

Yukon Legislative Assembly
Whitehorse, Yukon
Tuesday, March 30, 2010 — 1:00 p.m.

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

Prayers

DAILY ROUTINE

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

- Are there any tributes?
- Introduction of visitors.
- Returns or documents for tabling.
- Are there any reports of committees?
- Are there any petitions?
- Any bills to be introduced?
- Any notices of motion?

NOTICES OF MOTION

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to act on the Government of Canada's investigation into pensions by developing and submitting to it a statement which supports:

- (1) expanding and increasing the CPP, OAS and GIS;
- (2) establishing a self-financing pension insurance program;
- (3) ensuring that pension funds go to the front of the line of creditors in the event of bankruptcy proceedings;
- (4) protecting the CPP from imprudent investment practices;
- (5) ceasing the practice of awarding managers performance-based bonuses;
- (6) recovering those bonuses; and
- (7) paying pension fund managers appropriate industry-competitive salaries rather than bonuses.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Yukon government to provide stable, predictable, long-term funding to non-government organizations that provide programs and services on behalf of the Yukon government in order to ensure these organizations can continue to serve the Yukon people without having to spend much of their time looking for funding, operating with below-standard salaries, and without appropriate administrative and training opportunities.

Speaker: Are there any further notices of motion?
Hearing none, is there a statement by a minister?
That then brings us to Question Period.

QUESTION PERIOD

Question re: Fiscal management

Mr. Mitchell: I'd like to return to one of the Premier's favourite topics, and that is the deficit budget he tabled last week. This was something he didn't mention in his speech

to the Chamber of Commerce or when he repeated the speech in this Legislature last Thursday. For the fiscal year ending tomorrow, this Premier has presented a budget that is in the red. There is a \$23-million deficit. Yet, day after day, he stands on his feet and tries to deny it.

This is an example of why the public no longer trusts this government and this Premier. It's printed on page S-3 of this year's main budget book and S-1 of the supplementary budget book from last year, yet the Premier refuses to admit it. The public is looking for a straightforward response from the government. It appears the Premier has learned nothing from last year's ATCO debacle. People are looking for straight answers. Was last year's budget a deficit budget — yes or no?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: I think the question is, Yukoners are looking for answers. Let me refer the Leader of the Official Opposition to a statement he made in this House yesterday, and I quote from *Hansard*: "In closing, I want to thank officials across the government for their work in preparing the documents that we're discussing today. It's one of the largest tasks of the year and we appreciate their hard work in every department, and particularly those in the Department of Finance. I am sure it's not an easy task and the government puts such pressure on officials to come up with a document that ends with the numbers that the government would like to see."

Would the member enlighten Yukoners and this House on what those numbers are in this budget?

Mr. Mitchell: Well, Mr. Speaker, the Premier conveniently ended the quote just before I said, "although they weren't happy to see the deficit from last year."

Now, Mr. Speaker, the government's credibility has taken a big hit in the last year since the ATCO scandal broke. People no longer trust the government or the Premier. Yukoners were angry when they found out the Premier was negotiating behind their backs to privatize their energy future. They were even angrier when the Premier tried to deny it was happening.

Fast-forward a few months, history is repeating itself. The Premier has broken a promise that he would not table a deficit budget and now he's trying to deny it. Last year's budget is a deficit budget; that is beyond dispute. The deficit is \$23 million. I'll file the pages from his budget speech to refresh the Premier's memory. The appropriate numbers are highlighted in yellow, although it should be red.

I'm urging the Premier to come clean on this issue. Is last year's budget a deficit budget — yes or no?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: Mr. Speaker, the member knows full well even as recently as the briefing this morning on what the actual figures are and the fiscal position of the Yukon.

The member said something here on the floor of the House that is a very thinly veiled statement in regard to Finance officials. Does the member actually think that Finance officials would compromise their professionalism and their integrity by accepting pressure from any government in putting numbers in a budget document that the government simply wants to see there? Can the member explain this? The statement was made by the Leader of the Official Opposition. It looks like the member, once again — and his caucus — are targeting public officials.

Mr. Mitchell: There's no thinly veiled threat or threat of any kind to officials. The Premier should know better and should be ashamed to make those assertions.

It's all about trust. Nobody trusts this tired government. The Premier continues to duck a very straightforward question: was last year's budget a surplus or a deficit? The answer of course is that it was a deficit, a \$23-million deficit. We understand this, Finance officials agree with this, and Yukoners are disappointed in this.

It's very disappointing to see the Premier refuse to answer such a simple question. It's also disappointing to see all the members of his Cabinet go along with him on this question. They know the budget wasn't balanced. They have had plenty of time to correct the public record, yet they have not.

Just as with the ATCO scandal, they have chosen to back the Premier. They're all in it together.

So I am going to direct my final question to the Deputy Premier; she's pretty good with numbers. It is an opportunity for her to set the record straight. Does she back the Premier's claim or does she support what is actually written in the budget book? Because last year's budget —

Speaker: Thank you.

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Speaker: Thank you. Hon. Premier.

Hon. Mr. Fentie: Mr. Speaker, obviously this side does back the budget and all within, including all the public accounts this government has tabled before this House. I believe there is seven years' worth of those, Mr. Speaker, and we can get to that later in debate. What is really at question here, Mr. Speaker, is the Leader of the Official Opposition has made a statement that implies that we budget by forcing Finance officials to put things in the budget they know should not be there. That's the statement the member has to justify before the House, officials — because these government officials, as he said, work very hard — and the Yukon public. That is the problem here. It is all about accountability, the accountability of the Leader of the Official Opposition.

Question re: Fiscal management

Mr. Mitchell: Let's go back to the same minister and the same topic. In the Yukon Party's election platform in 2006, there was a promise to voters. It said, "Promote the development of balanced budgets." The Premier has broken that promise. He has delivered a deficit budget. It's not balanced at all. The deficit is \$23 million and the Premier is in denial. I'll let him know that the producers of *Dragon's Den* are in town looking for Yukoners with good business ideas. I would encourage him to go and try out some of his lines on them. They usually don't take kindly to people promoting one thing and doing another.

I'll ask my question this way: why is the Premier so reluctant to admit the obvious — that the budget for the year ending tomorrow will not be balanced?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: Mr. Speaker, what's not balanced here is the member's statements and his position — the position he's taking on the floor of the House in relation to the professionalism and the integrity of Finance officials.

For the member's benefit, even after budget lock-up, even after a briefing this morning, the member knows full well that if the member were to take the budget in its entirety, the net financial resource position of the Yukon Territory is indeed over \$69 million in the black.

Mr. Mitchell: Well, Mr. Speaker, if the Premier tried an answer like that on *Dragon's Den* he'd be shown the door. He knows full well the deficit for last year is \$23 million. That's why he wants to talk about other numbers, net financial position, total assets, anything but the deficit. The Premier has continued to insist that his government has produced eight balanced budgets in a row. His own budget documents don't back up that claim. His own officials don't back up that claim. We've met with those officials twice in the last week. Both times the officials have confirmed that, yes, last year's books aren't balanced; there will be a deficit.

Mr. Speaker, the Premier and his colleagues got themselves into a whole pile of trouble with voters last summer over their refusal to admit the obvious. They did in fact try to privatize our energy future. The Premier denied it; the Deputy Premier denied it; the now Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources denied it, and voters didn't believe any of them. The government is still paying a price for that.

When is the Premier going to admit for the public record that last year's books do not balance?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: The officials do brief ministers on matters such as the briefings provided the opposition when it comes to the budget and the departments' specific budgets. They do brief their ministers and me. I can assure the member that what he has just stated on the floor of the House, once again, is very similar to his statements of yesterday in making those insinuations that Finance officials would actually compromise their professionalism and be forced to put numbers in a budget that they do not believe are correct.

The member keeps harping about deficit. The last deficit of the Yukon Territory was the last budget of the last and only Liberal government in this territory, some \$5.3 million in deficit. Ever since then, since the Yukon Party has taken office, the budgets at year-end, based on the public accounts — those are the accounts duly audited; those are the actual numbers — have all been in surplus. The estimates before us today will be going before the Auditor General, and we will allow the Auditor General to do her work.

The bottom line, Mr. Speaker, is today, in the Yukon, the Yukon has spent \$155 million less than it has taken in. I call that positive.

Mr. Mitchell: It's because the officials are professional that, when we ask them the straightforward question — is the *Supplementary Estimates No. 2* showing we are in a deficit position for the current year ending tomorrow — that they say yes: \$23,096,000. It just comes down to credibility with voters. The public didn't believe the Premier's denials last summer; they won't believe him now.

The MLA for Lake Laberge is sitting on this side of the House because he wouldn't go along with the Premier's version of events. The employees and four board members of the Yukon Energy Corporation didn't believe the Premier's version

of events. Some of the Premier's Cabinet colleagues probably don't believe that version of events either, and they're left to explain their decision to voters.

All members have a choice to make. Are they going to defend the Premier's statements or are they going to admit the obvious, namely that the budget for last year is in deficit? Yukoners want to know if the Premier's colleagues are willing to stand up to their boss and tell the public the facts about last year's books. Is there any member of Cabinet who is willing to stand up right now and tell the public, "Yes, the budget is a deficit." Which minister will be allowed to answer that question?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: I think, Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Official Opposition should himself take this to *Dragon's Den*, and we'll leave that to the member opposite.

The member opposite continues to talk about accountability, credibility, so on and so forth. The problem with that, Mr. Speaker, is the statements the member makes on the floor of this House. It is about credibility and the member opposite, yesterday, when he put in question the professionalism of our public servants in the Department of Finance by insinuating that they would actually accept numbers to be put into the budget that don't belong there. Mr. Speaker, the member has a lot to answer for, not only to this House, not only to the Department of Finance, but to Yukoners in general. It's high time for that member to be accountable.

Question re: Fiscal management

Mr. Cardiff: Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Premier about the numbers game as well. The Premier has made statements in this House that the Yukon government has well in excess of \$100 million in cash. Now, what the Premier didn't tell the Legislature was that a lot of that money is spoken for. It's called "liabilities".

The Premier also denied running a deficit for the fiscal year that ends tomorrow. Officials confirmed today that there is a \$23-million deficit for 2009-10, and more than likely there will be a deficit for the 2010-11 fiscal year. Now the public just doesn't know if it can trust the Premier's numbers or his reasoning, and the public is concerned about the spending practices of this government. Will the Premier confirm or deny that, in this fiscal year, there will also probably be a deficit?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: You know, isn't this ironic, Mr. Speaker? A few short months ago, right in this House, the members opposite were berating the government for not spending more money and today, their position has obviously changed dramatically. I would wish that the members opposite would actually take the time to read a budget document. And if they did, they would recognize that you have to do a number of calculations to actually construct and present the budget to the House and to the public. The estimates before us show clearly that the net financial resource position at year-end, March 31, 2010, is some \$69 million. The estimates also show, before this House, in this year's budget, that we are running, once again, a surplus. Now, the member mentioned cash on hand. Well, we have almost \$200 million cash on hand, and that's why this government can pay its way — because we've managed the finances to produce surpluses.

Mr. Cardiff: Well, sometimes it feels like there is a high-stakes game in here, and I don't know exactly which game it is, but there seems to be an awful lot of bluffing going on on that side. Now, the chips are the Yukon people's money, and the prize is an election looming on the horizon. The public has been told to finance a wish list of major capital projects that has led to deficit spending and to long-term debt.

Now, the government is gambling that the federal funds we've been receiving are going to continue to flow and that there won't be any major cost overruns and that future governments can handle the interest payments and the increasing O&M costs associated with many of these projects. But this isn't a game. This is the public's money.

Major decisions with the public's money should be sound and well planned. Will the Premier call time on this game and begin working with the people on crafting a long-term plan for major projects that Yukoners both want and can afford?

Speaker: Thank you.

Hon. Mr. Fentie: I don't know what else to say to the member of the Third Party. The budget documents are before him. The numbers as presented — the estimates speak for themselves. By the way, Mr. Speaker, now let me refer to numbers that come out of our public accounts.

The members keep talking about deficits. Well, I'm sorry that's not the case. In 2004, the surplus for the Yukon was \$11.6 million. In 2005 — and these are public accounts, duly audited — the surplus was \$5.2 million. In 2006, the surplus, duly audited in the public accounts, was \$74.9 million. In 2007 — public accounts again, actual figures: \$57.4 million. In 2008 it was over \$9 million.

Mr. Speaker, I don't know how else the government side can present it to the members opposite. Our public accounts tabled in this House each and every fall show clearly that the government has earned \$155 million more than it has spent.

How in the world does the member opposite from the Third Party come up with this deficit theme? Secondly, the member has referred to wish lists. I would caution him to start calling hospitals meeting the health care needs of Yukoners throughout the territory here at home a wish list and/or green energy investment a wish list.

Mr. Cardiff: You notice the Premier stopped short of when he was quoting all the surpluses of quoting the surplus or deficit for the fiscal year that ends tomorrow. Someone recently said that we inhabit a territory basking in jaw-dropping benevolence from the Canadian taxpayers but operating on the fiscal razor's edge just the same. Now the consequences of being on the edge could be extremely grave. The path we are being taken down could lead to cuts to programs, it could lead to job losses and it could lead to sell-off of public assets. The impacts are real and they affect real Yukon families. This is not a game.

I'm going to give the Premier some advice, and it's not going to come from me. It's going to come from the people whom I've spoken to. It is time to take a deep breath, pull the foot off the gas before rushing into this unsustainable future and re-evaluate—

Speaker: Order please. Ask the question please.

Mr. Cardiff: I am asking the question.

Speaker: Member, you have —
Mr. Cardiff: Re-evaluate the —

Speaker's statement

Speaker: Order. Order. Order. Sit down please.

The honourable members have one minute to ask questions. This is an agreement on the Standing Orders accumulated and agreed to by all of us. The honourable member has one minute. I am trying not to get involved in this conversation, but you are forcing me, sir, to get involved in this.

So I would ask the honourable member to ask his question and then sit down, please.

Mr. Cardiff: I was asking him the question.

Speaker: Order, please. We're not debating, sir. I am simply the Chair. Are you done?

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Speaker: Fine. Next question, please.

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Speaker: There wasn't a question. So I'm presuming there's no answer.

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Speaker: No, there is no question; no answer.

Question re: Lake Laberge road improvements

Mr. Cathers: I have a question for the Minister of Highways and Public Works. Last year, I asked him to include money in this year's budget to continue repaving the north Klondike Highway north from kilometre 224 where last year's project ended. I'd like to thank him for committing \$2 million for that work this year.

The minister also announced that \$1.24 million would be spent to perform bridge inspections and minor upgrades. On several occasions, I have asked Highways and Public Works to examine and report on options to improve safety to the Takhini River bridge on the north Klondike Highway, including improving the approach to the bridge, widening the bridge and adding a pedestrian walkway.

Is funding for that included in the money the minister announced or elsewhere in this budget?

Hon. Mr. Lang: Addressing the member opposite's request for the work that we're doing in his riding, certainly there is invested dollars. If in fact it passes the House, some of that work will be done in this fiscal year. I don't think the opposition wants us to spend any money in any riding, listening to the conversation of the last two days.

As we go through this budget here, it will be very clear where this government is going to invest money. Certainly, some of that budget, if in fact it passes this House, will be spent in all of our ridings to improve access and highways and other investments that Yukon has on the ground in the territory. So let's get on with the debate and if, in fact, we can pass the budget, we — ourselves — have presented a budget — a road map — on how we visualize spending the resources.

Mr. Cathers: Unfortunately, the minister didn't actually answer the question. He seemed to be responding to the questions asked by members of the opposition rather than my question. I would again ask the minister whether funding is

committed in this year's budget for the examination I asked for on the Takhini River bridge and the north Klondike Highway.

I also asked the minister about another project that I hope is included in the \$570,000 he announced for intersection upgrades on the Alaska and Klondike highways. I asked the minister to include funding in this year's budget for extending the turning lane at the intersection of the Alaska Highway and Mayo Road, or north Klondike Highway, as it's officially known. Is that money included in this year's budget?

Hon. Mr. Lang: Yes, I'd like to remind the member opposite he is in the opposition. We will be discussing the highway budget and, if that budget is approved by this House — and I'm sure there will be a lot of negativity from the opposition — we will be resourcing some of the questions the member opposite has.

