

**Yukon Legislative Assembly
Whitehorse, Yukon
Monday, December 7, 2009 — 1:00 p.m.**

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

Prayers

Withdrawal of motions

Speaker: The Chair wishes to inform the House of a change which has been made to the Order Paper. Motion No. 847, standing in the name of the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin has been removed from the Order Paper as it is similar to Motion No. 836, which was adopted by this House, as amended, on December 2, 2009.

DAILY ROUTINE

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

Tributes.

Introduction of visitors.

Reports or documents for tabling.

Are there any reports of committees?

Petitions.

PETITIONS

Petition No. 10 — response

Hon. Mr. Lang: I rise today to respond to Petition 09-1-10, presented by the Member for Lake Laberge on November 24, 2009 regarding CBC Radio's AM frequency in Yukon. The petition asks this Legislative Assembly to ensure that every Yukon resident continues to be able to receive CBC Radio on an AM or FM frequency.

This government appreciates that access to radio is an important mechanism for Yukoners to stay connected with what is happening in the territory, Canada and indeed the world. However, I also have to be very clear that radio transmission is regulated by the Government of Canada and not the Yukon government and, inevitably, it is up to the CBC to decide how to best meet its broadcast mandate.

CBC recently received approval from the CRTC to replace its AM signal with an FM signal in Yukon, but we do not yet know if or when it intends to make this change. As such, we have agreed to provide a lease extension to CBC for the AM transmission towers until June 2012. Officials from the Department of Community Services have followed up with CBC about their future plans.

I did want to take this opportunity to also address any concerns about the impact of the loss of AM transmission on emergency response. In the case of an emergency, in addition to CBC Radio, there are two other basic mechanisms to reach Yukoners — the use of temporary emergency radio transmitters, and the Emergency Measures Organization has a transmitter for this exact purpose and to send emergency responders door to door.

So, Mr. Speaker, if we find ourselves in an emergency situation, we have a variety of ways to reach people that go

beyond the use of radio. In conclusion, the decision by CBC to cease transmitting the AM signal is a business decision by the CBC and was approved by CRTC, which is the regulator.

In closing, as minister responsible for Community Services and Highways and Public Works, I am willing to write to CBC and ask that it takes the special needs of northerners into consideration before making a final decision on the best way to deliver radio transmission in Yukon.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

NOTICES OF MOTION

Mr. Mitchell: Mr. Speaker, I give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to provide interim funding to the Boys and Girls Club to ensure the club is able to continue operating to provide services for young people until stable long-term funding sources can be identified.

I give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to comply with the *Financial Administration Act* by ensuring the public accounts, when tabled, are accompanied by the auditor's report.

Mr. Hardy: I give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to work more closely with the people of Keno to ensure the proposed mine and mill in their community do not negatively impact on their quality of life or their ability to derive economic benefits from tourism-related activities.

I give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House calls on the Prime Minister to listen to the facts on climate change and negotiate in good faith on a serious climate change agreement in Copenhagen that will ensure our survival on the planet.

I give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House calls on the Yukon government to either provide space for a new members' lounge in the Yukon Legislative Assembly or renovate the existing lounge in such a way that MLAs of all parties can have private conversations without being overheard by Yukon Party staffers.

Mr. Cardiff: I give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House supports the principle that Yukon's system of workers' compensation should be located in the Yukon under the control of Yukon and for the benefit of all Yukon workers and employers.

Speaker: Are there any further notices of motion?
Are there statements by ministers?

Hearing none, this brings us to Question Period.

QUESTION PERIOD

Question re: Environment reports

Mr. Fairclough: Many of the Minister of Environment's responsibilities are outlined in the *Environment Act*. The law says the minister shall update Yukoners on the state of our environment annually. The minister has not done that. Despite this requirement, the government is three years behind in this responsibility. The last report Yukoners have been provided with was in 2006.

This document could be a valuable resource for all Yukoners; however, the government can't seem to get around to producing this report in a timely fashion. One of the main goals of this report is to provide early warning and analysis of potential problems for the environment. I would argue that climate change is more than a potential problem, yet the minister is three years behind in reporting.

Why is this required report so low on the minister's priority list?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: As I believe I already articulated on the floor of the Legislature not long ago, since taking office, the Government of Yukon has indeed tabled a number of state of the environment reports, including three interim reports and a full state of the environment report.

We are certainly working on the next report to table in the spring as we are required to do within 12 months of tabling the last report, which report was tabled earlier this spring.

Mr. Speaker, the Department of Environment is working to that end. The state of the environment report is a collaborative undertaking which requires data from all respective departments in the Government of Yukon and a number of respective departments in the Government of Canada, as well and other entities like non-governmental organizations and so forth.

As I believe I referenced earlier, because of the data required it does take time. It takes up to 24 months to develop the full state of the environment report due to the data availability from the Government of Canada.

Mr. Fairclough: Well, that's not good enough, Mr. Speaker. This report should be coming out annually and the minister knows that.

As we head to Copenhagen, it would be good to have up-to-date information on how climate change is impacting Yukon, and the minister has failed to get that done.

Last week the former leader of the New Democrats signed a letter to the Prime Minister calling on the Government of Canada to commit to greater reduction in greenhouse gas emissions. The letter also proposed a carbon tax. Mr. Speaker, we support lower emissions but we do not support a carbon tax.

We have redrafted the letter, taken out the carbon tax, and forwarded it to the minister to see if she's now willing to have her signature on it as well. We don't think the Government of Canada is doing enough and we want to let them know by way of this letter. Will the minister put her signature on this letter?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: As I also stated last week, we believe that certainly actions speak louder than words on paper. Mr. Speaker, we believe that it is vitally important that Canada

maintains a leadership role very much to ensure a meaningful outcome at COP15, which will really translate into clear and significant decreases when it comes to global greenhouse gas emissions.

We also believe it's vitally important for all 192 countries that are convening in Copenhagen as we speak to do their part when it comes to arriving at a comprehensive and global agreement on greenhouse gas emission reductions. We also believe that climate change is a global issue that requires a global response. Yukon government is very much doing its part in mitigating greenhouse gas emissions through the expansion of hydroelectric capacity which is, as we speak, displacing tens of thousands of greenhouse gas emissions into our atmosphere.

We are certainly doing our part in terms of renewable energies.

We are looking at new electricity policies for independent power production and net metering. We are very much doing our part, and we will certainly contribute to Canada's position.

Mr. Fairclough: I didn't hear an answer to my question. I hope the minister gets around to signing it. While the Government of Canada has been reluctant to set targets nationally, the minister and Government of Yukon have done the same thing right here at home. The *Climate Change Action Plan* put out by the government in February of this year contains targets for the government itself to reduce its emissions. That's it. There are no targets for industry or business and for Yukon as a whole.

This is a commitment we made to Yukoners in 2006, and it is in our election platform. We heard the Minister of Economic Development a couple of weeks ago arguing that climate change was not man-made. This kind of thinking may explain why so little progress has been made on this issue. Why is the minister so reluctant to set Yukon-wide targets and when is she going to get around to doing it?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: I would like to ask the member opposite where, in fact, their climate change action plan is. If it was so important to the previous Liberal government, where is it? It was this government, the Yukon Party government, that delivered an action plan earlier this year, in February. We also delivered a climate change secretariat to oversee and provide government-wide leadership and coordination of government's response to climate change.

Mr. Speaker, we are very much doing our part. The action plan does reinforce our position that climate change is happening. Human behaviour is a contributor to climate change and a coordinated and comprehensive approach is required to address climate change.

Mr. Speaker, I find it very interesting, when we talk about targets, that our government is committed to becoming carbon neutral by 2020. We are committed to also within the year setting a government-wide or a Yukon-wide emissions target for the Yukon by 2011. That is also articulated in our action plan. We are Kyoto-compliant right now and we are doing our part to do even more again through enhancing hydroelectric capacity, enhancing renewable energies — whether it be solar, wind, geothermal, biomass and so forth.

Mr. Speaker, when we talk about targets, I just have to refer to the Government of Canada.

Question re: Thomson Centre

Mr. Mitchell: Mr. Speaker, a year ago, in October 2008, the Yukon government again promised to continue renovations on the Thomson Centre. At that time the minister said, "We are working with the Hospital Corporation on what our needs are health-wise and what our possibilities are for the Thomson Centre."

A year later, that translates into the Thomson Centre being used for office space, not health care. In spite of a clear commitment from this government, it has done little to address the growing numbers of Yukoners waiting for extended-care support. The government has flip-flopped on the Thomson Centre for years. It keeps trying to hide a problem of its own making. The building is either fit for patient care or it isn't.

What is the plan for the Thomson Centre? When will the building be used for its intended purpose, extended health care?

Hon. Mr. Hart: For the member opposite, we are working with the Yukon Hospital Corporation with regard to the use of the Thomson Centre for their facilities and their expanded facilities. They recently had a report done by a professional consultant who indicated the Thomson Centre would not fit that particular process.

I also stated at the local YMA meeting of the doctors association that upon receipt of that report, we would be moving forward on the Thomson Centre with a pod at the end and upgrading that facility to achieve the necessary bedding that is going to be required. It will take some time. We are in that process currently.

Mr. Mitchell: Four years ago, this government was warned of this growing crisis. An obvious solution is to reopen the long-term beds at the Thomson Centre. This government has frequently promised to do this, but failed to deliver. Now it has grown into a major problem and, unfortunately for Yukoners, there is no relief in sight and there are no clear answers coming from the minister except promising to continue to try harder.

Last year the minister promised to bring forward a plan for the Thomson Centre based on input from health care providers. The year before, it hired a company called Options Consulting that was supposed to bring forward recommendations. The year before that, it was considering turning the centre into a detox facility.

Let me ask the minister this question: what's the excuse going to be next year when the waiting list is longer and the Thomson Centre remains closed to patient care?

Hon. Mr. Hart: We are working with our officials and the Yukon Hospital Corporation's officials with regard to the Thomson Centre. We are in the process of doing an evaluation of each of the rooms and providing upgrading facilities within the Thomson Centre pod that we want to upgrade. That process is well underway and I anticipate having an RFP out on the Thomson Centre by December 18.

Mr. Mitchell: Well, Mr. Speaker, during the 2006 election, the Yukon Party promised to address the waiting list for Yukoners who need residential care support, but getting an

answer is a little bit like trying to pull teeth. The Yukon Party promised to reopen 44 beds in the Thomson Centre for long-term and palliative care.

We keep asking this government to deliver more than excuses; the government keeps giving us the same lame responses. The Thomson Centre has been turned into office space and now we hear that the Watson Lake shell may not be fit to be used for a hospital. It may have to be bulldozed, because the foundation may not be up to code for the changed use. The Dawson City health care facility is in trouble, because this government is deaf to the community's concerns. When is this government going to address the waiting list for long-term extended care beds by reopening the Thomson Centre for its initial purpose?

Hon. Mr. Hart: Mr. Speaker, we are working realistically on the issues that have to be addressed with regard to long-term continuing care within the Yukon. We did open up the last pod in Copper Ridge earlier this year, in 2009, so we're dealing with that. We had to deal with that. That did help out with our assistance with the hospital. We are working, and as I said earlier, we have an RFP scheduled to go out later on this month with regard to the Thomson Centre, with the renovations required to bring it up to code, because it has not been used as a continuing care facility for many years by many different parties.

Yes, we are looking at that. We are also looking at providing a stakeholder meeting with regard to those involved in continuing care to seek their concerns and improve enhanced care for continuing care throughout the Yukon.

Question re: Thomson Centre

Mr. Cardiff: I'd like to weigh in on this issue as well. The public has expressed a number of concerns about continuing care for seniors. A few weeks before the last election, in August of 2006, the Yukon Party government issued a news release from the then Health and Social Services minister. He announced the Thomson Centre would reopen for use as a continuing care centre.

He said they would be opening 44 beds, including palliative care. It's well known that this is an issue, and I understand the minister is suffering a little today, so I'm going to try to not make this too difficult.

The minister is talking about an RFP. Can he tell us exactly what the request for proposals is for the Thomson Centre, and what that request for proposals is intended to do?

Hon. Mr. Hart: We are going out with an RFP, and consultation to determine what's required to upgrade the facility to meet the current standards that are required for a continuing care facility. They probably will be substantial. I anticipate they will. We have to make some alterations to the facility in order to accommodate the new standards of continuing care. We are looking at a pod of approximately 20 rooms with regard to that, in addition to further rooms for palliative care.

Mr. Cardiff: That's interesting and I suppose it's a step forward, but what I heard the minister say is that they're looking at a request for proposals to look at upgrading the facility. This government has been elected for seven years now, and this has been an ongoing issue with them. Renovations to the

Thomson Centre have been going on for seven years and here we are once again. This is even worse. This is a longer project than the Watson Lake health care centre. Let me ask the minister this. When does he expect the 20 extended care beds and the 20 palliative care beds to be ready? Right now we're shipping continuing care patients to Watson Lake. We need to know when these beds are going to be ready.

