

**Yukon Legislative Assembly
Whitehorse, Yukon
Thursday, February 3, 2011 — 1:00 p.m.**

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

Prayers

By-election return to writ

Speaker: I wish to inform the Assembly that I have received a letter from the Chief Electoral Officer respecting the by-election held in the Electoral District of Whitehorse Centre on December 13, 2010. The letter, dated December 20, 2010, reads as follows:

“The death on July 28, 2010 of Todd Hardy, Member for the Electoral District of Whitehorse Centre, caused a vacancy in the Yukon Legislative Assembly.

“A writ of election to fill this vacancy was issued on November 12, 2010, with polling day being December 13, 2010.

“I hereby advise that the returning officer for the Electoral District of Whitehorse Centre has certified in the return to the writ that Elizabeth Hanson has been elected as the member to represent that electoral district in the Legislative Assembly.

“Sincerely,

“Jo-Ann Waugh

“Chief Electoral Officer”

New member takes seat

Mr. Cardiff: Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present Elizabeth Hanson, representing the Electoral District of Whitehorse Centre, who has taken the required oaths and now claims the right to take her seat.

Speaker: The member may now take her seat.

Mr. Cardiff escorts Ms. Hanson to her seat

Introduction of pages

Speaker: It gives me great pleasure to announce that the following students will be serving the House as legislative pages for the 2011 spring sitting. They are Kellina Benoit, Alyssa Blanchard, Shermaine Chua, Liam Finnegan, Sruthee Govindaraj, Kevin McLachlan and Kate Power from Vanier Catholic Secondary School, and Katie Doerksen from Porter Creek Secondary School.

Today we have with us Alyssa Blanchard and Sruthee Govindaraj. I would ask the members to welcome them to the House at this time, please.

Applause

Withdrawal of motions

Speaker: The Chair wishes to inform the House of changes that have been made to the Order Paper. The following motions have been removed from the Order Paper because they are outdated: Motions No. 241, 1094, 1230 and 1234, standing in the name of the Leader of the Official Opposition; Motion No. 835, standing in the name of the Member for Klondike; Motions No. 995, 996, 998, 1003 and 1189, standing in the name of the Member for Lake Laberge; Motions No. 1019, 1039, 1093 and 1148, standing in the name of the Member for

Mount Lorne; and Motion No. 1100, standing in the name of the Member for Kluane.

Also, the following motions have been removed from the Order Paper, as the action requested in the motion has been fulfilled in whole or in part: Motion No. 671, standing in the name of the Member for Mount Lorne; and Motion No. 692, standing in the name of the Member for Klondike.

DAILY ROUTINE

Speaker: We will now proceed with the Order Paper. Are there any tributes?

TRIBUTES

In recognition of World Cancer Day

Hon. Mr. Hart: On behalf of the House, I rise today in honour of World Cancer Day, which is tomorrow. I want to pay tribute to the hard-working men and women around the world who devote so much of their time and energy to the eradication of this disease. The World Health Organization supports the International Union Against Cancer in its call to promote ways to ease the global burden of cancer. This year the World Health Organization is emphasizing the value of physical activity in the prevention of cancers, especially breast and colon cancers.

The World Health Organization supports the International Union Against Cancer in its call to promote ways to ease the global burden of cancer. This year, the WHO is emphasizing the value of physical activity in the prevention of cancers, especially breast and colon cancers.

Closer to home, the Canadian Cancer Society states that cancer is the leading cause of premature death in Canada.

Pour sa part, la Société canadienne du cancer indique que le cancer est la principale cause de décès prématuré au Canada.

Every seven minutes, two Canadians are diagnosed with cancer and one dies from it every seven-and-a-half minutes.

The good news is that there have been amazing strides in the fight against all forms of cancer. Many cancers can be prevented by encouraging a physically active lifestyle, healthy eating habits and simple preventive measures such as covering up in the sun and not smoking.

Next to prevention, self-awareness is the best way to catch cancer early, mitigate its effects, prolong life and even cure the disease. Early detection of cancer is the best indicator of successful treatment of cancer. We know our bodies best. That's why there is so much information in the media encouraging us to go see our doctors if we notice unusual changes in our bodies.

C'est nous qui connaissons le mieux notre corps. C'est pourquoi les médias nous encouragent tellement à aller chez le médecin dès que nous constatons des changements inhabituels.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I would like to encourage all Yukoners to adopt a healthy lifestyle to help prevent cancer and to get themselves checked out regularly.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

In recognition of Heart and Stroke Month

Ms. Hanson: Mr. Speaker, I rise on behalf of the Legislative Assembly to pay tribute to this month, February, as Heart and Stroke Month.

Nearly 10 years ago the Romanow *Report on the Future of Health Care* was released. Unfortunately, this prophetic document has been largely ignored. One of the main thrusts in the report is the recommendation to put greater human and financial resources into the prevention of disease, rather than the present emphasis on a curative system. Prevention not only saves money, it saves lives.

The World Health Organization estimates that non-communicable diseases, such as cancer and cardiovascular diseases, contribute to 60 percent of global death and 40 percent of the global burden of disease. These diseases are more common among the elderly and, as the Canadian population ages, it is projected that the overall burden posed by them will grow.

Health Canada reports that cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of death, disability and illness in Canada. Total eradication of heart and stroke disease is an unrealistic goal, but much can be done to reduce their impact, both on individuals and for the population as a whole, through lifestyle improvements.

As with cancer and other non-communicable diseases, cardio-vascular problems are linked to known risk factors. The main risk factors are inadequate dietary intake of fruits and vegetables, lessened physical activity patterns and tobacco use. Public education is of great importance in controlling these risk factors, but we must also look at influences outside of individuals.

A restructured system for primary health care is our best vehicle for reaching healthy people in their communities. Interventions designed to decrease risk factors before disease takes hold can be available through collaborative primary care health clinics that educate the public and offer preventive measures. Systemic change is long overdue and has been researched in pilot projects across Canada. There are many stakeholder organizations in disease control. Coordination is needed to create synergy and maximize effectiveness.

We must also look beyond the health system. Prevention of heart and stroke disease and other non-communicable conditions will be most effective if the need for healthy public policy is considered in several sectors, in addition to health. These include the environment, agriculture, sports and recreation, finance and education, among others. In addition to improving our ability to monitor and control non-communicable diseases, such as cardiovascular conditions, we must also focus on the broader issues that affect health, especially poverty, affordable housing and low literacy.

The principles of disease prevention, health promotion and protection, and healthy public policy should be paramount in our minds. If we want to save money and lives and truly believe in the fact that a healthy population makes for a productive Yukon, it will take time, committed effort by leadership and sufficient funds. Our goal as government ought to establish and maintain a realistic system that responds to the health

needs and a preventive system, rather than concentrating on intervention, when sadly, sometimes that is way too late.

In recognition of Yukon Quest

Mr. Fairclough: I rise on behalf of the Assembly to give tribute to all participants, organizers, sponsors and volunteers who have made Yukon Quest a resounding success over the years.

This international dogsled race has been run every year since 1984 and is considered a true symbol of Yukon. Participants in this thousand-mile race follow the harrowing trail that prospectors followed in search of gold over a century ago. As a result, both mushers and dogs must endure some of the planet's harshest terrain and coldest temperatures. It is for this reason that the Yukon Quest has come to represent the true power of will and pushing oneself against all odds. It is for this reason that the world turns its attention to this great region.

Yukoners embrace the spirit and self-determination and have shown their love for all participants in this race, both human and canine, through their countless hours of volunteer hours and the financial contribution that they have dedicated to this event. The Yukon Quest is a race that shows deep appreciation and respect for the natural world. Dog and musher are equal partners in working together to survive against the elements in this journey. This mutual respect and dependency are evident in the way the dogs are cared for and loved by all involved in this event.

The 2011 Yukon Quest official start will take place in front of the White Pass building in Whitehorse at 11:00 a.m. this coming Saturday, February 5. We wish all of the participants the best of luck and would like to convey how proud we are of all of them.

Speaker: Are there any further tributes?
Hearing none, are there any visitors to be introduced?

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Ms. Hanson: I'd like the House to join me in welcoming several visitors to the gallery. First, I'd like to introduce my family: my husband Doug Mowat and my daughter Paula Mowat. I think we all recognize that families are incredibly important at all stages of our lives and no more so than when we undertake to engage in public service. I very much appreciate their presence here this afternoon.

There are some other friends and colleagues and people who are active in the community — Mr. and Mrs. DeBlanco, who are well known to this House for their community activism, Council of Canadians and elders functions; Ms. Beverley Whitehouse, a long-time Whitehorse Centre resident; and there are many others. I just wanted to say that it's a wonder to see such a good turnout to the Legislature today.

Applause

Speaker: Are there any other visitors to be introduced?

TABLING RETURNS AND DOCUMENTS

Speaker: Under tabling of returns and documents, the Chair has for tabling the letter from the Chief Electoral Officer

respecting the by-election held in the electoral district of Whitehorse Centre that the House was informed of earlier today.

The Chair also has for tabling a report from the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly on the absence of members from sittings of the Legislative Assembly and its committees, dated February 3, 2011.

Are there further returns or documents for tabling?

Hon. Mr. Kenyon: I have for tabling on behalf of the Yukon Housing Corporation the annual report for the year ended March 31, 2010.

Speaker: Are there any further documents for tabling?
Are there any reports of committees?
Are there any petitions?
Are there any bills to be introduced?

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 23: Introduction and First Reading

Hon. Mr. Fentie: I move that Bill No. 23, entitled *Third Appropriation Act, 2010-11*, be now introduced and read a first time.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Hon. Premier that Bill No. 23, entitled *Third Appropriation Act, 2010-11*, be now introduced and read a first time.

Motion for introduction and first reading of Bill No. 23 agreed to

Bill No. 24: Introduction and First Reading

Hon. Mr. Fentie: I move that Bill No. 24, entitled *First Appropriation Act, 2011-12*, be now introduced and read a first time.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Hon. Premier that Bill No. 24, entitled *First Appropriation Act, 2011-12*, be now introduced and read a first time.