In addressing this, we have to go forward with the budget, we have to pass it in this House and, at that point, if the House so passes it, we will proceed and resource the projects the Department of Highways and Public Works has put forward.

Mr. Cathers: I'm very disappointed that the minister has chosen to take this tone in responding. I began by thanking him for responding to a request for a riding project I had asked him for and gave him credit for that. I asked the minister specific questions about whether money is included in his budget for projects I listed. He did not answer any of those questions. Again, I asked for an examination of the Takhini River bridge to look at options for improving safety. I asked him about the intersection of the Mayo Road and the Alaska Highway.

I will now ask him about other intersection improvements that we had discussed. I have asked him about these in the past, including constructing turning lanes at the Deep Creek Road and Shallow Bay Road, where those two roads meet the north Klondike Highway, and improving sightlines at the intersection of Boreal Road and north Klondike Highway. Again, these are areas, in fact, that the minister has agreed in the past should be addressed at some point.

Is money for the projects I have mentioned included in this year's budget? Will the minister please answer that question?

Hon. Mr. Lang: I can reassure the member opposite there are some resources for Deep Creek and the Shallow Bay roads, the turning lanes, so that is going to be part of this budget that we're going to be debating over the next period of time. Those have been addressed in this budget.

Question re: McIntyre Creek protection

Mr. Inverarity: The Minister of Environment has repeatedly stated his commitment to the environment, so this is his opportunity to make good on his word. Yukoners are rightly confused about the future of the McIntyre Creek watershed. The government owns most of the land in question, and the government also has a responsibility to use the land to the benefit of all Yukoners. The Minister of Environment has made strong statements about protecting the environment — this environmental treasure. His voice might make a difference right now, but he is silent. Yukoners want to hear from the Minister of Environment.

Does he support protection of McIntyre Creek?

Hon. Mr. Edzerza: Mr. Speaker, as I stated quite clearly yesterday and in the past, this whole McIntyre Creek issue is not only about one government; it's about three different governments. Mr. Speaker, this government will respect and work with other governments with regard to this area.

Mr. Inverarity: Mr. Speaker, I asked the Minister of Environment last week if he supported the concept of protecting McIntyre Creek as a wildlife corridor. The minister responded by stating that he supported this concept when he was a member of the opposition, but things are different now that he's a minister. Mr. Speaker, he has changed his seats in this House, and McIntyre Creek is no longer a priority. In the past, there have been three competitive requests for this land: Yukon College endowment lands, residential development and parkland.

Which of these three does the Minister of Environment now endorse?

Hon. Mr. Edzerza: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to reconfirm the statement I made in the House yesterday: I am the only MLA who went and talked to the Kwanlin Dun First Nation with regard to this issue. I rest my case.

Mr. Inverarity: Well, Mr. Speaker, during the budget reply yesterday the minister also said this about McIntyre Creek, and I quote: I am the only one.

I would remind the minister, the member opposite, that the Minister of Environment's voice is supposed to be an important one. I remind the member opposite that he said as recently as last week that he is committed to the environment. I would also like to remind the member opposite of something he has said in the past, "Only when the last tree has been cut down, only when the last river has been poisoned, only when the last fish has been caught, only then will they find out that money cannot be eaten."

Mr. Speaker, the time has come for this minister to use his one voice to demonstrate his commitment to McIntyre Creek. When will he stand up for the protection of this area?

Hon. Mr. Edzerza: Well it just so happens, Mr. Speaker, that this minister does have respect for all people involved, unlike what is coming from the Member for Porter Creek South at this point in time where I'm getting every indication that he would be very likely to ignore all other governments and do just as one pleases; however, I will not do that. I have said before, and I'll say it again, that this government —

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Point of order

Speaker: Point of order, Leader of the Official Opposition.

Mr. Mitchell: I believe it is under Standing Order 19(g), that there was just motive impugned to what members on this side of the House would do were we to be in government. Just yesterday, Mr. Speaker, you were cautioning the very member who is speaking about us crossing that line and supporting him.

Speaker's statement

Speaker: Anybody else on the point of order?

The Chair reserves the right to read the Blues and examine the point of order, so I'll report back.

The Minister of Environment has the floor.

Hon. Mr. Edzerza: I will continue to do my job as the Minister of Environment. I will represent this government in the best possible way I can by respecting all people's opinions.

Question re: Peel watershed land use plan

Mr. Fairclough: We've asked the Environment minister repeatedly for some indication that he will stand up for the environment in the Peel. By his silence, he has told Yukoners everything about the government's position. This government has no intention of respecting the Peel planning commission's recommendations; this government has no intention of listening to the majority of Yukoners who recognize the Peel's ecological, recreational and cultural values. This government has no intention of coming right out and saying where it stands as it tries to coast into the next election.

When will the Minister of Environment level with Yukoners about what he's doing with the Peel?

Hon. Mr. Rouble: I'm pleased to respond to the questions and concerns coming from the member opposite. The Department of Energy, Mines and Resources has a responsibility to manage Yukon's natural resources and to ensure that integrated resource and land use policies are in place. We promote investment in, and responsible development of, Yukon's land, mineral, energy, forestry, agriculture and land resources. Additionally, we provide strategic leadership for natural resource planning and policy. Also, another key responsibility of the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources is to support and facilitate the implementation of the *Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Act*.

We take very seriously our role of working with land use planning councils and with the other orders of government involved in the land use planning process. A recent success story, of course, has been the Yukon's first land use policy — that for the north Yukon. I have, on several occasions already this session, provided the government's response on the go-forward plan, the *Peel Watershed Regional Land Use Plan*, and I'd be happy to provide additional information to the member opposite on this issue.

Mr. Fairclough: The public wants answers from the Minister of Environment, not a briefing note from the Energy, Mines and Resources minister. For days when he was in front of the cameras in Question Period, the Environment minister refused to make any statement on the Peel. But yesterday, away from the cameras and the opposition questions, he let the government's position slip. The minister wouldn't make any commitments about how much should be protected or what wilderness tourism values might be allowed or what cultural uses should be facilitated, but he was clear on one point. He said there are mineral claims staked in the area and they should be honoured. Committing to mining in the Peel before committing to any other use is a clear position; it is the government's position.

Why has this government already decided to ignore the Peel commission's recommended plan?

Hon. Mr. Rouble: That's a very interesting perspective coming from the Liberal Party. They also previously shared some other very interesting perspectives in some of their foregone conclusions on this issue.

I would like to remind the member opposite that the Government of Yukon, in cooperation with affected First Nations, has signed a joint letter of understanding on the Peel regional land use planning process. The parties have signed a joint letter of understanding that outlines our commitments to move forward on the extensive and challenging work needed to complete the Peel regional land use plan, to review that, and the approval process.

The parties honour and acknowledge their commitment under their respective Yukon First Nation final agreements and, as such, will continue to follow the processes outlined in chapter 11 of the final agreement. Also as outlined in chapter 11, extensive and complex work is required for the review, consultation and response process. I have tabled the go-forward plan, including the timeline and the schedules of the work that the respective orders of government are going to do. We, the governments involved, are going to do our good work on that and address the planning process as it should be.

Mr. Fairclough: Mr. Speaker, it appears that the Minister of Environment is muzzled on this issue. Now the Energy, Mines and Resources minister has tried to get the Environment minister off the hook. He has tried to minimize the Environment department's role in land use planning in the largest area ever recommended for environmental protection. Further to his argument, the Energy, Mines and Resources minister tabled a letter yesterday, a letter of understanding between the parties to the Peel plan. The letter is signed by the previous Minister of Environment. The Peel Watershed Planning Commission asked for the Environment department's input into the drafting of the plan. Now the argument that the Environment minister has nothing to say on the Peel doesn't hold water. So as Environment's advocate within government, why hasn't the minister taken his new job seriously enough to even answer the questions?

Hon. Mr. Rouble: Mr. Speaker, I will speak very emphatically for the member opposite that every member of the Yukon Party caucus is an advocate for the environment. We all have a responsibility to address this issue. I have a responsibility as Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources to address this planning and policy issue and I will continue to do so.

Also, in that process, we will continue to involve really all aspects of government from the Land Claims Implementation Secretariat, the Executive Council Office, Tourism and Culture, Community Services, Economic Development, Highways and Public Works and of course the Department of Environment. They all share important information, experience, perspective and data. We will all carefully consider the information and go forward with the plan that we have presented to this Assembly, that we have agreed upon with the other affected orders of government on how to address this issue.

Speaker: The time for Question Period has now elapsed.

Notice of opposition private members' business

Mr. McRobb: Pursuant to Standing Order 14.2(3), I would like to identify the item standing in the name of the Official Opposition to be called on Wednesday, March 31, 2010. It is Motion No. 848, standing in the name of the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin.

Mr. Cardiff: Pursuant to Standing Order 14.2(3), I would like to identify the item standing in the name of the Third Party to be called on Wednesday, March 31, 2010. It is Motion No. 992, standing in the name of the Member for Mount Lorne.

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT BILLS

Bill No. 19: Second Reading

Clerk: Second reading, Bill No. 19, standing in the name of the Hon. Mr. Fentie.

Hon. Mr. Fentie: Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 19, entitled *Interim Supply Appropriation Act, 2010-11*, be now read a second time.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Hon. Premier that Bill No. 19, entitled *Interim Supply Appropriation Act, 2010-11*, be now read a second time.

Hon. Mr. Fentie: Mr. Speaker, I will try to be as brief as possible in my remarks. I am very pleased to introduce Bill No. 19, the *Interim Supply Appropriation Act, 2010-11*. The act requests spending authority, which, in total, is not to exceed \$312,657,000. The purpose of this spending authority that's being requested is to defray the various charges and expenses of the public services of Yukon for the two-month period of April 1, 2010 through to May 31, 2010. Of this total amount, \$228,177,000 has previously been authorized by special warrant as outlined in Schedule C of the legislation.

The amount for operation and maintenance is \$208,951,000 and the amount for capital is \$103,706,000. The full details of these expenditures are included in the main estimates and will be fully discussed and debated during general and departmental debate on the 2010-11 main estimates.

So this is more of a formality than anything else. This government has continually brought forward the interim supply bills in a manner that is also backed up by special warrants to ensure that, as has happened in the past, situations or circumstances do not arise that would put the government in a position without spending authority at the end of March 31. This is the same approach, once again, by the government, as this is our eighth budget in our two-term mandate.

So I turn over the opening remarks now to the members opposite on the interim supply, and the total amounts, as provided to them are also reflected in the budget documents they have.

Mr. Mitchell: I'll be even briefer than the Premier. First of all, we will be supporting this bill, as we've always stated we would support interim supply bills. It's important that we make sure the work that's being done by all the employees of government and all the non-governmental organizations is able to proceed in a certain and organized manner, and that's what we will do to support that.

The Premier said in his opening remarks that this is merely a formality. I would like to note that it's not merely a formality, although the Premier likes to call it so. He makes it a formality by continuing to use special warrants. This is actually the Assembly providing spending authority and it's not a formality. It's how things should be done.

We are disappointed that once again the Premier chose to approve \$228,177,000 of the \$312.6 million previously by special warrant rather than bringing this in to approve it as we are here today. We've told the government repeatedly that these warrants are not necessary and that we will always accommodate a request for the annual interim supply bill in the spring. We've done just that in the past and that's why we're debating this bill today.

As far as the previous case when there was a problem, I'm pretty certain it was not the Liberal Party or the Liberal opposition that caused that issue.

It was the Yukon Party, I believe, that actually held up interim supply and caused a bit of a crisis, so they should remind people when they use that example of who did it. We will save our questions about the Premier's decision to run a deficit in 2009-10 and on all other budget items for the main debate. As I have said, the Liberal caucus will be supporting interim supply.

Mr. Cardiff: We, too, in the New Democratic caucus will be supporting the interim supply and I will try to keep my remarks brief as well. This is standard practice for this government to bring in an interim supply bill at this time of the year in order to ensure that the operations of government do continue, that non-governmental organizations continue to function, so capital projects can continue to proceed as well and keep those people in the private sector employed on those projects. There are alternatives. The Legislature could convene earlier. We could have a more thorough debate on the budget prior to the end of the fiscal year. This government has chosen not to do that, and that's their right.

I believe that it would be wiser to have a more thorough debate on the budget prior to passing this, so we know more about what the government's intentions are. We, too, will be patient; we will wait and ask our questions when we get to the main budgets for 2010-11. We'll also have questions on the 2009-10 supplementary, but we will support the interim supply.

Thank you.

Mr. Cathers: We're seeing again the annual argument about the special warrant. Mr. Speaker, this is another example of how this House doesn't work as constructively as it should. The government has a point, that in the past there was a situation and there could be in the future, where the opposition might filibuster interim supply and the government could be

caught without spending authority. That is correct. On the other hand, the opposition has a point that without matters being debated by this Assembly, a special warrant is supposed to be a last resort, not standard practice.

Mr. Speaker, there is actually a constructive solution to this. One example of this would be the fact that members some years ago put in place a clause commonly referred to as the "guillotine clause". At the end of a sitting, at a certain time on the last day, debate ends and the vote is held if the budget bill, and in fact any bills identified by the government under that clause are called for vote without further debate or delay. It's an option that exists, if there was actually a will on either side of this House to come up with a constructive solution rather than engage in the blame game and constant bickering about this matter.

The last sitting day of March could provide an opportunity where, if an interim supply bill is before this House and has not received third reading, it could be called, without further debate, for any readings which it had not passed.

Mr. Speaker, I will present the suggestion to both sides in what I fear is the vain hope that there will actually be an effort to use the Standing Committee on Rules, Elections and Privileges, adjust the House rules and, in future years, avoid the debate under this or any other government about whether or not there's a need for a special warrant. There's a way to deal with interim supply constructively if there is a desire on either side of the floor to actually do it.

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

Hon. Mr. Fentie: Let me once again extend on behalf of the government, our deepest appreciation to the members opposite for so quickly supporting interim supply, but I am compelled to provide some comments, if I may, Mr. Speaker.

Let me remind the Member for Lake Laberge that this is a constructive solution. We have just stood down on responses to the budget. All members at House leaders recognize that House leaders agreed to this process. I call that very constructive to the credit of the House leaders of this Assembly. That is why we're passing the interim supply bill as we are today.

Frankly, the special-warrant debate is moot and not needed because this is a constructive process and I think we should recognize that.

The Leader of the Official Opposition has once again made a statement that gives cause for one to ponder what the member actually meant.

The member says that they have continually committed to interim supply and that the government would not have to have a special warrant. But what is confusing about that is a number of things, Mr. Speaker. The Leader of the Official Opposition refuses to recognize a budget in its entirety and has on many occasions. It is evident that it comes down to a matter of convenience in many cases. A few short months ago, the Leader of the Official Opposition was calling on the government to spend more and more and more money. I even think the term that was used was that the government was "hoarding money". Now the

member's position is that the government is recklessly spending the financial well-being of Yukoners. These are the things that require some pondering, Mr. Speaker, because we have to understand better so that we can, in the future, not worry about special warrants if we can really accept the fact that the members opposite would support constructive approaches like this in dealing with interim supply.

The reckless spending issue is critical here, because even in the interim supply bill there is significant investment in Yukoners. Investment in public service wages — I would challenge the Leader of the Official Opposition — does the member define that as “reckless spending”?

There is a significant investment for NGOs — non-governmental organizations, front-line workers — who are out doing the good works on behalf of the Yukon public, and the government provides assistance for them to do that good work. Is the Leader of the Official Opposition suggesting that that is indeed reckless spending?

There is a tremendous amount of investment in interim supply that is related to capital projects — stimulating the Yukon economy, creating jobs for Yukoners, but, more importantly, putting infrastructure in place today that will contribute to the ongoing, long-term economic growth and well-being of the territory. Does the member — the Leader of the Official Opposition — suggest that that is reckless spending?

You see, Mr. Speaker, the problem here is that we must all be accountable for what we say. Furthermore, given yesterday's statement by the Leader of the Official Opposition, I would have hoped the member would have pointed out in the interim supply bill any of those numbers that the government “forced” the Department of Finance to put into the budget. It would have been very helpful for us to understand what the Leader of the Official Opposition actually means.

