

Yukon Legislative Assembly**Whitehorse, Yukon****Tuesday, May 18, 2010 — 1:00 p.m.**

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

*Prayers***DAILY ROUTINE**

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

Tributes.

TRIBUTES**In recognition of the Yukon Court of Appeal and Law Society of Yukon**

Hon. Ms. Horne: It is with pleasure that I rise today on behalf of the Legislature to pay tribute to the 50th anniversary of the Yukon Court of Appeal and the 25th anniversary of the Law Society of Yukon. These anniversaries remind us of the growth and development of our legal system in Yukon. The 25th anniversary of the Law Society of Yukon is a cause for celebration. We are indeed growing and maturing as a territory.

At the celebration yesterday, I had the opportunity to look around the room and was very impressed with the depth, the diversity and the quality of the Yukon's lawyers. Speaking both as the Minister of Justice and as the minister responsible for the Women's Directorate, I am encouraged to see so many women engaged in the legal profession as lawyers.

A young First Nation lady I met through a mentorship program is considering a career as a lawyer. It is certainly very encouraging for me personally when young people — especially those at the beginning of their career path — feel that all career options are open to them. At the special sitting of the Court of Appeal yesterday, I learned that this week's Court of Appeal will consist of an all-female bench. I wonder if those who were present at the inauguration of the Court of Appeal 50 years ago could have envisioned that.

As I listened to the speakers at yesterday's event, I was struck by the comments of several speakers who noted the many innovative, creative ways that Yukon has responded to the unique challenges we face in Yukon. For example, the therapeutic courts like the Domestic Violence Treatment Option Court and the Community Wellness Court reflect our focus on rebuilding relationships, restoring our communities and integrating services offered by the court with other government services.

As a First Nation woman, I hope that the trajectory toward being inclusive and reflecting the demographic composition of our communities continues on our bench and bar. My warmest wishes to both the Law Society of Yukon and the Court of Appeal, both of which do us proud. Thank you.

In recognition of International Museum Day

Hon. Ms. Taylor: I rise today on behalf of the Legislature to pay tribute to International Museum Day. In 1977, the International Council of Museums adopted a resolution designating

May 18 as International Museum Day. This resolution was passed to remind everyone of the very special role museums play in preserving and protecting our cultural heritage. Each year, International Museum Day has a special theme. This year it's "Museums for Social Harmony".

The work that Yukon museums and First Nation cultural centres do to preserve our local history is part of a much larger picture. These institutions are working as part of a global community to preserve the heritage of all of humanity. Yukon museums contribute greatly to the quality of life of, not only Yukoners but of people everywhere. Likewise, Yukon museums also generate significant revenue, which contributes to the economic well-being of the territory.

The Government of Yukon recognizes the importance of Yukon's heritage sector and remains committed to strengthening the viability of Yukon museums and cultural centres so that they continue to be major contributors to Yukon's social, cultural and economic fabric. This year the museums program, administered through the Department of Tourism and Culture, is pleased to provide approximately \$1.5 million in direct funding support to Yukon museums, First Nation heritage cultural centres and community interpretive centres.

This year's budget also contains significant dollars for the development of the Kwanlin Dun First Nation cultural centre, as well as the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations cultural centre. Both facilities are examples of strong partnerships among governments in support of a unique gathering place that recognizes and celebrates the culture and traditions of the peoples of Kwanlin Dun and Champagne and Aishihik First Nations respectively, while promoting cultural tourism and serving as a centre for sharing knowledge and bringing people together.

Mr. Speaker, this past year a number of activities and events were held, which highlighted Yukon museums and the many volunteers and workers who strive to preserve, protect and interpret our unique history and cultural legacies.

These include the opening of the 26,000-year-old Yukon horse exhibit at the Yukon Beringia Interpretive Centre last July. It also entails a Yukon historical fair and a student heritage poster, where students contributed to either a poster or a project that told a story about a piece of Yukon's history. The Yukon Gold Explorer's Passport contest was also expanded last year.

Last summer, more than 1,600 visitors from Canada, the United States and around the world kept track of the museums they visited by using the little blue passport book during their travels. This year, there are 32 featured sites for people to discover.

Earlier this month, the James Quong photography exhibit was also launched at Arts Underground and will be on display until the end of July. Complementing that exhibit will be three more exhibits that will be showcased at the Yukon Transportation Museum, Old Log Church Museum and the Dawson City Museum.

It is these kinds of events and initiatives, working in partnership with organizations, stakeholders and individuals that

give Yukoners many opportunities to engage in important aspects of our collective past.

The popularity of Yukon museums and cultural centres demonstrates a desire to be engaged and to learn, to discover something about ourselves that we didn't know, to see something we've never seen before, to understand and appreciate how the past affects today and potentially impacts the future.

This is all part of the important work museums and First Nation cultural heritage centres provide to the public. As we celebrate International Museum Day today, I encourage all Yukoners to visit a local museum, cultural centre or historic site near them. By learning from the past we can strive to make better choices for today and tomorrow.

In recognition of Emergency Medical Services responders

Hon. Mr. Lang: I rise today on behalf of the House to recognize the people throughout Yukon who dedicate themselves to providing top-quality emergency medical services care to those in need. On behalf of all Yukoners, I wish to express our deep gratitude to Yukon's team of Emergency Medical Services responders.

The 160 volunteers on-call attendants, serving 15 rural communities, and the 32 full-time government staff in Whitehorse, Dawson City and Watson Lake work together to help keep us safe. These people share one common goal: to provide emergency medical response services to Yukoners and our visitors 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. They stand ready to respond whether from calls to our 911 emergency dispatch centre or the 811 HealthLine. They are at the ready when community health centres, the RCMP or Yukon hospitals call for help.

To achieve this goal, our Emergency Medical Services responders commit to ongoing emergency medical training and continuing education. As well, they commit to working together to ensure a timely, coordinated response when people need help most. They maintain lasting, strong, cooperative relationships with our local governments, First Nation communities, community health centres, RCMP, community volunteers, firefighters, hospital staff and other providers of pre-hospital care in Yukon. They are dedicated to improving community health and well-being out of uniform too. You will find them leading the way in their workplaces, schools and in their other volunteer capacity within their communities. They help make their communities vibrant places to live.

Last year alone, our dedicated crews handled 1,501 emergency calls in 15 rural communities. Whitehorse EMS paramedics responded to 5,033 calls for ground ambulance services and our EMS air medevac critical care teams responded to 643 calls. Growing call volumes throughout Yukon demonstrate the commitment it takes by each EMS member to deliver much-needed services to residents and visitors alike.