Hon. Mr. Hart: I think it just demonstrates the need for having a rural cottage hospital in Watson Lake available so it can assist us in our time of emergency. I think it just totally demonstrates that particular aspect — supported by all the local doctors, I might add — with regard to that particular element.

In addition, we are looking at putting out the RFP to make the alterations as I indicated. Until such time as we get the bids in from that, I can't provide the member opposite with a specific date. I am looking at somewhere late next year, yes, to get there, that is initially when we're looking for, but until such time as we get the RFP in and we start moving around in the building and trying to uncover what's going to be there — what has to be upgraded — we won't be able to give him a specific answer.

Mr. Cardiff: Mr. Speaker, this is one of the most pressing needs facing Yukoners today. We need to have long-term extended care, continuing care and a more collaborative approach to health care. The Thomson Centre is part of that equation. That building has not been used to its full potential for a number of years, including the seven years that this government has been in power.

The minister has said there will be an RFP to look at upgrading the facility. What are the minister's and the government's plans to move toward a more collaborative model of health care that will ensure the continuing care needs of Yukoners are met now and into the future?

Hon. Mr. Hart: With regard to the Thomson Centre, there have been some structural problems with that facility ever since it was built. I'll remind the member opposite it was his party that vacated that facility and stripped it bare to take the facility and the beds, et cetera, up to Copper Ridge Place.

I guess I am a little guilty of some of those things but I don't want to take all the responsibility for what's there. Because it has been uninhabited, and there have been some huge standard upgrades since that time, it has to be brought up to code. As such, we are going to go through that process and take it stage by stage. Realistically, we couldn't afford to upgrade the entire facility and utilize it for that process, so we're going to take it in stages and ensure that we can have extended and continuing care for our seniors so they can enjoy their lifespan in there, as well as providing palliative care in that facility.

Question re: Boys and Girls Club

Mr. Hardy: The executive director for the Boys and Girls Club — who I believe is in the gallery today — says that the centre will be closing its doors for good on December 14. Well, Merry Christmas. After unsuccessful attempts to secure additional core funding, or even interim funding for basic operating costs, what is the Premier, as the minister responsible for our youth, going to do to prevent the Boys and Girls Club from having to close their doors?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: The government did advance to the Boys and Girls Club the last quarter of its fiscal allocation for this fiscal year. There are also officials with the Youth Directorate working with the Boys and Girls Club, but I also have to emphasize the fact that this government has increased significantly the allocation of fiscal resources to youth groups in the City of Whitehorse. We've gone from around \$60,000 annually to in excess of a \$100,000 annual investment. There is also a submission within the Management Board Secretariat system that is to meet our commitment to longer term funding for NGOs. In this case, the submission is specific to youth groups here in the territory.

Mr. Hardy: That doesn't sound very positive to me, Mr. Speaker. The Boys and Girls Club of Whitehorse, previously known as the Whitehorse Youth Centre, has been around for 10 years providing a safe space for youth aged 12 to 18, many of whom are escaping violence and substance abuse at home. Six years ago, this government announced core funding of \$110,000 to youth NGOs like BYTE, Youth of Today Society and the Boys and Girls Club. What is it today? It is \$110,000 still six years later and that is a big zero increase.

In 2003, the Yukon government spent \$544,000 on its operations. This year, we are voting on a budget that exceeds \$1 billion. That is almost 100 percent in government expenditures, while youth NGOs have seen no increase to their core funding. Will the government immediately sit down with the Boys and Girls Club and the other youth-focused NGOs to discuss increasing the core funding for their important work?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: In regard to the Boys and Girls Club, officials charged with the responsibility in this area have been and are in discussions with this particular NGO. I think it is important that we recognize that other sources of financial support for these NGOs appear to be diminishing, and that is something of concern.

I want to emphasize the fact there is a Management Board submission that is being analyzed as we speak, and it relates to the funding — and that's annual funding — for these groups over the longer term. I'm positive, though I haven't seen the submission as yet and won't until it's tabled before Management Board, that the submission includes an increase of core funding for these groups. But we'll allow the Management Board Secretariat to do its analysis.

Mr. Hardy: Everybody is facing more of a crunch out there. The Boys and Girls Club provides a safe space for youth in the downtown core and at the Canada Games Centre. They provide hot meals, programming and employment services for youth. They've been caught in a budgetary difficulty through no fault of their own. Like so many NGOs, every year they're forced to write applications for funding to keep programs going. This year, the Boys and Girls Club had several proposals rejected.

They saw this coming quite awhile ago, they admit, and they had conversations with the government but, so far, there has been no luck in those discussions. To keep afloat, they have cut hours the centre is open for the youth; staff has voluntarily worked without pay; a local church has supplied food to feed

the kids; and others in the community have stepped up to keep the computers running so the youth can craft their resumés.

It's really a no-brainer. If the services the Boys and Girls Club provides are valued, then the government will sit down with the executive director and board and do it. Will the Premier or the minister sit down right now and put some interim financing in place until this can be sorted out?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: I did express to the member opposite, in answer to his first question, that the government has advanced the quarterly allocation for the Boys and Girls Club. Indeed, that's a significant step. That's 25 percent of their annual allotment. So the government has advanced that to assist them, and we are in discussions with the Boys and Girls Club, as we speak, through officials responsible for this area.

Furthermore, I have stated that there is a Management Board submission before the Management Board Secretariat. We'll allow the secretariat to do its analysis, so that it can come forward and Management Board can make a decision. The submission, as I understand it, includes an increase request for core funding for youth groups here in the Yukon. By the way, this government has increased — significantly — the annual allocation to these groups.

Now, the member says that was some time ago. Well, all through this period, that "some time ago" included thousands and thousands of dollars of financial assistance to these groups that came from other sources. The situation we're in today shows clearly that those other sources have diminished and that's why the government is working on the issue for the Boys and Girls Club.

Question re: Tourism trends

Mr. Inverarity: The Department of Tourism reported declining tourist visitations again this year. In 2008, Yukon saw 30,000 fewer visitors than the year before that. At the end of August of this year, the number of tourists who visited the Yukon was down by an additional seven percent or about 21,000 visitors compared to the same period last year. The downward trend continues in spite of increased investment, Mr. Speaker. The Yukon is a world-class destination. Tourism is a pillar of Yukon's economy, and this downward trend is cause for concern. Tourism has declined for two years in a row and right now we have no reason to believe that it's going to change much next year. Can the Minister of Tourism tell us if the operators have also been facing declining revenues this year?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Mr. Speaker, it is for that very reason that this government has enhanced its investment in a number of different programs following the lead and certainly the strategic advice of our Senior Marketing Committee when it comes to the development, implementation and evaluation of our tourism marketing programs. We're certainly following the direction of the tourism industry when it comes to where we should be investing our dollars. For that very reason we have followed industry's direction, and we have enhanced funding in terms of media relations, product development, enhanced funding in overseas marketing — certainly in domestic Canada — as well as in conventions, incentive travel and meetings, to list but a few initiatives. We are continuing to work with the Cana-

dian Tourism Commission and industry, including tourism operators, to see to it that we too ensure high visitation as well as high yield revenue.

Mr. Inverarity: Just for the record, I don't believe I got an answer to the question. Are they experiencing revenue declines? We are aware of the downturn in the world economy last year, plus the high gas prices in 2008. We recognize that under those circumstances, the consumer trend is to spend less money on things like vacations. However, we're not talking about a blip on the 2008 radar screen; we're talking about the year-to-year downward trend in tourist visitations with no turnaround in sight. The problem we're trying to deal with is that the government is spending more and more money over time to attract visitors, and Yukoners are seeing fewer and fewer visitors in response.

The news reported that minister just picked up another half a million dollars from Ottawa. We know that Yukon has injected over a few million dollars into the Olympics. Is the minister expecting the traditional investments in marketing to turn the tide in Yukon's tourism?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Mr. Speaker, compared to other jurisdictions across the world and in our country, Yukon is faring relatively well. Yes, we have seen a decline in visitation over the last couple of years, but we have seen very good peak visitation in other markets. It may not be in the U.S. visitation, but if members opposite haven't noticed, there is such a thing as an economic downturn being felt, particularly in the United States. When it comes to Canada, however, we see a spike in visitation. In fact, in this year alone we saw about a 13-percent increase thus far in Canadian visitation. For that very reason we are following industry's strategic direction to increase consumer awareness marketing dollars in gateway cities such as Edmonton, Calgary and Vancouver, working with instrumental partners such as Air North to ensure that we are able to capitalize and leverage on additional funding sources from the Canadian Tourism Commission.

That is why we have invested almost \$3 million in the Winter Olympics, as it is coined as one of Yukon's largest tourism marketing initiatives ever undertaken. That is why we have added \$500,000 for overseas marketing, as well as meetings, conventions, incentive travel and such.

Mr. Inverarity: We know the government has increased its investment in marketing. We also know that tourism is declining, and that's the point. The world economy has been shaken. Consumers are spending less money on things like vacations. If the government is going to spend money encouraging tourists to come visit the Yukon, the government needs to focus that spending on consumers who can afford to come.

Spending is up and visits are down. It's not hard to understand. We are not questioning the need for tourism marketing. When it's done right, it's done well. Right now, it is not working and we are questioning the government's marketing strategy. Are the tourists who come to the Yukon spending more money to make up for the decline in overall revenues?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: I find it really interesting that the Member for Porter Creek South is questioning the Government of Yukon's investments in tourism marketing. When that

member opposite does just that, he's also questioning the Tourism Industry Association of Yukon's strategic advice it provides the Government of Yukon as to how to market the Yukon.

Mr. Speaker, unlike the members opposite, I will not be putting forward my advice or asking for my advice from the members opposite. In fact, I will continue to work with the Tourism Industry Association in Yukon and the Senior Marketing Committee, leading or following up on our mandate which is industry-led, research-based and certainly market driven. Everything that we do, we do in collaboration and partnership with the industry. That is in fact why we do have a document such as the 2009-10 tourism marketing plan, which provides that strategic analysis and advice into our development, implementation and evaluation of all of our tourism marketing programs.

Mr. Speaker, we are following up on advice in marketing when it comes to implementing the tourism cooperative marketing funding, enhancing investments in our website, enhancing investments in media relations, product development and certainly marketing dollars.

Speaker: The time for Question Period has now elapsed. We will proceed to Orders of the Day.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

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

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

Motion agreed to

Speaker leaves the Chair

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Chair (Mr. Nordick): Committee of the Whole will now come to order. The matter before the Committee is Bill No. 17, *Second Appropriation Act, 2009-10*, Department of Justice. Do members wish a brief recess?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

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

Recess

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

Bill No. 17 — *Second Appropriation Act, 2009-10* — continued

Chair: The matter before the Committee is Bill No. 17, *Second Appropriation Act, 2009-10*, Department of Justice.

Department of Justice — continued

Hon. Ms. Horne: I would like to resume our discussion on the Department of Justice budget by summarizing some of the key points that we have covered previously. In our cam-

paign, we committed to dealing with alcohol and drug abuse. We committed to implement the *Yukon Substance Abuse Action Plan* by addressing the four strategic directions: harm reduction, prevention and education, treatment and enforcement. We committed to continue to implement the five-step FASD action plan.

Indeed, we have gone well beyond those commitments. Both Minister Hart and I have raised FASD at our national federal-provincial-territorial meetings. In Justice, we are taking steps to help those with FASD involved with the justice system as victims, witnesses or offenders. There is much, much more I could say on this matter.

We committed to the continued implementation of the inpatient alcohol and drug treatment programs offered at the Sarah Steele treatment centre and to work with First Nation governments, NGOs and other stakeholders to develop more treatment centres and programs throughout the territory in order to support the operation of our therapeutic courts.

We have the Community Wellness Court, which is a therapeutic alternative court to deal with offenders with drug or alcohol addiction, symptoms of FASD and/or mental health issues. We are working with various First Nation partners on land-based healing centres. We are delivering on this commitment.

The Member for Vuntut Gwitchin noted domestic violence on Thursday. I would like to remind him that we committed during the campaign and have delivered on our commitment to continue to offer treatment programs to those who are responsible for family violence through our therapeutic court, the Domestic Violence Treatment Option Court.

We committed to work with Yukon Housing Corporation to implement a priority housing policy for those individuals leaving abusive relationships. Not only did we deliver on this commitment, we have invested heavily in building our new housing stock and renovating older units. Even as we speak, work is underway on a new affordable housing complex in Riverdale for single-parent families — the majority of which are headed by women. We have internal processes underway to examine options for addressing other housing-related needs.

We committed to creating safer communities. I think we can all agree that SCAN and the street crime reduction team have been tremendous successes. We committed. We delivered.

We committed to implement the corrections action plan that includes developing a new correctional philosophy, developing a new *Corrections Act* and then replacing the Whitehorse Correctional Centre with a building that is built in accordance with our new correctional philosophy. Our emphasis has been and will continue to be on keeping Yukoners safe and holding offenders accountable for their actions. We will continue to present a spectrum of treatment options for those offenders who want to make a change. This work is ongoing.