Motion for introduction and first reading of Bill No. 24 agreed to

Bill No. 94: Introduction and First Reading

Hon. Ms. Horne: I move that Bill No. 94, entitled *Act to Amend the Judicature Act (Trade Orders)*, be now introduced and read a first time.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Minister of Justice that Bill No. 94, entitled *Act to Amend the Judicature Act (Trade Orders)*, be now introduced and read a first time.

Motion for introduction and first reading of Bill No. 94 agreed to

Speaker: Are there further bills for introduction?
Hearing none, are there notices of motion?

NOTICES OF MOTION

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to give notice of the following motion:

THAT, notwithstanding any Standing Order or usual practices of this House, on Wednesday, February 9, 2011, the House shall recess at the appropriate hour, in order to receive

an Address from the Governor General of Canada, the Rt. Hon. David Johnston, together with all introductory and related remarks;

THAT upon completion of the Address, the House shall continue with the business before it;

THAT the Address and introductory and related remarks shall be printed in *Hansard* for that day and form part of the records of this House; and

THAT the media recording and transmission of such Address, introductory and related remarks be authorized pursuant to established guidelines for such occasions.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to forward a copy of its surplus 2011-12 budget to the federal Minister of Finance, the Hon. Jim Flaherty, in order to fulfill its obligation as the first government in Canada to table a surplus budget, meeting the national commitment by federal government and all provinces and territories to return to balanced budgets as soon as possible, and request that the federal Finance minister not penalize the Yukon government in any way because of its healthy surplus and balanced budgets being projected to 2014-15.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges all members of this House and all governments in Yukon to recognize and respect chapter 11, "Land Use Planning", of the *Umbrella Final Agreement*, the objectives of which are to:

- (1) encourage the development of a common Yukon land use planning process outside community boundaries;
- (2) minimize actual or potential land use conflicts, both within settlement land and non-settlement land and between settlement land and non-settlement land;
- (3) recognize and promote the cultural values of the Yukon Indian people;
- (4) utilize the knowledge and experience of Yukon Indian people in order to achieve effective land use planning;
- (5) recognize the Yukon First Nations' responsibilities pursuant to settlement agreements for the use and management of settlement land; and
- (6) ensure that social, cultural, economic and environmental policies are applied to management, protection and use of land, water and resources in an integrated and coordinated manner so as to ensure sustainable development.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon through the Department of Community Services to develop an implementation plan in response to the findings report of the Municipal Fiscal Framework Review Committee in the "Our Towns, Our Future" consultation that will be completed in May.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House congratulates the three territorial governments for their successes in having their critically important territorial financing agreement reinstated, which the previous federal Liberal government scrapped, and urges the current federal government to ensure the three territories are treated fairly in accordance with the individual circumstances in relation to other federal-territorial agreements, such as the territorial health system sustainability initiative and devolution transfer agreements.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Yukon private sector contractors to review the Government of Yukon's multi-year capital plan contained in the 2011-12 budget that identifies capital priorities and their related expenditures over the next four years, including the three-year plan of core expenditures concerning information technology of \$6.5 million and capital building maintenance of \$12 million, as well as the \$42 million for land development and a minimum of \$46 million for highways and airports in order to obtain maximum benefit for their companies and employees through the certainty provided by these stable, predictable, long-term government investments in identified key sectors.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to develop an implementation plan to respond to the recommendations contained in the report: *Sharing Common Ground — Review of Yukon's Police Force*.

Mr. Mitchell: I give notice today of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to implement the evidence-based recommendations brought forward by the Task Force on Acutely Intoxicated Persons at Risk, including developing a downtown co-located shelter/sobering centre/detoxification facility.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Yukon government to expeditiously undertake to ensure that Yukoners receive fair and enduring benefits from mining in the territory by working collaboratively with Yukon First Nations and negotiating an improved resource royalty sharing agreement with the Government of Canada.

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

THAT this House urges the Yukon government to create a program to meet the needs of industry that:

- (1) encourages a vibrant resource development sector in the Yukon;
- (2) recognizes the industry's need for infrastructure such as roads, housing and energy supply; and
- (3) establishes a dedicated industrial development fund from which resource industry participants may apply and receive funding for infrastructure-related expenses.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Yukon government to immediately take constructive steps to alleviate the housing shortage that impairs people working in the mining industry, and which forces lengthy commutes for those who live outside the territory, who want to work here but can't because they have no place to live.

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

THAT this House urges the Yukon government to upgrade the Mayo airport to handle regular, scheduled charter flights in order to accommodate and facilitate increased mining activity in the area.

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

THAT this House urges the Minister of Health and Social Services to immediately implement the recommendations of the final report of the Task Force on Acutely Intoxicated Persons at Risk, which was completed and submitted December 31, 2010, by:

- (1) working with the Yukon Hospital Corporation to alleviate the staffing and physical resource crisis of care in the emergency department of Whitehorse General Hospital;
- (2) establishing programs of standards of care, performance evaluation and professional training in addictions medicine for everyone providing care for acutely intoxicated persons, in order to ensure that all persons under their care are assessed and treated with best practices and with compassion and dignity in a non-judgmental manner;
- (3) identifying, analyzing and addressing gaps between services for acutely intoxicated persons, including but not limited to the RCMP, medical, detoxification and treatment facilities, outreach workers and local and First Nation governments;
- (4) bringing forward legislation that authorizes non-criminal detention for intoxication which reflects current social mores and accepted human rights, and includes reasons for detention and the parameters under which detention ceases;
- (5) creating a sobering centre in downtown Whitehorse with quality medical care and easy access to other supportive services for detaining and treating acutely intoxicated persons;
- (6) creating a nighttime shelter in close proximity to the sobering centre;
- (7) creating supportive housing for persons with a history of acute intoxication who are seeking assistance to change their lives;
- (8) expanding the detoxification level of care at the current detoxification unit to provide medical detoxification;
- (9) establishing an intervention team to respond to calls for service to deal with acutely intoxicated persons within Whitehorse city limits; and
- (10) developing and implementing realistic programs of addiction prevention, harm reduction and after-care in order to support persons who desire to remain or become sober, productive Yukon citizens.

I give notice of a further motion:

THAT this House urges the Minister of Health and Social Services and the minister responsible for Yukon Housing Corporation to:

1) immediately assess the individual and family situations of over 20 residents of the hotel in downtown Whitehorse that is planning to close at the end of February in order to renovate;

2) immediately determine the availability of accommodation in Whitehorse for all individuals and families in the hotel who have been unable to find accommodation for themselves, not only those on social assistance;

3) on the basis of the assessments, to secure accommodation and relocate those individuals and families in need of support; and

4) immediately begin the process of planning and development for construction or subsidization of adequate social housing units to meet the demands of the 142 people currently on the Housing Corporation's wait-list.

Finally, I give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House, upon proceeding to the Orders of the Day on Tuesday, February 15, 2011, shall resolve into Committee of the Whole; and

THAT Sheila Fraser, Auditor General of Canada, appear as a witness in Committee of the Whole on that day to discuss matters relating to the Auditor General's report on the Department of Health and Social Services.

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

THAT this House urges the Yukon government to take the next steps to implement the functional plan for upgrading the Hot Springs Road by funding the next phase of the project to widen and repave the road, create cycle lanes and develop trails on both sides of the road.

I give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Yukon government to take the next steps toward making improvements to Takhini River Road, including fixing the dangerous hill west of river-level properties, by completing engineering for this project as soon as possible.

I give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Yukon government to seek a new agreement with the federal government on resource revenue-sharing to have the cap on Yukon's share of resource revenues raised from the current paltry level of \$3 million per year, which the then Liberal federal government and the then Liberal territorial government agreed to set it at.

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

QUESTION PERIOD

Question re: Fiscal management

Mr. Mitchell: I have questions for the Finance minister on the budget documents he tabled just minutes ago. For the fiscal year ending March 31, 2011, the government is projecting a deficit budget. In fact, this will be the Yukon Party's second consecutive deficit budget. The Premier has once again spent down the savings account and this year's deficit is now more than \$20 million.

Last March, when the Premier presented this budget, he said it would be a surplus; it is not. Will the Premier confirm for the record there is a deficit for the year ending March 31, 2011 and that that deficit is more than \$20 million?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: Mr. Speaker, I don't think I need to confirm what's already tabled in budget documents, but I will reconfirm for the Liberal leader that, having created a savings account, the Yukon found itself in the fortunate position to be able to meet emerging needs during a global economic meltdown, which we have managed our way through quite well. Yukon is one of the lead jurisdictions in Canada right now when it comes to dealing with that situation.

We were able to meet needs for Yukoners with physician claims and hospital claims. We were able to meet the needs of the Hospital Corporation and the college with respect to solvency issues, with pension funds. Mr. Speaker, we were able to escalate projects like the Kwanlin Dun cultural centre and the new Correctional Centre, because they are ahead of schedule. This is why we created a savings account. These are the areas where we spent down the savings account. If the Liberal leader takes exception to that, he should tell Yukoners why he would not have met those emerging needs in the course of a fiscal year.

Mr. Mitchell: Mr. Speaker, the Premier knew full well what the world economic conditions were when he tabled the budget projecting a surplus, but he tabled it that way nevertheless.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the Premier has also made public the spending plans for the upcoming fiscal year. It's no surprise the Premier is presenting this as a surplus budget — there is an election coming after all. Of course, the Premier said the same thing last year and the year before and we know how both those budgets ended: in the red. Trust is based on past performance. In the past two years, this government has promised surpluses and delivered deficits. Now the Premier, on the eve of an election, is once again asking Yukoners to trust this government. Given what was promised and what was delivered in the last two budgets, why would anyone trust this government?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: Mr. Speaker, at the risk of seeming somewhat facetious, I think the Liberal leader is getting a little ahead of himself. We are actually in a budget sitting, here in the spring, in the Yukon's Legislative Assembly, doing what we're obligated to do. If the member is in a hurry to go to the polls, I'll leave that to the member to explain to the Yukon public.

Secondly, trust is an issue. This Liberal leader continued to articulate to the Yukon public that this territory was broke. How can the member expect to have the trust of the Yukon

voter when before the member is, not only a balanced budget, but one that is in surplus, with a replenishment of our savings account. Mr. Speaker, the Yukon is far from broke; it's one of the lead jurisdictions financially in the country.