When the Leader of the Official Opposition says that they are committed always to passing an interim supply bill expeditiously and ensuring that the government can meet its spending requirements and authorities, does the member mean that? When the member says that we actually put numbers in the budget that shouldn't be there, does the member mean that, or is that just some statement of convenience?

These are the things we're trying to determine and Mr. Speaker —

Speaker's statement

Speaker: Order please. The Chair is very uncomfortable with this line, because the Premier is getting very close to intimating that the Leader of the Official Opposition is either misleading the House or is not being straightforward or honest with the House. I know that that's not the honourable member's intention, but I just wanted to give him a little warning.

The Premier has the floor.

Hon. Mr. Fentie: Mr. Speaker, I am deeply sorry if I have offended the members opposite or have implied any wrongdoing. Frankly we're just trying to understand better where the members opposite are actually coming from.

In closing, it's clear that the amount of investment — once again in this budget — that will be invested in the Yukon Terri-

tory, in Yukon people, in infrastructure, in facilities, in hydro, in education, in health care — once again the government, this Yukon Party government, with its fiscal management practices that we implemented some seven years ago — this is our eighth budget — is very pleased that we have the means to do what we're doing once again this fiscal year on behalf of the Yukon public.

This is our second billion-dollar-plus budget — a phenomenal achievement for any government in such a small jurisdiction. We have been able to build the Yukon, to progress here in the Yukon, to build our economy, to stimulate our economy, to improve our health care system, to improve our education system, to start meeting the infrastructure deficit of this territory, this government has been doing that because we have the fiscal capacity to do so.

This government is paying its way; this government now has paid its way for eight years successively. We are very pleased that the Yukon Territory today is a much better place to live than it was when we took office.

It is all about a quality of life for Yukoners and this Yukon Party government has the fiscal wherewithal, the fiscal management and prudence and, indeed, the plan and the vision to deliver on that quality of life for the Yukon Territory.

Motion for second reading of Bill No. 19 agreed to

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): I will now call Committee of the Whole to order.

Bill No. 19 — *Interim Supply Appropriation Act, 2010-11*

Chair: The matter before Committee of the Whole is Bill No. 19, *Interim Supply Appropriation Act, 2010-11*.

Hon. Mr. Fentie: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and welcome back to Committee.

Mr. Chair, I am pleased to be able to provide the Committee of the Whole with some introductory comments on Bill No. 19, *Interim Supply Appropriation Act, 2010-11*. This appropriation act will allow the public service to continue to make certain expenditures while the main estimates for 2010-11 are being considered by the Legislative Assembly during this sitting.

The interim funding requested is for the period of two months, ending May 31, 2010. The total amount for which approval is sought is \$312,657,000 and is made up of capital expenditure appropriations totalling \$103,706,000 and O&M appropriations totalling \$208,951,000.

The amounts required for this two-month period have been derived by canvassing the Yukon government departments to determine their expenditure requirements for this two-month

period, not by forcing Finance officials to put numbers in the budget, but by canvassing Yukon government departments to determine their expenditure requirements for this period. I thought I'd make that point clear for the members opposite.

The amounts are significant, largely owing to the fact that a large portion of commitments and expenditures are made during this period. I look forward to debating this interim supply appropriation bill in the Legislature and for its quick passage so that the operations of the Yukon government can continue as they should.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Mitchell: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and welcome back from this side as well.

We have already indicated in second reading speeches that we would be supporting interim supply. We noted that the only time that it was ever filibustered and not passed in a timely manner was when the Yukon Party sat in opposition and chose to do so and, since they are not sitting in opposition, I guess they won't choose to do so now.

We certainly will support it. As we have said, it is important to keep government working, to keep all of the some 4,000 employees paid to do the good work that they do. It is important that those contractors who need to work on capital projects are able to carry forward with some certainty for the next few months until the main estimates are passed. It is important that non-governmental organizations also have certainty.

We said we were disappointed when the Premier once again chose to have \$228,177,000 of this amount approved by special warrant of the Commissioner. Again, we don't believe these warrants should be necessary except in the more extraordinary situations, such as when governments change during the budget season through an election, times like that and times of emergencies.

We have again said that it's not a formality. This is a very important role of this House, to approve all spending, and that's just what we're doing here today. We will save all our questions about the Premier's resulting decision of missing the mark last year in his main estimates by some \$43 million when he tabled the main estimate with a \$20-million projected surplus for the year — annual surplus/deficit position — and is ending the year with a \$23-million deficit — surplus/deficit position — for the year. That's the number we're referring to.

Once again, for the Premier's benefit, we respect the work done by officials. We are only noting that the Premier would wish it were different and that the numbers had turned out differently, but of course the officials will provide assistance to the Premier to read the statement properly so he'll understand what the surplus/deficit position for the year-end is. Again, we'll support this interim supply bill and we can move on to the main estimates.

Thank you.

Hon. Mr. Fentie: I appreciate the member's comments. I don't agree with the member's view of how to read a budget document, but I guess that'll just be something we work out as we continue the debate. Mr. Chair, I think it is significant when you recognize that the fiscal capacity the Yukon has

today has dramatically increased from where we were seven short years ago and much is being done with that fiscal capacity to the benefit of Yukon.

Mr. Cardiff: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and welcome back as well from our caucus. I'm going to be even more brief. I made my comments during second reading. We will be asking the government questions regarding their spending priorities in the main estimates when we discuss them, and we look forward to quick passage of the interim supply.

Hon. Mr. Fentie: Mr. Chair, I want to thank the members opposite for their comments and thank them for the expeditious manner in which they've dealt with the interim supply bill.

I would move that Bill No. 19, *Interim Supply Appropriation Act* —

Chair: Before we consider the motion, is there any further debate?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: At the risk of being repetitive, I move that Bill No. 19, *Interim Supply Appropriation Act, 2010-11* be reported without amendment.

Chair: It has been moved by Mr. Fentie that Bill No. 19, *Interim Supply Appropriation Act, 2010-11*, be reported without amendment.

Motion agreed to

Hon. Ms. Taylor: I move that the Speaker do now resume the Chair.

Chair: It has been moved by Ms. Taylor that the Speaker do now resume the Chair.

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. 19, entitled *Interim Supply Appropriation Act, 2010-11*, and directed me to report it without amendment.

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.

Unanimous consent re third reading of Bill No. 19

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 14.3, I would ask for the unanimous consent of the House to proceed with third reading of Bill No. 19, entitled *Interim Supply Appropriation Act, 2010-11*, at this time.

Speaker: The Government House Leader has, pursuant to Standing Order 14.3, requested the unanimous consent of the House to proceed with third reading of Bill No. 19, entitled *Interim Supply Appropriation Act, 2010-11*, at this time. Is there unanimous consent?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT BILLS

Bill No. 19: Third Reading

Clerk: Third reading, Bill No. 19, standing in the name of the Hon. Mr. Fentie.

Hon. Mr. Fentie: I move that Bill No. 19, entitled *Interim Supply Appropriation Act, 2010-11*, be now read a third time and do pass.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Hon. Premier that Bill No. 19, entitled *Interim Supply Appropriation Act, 2010-11*, be now read a third time and do pass.

Motion for third reading of Bill No. 19 agreed to

Speaker: I declare that Bill No. 19 has passed this House.

We are now prepared to receive the Commissioner of Yukon, in her capacity as Lieutenant Governor, to grant assent to a bill which has passed this House.

Commissioner enters the Chamber, announced by the Sergeant-at-Arms

ASSENT TO BILLS

Commissioner: Please be seated.

Speaker: Madam Commissioner, the Assembly has, at its present session, passed a certain bill to which, in the name and on behalf of the Assembly, I respectfully request your assent.

Clerk: *Interim Supply Appropriation Act, 2010-11.*

Commissioner: I hereby assent to the bill as enumerated by the Clerk.

I would also like to extend a welcome to the spring sitting on behalf of the Commissioner, myself, and good luck in your deliberations. Thank you and Happy Easter.

Commissioner leaves the Chamber

Speaker: I will now call the House to order.

Pursuant to an agreement among the House leaders, the House will now recess for 10 minutes.

Recess

Speaker: I will now call the House to order.

Bill No. 20: Second Reading — *adjourned debate*

Clerk: Second reading, Bill No. 20, standing in the name of the Hon. Mr. Fentie; adjourned debate, Mr. Fairclough.

Mr. Fairclough: As I was replying to the budget as presented to the House in the budget speech, I have brought up projects that could be moved forward in my riding. I named off a few. I thank the government for including some of the projects in the budget. We definitely support that and some of the good things that are in the budget. Every budget has some of that. It is the way in which it has been put together as a package that at times we disagree on with government.

I wanted to note a few things. I have talked about each community in the riding and the issues that they've brought up.

The biggest one, the one that comes to mind the most, is the condition of our highways. I know those who travel feel it. The Member for Klondike, for example, rides that highway quite often and knows a lot of work needs to go into road improvements and our highway improvements, even looking at improved technologies into repairing some of our highways. That has been brought up to me by some contractors in the community of Mayo, to find some different materials even to fill potholes we have on our highways.

There are a lot of potholes, bumps and dips in the highway. I believe, last year, for some of the highways, the department even ran out of red flagging tape and red flags to mark these bumps. I hope we have enough this year, because I'm sure that there is going to be a record number again.

With that, I urge the government to look seriously at this. There is a lot more traffic on some of our highways with Minto mine up and running, and it has potential for a lot more.

When you go up the highway, Mr. Speaker, people in the communities of Keno, Elsa and Mayo always talk about the conditions of the Silver Trail right to the community of Keno. They have always been asking for more maintenance, so I ask the government again to look at ensuring this does happen and not have a road deteriorate in such a manner as it is. There is a lot of activity, like I said, taking place in my riding, particularly with mining. There is so much going on right now and a lot of the local people are noticing it and are involved. Businesses are counting on it. I ask the government to once again look at how it can best support this by listening to community people, for example, and making improvements particularly to our secondary roads. Some of those have been taken care of or have been addressed in certain fashion so far.

There are some big issues right now — big projects going on. The extension of the transmission line from Pelly to Stewart Crossing and the project of Mayo B. A lot of discussion is taking place among community members about these projects. I urge government to listen carefully to community concerns about it because some of them are serious. They need reassurance from government, they need government expertise, and they need the Environment minister's ear and voice on this matter.

I would like to address one issue that has come to my attention, and I hope the Minister of Community Services takes note of this because this is important. It is in the community of Keno and it's regarding their water delivery that is funded through the community and contracted out. This contract was some \$30,000 last year and has been reduced. The amount of work and hours put into actually taking care of the facility, the trucks, and delivering water is much higher than even the \$30,000 that is identified for it.

So it is an issue right now because there is a reduction in dollars. I ask the minister to perhaps look at this carefully and to ensure that this does not happen and look at finding ways of paying what is equivalent to Yukon government wages to the person who ends up with this contract.

I want to bring people's attention back again. There is so much that I could be talking about in the riding itself. It's a

very busy riding right now and it's going to require a lot of government attention.

I just want to move into an area that we had debate on in Question Period. It is the lack of voice and mention of the Peel in the budget speech. I know the Minister of Environment has spoken with regard to the budget and has brought up some of the government positions and his view when it was his turn to respond.

I would like the Environment minister to answer questions in the Legislature when called upon and be accountable because right now the general public is looking for that from government and they are really not seeing it. Right now, it is the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources — the minister involved — who has, it appears, taken over this portfolio on this specific issue. The public is quite concerned that this government is just not accountable to the people's interest in this particular matter.

I want to remind the public again and this government about how they go about being accountable to the general public, because one of the very first things they did — actually, it's the very first thing that the government did in this House regarding bills presented to the House — was repeal the *Government Accountability Act* — take it off, kill it. It is no longer. That was the first business of the day. That in itself spells a lot about where this Yukon Party is going and how they are accountable to the general public.

When we ask questions in the House related to the budget, in the interest of the general public on really important matters, such as the Peel, we expect the minister, who is the voice and advocate for the environment for the government caucus and the government side, to say something in regard to this — say something, speak up and be accountable.

I know, when on this side of the House, that minister as a private member had lots to say, and I would like for him to carry the principles he had on this side of the House with him to the government side and to use them in the best interests of the general public. That's what we want to see and that is what the public wants to see.

Unfortunately, we are not seeing that in this Legislature. This has not happened just in this sitting and not just the last sitting, but for quite some time now. It has to change. If it doesn't, then it does not look good for how governments, any parties, conduct themselves in this House, and it does not look good on behalf of the Yukon Party in their final term in this Legislature.

I know that it is a tough issue; it's a tough one for the Environment minister to come out and say something, take a position or make a comment on it, and it must be even tougher to have to listen to another minister speak on behalf of the government, or even on behalf of the Minister of Environment on this issue. If the Yukon government really had listened and is listening to the general public on this, perhaps that would not be the case. That's some advice to the members opposite. Whether they listened to members on this side of the House is another thing. We will see in the days to come. I think there is some hard thinking for the government to do in the next little while with regard to this issue. We understand land claims

agreements; we understand processes, but we also understand the responsibilities of each of the ministers' portfolios.

I did talk a little bit about the fact that government has talked a lot about increasing the number of dollars that we have annually here and part of it, of course, was due to the devolution transfer agreement. I did note that the Premier, the Finance minister, did make mention of working closely with Yukon First Nations, and what has resulted is forming budgets and the good working relationships that they say they have with First Nations. But when you go to these communities and talk with the First Nations, that is simply not the case. We have a huge court case, Mr. Speaker, that is going to come to a finalization quite soon; I believe it's in May. That is a long, drawn out battle that was between governments, between the First Nations and this Yukon Party government, and it was intentional. It was not by any accident. The First Nations believe in what their final agreements say. They are consistent and they have the same people working who worked to negotiate these agreements. Some of them are there to implement them, and governments come and go and that becomes a problem because often the wording in the agreements are a matter of semantics between the two governments.

I know my time is up for the response to the budget. Once again, I would like to thank the officials for providing the briefing. They have clarified a lot of things for us and I thank all for listening to what I have to say in regard to the budget.

Mr. Nordick: Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to represent my riding the Klondike. It is a true honour to speak as a rural member and ensure that our voice, the voice of rural Yukon, is heard.

Mr. Speaker, this Yukon Party government understands the needs of communities like Dawson City and supports them 100 percent. Mr. Speaker, I support this budget — this \$1,075,402,000 budget that supports rural Yukon and Whitehorse equally. I will focus my comments today on how this budget affects my riding.

In regard to health care for Yukoners, this government, in partnership with the Yukon Hospital Corporation, is building acute care facilities — hospitals that is — in Watson Lake and Dawson City. This proves our support for Yukon's rural communities. Our government supports rural Yukon, unlike the Liberal opposition, as they stated during Oral Question Period that building hospitals in Watson Lake and Dawson City was “reckless spending”. The Yukon Liberal party is a Whitehorse-focused party. They believe that rural Yukoners do not deserve health care facilities in their communities and that my constituents should be expected to travel to get the same level of care as Whitehorse residents. To me, this attitude is unacceptable. Not only are the Liberals opposed, the Yukon NDP on March 29, 2010, stated that, “building hospitals in Dawson City and Watson Lake is not a sane direction.”

Mr. Speaker, one opposition party says it's “reckless spending” to build hospitals in my community, and the other opposition party says it's not a “sane direction” to go. How can the opposition parties defend their statements?

I support my community and take issue with opposition plans not to support the growth of my community. In this budget, there is over \$2 million for teleradiology to provide computed radiology in 13 community health centres, improving health care facilities for all Yukoners, and \$120,000 for telehealth, expanding telehealth video conferencing equipment into First Nation offices, supporting all of Yukon.

McDonald Lodge replacement is in our three-year capital plan. Once the hospital construction is complete, the old health centre and medical clinic will be removed and the second phase will start — the second phase being the replacement of McDonald Lodge. These two buildings will share services to reduce costs, with kitchen facilities being one example.

This government is continuing its support for the School of Visual Arts and the Dawson City Arts Society with over \$800,000 a year in funding for O&M.

Mr. Speaker, we are expanding Yukon College by building a \$2.6-million expansion on to the existing SOVA building.

Yukon College offers certificates, diplomas and degrees through five academic areas, including school of arts, school of science and trades and technology, school of health, education and human services, school of liberal arts and the school of management, tourism and hospitality.