This is not the whole story though. Our government has also made strong commitments to victims through our recently released victims of crime strategy and our new victims of crime act. In addition, we have a significant number of existing programs and services that are already offered to Yukoners. I am pleased to be able to advise members of this House that the

Department of Justice already offers a number of innovative and positive services to individual victims, families and communities throughout the Yukon.

I would like to take a moment to outline some of these programs for you. The VictimLINK crisis line is a valuable service offered to Yukoners who may be experiencing crises in their lives. This crisis line is available 24 hours a day. It is offered in partnership with British Columbia as part of an agreement Yukon has with the British Columbia government in exchange for Yukon providing victim services to Atlin and Lower Post.

The Our Way of Living Safely, or OWLS, program for children who witness domestic violence has been developed to offer support to children who have witnessed violence and whose parents are or have been involved with a domestic violence treatment option court.

There are also two separate but integrated and complementary programs to support victims. The victims program offers short-term services to victims of domestic violence and sexual assault, and the women's program offers longer-term individual and group counselling services to women who have experienced or are experiencing violence in intimate relationships.

Training has been provided for front-line staff of government, other organizations and communities on the prevention, intervention and management of family violence and the *Family Violence Prevention Act*. Formal training sessions have been provided in a variety of communities to shelter workers, JPs and the RCMP on such topics as how to use the *Family Violence Prevention Act*, sexual abuse prevention, how to work with victims of domestic violence and coping with vicarious trauma. An interactive CD-ROM training package has been developed by the Department of Justice that is being used by RCMP officers who are new to the Yukon and have not been able to attend a regular training session. This training is mandatory for all M Division RCMP members.

The unit has also provided training for community members interested in developing their skills to facilitate groups related to family violence issues. The Women's Directorate and the Department of Justice co-facilitate a 19-member inter-agency working group called Circles of Respect and Equality, or CORE, who have worked together to develop a long-term public education campaign on the prevention of violence against women and children.

In May 2008, CORE released two Yukon-relevant violence-prevention videos and a resource manual. Both videos are being used to help educate and raise awareness on violence against women and children in the Yukon and to empower the viewer to take action to prevent and stop violence. As well, a resource manual was developed to complement and enhance the information in the videos. These videos have received acclaim locally and across the country.

In November 2008, CORE gave a second offering of the train-the-trainers workshop on how to effectively use the videos and manual in community training workshops for front-line workers.

The Department of Justice in cooperation with the Women's Directorate and the Department of Health and Social

Services has formed a working group to research and understand the complex factors affecting Yukon women who are experiencing issues related to substance abuse. This working group has researched current government services to women with addictions and how women and substance use can be most innovatively and effectively addressed.

A report entitled, *Improving Treatment and Support for Yukon Girls and Women with Substance Abuse Problems and Addictions*, was released in February 2009 with the group's findings. One of the recommendations in the report was to provide training for front-line workers with women who may have substance abuse problems. Two training sessions were delivered in spring 2009 and a number of Justice staff participated in each of these sessions. More training sessions are planned over the next year. I can also advise that Justice staff will be participating in the train-the-trainer sessions scheduled for November 2009.

Justice also has staff participating in the working group established in response to this report. The working group has been directed to bring forward suggestions on an implementation plan.

Another successful program I'd like to speak to is the Protect Yourself, Protect Your Drink campaign, also known as the coaster campaign, which was launched in the late summer of 2004 and has been run several times since then, including this past summer, and is continuing into the fall and winter of this year. This public awareness campaign highlights the dangers of date-rape drugs, which can be placed into victims' drinks. This is a very important and serious issue for all Yukoners.

An inter-agency group worked with a group of local young people to refresh this campaign for summer 2009. A national conference, "Northern Responses and Approaches to Victims of Crime", was held in Yellowknife earlier this fall. Twenty-eight Yukon delegates attended this conference, and Yukoners organized and led a number of workshops at that conference. As you can see, our government takes the needs of victims very seriously and is working hard to ensure that they are receiving the best possible service in every respect.

We also have the Family Law Information Centre, and we must not forget the *Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods Act*. This act provides mechanisms to support families who feel that they are unsafe, that there is illicit behaviour occurring in their neighbourhoods which puts their safety at risk.

SCANA provides a complaint-driven process that can result in a closure of properties associated with illegal activities. Yukoners should never feel unsafe in their neighbourhoods, and this legislation helps address those fears. These are all programs that are already in operation, but as I have indicated before through the correctional redevelopment strategic plan, the Government of Yukon has committed to further ensuring that the needs of victims and families are considered. The Government of Yukon takes its commitment to victims, families and indeed, each community, very seriously. We understand that until we address the needs of offenders, victims and families, we will not be able to ensure safe communities and an increase in the quality of life for all Yukoners.

Mr. Elias: I thank the Minister of Justice for her opening remarks today, continuing more debate with the Department of Justice. She did answer a number of the questions I had today and touched on a few. I only have a few specific questions that the minister didn't touch on. They relate to the Family Law Information Centre with regard to the number of clients the centre provides the service to and a budgetary question with regard to the operation and maintenance of the centre on an annual basis.

The other question I have is from a Yukoner this weekend, and I couldn't provide an answer to them. It was about the number of unsolved homicides in the territory. There seems to be quite a number of them, and I couldn't give them actual facts. I might be actually writing a letter to the minister with regard to this topic. Maybe we will begin with those two questions, and then I only have a couple more.

Hon. Ms. Horne: The unsolved homicides in the Yukon date back several decades. We would have to confer with the RCMP M Division to determine the number and as to whether or not they are still active. I know the most recent ones in the last couple of years are very active, and they are still working on them actively.

As to the statistics on the Family Law Information Centre, or FLIC — we do not have those statistics here but we will get back to you with those.

Mr. Elias: Is it my understanding that the minister will get back to me with regard to the territorial statistics on the number of unsolved homicides in the territory — is that what I heard — and the information regarding the Family Law Information Centre clients? Maybe it will save me some time from writing a formal letter to the minister, especially with regard to the number of unsolved homicides in the territory.

Hon. Ms. Horne: These statistics on the unsolved homicides would have to come directly from the RCMP as it is under their jurisdiction. I will get back to the member opposite with these statistics on the Family Law Information Centre, or FLIC.

Mr. Elias: I've only got a couple more questions here. One is with regard to the safer communities and neighbourhoods legislation and the street crime reduction team, with regard to illicit behaviour, as the minister mentioned earlier. Can the minister let me know how many complaints were registered this year under SCAN? As a result of those complaints, how many times was action actually required from those complaints? If she has those details for me today, that would be great. I believe the minister answered the question about the coaster campaign. Did she? Yes, I believe she did earlier on. If she has got some questions with regard to the SCAN numbers, that would be great.

Hon. Ms. Horne: I am very pleased to rise to offer information on our *Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods Act*, which is doing the job that it was enacted to do in Yukon.

The SCAN act has proven to be effective and popular in helping to reduce illegal activity in Whitehorse neighbourhoods. As you are aware, the SCAN act was passed in May 2006. This legislation had the support of all parties in this House. SCAN is a part of Yukon's *Substance Abuse Action*

Plan and is just one of the tools that addresses one aspect of a larger social issue. The act was a response to some members of the public feeling unsafe in their communities because properties in their neighbourhood were being used for activities such as the illegal distribution of drugs and alcohol, and prostitution. Our government listened to these concerns. The police were able to remove individuals from these properties, but the activities persisted. In addition to the safety concerns, people were worried that property values would be negatively affected by having these types of activities in their neighbourhoods. Our government acted on those concerns.

The SCAN act is an integral part of this government's commitment to ensure safe communities and an increase in the quality of life for all Yukoners. SCAN provides a complaint-driven process that can result in a closure of properties associated with illegal activities. The focus is on habitual activity, which has an adverse effect on the community and/or neighbourhood. Complaints under the SCAN act can be initiated by any member of the community. The identity of the complainant is confidential and will never be revealed. Activities, not individuals, are targeted and the approach to investigating and taking subsequent action on a property is through civil rather than criminal law.

The act provides a wide range of remedies to address the illegal behaviour, from an individual voluntarily ceasing activity, to landlord-assisted evictions, to application to court to compel property owners to take responsibility for activities occurring on their property. The SCAN office opened and began taking complaints on November 29, 2006. As of this fall, there have been close to 300 investigations conducted since the inception of this legislation. As a result of those investigations, 49 warnings were issued to tenants engaged in illegal activity, and 36 evictions have taken place with the consent and support of the landlord. I'm sure we're all aware of the famous address on Wheeler Street that has now turned into the Habitat for Humanity and is now doing well for the community.

The number of complaints received by the safer communities and neighbourhoods office indicates that citizens are confident in the unit. These citizens are looking for assistance and sending a clear message that these types of activities are not welcome on our streets, in our neighbourhoods or near our children. They want their children to walk to school knowing they can do so without risk. They want their families to be able to enjoy their neighbourhoods and be free of the fear they may be exposed to dangerous and illicit activity. Through the SCAN legislation, our government is responding to these needs.

I would like to address the claims that SCAN legislation merely displaces crime, causing drug dealers and bootleggers to move their activity from one location to another, rather than putting an end to it. If drug dealers and bootleggers move their activities, SCAN legislation is available to respond to complaints about these activities. Through the continued commitment of Yukoners to living in safe neighbourhoods and communities by contacting the SCAN office to file a complaint, this legislation will help to ensure this activity ceases.

SCAN legislation allows us to continue to address this activity until the drug dealers and bootleggers get the message

that this type of illicit activity is not welcome in our neighbourhoods. It is not welcome in our communities and it is certainly not welcome in Yukon.

Let me provide you with an example that is leading to a happy ending, again at 810 Wheeler Street. Through the efforts of the community, the family and the SCAN unit, the residents were evicted and the property demolished and now it is being turned into a Habitat for Humanity dwelling.

Again for the stats — as of this September, there have been close to 300 investigations conducted since the inception. As a result, there have been 49 warnings including voluntary cessation and 36 evictions. On the street crime reduction team — from April 1, 2009 to the end of September the team has made 129 Criminal Code arrests, executed 58 warrants, undertaken 88 curfew checks on prolific and priority offenders; taken 118 intoxicated persons into custody, laid 12 charges under the *Controlled Drugs and Substances Act*, and executed five search warrants. This includes the numbers for Project Macer. I would say those are very good statistics as to our success.

Mr. Elias: I only have one more question about the use of tasers in our territory. Going back to the number of unsolved homicides in our territory, I would like to request that the minister talk with the RCMP and provide me with that data. If she could do that for me, that would be great. I look forward to that information.

The question with regard to tasers — as we all know, it has been a country-wide issue and it has been close to home. I realize in our correctional centre, if I'm not mistaken, the tasers are no longer used or were never used. Maybe she could shed some light on that. Does the minister have any idea with regard to how many taser-related deaths there have been in the territory and the statistics with regard to how many times tasers have been used in the territory by our law enforcement officers who use the taser as a tool?

Hon. Ms. Horne: I can facilitate the statistics on the homicides. What I don't have is the number of times the RCMP has used the taser. I can facilitate both of those.

To the best of my knowledge, which I will also reconfirm, there have been no deaths directly attributed to taser use in Yukon.

In general, on taser use, the Department of Justice engage in ongoing discussions with M Division, Public Safety Canada and with provincial and territorial partners on the development of national standards for testing and the needed improvements to conductive energy weapons policies, training practices and reporting requirements.

As members are all aware, a moratorium on the use of conductive energy weapons was initiated at the Whitehorse Correctional Centre, awaiting the outcome of both national and local reviews. The moratorium will continue until the recommendations of the Braidwood inquiry and the best practices across Canada can be incorporated into a redeployment plan for conductive energy weapons at Whitehorse Correctional Centre.

Some of the recommendations by Braidwood included increasing the threshold for using conductive energy weapons from one of active resistance to a much higher standard of causing bodily harm. The Braidwood inquiry also recom-

mended the replacement of certain models of conductive energy weapons with more advanced weapons that are deemed to be more reliable. This would affect all the conductive energy weapons at Whitehorse Correctional Centre and require replacement before redeployment.

A workplan is being drafted at this time that will include new procedures based on best practices and recommendations of the Braidwood inquiry and will include the decommissioning of the current conductive energy weapons now sitting in storage and replacing them with more reliable models.

Mr. Cardiff: I'd like to thank the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin and the minister for all the questions and answers that have been provided to this point, and I would like to thank the officials for being here today and for the information that was provided in advance. I have some questions for the minister regarding the *Human Rights Act* and the Human Rights Commission.

We recently received the annual report for 2008-09, and I'm reading from the chair's report. Some recommendations were made by the select committee that went out and talked to the public about changes to the Yukon human rights legislation. Some of those recommendations were acted on, but it was generally agreed that there would be a second phase. The chair alludes to that in her report, and the commission looks forward to that and they would like to play an active role in that.