Mr. Mitchell: Well, Mr. Speaker, the normal routine in here is that we ask the questions and the Premier answers, but since he's asking questions, the simple answer is for two years we said the budget would be in deficit, not surplus and for two years we've been right.

Yukoners don't believe the government's numbers and why should they? For the past two years, the government has promised surplus budgets and instead delivered deficits. The budget the Premier just tabled projects it will cost less to operate the Government of Yukon this year. Year after year, under the Yukon Party, the cost of operations has gone up, not down. Yet in this election budget the government is forecasting a \$10-million drop in operation spending. It's completely unrealistic. We don't believe this government and neither will Yukoners.

Why should anyone trust this government and these numbers?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: Here we go again. The Liberal leader is now inferring that those hard-working officials, accountants and professionals in all departments, including the Department of Finance, who construct these budgets, who provide that sage advice to ministers of this government, are actually providing information that is not correct. We'll leave that to the Auditor General to determine, not the Liberal leader. We have no advice to take from the Liberal leader on trust. He said this territory was broke. Instead, this government met health care needs for Yukoners, solvency issues for pension funds, stimulated our economy, put this territory in the lead in the country. I'd say the Yukoners will trust that versus someone who thinks this place is broke.

Question re: Acutely Intoxicated Persons at Risk, Task Force report on

Mr. Mitchell: The Yukon government recently received a series of recommendations from the Task Force on Acutely Intoxicated Persons at Risk. This group was formed because our communities are experiencing serious issues around alcohol and drugs. Our current way of handling these problems through social services agencies, the hospital and the RCMP isn't working. The task force brought forward several recommendations based on their research here in the Yukon and in other communities dealing with drug and alcohol problems. Why isn't the government responding to implement the report's recommendations?

Hon. Mr. Hart: I thank the member opposite for the question. With regard to dealing with the report just handed in recently by Dr. Beaton and Chief James Allen, we are reviewing the information provided by those individuals. We are looking at what the possibilities are, what issues we can address immediately and in the future to address some of the recommendations put forth by the task force. We are in that process right now. In fact, we are engaging with the co-chairs to ensure that we follow along their guidelines, with the aspect of trying to improve the work and the assistance provided to those in need because of the chronic inebriates.

Mr. Mitchell: The task force that was co-chaired by Chief Allen and Dr. Beaton brought forward its recommendations based on the belief that severely intoxicated individuals are not just the responsibility of law enforcement; instead, health care and social services agencies must now play a greater role.

The task force specifically called for a comprehensive downtown facility where people can sober up and, if they want to, stay for longer term detox services. To be effective, that same downtown facility must also include or be adjacent to a shelter capable of accepting people who are severely intoxicated.

Why aren't these downtown sobering centres, detox facilities and shelter complexes in the budget?

Hon. Mr. Hart: I again thank the member opposite for the question. As I stated earlier, we are working on the situation to try to see what options are available to the government in order to provide immediate services based on the recommendations in the report that we can achieve right away. We're also working with the co-chairs to ensure what we can provide in the long term.

A lot of their recommendations do provide situations that are going to protract over a period of time. That's the position we are in and we are in that to look at. Members opposite were at a facility in Ottawa that provided several of these options, and these are just some of the options that our group looked at and made their recommendations on. We are looking at trying to follow through and ensure that we can meet the obligations put forth by the task force.

Mr. Mitchell: Mr. Speaker, the task force was clear: our community needs a secure sobering centre with medical care available downtown.

This government has brought forward its budget quite a bit earlier this year and they explained that the work of preparation was done early, they could do it early. Perhaps they should have spent more time implementing this report.

Now, further, based on significant research, analysis and insight, this downtown facility should be here and keep people within the social and treatment communities that are necessary for long-term recovery. It's also downtown where many of the chronically addicted persons are likely to have been detained in the first place. The report's recommendations specifically said the facility should not be located at the Whitehorse Correctional Centre but the government decided to build one there anyway.

The government has asked these experts for help. Why is it now ignoring their explicit advice?

Hon. Mr. Hart: I spoke with the co-chair specifically on this aspect. He has indicated that he has spoken with those involved at the Whitehorse Correctional Centre and that this facility that will be there, although not the ideal situation, will meet the requirements of the task group and will provide the much-needed medical facilities when the facility is completed. It will also provide the RCMP with action and will also reduce the pressure on our ER.

Question re: Mental health services

Ms. Hanson: I have a question today for the Minister of Health and Social Services. Over the past months, I have spoken with many Yukoners who worry about the state of mental health services in the Yukon, whether it's professional caregivers frustrated by overly complex and often confusing care options, or parents and caregivers who are desperately seeking help for their mentally ill child or parent. While the demand for mental health services appears to be on the increase, I have heard concerns expressed about impending job cuts to mental health services. Attempts to get information have been stymied; employees have been under a gag order not to speak to the media; and the minister hasn't given any interviews.

On the first day of this sitting, I want to give the minister an opportunity to explain what's happening. Will jobs be cut in mental health services and, if so, which programs will be affected?

Hon. Mr. Hart: Mr. Speaker, for the member opposite and all the members opposite with regard to this question, the Premier — the Minister of Finance — will be providing a short outlay of the budget for 2011-12. There will be no cuts in the funding for Health and Social Services. In fact, the member opposite will be pleased to note that we are going to be taking the lion's share of the increase with regard to funding for Health and Social Services. We will be increasing funding substantially.

We have also asked our officials to look across all their departments to ensure that we can find the additional funding required so that we can not only maintain the facilities that we had in the past under THAF — that is for the mental health services, which was created under THAF; however, that funding was coming to an end in 2011. As such, we had duties that we had to follow along with, but I'm here to say, Mr. Speaker, that my officials have been able to find the additional funding required to maintain those services, and we will not only be maintaining the mental health services for those individuals in the rural areas, we intend to enhance them.

Ms. Hanson: I guess I'd like to clarify if we're talking about a permanent extension, or a one-year extension, as has been rumoured. If it is one year, I would like to hear clearly from the minister the length of time this program will be extended, because the last time I checked, the experts are still saying that one in five of us, one in five Canadians — look around this room. That means one in five of us here will suffer from some form of mental illness in their lifetime. This will be the case one year from now and five years from now. So if there is an extension or a stay of execution, I think we need to know how long this stay of execution will be in place.

I'm concerned that having made the announcement — or, it having gone through the media before being conveyed to the staff, we've already seen an exodus of highly skilled mental health staff leaving for other employment. I wonder what the likelihood is of getting these highly skilled workers reassigned for one-year temporary assignments. Or, can we get an assurance from the minister today that there will be ongoing support for these programs?

Hon. Mr. Hart: If the member opposite wishes to listen to the Premier's speech here shortly, he will provide a very in-depth response to that question, and we plan to follow through with that process to ensure that services are available to all Yukoners for all mental health issues.

Ms. Hanson: That didn't quite answer the question I had raised. Perhaps as a new member, I'm only relying upon the information provided by this government, so I'm mindful that, four years ago, this government announced with great fanfare that it was making improvements to mental health services at the community level. I'm tabling their own press release. In that press release, they talk about a mental health clinician to be hired for Dawson City, an early psychosis intervention plan would be created, and housing supports would be provided.

At that time, the minister said these changes are part of a plan for long-lasting improvements to mental health services that will benefit those Yukon residents who need them most.

After deciding on making major cuts, I'm assuming the minister, under pressure from the media and families, announces today a reversal of direction or perhaps a stay of execution. When can we get a confirmation that Yukoners can expect to have the services they require and need for healthy mental health throughout the territory?

Hon. Mr. Hart: Maybe the member opposite is new, but I think she has picked up on what questions to ask fairly quickly.

With regard to the question, we are providing assistance to mental health, as I indicated, and with the help of my officials, we have been able to provide secure funding for that program to ensure that we provide for all of the services the member opposite referred to, and we plan to provide it for years to come.

Question re: Landlord and Tenant Act

Mr. Cardiff: My question is for the Minister of Community Services. He, as well as other members of the government caucus, supported an NDP motion to establish an all-party committee to receive the views and opinions of Yukon residents on changing the *Landlord and Tenant Act*.

On April 6, 2010, this House voted to amend the reporting timeline of this committee to the fall of last year. That motion passed unanimously as well. The committee did report last year. Since that time has now come and gone, can the Minister of Community Services tell the people of the Yukon when they can expect to see new *Landlord and Tenant Act* legislation presented to this House?

Hon. Mr. Lang: I would have to agree with the member opposite on the question. We did go through the process. We did get an extension on the actual report. I would have to get back to him on timelines on when the government could see itself going forward with the actual new *Landlord and Tenant Act*. I haven't got that at my fingertips at the moment.

Mr. Cardiff: Mr. Speaker, if you go back to the original motion, there was actually going to be legislation tabled very shortly afterward.

The members of the all-party committee on the *Landlord and Tenant Act* worked long and hard to gather input from

Yukoners on whether or not the 40-years-plus law should be reviewed and updated. They received written submissions, they posted a questionnaire and they held public hearings. The public response was crystal clear: the current act is not fair, it's not equitable and it fails to clearly lay out the rights and the responsibilities of all parties.

On November 9, the committee presented its report in the House, including eight recommendations to the members of this Legislative Assembly. When will the government honour the wishes of the Yukon public who took the time and made the effort to take part in these consultations and table new legislation reflecting their ideas for badly needed changes?

Hon. Mr. Lang: I will repeat what I just said to the member opposite. I committed to get back to the member opposite with the timelines. That's all I can do in this House, Mr. Speaker — get back to the member opposite with some timelines.

Mr. Cardiff: Well, when this was discussed, they were prepared to bring the legislation in post haste — right away.

I wrote to the minister about this on December 9, and on January 14 the minister said this: "Before making changes to the legislation, I want to ensure the community is engaged and provided with an opportunity to provide input."

Well, they were, Mr. Speaker, and I'm very disappointed. What I'm hearing from Yukoners, from my constituents, is that they're disappointed in his response too.

This government has a bad habit of asking people for their opinions and then turning around and ignoring or rejecting their input. It has done this now with the *Health Act* review, Yukon's *Child and Family Services Act*, the Peel land use planning commission report, Task Force on Acutely Intoxicated Persons at Risk, Select Committee on Whistle-blower Protection, and the list goes on and on. I don't know what to say.