The college also provides the first two years of university transfer and is a respected member of the British Columbia Council on Admissions and Transfer. This broad range of programming allows Yukoners to stay in the north while pursuing post-secondary studies. It also accommodates contract training demands by local industry and government in a range of specialties.

Last fall, we unofficially opened the Tombstone visitor centre, which took place shortly after we signed the Tombstone management plan. This spring, we will officially open the centre. If you have not travelled up the Dempster recently, I would encourage you to do so and see for yourself the beautiful building that helps showcase the area to all who travel up and down the highway.

There is \$750,000 for Destination: Yukon cooperative marketing campaign, designed to increase awareness of the Yukon as a travel destination from our key markets of Vancouver, Calgary, Edmonton and Toronto and attract more Canadian visitors to the Yukon. Mr. Speaker, there is also \$700,000 for the tourism cooperative marketing fund.

One may ask, what is needed for communities to succeed? I believe it is quality health care facilities, quality education facilities, quality infrastructure. Also, one of the most important aspects for the Yukon and our communities to succeed is a strong and diverse private sector economy. One of our key election platform commitments was to continue to utilize government budgets and policies to stimulate the private sector economy and promote the development of a balanced budget for the future. That commitment is ongoing.

Capital spending in the Yukon for the 2010-11 fiscal year will be over \$600 million when the capital projects of the private sector and other governments and agencies are included. This budget has an increase of \$808,000 in the comprehensive

municipal grant and a \$121,000 increase for community operations in unincorporated communities.

This government supports the City of Dawson. We have allocated almost \$17 million in 2010-11 and \$9 million in 2011-12 for Dawson's waste-water treatment facility.

Not only are we helping the City of Dawson with their long-term problem — court-ordered I might say — we are allocating approximately \$4.5 million for a district biomass heating system connected to the new waste-water treatment plant. This will be a potential revenue stream for the City of Dawson. The plan for this system will be to heat the waste-water treatment plant and the City of Dawson's water supply and could be used to heat other large buildings like the Korbo Apartments replacement, the swimming pool, the new hospital, and the list could go on. Not only is it a potential revenue stream for the City of Dawson, Mr. Speaker, it has the potential to create more jobs for my community.

Mr. Speaker, also in this budget is another million-dollar allocation to the City of Dawson for the Art and Margaret Fry arena. Mr. Speaker, we are all aware that the former mayor and council requested \$4 million to upgrade the current arena. I communicated on December 14, 2009, to the new mayor and council — I will read a quote from the letter: "I am writing today to determine if the new Dawson City Council is of the same view as previous council in relation to the Art and Margaret Fry Recreation Centre. Should the new Dawson Council wish to change the City of Dawson's position and request a new recreation complex, in keeping with my personal view, I would recommend that the new facility be a joint venture involving the City of Dawson, the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in government and the Government of Yukon. I stand by ready to assist the Dawson City Council in this regard in any way I can."

Mr. Speaker, I am committed to help ensure future generations have a quality facility to use in the future. We need viable economical infrastructure in communities to ensure the long-term success of these communities. I know the citizens of Dawson and the Klondike will appreciate the investment this government made last fall in upgrading and paving Front Street. This was a commitment of mine that this government fulfilled. There is some minor work that needs to be completed this spring.

Economic development comes when industry leads. This government provides the tools and the environment for investments to take place in the Yukon, like the investments in the White Gold property in my area. There is \$1.8-million second-year funding for the Yukon mining incentive program. There is \$4.8 million for improvements to Yukon airports. This is on top of the upgrades we completed last fall in Dawson City and Old Crow. Those upgrades make it possible for Air North to supply jet service to Dawson City and Old Crow.

Mr. Speaker, this government is upgrading the Mayo B hydro facility. This will decrease our dependence on diesel fuel, resulting in significant savings in fuel each year. Yukon Energy has projected a savings of \$20 million per year in fuel costs starting in the year 2012. This government is replacing the old Korbo Apartments in Dawson City with a new 20-unit building. The tender is closing tomorrow, March 31 of this

year. As well, \$2.682 million is allocated for the replacement of obsolete trailer units in Carmacks, Ross River and Dawson City.

Mr. Speaker, I have kept my comments quite short on this budget speech. I can speak all day on it, but I wanted to focus just on rural Yukon and my riding specifically.

Mr. Speaker, in conclusion, the Yukon government supports my community. We support it by increasing health care services, by building a hospital and the McDonald Lodge replacement, by increasing education services, building the School of Visual Arts and a new Yukon College expansion, by building Dawson City's waste-water treatment and a district biomass heating system, by building a beautiful Tombstone visitors centre showcasing it to the world, by expanding Dawson City's airport for jet service, by replacing the old 13-unit Korbo Apartments with a new 20-unit building, by upgrading Front Street, by increasing the municipal grant transfers to communities, by supporting many of the organizations through the CDF — like \$400,000 to the Klondike Visitors Association for repairs to Diamond Tooth Gertie's, \$75,000 to the Dawson Firefighters Association to build a cold-weather storage facility for their museum and \$149,000 to the Klondyke Centennial Society to build walking trails around the Discovery claim. This list goes on and on.

I will continue to represent the Klondike and ensure that rural Yukon's voice is heard.

Mr. McRobb: Once again it's a pleasure to rise in response to a main budget. I would like to start by just responding to some comments I heard stated by the Member for Klondike, who alleged the Liberal Party didn't support communities in the territory. I know that is an issue that's a matter that simply cannot be supported by the evidence. Within our party are three rural MLAs and we ensure our party is highly supportive of Yukon communities.

Now, if you look at the rationale the Member for Klondike used to jump to that conclusion, it was based on some critique the Liberal Party has levied toward the government in the past involving the Dawson City hospital project. Mr. Speaker, I have been here since the project was first announced, I believe way back in March 2003, jointly between a former Yukon Party Health minister and the federal government. The project at that time was estimated to cost \$5.2 million. Originally our questions focused on the estimated cost of that facility because we wondered actually what type of facility could be purchased for only \$5.2 million. Consequently, we were unable to get a response from the Yukon Party government about the final cost of the project no matter how many times the question was asked.

This in itself broke a precedent in this Assembly, the primary purpose of which should be for opposition members to hold the government of the day fully accountable to the public. I don't ever recall previously where a government has refused to provide an estimated cost for a project, but it happened under this Yukon Party rule. That was an original bone of contention.

As the project proceeded through the planning stages, it then became apparent that the former Yukon Party Health and

Social Services minister was micromanaging the project and was even reported to be choosing the drapes and carpets for the building. Of course that caused us concern, and again the questions were not answered.

Then we moved on to a discussion about what type of facility would be built there and again the Yukon Party government did not respond to these questions. Another issue that arose was about the location of the proposed facility. A petition from residents of Dawson City was tabled in this Legislature with respect to this very issue, yet the government side rejected that petition from the residents of Dawson City.

The government's answer was, "It's our way or no way at all." It was also reported that if Dawsonites didn't go along with the Yukon Party location, they would lose the project and it would go to another community. So I say, shame on this government and particularly this member for using — I'll be careful with my words, Mr. Speaker — given his conclusion the Liberal Party doesn't support communities, because we've asked questions about the Dawson City hospital. Well, Mr. Speaker, the record can speak for itself.

Now, there are lots of issues to cover on a general front and in my critic areas of Economic Development, Energy, Mines and Resources, Yukon Housing Corporation — recently the subject of an Auditor General's review — and of course, the Yukon Energy Corporation/Yukon Development Corporation, which has been in the news quite a bit since the Premier's secret parallel negotiating process was discovered last June.

But I would like to start with some riding issues that I want to get on the record, so as to avoid any confusion about some of the government's expenditures in the Kluane region.

Now, again, Mr. Speaker, in review of this budget it is quite apparent the Yukon Party has again largely ignored the people in communities in the Kluane region. There is very little in the way of Yukon government-funded projects other than a contribution toward the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations cultural centre in Haines Junction. Now that particular project, Mr. Speaker, is mostly funded by the federal government and the First Nation itself. But there is nothing in this budget for a new fire hall, badly needed in Beaver Creek — and the Yukon Party was aware of this last fall during the budget planning process and previously.

There is nothing in this budget for the repairs to the community hall in Beaver Creek, which is in danger of a roof collapse. There is nothing in this budget for a new school in Burwash Landing, Mr. Speaker, even though one of the Yukon Party ministers promised people in that community there would be a new school a few years ago.

There is nothing in this budget for new land development in Destruction Bay. Again, this government is aware of the need for lot development in Destruction Bay and, in fact, there are people who are going to be forced to move from the community simply because they have no place to build a home.

There is nothing in this budget to implement the Haines Junction regional economic development plan. Mr. Speaker, this Yukon Party government raised hopes of people in the Haines Junction area when it gave approval for a planning exercise with respect to the future economic development of the

region. Now, there was some cynicism at the time where people hoped this wasn't merely another report, another involving process that would end up collecting dust on the shelf. In fact, that's what has happened. This report has collected dust for the past three years, Mr. Speaker. Nothing in the report has been implemented. I've asked the ministers some questions and essentially got no response.

People have wised up to governments over the years. They are very cynical when governments announce planning exercises that lead nowhere. People value their time more than simply being pawns in a government process leading to a report that goes nowhere. Yet it seems this regional economic development plan was another such exercise.

There is no money in this budget for a community well in Mendenhall, even though this government knows the water in the existing well is contaminated by uranium.

Many of the projects I've just identified are critical in terms of the health and well-being of our rural citizens. Without these projects, people are put at risk and, without these projects, it's a deterrent to even living in some of these rural communities.

It also compromises the future of these citizens to do without these badly needed projects.

We hear lots of platitude-type announcements from the government about how it's addressing the needs of rural Yukoners, of local economies, the health and well-being of its citizens but, when the rubber hits the road in terms of funding for badly needed projects such as the ones I've identified, what's in the budget? Zero. A billion-dollar budget yet zero dollars for these projects. Is this a one-time occurrence? No, it's not. This occurred last year as well — zero dollars for these projects. These are not new projects; many of them have been known for a few years now.

The government might try again to point to highway improvement projects in the Kluane region as some substance to legitimize that it is, in fact, spending taxpayer dollars in the Kluane riding. Well, let's hear the flip side of that argument.

Those monies are paid for by the United States taxpayers. They are not funds from the Yukon government. Let's make that clear. It's U.S. dollars that must be spent on that section of highway and, over the past three decades, the total amount spent is approximately half a billion dollars. It's winding down quite a bit now. I believe this year's budget includes some funds for paving, but essentially the reconstruction and bridge work is already done.

The government might try again to point to the Haines Junction seniors facility as an example of how it has spent money in the Kluane riding, but again, Mr. Speaker, that too was paid for by another entity. In fact, it was the federal government and it wasn't even the Harper government. It was the Paul Martin Liberal government that allocated the funds for that new facility in Haines Junction, but who takes the credit? The Yukon Party, of course.

Now, the government might again try to point to another project to legitimize it spending a fair amount in the Kluane riding. For the past three or four budgets now we've heard members in their budget speeches mention the elders/youth

facility in Burwash Landing. Well, Mr. Speaker, that is quite a project. Has it been built yet? No. As a matter of fact, the last time I was at the site, construction had yet to even begin on that project, yet it has been announced for four consecutive years. This, Mr. Speaker, should have been built the first year it was announced. But it was not; it just keeps getting re-announced.

There is another issue associated with that particular building. The First Nation itself has requested some flexibility to, instead of proceeding with that particular building, put up a small school instead. But this Yukon Party government has denied them that request and has insisted it remain the identified facility. So, Mr. Speaker, the children from the community must commute daily in a school bus on the Alaska Highway throughout all-season weather conditions because this government was unwilling to relent on the project description designated for that community.

The government might try to point to the pavement project done within Haines Junction last year as evidence it has spent money in the Kluane riding. Let's examine that project for a minute. Who paid for it? The Yukon government? No. Once again it was United States taxpayers. It's part of the Shakwak project. Furthermore, the pavement didn't even extend all the way out of town. It stopped halfway through town. This raised the question among the local citizenry of why the Yukon government stopped the project halfway through town and didn't continue it to the municipal limits.

The answer is simple: the Yukon government refused to provide any Yukon government money toward this project to top it up so it would extend to the edge of town.

Even though the crews and the equipment were all on site and prepared to do the rest of the paving, this Yukon Party government said no and refused to spend one dollar to extend that U.S.-funded paving project. I say, "Shame on this government." I've made all types of requests for funding for projects in rural communities within my riding and other ridings to this government in the past, but virtually each time a request is made, Mr. Speaker, this Yukon Party government has denied each request.

Then what happens at election time? Well, I'll tell you, Mr. Speaker. The government then goes to the voters in the region and puts the question to them, "What has your MLA done for you?" Well, it's the old game. Don't spend in an opposition member's riding and then try to shoulder that member with the blame for getting nothing done in the riding. I don't believe in the use of such despicable politics. I think we should all rise above those transparent schemes and try to do what is right for people in all ridings, not just ridings held by the government of the day.

You know, we've heard a lot of debate so far in this sitting about going into debt. We on the opposition side have asked several questions about what empowered the Premier and his colleagues to put the territory in such massive debt for years. And on the other side, we get the normal rhetorical response about which projects the opposition would cut out of that. Well, that is a very similar type of political game, Mr. Speaker.

You know, a few years ago this government consulted people on how to spend some money that was granted to the

Yukon from the federal government and some good ideas were generated. But did the Yukon Party ask the people of the territory even once if they would support the government putting them into debt for years before doing it? Mr. Speaker, the answer is no. It was a unilateral decision made from the corner office.

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Point of order

Speaker: On a point of order, the Hon. Government House Leader.

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, pursuant to 19(g), the member opposite appears to be imputing false or unavowed motives to members opposite — the government. The member opposite knows full well that what he has just stated on the floor of the Legislature is not, in fact, accurate. I would ask that the member opposite withdraw his statement.

Mr. McRobb: On the point of order, the member opposite is suggesting that I'm stating an untruth. I believe that, in itself, is out of order. I firmly have the conviction that everything I've said is truthful, and it's just a dispute between members, unless she's called out of order for suggesting that I'm not speaking the truth.

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Speaker: You can talk to the point of order.

Hon. Ms. Horne: Yes.

Speaker: Yes, please do.

Hon. Ms. Horne: I am in a corner office, and I do not direct the government on where to spend their money.

Speaker's statement

Speaker: From the Chair's perspective, members are going to have to indulge me to review the point of order raised by the member, and I will report back to the House. Thank you.

Mr. McRobb: I realize I only have about a minute left, and I was getting a little worked up there. Oh, I have 40 minutes. Okay. Well, we have lots of time left.

Maybe someone could remind me where I left off. Anyway, it was about the debt, and the bottom line is the government did not ask the people of the territory for a mandate to put them in debt and go on a spending spree and, likewise, it did not ask the people of the territory which projects it should buy in that spending spree. It kind of mocks the old public consultation process with the question: which items should the government of the day consult the citizenry on? Of course I think a legitimate response to that question is "matters of importance to the people".

This government has consulted on several matters of little importance, but has chosen to not consult on matters of significant importance and I would suggest that putting the territory into massive debt for years is a matter of significant importance.

Let's put it in terms of the family — you know, into a context the average person can understand.

Let's take a married couple. If one spouse takes a credit card and goes on a big spending spree without asking the other

spouse, is that right? Or decides to purchase a number of items that the other spouse is unaware of, is that right? No, it's not. In these terms, within our system, the government did exactly that. I would have suggested that a motion discussion on a Wednesday would have been entirely in order, asking all members of this Assembly the two essential question. Should the government put Yukoners in debt for years? And the second question: to what extent and what should be purchased? Well, Mr. Speaker, wouldn't that have been an interesting motion day? Did it happen? No, of course not, because it was a matter of significant importance to Yukoners and the Yukon Party didn't want to open the can of worms. The Yukon Party decided to make the decision, write up the budget and do it — just come out with a message box and hopefully the whole thing will blow over.

Well, Mr. Speaker, you know several times in the past we've talked about how even though a government is sometimes good at the beginning, it almost seems inevitable the power will go to the government's head and arrogance sets in. I think those are symptoms of what has happened here. I would suggest members on the government side need to realize there are other members elected by the Yukon citizenry to represent them in this Assembly. To exclude them from debate on such an important matter is disrespectful to this institution. It's also disrespectful to Yukoners, just like announcing the budget outside of this House was.