The Yukon government recognizes that Emergency Medical Services provide a vital public service and that our EMS practitioners play a crucial role in the territory's overall health care program.

Our EMS staff brings their professional expertise to community emergency preparedness. They participate in mock disaster exercises to help plan responses to major medical

emergencies. They join their B.C. and Alaskan colleagues in regional and international health mutual-aid partnerships that prepare responses to public health emergencies.

This week — May 16 to 22 — is National Emergency Medical Services Week across Canada. This is our opportunity, Mr. Speaker, to recognize our dedicated Emergency Medical Services responders and to salute them for being there when we need help most.

Until we need them, Mr. Speaker, we rarely think about the services they provide so dependably. I urge you, the next time you pull over to let an ambulance pass, to think about the people in that ambulance. Please think not only of the patient, but also of the men and women who rush into action to protect and preserve our lives and those of our friends and loved ones.

In closing, I call on all members of the House to please join me in recognizing Yukon's outstanding EMS team. They help keep us safe and we are thankful for their services — job well done, folks.

Speaker: Any further tributes?
Hearing none, is there any introduction of visitors?

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Mr. Rouble: In our gallery today, we're joined by members of Team Yukon, part of the Skills Canada Yukon Association here in the territory. In the gallery, we are joined by teachers, coaches, judges, industry partners, Department of Education officials and, of course, the competitors.

Also in attendance is Dan Curtis, the executive director of Skills Canada Yukon.

Team Yukon is heading off to Waterloo, Ontario, for the National Skills Competition later this week. We wish you all the best of luck, and welcome to the Assembly.

Applause

Speaker: Any further introduction of visitors?
Returns or documents for tabling?

TABLING RETURNS AND DOCUMENTS

Hon. Ms. Taylor: I have for tabling the 2008-09 annual report for the Yukon Geographical Place Names Board.

Speaker: Are there any reports of committees?
Are there any petitions?
Any bills to be introduced?
Any notices of motion?

NOTICES OF MOTION

Mr. Inverarity: I give notice of the following motion:
THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to implement the additional recommendations of the Report of the Select Committee on Human Rights and also to include the following:

(1) that conflicts of interest are identified prior to new appointments being made to the commission or to the panel of adjudicators; and

(2) that the appointments to both the commission and the panel of adjudicators are merit based; and

(3) that both the commission and the panel of adjudicators reflect the diversity of Yukoners by ensuring fair representation including First Nations.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to amend section 22(3) of the *Human Rights Act* by replacing subsection (3) with the following:

“A member of the panel may only be removed from the panel by resolution of the Legislature or if that member formally resigns.”

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

THAT this House urges the Yukon government to assist the Yukon public, and professionals working with children, to implement the new *Child and Family Services Act* by:

- (1) mounting a thorough public education process immediately;
- (2) providing brochures containing information about the act;
- (3) training social workers about the consequences of the act, particularly in rural Yukon;
- (4) training First Nations and organizations involved with children through workshops to explain the details and the application of the act; and
- (5) immediately writing regulations to the act in plain English.

Speaker: Thank you. Are there any further notices of motion?

Is there a statement by a minister?

This then brings us to Question Period.

QUESTION PERIOD

Question re: Off-road vehicle use

Mr. Inverarity: Mr. Speaker, the Environment minister is on record stating that ATV use is best regulated by the individual. That's his opinion. Unfortunately for the minister, not all Yukoners share his point of view. We have seen a petition that wants the government to have ATV use regulated. Another petition is currently being circulated that wants the government to avoid regulating the use of ATVs. Again, for the minister's benefit, the select committee has been formed to consult with Yukoners on this particular issue. When is the government going to appoint a chair to this committee and call a meeting of the committee to start the ball rolling?

Hon. Mr. Lang: We are putting together a chair for the select committee on the ATV question, and we will be doing that as quickly as possible. I look forward to doing that in the next month.

Mr. Inverarity: The minister indicated last week that education, not regulation, was his preferred way to deal with ATV use in the Yukon. I'm directing this toward the Minister of Environment. Unfortunately, the minister is not authorized to make that call. The select committee has been established to hold public consultation on ATV use. The government's only

responsibility now is to appoint the chair to the committee. Let's get on with it and let's get the hard work done; let's not have to wait months. There were strong opinions on both sides of this issue and all Yukoners will be affected by whatever decision that's being made.

Will the minister tell us when the government plans to stop stalling — they have had since last fall — and do this appointment? When are you going to do it?

Hon. Mr. Lang: Of course the motion was looking at the safe use of ATVs and certainly I made a commitment five minutes ago. We're looking at putting the chair appointment together and will hopefully have that out by next month, so we are acting on exactly what we were instructed to do in the House here.

Mr. Inverarity: Perhaps the minister should actually read the motion. It's for safety and use of ATV and off-road vehicles. When it comes to ATV use, the Minister of Environment believes that people need to get busy and to start learning what it means to respect the environment. The minister already needs to get busy and learn what it means to respect Yukoners.

Petitions are circulating around the territory that speak in favour of, as well as against, regulating ATV use. Yukoners are speaking about this issue everywhere. There are lots of complexities around this issue and Yukoners definitely want to be heard. It's the government that seems to be stalling this process. When is the government going to catch up with the rest of Yukoners and get this thing going?

Hon. Mr. Lang: I couldn't be clearer. We're going to go out and get the committee together to do exactly that, so we'll be working in the next month to put the committee together and do exactly what we decided to do here in the House.

Question re: Environmental safety

Mr. Fairclough: The top news around the world is the oil-rig disaster in the United States. This has northerners questioning the reliability and safety of drilling for oil in the Arctic. My colleague from Vuntut Gwitchin brought forward a motion two weeks ago, urging government to work with their counterparts on this important issue. Hopefully, the Minister of Environment was able to meet with Minister Prentice and give some suggestions on what should be done in regard to offshore drilling when he was in Ottawa last week.

The minister could take a stand and comment on this issue with a ministerial statement but, so far, he has been silent. Did the minister meet with the federal Minister of Environment when he was in Ottawa last week?

Hon. Mr. Rouble: Mr. Speaker, the government, like all Yukoners, is watching in horror as we see the events in the Gulf of Mexico unfold. It is indeed a disaster that will have long-term impacts on our environment. The Government of Yukon, through Energy, Mines and Resources, will continue to carefully monitor this situation and compare the regulations that were in place in that jurisdiction to the regulations that are here in Canada.

I'll remind members opposite that oil and gas activities in the Beaufort Sea are regulated under the National Energy Board, and the Government of Yukon will continue to work very closely with our counterparts in the federal government in

order to ensure we have appropriate regulations to protect our environment now and into future.