The minister says in his letter that he is committed to working toward enhancing a positive environment for landlords and tenants.

Speaker: Ask the question, please.

Mr. Cardiff: Why won't the minister make bringing legislation to this sitting of the Assembly a priority?

Mr. Nordick: With regard to the *Landlord and Tenant Act*, I would like to thank the members opposite for their participation on the committee. It's an example of how when all parties work together we can come to solutions that work better for Yukoners. What the member opposite is forgetting is that we have to go out and consult with Yukoners. Government is still obligated to consult with Yukoners, First Nation governments, municipalities and stakeholders. We cannot rush things, like the member opposite would like us to, and get it wrong. It has to be done right.

Question re: Social housing

Mr. McRobb: I have some questions for the minister responsible for the Yukon Housing Corporation. Just three days before this past Christmas, the minister's colleague released a report called the *Whitehorse Housing Adequacy Study*. This study was undertaken to help us better understand the breadth and depth of the issues facing the homeless and those who are

precariously housed. It also provided the information all of us require in order to make informed decisions.

This study provides hard evidence that homelessness and the lack of low-income housing is a major problem in our community. More evidence of that is clear with the closing of rooms at the Roadhouse last week. This week, Yukoners discovered that the Housing Corporation is sitting on 30 empty rooms at the former athletes village. Why is this government not using these rooms to house people?

Hon. Mr. Kenyon: We are looking at that report and digesting it. It's a good report and we appreciate all the hard work that went into it. Also, we are trying to catch up with building social housing units. We have added almost 40 percent; we will soon be over 600 units. I reflect back on the very short-lived Liberal government that, in 22 months, built not a single one. Before anyone starts smiling, two NDP governments before that also built none — zero.

We have over 600, or will have soon, and we've increased that capacity by 40 percent. It's an ongoing process and we're working very, very hard.

In terms of the final part of the question, I do hope that the member opposite will think better on what he's saying to recommend, perhaps, that we go against building code and house people in unsafe environments.

Mr. McRobb: Once again, this government is focused on the rear-view mirror. The report released by the Minister of Health and Social Services just before Christmas outlined the seriousness of problems related to housing and homelessness in our city. The report indicated that 43 percent of people surveyed felt their choices for housing were extremely limited. A number of factors appear to be limiting that choice, such as the fact that 58 percent of the respondents said it was hard to find affordable rental accommodations and half said it was very hard to find any vacancies. The minister responsible for the Housing Corporation is sitting on 30 empty units, yet has no plans to use them. When will the minister open up these units for these and other homeless families?

Hon. Mr. Kenyon: First of all, I have to point out that the member opposite refers to these rooms as "units". They certainly aren't. They have no bathrooms. They have a common one down the hallway that was designed to be removed to increase programming space.

They have no kitchens; there are no restaurants in the area, and no shopping centres in the area, other than the cafeteria. At the college, there are no facilities for that. But I would also point out to the member opposite that the photograph that appeared in one of our local advertising papers clearly shows that the types of windows that are in there are totally against building code. They would block egress and access for firefighters and the ability for tenants to get out. They are against code, Mr. Speaker. They were never designed for that, and I do hope that the member opposite is not seriously suggesting that we house people in unsafe environments.

Mr. McRobb: Mr. Speaker, Yukon Housing Corporation has more than 100 clients on its wait-list, yet it has empty rooms. A spokesperson for the minister confirmed that the government has not even considered using the vacant rooms at the

former athletes village, and I quote: “We have not looked at that,” said the spokesperson. The obvious question is: why not?

The families moving out of the Roadhouse, who are now looking for a place to live, would like to know the answer to that question and so would many concerned Yukoners.

The minister has given some reasons why he feels these rooms cannot be used, Mr. Speaker, but we have not heard enough.

Can the minister explain why these rooms remain empty and why the government has not looked at using them?

Hon. Mr. Kenyon: I will repeat again: these rooms are not to code; it is not legal to house people in them. The photograph I referred to earlier clearly shows slot windows at height. These are not legal to house people in. Residents could not get out in a fire. They are against code.

It was reported in that article that the reporter didn’t know what that meant. For the member opposite, who obviously doesn’t know what that means either, it is not legal; it is not safe; and I am not prepared to have to answer questions in this House — should, God forbid, there be a fire or accident — why people were injured or died. That is not a reasonable solution, and I ask the member opposite to seriously think about what he’s saying. It makes no sense.

Question re: Devolution negotiations

Mr. Mitchell: I have questions for the Premier on the recent devolution agreement signed by our neighbours to the east in the Northwest Territories. The new deal will allow the N.W.T. to retain millions of dollars in resource royalties that had previously flowed to the Government of Canada. If the deal had been in place last year, the N.W.T. estimates it would have taken in an additional \$60 million.

As new mines open here in the Yukon, we face the prospect of the lion’s share of the royalties they generate flowing to Ottawa. In fact, the most we would keep is \$3 million a year. The need to renegotiate the royalty aspect of our devolution deal is now obvious.

What negotiations, if any, has the Premier had with Canada, and have those discussions involved Yukon First Nation governments as well?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: Mr. Speaker, I would remind the Liberal leader who signed us on to the existing agreement that dictates what portion or share of non-renewable resource revenues Yukon retains. That said, we’re very pleased that the Government of the Northwest Territories has reached this threshold in their negotiations with Canada on taking on management and control of their own affairs. This is a very important milestone for the Northwest Territories, and we’ve always supported them in their efforts.

Thirdly, we’ve been very clear for years that, should the N.W.T. receive a better agreement with Canada on sharing, that we would certainly look into it and be looking at how we can further maximize retention of revenues here in the Yukon. So that said, I can assure the member that, as far back as September 2010, the process has already commenced right here in Yukon.

The first steps we are taking, though, are with First Nation governments, because they have a sharing capacity with the

Yukon public government vis-à-vis the formula under the *Umbrella Final Agreement*. That said, once we have a joint position to present to Canada, we will do so. But I also remind the member that we take a much broader approach to our fiscal relationship with Canada — not just non-renewable resource revenues.

Mr. Mitchell: Well, I’m glad to hear that the Premier recognizes that under chapter 23 of the *Umbrella Final Agreement*, there is actually a requirement to work with Yukon First Nations; nevertheless, we want to see and hear what exactly has been done. Without a change to the royalty section of our devolution agreement, Yukon will miss out on millions of dollars with increased mining that would go straight to the Government of Canada. Keeping those royalties here in Yukon would be a giant step forward toward our fiscal independence. The Premier has the ability under chapter 7 of the devolution transfer agreement to engage the federal government and insist on Yukoners getting a better deal. The Premier has basically told us he’s researching it and consulting with Yukon First Nations. Has the Premier informed Canada of his desire to invoke chapter 7 of the agreement, and, if so, when do negotiations start and how with First Nations be involved?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: When the government side says that we take a much broader approach to our fiscal relationship with Canada, there is good reason for why we do this. Let me point out the fact that non-renewable resource revenues tend to be quite volatile. It’s great to maximize the amount of royalties that we can retain here in Yukon, but what goes up in this area of non-renewable resource revenues will go down. In taking the broader approach, we ensure that our fiscal relationship will not compromise the future of the Yukon because we’ve staked all our future in an area that may be reduced dramatically going forward.

That said, another point to be made with respect to the royalties is it’s this Liberal leader who constantly accuses this government of living by the largesse of the federal government. Here we have Yukoners who are returning a portion of what we earn back to this federation, including 70 cents of every dollar of our own-source revenues. In other words, we are paying our way in this nation. The member, the Liberal leader, says we live by the largesse. Mr. Speaker, the facts are the Yukon government and the Yukon people are paying their way in this country, Canada, and that’s a good thing.

Mr. Mitchell: It’s fine to be a contributor to Canada — we should be — but these are first and foremost Yukon’s natural resources. I would expect this Premier to stand up and be more like Danny Williams and fight for this territory, not just roll over.

The Liberal Party believes that First Nation governments should be our partners in these negotiations, not competitors. We also believe First Nation governments should receive a share of any increase in the amount of royalties that we receive, so we’re urging the Premier to move forward with Yukon First Nations to negotiate a better agreement with the Government of Canada that will see Yukon keep more of its royalties.

Yes, the mining industry is cyclical; what we’re talking about is maximizing our benefit during the up-cycle.

We should all share in the increased wealth that comes from a rejuvenated mining sector and we will all have to spend money in support of the infrastructure needed for that sector, so it's only logical. Again I'll ask: what has the Premier requested from the Government of Canada and what has he heard in response?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: Let me see if I can get this straight. On the one hand, the Liberal leader says we get too much money from Ottawa; now the Liberal leader is demanding that we go ask for more. I think there's a real contrast in this Legislature and in this territory when it comes to leadership.

The Yukon Party government believes in not going to Canada with our hand out; we go to Canada with an offer as a partner.

Secondly, I want to repeat: it's the Liberals of this territory that signed us on to this agreement that the Liberal leader now finds great fault with. I would remind the Liberal leader that back then, the one voice in this territory that said, "Let's not be too hasty on this devolution transfer agreement", was the Yukon Party. It's on the public record.

Let me go on. The Liberal leader is talking like we own these resources. We do not have provincehood. We do not own these resources; we manage them on behalf of Yukoners and all Canadians. Mr. Speaker, we are getting our fair return from the national wealth and treasury, but we are also putting back into that treasury our justified return. That's the Yukon Party's approach. The Liberals would go there with their hand out and achieve nothing.

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT BILLS

Bill No. 24: *First Appropriation Act, 2011-12* — Second Reading

Clerk: Second reading, Bill No. 24, standing in the name of the Hon. Mr. Fentie.

Hon. Mr. Fentie: Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 24, entitled *First Appropriation Act, 2011-12*, be now read a second time.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Hon. Premier that Bill No. 24, entitled *First Appropriation Act, 2011-12*, be now read a second time.

Budget speech

Hon. Mr. Fentie: Mr. Speaker, honourable members, it is indeed my honour and privilege today to table the 2011-12 budget — a surplus budget, the fifth budget of our second mandate and our ninth budget overall since our government — the Yukon Party government — was first elected in 2002.