Recommendation 8 from the select committee, of which the minister and I were both members, states that if draft human rights legislation is brought forward by the Yukon, there will be an opportunity for the public and for stakeholder groups to comment on proposed legislation.

It was generally agreed that there were some issues that needed further consideration and needed more consultation with the public. My apologies for a long preamble because the question is basically pretty straightforward: when does phase 2 of Yukon human rights legislation consultation and reform begin?

Hon. Ms. Horne: The Select Committee on Human Rights was appointed by this House in the spring of 2008, and the government has very much appreciated the input and the effort of Yukoners around the territory through the select committee process. The government also values the work of the members of the opposition who are part of this process. I must say that we did work very well together. All differences were put aside and we came out with effective changes proposed for the *Human Rights Act*.

Phase 1 began with Bill No. 71 passed by the Legislature in the spring of 2009. Those amendments addressed eight of the 25 recommendations of the Select Committee on Human Rights. The amendments to the act will help improve the complaints process, modernize some of the language and clarify accountability and a few other issues around the board of adjudication.

The government worked with the Human Rights Commission on the regulation amendments needed to bring Bill No. 71 into force. Once the bill is proclaimed and the revised regulations are passed, phase 1 will be complete. The government is committed to take action to ensure Yukoners are fully protected

under human rights legislation. Now that phase 1 has been completed, the government will move forward on the remaining and more complex recommendations. Phase 2 of the modernization process will address the remaining recommendations of this Select Committee on Human Rights. These fall into three broad categories: (1) improving the complaints process through changes to the structure, process and roles and responsibilities; (2) reviewing and updating the scope and coverage; and (3) other matters including consultation on the amendments.

The Department of Justice has been directed to undertake further research into this specific process of recommendations. These recommendations include: recommendation 13, that there be increased education in the school system on human rights and responsibilities and this be enshrined in the *Human Rights Act*; recommendation 14, that the human rights process change from the current configuration to a hybrid model that would reflect parts of a direct-access model with the intent of building efficiencies into the process; recommendation 15, that there should be greater guidance on the role of the Human Rights Commission in the adjudication process to maintain balance; recommendation 16, that the funding of the Yukon Human Rights Commission and/of the Yukon Human Rights Panel of Adjudicators be removed from the Department of Justice; recommendation 17, that process issues be addressed and evaluated for both the Yukon Human Rights Commission and the Yukon Human Rights Panel of Adjudicators; recommendation 19, that there be further discussion of the roles, responsibilities and qualifications of the members of the Yukon Human Rights Panel of Adjudicators and that these roles, responsibilities and qualifications be clarified; recommendation 21, that further clarity be sought on section 28, appeals of the act, with regard to the effectiveness of their provisions concerning appeals of final decisions of the board of adjudication.

Once the Department of Justice has completed its research, there will be targeted consultations on the process structure, roles and responsibilities. The targeted consultations will include the Human Rights Commission, Panel of Adjudicators and interested parties who made submissions to the select committee. There will also be an opportunity for broader public input.

These consultations will take place this coming spring. The department has been directed that a report is due by the end of December 2010. These are tight timelines, but we will be able to initiate the recommendations of the Select Committee on Human Rights and it's important that we maintain this aggressive timeline.

Mr. Cardiff: I thank the minister for that answer. That actually clears up some of the concerns I had. I am glad that they are doing the research. I guess the question is, when did the department begin the research? How far along has it progressed? The minister talks about targeted consultation. She talks about an opportunity for broader public consultation, and that was actually one of the recommendations. It was recommendation 8 — that if draft human rights legislation is brought forward by the Yukon government, there would be an opportunity for the public and for stakeholder groups to comment on

the proposed legislation. The minister is talking about a report by the end of December 2010.

Mr. Chair, what would the minister expect would be — I know she can't tell us what the outcome of that consultation or report would be, but what does she see as the next step from the report? Is that when we may get new draft legislation that would go out for that public and stakeholder consultation?

Hon. Ms. Horne: It was late last month when I directed the Department of Justice to initiate work on this report, on phase 2. Once the Department of Justice has submitted its report on the consultations on the process recommendations, consideration will then be given on how to address the remaining recommendations.

Obviously, we are committed to ensuring an opportunity for public input into modernizing the human rights framework. The government is also committed to continuing to keep up the momentum to ensure a solid foundation for human rights legislation in order to protect and uphold human rights now and into the future.

I believe the Department of Justice is very well positioned to bring forward a report and recommendations that will be helpful at looking at the issues around improving the complaints process through these recommended changes to the structure, process and roles and responsibilities of both the commission and the board of adjudication.

Mr. Cardiff: I have a quick question then. When does the minister anticipate that there may be actual legislative changes presented here in the Legislature? Is it going to be before the end of this government's mandate? Or, will it be the responsibility of a subsequent government?

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Quorum count

Chair: Mr. Edzerza, on a point of order.

Mr. Edzerza: Pursuant to Standing Order 3(3), there doesn't appear to be a quorum present.

Chair: Pursuant to Standing Order 3(4), if there doesn't appear to be quorum, the Chair will ring bells for four minutes and we'll do a count then.

Bells

Chair: Order please. There appears to be quorum. We will now continue with Bill No. 17, Department of Justice.

Hon. Ms. Horne: In response to the member opposite, we will allow phase 2 to run its course and once we get a copy of the said report that was requested, we will be in a better position to determine the timing.

Mr. Cardiff: I thank the minister. The report is due in December and I thought I heard the minister say she was committed to ensuring that the process moved ahead, and I would hope that there would be some expediency. I know that you don't want to sacrifice good quality work and good quality consultation. We want the process to be open and fair, but at the same time what I'm hearing is that we're going to get a report a year from now and that there won't be any changes until we get that report and it's analyzed. If we take recommendation 8 of the select committee, there'll be an opportunity

for public and stakeholder groups to comment on any proposed legislation, and that's going to drag it out even longer. My fear is that these changes won't be made prior to the next election.

The minister stated that one of the recommendations that the Department of Justice is doing research on is recommendation 16, which is the issue and recommendation that funding of the Yukon Human Rights Commission and the Yukon Human Rights Panel of Adjudicators be removed from the Department of Justice. We're going to research that for a year, so that means we can look forward to it in the 2010-11 budget and, more than likely, there won't be any changes prior to the 2011-12 budget.

The concern — and it's a concern that has been expressed by the commission and by the public for a number of years — is the appearance — and not just the appearance — that the commission needs to have an arm's-length relationship with government. I've heard this in the communities — there is an appearance and the public does not necessarily perceive the commission as neutral due to those funding arrangements.

It seems odd, and I think that it is extremely unfortunate that the work that the commission does and that the Panel of Adjudicators does on a regular basis is compromised by that perception in the public. With that in mind, I would think that this would be one of the recommendations that the minister would like to deal with sooner rather than later, in order to remove that appearance of conflict. So I guess the question for the minister is this: would she consider bringing forward changes that would deal with that recommendation? That would be recommendation 16.

Hon. Ms. Horne: This government wants to allow time for adequate research and consultation so that our human rights regime serves Yukoners' interests. This is an important piece of legislation that this government, as I said, takes very seriously. We want to take the steps to do it right. We do not want to sacrifice an effective act that will serve Yukoners well into the future. We have heard allegations of a potential conflict of interest by the Department of Justice undertaking this work. I want to address this theme that the Department of Justice is somehow in a conflict of interest by leading the policy development and drafting legislation regarding human rights. I will remind members that it is Cabinet that is responsible for setting policy direction and not one individual department.

I get very upset when I hear comments that suggest that somehow the public service and the Department of Justice lacks integrity. This is not so. The argument that the department cannot serve as the hand of government is misguided. While one part of one branch occasionally represents government as the employer, this has nothing whatsoever to do with the policy development function or funding. If this is considered a conflict of interest, then the department, in whose budget funding for courts administration and operations is located, would be barred from appearing on behalf of the Yukon government in the territory's courts.

If this is considered a conflict of interest, then it is a conflict of interest with virtually every jurisdiction across Canada, where human rights legislation, including policy foundations for legislation, resides with a government department. Making

these kinds of statements is basically an attack on the professional and dedicated public servants in the Department of Justice. I cannot and will not go along with this line of reasoning in any way.

Mr. Cardiff: I'm not attacking public servants or the department. The department worked on the piece of legislation. If the minister wants to go back and look at how the Yukon human rights legislation originally came into being, it was actually drafted outside of the Department of Justice, I think she would find.

Now, I'm not talking about the drafting of the amendments to the legislation. The minister needs to listen to what the question actually was. The question was whether or not she would entertain looking at the question of where the funding for the commission and the panel of adjudication was located.

This was an issue that was raised in the consultation that took place a little over a year ago. It is a concern. I believe it's something that could be — it would have improved the appearance, because there is a perception on the part of the clients of the commission that there is a conflict. Even if it's only perceived, it's about what we can do to eliminate that perception.

If you look at where the funding comes from in other jurisdictions — there are only 12 other jurisdictions in Canada — to look at that and what models there are for funding human rights commissions in the other 12 jurisdictions and how they've addressed that — maybe we could come up with a solution sooner rather than later and that would free the commission from that perception. They could make their submissions to a group like Members' Services Board possibly and there could be a built-in escalator clause that would deal with it on a case-by-case basis so the commission was adequately funded.

I'm just going to ask the minister once more — and I hope she understands we're not talking about the drafting of the legislation; this question is focused strictly on the funding arrangement.

Hon. Ms. Horne: As I said earlier, recommendation 16 will be part of phase 1. We will allow phase 2 to run its course and once we get a copy of the report, we'll be in a better position to assess the act as a whole and not piecemeal. We do not want to sacrifice an effective act that will serve Yukoners well into the future.

As I have said in this House before — and I've said to the Human Rights Commission directly — it is important to ensure the commission is independent. Similar funding arrangements are in place throughout the country. I believe we have eight jurisdictions plus Yukon — nine in total — where departments of Justice fund the human rights commissions, including the Attorney General. The funding arrangements are based on the requirements of the *Financial Administration Act*. They are based on policies designed to ensure transparency and accountability.

The 2009-10 annual funding for the Yukon Human Rights Commission is \$478,000. Over the past couple of years, the Department of Justice has been working with the commission to help stabilize its operational costs and resolve its funding issues. The increase from 2000-01 to 2007-08 in approved funding and additional funding represents an increase, includ-

ing the amounts requested by the commission of 188 percent over eight years. One-time funding approvals during this period total \$265,700.

This government supports the important work done by the commission and as a result the Department of Justice continues to work with the Human Rights Commission on current and future budgets.

Mr. Cardiff: Obviously, the minister is not committed to changing that so we move on to another. I would like an update from the minister on one of the other recommendations that wasn't addressed. That was recommendation 23. I am just wondering if any progress was made. It was recommended that further clarity be sought with respect to the application of human rights laws to self-governing First Nations, including the clarification of the application of section 13.1 of Yukon First Nations self-government agreements and clarification of the application of the recently amended *Canadian Human Rights Act*.

Can the minister tell us what information and what clarity has been found around that issue? I would appreciate it if she could provide that by — she can give us the response now but I would appreciate having a legislative return if possible on that item.

Hon. Ms. Horne: As the member opposite knows, this is a hugely complicated issue. I understand the Human Rights Commission has received funding from the northern strategy fund to examine this issue. We would look forward to working with the Human Rights Commission, should they allow us to work with them on this issue.

Mr. Cardiff: Is the minister telling me that she has done no work on this issue?

Hon. Ms. Horne: As I said before, this is a hugely complicated issue. Our lawyers in the Department of Justice are well aware of the complications of this matter, and we are following this. We don't want to duplicate the work that the Human Rights Commission is doing. Since they have the funding, we will leave this to them, and we hope to work with them in the future.

Mr. Cardiff: It's an issue of access to process and the processes that are available. Depending on your individual situation — whether you're a member of a self-governing First Nation or a First Nation without a self-government agreement — there are issues about whether or not you can actually access the process here in the Yukon or whether you have to go to the *Canadian Human Rights Act*.

This is an important issue for the minister, and I understand and I'm glad to hear that the Human Rights Commission has received some funding to look at this issue, but again, it is complex. The minister says that her officials are aware of the problem and they are willing to work with the Human Rights Commission on this. I think that's positive. Once again, it's about timeliness and it's about — in this case, I believe — human rights, because it's about a person's human right to have access to a process. I don't think we should be delaying that. These recommendations are a year old, and I believe that we should have made some progress on this issue already.

I don't see the minister really wanting to move this issue forward in a timely manner. I understand we have to wait for the commission to do its work under the funding it received from the northern strategy. What time frame does the minister see for coming up with some resolution? I understand it's complicated and will take time, but what is the time frame the minister is looking at for this?

It's not part of the second phase of the law reform, so what time frame does she have for this recommendation?

Hon. Ms. Horne: As I said before, we don't want to sacrifice an effective act that will serve Yukoners well into the future. We put phase 1 through a very aggressive time schedule, which we are also doing with phase 2. We will leave the issue of First Nations and human rights Canada in the hands of the Human Rights Commission. This is not part of our phase 2.