Mr. Fairclough: Mr. Speaker, it appears that the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources is muzzled again. This past week there was a northern premiers forum, and the communiqué that was produced seems to be missing any discussions that may have taken place on Arctic drilling at this pan-northern forum. We had the premiers of Northwest Territories and Nunavut here to discuss northern issues. It was also the first time meeting with the Canadian representatives of the Arctic Council, and we hope the Minister of Environment took the opportunity to put this issue front and centre.

Not only did the minister have a chance to make this a top priority with leaders across the north and with the Arctic Council, but he was just in Ottawa last week himself.

Yukoners want to hear from the Minister of Environment as to why this most topical issue of protecting our northern shores was not discussed. So again — to the Minister of Environment — why did the minister not meet with his federal counterpart?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: Mr. Speaker, the Member for Mayo-Tatchun, the Liberal member of the House, has alluded to the meeting of the northern premiers and the permanent participants of the Arctic Council. I can assure the member that many issues of priority for those of us who reside in the Arctic regions were discussed, including this very difficult matter that is creating quite a global environmental impact as we watch the events unfold in the Gulf of Mexico.

I want to reiterate what our Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources has just stated, not only today but I believe yesterday, the National Energy Board is looking into this matter. The National Energy Board regulates drilling in the Beaufort Sea, for example, and I am sure that they are as concerned as we are. In all matters of discussion — the environment, health care, housing, our economy, education — these are all priority issues for the northern premiers, as we've demonstrated all through our pan-northern process and indeed our priorities for the members of the Arctic Council.

Mr. Fairclough: Well, if it were a priority, why didn't the Minister of Environment meet with his counterpart in Ottawa last week, Mr. Speaker? We know submissions have been made by oil producers to take out the requirements for drill relief wells in the Arctic. Yukoners want to know that a plan for dealing with drilling in the Arctic was on the Minister of Environment's agenda when he was in Ottawa last week? They want to know whether there is a pan-northern plan for dealing with unforeseen disasters. We all know that drilling in one section of the Arctic could potentially affect all of the Arctic if there were a disaster. So why didn't the minister meet with his federal counterparts when he was in Ottawa last week. He had the chance — the Minister of Environment.

Hon. Mr. Fentie: Mr. Speaker, I marvel at the Liberal member's questions. Our Minister of Environment is doing his job — doing the job that he is obligated to do and he even went beyond that. He represented Yukon before the parliamentary committee on the long-gun registry. Bravo for our Minister of Environment.

Now let me talk about a former Minister of Environment who sits as a Liberal member. We're still waiting for the 1998 state of the environment report. We can't find that report, Mr. Speaker.

So let's now go back to the facts and some substance. The issue of Arctic offshore drilling, as it relates to the disaster unfolding in the Gulf of Mexico, is a concern to all of us and it should be. It's a concern to Yukoners; it's a concern to the Legislative Assembly and its members; it's a concern to the government; it's a concern to the National Energy Board; it's a concern to my territorial colleagues, my fellow premiers; it's a concern to the permanent participants of the Arctic Council; it's a concern to the world — and that's what it should be.

Question re: Doctor shortage

Mr. Cardiff: Tourist season has started, the mining season is ramping up, visitors and workers are returning to Dawson for the summer. In fact, this weekend, they're going to be welcoming gold show participants to Dawson City, and it's starting to become a busy place.

The government has just unveiled architectural plans for its \$25-million cottage hospital in Dawson City to mixed reviews from residents, but there's another, even bigger problem. Dawson City is slated to go from three doctors to zero doctors in three years. Dawson may not have a doctor this summer.

How long has the Minister of Health and Social Services known that Dawson's only doctor is going on leave very soon?

Hon. Mr. Hart: I thank the member opposite for his question. We have been dealing with the doctor in Dawson City for some time. He has indicated to us that he was looking at taking a leave of absence from his facility. We also had discussions with him about providing replacements for him. He was reviewing those issues; it wasn't until recently that he had a couple of options that went a little sour for him and thus he has asked us to come in to assist him to help fulfill those positions.

Mr. Cardiff: That's not quite how it goes, Mr. Speaker. In the past — the way that I understand it — it was the doctor's responsibility to find his own locum when he went on leave, and that was when he was paid on a fee-for-service basis, but he switched to working on a salary basis, and it is now the responsibility of the minister and the Department of Health and Social Services to find that replacement. I understand, from the latest that I've heard, that no replacement has yet been found. The people of Dawson might soon find themselves without a doctor in one of the busiest seasons of the year, and that would be unthinkable, Mr. Speaker.

What's the department's contingency plan if it cannot find a doctor before the current one starts his leave?

Hon. Mr. Hart: We are in charge of looking for physicians for all the facilities in Yukon, including the Whitehorse General Hospital. We are responsible for finding those doctors as well as doctors for the rural areas, and that is something that we are in charge of regardless of the service being provided by the physician. As I stated, we have been in discussion with this doctor for some time. He came to us. We are dealing with this individual, and we feel that we can be in the position to provide the services of a physician in Dawson for the upcoming season.

Mr. Cardiff: This is a serious matter. This requires urgent attention. It should be at the top of the list. The government appears to have dropped the ball, and let's hope they don't drop the ball when they are dealing with a full-blown hospital that is going to require three doctors and several nurses to run it around the clock. Recruiting and retaining health care professionals is a major challenge for small, northern jurisdictions like the Yukon. Working and living conditions are huge issues for people deciding to relocate to the north even if it just to temporarily fill in for a doctor or a nurse who is on leave. Currently there is no housing for medical staff in Dawson City.

Where are the health care professionals who will work at the new hospital in Dawson going to live, and what is the government's plan?

Hon. Mr. Hart: I think I've already answered that. We in the Department of Health and Social Services are working with the physician in question. We have come up with a process; that individual indicated he could find a replacement for himself. He was unable to do so; he asked us to come in and assist, and we did. To that fact, we will be providing backup facilities for that individual for the upcoming season, and I thank the member opposite.

Question re: Lake Laberge zoning

Mr. Cathers: I'd like to follow up with the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources on questions I asked him earlier this sitting. A month ago, I asked him to provide timelines for the process of approving the draft Deep Creek zoning regulations, including the timeline for public consultation and the target completion date for approval of regulations. He assured me the file was a priority but did not provide timelines.

The minister has had a month to look into this matter. Will he please tell me today what the timelines are for the Deep Creek zoning file, including the target for approval of the regulations?

Hon. Mr. Rouble: I appreciate the question coming from the Independent Member for Lake Laberge. We are continuing to look at issues in the Laberge riding, as well as throughout the territory.