The eight budgets we tabled previously were the building blocks of Yukon's future. The 2011-12 budget will continue this trend. Our budgets, Mr. Speaker, have clearly put Yukon on the pathway to prosperity.

The Government of Yukon's budget for 2011-12 is \$1 billion and 89.580 million. The operation and maintenance totals \$851.863 million, of which \$93.916 million is recoverable.

The capital budget is a total of \$237.717 million, of which \$143.020 million is recoverable. It is interesting to note, by way of comparison, that our first budget for the fiscal year 2003-04 was only \$550 million. This is our third budget that exceeds the billion-dollar threshold. We have utilized our previous budgets to help stimulate Yukon's private sector economy and the 2011-12 budget will be no exception. That strategy has worked. It has worked extremely well.

Despite this obvious success, our government has been criticized for utilizing our budgets in this way. Our critics would not and do not support the Yukon government using its savings account to help create economic growth here in Yukon in the private sector. They argue that the Yukon government and the Yukon economy are too dependent upon transfer payments from the federal government. Well, I can emphatically say that our critics are wrong.

First of all, the territory is only receiving its fair share of federal transfer payments under the territorial formula financing agreement, which is based upon the fundamental premise of comparable services for comparable levels of taxation.

Secondly, our "savings account" has been used to leverage the government's stimulus monies from the federal government to provide necessary and much needed infrastructure while stimulating the economy. This only made sense.

What is the point of having a "savings account" if you cannot use it in time of need? Our government reviewed our strategic capital investment plan with the priority objective of delivering maximum benefit to Yukon and we have succeeded.

Our critics failed to recognize that the territory's private sector is fast approaching parity with government in contributing to the growth of the Yukon economy. In fact, in 2010 that contribution in just one sector — the mining sector — is estimated to be approximately some \$800 million.

Our critics certainly need not fear Yukon's financial position, though they tend to try and express to Yukoners that there is something to be concerned about. I'm here to comfort our critics and the Official Opposition and the Third Party of this House.

The 2011-12 budget replenishes the Yukon government's savings account by providing a surplus of some \$38.456 million, with a net financial resources position at year-end of some \$43.137 million.

This is a budget where our revenues exceed our expenditures. This budget shows a balance between a whole range of competing priorities. Further, this budget, like our previous budget, now includes a multi-year capital plan.

The Yukon is one of the first jurisdictions to table a balanced, in-surplus budget, which is the direction of the nation.

This plan identifies our commitment to stable, predictable investments in key sectors of our economy that enable Yukon's private sector contractors to plan accordingly. We are committed to a three-year plan of core expenditures concerning our information technology sector.

This includes a total of \$6.5 million and a capital building maintenance program especially made and tailored for smaller contractors of \$12 million. In addition, \$41.921 million is provided for land development, and a minimum of \$46.633 million for highways and airports. Mr. Speaker, this is an investment in Yukon's infrastructure which is compatible and contributing to the Yukon's private sector and our economic future.

In considering Yukon's healthy financial position, one must also consider the fact that the Yukon is only one of two jurisdictions in Canada — the other being the Province of Alberta — that has the fiscal resources available to finance future government operations. In other words, we have a net financial resource position in the positive, along with Alberta. All other jurisdictions in the country are in a net debt position. We are paying our way.

The 2011-12 surplus budget is also in keeping with Canada's national strategy, as said, whereby the government and all provinces and territorial governments are being urged to return surplus budgets as soon as possible.

Today, the Yukon has reached that mark. If this isn't good, prudent fiscal management, I don't what is. As this is the last budget of our current mandate, it is time to take stock, to reflect on from whence we came, where we are today and where we are headed in the future.

Let me touch briefly on where we were back in 2002. When our government took office in 2002, the Yukon had experienced seven years of economic recession. Yukon's population had been in decline for six consecutive years, following the closure of the Faro mine in 1997. Yukon's unemployment rate was in the double-digit range of over 10 percent for years. Tourism was Yukon's number one industry and mainstay. Yukon's mining industry was virtually defunct. Annual mining exploration and development spending in the territory was less than \$10 million. There were several major factors causing this decline, irrespective of world mineral prices and world markets.

There was a lack of investor confidence in Yukon and in Yukon's mining industry due in large part to measures that tended to create an improper balance in government policy, regulation and legislation between the economy and the environment. I want to be clear: this Yukon Party government believes in balance between the two. They do not conflict; they are compatible; they are our future.

Unsettled land claims, a cumbersome, time-consuming Ottawa-based permitting regime, and implementation of policies such as the Yukon protected areas strategy at the territorial level and placer mining policies at the federal level, impeded Yukon's mining sector and investment possibilities and indeed other resource industries.

One of our government's first actions in January 2003 was to discontinue the seriously flawed Yukon protected areas strategy. That was being implemented in competition with the processes as established under the *Umbrella Final Agreement* for creating parks, habitat protection areas and special management areas.

We also had to address the conflicts created by previous governments in relation to mining claims, in the establishment of Tombstone and Fishing Branch territorial parks.

There is an old adage that if you don't learn from history, you are destined to repeat history. This is why our government is taking a systematic, balanced approach and a reasoned approach to land use planning in all regions of the territory that we are obligated to do. We are following the processes as set out in the *Umbrella Final Agreement*.

Achieving a proper balance between the economy and the environment is as important today as it was in 2002. It is interesting to note here that our government is the only government to achieve a land use plan — the *North Yukon Regional Land Use Plan* of 2009 — since the *Umbrella Final Agreement* was ratified in 1993. Our government succeeded where all other governments failed.

The seven years of economic decline exacted a heavy toll on the Yukon population. In some instances, the actions of previous governments made the situation worse by even reducing services. For example, the Crossroads detoxification centre was closed under "government renewal".

The Women's Directorate lost its stand-alone status. The Department of Tourism was combined with small business and the Department of Economic Development was disbanded completely. The community development fund was also significantly reduced.

The bulk of the 2,800 Yukoners who left the territory between 1995 and 2002 were in the 25- to 34-year-old age group. This was our future. This was our prime labour force. Mr. Speaker, it was back then that Yukon's future was indeed being mortgaged. Our children had to leave the territory to find work outside of Yukon. This was the legacy left to us by previous Yukon governments, both Liberal and New Democratic, since the Yukon Party government was last in office, from 1992 to 1996, when indeed, factually, the Yukon economy was again prospering.

Accordingly, rebuilding Yukon's private sector economy was job number one for the Yukon Party government upon taking office in 2002. Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to say that we more than succeeded in that task in our first mandate in 2002 to 2006.

Our government is now approaching the end of its second mandate that commenced in 2006 and will run until October of 2011. This the 2011-12 budget is our final budget for this mandate. Comparing Yukon with where it was in 2002 to where we are in this sitting and beyond — for the period ending December 2010 — is like comparing night and day. Let me briefly touch on promoting a strong, diversified private sector economy. Our government succeeded in turning Yukon's economy around from being one of the weakest economies back in 2002 to one of the best in Canada today. A recent survey by the Fraser Institute discovered that, in the opinion of senior mining executives from around the globe, the Yukon is fourth in the world as far as a place to do business and a place to invest. The survey looked at everything from regulatory duplication to uncertainty over taxation regimes. In the opinion of over 400 companies doing business around the world, Yukon ranked

fourth out of 51 other jurisdictions. That in itself is a remarkable achievement.

Back in 2002, when you compare that, Yukon was ranked a paltry 36th out of 45 jurisdictions from around the world. So one of our first challenges was to create a stable political, economic and regulatory environment. The settlement of three more land claims and promoting Yukon First Nations as full partners in the economic development of the territory contributed to this economic turnaround. We promoted a positive investment climate by providing favourable taxation, business incentive programs and competitive royalty regimes. Last fall we amended the *Income Tax Act* so that corporate income tax for small business deduction limits were increased from \$400,000 to \$500,000, which means small businesses — which are the foundation of Yukon's businesses and economy — will be paying less taxes in 2011.

Our individual and small business tax rates are some of the lowest in the country and we have neither territorial sales tax nor any payroll taxes. We also have the lowest fuel taxes by far in Canada. Compared to British Columbia, our tax rate on gasoline is 67 percent lower and on diesel it is 64 percent lower.

We streamlined regulatory processes and support of legislation together with establishing a system of integrated resource management. During the period of global economic uncertainty, we focused our efforts on diversification by promoting natural resource development, by promoting tourism, promoting trade, arts and culture, film and sound, research and development, information and technology, agriculture, forestry, manufacturing, trapping and outfitting, and small business diversity.

There is economic strength in diversity. We invested heavily in transportation, energy, communications, and information technology, as well as in the innovation and knowledge sectors — the Shakwak project, Mayo B, the new mobile communications solution, the Climate Change Research Centre of Excellence, and the Yukon Cold Climate Innovation Centre are but a few.

Yukon has well maintained highways, resource roads, bridges, airports, access to ports and expanding energy in communication networks.

In this budget, we are investing some \$38.58 million for a variety of work on the Alaska Highway, Klondike Highway, Dempster Highway, Atlin Road and other territorial roads, including \$4.43 million for bridge work.

In 2010 our government marked the opening of the Erik Nielsen Whitehorse International Airport terminal building. This expansion ensures that Yukon can continue to receive direct international flights, such as Condor Airlines as well as attract additional international carriers such as Edelweiss Air who are working to initiate a new direct service to Whitehorse from Zurich, Switzerland, beginning this summer. The 2011-12 budget includes \$2.990 million for more improvements to Yukon airports.

Our government invested heavily in tourism marketing such as the 2007 Look Up North marketing campaign and the

2010 Pan North Marketing Consortium Olympic marketing initiative.

“Destination: Yukon” builds on this momentum and the awareness generated by Yukon's participation and targets the gateway cities of Edmonton, Calgary, Vancouver with an eye on Toronto for larger campaigns.

We are also continuing our investment in the tourism co-operative marketing fund that has helped further increase awareness of the Yukon as a travel destination. The 2011-12 budget is providing, under the leadership of the Minister of Tourism, some \$750,000 and another \$700,000 respectively to these two marketing initiatives.