Mr. Speaker, lots of questions — very good questions — could have been raised about the issues, about the projects that have been identified to put the territory into massive debt for several years.

I dispute the cost savings mentioned by the Member for Klondike with respect to Mayo B and I'll fact check that later today, but it seems very unreasonable to save \$20 million a year on diesel from a five megawatt addition — very unreasonable. I do have the formula to crunch those numbers myself, so I will be doing that.

Now, on the general picture, of course the main concern expressed by ourselves in the Official Opposition and the Third Party so far in this sitting has been the simple matter that the Yukon Party is spending more money than it's bringing in. The government has overspent throughout the year — the current fiscal year — which ends tomorrow and has left Yukoners with a \$23-million deficit. That equates to \$43 million overall in unplanned spending in the past year, below what was forecast.

This year the Finance minister is projecting a surplus of \$2.9 million in the main estimates, but the government cannot stay on budget, and we should prepare ourselves for this surplus to turn into another large deficit by this time next year. The budget estimates simply cannot be trusted. The estimates are not realistic. For example, the Health and Social Services department is projected to cost only the same amount this year as last year, and we're all aware of the projected trend within the Health and Social Services department. The trajectory has not been wrestled down, despite those assurances by this Yukon Party government. The trajectory is still increasing, despite the Yukon Party government's budget.

Does this government expect that merely repeating last year's number will wrestle down the trajectory? What does it think is going to happen when medevac flights next December, January, February and March have to be cancelled because there is nothing in the budget? Would that happen? Of course it won't happen, Mr. Speaker.

The funds will have to be appropriated through a supplementary budget. What does this mean? Well, it blows the government's forecast out the window. That's what it means. There will be a second consecutive year of a deficit budget.

Now, after three Question Periods, it is obvious the Premier is still in denial about the deficit spending and the government debt and all of his colleagues within the Yukon Party are all in agreement with him. This really raises a lot of concern for us in the opposition who are charged with the responsibility of holding this government accountable. I am sure it raises a lot of concern with Yukoners who are paying attention to their financial future with respect to government spending.

It is already identified in the budget that health care user fees are coming. Is this some form of hidden tax? The government hasn't explained that. We've heard from a few ministers already in their budget speeches. Has any one of them explained what these health care user fees are? Not one, Mr. Speaker.

How about we hear some substance in the budget reply speeches about what some of these numbers mean or what some of these lines mean, rather than accusing the opposition of not caring about communities because we asked about a certain project?

The government has also demonstrated on several fronts poor financial management, especially with respect to project overruns. One of the more notorious project overruns is the Watson Lake care facility. Mr. Speaker, this too was announced in March 2003 jointly with the Dawson project for an amount of \$5.2 million. What is the final cost of this going to be?

You know, the same thing is happening. The Yukon Party so far has refused to declare a total projected estimated cost for this project. Is that being accountable to the public? Certainly not. We've asked several times over the years: what does the government expect the total estimated cost for the Watson Lake facility to be?

Now, with respect to the Premier's secret parallel negotiating process regarding his attempts to privatize Yukon's energy future and sell to a private company based in Alberta, well, this is still a live issue. We heard one version from the former chair and other board members who resigned — in doing the right thing — to alert Yukoners to what was happening behind the scenes. We heard a different version from the Premier and some of his colleagues. Then we heard a third version from his former Energy, Mines and Resources minister, when he resigned last fall, and that version echoed the first version Yukoners heard. So I think we know what most people believe, in terms of which version.

In response to the public outrage, we in the Official Opposition brought forward a bill that would protect Yukon's ownership of its energy corporation. Well, how did the Yukon Party

government react to that private member's bill? Well, one word commonly used describes it all: hijacked. That bill was hijacked, it was punted out of Committee and nobody has heard a word about it ever since. The government said it would work on it. Well, I haven't heard one word about that bill, the *Yukon Energy Corporation Protection Act* — nothing. It was swept under the carpet along with everything else.

There has never been an investigation into what happened. The government has refused. A lot of questions remain unanswered, but I give the Yukon public more credit than this government gives them. I believe they will remember. They will remember and they won't forget throughout the next election and I personally believe last week's DataPath poll proves that Yukoners are smart enough to remember and they won't forget what happened.

They won't forget that it happened without their knowledge and that if it wasn't for the courageousness of four individuals who resigned as a matter of principle and a further minister who resigned as a matter of principle, they wouldn't have known until it was too late.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I think judgement day for the Yukon Party is coming whenever the next election is held. Like a lot of Yukoners, I believe it should be held sooner rather than later. Already, we're at the three and a half year mark — that's equivalent to the total term of the Piers McDonald government from 1996 to 2000. It is a full year longer than the successive government, the Pat Duncan Liberal government.

I see the Education minister is snickering at that. Well, these are the facts. The government shouldn't just assume it will get re-elected a third time because, Mr. Speaker, I believe Yukoners are fully aware now of the character of this government. The bottom line is that this government simply cannot be trusted. It will say one thing, yet do another.

People have wised up; they simply don't trust what they're told by this government.

By the way, I referred to that recent poll. Bad governance was tied as the top issue with two other matters and it's no wonder. I shouldn't have to explain why that issue popped to the top, because it's quite evident why. When people lose trust in the government, then good governance becomes a big issue to the voting public.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I have mentioned my critic portfolios. Unfortunately, time is winding down and I won't have time to go into the level of detail I originally hoped. There are several issues of a general nature that I could get into, but they are just simply too lengthy within the couple of minutes I have left.

There is a lot to talk about. Fortunately, there is lots of time left in this sitting.

We still don't know yet how many days this sitting will be, but we're in here for another eight weeks, anyway. So I'm sure there will be an opportunity to express views on matters as they come forward. In all benevolence, I look forward to the expressions of each and every other member of this Assembly, regardless of political stripe. I can assure members that no matter which person is speaking, I will give full consideration to what I hear and treat members with the respect they deserve and not merely close the door on them because they belong to another

party. I don't believe that's fair and, quite honestly, it's not something the voters want their representative to do.

They do want us to work together as best we can for their benefit and the maximum benefit of the territory. That's what I'm here to do, and I'm sure, in all degrees of professionalism, the government-side members recognize that because I sit in the opposition benches, my primary role is to hold them accountable.

When there is a hard question that needs to be asked, I am all in favour of asking that question. If it rattles some members or insults them or whatever, well, Mr. Speaker, that is too bad; get a thicker skin, I guess. I know I have after nearly 14 years. So it is all part of what happens in here. When we break on the final day, I still hope we can all shake hands together.

Hon. Ms. Horne: In 2006, we campaigned on a commitment to provide Yukoners with a clear vision for a bright future. We committed to help Yukoners achieve a better quality of life. We committed to protect and manage Yukon's environment. We committed to continue to grow and build our economy. We committed to practise good governance. We committed and we delivered.

This budget before us is only one more example of our government delivering on our commitments. I would like to reiterate that over the past seven years this government has taken in \$150 million more than we have spent.

Our accumulated surplus at the end of this year is \$524,151. Our net financial resources at year-end are \$69,430,000 and these are in the black. This is not a deficit. Is this reckless spending? I say it is shrewd management in taking care of Yukon now and into the future.

In my comments today, I want to focus on four main areas. The first is what this budget means for my riding specifically. The second area covers what we are doing with respect to the Department of Justice. The third addresses our work in the Women's Directorate. The fourth area is what this budget means for all of Yukon.

Mr. Speaker, in this budget is \$2,019,000 for teleradiology to provide computed radiology in 13 community health centres.

As a member representing a rural riding, I am so pleased with the progress that our government is making and getting more services for Yukoners living outside of Whitehorse. On a related note, this budget has \$120,000 to expand telehealth video conferencing equipment into First Nation offices.

One of the concerns I had as an MLA that I have heard from my constituents is that there is a need for a crisis line for people with substance abuse issues. In this budget is \$38,000 to provide a 24-hour crisis information line through the alcohol and drug information referral service that offers the public access to addictions support workers at all times.

As an MLA who represents two incorporated municipalities in Faro and Teslin, as well as the unincorporated community of Ross River, I am profoundly interested in our support for municipal and local governments. In this budget is \$808,000 for an increase to the comprehensive municipal grant. As well, there is a \$121,000 increase for community operations in unincorporated communities. I hope when we get to Com-

mittee of the Whole discussion that my colleague, the Minister of Community Services, will have an opportunity to share with this Assembly the tremendous support our government has provided to municipalities since we took office.

If you look at the commitments I made during the campaign of 2006, you will see that I pledged to continue to ensure that seniors and elders are able to remain in their homes as long as possible by increasing home care and other services. In this budget is \$527,000 to enhance and support the Yukon home care program to provide services to all Yukoners, but particularly for those who require home care outside of Whitehorse.

We are doing more to keep seniors in their home communities. For example, in Faro we have \$250,000 in this year's budget of a \$1-million investment to build housing for seniors. This is part of a \$3.25-million investment in Faro, Teslin and Watson Lake.

I am delighted to see that work is well underway on this project. I understand that the building is closed to weather, the walls are insulated and the roof shingled. I understand that this year's budget is to complete the six-unit seniors housing project in Faro. This budget, for example, includes \$1.5 million for seniors housing in Teslin. Work is progressing on the new housing units for elders and seniors. The foundation work was completed in October. Lower-level framing and main-floor construction was completed in November.

As a frequent traveller of our highways, I am keenly interested to see what we invest in our highways. In this year's budget is another \$15.25 million as part of a three-year program. I appreciate the work of the highways department in closing the 36-kilometre gap in the chipseal between Carmacks and Faro.

Excuse me — I'm just getting over a flu.

I appreciate the Highways department for closing this chipseal gap. I know many of my constituents also travel that road and are delighted to see this issue being addressed. We committed and we are delivering. During the 2006 campaign, my priorities were to consult with elders and seniors in the communities, to keep them in their home community as long as possible.

We have had so many people who have lived in the communities that I represent. In thinking of seniors who have made major investments in their communities, I think of Orville and Marge Smith of Teslin. Orville was our major in Teslin and operated a heavy equipment company for many years. He passed his knowledge on to his sons who are now carrying on the torch for him. Orville and Marge were missed in the community. They had to move into Whitehorse because of medical reasons. They were sorely missed. Orville just recently passed away and he will be a terrible loss for the community.

We have had many influential forerunners in my riding of Teslin: Jim Fox, Jake Jackson, Bosun Smith, John Dewhurst, Len Usher, Harry Morris, Ted and Cliff Geddes, Bob Hassard and Frank Thomas. In Ross River: Doug MacPheat, Tim Moon, Bill Carson, Jack and Jenny Caesar, Thomas Jirousek, Werner and Peter Koser, Clifford McLeod, Norman Sterriah, Verna Nukon. In Faro: Paul and Beth Rogers, Mario Murphy, Ivan Benoit, Phyllis and Doc Forbes, Rennie Mitchell, Rudy Cou-

ture, Ernie Wagantall, Tom Connelly, Ted Baker, Gary Jones, Michelle Vainio, George Miller, Jeanne Clarke, Lena and Larry Brule, Val Benoit, Mickey and Marj Fisher. They have contributed so very much to the riding in so many ways. We are fortunate to have had that influence and they have left and are leaving an immeasurable legacy.

As I indicated just a few moments ago, I am deeply concerned about investing in the roadwork. To that end, we are investing \$1.125 million for bridge work at Deadman Creek. The Morley River bridge redecking project is receiving \$500,000. We are budgeting \$1 million for culvert replacement at Quiet Lake. This budget calls for an additional \$250,000 for roadwork and pipe installation.

For Faro, in this budget, is \$100,000 for an apron expansion at the airport. We are earmarking \$700,000 for the demolition of old buildings. We have budgeted \$600,000 for water and sewer services. I am very proud of our accomplishments in Faro and of this government's continued commitment to Faro.

Mr. Speaker, the community is proud of their community, which is reflected in the many, many volunteer hours they donate. Isn't it just that this government also contributes back to them?

Some \$33,923 is being spent on the Faro mine reclamation work.

In Ross River we are investing some \$38,000 for painting the school. Our government is investing \$823,000 under the recreational infrastructure Canada program to improve and upgrade recreational facilities in Dawson City, Carcross, Watson Lake, Carmacks, Mount Lorne, Beaver Creek and Ross River. We are putting \$196,000 into upgrades at the community centre. We are also spending \$1,350,000 on water- and sewer-related upgrades. Of this amount, \$1.1 million is to treat the water supply for arsenic and manganese. A further \$250,000 is to design a new Ross River fire hall truck storage and water treatment building.

Finally, we have designated \$600,000 for work on the suspension bridge there. We have \$2.682 million for replacement of obsolete trailer units in Carmacks, Dawson City and Ross River. I understand that the mining industry is looking at pumping tens of millions more into the area over the next few years. These are promising days in my riding, a grouse in every pot, so to speak.

Our government has worked hard to make Yukon attractive to investors once again. Our budget supports that goal. Nowhere is that clearer than in my riding. I want to thank my colleagues for the teamwork we've enjoyed in working together for the benefit of Yukon.

I would now like to turn my attention to the Department of Justice. By far, the largest driver of crime in Yukon is substance abuse. If we are going to create a better quality of life, we simply must address substance abuse, and the substance most abused is alcohol.

Four years ago, we committed to Yukoners to implement the Yukon *Substance Abuse Action Plan* through initiatives related to four strategic directions: harm reduction, prevention and education, treatment and enforcement. Let me share with you some of the areas that our government, through this budget

supports. We have been and are continuing to work on increasing our support in communities for initiatives related to after-care, treatment, harm reduction and prevention.

We have increased our training for staff who work with offenders in communities or at the Whitehorse Correctional Centre. We provide counselling for children in homes where there have been incidents of violence. Our goal is to break the generational cycle of abuse so that children of abusive parents are shown a better way to resolve conflict.

We are working with community partners in the area of addiction issues to provide counselling, support and after-care. We published a resource directory for Yukon communities to develop an inventory of programs, services and resources related to substance abuse and the social supports that are available in each Yukon community.

My friends opposite like to complain that there is nothing out there, but this directory, close to 90 pages long, demonstrates how much Yukoners do have available to them. In partnership with Health and Social Services, we are continuing to implement the in-patient alcohol and drug treatment programs offered at the Sarah Steele treatment centre.

Speaking of substance abuse programs, our government, through Health and Social Services, is investing \$233,000 for alcohol and drug services, in collaboration with Family and Children's Services and the youth outreach program at the Skookum Jim Friendship Centre to operate a four-bed youth emergency shelter.

Our government, through Health and Social Services, has \$447,228 for the Yukon addiction services, systems standards and evaluation project that will enhance, create, and document systems that standardize detox and treatment practices.

Along with Health and Social Services, we in the Department of Justice are working with First Nation governments to develop more land-based treatment centres and programs throughout the territory in order to support the operation of the community court. Speaking of the community court, our government has \$90,200 to provide an Alcohol and Drug Services addictions counsellor for the Community Wellness Court.

My department has been very focused, and thus very effective as a result. First, we did the consultation on corrections, then we developed the new correctional philosophy, then the new *Corrections Act*.

Work is now underway to support the new philosophy and the new act in terms of a new correctional and treatment facility, as well as a land-based treatment option. We have developed the Yukon Community Wellness Court to deal with offenders with drug or alcohol addictions, symptoms of FASD and mental health issues. This court provides a therapeutic alternative that supports offenders so that they don't reoffend.

This budget continues our support for the operation of the VictimLINK crisis line for all Yukoners in need of immediate assistance. Money in this budget will continue training initiatives for Victim Services workers, transition workers, justices of the peace and members of the RCMP regarding anti-violence initiatives. We will continue to ensure victims of abuse have access to a safe place and support services through

the Victim Services/Family Violence Prevention Unit and other departments and agencies.

On a related note, I'm thrilled that we have reconfigured our space to improve the services we offer victims of crime as they access the government services to which they are entitled.

We have seen more people avail themselves of victim services. I expect that this number will increase as we unfold the victims of crime strategy. Of the many accomplishments in my portfolio, improving the quality of service we provide to victims of crime will be the ones that I am most proud of.

Our government will continue to implement the provisions of the safer communities and neighbourhoods legislation as per the *Substance Abuse Action Plan*. This budget continues our commitment to the safer communities and neighbourhoods legislation implementation to improve community safety by targeting locations that are used for drug-dealing, bootlegging and prostitution.