Some of the local area plan issues that the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources will be working on through this year include the completion of the West Dawson/Sunnydale local area plan, establishing the Marsh Lake and Carcross local area plan as per the self-government agreement obligations and looking at the Teslin Lake north area. Additionally, we are looking very closely at issues in Tagish, Fish Lake, Shallow Bay, Fox Lake, Klondike Valley, Haines Junction, Mayo peripheries, Mount Lorne and additionally, some of the new changes going on in the Hamlet of Mount Lorne where there is also a strong push for a new plan.

We're continuing to work very diligently on the issues of local area plans, including in the Lake Laberge riding. As soon as some details and more specifics become available about the process, I will share those with the Member for Lake Laberge.

Mr. Cathers: The minister's department recently sent a letter to Deep Creek residents asking for comments on the draft zoning regulation by June 1 and indicating it would be forwarded for an order-in-council at the end of June. I will ta-

ble that letter now. Clearly a timeline and completion date exist. It's disappointing and rather puzzling that the minister didn't provide that information.

I'll move on to another land planning file and hope he will be more constructive in response.

The Ibex Valley Local Advisory Council proposed a change to zoning that would reduce minimum lot size and allow owners of large residential lots to subdivide.

Will the minister please tell me the current target date for approval of the proposed amendment to the Ibex Valley zoning regulations?

Hon. Mr. Rouble: I appreciate the question coming from the Independent Member. Yes, there are certainly issues being addressed in the Laberge riding, as the member has indicated. He has seen the letters that have gone out from the department seeking the information and response from residents about local area planning and land use issues. We are taking those issues very seriously. We are continuing to work on these areas in the member opposite's riding and also addressing the obligations throughout the territory.

There is additional information that will be coming out later this summer as we work to bring closure to many of the outstanding land use planning issues in Laberge and also in other jurisdictions throughout the territory.

Mr. Cathers: When I was Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, timelines for land planning initiatives were shared upon request. When the Member for Porter Creek Centre was minister, he also provided those target dates when asked for them. I am puzzled and rather disappointed the current minister seems to prefer to give a non-answer when asked for those dates.

The first public meeting to develop the South Fox Lake local area plan was to be held last fall. It was not and no indication has been given when it will be rescheduled. When will the public meeting be held to start developing a local area plan for Fox Lake and, once again, what are the target dates for the Ibex Valley zoning regulation amendment and Deep Creek zoning regulation approval?

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Hon. Mr. Rouble: The Member for Vuntut Gwitchin comments "was" — an important point to cutting out, I guess. In fact there were and are a lot of issues that remain to be concluded upon and I will certainly take all the issues for land use planning very seriously in the member opposite's riding, in Laberge, in looking at the issues that he has brought forward and looking at the issues that his constituents have advised me on.

We will continue to work on addressing land use planning issues throughout the territory, including completing the West Dawson/Sunnydale local area plan; establishing the Marsh Lake and Carcross local area plan, as part of the self-government obligations; addressing land planning issues in Teslin; as well as areas such as Tagish, Fish Lake, Shallow Bay, Fox Lake, Klondike Valley, Haines Junction, Mayo and Mount Lorne.

The Department of Energy, Mines and Resources takes very seriously its land use planning issues. We will continue to

address the issues not only in Lake Laberge, but also in other jurisdictions throughout the territory.

Question re: Porcupine caribou herd

Mr. Fairclough: The harvest management plan for the Porcupine caribou herd was negotiated earlier this year and formally signed on April 29, 2010, by four parties to the plan, including the Government of Yukon. Even before the formal signing, the chiefs of Vuntut Gwitchin and Na Cho Nyäk Dun had signed on to the plan. Effectively, most parties responsible for the management of the Porcupine caribou herd in the Yukon and Northwest Territories have agreed to adopt the harvest management plan to conserve the herd.

Most parties have signed, except for the governments of Canada and Northwest Territories. The Minister of Environment just returned from Ottawa. Did the minister raise the harvest management plan with the federal Minister of Environment?

Hon. Mr. Edzerza: There has already been a commitment from the two parties that have not signed yet, and that's Northwest Territories and the Government of Canada, but they are in agreement.

Mr. Fairclough: The full harvest management plan will be released once all parties have signed and, at that point, they can begin working on the implementation part of the plan. The Minister of Environment was in Ottawa last week and, this past weekend, the Premier of the Northwest Territories was here. I would expect that he would have taken every chance he could to raise the signing of the harvest management plan with his counterpart.

What is the Minister of Environment doing to ensure the harvest management plan is signed by both the governments of Canada and Northwest Territories? He said they're in agreement, but what about signing the agreement?

Hon. Mr. Edzerza: I know I'm responsible for a lot of things, but I think the Minister of Environment for Canada and the Northwest Territories will sign this document in due process. I know that it's not stopping the plan from going ahead. The committee is already starting to work on the implementation plan and how we're going to move ahead with this.

Mr. Fairclough: Once the plan is signed off, then the implementation phase of it can start. Now again, Mr. Speaker, most of the parties are in agreement with a harvest management plan; that's why they signed it. Like all Yukoners, they want to be sure that future generations will be able to enjoy and utilize the Porcupine caribou herd as have past generations.

Now, the public wants to hear the Minister of Environment tell them that he's doing his job. The governments of Canada and Northwest Territories are the only outstanding signatories to the harvest management plan.

It's a pretty simple question for the minister: will the minister tell us what action he has taken to ensure that Canada and the Northwest Territories will sign the harvest management plan?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: I don't know how the minister could be any clearer. All parties have agreed to the harvest management plan because all parties worked on the harvest manage-

ment plan. Secondly, the Yukon government has taken steps with interim measures to deal with the situation while this work was being done. This is a significant and watershed time in the north, when all these governments have come together and actually agreed to do something about conservation for one of the most important caribou herds in the north.

Now, I would hope it's okay with the Liberal member of this House for other governments, like the GNWT, to go through their appropriate processes, as indeed the federal government must. There's such a thing as sanction of Cabinet; the executive members must meet, schedules so permitting, to go through these matters, as we do as a government.

We have no concern; all parties have agreed and I can assure the Liberal member that, in discussing this matter with Premier Roland of the Northwest Territories on Friday, the GNWT is very close to ending the process they require to ratify the said agreement.