An issue of access to the Yukon human rights process is also a constitutional issue and is an issue about service quality. I do agree that it's a very important issue to all Yukoners, so we are looking into this issue and we are encouraged that the Yukon Human Rights Commission has taken on this issue. I do look forward to the outcome of this work done by the commission, but right now, all Yukoners are covered by the Yukon *Human Rights Act* when they leave their traditional territory, and they are covered by the *Canadian Human Rights Act*. We can't say that they are not covered, because they are covered by one or the other.

Mr. Cardiff: I thank the minister for those answers. I look forward to watching and hearing about more progress, hopefully sooner rather than later in this area.

Because of the consultation that we were involved in as Members of the Legislative Assembly, I think we realize just how important this is to the people of the territory.

I would like to ask the minister — I know that there were a number of questions asked about the new correctional facility and some of the existing problems with the current facility that have seemed to be on the radar screen here in the last little while. I would like to ask the minister a question about staffing. I know some of this was covered off last week but I want to clarify that I have the numbers correct. She stated that there were five management, 24 admin and food services workers, 38 corrections officers and 16 auxiliaries. Could she confirm that those were the numbers?

Hon. Ms. Horne: I can confirm that those totals that were quoted are correct.

Mr. Cardiff: Does the minister have any statistics she could provide on how often — this is with regard to staffing levels. I guess what I'm looking for from the minister is statistics on how often auxiliary on-calls are actually used or called in to fill in for staff.

The other question I have regarding this is, would the minister have statistics on the number of incidents of the facility actually being understaffed due to the inability to have auxiliary on-calls available or the corrections officers available to come in?

Hon. Ms. Horne: I do not have the data at my fingertips for the use of auxiliaries at Whitehorse Correctional Centre, but I can confirm that the Whitehorse Correctional Centre

is not understaffed. I am pleased to report to the member opposite that there is a full complement of staff at the centre.

Our government is committed to correctional redevelopment. Three years ago, as part of this change — as I've already noted to this House — is to train our staff for a new type of service delivery.

In a 24-hour/seven-day-a-week facility, we need to train staff in a timely manner that often requires bringing staff in on their day off or putting in auxiliaries to cover shifts while staff are receiving training. This is the reality of a facility of this nature.

This government committed this year to increasing the training budget very substantially to over four times the amount spent last year to date. We still have one-quarter of a year to go. The fact we have increased the training so substantially has resulted in overtime being used for covering staff positions while training has occurred, but this will be necessary during this very important transition into the new supervision model and the new regulatory system this House passed unanimously this past spring.

What is interesting to note, however, is that while the amount of overtime authorized to allow staff time for training has increased due to the substantial increase in the amount of training, the actual aggregate amount of overtime is substantially lower and reflects a long-term trend at the correctional centre, as more staff have been added and we have adjusted our staffing model.

I am very proud of the accomplishments of the staff at WCC for coming so far so quickly, and I encourage their continued efforts to make our correctional system work for all Yukoners.

Mr. Cardiff: I thank the minister for that answer. I look forward to the statistics the minister will be able to provide that weren't at her fingertips on the correctional facility's use of auxiliary on-calls.

The minister touched on a couple of things with regard to the corrections facility and the new generation 3 model. I would like to take the opportunity to thank — I had briefings on the model.

I've had the opportunity to visit the correctional facility. I think it was probably a little over a year ago and unfortunately, due to scheduling, I wasn't able to attend a tour of the new women's transitional living unit construction site this fall. I look forward to maybe an opportunity to do that in the new year.

The minister talked about providing enhanced services to the inmates. The new correctional facility is being billed as a healing centre. There have been questions asked in the Legislative Assembly about a land-based treatment centre either here in Whitehorse — there is one proposal and it has been indicated by one minister or another that it is the government's intention to provide a system that is going to provide enhanced services to all First Nations and to all Yukoners throughout the Yukon.

The minister stood up and responded to this. I'm just wondering what type of addictions treatment is going to be available at the new corrections facility or healing centre?

Hon. Ms. Horne: This is not a healing centre. It's Whitehorse Correctional Centre. It's a correctional centre in every phase of a correctional centre — what it should be. Healing is part of it, and this government is very interested in getting a land-based treatment centre up and running. I can report that I've met with the Chief of Kwanlin Dun First Nation and offered whatever assistance my department can provide. As you may know, the Kwanlin Dun First Nation has received an additional \$300,000 in funding from the year's intake of the northern strategy trust fund. It's my understanding that this money will be directed toward developing a programming model for a land-based treatment centre, and I'm very pleased that Kwanlin Dun First Nation has taken the initiative to develop programming, as I mentioned. I have directed officials in my department to provide whatever help KDFN may require.

From the department's perspective, we recognize how a land-based treatment centre will complement the work we are doing on correctional redevelopment. We are building a new correctional centre that is oriented toward treatment and programming. The new correctional centre and the enhanced direct supervision model that we will introduce when we move into the new building are geared toward providing high-quality programming that targets the needs of offenders.

Some inmates need a place to go when they are discharged from the Whitehorse Correctional Centre. A land-based treatment centre will provide another alternative for these low-risk individuals who have served their time in the correctional centre. In addition, the department is responsible for a number of low-risk, non-violent offenders who have substance abuse issues — for example, clients involved in the Community Wellness Court and clients on probation. A land-based treatment program would benefit these individuals.

I am aware that the Council of Yukon First Nations and Teslin Tlingit Council have also initiated a study of assessing the feasibility of opening a wellness centre in Teslin. I'm very pleased that these are going forward.

I want to make very clear here the government's commitment to work with KDFN does not preclude its involvement in other land-based treatment projects. We are well aware of the CYFN project, and we will work with CYFN and its partners as required, but it does not preclude us from working with other First Nations in Yukon.

Mr. Cardiff: I thank the minister for that answer. It provides a little more clarity around this issue than we've had previously in the last week or so, so we're making a bit of progress.

This is related to the whole addictions treatment and the land-based treatment centre issue. This is a question I've raised before in this Legislature, and I was pleased to have a constituent raise it at the Premier's meeting in my riding this past fall.

I guess what I am asking the minister is whether or not she would maybe look at this a little closer and maybe talk with the Minister of Health and Social Services and the Minister of Education on this issue. I have raised this issue before in the Legislature and it is about the possibility, given the prevalence of alcohol and drug addictions in the territory and realizing that this is a generational issue that is going to be with us — it is

about learned behaviour to some extent — recognizing that it is going to take some time to resolve this. What I am asking the minister is whether or not she would take this forward and look at the possibilities of championing a two-year addictions course at Yukon College to be held in conjunction with — there is already some of this training that happens in relation to the bachelor of social work program.

There have been questions asked in the past. There have even been suggestions that there are addictions treatment courses. I know there were addictions treatment courses in the Northwest Territories and we were encouraging the government to try to access seats in that program some years ago. But would the minister agree to take this issue forward — the idea of a two-year addictions course in conjunction with a bachelor of social work so that we could train our own addictions treatment people here in the territory in a Yukon context with the sensitivities of the Yukon communities in mind?

Hon. Ms. Horne: What the member opposite is suggesting is very good and we are already doing the same. As part of our government's commitment to safety, security, training and education, the departments of Justice, Education, Health and Social Services and the Public Service Commission are working to implement a northern institute of social justice to be based at Yukon College and linked to the college.

The following work has already been undertaken in preparation to implement a northern institute of social justice: securing funding for the first four years of operation, which will be followed by an independent evaluation, strategic planning sessions and development of a strategic plan, action plan and founding charter for review and approval by the northern institute of social justice development committee; preliminary training needs identification sessions with some government departments and representatives from some First Nation governments, to be followed by discussions with other departments, agencies and organizations; delivering a pilot program, the correctional officer career exploration training program for women; preparing for development and delivery of an FASD training program in winter/spring 2010; identifying the range of trauma training programs to be delivered in 2010-11; identifying funds to help support delivery of workshops on women and substance abuse; identifying other potential training programs for delivery in 2009-10 and 2010-11, in response to the preliminary training needs identification and preparing office space for the institute within Yukon College.

Yukon's public and First Nation governments, non-governmental organizations and the private sector face two primary challenges in delivering programs and services with a justice-related component. Those challenges are recruiting, retaining and training employees and assisting existing employees and accessing additional training opportunities in Yukon.

The institute will focus on meeting the need for entry-level training, common training applicable to a variety of jobs, and training that meets the specific needs of specific jobs. The institute will work in partnership with public governments, First Nation governments, and colleges to consolidate and coordinate delivery of all justice-related training; broker justice-

related training provided by organizations located in Yukon or outside Yukon; develop and deliver training to meet gaps in training and undertake related research. The institute will focus on delivering programs that are relevant, integrated, recognized, accredited and transferable. Expenditures for discussions, studies, preliminary planning and preparation for implementation 2005-06 was \$7,627.37; 2006-07 it was \$14,109.09; in 2007-08 it was \$169,485; in 2008-09 it was \$20,751; in 2009-10 it was \$5,000.

In response to the question from the member opposite, yes, the type of program that the member opposite suggested — and indeed the approach toward interdepartmental collaboration that he suggested is well within the scope of the northern institute, so this is something that we can and will be looking further into. We are serious about implementing healthy communities and a healthier Yukon.

Mr. Cardiff: Well, I appreciate the minister's answer and again, it's good information that I can use and I can take back. There was interest at the meeting on the part of, I believe, the Minister of Education and the Premier, in a two-year addiction course. They were going to go back and look at that focus. I'm asking the minister to champion that idea. She's telling us in the Legislative Assembly here that this work has already begun, so can she tell us when the two-year addiction part of the bachelor of social work program will be available?

Hon. Ms. Horne: As I said, this is the type of issue we are looking into — the type of programming we're looking into and we will be initiating these programs.

Mr. Cardiff: That was a short version of the minister's first answer. The question I just asked was this: what kind of time frames are we looking at for the availability of this type of training for Yukoners?

Hon. Ms. Horne: As to when this will be starting, I am pleased to announce here today that our official opening of the Northern Institute of Social Justice will be opening this Friday at 10:00 a.m., and I welcome all the members of the House to be there for the grand opening of the institute.

Mr. Cardiff: I can't promise to be there, as I'm going to be travelling at some point that day. Depending on my availability, I would be pleased to be there but, if I can't, I would send my best wishes and congratulations to all those involved in this endeavour. I would also ask the minister — the question wasn't about when the northern justice institute would open its office; it was about when we might see a two-year addictions course at Yukon College.

Hon. Ms. Horne: I cannot give the timelines at this time. This will be addressed by the college, but I will bring the member opposite's concerns forward to the president of Yukon College.

Mr. Cardiff: That was basically what I was looking for. I recognize that the minister is not the Minister of Education, but what I was asking was for her to champion this issue. I know it was raised by a constituent of mine. I've raised it previously in departmental debate in Education, and I think it is an important issue.

I'd like to ask the minister — we've asked this question before — about the Yukon adult residential centre. In the

budget it's my understanding that there is a request to fund personnel, and I'm just wondering a couple of things. We've asked previously about evaluations of the Yukon adult residential centre and whether those evaluations have been done and if they are available.

There is an increase to fund more personnel at the ARC. I am wondering what staff members are being hired and if the department knows that. What are their qualifications? Once again, I have a question about the availability of an evaluation of the services provided by this group.

Hon. Ms. Horne: The Department of Justice continues to work with the Salvation Army to address its funding issues for the ARC. The Salvation Army has operated the ARC in the Yukon for the past 20 years. Justice contracts with the Adult Resource Centre to provide 11 beds for male offenders. The majority of these beds are used for bail clients with the condition to reside in Whitehorse.

Contract renewal efforts have been underway since October 2008. The Salvation Army initially requested cost-of-living increases. Subsequent increases were requested to enable the Adult Resource Centre to be more competitive in hiring and address staff retention. In June 2009, Justice was informed that the Adult Resource Centre would be placed under new management. The current contract was extended until December.

The Adult Resource Centre budget of \$400,000 hasn't changed since 2005-06. Contract increases to \$411,145 in 2007-08, and \$420,519 in 2008-09 were absorbed by Corrections internally.

I'm pleased to report that we are including an increase of \$284,000 in this supplementary budget to ensure that the ARC has stable funding so it can continue to provide services to offenders.

As to the question of staffing, the staffing is done by the Salvation Army, which is an NGO. Staff is not a question for our Department of Justice. We know that they will be hiring caseworkers and the qualifications are up to them.

Mr. Cardiff: I recognize the arrangement with the Salvation Army and the fact they are arm's length. I'm not trying to be critical, but what I want to do is understand a little bit more of the role of the Adult Resource Centre. I do have some concerns; I just want to make sure. I think it's like any other service. What I'm hearing is that the government is providing an additional \$284,000 for this service in this fiscal year.