I think of my colleague from Whitehorse Centre and the very helpful discussions that we had regarding this file. I also want to thank the members of the executive and the Downtown Residents Association for their contribution to SCAN. This goes to prove that by working together we can and did do better. That is, with constructive criticism we are able to do better. We were able to make a change in that community that is most memorable and outstanding.

In this budget is money to implement the corrections action plan, including the construction of a new correctional and treatment facility to replace the Whitehorse Correctional Centre. We have money for programs, services, treatment, case management, human resource development, training and support. Our government continues its support for community capacity development and for the victims and family services.

On that note, I should also add that we have been working on a new victims of crime act, which was just announced. We had improved our information and communications materials, especially for offenders with FASD at the correctional centre.

In this past year, one of my proudest moments was the opening of the transitional women's living unit on the grounds of the correctional facility. When I first toured Whitehorse Correctional Centre, the conditions for the women at that old facility were absolutely not suitable, and I am pleased that we were able to address this issue promptly.

My vision for Yukon is for it to be a place that is free of sexual violence. That is my goal. That is my hope for Yukon's bright future.

I would like to applaud the work of the different women's organizations that I have had the opportunity and pleasure to work with. As I reflected on this budget, I realized how much we have accomplished.

The most significant accomplishment concerning the Women's Directorate by the Yukon Party is the re-creation of this unit, which occurred shortly after the Yukon Party was elected in 2002. The previous Liberal regime had collapsed the unit as part of the renewal process. Our government continues to fund this important unit within our organization. The budget before us demonstrates our commitment to women of Yukon and I would like again to commend all the women who work

with the women's groups in Yukon, who give so tirelessly of their time. I would like to note Ann Maje Raider of Watson Lake who has done so much in that community and continues to do so much. I do commend them for all the work that they give.

Let me note here that my colleague, the Minister of Health and Social Services, advises me that his department has provided \$38,000 in enhanced funding for the Yukon Women's Transition Home Society, otherwise known as Kaushee's Place, and \$15,000 for Help and Hope for Families Society in Watson Lake. Our government is investing \$3.3 million to complete a 30-unit Whitehorse affordable housing complex for single-parent families in Riverdale. This was identified as a number one priority and we are working to address this concern. We have \$185,207 in this budget for the first of a three-year social marketing and public education campaign focusing on violence against women.

Our government has set aside \$215,420 to implement the recommendation of the Yukon's Aboriginal Women's Summit held in Yukon. Mr. Speaker, this is in addition to the \$200,000 we provide for the prevention of violence against aboriginal women fund and the \$300,000 for women's equality fund.

I am going to come back to these funds in a minute. Flowing out of the Yukon Aboriginal Women's Summit — YAWS — and National Aboriginal Women's Summit — NAWS — are recommendations related to improving the lives of women by increasing their economic opportunities. To that end, Yukon has undertaken several initiatives to increase the career options available to women. For example, our introduction to being a correctional officer was very popular and Justice officials advised me that we had a very strong intake.

We have also taken steps to ensure that young Yukon women know that all career fields are open to them. Historically, the trades and technology areas have not attracted a significant percentage of women. Our government has consistently supported the exploration of trades and technology by women. My colleague, the Minister of Education, has shared with me some of the great success stories in opening up these careers to women. Women with economic and financial resources have more options. By rebuilding our economy, everyone wins.

Women's organizations have identified affordable family housing for single parents as their highest priority. Construction is now well underway in Riverdale to address this need.

Mr. Speaker, we are continuing to fund the Domestic Violence Treatment Option Court, which is designed to stop domestic abuse without splintering the family unit. We know many Yukon women want the violence to stop, but also want to remain with their partner. This court makes that possible.

Reports of domestic violence in the north are three to four times the national average, with aboriginal women being the most significant at risk. In response to these deeply concerning statistics, Yukon is allocating \$200,000 per annum for community-based projects that help prevent violence against aboriginal women.

The Government of Yukon cannot alone create the kinds of changes that we need to put an end to domestic violence. It

has to be a societal change. We need all Yukoners working together to put an end to this violence. We must work together as a society to make significant change for women and children. It was only a few years ago that public drinking in our society was acceptable.

Smoking at all public functions, including hospitals, airplanes and theatres was permitted. We thought it was our right. It's unbelievable now to think back that we actually smoked in every public place — in our offices and in the Legislature. It is no longer the norm and it is not acceptable to our society; neither is violence against women. We must do the same with violence against women. We must stop the violence. It's our right as women to live without fear of violence.

We must start teaching our children in the home, in day-care and in schools the expectations that we as a society demand. With human rights comes the responsibility of respect for each other. The Tlingit society taught this balance. Each citizen knew their rightful place in our society. We lived in unity, with respect for each other and nature. It was our law. Whatever we took from nature, we were expected to give back, in kind, what was taken.

That fine balance is missing but, with a little thought, we can start to replace it. The women's equality fund was first introduced in 2007 at \$170,000. Our government has increased this amount to \$300,000 annually and renewed the fund for 2010 to 2013. The three-year funding program supports direct services and programs for women, advances women's equality through research and policy development, supports education and social action on women's equality issues and supports the development and capacity of women's organizations to effectively enhance women's equality.

The voice of women in politics is growing stronger and we must be heard. Just last week, Mr. Speaker, I was able to attend the ms. infinity conference that encouraged young ladies to develop their math and science skills so they could compete for interesting jobs. Some of us who are a few years removed from high school were commenting about what a great program it was.

By the time I finished looking at the first booth I went to, I wanted to be a doctor like Sally so I could help babies in trouble. Then I wanted to be a vet so I could hang out with dogs like Brody all day. Then I wanted to be a photographer, a financial advisor, a physiotherapist and a biologist. All of these careers are so interesting, and all of these careers are now open to women.

I hope that we have more women interested in a career in politics, as well.

Every new year I reflect on the year that was and ponder the year to come. While I recognize that I cannot change the world, I can change my world. This budget reflects my priorities; it reflects the things that I want to see changed to create a better world — a bright future. As I said when I was first elected, I decided to run for public office because I firmly believe the Yukon Party has proven its ability to create a bright future for our children with a strong economy and healthy communities. My priority then, as it is now, is to solidify the development and strengthening of the government-to-

government relationships between First Nations and the Yukon government.

As minister, I have directed my departments to work with First Nations to address the issues that face us. I take great pride in the fact that the *Corrections Act* specifically references working with First Nations.

This budget before us includes funding to implement the corrections action plan. Significantly, it is funds to build a new correctional and treatment complex. Our new facility is being constructed in partnership with Kwanlin Dun. This is one more example of Yukon and First Nations working together.

A few moments ago, I spoke about the under-representation of women. About 30 percent of Yukon voters are of First Nation ancestry, yet are also under-represented. I represent both of these groups. I would like to see this Assembly reflect the demographic diversity of Yukon.

Mr. Speaker, as I said four years ago, I believe that transportation links are critical to the development of economies in rural Yukon. I committed to working to ensure that the Robert Campbell Highway was identified as a key priority for highway reconstruction. I am pleased to see that this budget set aside more funds for the Campbell Highway reconstruction.

My colleague, the Minister of Education, is funding for the implementation of New Horizons, a new vision for education in Yukon, flowing from the education reform project. Our government has \$126,000 for the Four Winds Family and Community Literacy project. We have \$100,000 for the Old Crow experiential project that will provide a First Nation experiential model for kindergarten to grade 9.

One thing I've learned over the years is that we each have our own way of learning what works for us. Years ago, the focus was on teaching. Now, the focus is on learning. I applaud the minister for looking at projects that help children learn through new methods. Well done, Minister.

We are investing \$1.4 million over two years, commencing 2009-10, for the Pelly Crossing community campus. We have \$2.6 million over two years, commencing 2009-10, for the Dawson City community campus.

Mr. Speaker, I know you and I have spoken on many occasions about finding ways to help young people. In this budget is \$80,000 to operate the Youth Achievement Centre that provides program funding for youth at risk in order to gain the required skills in the area of carpentry and woodworking to be apprentice-level ready. In thinking of helping young people, I am pleased that this budget has \$195,000 to implement a foster care rate increase of 17 percent effective October 2009 and provide annual increases effective April 1, 2010 based on the Whitehorse consumer price index.

In my reply to the throne speech in 2006, I flagged several areas that I wanted to see addressed. As a minister, I wanted to see our correctional system be changed at a fundamental level and I wanted to see definite action taken on sexual abuse. I am pleased that this budget continues to reflect the priority our government places in these areas.

I spoke about the need for our Assembly to better reflect Yukon's demographics in that roughly half the population is female, but only two — or 11 percent — of the members of this

Assembly are. By working to improve the lives of Yukon women, it is my hope that more women will be able to step forward and offer themselves for public service.

I spoke about working to strengthen the partnership between the public government and First Nations. I am pleased at the progress we have accomplished in this area. As the Minister of Justice, I am proud of the working relationship that we have been able to establish with First Nations. As a First Nation MLA, I am proud of our record. I spoke about the needs of particular citizens in my riding, be it health care or educational opportunities for children or seniors looking to stay in our communities. This budget, like the ones this government has tabled previously, has initiatives to address these priorities of mine.

I commend this budget to this Assembly and I ask that all members support it.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Cardiff: It gives me great pleasure to be back in the Legislative Assembly debating the government's 2010-11 main estimates.

First of all, I'd like to begin, once again, by welcoming everybody back. I'd like to say what a privilege it is to represent the constituents of Mount Lorne. The guidance, the interaction, the phone calls, the e-mails, and the questions from my constituents, whether they're from within the riding or outside of the riding, actually guide me constantly and give me the strength to continue to come into the Legislative Assembly and ask the questions that I ask. It is truly a privilege to live in that riding.

I know the Member for Southern Lakes calls it the beautiful Southern Lakes. And I think I've said this before, that truly, when I drive home every night to my home in the Hamlet of Mount Lorne, it is a wondrous beauty to view the mountains and the wildlife along the road.

Just the other day, I drove into my driveway as a lynx crossed the driveway. It speaks to the efforts of the government, the Department of Environment, the citizens of the Yukon and indeed the Carcross-Tagish First Nation and the work that has been done on the Southern Lakes caribou recovery program that I woke up the other morning with six caribou in my front yard. That type of thing is why we live here in the Yukon: the fact that we can be that close to nature. Truly, it is a privilege to represent all of those constituents, whether they be in the Hamlet of Mount Lorne, the Golden Horn subdivision, Mary Lake, Wolf Creek, Cowley Creek or Spruce Hill — all of those constituents who contact me with their concerns, whether it be about land development in their backyard, about problems with the *Forest Protection Act*, noisy trucks on the highway and the inaction of the government in trying to make the quality of life for those people a reality.

I truly believe that that's what makes us so privileged here in the Yukon: we can have that type of interaction with just about all of our constituents, because we're that close to them.

I'd like to begin talking about the budget by talking a little bit more about my riding and some of the things that I see in the budget that are in there for my riding. There are a couple of

projects and I appreciate the government's response to my community on at least two of the projects that are in this budget. Some of them were announced awhile ago. One was the Annie Lake Road upgrade. This is something that has been needed for an awfully long time. I believe there's \$350,000 in the budget for an upgrade for a portion of the Annie Lake Road.

Now, I believe and I hope that the Minister of Highways and Public Works will continue in this vein. It's about public safety. Many of the MLAs here today have spoken about highway infrastructure and its importance. In this case, it's a matter of public safety. As well, I would like to congratulate the Lorne Mountain Community Association on money that's in the budget for a new building to house the Zamboni that clears the ice and makes the ice rink such a popular spot in the community of Mount Lorne. Indeed, people come from all over to use that facility, and it recently hosted some teams in a tournament that was being held in Whitehorse.

There is, I believe, \$248,000 in the Community Services budget for that building. I congratulate the community association on their efforts to obtain that funding — as well, I believe they have similar funding from the federal government. I'll be asking questions about other infrastructure projects in my riding when we get into departments.

My general comments about the budget — obviously we've heard a little bit, we've asked some questions in Question Period. We are concerned with the direction in which the government is going. When we look at the budget, the Minister of Finance doesn't seem to like to acknowledge the numbers that are in the budget, but I'd like to just go over them. In fact, the Premier doesn't even want to — I mean, if he could get away with it, he wouldn't even use the word "deficit", but the reality is on page S-4 of the main estimates.

It shows that there is going to be a \$23-million deficit as of the end of this fiscal year — that being tomorrow. That's what's forecast — and if the government's books are that far out, when the Auditor General reports in September, I'm sure that she won't be impressed with the Premier's accounting, if those are the numbers that he is disputing.

The other numbers that the Premier likes to talk about — and has been talking about for the past few days — is the fact that the net financial resources at the end of this year — that being tomorrow — are \$69,430,000. What the Premier — and the Premier also likes to tie that in with the fact — and I believe today he was using almost \$200 million in cash. But the reality is that all of that cash is not available. Some of that cash is spoken for, in terms of what's known in accounting as liability. There's some \$80 million — I was told \$84 million or \$86 million — in liabilities, some of those being employee benefits that need to be there in order to pay out when those employees reach the end of their employment.

So that's money that the government, if it was spending, would have to book as liability and we would be again in deficit. Part of that money is also invested in asset-backed commercial paper, and we probably won't see all of that money for some time to come.

The other thing that we're concerned about is what appears to be the government's increasing reliance on federal transfers from Canada. We learned a little more about this and how it works during the briefing, and I'd like to thank the officials for providing the information. Where our concern comes in is that we don't feel that these transfers from Canada are necessarily going to be sustainable, and we need to plan for the future.

We need to have that money in reserve. Now when you look at the net financial resources, if you go back to the 2006-07 public accounts, there was \$200 million in net financial resources or accumulated surplus. When we look today — and these are the Premier's figures — it's \$69 million. This government has spent \$130 million of the accumulated surplus. I guess what needs to happen or the conversation that needs to happen — not just here in the Legislative Assembly but indeed in the public — is about what kind of accumulated surplus the Government of Yukon should be maintaining in order to provide that cushion when mineral prices go down or federal transfers are cut — and there are indications of that. Like I said earlier today, I heard on the radio that Mr. Day, the federal minister, is looking for ways to save money.

Now, the federal transfers — the formula: the way that it was explained to us was that there is a two-year lag. So the transfers that we get this year — the grant from Canada is \$653 million — are based on the formula. The calculation was done two years ago, on figures from two years ago.

Part of that calculation is based on the amount of money the provinces and municipalities spend on their operations and on their infrastructure. Now we're seeing a trend. We're seeing the federal government run deficit budgets and, indeed, run up a debt.

We're seeing that happen in other provinces that haven't come through the economic downturn quite the same way we've been as lucky to experience here in the Yukon. We've seen a fair amount of economic stimulus and infrastructure money over the past years, and that is what has given rise to increasing the federal transfer, the grant from Canada, to the point that it is now.

What we're watching in other jurisdictions in Canada is a decrease in spending. Governments are looking for ways to save money. They're making cuts to programs and services. Once this stimulus money runs out, they won't be building the infrastructure that they have been. Their expenditures will go down. That will affect the grant from Canada. That's the way the officials explained it. That's the way that I understood it. That leads me to believe that we can't necessarily rely on — and I don't believe the Premier should rely on — the fact that grants from Canada will remain stable or indeed increase.

If you look at the government's five-year plan and projections, transfers from Canada projected out for the next four years basically are expected to increase by almost \$72 million. This year, the total transfers from Canada — the estimates are \$691 million. That includes the Canada health and social transfer and other transfers from Canada. The Premier's prediction is that that's going to rise to over \$760 million.

I don't necessarily believe that's going to be the case. I think we need to plan, and we need to have that cushion. I'm

not saying that we shouldn't be spending money on programs and services or indeed infrastructure, but I think we need to be a little more thoughtful about how we go about doing that.

I listened with interest to the Premier's budget speech and noted that a lot of the speech wasn't so much about announcing spending. It was almost like a pre-election speech, boasting about the accomplishments of the government. I suppose that's what governments do. But I'd just like to point out that the Premier is, number one, taking credit for a lot of initiatives that are being funded by other sources — namely, federal economic stimulus and infrastructure funds, some of which the Premier can take credit for because he was involved in negotiating them. Some of those agreements are going to be renegotiated in the coming years, including the Canada health transfer, Canada social transfer, and the grant from Canada, the funding formula.