Question re: Fiscal management

Mr. Mitchell: Mr. Speaker, this Yukon Party government is bankrupting the territory. Worse, it won't even be up front with Yukoners about it. Let's look at the facts. Last year the Premier promised to balance the books. Instead, he presented Yukoners with a deficit of tens of millions of dollars. This year he promised a slim surplus by excluding expenses he knew were coming. Well, those bills have now come due, Mr. Speaker. Overdue employee wage increases have just been settled and that slim surplus is gone, and then some. Why can't the Premier present a budget that is both accurate and balanced or does he have to choose one or the other?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: Speaking of bankrupt, Mr. Speaker, the Liberal leader seems to be bankrupt of any vision or plan for this territory. It is the same old, same old. Mr. Speaker, the member knows full well that the territory is far from broke. The member knows that Yukon is one of the only two jurisdictions in Canada that actually has a savings account. That's why we have a savings account — to deal with emerging issues, Mr. Speaker.

Furthermore, the member conveniently omits a major global economic downturn, a recession unlike anything since the Depression, where all governments — not only of Canada but globally — have come together for one common purpose: to invest back into the economy, to prime our economy, to stimulate our economy. And because we had a savings account, the Yukon and the Yukon government played the appropriate role as a member of the global community.

So we did invest a lot of money in stimulating the Yukon Territory and we still have a savings account of millions of dollars.

Mr. Mitchell: Just a few weeks ago, the Premier said we weren't even touched by the recession. Perhaps next he's going to tell us the dog ate his homework.

When the Premier gave up on balancing the books, he started taking out debt that our children will still be paying back decades from now. There is the \$100 million for Yukon Energy; there's the \$17 million for the Whitehorse nurses and specialists residence; there's the \$25 million for the Watson Lake hospital; and then another \$25 million for the hospital in

Dawson City — all borrowed money, all racking up interest charges, and all to be paid back long after the Premier and his colleagues are gone. That's the legacy of the Yukon Party government.

Why should Yukoners have to pay for this Premier's fiscal irresponsibility?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: Well, yes, we're doing all those things, Mr. Speaker. The Yukon Party government is actually doing all those things — building hydro infrastructure instead of burning more diesel, building hospitals in rural Yukon, building roads and highways, building and replacing bridges and, by the way, building affordable housing, building other public facilities, like a new airport addition to our terminal and the list goes on and on and on.

It's all about building the future, Mr. Speaker, and indeed, in some cases, all Yukoners of today are not burdened with the cost of something that, for years to come, will be accessible by Yukoners of tomorrow. What a fair and balanced approach and, through it all, Mr. Speaker, we still have a savings account of millions of dollars. That is fiscal management, not irresponsibility.

Mr. Mitchell: What Yukoners will remember is that this government has been building a debt. That's what they're building now. Mr. Speaker, we're only 45 days into the fiscal year and the Yukon Party government has delivered what is turning into its second consecutive deficit budget.

The financial picture is only going to get worse. This government has a history of managing projects way overbudget. In one analysis, the Auditor General's office found that two-thirds of Yukon Party government projects cost more than they should.

The Watson Lake hospital has already ballooned from \$5 million to \$25 million.

When will the Premier be up front with Yukoners about this government's finances?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: Well, Mr. Speaker, it appears that the Liberal leader is now suggesting once again that officials who work in the Finance department — that the Auditor General is allowing us to cook the books. Talk about a deficit, Mr. Speaker, a deficit of responsibility and understanding of the job the Liberal leader was elected to do.

Mr. Speaker, let me repeat — the Yukon Territory is one jurisdiction today and will be in the foreseeable future a jurisdiction that has no net debt, but a net financial resource position. The Liberals didn't build that fiscal position. The NDP in this House didn't build that fiscal position. The Yukon Party government built that fiscal position. Over the last eight years under our watch, our finances have improved, our investments in the territory have more than doubled, or fiscal position has more than doubled and we are investing in building a future, not tearing down the past and the present.

Speaker: The time for Question Period has now elapsed.

Notice of government private members' business

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Pursuant to Standing Order 14.2(7), and in the spirit of collaboration and cooperation, I would like

to inform the House that the government private member does not wish to identify any items to be called on Wednesday, May 19, 2010, under the heading of government private members' business.

Speaker: Thank you. We will proceed to Orders of the Day.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

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

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

Motion agreed to

Speaker leaves the Chair

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Chair (Mr. Nordick): Order please. Committee of the Whole will now come to order. The matter before the Committee is Bill No. 20, *First Appropriation Act, 2010-11*. We are now in Vote 11, Women's Directorate. Do members wish a brief recess?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

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

Recess

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

Bill No. 20 — *First Appropriation Act, 2010-11* — continued

Chair: The matter before the Committee is Bill No. 20, *First Appropriation Act, 2010-11*, Vote 11, Women's Directorate. Mr. Elias, you have about 19 minutes left.

Women's Directorate — *continued*

Mr. Elias: As we adjourned yesterday, I was asking the minister about some questions with regard to the Riverdale affordable housing project and I understand the minister said that the facility was going to open this fall. I was questioning whether there was a specific month or target date that the facility would be open and if there were people actually ready to occupy the building and, if so, how many. Another question was about how these people were chosen to occupy the Riverdale affordable housing project.

The other question that I asked about the facility was with regard to some of the public consultation. I was aware about possible residents of the affordable housing building in Riverdale who requested a daycare and asked if a daycare was a part of the plans of the building.

Those were some of the questions that I asked in debate yesterday before we adjourned. I guess today I just wanted to take the opportunity to talk a bit about some of the comments

made earlier today from the minister with regard to the demographics and how many women lawyers we had in our territory and that's wonderful to see.

I also noticed another demographic and it has to do with this Legislature because I think that we don't have enough women in this Legislature. We have 18 seats presently and the next election we'll have 19 seats. Presently, we only have two women. I've said this before and I'll say it again — I thank the Minister of Justice, who is responsible for the Women's Directorate, and the Minister of Tourism and Culture for their dedication and fulfilling their duties as members of this Legislative Assembly. I'm sure that the young women of our territory are watching with interest what goes on in this Legislature and, you know, they're thinking, "One day I want to be an MLA too."

Forty-nine percent of our territory's population — but only 11 percent of our members in this Legislative Assembly who are women. For women to truly have a political voice in shaping the territory's future via public government and to effect change, we need more women to be elected as territorial representatives.

I would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate all the women who have been chosen to lead or elected to school councils, town and city councils, and to leadership positions around this great territory of ours and the wonderful jobs they do on a day-to-day basis to make our territory a better place.

Over the years, when I first became elected as the MLA for Vuntut Gwitchin, as the Official Opposition, we went through a process of who had critic responsibilities and advocate responsibilities in our caucus. When it came to being an advocate for the Women's Directorate or the critic for the Women's Directorate, I submitted my name to take on that challenging role because while growing up I was raised by strong Gwitchin women, but they were single mothers as well.