The first question I would have for the minister is, is this going to be an ongoing commitment of the Department of Justice to this contract? The minister was talking figures in the neighbourhood of \$400,000 and with this additional money, given there were some escalators in there — \$420,000 with the addition of this — we're in the \$700,000 range. Is that going to be the ongoing commitment by the Department of Justice for this function? How does the department evaluate the service that it's receiving for those 11 beds that are provided? The other question: are the 11 beds the total number of beds that are available there, or do they provide spaces or beds for other clients or is this strictly operated as a contract solely for the Department of Justice?

Hon. Ms. Horne: I repeat: the ARC is an NGO, a non-governmental organization. The \$284,000 is an ongoing commitment to the ARC. The bulk of these resources will be directed toward increasing the salary of staff so the ARC can attract and retain qualified staff.

Eleven beds are the total that the Department of Justice uses. There is a separate contract under Health and Social Services, and there is a separate contract with the federal government for federal inmates on parole.

Mr. Cardiff: That clarifies some of the questions I had. I just want the minister to confirm that when she says it's an ongoing commitment by the Department of Justice, we can see the request for this service in the 2010-11 budget. There will be a budget request in the neighbourhood of \$700,000. Is that correct?

Hon. Ms. Horne: I repeat again that this is an ongoing commitment to the ARC.

Mr. Cardiff: Okay. For clarification, does the minister — it doesn't seem to be a really difficult question.

I don't know whether or not I'm posing the question. Do the math. Actually it is not math — it is arithmetic even. The minister quoted that it started out at about \$400,000. There were a couple of increases to \$420,000 odd for the services provided. There is an additional request for \$284,000 — \$284,000 plus \$420,000 comes out to \$704,000. If the \$284,000 is an ongoing commitment, then the minister can do the arithmetic. Is that what we can expect — \$704,000? We are going to maintain what was given in the previous year plus what is in the supplementary, and that will be the request in the spring. Can she confirm that?

Hon. Ms. Horne: I misunderstood the question. I thought he was asking if we were committing to work with the ARC next year. The member opposite is correct. The \$420,000 plus the \$284,000 will be reflected in next year's budget.

Mr. Cardiff: I see the Minister of Education nodding in approval that I indeed passed my arithmetic test this afternoon.

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Point of order

Chair: Mr. Rouble, on a point of order.

Hon. Mr. Rouble: I'm sorry, Mr. Chair, but the member opposite is imputing a false or unavowed motive to me. We can't accept that. I will do a formal evaluation and report —

Chair's ruling

Chair: Order please. There is no point of order.

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Quorum count

Chair: Mr. Fentie, on a point of order.

Hon. Mr. Fentie: Pursuant to Standing Order, 3(3), I call quorum.

Chair: Pursuing to Standing Order 3(4), if it is drawn to the Chair's attention that there is no quorum, the Chair will ring the bells for four minutes and do a count.

Bells

Chair: Order please. There now appears to be a quorum.

Is there any further general debate?

Mr. Cardiff: I thank the minister for that answer and the clarification around that. There has been some confusion at times around the provisions of services for mental health patients who are involved in the correctional system.

The minister indicated earlier that the Department of Health and Social Services has an arrangement with the Adult Resource Centre as well. It's my understanding from a response that was provided to me earlier this year that those three beds at the Adult Resource Centre are for persons with mental health disorders, who are under the jurisdiction of the Yukon Review Board. This means that they are, to the best of my knowledge, persons who have been mandated by the court to be incarcerated or put into care. I'm wondering what the issue is about security and about the arrangement that the Department of Justice has as well. I got the impression from the minister that the 11 beds were for people who were out on bail or who were leaving the correctional facility.

I'm wondering if she can tell us whether or not there are people involved in the justice system who have mental health disorders and are under the jurisdiction of the Yukon Review Board and are staying there. What types of security are provided under this contract with the Salvation Army in order to ensure the safety of all those there? There have been issues around inmates with mental health disorders and the security and safety of other inmates. I'm just wondering what measures the department has in place to ensure the safety and security of inmates or other Yukoners in this facility as well.

Hon. Ms. Horne: I repeat again the ARC is an NGO and only low risk offenders are sent to the ARC. We have to ensure before they're sent that they are low risk. Risk assessment is a paramount procedure for making any decision on transferring inmates to the ARC.

Mr. Cardiff: I fully understand the minister's position on this, that it is a non-governmental organization and they operate at arm's length from the government, but they provide a service to the government. When you enter into that service agreement for \$700,000 a year, there have to be some conditions. That's why I was asking the questions about qualifications. It is up to the NGO to decide whom to hire.

When they are providing a service to the government or the taxpayer — actually, the service is being provided to the taxpayer and the government has a right to specify what the qualifications of those people will be. I understand the issue of recruitment and retention. We had an example of it here this afternoon earlier this afternoon during Question Period about the whole non-governmental organizations being put under financial duress basically because it is hard to compete, it's hard to recruit and it is hard to retain people to provide services — whether it is at the Adult Resource Centre or the Boys and Girls Club of Whitehorse. All of these non-governmental organizations have escalating costs, just like the Government of Yukon has escalating budgets — revenues and expenses on both sides of the equation. Enough said there.

It's about whether or not the government has any requirements for the qualifications of the people who provide the service to the government. It goes back to the question that I've asked time and time again: does the government evaluate the services that are provided and are those evaluations available? Obviously, there must have been some evaluation done in order to commit another \$284,000 to the provision of this service. All I'm asking is, have there been evaluations done and what were the outcomes of those evaluations?

Hon. Ms. Horne: I repeat that risk assessment is a paramount procedure for making any decision to transfer inmates to the ARC.

Regarding decisions about the temporary absence of an offender from Whitehorse Correctional Centre, whether that temporary absence is for a funeral, a special event or to be released to the ARC, our staff at Whitehorse Correctional Centre perform a risk assessment on the individual in question to ensure that the level of supervision required for the individual can be ensured. We will not send an inmate to the ARC if the ARC cannot provide the level of supervision required. With respect to evaluation, a new management team has started at the ARC. This new management team was put in place by the Salvation Army offices in Alberta. Since the new management team has come on board, the Department of Justice has been in discussion with the new management regarding a new program model. As part of our discussions, we have built into our contract provisions for evaluation.

Mr. Cardiff: I can't believe how many years it has taken to actually get this answer. It hasn't been evaluated, but it is going to be evaluated in the future and that's progress. I guess that pays off all the years that question has been asked that now we will be evaluating that program. I'm pleased with that.

I have another question for the minister regarding the correctional facility. Section 43 of the new *Corrections Act* provides for the establishment of a community advisory board. That community advisory board has some duties and can provide recommendations about the operation of the correctional facility. According to the act, they must be granted access to the correctional centre in respect of which the board has been established upon reasonable notice to the person in charge.

Has the community advisory board been established under the new *Corrections Act*? Have they been granted access? Have they made recommendations about the operation of the current facility?

Hon. Ms. Horne: The community advisory board has not yet been established. It is a high-priority honour list. We're focusing right now on staff training, but the work is underway, and we're establishing the parameters in terms of reference for the board. We hope to have this community advisory board up and running by the end of this fiscal year.

Mr. Cardiff: At least that's on the radar screen. I just wonder — some of the concerns that have been raised — the recent fire at the correctional facility, issues around which inmates are put in segregation and basically it's about inmate and correctional officer employee safety.

I don't want to get into the discussion that we had last Thursday about whether or not this was done or that wasn't done. The reason I'm raising the issue of the advisory board is because I view that as developing a strategic plan. The director of corrections must consult with each community advisory board established under section 43.

I hear what the minister is talking about — all the training of staff, about the plans for the new generation 3 facility, the fact that the supervision model of the facility is going to be different.

I am pleased that at least we have some time to deal with this and that the minister is hoping we will have a community advisory board by the end of the fiscal year. We are moving ahead with all the training and the planning around the new correctional facility, and I am pleased that the minister has said earlier that this is a correctional facility with a healing component, and we are not going back to the advertisements that the minister had in the paper a year or two ago about a healing centre. I know there was some confusion about that, but I'm glad that we've got that clarified. It seems to me, with all the training and all the planning that goes into bringing this new facility on-line within the next two to three years, that this community advisory board is a necessity. They're going to be able to provide some insights by their ability to look at what's happening at the current correctional facility, to make some recommendations for the new facility and the operation of the current facility so that we don't get ourselves into situations like we were in a couple of weeks ago.

I hope the minister will take those comments under consideration, and I'll await her response.

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

Recess

Chair: Order please. Committee of the Whole will now come to order. The matter before the Committee is Bill No. 17, *Second Appropriation Act, 2009-10*, the Department of Justice, Vote 8. We will now continue with general debate.

Hon. Ms. Horne: Mr. Chair, yes, I agree that the community advisory board is an important new feature of the act.

I am eager to get this board in place as well so that community members will have a better understanding of what goes in a correctional centre. I believe this committee will play a key role in providing accountability to the public. But speaking of accountability, the *Corrections Act* consultation process identified the need for independent and impartial oversight of the corrections system. The investigations and standards office will meet this need. The office will respond to requests from inmates for a review of their disciplinary hearing.

As well, inmates will be able to request a review of the response by the corrections management to an inmate's complaint. The director of investigations and standards may investigate any matter with respect to administration of the *Correc-*

tions Act at the request of the assistant deputy minister or on the director's own motion.

The office will also conduct periodic inspections of the correctional centre to ensure that the treatment of inmates is aligned with the principles of the new *Corrections Act*. The investigations and standards office will provide recommendations to corrections management and staff, which will ensure a timely, thorough and fair complaint and disciplinary process.

Posters and pamphlets have been circulated so inmates and Whitehorse Correctional Centre staff can better understand the role, mandate and procedures of the office. The investigations and standards office will commence work with the proclamation of the new *Corrections Act*. Hiring for the investigations and standards office is complete and the office is comprised of the director, senior investigator and two investigators. Extensive work is underway to establish the needed policies, procedures and data-tracking abilities for this office. Yes, accountability is in place.

Mr. Cardiff: Can the minister tell us when the act will be proclaimed? She alluded to that in her answer.

Hon. Ms. Horne: Yes, I can respond to the member opposite that the act will be proclaimed early in the new year. We're just doing some final steps on the act right now.

Mr. Cardiff: I thank the minister for those answers. There are some other expenditure requests in the supplementary budget that I wanted to ask a few questions of.

There's an additional almost \$3.5 million for policing and investigative services, and it's my understanding that part of this, in the O&M, represents the contribution the RCMP is making to the mobile radio system in the Yukon, the new mobile radio system. I think we had this discussion in previous years. There's also, it's my understanding, some additional funding for the RCMP due to other pressures.

I'm wondering if the minister can tell us — if she can give us a breakdown of — what those costs are in relation to the RCMP — the policing and investigative services. It's almost \$3.5 million, and I'd like to hear the minister's explanation for that.

Hon. Ms. Horne: Mr. Chair, have we moved into line by line? I believe this can be better answered in line-by-line questioning.

Mr. Cardiff: Mr. Chair, I agree we're in general debate, but I have never found in my seven years in the Legislative Assembly that the answers get any better when we're in line by line. The answers are the answers. I'm asking a general question about policing and investigation services. It's my understanding that part of this money is for a communications system and some of it is related to other RCMP matters. All I'm asking the minister for is an explanation of what the funds are being used for, not unlike some of the other questions we've been asking.

Hon. Ms. Horne: I'll give the explanation that's in the line-by-line section which totals \$3.4 million. \$730,000 was approved in the 2009-10 O&M main estimates for the mobile radio system operating costs. The system has not yet been commissioned and it is now expected that operating costs in 2009-10 will be required in March 2010 at a cost of \$122,000.

As a result, this budget line will be reduced by \$608,000 — just as identified, \$1,517,000 for 2009-10 RCMP funding pressures. Management Board approved a revote of \$2,355,000. This amount represents 70 percent of the cost to the RCMP for upgrading the mobile radio system in Yukon.

The Management Board Secretariat instructed Justice to identify a one-time increase of \$110,000 to fund costs associated with the development of functionality for radio dispatch consoles and \$27,000 for lighting control heads required as part of the mobile radio system project.

A one-time budget increase of \$340,000 was approved to fund the *Corrections Act* implementation activities. Of this increase, \$63,000 was allocated to the program director's office, policing and investigation services — for a total \$3.464 million.

Mr. Cardiff: I think she said there was in the neighbourhood of \$1.5 million in funding basically for increased pressures the Department of Justice had identified. What I'd like to know is what those funding pressures were. I'll ask her one more question as well: what is the total funding going to be for the RCMP contract for this fiscal year?

Hon. Ms. Horne: Operational response allowance incremental cost: \$464,867; stand-by level one costs: \$205,892; McLeod in-custody death investigation: \$20,090; Silverfox in-custody death investigation: \$34,160; Watson Lake investigation: \$17,220; conductive energy weapons: \$8,859; detachment clerk review and reclassification: \$275,100; service pay increase: \$99,190; MPL maintenance costs: \$42,000; major investigations: \$262,500; retro stand-by pay: \$86,666; for a total of \$1,516,538.