As well, there were a number of things that the Premier spoke about in his Budget Address that he was taking credit for, that were indeed initiatives that were initiated by the NDP caucus, those being the substance abuse action plan and the *Smoke-free Places Act*. We asked questions of this government, just about from day one of their first mandate, about whistleblower legislation. Indeed, we even presented a whistleblower bill which the government wasn't prepared to support. But we managed to finally get them to support a select committee to deal with it, and I am confident that the recommendations of that committee will be coming forward soon.

The Premier talked about the social-inclusion summit. That was something that my colleague for Whitehorse Centre very vigorously promoted — the fact that we need to find a way in this territory to deal with issues of homelessness and poverty. I see the Minister of Health and Social Services is a little shook up about that, but the reality is that it was a motion by the Member for Whitehorse Centre that initiated the idea of having a summit. The government may have been moving in that direction, but it was with a little push from this side that we actually achieved it and I look forward to that. I hope that something valuable comes out of it, like something valuable came out of something like the *Substance Abuse Action Plan*. It came out of summits that involved people who are close to the issue — the people who the issues actually affect and the people who work with those people. Those are the people who need to be involved in this so that their voices are heard and so that the response of the government indeed addresses the problem.

Other things that the Premier talked about were select committees on the *Landlord and Tenant Act* and *Legislative Renewal Act*. Both of those are initiatives of the NDP caucus.

We have some concerns, as I mentioned earlier, about the fact that we don't believe the government can necessarily sustain the trajectory of spending. They can't rely on the continuation of large transfers from the federal government and they can't even rely on a good economy to continue to raise revenue.

Indeed, if you look at own-source revenues here in the territory, they haven't gone up a lot over the years — not anywhere near compared to the grants from Canada and other sources of revenue.

So we're concerned that the government is spending the accumulated surplus. We're also concerned about some of the decisions this government is making with regard to infrastructure projects. I'd just like to remind the government about some of the projects — that when you rush projects or don't necessarily have a good plan before you go into a project, what that leads to.

One of the projects we're concerned about is the Yukon Energy Corporation project for Mayo B. We're not saying that it's a bad idea. What we're saying is that there was no plan to look at any other projects that may have been just as feasible or more feasible. Indeed, this project is being rushed, prior to the completion of the regulatory process.

Examples of other rushed projects that have led to cost overruns are projects like the athletes village, projects like the Watson Lake health care facility that millions of dollars have been spent on and we still have nothing really to show for it.

This government is encouraging — and indeed, in telling the Yukon Energy Corporation to go out and borrow \$100 million, basically to go ahead with this project and the extension of the transmission line. Now, I think it makes sense to join the grid, to make that grid complete. I think that what we need to do is to wait. The Energy Corporation has entered into a large contract at a huge risk to the ratepayers and the taxpayers of the Yukon, before the Yukon Utilities Board has even ruled on whether or not this project is feasible at this time, whether or not another project would be better at this time, and whether or not the scope of the project should change.

When we look back at the Auditor General's reports going back to the Mayo-to-Dawson interconnect and the line there, and we look at Highways and Public Works, Yukon Housing Corporation, and the Department of Education, the Auditor General has indicated that departments and corporations don't have adequate risk management practices in place. They are not using the appropriate checks and balances to ensure that taxpayers' money or ratepayers' money is being spent appropriately.

We believe that this project is being rushed unnecessarily. The Premier disagrees with me, I know, on this, as does the corporation.

The justification for it is that the money is time-limited. I'm sure that with the Premier's good relationship with the Prime Minister, he could squeeze a few more months for that money to be committed and he could squeeze a few more months out of the Prime Minister to have that money made available if it was necessary.

One of the other things that the government has done as far as jumping the gun and going ahead in announcing projects is in relation to the hospitals announcements. If you look first at the *Yukon Health Care Review Final Report* from 2008, one of the recommendations in the summary of recommendations indicated that the government should consider transfer of services and facilities to the Hospital Corporation.

It talked about the Watson Lake hospital and the transfer there, and it was in order to improve the effectiveness and the efficiency of those services. It talked about the transfer of other services and facilities if it could be demonstrated that a transfer

will lead to both an improvement in the alignment in the delivery of health care services and improved cost efficiency and effectiveness in service delivery.

We don't see where the government has provided that evidence that that indeed is going to happen. What we're more concerned with is that it's about services. It shouldn't be about saving money; it should be about providing services. We need to be looking at how to improve the services to Yukoners.

Now if you'll look at the other document, the *What We Heard* document, "*Taking the Pulse*", the final report. It says in the report on the background paper that, before any decisions are made regarding the *Yukon Health Care Review* recommendations, the Yukon Legislature would like to know what you think. This report is dated July 2009. The government, in July, is saying that before any decisions are made on any recommendations, they want to hear what Yukoners think.

Interestingly enough, there was a media release on April 9, 2009, announcing the Dawson City hospital. So the government was making announcements about what its intentions were with regard to health care delivery and health care facilities in advance of listening to what Yukoners had to say. We don't believe that is necessarily what Yukoners expect of their government.

Indeed, if they looked at some of the submissions that were in the *What We Heard* document, they would see one of the things that Yukoners most would like to see — in fact, it received the highest approval, and I don't think it was actually something that was even in the recommendations. But 59 percent of Yukoners thought that the government should continue to invest in expanded home care community support programs and supported assisted living, as it keeps people out of institutional long-term care, while providing services at a lower cost. So 59 percent of Yukoners agreed with that. The government's answer to that in this budget is an investment of \$500,000, if I'm not mistaken. I'm sure that the Minister of Health and Social Services will give us the total figure, as opposed to rushing into projects where they haven't presented the Legislature or the public with the evidence of the need or how it will indeed improve services to Yukoners in communities.

We are concerned about the fact that the government is rushing into these projects and indeed, again, encouraging government corporations to borrow money and to go into debt. That debt will eventually show up on the books of the Yukon government and taxpayers will end up footing the bill.

The other thing we're concerned about, and which was a concern for this government not that long ago, was municipalities that were building infrastructure with no thought given to the increases in O&M costs. We'd like to know what the increased O&M costs of some of these facilities are going to be. What kind of pressure is that going to put on the budgets of this government to staff and to operate and to provide those improved services to Yukoners? We're not saying that it's a bad idea, but we need to do it thoughtfully.

The other thing I'd like to clarify — the Premier, earlier today, was indicating that last year the opposition was calling for greater stimulus spending. I think either the minister — the Premier — is misinformed or he's painting all parties in oppo-

sition with the same brush. Just to be clear, the NDP's position in general debate of the 2009-10 budget— you can find this in *Hansard* — was we believed, as we do now, that these budgets do not reduce the dependency on Ottawa. The budgets did not diversify our economy or have more revenue coming from local sources.

It's what we were saying last year and we're saying it again this year: the government is still not doing that. The government needs to monitor its progress of spending and provide feedback to the public about its record stimulus spending and its accomplishments or lack thereof. It didn't do that last year and we don't know whether it will this year or not.

The budget had some big, flashy projects, but it neglected some other values like gender equality, environmental protection, green jobs, creating more rural jobs, investing in human infrastructure or social capital, and more support for NGOs. We didn't find it all that stimulating a budget; we didn't find it all that creative.

We thought that we needed to be more thoughtful about targeting the public's money on projects. We wondered last year why there was no money set aside for the Mayo B project. Now we know. We didn't think that the Premier's discussion with stakeholders to get advice and direction on the budget was necessarily open and accountable. Last spring my colleague, the MLA for Whitehorse Centre, said this: "Is this a budget that is only crafted to take us up to the next election to get re-elected, enough money to get re-elected based on that? But after that, there is no vision of where you are going? At some point, something has to break. At some point, if you don't make your mortgage payments, they come to collect your house."

This government is spending the accumulated surplus, the money that should be there to get us through the tough times. Right now times are not that bad, Mr. Speaker, although there is no money in this budget to operate an emergency youth shelter. There's money for youth groups, but there's no money in this budget for an emergency youth shelter and on that, Mr. Speaker, I could talk for another 20 minutes. I know my time is up, but I'm concerned about that.

I'm concerned about this government's commitment to land-based treatment as well.

There is \$230 million in northern strategy money for it, but we don't see a big commitment in communities to support land-based drug and alcohol treatment. As I said, I could probably go on for 20 more minutes. We are concerned with the government's direction and the way that it's spending the money, the lack of vision that it shows and the fact that it's leading us down the road into more debt, not thinking about when those tough times are going to come and the hard decisions are going to have to be made.

Hon. Mr. Hart: It's indeed my pleasure and honour to rise in the House today and to speak to the 2010-11 budget; however, first let me say that I am very proud to represent the constituents of Riverdale South.

If you bear with me, Monsieur le Président, membres honorables, je suis très heureux d'être de retour à l'Assemblée législative pour représenter mes électeurs de Riverdale Sud.

Over the years there has been a shift in demographics from a stable base to one that is changing and focusing more on younger families and seniors throughout Riverdale.

The infrastructure for schools and recreation remains the same; however, there are several new projects underway that will have an impact on the community. There is a new Whitehorse affordable housing 30-unit single family complex presently underway. Construction is currently in full swing, and it's just across from Christ the King Elementary School. There is also a new medical residence being constructed on Hospital Road, and they are currently working on the third floor of that facility.

Both of these projects are responding to priorities raised by stakeholders and both will meet the demands to provide the much-needed affordable housing and residential facilities for the visiting medical specialists and nurses to the Yukon. With the completion of this facility, it will provide us with another tool to bring further professional services to the Yukon and reduce our need to send patients Outside. Again, this will endure and save health dollars for programs to be held here in the Yukon.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, spring is in the air, and this year the Millennium Trail has been utilized more than ever before, due to the mild weather this winter.

In fact, the trail has been groomed and cleared many more times than it has in the previous years. One can see the changes in the yards along the bus routes through Riverdale and into town, and I must say I'm very impressed with the ridership on the morning and evening rush-hour city buses, because quite often I have to share my seat with my fellow passengers. I'm hopeful, also, that once the ground dries up, I'll be able to walk in more frequently to and from work, in addition to walking the Millennium Trail on a much more regular basis.

The Millennium Trail has proven to be a very well-used facility for all citizens of Whitehorse and it's a pleasure to meet many people on that trail, especially during the weekends. The 2009-10 year has been very busy in our portion of the world with the Paralympic Games and the Olympic Games being recently held in Vancouver and the world converging in Vancouver and Whistler to watch this amazing event. When I attended some of these events, I must say that I was very proud of my fellow Canadians, especially when it came to our hospitality and especially their behavior.

In the same vein, I was, for the first time in my life, very proud of the Canadian accomplishments attained during the Olympics and pleasantly surprised that Canadians were cheering loudly for their athletes in addition to others. The celebration of Aboriginal Day, Francophone Day and Yukon Day were all very successful events that provided an important participation by the Yukon in the Olympics. I must say that I received several kudos from many individuals, both living in Vancouver and those visiting Vancouver, as to what the content from Yukon was at the northern facility in addition to that provided by Yukon Day. I must say that the Department of Tourism and

Culture is to be commended for their organization in bringing that event to fruition, in addition to bringing international media and travel writers up to Whitehorse and giving them an opportunity to do a feature on the Yukon that can be related to their home country.

I believe that day was very successful. I must say that I'm very happy that Air North participated in that event and enabled them to bring up the tour guides and the writers to the Yukon during the day while the airline provided services to Yukoners to attend Yukon Day and still bring them back in the same day — a very successful event and a very widely accepted event for Yukoners and, I must say, it was well done.

The Yukon was also pleased to participate in Northern House and I would like to thank all those who assisted in reservations, accreditations, bookings, planning and the officials who participated at the Olympic and Paralympic Games. Also, Mr. Speaker, it was very interesting to see the Paralympic athletes in their games, especially the downhill skiing. It was very enlightening and I guess very challenging for those athletes, considering that I can see the ski hill and I couldn't ski anywhere near as well as some of them could.

All in all, I thought the event was very successful. I thought the atmosphere in Vancouver was outstanding. Again, as I said, I'm very proud of my fellow Canadians who provided the venue and hosted an exceptionally good event — and we were well received in that area.

Additionally, Mr. Speaker, this was also the year for the Arctic Winter Games, in which the Yukon sent a contingent to Grand Prairie, Alberta, to compete with other circumpolar countries and northern Alberta and British Columbia in sporting events that enhance our competitive spirit and improve the health of our youth.

This is a biannual event that takes place among the participating jurisdictions and Whitehorse will be hosting this event in 2012. Again, Mr. Speaker, I believe this will be an important event. I think we've demonstrated in the past that Whitehorse is more than capable of hosting these types of events. I think that has more than been proven with the 2007 Canada Winter Games, which were held here in Whitehorse also.

Again, Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank all those who participated, including coaches, parents, athletes and volunteers who made this a successful event, even though from what I understand there was very little snow around for the event; it came a week later. The athletes did enjoy themselves and they had a good time. All those who were involved are to be commended.

Now, this leads me into another very important event, and that is to the discussion of the 2010-11 budget — again, the largest ever for the second time. It's breaking the \$1-million threshold for that second time. Kind of like a sporting event — you get to break your own record and it's a good feeling.

Now this budget is focusing on practising good government and promoting a strong and diversified economy, protecting the environment and providing a better quality of life for all Yukoners. This budget provides us with the direction for the next three years and emphasizes our independent, rich history and cultural diversity. We have a quality of life second to none

in Canada, and we have great landscapes in to explore and visit.

The member opposite talked about waking up in the morning to caribou. I'd like to also share that, on the weekend, for the first time I can remember probably in the last 10 years, I saw seven caribou at the Lewes River bridge — first time ever. I must say, right on the roadside — again, I believe that this also due to those members in the Department of Environment, also the First Nation, in protecting the southern caribou. I also did see a couple of deer just a little further south and they also were there.

We enjoy new residents coming to the Yukon and that being deer, of course. But I think it demonstrates that I think the Yukon has — and I think we take it for granted in many cases — a wonderful landscape. And I think many of us probably haven't even explored all of the opportunities available in the Yukon. I would ask all members of the Legislature to do their best to explore all corners of the Yukon to ensure they get the best benefit.

We the government are implementing New Horizons, which is a new vision for education, and we're also looking at implementing the new *Corrections Act* which, again, are both the result of some extensive consultation and have resulted in major changes in how education and corrections are being provided here in the Yukon.

On the corrections side, I think we're seeing that we're changing the whole process, and we're looking at focusing more on programming that will enhance and provide better protection for the public and reduce recidivism in the local facility.

We're also looking at implementation of the *Climate Change Action Plan* and the *Energy Strategy for Yukon* through the Yukon Research Centre of Excellence, which was established recently at Yukon College, and the connecting of the Mayo-Dawson grid and the upgrade of the Mayo dam. Again, both of these facilities, or both subjects, will provide for enhanced hydro facilities that will reduce our dependence on fossil fuels and continue to provide greener elements and reduce our effluent of increased carbon dioxides into the air. I think these are all issues that will provide a positive aspect with regard to the atmosphere and also enhance our environment.

The member opposite talked about social inclusion. I'd like to say that the development of a new social inclusion strategy kicks off next week with a two-day symposium with the inclusion of all the stakeholders to commence on the development of the guideline of the document that is intended to be presented by next fall.

This is a project that has been well underway through the department since last spring. We presented a guideline outfit to that process and we shared with the members opposite on the issue, on their motion, to present the two-day symposium, which we have followed through on.

We are very hopeful that the results of this are just the beginning and will prove to be a historic event here in the Yukon and result in a situation that will ensure that all Yukoners get included in the process. We have committees set up now throughout the government to bring this into being. Part of the

process will ensure that all projects coming forth through the government will be brought through the committee and ensure that they do pass the social inclusion strategy and ensure that projects that are brought forth and go forth to the public get the widest and best value for the buck — especially when it comes to social inclusion.

I look forward to the results of this two-day symposium. I've already seen the results of some of the interdepartmental meetings and, again, look forward to also getting some data from the collection that we hope to get some surveying done and to have some concrete data on which to make our assumptions and, hopefully, we will have some of that data available later on this fall.