Our government has also invested heavily in tourism, arts and cultural infrastructure over the years. Let us look at some of the areas of strategic investment. The Old Fire Hall and the roundhouse on the Whitehorse waterfront, the Pacific Steam Whaling Company community house on Herschel Island and work at Forty Mile, not to mention the official designation of Fort Selkirk and the A.J. Goddard as Yukon historic sites.

The 2011-12 budget will see more major investments in this regard: \$4.523 million for the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations cultural centre with a total cost of some \$12 million; a \$916,000 contribution for the Kluane First Nation cultural centre and \$1.5 million for the \$22.4 Kwanlin Dun cultural centre, together with the Whitehorse Public Library, which is a centrepiece in the revitalization of the Whitehorse waterfront.

In addition, \$4.827 million is being invested in the Whitehorse waterfront project, together with \$1.037 million for the Carcross waterfront project.

Our government's continued marketing initiatives in China have led to the development of a sister relationship with Shaanxi Province and the purchase of Yukon Zinc's Wolverine project by two Chinese companies. The Yukon Party government's Minister of Economic Development has worked hard and diligently for years since taking office to cultivate this relationship. Today it is producing hundreds of millions of dollars of investment in Yukon's private sector.

In addition, the Chinese zinc and lead producer Yunnan Chihong Zinc & Germanium Co. Ltd. has established a joint venture with Selwyn Resources to advance Yukon's Selwyn project, one of the largest undeveloped zinc and lead deposits in the world.

A growing economy also requires developed land, and our government invested some \$15.1 million territory-wide in residential, commercial and industrial land development for last year. This year we are almost tripling that amount, to a total of \$41.921 million.

Where are we today, ending 2010? This brings us to that very important point. Yukon's economic growth, our gross domestic product of 3.9 percent, was the strongest in Canada in 2009. Yukon was one of only two Canadian jurisdictions, along with Manitoba, which was at a paltry .05 percent growth, that registered real economic growth. This was the fifth time in the last six years that real GDP growth rate in Yukon was higher than the national average. Yukon's population in 2010 is estimated to be some 34,500. Our skilled labour force and our

children, who were forced to leave the territory those years ago, are returning and finding gainful employment. In June 2010, we marked the seventh consecutive June which recorded an increase in Yukon's population. As of December 2010, Yukon's unemployment rate of 4.4 percent was the lowest in the country.

Mining exploration expenditures in 2010 are expected to exceed the 2007 record of some \$140 million by about another \$10 million; whereas, the value of mineral production for 2010 is expected to total some \$260 million. Remember those years ago upon taking office when Yukon received a mere \$10 million less in investment. By April of this year, there will be three operating mines in the Yukon: Capstone's copper-gold mine at Minto, Alexco's Bellekeno silver-lead mine at Keno and Yukon Zinc Corporation's zinc-silver Wolverine mine near Ross River. Three more mines are in the permitting stage: Victoria Gold's Eagle property near Mayo, North American Tungsten Corporation's property at Mactung north of Watson Lake and Selwyn Chihong's massive zinc-lead deposit at Howard's Pass. In addition, new discoveries such as White Gold and the Rau properties greatly influence exploration activity in 2010 and there's no doubt that will continue in 2011. The last time that the Yukon had three operating mines was in the heydays of the 1970s. We are indeed going back to the future and we are indeed benefiting from the efforts to date.

Tourism, Yukon's other economic mainstay, while facing its share of tough challenges in 2010, has fared relatively well. We thank the minister and her department, and of course the Tourism Industry Association, for all their efforts.

Year-to-date figures for border crossings show an increase of 10 percent, marking 11 consecutive months of growth in border crossings to Yukon. That is indeed a remarkable achievement. Compared to other jurisdictions across Canada, Yukon continues to lead the country when it comes to visitations — another remarkable achievement.

The territory was not significantly impacted by global economic recession and, in fact, has benefited from the increased capital spending by the governments of Yukon and Canada in construction projects initiated in 2009, which was a response to the global economic downturn that took hold of the world in 2008.

Yukon is the best place in Canada to live today and we are proud of it. There is the economic legacy of our government which we are leaving for the future of this territory.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, there is more. Now where are we headed in 2011-12? This budget, like its predecessors, is based upon three pillars in addition to promoting a strong, diversified private sector economy. Those are practising good government, protecting and preserving our environment and wildlife, and achieving a better quality of life for all.

First, on practising good government: practising good government is a hallmark of our government, especially in relation to the prudent fiscal management of the territory's financial resources. In my opening remarks, I noted how well off the Yukon is in this regard when we compare ourselves to other jurisdictions in Canada. To do all that we have done and still have a healthy surplus budget for the fiscal year 2011-12 with

no net debt forecasted anywhere in our future as laid out in our multi-year fiscal framework is another major accomplishment. At this juncture I want to extend, on behalf of all ministers and our government, our appreciation to the Department of Finance, its officials and to all Yukon government departments and their officials for their dedication and commitment to achieving this very important milestone for our territory within our nation.

Other major good-government initiatives undertaken by the Yukon Party government since 2002 cover the entire spectrum of government services in relation to education, justice, the environment, energy, health and social services, and the economy. The education reform project final report of February 2008 has led to the development of a new vision for education in Yukon, entitled *New Horizons: Honouring our Commitment to the Future*. The minister and the department are forging ahead with educational reforms to better educate and prepare Yukon children and Yukoners for the benefits that are accruing today and long into the future.

With the Minister of Justice's leadership and her department, the corrections consultation that commenced in November 2004 and concluded in March 2006 has resulted in a new philosophy of corrections that emphasizes the protection of the public, holds offenders accountable and provides appropriate opportunities for rehabilitation. This is reflected in the new *Corrections Act* and in our new facilities and programs to be delivered in those facilities. The corrections consultation has also led to the development of a *Victims of Crime Strategy* and the development of the *Victims of Crime Act*.

The *Yukon Substance Abuse Action Plan*, which was outlined in our 2006 election platform, has four strategic directions. They are harm reduction, prevention and education, treatment and enforcement. As a consequence of this plan, Yukon is recognized as a leader when it comes to dealing with fetal alcohol spectrum disorder, otherwise known as FASD.

The safer communities and neighbourhoods office — SCAN — and the street crime reduction team, which has now been incorporated into the overall police services agreement, are two initiatives emanating from the *Substance Abuse Action Plan*.

On September 5, 2006, our government released the Government of Yukon climate change strategy, which was followed on February 12, 2009, by our *Climate Change Action Plan*.

One of the key actions outlined in this plan, as well as in our 2006 election platform commitments, was to establish a Yukon Climate Change Research Centre of Excellence at Yukon College, which opened its doors on October 21, 2009.

At the same time, our government developed the *Energy Strategy for Yukon* in concert with the *Climate Change Action Plan*. The *Energy Strategy for Yukon* was released on January 23, 2009. A major commitment was the development of a territorial-wide electrical grid and our government was fortunate to have the first project approved under the Government of Canada's green energy infrastructure fund. The Government of Canada is contributing up to \$71 million of this \$160-million project for the Carmacks-Stewart transmission line connecting

the Whitehorse-Aishihik-Faro grid to the Mayo-Dawson grid and upgrading the Mayo dam, known as Mayo B. The project is currently on time, on budget. It is a project meeting immediate infrastructure needs and challenges and it is indeed the largest project the Yukon Energy Corporation has ever undertaken.

On November 5, 2009, our government tabled the *Yukon Solid Waste Action Plan* in this House and, led by the minister, we are setting out how to improve our infrastructure and services for sustainable waste management.

In April 2008 our government established another major review, the *Yukon Health Care Review*, which examined the sustainability of Yukon's health care system over the next decade. The *Yukon Health Care Review* final report was completed in September 2008 and the Yukon Party government is acting on those recommendations.

One of the actions for change emanating from the health care review was to develop a wellness strategy focusing on children and youth, healthy aging and social inclusion. One of the most difficult challenges in government is this portfolio, and our minister is providing the leadership and these areas of recommendation are well underway.

The investment in social inclusion initiatives that improve the well-being of Yukoners have been a focus of our government for the past nine years.

Let me touch on some of the highlights of government accomplishments in regard to the following: increased social assistance rates by more than 25 percent in 2008. The Liberals in this House opposed that; the NDP in this House opposed that. We doubled and indexed the Yukon seniors income supplement. What is astonishing is the Liberals of this House opposed that, and the NDP of this House —

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Point of order

Speaker: The Hon. Member for Kluane, on a point of order.

Mr. McRobb: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, I would submit it's a precedent in this House for the Finance minister, when reading the budget speech, to stick to the text. Instead today he has injected, on numerous occasions, ad-lib comments that raise political arguments to which we have no opportunity to respond.

Speaker's ruling

Speaker: From the Chair's perspective, there is no point of order. It is merely a dispute among members.

The Hon. Premier has the floor.

Hon. Mr. Fentie: Mr. Speaker, another item: we increased and indexed the pioneer utility grant. The Liberals of this House opposed that; the New Democrats opposed that.

We increased childcare subsidies — the Liberals of this House opposed that; the NDP of this House opposed that.

We increased the Yukon child benefit. Surprisingly, the Liberals opposed that and the New Democrats opposed that.

Mr. Speaker, we increased and indexed rates paid to foster parents who are caring for Yukon foster children: the Liberals and the NDP opposed that.

We constructed a 32-unit, \$8 million complex in Riverdale for single-parent families. The Liberals and the NDP opposed that.

We built a new Habitat for Humanity triplex on the site of the infamous 810 Wheeler Street. The Opposition of this Assembly opposed that. We doubled the prevention of violence against aboriginal women from \$100,000 to \$200,000. The Opposition of this House opposed that. Building the \$12-million new seniors complex on the Whitehorse waterfront, replacing the Alexander Street seniors apartments — the Opposition opposed that. What is clear here is who bears the social conscience for Yukoners. It is not the Liberals. It is not the NDP. It is the Yukon Party government and the evidence is before us. Those are just a few accomplishments on the social side of the ledger and there are many, many more that the Opposition opposes. There are over 100 more. No previous Yukon government has allocated so many resources, so much time and effort in working to improve the quality of life for all. We know there are still areas where Yukoners could use more assistance. The work is currently underway on the social inclusion strategy, and this will highlight the priorities of future investments.