So I grew up in a home where I was witness to violence and I was witness to the struggles of single mothers having to choose between putting me in sports, or putting food on the table, or gas in their vehicle, or to provide heat. I'm just sharing with the minister responsible for the Women's Directorate that, as part of my caucus, I asked to be an advocate for women's issues and the critic to the minister responsible, because that's a bit of my background and I care about these issues. I thought I could make a difference and I hope that I have and, hopefully, set an example for other young MLAs who may find themselves in my position to also take on this challenge.

As long as I see our statistics in our territory with regard to violence against women, and especially violence against aboriginal women, to be consistently double and sometimes triple the national statistics, year after year after year, and I watch the women's groups work tirelessly and advocate for the issues, those things continue, and will always continue, to matter to me.

I have been advocating to the minister for an interdepartmental approach, in that each and every department should have a role to play to curb those statistics of violence against women in our territory. I understand that the Department of Justice, the minister's other portfolio, is contributing to this

violence against women program and that is good to see. You know, as long as women in our territory have to compromise their dignity just for a place to sleep for the night — that matters to me. As long as there are unsolved cases and missing aboriginal women in this country of ours — you know, those things matter. I think that raising the profile of these issues at home helps across the country.

I was quite moved — I think it was a couple of weeks ago — when the minister was sharing some of her experiences with regard to the residential school. When I was raised out in the bush with my grandmother — she has now passed on — she used to sit there and sob and I was wondering why. One day she told me that she had 11 brothers and sisters and she was the only one that survived and so that's why I'm standing here today.

Again, as I said earlier, I'm not going to go on too long with my questions to the minister. But, again, if she could answer some of the questions with regard to the Riverdale affordable housing project — does she have a specific targeted date as to when it's going to open? Are people ready to occupy the building and, if so, how many and how are they chosen? Is a daycare actually going to be included in the Riverdale affordable housing project?

Hon. Ms. Horne: After the questioning yesterday, I've been very troubled by the words of the Liberal Member for Vuntut Gwitchin. As a matter of fact, I had a very unsettled sleep last night remembering what he said, and I quote: "I will stand down with regard to going into a lengthy debate with regard to the Women's Directorate budget line items, as we are running out of time and there are other larger departments that we communicated to be a priority ..."

I know the prior government closed down the Women's Directorate, deeming it unimportant to Yukoners. I am very nervous, as we have made considerable strides and progress in our issues, both in Yukon and with our northern sister territories. If we were not in office, would this important Directorate be gutted yet again?

I again impart: there may be larger departments than the Women's Directorate, but there are none that are more important to the safety and equality of women in Yukon. Healthy mothers, healthy families, healthy communities — a healthier Yukon is our long-term goal. As to these statistics of females in the House, 11 percent are represented on this side of the House.

Yesterday, the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin asked me about the role of the social marketing analyst, and I would just like to elaborate on that for a moment. As I said, the position is targeted to start in early June. The recruitment process has just concluded. The position will create a strategy to reduce violence against women by involving other government departments and working particularly with the Victims of Crime Strategy Advisory Committee.

The campaign will include working closely with the RCMP and the departments of Justice and Health and Social Services to design social messaging that will address reducing violence against women. The analyst designs and implements social marketing initiatives that will effectively help Yukon residents change their behaviours and attitudes about gender

stereotypes, women's equality, women's experience of violence and to promote the respect of women and girls in Yukon.

The analyst will work to educate not only the public but also departmental staff throughout the government about how changing communications culture and public education methods can positively impact the lives of all Yukoners, especially women. This will have an overarching effect on men, women, children, families, communities and indeed the entire Yukon.

Over \$200,000 will be invested in 2010-11 for social marketing. This includes a social marketing analyst and \$100,000 for campaign materials such as posters, advertising and print material. This government is committed to addressing the affordable housing needs of single-parent families in the territory. We want to help break the cycle of poverty and violence. In order to do that, we are supporting healthy mothers and, therefore, healthy families.

In February 2008, following targeted consultation to determine priority housing needs in Whitehorse, research confirmed that women and children are in the highest needs group. We announced our intention to design and build the Whitehorse affordable family housing project.

In October 2007, Minister Taylor, then the minister responsible for the Women's Directorate, and Minister Kenyon proposed a housing initiative that would meet the needs of the most vulnerable population experiencing housing insecurity in the Yukon.

Research indicated that single women with children and single women made up the majority of the waiting list for social housing and, therefore, were considered to have in the most significant need. Targeted consultation with women's groups, transition homes, Grey Mountain Housing, Victim Services and social housing clients were conducted by the Women's Directorate during November and December 2007. This consultation helped identify a strong interest in multi-residential affordable housing with childcare facilities and other special design features to provide a safe, supportive and nurturing living environment for women and their children.

Women with dependants were the single largest group on the social housing waiting list at 38 percent, followed by single females at 14 percent and senior women at 12 percent. Victims of violence abuse made up 11 percent of the waiting list for social housing at that time, including single parents and couples. Women make up 75 percent of the entire waiting list for social housing.

This project will provide up to 32 new social housing units for lone-parent families and work on this project does continue. With the advice of an advisory committee, we have designed four buildings, each with eight dwellings on the site in Riverdale. Construction of the buildings began in August 2009 and is progressing steadily and on time. The original budget for this budget was \$10.5 million and the project costs will be significantly lower as a result of excellent project management.

Funding for the project is coming from Government of Canada's economic action plan. It is estimated that the first tenants will move in during the fall of 2010. The project has taken approximately two years to complete. In order for a family to be approved, they first have to apply for housing. Their

applications are scrutinized, the main priority being single families — that would be male or female as the head of the family, but single-parent families.

The project's advisory committee is made up of representatives from women's organizations, the Riverdale Community Association, tenants of other affordable housing complexes and government. It was established to provide advice and recommendations as we move forward on this housing project. It met regularly until the construction was underway. Although we considered a variety of options for the layout of the four buildings, in the end the decision was made to maximize the number of units. We have been told by many community agencies and individuals that the need for housing in our community is great and we have heard that message. We know that constructing 32 new family-focused living units will provide a much-needed influx of affordable units in the Whitehorse area.

There will be a staff person for this housing complex and we are working to incorporate places for children and families to play together. We are exploring ways for tenants to contribute to and provide input into the complex and identify their individual and collective needs. We will continue to explore the connections to the surrounding neighbourhoods and the community at large. During the consultation, being close to schools, grocery stores and other amenities was identified as a very important item for this project, all of which are features of this site.

In addition, the site is a parcel of Government of Yukon land, which assisted in reducing the cost of this project. The government chose not to include amenities such as a daycare, in favour of maximizing the housing units, which are so much in demand.