Then we'll have a further symposium to follow up on those results and we can go forward in the new year on the priorities that are identified from that procedure.

Again, it's an area that's relatively new for the Yukon. There are a few jurisdictions in Canada — I believe four — that are using a social inclusion-type strategy and we are looking at gleaning the parts of those jurisdictions that we can apply here in the Yukon and make it better for all Yukoners.

We're also looking at the development of a multi-year capital plan, providing a schedule of specific projects in which the government will expend over the next three years. We're also looking at providing fixed funding in the IT sector and building capital maintenance to assist all local contractors in managing their staff to ensure that projects are available over the next three years.

Our main focus there is to ensure that we can maintain our local trades and ensure that they are going to be around for at least three years and ensure that the skills are going to be here in the Yukon to complete these projects.

We are continuing implementation of our First Nation governance, including support for new self-government land claim settlements. During the recent economic times, we have diversified our economy by focusing our stimulus funding on film, sound, research and development, information technology, agriculture and other small business entities.

We have been focusing our funding on the IT industry and stabilizing that funding has proved very valuable, because it has maintained that small entity and group to enable them to keep their staff and ensure that their funding is available.

So we are looking at doing the same for our capital and building maintenance structure to ensure that the smaller businesses in that line, which are providing maintenance to our buildings, can utilize the same service and maintain the same expertise in that field. By having consistent funding available for capital maintenance, we are confident that we will be able to maintain those small businesses.

Now, we're also looking at continuing our marketing initiatives in China, which has led to a good relationship and has also fostered extensive investment into the Yukon of dollars into our natural resource and retail markets. We're also looking at creating a new mining Web portal to attract mining investment to the Yukon. That is something that is also coming through the process. We're also looking at providing a little over \$1.5 million through Tourism Yukon to provide increased

marketing through Destination: Yukon, as well as our cooperative marketing fund, and, in addition, provide additional funds for the development of displays that promote Yukon at various travel trade shows, et cetera, again, to attract tourists to the Yukon from various parts of the world.

Now, part of the process here is that we're also looking at \$10.3 million for the Kwanlin Dun cultural centre, in which a new public library will be the centrepiece of that development. It will be located on the Whitehorse waterfront. In addition, we're looking at approximately \$250,000 over the next couple of years for the Yukon entrepreneur support program. We're also looking at \$1.8 million for the second year of funding for the Yukon mining incentive program. In addition, we've got \$3.7 million for the forestry research and the establishment of the new Yukon core library. We've got approximately \$250,000 in the northern strategies funding for the Yukon Mining Training Institute to provide mining training for Yukoners.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, we have \$4.3 million for the labour market development agreement and \$1.5 for the community training fund for non-governmental organizations and First Nations to provide employment training. We have a further \$1.4 million under the labour market agreement to provide programming for unemployed and underemployed clients, including social assistance recipients, older workers, youth and persons with disabilities.

Now we have a multitude of other initiatives underway, as I have already mentioned, covering the Yukon Film and Sound Commission and for looking at making additional items available through Highways and Public Works. We are also looking at making improvements at the local airport. The airport is expected to be finished this year. This facility — the major portion of it — will accommodate the large Condor flights that come in during the summer and it will enable the plane to dislodge their passengers and keep them in the facility until they can clear Customs.

It was also a requirement by Customs that this facility be enlarged to accommodate that process. I think the enlargement of the airport is going to provide an excellent service, especially to those individuals coming into the Yukon and utilizing that service. I think the Minister of Highways and Public Works has done a fine job in the completion of the airport facility, as well as the airport parking lot. The procedures now have enabled them to collect for cars that are parked there and to ensure that no long-term parking takes place without the knowledge of the airport facility.

I'd like to focus a little on the environment. Environment is providing substantial money in this budget. They're providing a little over \$33.9 million for the Faro mine remediation work. There's approximately \$2.1 million over two years for research and rehabilitation for the Yukon Wildlife Preserve.

We have \$100,000 for the Ross River resource planning involving the Ross River Dena Council. We have approximately \$175,000 for the Yukon Placer Secretariat, working in partnership with the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in. We have a little over \$1 million for the expansion of the Yukon forestry research infrastructure. We have \$115,000 for the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations spruce beetle impact litigation project.

We have \$1 million for the FireSmart program. This has been a long-standing program providing reduction of fire services on the interfaces of all communities throughout the Yukon. It has proven to be a very valuable program. It also provides enhanced employment services in our rural areas and it continues to be supported by the department. I can't say that it provides prevention against fire, but it definitely reduces the availability of it coming to the Yukon and into the communities.

We also have \$1.13 million under the municipal rural infrastructure fund to improve the Little Salmon-Carmacks First Nation water supply. The member opposite talked about this yesterday and the fact that this was much needed and was looking forward to getting it. So I'm glad to see that he actually picked that up and that it's something that's going to take place within his community.

Also, there is \$1.4 million to upgrade the water surface treatment in Carcross. There is \$3.4 million to provide arsenic treatment upgrades for the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations, the Carcross-Tagish First Nation, and the communities of Haines Junction and Teslin. Again, these are all issues that are required in order to meet the new health standard for water throughout the Yukon. These are all items that we're doing in order to provide good drinking water.

We're also providing \$150,000 for sewage treatment options for Old Crow. Again, under sewage, we're looking at \$16.8 million under sewage treatment and the district heating wood-chip boiler in Dawson.

There is \$320,000 for implementation of the solid-waste action plan and \$262,000 in additional monies for the transfer stations, including Carcross and Tagish.

I think the Minister of Community Services will go a little bit more in-depth with regard to the *Solid Waste Action Plan* but I believe this is something that was asked for by the members opposite many times and we have been in the process of completing this stage. We have gone through the engineering studies required for waste management to be handled throughout the Yukon and we look forward to implementing this to ensure that we can cut down on the burning of refuse in the Yukon. We are looking forward to the results of that also.

We now would like to discuss the better quality of life throughout the Yukon. This budget provides a substantial amount of funding that's going to be provided to enhance all aspects for all Yukoners throughout the Yukon. We're looking at providing \$2.7 million for the design of the F.H. Collins school — again, a replacement of this facility. This \$2.7 million is for the initial design for the school replacement. I am advised that it is all well underway and the RFP is set to go out very soon. There is funding being set aside for the replacement to commence in the ensuing years.

We're also looking at providing \$120,000 for organization and capacity development for the Na Cho Nyäk Dun First Nation. We have \$950,000 to enable Yukon College to develop an interdisciplinary research and communication facility to further enhance its research, commercialization, education and training capacity. These are all items that will enhance and allow

Yukon College to expand their research capability and leverage other research aspects to be completed there at Yukon College.

We're looking at \$1.4 million over two years, commencing 2009-10, for the Pelly Crossing community campus. We're also looking at \$2.6 million over the next two years for commencing the Dawson City community campus. Again, these are both facilities that are needed to provide and enhance post-education facilities in those small communities.

I will reiterate that the member opposite discussed this when he was up — the Member for Mayo-Tatchun — that this facility was much needed in Pelly, and I'm glad to see that it is moving in there. It does provide a much-needed service within that small community.

Now, we're also looking at providing an additional \$330,000 to support programming for core operating costs for three youth-serving organizations: Bringing Youth Towards Equality, Youth of Today Society and the Boys and Girls Club of Whitehorse. These are all based on the demands and requirements to meet the needs of these youth and they are providing a service that's needed here in Whitehorse. This funding will meet their requirements and provide the services needed.

We're also looking at providing \$312,000 for the first year of a three-year initiative to implement the victims of crime strategy. We're looking at providing an additional \$20 million for the Correctional Centre and we're also looking at \$185,000 for the first three-year program of social marketing and a public education campaign focusing on violence against women.

We are also looking at providing monies for a prevention of violence against aboriginal women initiative. We are also looking at providing \$300,000 for the women's equality fund in that process.

Now, I did indicate that the commencement of the Whitehorse affordable housing complex is well underway in Riverdale and funding is in this project for the completion of that facility. It is nice to see that all four units are already up and the roof is on and, after visiting those facilities, Mr. Speaker, and going for the testing, I was glad to see that there is actually a little competition among the workers. They each have their own building and they take great pride in trying to, shall we say, outdo the other contractors in each building, or each supervisor, to get the best results in cutting and ensuring that they have the least amount of air getting into their building and ensuring that they have a good airtight facility that is going to be easy to maintain with their operational maintenance.

I was very glad to see that the testing that was done demonstrated that these facilities definitely will provide a greener situation for the Yukon. It was a very interesting test and it was interesting to see how it took place. I was also glad to see the radar gun that was used to go around on the windows and demonstrate just exactly where the cold air was entering the facility.

Now, also, Mr. Speaker, there is \$7 million for the replacement of the Korbo Apartments social housing in Dawson City. There is \$2.6 million for the replacement of the obsolete trailer units in Carmacks, Ross River and Dawson City.

We also have approximately \$2.2 million for the social housing units in Whitehorse. We have \$3.7 million to upgrade

social housing Yukon-wide and we're looking at \$1.6 million for the Whitehorse Abbeyfield seniors housing. I'm sure the minister will elaborate on that facility when it's his turn.

There's \$11.25 million for the replacement of 207 Alexander Street senior housing in Whitehorse and \$250,000 to complete the six-unit senior housing facility in Faro. With regard to those facilities, there's also a similar unit taking place in Teslin and in Watson Lake. All of those facilities are well underway and we anticipate providing those services to the seniors in those communities in the very near future.

We also have \$527,000 to enhance and support the Yukon home care program and to provide services to Yukoners, but particularly those in home care facilities outside of the Yukon. On home care, this is additional monies to what we are already providing under home care facilities. It does provide for approximately five FTEs throughout the process. We are looking at providing a full-time LPN to be housed out of Whitehorse.

We're looking at liaisons — two liaison FTEs in our communities and three others, including Faro and Teslin.

Now, all of these are meeting our commitment to provide further assistance to those in the home, especially in the rural areas. With the completion of the seniors facilities, this will also enable our seniors to stay in their communities much longer than they do with the current process.

By providing this home care, we can keep the seniors in their homes much longer and also keep them in their communities at a longer stage. Also, this will reduce the pressure on our local facilities; those being Copper Ridge and Macaulay.

One of the items in this budget, Mr. Speaker, recognizes the work of foster parents who volunteer to provide family and home for children who cannot live with their parents. Nearly \$200,000 is included to reflect the 17-percent increase in rates put in place in 2009 and, for the first time ever, includes annual indexing to the CPI. I might add, Mr. Speaker, the additional CPI has been a very important aspect of this government, both in social assistance and the minimum wage, in addition to foster care. We have also put the CPI into our municipal grants, which we have been increasing substantially on an annual basis. We are in year 3 of a five-year agreement with the municipal arrangements and those things are being indexed also. So the index has been there and in fact this is the first time they've had an increase in a substantial amount of time, in addition to our social rates, which we just recently increased last year. Those are also being indexed so that they aren't being held back by lack of the government putting any funding toward social inclusion.

Again, I believe with the completion of the social inclusion strategy, this will negate us having to deal with this situation much like we had to do last year on a dramatic basis to bring it current, based on the cost of living rate here in the Yukon. I look forward to the process, I look forward to further discussions here in the House with regard to the budget and I look forward to comments from the members opposite with regard to the budget. Thank you.

Hon. Mr. Lang: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I'd like to thank the Minister of Health and Social Services for his

comments this afternoon. I certainly would like to speak to this budget. This is the eighth budget that this government has put forward to the House. First I would like to thank and certainly recognize my constituents and of course Porter Creek Centre; I enjoy working with the constituency in improving the fabric of our communities and, of course, with the kind of input I get from my constituents, it helps me here in the House as we invest money in the Yukon as we go forward.

As we discussed this afternoon, I've heard many comments from the members opposite and I'd like to thank the team here on this side — of course, led by the Minister of Finance, the Premier — for all the hard work we did as a team to put this budget forward to the House here today, and also to the Yukon people in general.

Again, it's the largest budget that this government has put forward and is the largest budget that any Yukon government has put forward and put on the floor for debate in the sitting here in this year. It's a \$1.750-billion budget and it is a very large budget.

The conversation we've heard from the opposition is fairly — it has been a negative overview of the budget. We haven't even got into debating the lines of the budget or the departments. But obviously their direction is to cut a lot of these programs we're putting forward and the investments we're doing in the Yukon. It'll be interesting as we come through this debate on which part of the budget they would recommend us, as a government, or the House, to put on the back burner for another day. Certainly, it will be interesting to get their overview as we go through our departmental discussions here in the next period of time.

The upgrade to the Mayo hydro dam has been an issue, not only in the House, but it has been an issue for many, many years in the territory because of the room for improvement and the modernization of the actual structure itself to produce more energy for that part of the Yukon.

Of course, over the last seven years this government has worked toward enhancing that — in other words, putting the resources together to improve on the Mayo hydro. That was a project that Yukon Energy recommended to this government, Mr. Speaker. Yukon Energy and the board of directors — the operating officers of the company — sat down with us and recommended that's where we could best invest this money, understanding that we have a short timeline to invest the money.

Certainly in that discussion we also had to address the fact of how we tie our grids together, how we maximize the benefit to all Yukoners. Of course, the next step was to tie the hydro line together — the grid from Pelly to Stewart — and enhance the grid from Stewart to Mayo so that we could manage our hydro throughout the territory.

As the Minister of Justice was saying about the estimates — not our estimates, Mr. Speaker, but the estimates given to us by the corporation — if in fact we were not to do this project, it would reflect by the year 2012 — which is not very far in the future — a huge increase in diesel cost as the expansion of the territory moves forward.

So, Mr. Speaker, that is front and centre. It is also a green project and it is being funded by the federal government. I'd

like to take a moment and thank the federal government for that investment. That in itself makes the Yukon a little stronger.

The other interesting thing we did as a team was we looked at the success of the three-year plan and the expenditures to the Information Technology branch on what we did about probably five years ago in one of our first budgets. We put together a set amount of money for that part of Yukon's industry and how we as a government could work with the information technology industry to give them certainty.

That number today is \$6.5 million. That money is put there to work with the industry. As we monitor that, going forward over the last period of time, it has been very successful in creating a Yukon industry that is flourishing today. Without the certainty of this \$6.5-million investment from the territorial government, I'm not quite certain that we would have the volume of investment we have in the territory. You only have to talk to the people who are involved in information technology to understand that it's very important to have certainty, and this comes with that investment this government made.

Now, in saying that, how could we work with the Yukon, with contractors or with investors in the territory in other ways, where they would have certainty? So, what we've done as a group — come up with again on the back of the success of this investment we made in the information technology — capital building maintenance. We've now invested \$12 million. That \$12 million is invested over the next three years. In other words, every year the department will be working — the capital building maintenance fund will be \$12 million, managed by the department, and they can go out and do the enhancement they have to do to maintain our buildings and do things like that.

That again helps industry, helps the small contractor — because they'll know that there is a \$12-million figure, and that money will be funded over the next three years. In other words, \$36 million over the next three years. Another one was the land development — there's always a question year to year: what are we going to do for land and development? Well, we've made a commitment here, our team, that we would invest that to \$15 million a year. We have \$15 million in the budget for the next three years, which is \$45 million over the next three years for land development. That's throughout the Yukon; that's municipalities, unincorporated communities, the Yukon as a whole; that money will be there. Another thing is resourcing our Highways department for a minimum of \$40 million a year. That would be \$120 million over the next three years that the department can go to work on and know internally that those resources will be available over the next three years. This is a whole new way of looking at budgeting and looking at helping Yukoners so they can plan forward in their business plans and into their future.

Mr. Speaker, looking at the time, I move that we adjourn debate here this afternoon.

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Hon. Mr. Lang: No, I'm not adjourning debate, sorry.

Speaker: Just carry on and I will call it.

Hon. Mr. Lang: Okay, thank you, Mr. Speaker, for that correction.

I'm looking forward to this new way of managing these investments and giving certainty to Yukoners, which will make a bit of an improvement. If we only get half the success we got out of the investments we've made in information technology — the \$6.5 million — it will be a success. As we go forward, these amounts of money will be looked at on a yearly basis, so that if we are doing specific projects — and it won't limit what we do there — we will have these resources available.

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

Debate on second reading of Bill No. 20 accordingly adjourned

The House adjourned at 5:30 p.m.