Mr. Cardiff: I thank the minister for providing that information. I will review that and look into some of that. The minister didn't answer the final question, which was what the total cost of the RCMP contract was going to be for this year.

Hon. Ms. Horne: Total cost for RCMP: \$25,504,000.

Mr. Cardiff: There were some things in that breakdown that I'm curious about. Unfortunately, I don't know that we have the full time to go into a lot of the detail today on this issue and maybe I'll be able to pursue some of this further in the spring.

There have been further requests in the public and even by former RCMP commissioners, I believe, around a more arm's-length investigative process. The way it works now is that the RCMP Complaints Commission basically — the appearance to the public, anyhow, is that the national police force investigates itself. What I'm wondering is whether or not the minister has lent her voice to some of these calls for a more independent, arm's-length investigative unit that would investigate some of these complaints. I'm not calling into question — the minister always seems to take this as us pointing fingers at bureaucrats or the RCMP for not doing their job.

I am hoping to pre-empt the minister's remarks a little bit that go down that line.

If the minister wants to check the record, earlier this spring I wrote letters and was on record as taking the federal government to task, as a matter of fact, for their treatment of the RCMP around the collective bargaining process. There was a

negotiation process and there was a contract agreed to and, as a matter of fact, the federal government rolled RCMP back. I am glad to see that there are funds in this supplementary budget that actually deal with some of those issues, that there are funds to deal with basically collective bargaining increases — is the way that I understood that.

They make our communities much safer and they provide an essential service to every community of the Yukon, but what I'm asking is whether or not the minister has lent her voice — to avoid that appearance of conflict again — to a more independent avenue for the resolution of complaints.

Hon. Ms. Horne: Indeed, Mr. Chair, we should all be grateful to have the services of the RCMP to make our Yukon a safer place, our communities a safer place for all Yukoners.

Based on the results of a coroner's inquest, the chief coroner can recommend ways to prevent similar untimely tragedies and save lives. When a jury makes recommendations for how to prevent similar tragedies, the coroner will pass on those recommendations to the appropriate groups and individuals. Inquests can clarify facts and generate recommendations every year. Although they are non-binding, each recommendation is designed to prevent similar deaths in the future. They also inform the public of what has been learned through the investigation and/or inquest process.

I can assure the member opposite that the chief coroner and the RCMP have worked to ensure that the recommendations made in previous inquiries are implemented to the fullest extent possible.

Our government is looking at ways of how we can ensure that the unique situation of northerners is considered when it comes to addressing complaints about the RCMP. Here in the north, we often have a special relationship with the RCMP members who serve our small communities and are often close members of our community.

I have communicated my view on how best to improve the complaints process to the federal Minister of Public Safety on several occasions over the past year. I have indicated that any new processes must address some of the unique challenges faced by Yukoners and meet the need for greater timeliness, transparency and accountability of the RCMP. I have also emphasized that accountability of the RCMP, including responsiveness to any complaints, is of great interest to the Yukon.

The RCMP is our sole police force and a community partner in improving the lives of northerners through effective and efficient delivery of policing services.

I have expressed concerns about any proposals to strengthen the existing centralized approach to dealing with citizens' complaints and oversight of the RCMP. This centralized approach may not be appropriate for a smaller jurisdiction like Yukon. In the first instance, it is challenging for citizens to have to lodge their complaint with the very detachment they are complaining about. In the second instance, the complaints commission is seen as far removed from the actual situation and often seen to be time-consuming.

It is important to note that, since the Yukon does not have a police act, we are therefore not in a position to delegate the intake and investigation of RCMP public complaints to another

body. I can assure the member opposite that we are committed to continue to work with officials from Canada and other contract jurisdictions to develop a robust and sensitive complaints process for Yukon.

Chair: Is there any further general debate? Seeing none, we will proceed line by line in Vote 8, Department of Justice.

Mr. Cardiff: I'd like to request unanimous consent of the Committee to deem all lines in Vote 8, Department of Justice, cleared or carried, as required.

Unanimous consent re deeming all lines in Vote 8, Department of Justice, cleared or carried, as required.

Chair: Mr. Cardiff has requested unanimous consent of the Committee to deem all lines in Vote 8, Department of Justice, cleared or carried, as required. Are you agreed?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

Chair: Unanimous consent has been granted.

On Operation and Maintenance Expenditures

Total Operation and Maintenance Expenditures in the amount of \$5,407,000 agreed to

On Capital Expenditures

Capital Expenditures in the amount of \$571,000 agreed to

Department of Justice agreed to

Chair: Committee of the Whole will now proceed to Public Service Commission. Do members wish a brief recess?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

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

Recess

Chair: Order please. Committee of the Whole will now come to order. The matter before the Committee is Vote 10, Bill No. 17, *Second Appropriation Act, 2009-10*.

Public Service Commission

Chair: We will now proceed with general debate on the Public Service Commission.

Hon. Mr. Rouble: Mr. Chair, thank you for this opportunity to speak briefly about the Public Service Commission's supplementary budget for 2009-10. Mr. Chair, under the *Public Service Act*, the Public Service Commission acts as the employer on behalf of the Yukon government. In this role, the Public Service Commission invests in programs and services to sustain the public service for delivering programs and services to Yukon people and for providing services to Yukon government employees and their departments. It also provides leadership and planning and implementing human resource initiatives and works with departments to develop human resource expertise. The Public Service Commission also provides significant programs to the general public, to First Nation governments and to people with disabilities. I will speak more about these programs later.

First, Mr. Chair, I would like to note that the Public Service Commission has returned \$17,000 to government revenues for corporate projects to which all departments have contributed. There are also two revotes. The first is \$300,000, approved for revote from 2008-09 for the recruitment and retention fund. Management Board provided \$1 million over three years to address Yukon government recruitment. The three-year funding ends on March 31, 2010. The second is for \$250,000 for the investing in public service framework, related to the employee development assignment program, rotational assignments and disability program assignments. Finally, transfers have been made within the Public Service Commission from operation and maintenance to provide the necessary funds for a capital budget purchase of a photocopier totalling \$9,000.

I would now like to elaborate on some of the points that I have made relative to this supplementary budget and also to speak to some of the other work that is done by the Public Service Commission.

First of all, in the area of recruitment and retention, for example, a significant portion of funds has been used as incentives to attract highly skilled employees to some of our harder to fill positions. This fund supports a human resource goal in the public service to attract, develop and engage talented people as Yukon government employees.

Over \$1 million over three years has been allocated to address public service recruitment and retention issues. As I said, the three years end on March 31, 2010. The first priority has been to fill immediate vacancies in difficult-to-recruit areas. To date, \$151,000 has been spent on recruitment incentives for immediate vacancies, and another \$195,000 in recruitment incentives is pending. Most of these incentives have been used for nursing and social work positions, and for positions in Environment and Justice. The incentives are only used where necessary to attract candidates, and not all approved incentives are ultimately needed. The incentives are reported to the Deputy Ministers Human Resource Committee, DMHRC, based on proposals received. The remaining funds may be used for related corporate projects to continue with our work to develop the public service. DMHR has also approved three corporate projects which are estimated at \$300,000. These include our ongoing work on recruitment and retention strategies and employment brand initiative and marketing strategies.

Other tools for recruitment and retention such as a management competency system to evaluate candidate leadership skills is being considered. This will depend on what resources remain after all individual incentives and the committed corporate projects are completed.

Second, Mr. Chair, are the development and rotational assignments programs that are used to develop employees within the Government of Yukon so younger employees have the opportunity to learn from more-experienced employees.

Next, there are the disabilities program activities which include support for people with disabilities to work for the Yukon government and also for work with current employees who become disabled and require accommodation and other support to return to work. The disability management program is currently being reviewed so it will better meet the needs of em-

ployees and can also better address the employer's obligations in the areas of workplace accommodation.

There is also a great deal of work being done in the area of health and safety to develop a corporate health and safety regime, as well as health and safety programs within each government department and Crown corporation. Mr. Chair, there will be some important training initiatives throughout the public service related to both these projects.

There are also many other training and development opportunities that are offered to employees. Additionally, these are also available to First Nation government employees and other people. Training and development courses are organized into seven themes: healthy and safe workplace, leadership, information technology, skills and knowledge, systems and practices, working with people, and government culture.

The Yukon government is a multi-functional organization with many lines of businesses, so the number and type of courses vary from year to year. Corporate training and development coursework is delivered as general offerings to employees across the government and as targeted programs to groups of employees, such as first-time supervisors, mid-level and senior managers, human resource professionals and finance professionals.

The Public Service Commission and staff development branch may participate in delivering department-specific training and development coursework. Staff Development uses a combination of internal and external instructors and facilitators and purchases seats from other organizations, such as Yukon College. Coursework is delivered using in-class instruction, satellite-delivered, web-enabled and self-paced learning at the desktop workshops.

Additionally there are three land claim training options for Yukon government employees, including a four-day workshop of First Nation culture, intercultural communications and the history and process of land claims through to self-government; and a three-day workshop focused on traditional knowledge, practices of First Nations and department-specific training, based on a particular department's specific needs and issues.

Mr. Chair, as of September 1, 2009, 139 courses were delivered to a total of 2,198 participants since the training began in 1998. First Nation government employees are invited to attend the four-day workshop and, as of September 1, 2009, 92 First Nation government employees have attended this training. \$36,800 in course fees were waived. This represents 368 days of training provided by the Yukon government to First Nation government employees.

I would also like to bring to the attention of this Legislature the work that the Public Service Commission has undertaken in the area of the flu pandemic response. As the lead for corporate human resource planning, the human resource management team has been established as one of the areas of response.

The team is chaired by the Public Service Commission staff, and human resources directors in the government provide input on sick leave so that there can be a timely response when there needs to be a redeployment of staff to continue to deliver essential services to Yukon people. The Public Service Com-

mission also carries out negotiations with the union to expand the sick and special leave provisions, allowing employees to be at home if they or their dependants contract the H1N1 virus.

Questions and answers for employees are posted on the Public Service Commission website so that whether they are at work or at home they can review this material. Information delivery to the public is being managed by the Department of Health and Social Services, but as minister responsible for the Public Service Commission, I am confident that every possible consideration is being made to ensure the delivery of essential services over the coming months.

In the area of workplace diversity, I am pleased that the First Nation Training Corps is continuing its long tradition of providing training and employment opportunities to Yukon First Nation people. Twenty training positions are planned for 2009-10. Eleven of these were developed jointly with First Nation governments and during this fiscal year the first-ever director-level position is in place through the FNTC.

Temporary assignments with Yukon First Nations are also continuing. Three temporary assignments concluded in 2009 and two new assignments have been assigned to date. The Aboriginal Employees Forum has also been active since it was launched in 2006. With a membership of over 130 aboriginal employees across the government, this is a place where aboriginal employees can network and learn corporate organizational values in ways that are culturally relevant. The AEF also provides a place for aboriginal employees to connect with role models in the workplace.

I'm particularly impressed with the aboriginal employees award of honour that was developed through the initiative of the Aboriginal Employees Forum steering committee. The first call for nominations closed a couple weeks ago, and award recipients have been selected by a committee that includes the deputy minister champion and others from the aboriginal community. I had a very positive opportunity to be present at the presentation ceremony that was held last Friday. Also in attendance was Minister Horne. We very much look forward to future events, where we can honour aboriginal employees with their awards.

Mr. Chair, both the Aboriginal Employees Forum and the aboriginal employees award of honour are approaches to recognition and appreciation that support core strategy 4 in the representative public service plan which states that we intend to create a workplace environment within the Yukon government that accommodates Yukon First Nation culture and supports a Yukon First Nation people.

Next, I would like to update this House on the success of the corporate shredding and recycling program that supports government's efforts to be an exemplary environmental citizen. To date in this fiscal year, this program has processed 23 tonnes of material that would otherwise have been sent to be burned.

Mr. Chair, this is an overview of just some of the activities within the Public Service Commission. I would like to thank you for the opportunity to provide details on this supplementary budget. I now look forward to questions from the Official Opposition and from the Third Party.

Mr. Fairclough: I do have a few questions for the minister within this department. I would like to thank the officials for providing the briefing to us; it was helpful. I do have a question that is a result of some of the information that was given to us.

There are not a whole lot of line items in this supplementary budget in this department. The minister has explained some of them. It is really one line item really in the capital expenditures and he said that it was for a photocopier.

I will be brief with my questions. I will ask a number of questions here and hopefully the minister can answer all of them when he gets up to speak.

First of all, I would like the minister to provide us in opposition with the number of government employees presently, and also right back to 2002. If that is not at the minister's fingertips, I will accept that by legislative return.

Could the minister also explain where things are at in regard to negotiations with the government employees in YTA? When do we expect resolution? I understand their contract expires on December 31. Could the minister also explain that one?

The recent survey that was done with government employees about their satisfaction within government and the low morale in some of the departments — what is the Public Service Commission doing to improve that and make this a better place to work? I also understand from the briefing that money is identified for a marketing fund and the government is actually going out to say that this is a good place to work and try to attract employees from elsewhere.