Prior to the announcement, targeted consultations with social housing clients, women's groups, transition homes and other groups identified priorities, including affordability, safety, proximity to schools and transportation. The site selection was based on the results of the consultation, as well as specific criteria, including cost-zoning characteristics, physical-technical site characteristics, adjacent amenities and general and child safety issues.

I would also like to note that the Whitehorse affordable family housing project is built to SuperGreen home standards, which means longer-term heating and operational costs will be minimized. Of the sites, four sites were considered but the Riverdale site met the majority of the features outlined in the site comparison chart and the consultation.

It is within a residential area and close to five schools, a grocery store, and is also accessible to public transportation. It is also within walking distance to downtown, where numerous other necessary services and amenities are available.

The property is zoned "public service institutional" by the City of Whitehorse, which means that public buildings and structures can be built there. A government-operated business, including social housing, can be constructed and operated on that site. This project is an example of successful planning and good fiscal management by this government.

Mr. Elias: I thank the minister for the latter half of her response. I was quite surprised to hear the minister engage in

the negative, but I'm not going to do that. I will say this: she mentioned past governments that I had no hand in. I refuse to accept any credit or any criticism for the decisions of any government where I had no hand in making the decisions or influencing the climate under which those decisions were made, and I will leave it at that.

Again, I stand by my words. I am just going to ask two more questions, and then I'll stand down. We have very limited time here, and we have a number of departments left in this billion-dollar-plus budget, including what we mentioned as a priority, and that is the Department of Environment.

I have got a couple more questions for the minister. I understand there are some women's organizations around the territory that have approached the minister about primary aggressor legislation. Can the minister provide some information on where she is taking this direction from the women's groups around our territory with regard to developing primary aggressor legislation in our territory? This type of legislation helps support women who are in domestic violence situations and have to defend themselves or fight back, so to speak. It recognizes that a domestic violence victim defending herself is different from someone launching an attack. There are other jurisdictions in our country that have this type of primary aggressor legislation, and I understand that she has been contacted by some women's groups, and I would like her to elaborate on that.

One of the final questions I have is with regard to the violence against women program. I understand that the funding has been doubled and that's great. I recognize, again, the minister's work and all of the staff within the Women's Directorate's hard work in accomplishing the goals and objectives of the Directorate.

With regard to the statistics in the Yukon about alcohol or drugs being present or part of the problem when assaults are experienced by women, the statistics that I have in front of me are that it is 59 percent in the Yukon. When a woman experiences violence in the Yukon, 60 percent of the time alcohol and drugs are involved. I'm wondering if the violence against women programming that is being conducted in the Yukon includes addressing this statistic.

Basically, my second question is, how is the minister responding to this high correlation between alcohol and violence against women in our territory and how is it being addressed? Those are the final two questions that I have.

Hon. Ms. Horne: As to the question of dual charging — I believe that is what the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin is referring to — I cannot remember being questioned by a women's group about the dual charging. I have done this on my own and asked about the dual charging and asked why, in some cases, it is being done. This will be part of the policing review that is going on in the Yukon right now. It was one of the initial questions I had when this came up.

I'm very concerned about the well-being of women. It's also two-sided; there is balance there. Men have also complained about dual charges when they have been the victims; yet, they are also charged. We'll plan on having training at the Northern Institute of Social Justice to train the officers more on

the local conditions, when to charge and how to investigate. The RCMP commanding officer has also voiced his concern to address this problem, so I am confident we will be addressing this.

As to the violence against women, I can tell you what we're doing for violence against aboriginal women. As I have said many times in this House, we have found that substance abuse is the biggest driver of criminal activity in the Yukon. This includes violence against women. We are addressing that with the Justice department. We have done a complete overhaul of the correctional system. We have the *Yukon Substance Abuse Action Plan*, which is far-reaching into every community.

We have developed the *Victims of Crime Strategy*. We have Victim Services workers in each community. We have in place the sexual assault response team. There is longer term counselling available to victims, both individually and in group settings. We have \$85,000 committed to training for workers who deal with victims.

We have committed \$500,000 over three years to support community-based social marketing by the Women's Directorate and the new position, as I said, starts June 1. We want to educate communities and the public that we will not condone violence against women. This is not only for the Women's Directorate; it must be addressed by everyone. It must be addressed in the homes, in the schools, and we must teach our children when we are raising them that we will not condone violence toward any member of our society — girls against boys, boys against girls. This is how it was traditionally done and for some reason we've failed to pass that on to our young children. In our schools, in society — as I said, we used to be able to drink in public in Yukon. That is no longer acceptable. That is not done. It is shunned by the public. We also have to do that with violence.

The Women's Directorate, as I say, is a very, very integral part of this government and of our society. Thank you.

Mr. Cardiff: I would like to thank the minister for her words today and yesterday and thank the officials from the Women's Directorate for being here today.

I do have some questions for the minister. One of the things that struck me immediately when I was listening to the minister speak this afternoon about the family-focused housing unit the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin was asking about was the minister identifying women and children as having the greatest need and that single women with children are some of the most vulnerable and in need of shelter. I applaud the government for the work they're doing with the family-focused housing project. I think it's long overdue. We need to have more affordable housing for the most vulnerable.

One of the other areas I know has been identified as an important issue that would address the needs of women and children and single women with children — I'm going to tie it into what the minister just was speaking about — and that is violence. The minister was talking about how we used to be able to drink in public and we can't anymore. Actually, there are still displays of public drinking in society. Certain events have beer gardens, which don't have walls.

Unfortunately it's not even necessarily the public displays of violence that we need to be concerned about; it's the violence that you can't see. It's the violence that takes place behind closed doors, or verbal or psychological violence, where your ability to see it in the public just isn't there — it's hidden, and women and children are afraid. All governments need to address this issue.

I believe it has been at least a year or more since I attended the annual general meeting of the Yukon Women's Transition Home Society. There was a presentation made; the minister was there and she saw the presentation. There is a demonstrated need — unfortunately it is a demonstrated need — this is something I wish we didn't have to do. Is the minister working with the ministers responsible for the Yukon Housing Corporation and the Department of Health and Social Services on a second-stage housing project that is going to be built soon? I have been going to these meetings for years. I have been an MLA now for seven and a half years. I have been going to those meetings — I may not have been to each and every one of them but I have been to many of them — and I keep hearing over and over and over again the need for something between emergency housing and moving on with your life. It's called "second-stage housing". There are only so many beds in that facility.

Women and children need a safe place, because if they don't have that safe place, they end up returning to the violent relationship. I want the minister to take this very seriously. I see the former minister is going to give some advice on this matter. She has some history and knows a little bit about this issue — how important it is and how long this has been asked for by the community.