The social inclusion strategy will be one of the most significant policy initiatives in the history of the Yukon government. It will include a broad range of initiatives focused on poverty reduction, access to housing, education, health and social services and other services.

Another hallmark of good government is cooperative governance. Once again, the Yukon Party government has excelled in this regard. Under our watch since 2002, the Kluane First Nation, the Kwanlin Dun First Nation and the Carcross-Tagish First Nation have reached final agreements. Our government-to-government relationship with Yukon First Nations is based on mutual respect of our respective jurisdictions, including the three First Nations who have not settled their land claims to date. All this has produced positive results.

Here are some of them: the re-establishment of the inter-governmental forum involving the governments of Canada, Yukon and all 14 Yukon First Nations; the creation of the Yukon Forum, involving the Government of Yukon and all 14 Yukon First Nations to discuss matters of mutual interest and common good; the allocation of various federal funding programs, such as the \$50-million northern housing trust, the \$40-million northern strategy fund and the \$27-million strategic investment and northern economic development.

The Yukon government's support for the new self-government financial transfer agreements with the federal government has resulted in a \$10-million increase; and the showcasing of Yukon First Nations culture in both the 2007 Canada Winter Games and the Vancouver 2010 Olympics.

Unlike previous Yukon governments, we adopted a pan-northern approach with our two sister territories. The Northwest Territories, Nunavut and Yukon are dealing collectively with both the federal and provincial governments with one voice. Utilizing this approach, the three territories were successful in creating the five-year territorial health access fund

and its two-year extension now called the territorial health system sustainability initiative.

We are currently engaged with the federal government to seek a further extension to coincide with the health care agreements with the provinces that terminate in 2014.

Mr. Speaker, perhaps our greatest accomplishment, however, was convincing the federal government to retain the territorial funding formula on a principle-based approach. This was for the three territories, and it has served Yukoners well since it was introduced by the Hon. Erik Nielsen back in 1985.

The 2007 Canada Winter Games involving our two sister territories was another major accomplishment that made all partners proud and later led to the establishment of Northern House at the Vancouver 2010 Olympics. The 2010 Olympics and Paralympics were one of the largest marketing initiatives ever to be undertaken by the Yukon. Our government's investment of over \$3 million has raised global awareness of Yukon as a travel destination and celebrated our culture with a worldwide audience. We were, indeed, a great attraction. All three territories benefited from this exposure and we are continuing to work in collaboration.

In our 2006 election platform we also made a commitment to make the Yukon Legislative Assembly work better, and our government has remained true to that commitment. There is no previous government in the history of the Yukon Assembly that has passed more unanimous motions on matters of importance to Yukoners than our Yukon Party government. We have done so working in collaboration with the Official Opposition and the Third Party in this House.

Moreover, no previous Yukon government has established as many all-party committees of the Legislature to conduct public consultation on matters of importance to Yukoners, such as anti-smoking legislation, human rights, whistle-blower protection, the *Landlord and Tenant Act*, the safe operation and use of off-road vehicles and Bill No. 108, *Legislative Renewal Act*.

All members of the 31st and 32nd Legislative Assemblies can indeed be proud of the fact that they have set aside partisan differences to make the Yukon Legislative Assembly work better for the common good of all Yukoners.

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Mitchell: I would ask all members to join me in welcoming a former member from Watson Lake and former Speaker of the Assembly, Mr. John Devries, to this Assembly this afternoon.

Applause

Hon. Mr. Fentie: Another pillar of great importance to good government — protecting and preserving our environment and our wildlife. The Yukon government has had control and management of Yukon's wildlife resources for many decades. However, on April 1, 2003, our government assumed the management and control of Crown land in the territory due to the devolution transfer agreement.

Our government was the first government to be in the position to protect and preserve Yukon's environment and wildlife without direction from Ottawa. Accordingly, our government, the Yukon Party government, has done more to protect and preserve Yukon's environment and wildlife than any previous Yukon government. Currently, the Yukon has some 12.68 per cent of its land protected, second only to the Province of British Columbia.

Under our government's stewardship, we have committed to identify the following six areas as future territorial parks: Fishing Branch Wilderness Preserve established in 2003; Fishing Branch Ecological Reserve established in 2003; the Tombstone Natural Environment Park established in 2004; the Asi Keyi Natural Environment Park identified in 2003, the Kusawa Natural Environment Park identified in 2005; and the Agay Mene Natural Environment Park identified in 2005.

Our government has also worked with the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in government and Holland America to construct a state-of-the-art Tombstone visitor reception centre that serves as an economic catalyst encouraging visitors to travel in the area and stay longer in the region. The centre was fully operational last summer.

Further, under our government's watch, seven habitat protection areas have been established or identified as follows: the Fishing Branch Habitat Protection Area, which was established in 2003; the Lhutsaw Wetland Habitat Protection Area was established in 2007; the Old Crow Flats — east and west — Habitat Protection Area was established in 2009; the Nordenkiold Wetland Habitat Protection Area was established in 2010; the Pickhandle Lake Habitat Protection Area was identified in 2003; the Lewes Marsh Habitat Protection Area was identified in 2005, and the Tagish River Habitat Protection Area was identified in 2005.

Mr. Speaker, these are all accomplishments, because the Yukon Party government had the vision and the foresight to discontinue flawed processes, like the protected areas strategy and follow our obligations under the *Umbrella Final Agreement* — success on both fronts. Balanced with our economy and the environment, more protection for Yukon's pristine wildlife and wilderness and more development for Yukon's resources in building our economy — another remarkable accomplishment.

We are the only government to have ever reached a conclusion in an actual land use plan. We have done so in concert with the Vuntut Gwitchin government and have now established the *North Yukon Regional Land Use Plan* — another major accomplishment by following the process.

One of our early successes with respect to preservation of our wildlife was the Chisana caribou recovery project. Left unattended, experts agree that the herd would be extinct in seven to 10 years. This genetically distinct herd declined from 1,800 caribou to 300 and annually produced very few calves. In March 2003 our government initiated an experimental pilot project to test the feasibility of rearing caribou calves in a protective enclosure. This three-year project was a tremendous success, involving our government, the White River First Nation, the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board, the Ca-

nadian Wildlife Service, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, the United States National Park Service and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. It was indeed a very successful model of international and intergovernmental cooperation.

Mr. Speaker, another very important commitment was supporting the initiatives of the Vuntut Gwitchin government to ensure the integrity and the protection of the Porcupine caribou herd and its critical habitat, especially the calving grounds. By July 6, 2010, a historic agreement was reached on the Porcupine caribou harvest management plan involving the Vuntut Gwitchin, the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in, the Na Cho Nyäk Dun, the Gwich'in Tribal Council, the Inuvialuit Game Council and the governments of Yukon, Canada and the Northwest Territories.

This very important agreement provides a management framework that varies harvesting practices dependent on the size of the herd and its population and applies to all hunters. It establishes a mandatory reporting and bulls-only regime.

One of our first actions as a government in 2003 was also to save another important legacy for Yukon — the Yukon Wildlife Preserve — for future generations. This preserve promotes knowledge and appreciation of Arctic and boreal ecology through the creation of a centre of northern education, conservation and a research centre of excellence.

A multi-year agreement from 2009 to 2012 will provide the preserve with a total of \$1.8 million over three years to help the organization expand its programs and seek other funding and investment opportunities. A further \$1.9 million over two years has been provided for the design and construction of an animal research and rehabilitation centre at the preserve, a critical step for obtaining accreditation with the Canadian Association of Zoos and Aquariums.

Multi-year research projects are underway on moose, caribou, grizzly bears and selected fish populations. Information from this research informs our government and wildlife management entities and other areas of use so we can make better and more informed land use decisions.

Under “practising good government”, I’ve already mentioned our government’s climate change strategy and action plan, as well as meeting our election platform commitment to establish the Research Centre of Excellence at the college. This newly established initiative is the Climate Change Secretariat and is now coordinating our government’s response to at least 33 actions outlined in our *Climate Change Action Plan*.

In addition, we have provided funding support for the Yukon Cold Climate Innovation Centre, another very important research facility located at Yukon College dedicated to creating commercial solutions to cold climate issues affecting northerners.

The Department of Environment, led by our minister, has also another major responsibility and that is contaminated sites. The site assessment and remediation unit was established in 2008 to manage Yukon-owned contaminated sites. The unit was set up in response to recommendations by the Auditor General of Canada so that the Yukon government was to create a contaminated sites liability policy and a clean-up program, which is well underway.

The abandonment and reclamation of the Faro mine is the most formidable environmental challenge facing the territory that fortunately remains the responsibility of the federal government. Our government took over the management responsibility for the care and maintenance of this mine complex in early March 2009 after reaching this consensus with Canada and affected First Nations on a preferred closure option, which is estimated to cost \$30 million per year for the 15-year construction phase and another \$10 million per year for the 15-year period of adjustment.

On June 29, 2010, Canada and our government reached an agreement to fund the remediation of the largest hydrocarbon contaminated site in Yukon, the Marwell tar pits here in Whitehorse — another major accomplishment. This has been an environmental hazard left over from World War II and was left unattended for all these years. It is now time to clean it up. This 10-year long project is estimated to cost \$6.8 million, with Canada funding 70 percent and Yukon the remaining 30 percent.

Ensuring Yukoners have access to clean drinking water is another major 2006 commitment. Our government has designated a considerable amount of financial resources to meet that commitment. The Little Salmon Carmacks First Nation, the Carcross-Tagish First Nation, the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations and their respective communities, as well as the communities of Teslin and Ross River, have all had water treatment programs implemented.

Similarly, water treatment options have been examined for Old Crow and a further \$1.5 million is being invested this year to complete the project in Carmacks.

There is the \$21.768 million secondary waste treatment and district heating facility in Dawson City that is still undergoing construction.

Mr. Speaker, the last pillar: achieving a better quality of life. We are indeed very proud of our track record in improving the quality of life for Yukoners since taking office in 2002. There is no question that Yukoners and the territory are better off today than those dark days ending in 2002.

No previous government can claim to have done more. Our government is striving to achieve a better quality of life for our citizens by increasing education opportunities and fostering healthy and safe communities through addressing drug and alcohol abuse, promoting sports, art and culture.

Our children are our future and education plays a key role in developing that future. Our government has constructed a new school in Carmacks and is engaged in another major school construction project, the replacement of F.H. Collins Secondary School. There is a \$2.7-million expenditure for that project in this budget.

On July 8, 2009, the Government of Canada and the Government of Yukon signed a labour market development agreement to implement new arrangements in the area of labour market development that enables Yukon to assume an expanded role in the design and delivery of labour market development programs and services to Yukon. This is indeed a benefit to clients.

The agreement came into effect February 1, 2010 and replaces the agreement signed in 1998, under which the federal government retained the responsibility for the design and delivery of EI-funded employment benefits and support measures.

Our government is also dedicated to increasing the number of apprentices and skilled workers in the territory and in training Yukoners for Yukon opportunities. In the four years between 2004 and 2008, the number of registered apprentices was increased by 80 percent. We have made and are continuing to make significant investments in post-secondary education and initiatives such as Skills Canada Yukon, Women in Trades and Technology and other programs that help us meet our needs in the labour market.

In February 2009, our government launched a four-year licensed practical nurse program at Yukon College to encourage northerners who are interested in pursuing a career in the medical profession to remain here in Yukon.

The LPN program builds on our \$12.7 million health human resource strategy which was launched in 2006 to assist in the recruiting and retaining Yukon health care professionals. Training LPNs locally is helping us address Yukon's demand for health care professionals, particularly in continuing care and in home care. Today, Yukon College is also upgrading its physical infrastructure through the construction of new facilities in Pelly Crossing and Dawson City.

Two more major reviews were completed at the end of December 2010: *Sharing Common Ground*, which is the report on the review of Yukon's police force, and the final report of the Task Force on Acutely Intoxicated Persons at Risk. As a consequence of these two reports, the Yukon government in conjunction with the RCMP, will be constructing a \$4.08 million secure assessment centre that will be attached to the new Whitehorse Correctional Centre. The new secure assessment centre will have medical professionals on staff and will spell the end of the RCMP drunk-tank era here in Whitehorse.

This budget is providing another \$7.414 million for the completion of the Correctional Centre, one of the largest capital projects undertaken by our government and is based on the corrections philosophy outlined in the new *Corrections Act*.

Yukon has become — as I said before — a recognized leader in dealing with FASD with the setting up of the Community Wellness Court — a therapeutic court in the Yukon justice system — as well as establishment of a pilot project — the land-based healing program at Jackson Lake, which was administered by the Kwanlin Dun First Nation. We will be urging the Government of Canada to work with our government in utilizing some of the \$69 million transferred to Health Canada to deal with the residential school abuse here in Yukon by examining our FASD programs, the Community Wellness Court and our land based treatment options and other facilities and programs.

Our government increased funding support for women with FASD and for women's shelters such as Kaushee's Place in Whitehorse, Help and Hope for Families Society in Watson Lake. The opposition, once again, opposed those support programs for Yukon women.

Almost \$11 million is being made available to non-government organizations to provide services to Yukoners. In 2011-12, \$487,000 is being provided for the implementation of the *Victims of Crime Strategy*. This money extends through to March 31, 2013. Further, another \$382,000 of community development trust funding has been allocated for the Northern Institute of Social Justice.

Since 2002, our government has invested approximately \$100 million in new affordable housing for seniors, families and Yukoners in need. This investment, as the minister responsible for Yukon Housing has stated earlier this afternoon, is an increase of the Yukon Housing portfolio by some 40 percent — which, by the way, Mr. Speaker, the opposition opposed and yet has the audacity to criticize the Yukon Party government for having done nothing — a 40-percent increase in housing availability for those in need.

Mr. Speaker, new seniors residences have been constructed at Yukon College in Whitehorse as well as in Haines Junction, Watson Lake, Teslin and Faro. In addition, a new building is being built on the Whitehorse waterfront to replace the Alexander Street seniors apartments, and another very important project is underway for the new Abbeyfield seniors project in Whitehorse. The Yukon Party government places a great emphasis on taking care of our seniors. In Dawson City, a new structure is being built to replace the Korbo Apartments.

Our government also implemented the most comprehensive review of social assistance since the inception of the program. This review resulted in increasing the rates, providing an incentive to encourage recipients to enter the workforce and providing enhanced services for persons with severe disabilities. What is clear is, once again, the Yukon Party government has stepped up to meet the social needs and challenges that Yukoners face.

The 2011-12 budget provides \$14.14 million for social assistance. Since 2002, Health and Social Services expenditures have increased from \$143 million to \$262.611 million in this fiscal year, 2011-12. Our government provided \$5 million in May 2007 for the next five years for childcare to improve the wages for childcare workers and decrease the cost of childcare for low-income families.

We are providing some \$220,000 annually in long-term funding for three youth-serving organizations: Bringing Youth Towards Equality, Youth of Today Society and the Boys and Girls Clubs of Whitehorse.

In addition, our government has constructed a new children's receiving home in Whitehorse.

The government has also opened the remaining 12-bed unit at Copper Ridge Place and is currently providing \$3.258 million for opening 19 more continuing care beds at the Thomson Centre in 2011-12.

The Yukon Hospital Corporation is investing approximately \$70 million for three major infrastructure projects: the residence for visiting health care professionals and staff office complex on Hospital Road, and the two regional hospitals in Dawson City and Watson Lake.

One of our government's greatest health care accomplishments was the establishment of the five-year, \$150-million

territorial health access fund. I need not repeat what is already known, but that fund and its continued implementation in the relationship with Canada is vital to our health care needs in the Yukon and in the north, so we will continue to work with Canada on maintaining these types of investments.

We've established new services to children with disabilities and funding for home repairs for disabled workers.

Our government established the Yukon palliative care program to provide consulting services, public and professional education and training and support to volunteers in communities. Health care facilities are certainly important to all Yukon communities, and this budget is providing another \$3.2 million for the Whitehorse ambulance dispatch station, and \$103,000 and \$143,000 for community nursing health centre renovations in Old Crow and Haines Junction.

Community infrastructure is also very important for contributing to the Yukon public's quality of life. In that regard, we are investing \$1.17 million in recreation infrastructure improvements in Dawson City and \$700,000 for staff housing in Pelly Crossing.

The historic heart of downtown is the Whitehorse waterfront. It is being revitalized through 12 different projects, including the Kwanlin Dun cultural centre and the Whitehorse Public Library. Our government recognizes that municipalities make a major contribution to improving the quality of life for all Yukoners. On October 22, 2010, we launched the territory-wide Our Towns, Our Future review. This review was set up in response to concerns put forward by Yukon municipal governments about important issues including funding levels, infrastructure deficits, and recruitment and retention of qualified staff. The comprehensive municipal operating grants in 2007-08 totalled \$12.538 million. Starting in 2008, our government has approved annual increments of increase of some \$808,000 and \$121,000 for unincorporated communities until the year 2012-13. The total increase over five years brings the total for municipal grants to \$16.578 million, representing an increase of some 32 percent, or approximately 6 percent annually.

Sports and recreation are essential ingredients to improving the quality of life for Yukoners. The successful hosting of the 2007 Canada Winter Games was one of Yukon's greatest achievements.

Our government is continuing to invest in Yukoners' participation in various events; namely, the North American Indigenous Games being held in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, in August 2011 and the 2011 Canada Winter Games being held in Halifax, Nova Scotia. We are also supporting the City of Whitehorse to host the Arctic Winter Games in 2012 and providing another \$150,000 of contribution for the 2011 Western Canada Summer Games, as well as a further \$130,000, which will be contributed in this fiscal year next to Softball Yukon to host the Women's Fast Pitch World Championships in 2012-13.

So our government continues to reflect on our policies and actions that are important to achieve a balanced society. While we develop Yukon's economy, we have an equal focus on ensuring that Yukoners are provided with the services that strengthen and support healthy individuals, families and com-

munities. We are confident that, as we continue our work toward growth in this territory, Yukoners will continue to enjoy a better quality of life.

So, Mr. Speaker, in conclusion, what does all this lead us to? It leads us to the pathway to prosperity. There is only one pathway to prosperity and Yukoners are currently on it. Beware those who are promising to change Yukon's direction. On the pathway to prosperity, there is only one direction. You can either go forward or you can go backward.

This fall, Yukoners will have a clear choice to make: do they wish to continue on this pathway with the Yukon Party government as their guide? In making this decision, we urge all Yukoners to consider what has been accomplished over the last nine years and who best will be able to meet the challenges of the future — the tried, the tested and those who have delivered or those who are yet to be tried, tested and have delivered nothing.

Rest assured there will be challenges. The sustainability of Yukon's health care system and the provision of affordable energy to sustain the territory's economic growth will be two of the most paramount. We believe our government is the best equipped to meet these future challenges.

Our government has a proven track record of nine years of accomplishments, of which we are justifiably proud. These accomplishments were only achieved through all the hard work of all departments, their officials, and through the leadership of our ministers. We provided the policy direction and they delivered the goods.

Our eight previous budgets, together with this budget, the 2011-12 budget, laid the foundation, the cornerstones, for the pathway to prosperity.

It is a solid foundation and I commend the 2011-12 budget to the Liberals of this House, to the NDP of this House, to the Independent member of this House, to all members of this House and to all Yukoners. It is the future; it is the pathway to prosperity.

Motion to adjourn debate

Mr. Mitchell: I move that debate on second reading of Bill No. 24 be now adjourned.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Leader of the Official Opposition that debate on second reading of Bill No. 24 be now adjourned.

Motion to adjourn debate on second reading of Bill No. 24 agreed to

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

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

Motion agreed to

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

The House adjourned at 3:13 p.m.

The following Sessional Papers were tabled February 3, 2011:

11-1-197

Election of Elizabeth Hanson as Member for Whitehorse Centre, letter (dated December 20, 2010) from Jo-Ann Waugh, Chief Electoral Officer of Yukon, to the Speaker (Speaker Staffen)

11-1-198

Absence of Members from Sittings of the Legislative Assembly and its Committees: Report of the Clerk of the Yukon Legislative Assembly (dated February 3, 2011) (Speaker Staffen)

11-1-199

Yukon Housing Corporation Annual Report for the year ended March 31, 2010 (Kenyon)