So I've asked a number of questions, and I hope the minister is able to answer them. I'll just carry on from there and hand it over to the minister.

Hon. Mr. Rouble: I don't have some of the specific information at my fingertips that the member is looking for. The total number of employees I believe is around 4,600, but that's a very rough estimate. I don't have the exact figures the member opposite is looking for at my fingertips.

He has asked for an update as to where we're at with the negotiations with the various unions that the Government of Yukon works with and which provide, through their members, the services to Yukoners.

I'll start with the Yukon Teachers Association. As the member is aware, we are in a bargaining process with them currently. A mediator has been identified to work with both the YTA and the Government of Yukon. That process will be undertaken in January. There were some challenges in dates in this process but we are working with a mediator out of Alberta. We are working as expediently as we can on this issue.

With regard to the Alliance — we have received formal notice to bargain so we are now in the bargaining process. We expect to go into greater detail with that in January with substantive bargaining happening in February.

So that is an update on where we are at with working with the unions that represent many of the Government of Yukon's employees. Also, in an effort to ensure that not only is the Government of Yukon a good place to work but a great place to work, the Government of Yukon once again, with the Public

Service Commission, conducted an employee engagement survey to look at a variety of different departments in the Government of Yukon, to look at different issues that are arising and also to look at ways that we can improve how we are as an employer.

The employee engagement survey was conducted. Our engagement score has remained fairly stable. The information provided from this survey has been provided to all the deputy heads in a variety of different areas of responsibility, as they have the responsibility of working with staff and ensuring that the overall objectives of government are being met.

Mr. Chair, many of the information points about what is being done has been conveyed to Government of Yukon employees already in a recent edition of *The Sluice II*, which I'm sure the member is aware is the internal YTG newsletter. There were some very detailed descriptions as to what was going on in each of the departments. I have four pages of notes on this. I think it might be just a bit more expedient if I provided a copy of *The Sluice II* that contained the article to the member opposite, as opposed to just reading — which I can, if the member would like — all of the points into the record.

I can provide a copy of this *The Sluice II* article, which outlines about — it looks to be about a hundred different points as to how the departments are responding to this and outlining some of their strategies for working with their employees.

As an example, some of these include greater opportunities to provide communication, at least two-way, if not including information from a variety of different stakeholders, of different brainstorming sessions, doing departmental report cards, holding additional planning sessions, additional training sessions, staff meetings, putting in place flexible work arrangements, providing additional educational opportunities or additional recognition programs.

There is a variety of different programs, and the Government of Yukon has a tremendous amount of faith in the deputy heads and their ability to work in a very positive and productive manner with our staff to ensure that the Government of Yukon is not just a good place to work, but also a great place to work.

I have some more specifics about some of the workplace statistics. As of December 31, 2008, there were 3,321 permanent jobs, 216 term jobs, about 699 auxiliary on-call jobs, 256 seasonal auxiliary jobs, 93 casual jobs and 245 other. These other positions include things like GradCorps, or temporary teachers. I'm sure the member opposite knows the difference between jobs and FTEs, so I don't have to go into some of those specifics.

Again, Government of Yukon is responding to needs throughout our community and some of the growing demands to see different initiatives, some of the additional responsibilities under devolution and working very hard with all Yukoners with our department heads to ensure that we have appropriate staff with appropriate skills in the appropriate place to provide the type of services that Yukoners are expecting to be delivered.

Mr. Fairclough: I thank the minister for that information. The minister says he does not have the rest of the informa-

tion. I asked about the number of government employees back to 2002 and I'll just wait for that information. In the briefing, the officials said that approximately 135 people, or close to that number, retire every year and then they are replaced, and that government hires an additional 100 new employees per year. The minister said there are growing demands by the public for government to provide services. What's the main driver behind having an additional 100 new employees per year that we're seeing — an increase in numbers?

Hon. Mr. Rouble: That's a question that I would encourage the member opposite to possibly ask the different departments because they know where they're seeing FTE growth better than I do. However, I would say that the Government of Yukon is being responsive to the needs of Yukoners in looking at areas that we need to increase our resources for. Just as an example, if I can highlight for the member opposite that in the Department of Education — and I don't want to dwell on it too much but it is one that I can use as an example. The Department of Education was identified by the Auditor General as needing to increase the amount of analysis on the statistical indicators. We also know from doing our research through the education reform project and engaging with our partners in education that they wanted to see a growth in First Nation programming and partnership and also increases in our curriculum development.

It is areas such as that where we look at what are the growing concerns, what are the growing demands, what are some of the new legislative requirements. We have enacted some different legislation in the last couple of years which has called for the creation of additional people or for the additional positions. As well, the work we do in a regulatory area — we need to ensure that we have the right people in the right place in order to address that. Some of the other areas of employee growth have been through the Department of Health and Social Services.

Certainly, when we expanded the number of beds at Copper Ridge, that increased a need for staff in those types of facilities. When we're looking ahead and we look at additional facilities, such as the Watson Lake or Dawson facility, we can anticipate some staffing changes there — whether they be new positions or not. We'll have to see how some of this unfolds in order to ensure they're staffed appropriately.

Again, this is about being an appropriate employer and being responsible to the taxpayer because we certainly have limited resources. I do realize that members opposite always identify additional things the government could do; however, we are limited by the resources we have.

We do see a significant number of people retiring in this last year. I believe the member used the number of 135. In order to address those issues, departments have worked very diligently putting in place succession planning programs. We're also working very hard on some mentoring programs.

I mentioned earlier the development and rotational assignments, which are to provide younger employees with the opportunity to see different areas of government, to ensure that we're not seeing — excuse me — to ensure that government employees are having a broad understanding of the variety of

different programs that governments provide, to ensure that they are best able to take on leadership functions in the future and to ensure that our departments are working very well with each other. I'm really encouraged to see employees going from different departments to create that cross-pollination, if you will, where younger employees are given a broader background so that they have a fuller appreciation of Yukoners' needs, the different delivery models that we have in place and then the different mandates of different departments.

Additionally, there are the training and development programs. I talked about some of the specific areas there, including leadership training, health and safe workplace training, information technology skills and knowledge, systems and practices, working with people in government, culture training. This is on top of what some of the different departments do. We have already heard about programs going on with the Department of Education, for example, such as working with Yukon College on the masters of education program at Yukon College, which will help to build capacity of employees there.

Also, the Minister of Justice provided an invitation to all members to attend this Friday's opening of the Northern Institute of Social Justice, which will be held at Yukon College. This is another training opportunity at Yukon College to prepare Yukoners for continued careers in the area of social justice. This will touch on things like dealing with addictions or dealing with social work issues or probation issues or, really, the whole gamut of social justice and social justice related issues and training.

We are working very closely with Yukon College for them to identify with our different departments as employers what skills are needed. They will then provide the delivery of those types of programs to ensure that staff and other Yukoners are trained and educated in these very important areas.

We do recognize that there are growing demands. We staff them appropriately. We recognize that there are changes in legislation that require us to change how we staff positions. Additionally we recognize that there is an aging of the workforce, which is causing additional people to retire. We're putting in place appropriate succession planning programs for that and additional training opportunities so that Yukon staff can be prepared for Yukon opportunities.

Mr. Fairclough: I thank the minister for the answer. It was a little longer than I thought, but the minister is actually doing a pretty job in answering in short — versus what we got from the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, for example.

The reality is that we are not going to be getting all the departments up for debate here and that's why I asked the question. I'm hoping that the minister could provide us with those where the greatest growth is — it sounds like in Health and Social Services — but if he could provide those numbers to us. There are approximately 135 retiring this year — they will be replaced and the 100 new employees — and have that information sent to us. I appreciate it and I thank the minister for his answers.

Hon. Mr. Rouble: Mr. Chair, for the member's information, there have been some significant changes since

2000, the largest of which was devolution, which saw a tremendous number of employees transfer from the federal government to the Government of Yukon, so those numbers really have to be taken in the full context of that.

Mr. Cardiff: I'll try to be brief as well. I do have a number of questions, and we probably will have — this probably, more than likely, will carry on tomorrow afternoon or in the future. The first question I have for the minister responsible for the Public Service Commission is, earlier this year, I came across a request for proposals that was put out by the Department of Community Services — but this is a personnel issue. I'm just wondering, in a general overall policy view from the Public Service Commission — the request for proposals was a value-driven request for a medical director of Yukon emergency medical services. There's a little over a page in the contract specifications of what's required of this individual.

I'm just wondering what the government's policy is in matters like this and why we're going to a request for proposals and contracting this work out, so to speak, as opposed to actually hiring somebody who is the medical director of emergency medical services.

Hon. Mr. Rouble: In a variety of different departments, occasionally they require periodic advice or intervention on programming. This is something of an ongoing nature, but it would be every couple years or maybe even a longer type of intervention of having someone come in on a very short term to provide an internal evaluation or additional advice and expertise. But it isn't part of the ongoing operations.

Mr. Cardiff: Looking at the specifications, the start date is November 2, 2009, and the end date is March 31, 2012. That is fairly long term. The primary job of this person or of this position is the capacity of a medical oversight physician. They are providing ongoing independent audits of the emergency medical services — guidelines, training, review of patient care and ensuring the processes meet the current standards. It seems like a full-time position to me. It is not something that is only going to be required for a certain period of time. It seems to me like it is an ongoing position to oversee the emergency medical services. That is the way that I am looking at it. If the minister has other information I would be happy to hear that.

Hon. Mr. Rouble: The contract that the member opposite is looking at, I believe, is one that's looking into an audit protocol. It is examining do we have the appropriate protocols in place, or how have they changed, or how have different medical standards throughout Canada or in other jurisdictions changed in order that we should refine our protocols here. It is not a management of people implementing those protocols, but instead a periodic review of the different protocols that are in place.

Additionally, this service provider might also have additional expertise to lead to additional training of our service providers, or even additional training of the manager of the different service providers. It is one of those things that the government has used over the years for a periodic inspection of the protocols that are in place.

Mr. Cardiff: Well, I can understand if that's the perception, but I guess where I have a problem with this is that it talks about attending meetings — a number of different meetings with a number of different agencies, national and territorial, travelling to emergency medical services stations throughout the territory, and it also goes so far as to ensuring that monthly medevac physicians' schedules are put in place. If they're going to be responsible for scheduling, it would seem to me that it's not something that would be only a temporary thing. I think that's something you have to do on a regular basis so that's why it's a little confusing.

Hon. Mr. Rouble: I'm trying to clarify the confusion for the member opposite. It would be part of normal duties of someone coming in to do an audit on service, to have regular meetings with different people, to find out about the information to update them on changes, to do an assessment of the protocol.

I would also expect this type of contractor to go to different communities to look at how these services are being provided throughout the territory and ensure there is a consistency.

There are a couple of other issues that the member has brought forward. I don't have the document that he is referring to. I'm trying to answer the member opposite to the best of my abilities, but this is a very specific case that I believe has come forward from Community Services as one of the contracts that they were providing. I'm trying to look at this from a larger perspective — from a Public Service Commission policy. I'm trying to explain to the member opposite that Government of Yukon follows appropriate hiring practices. We do have situations that arise that are outside of the normal course of Government of Yukon's operating procedure, where we do contract services out to others to bring in their expertise to do some of the irregular kind of functions. There are other positions that are contracted by the Government of Yukon, such as the chief medical officer of health, for example, which is a contract position.

I hope this clears up the issue for the member opposite.

Mr. Cardiff: It does provide a little more clarity. I had hoped to be able to ask the Minister of Community Services questions about this, but there wasn't unanimous consent to go back to that line for some reason. I thought this might be the opportunity to get a little more clarity around this issue. I would like to ask the minister a fairly quick question here about what the government is doing overall. We can ask questions of individual departments, I suppose, but what is the government's overall strategy for reducing workplace injuries?

Hon. Mr. Rouble: Members will recall there was a directive from Yukon Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board a number of years ago — two, I believe — and that the Government of Yukon was required to conduct a comprehensive review and update of safety management practices and procedures within the Yukon government. We are currently actively doing all that work throughout the government, working both internally and with external consultants and service providers. We are conducting a corporate health and safety plan, which will include a variety of different policy changes, practice changes, and additionally, education and training ini-

tiatives. We strongly recognize the value of having a healthy and safe workplace, and we are taking significant efforts to provide a management system that is planned, proactive and focused on the health and safety of all our employees.

There has been significant work in some of the higher risk areas, our higher risk departments, to ensure that they are taking great steps in this area, but we are looking at it.

Chair: Order please. Seeing the time, the Chair will rise and report progress.

Motion agreed to

Speaker resumes the Chair

Speaker: I will now call the House to order.

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

Chair's report

Mr. Nordick: Committee of the Whole has considered Bill No. 17, *Second Appropriation Act, 2009-10*, and directed me to report progress on it.

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

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Speaker: I declare the report carried.

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

The House adjourned at 5:31 p.m.