I'm hoping that the minister will stand up and will give us all the good news.

Hon. Ms. Horne: The statistics in Yukon are very disturbing. Helping to alleviate these is what keeps the department and me going. The violence in the Northwest Territories is also very severe and extreme, compared to the rest of Canada. Yukon was one of the jurisdictions with the highest rates of charges being laid for spousal abuse, but we have to also bear in mind that, as our numbers go up, it's the security that people feel so they can come forward. They are coming through the fear of being able to come forward and feel safe enough to come forward and tell their story.

While the figures may rise in the next few years, it's because people are feeling safer. Compared to the provinces, in 2006 the Yukon was two to three times higher than the rest of Canada in sexual offences. Statistics Canada reported that the rate of sexual assault is 65 per 100,000 in Canada. Yukon is 193.6 per 100,000.

Spousal homicide per one million — Canada is 4.6 per million; Yukon is 30.4. Shelter use on a single day — Yukon is four times higher; Northwest Territories, four times higher; Nunavut, 10 times higher.

Half the women in Canada over the age of 16 experience physical violence at least once in their lives. That's deplorable. Every year, up to 360,000 children in Canada witness abuse in their home surroundings. One to two women die as a result of

domestic violence every week. These figures don't reflect the fear that stays with a child who has witnessed that violence in the home. They don't measure the level of courage it takes for those women — as the member opposite mentioned — to leave an abusive relationship. They don't measure the fear that stays with a woman who has endured that domestic violence in the home. They don't estimate the amount of strength it takes for a woman to start a whole new life. They don't measure the courage it takes for the woman to come forward to have charges levied against her partner.

They can't ever measure the self-esteem that is taken from that woman because of domestic violence. Our numbers are appalling.

The government is continuing to work with Kaushee's Place. We recognize the importance of having second-stage housing. Officials from Yukon Housing Corporation, Health and Social Services and the Women's Directorate — I would just like to emphasize here that the Women's Directorate does work throughout the Yukon government, in every department, to make sure that the women are taken care of and that there is gender equality. The officials are now working to identify a potential site so that we may fully analyze costs in order to determine the project's feasibility for Kaushee's second-stage housing.

While we remain committed to providing safe and accessible options for women and children fleeing violence, we want to ensure that we have diligently assessed costs associated with any proposed project. Second-stage housing does provide safe, supported options for women and their children who were victimized by spousal violence and have chosen to leave those relationships

It offers medium-term, affordable housing that is secure and allows women the opportunity to adjust to a new lifestyle while continuing to receive the supports they require.

Kaushee's has five, second-stage units, which are self-contained apartment units that are rented to women who want to live independently in a safe environment. Women and their dependent children can rent a unit for up to six months. There is a high demand for Kaushee's second-stage units. They are always full, and there is always a waiting list.

This government also provides \$276,313 to the Help and Hope for Families Society in Watson Lake in order to construct four new second-stage housing units. The units are attached to the existing transition home and will allow for the provision of longer term, supportive and affordable living for women and children escaping abuse. I have visited this home in Watson Lake, and it is run magnificently. The workers there do their work with passion and the caring that these women and children need.

I'm very proud of these workers. We also have a home in Watson Lake that provides security for women and children and we are working with Kaushee's Place. The demand is high in Yukon. We can't ever fully address the problems, but we are trying.

Mr. Cardiff: I'm almost embarrassed, because the minister just stood up and cited a litany of statistics, arguing why this is needed. It's not like we haven't known that it has

been needed for a long time. As I said to the minister, I've been going to the annual general meetings for the last seven years. I may not have made all of them, but I've been to quite a few of them.

This has been an identified need. I've asked questions about this in the Legislature before, I've asked the minister responsible for Yukon Housing Corporation, I've asked the minister responsible for the Women's Directorate — the previous minister — and I've probably even asked the Premier about this. This is an important issue.

The minister just stated that they're working on it, that they're trying to identify a site. Well, there are lots of building sites around. The city has lots for sale. We have a billion-dollar budget; I am sure the government can ante up enough money for a building site so this project can go ahead. When I asked the question, I just asked the minister to give us the good news. What is the word? Is this project going to go ahead? What I get in return is, "We're trying to identify a building site. We're never going to be able to address the issue but we're trying."

Well, Mr. Chair, I am sorry, but that doesn't cut it with me. That is not acceptable. We're witnessing this happening in front of our eyes. There are five units in Whitehorse that are available for six months. The minister said that they are always full and there is always a waiting list. That is a demonstrated need in my mind. They have always been full and there has always been a waiting list for as long as I can remember. We are still at the stage where we've got to identify a building site and we don't even know if there is a project the government is going to advance.

This is a very, very serious and important matter and I think it needs to be addressed. I'm asking the minister to please tell us what stage the project is at. She's working with two other ministers. I'm assuming she has their support. Do they have a project between the three of them that the government is going to support and advance? How many units? If the minister wants to go and look at lots in the City of Whitehorse, I'd be more than happy to drive around and look for a suitable location. I think this is important and this is a project we should be breaking the ground on tomorrow.

Hon. Ms. Horne: I'm embarrassed that the member opposite doesn't realize all that we're doing for women of the Yukon. We're working with Kaushee's Place. We can't just go out and pick any site in Whitehorse.

Kaushee's Place has come forward with specialized requirements of this second-stage housing project. Yukon Housing Corporation is working on finding a site that can be built upon. We are working together; as I say, the Women's Directorate is working not only with Yukon Housing Corporation or Health and Social Services, but within every department of the government. We are addressing the needs of women and children in the Yukon. Again, I reiterate that we are working with Kaushee's Place.

We have done a lot for women. The mandate of the Women's Directorate is to support government initiatives aimed at increasing the equality of women, to apply a gender lens to all Yukon policies and legislation, to provide public education, to provide project and operational assistance.

In 2002, as I've said, the department was totally gutted. The Yukon Women's Directorate was reinstated as a stand-alone agency by this government, by this side of the House. The Yukon Advisory Council on Women's Issues meets quarterly to provide advice. They hold an annual women's forum. Yukon is closely involved in working with the international community and national women's equality-seeking organizations to better support equality for women.

In aboriginal women's initiatives, we are continuing to implement the recommendations made at the 2007 Yukon Aboriginal Women's Summit. The aboriginal women's program and policy analyst is 50-percent dedicated to supporting implementation. The First Nation Training Corps position within the Women's Directorate works with aboriginal women's organizations toward the implementation of the YAWS recommendations. The prevention of violence against aboriginal women's fund has doubled from \$100,000 to \$200,000. Since 2004, