure of Yukon taxpayers' resources, is a need that could have been entirely avoided if the government had been acting with due diligence and called the Legislative Assembly back to perform its duties in advance of the commencement of the fiscal year, rather than trotting about doing photo ops and not dealing with these matters where they are supposed to be dealt with, which is in the Legislative Assembly.

This is not the first time with this government, and luckily it will be the last.

**Speaker:** Does any other member wish to be heard?

Are you prepared for the question?

*Motion for second reading of Bill No. 22 agreed to*

**Mr. Elias:** I move that the House do now adjourn.

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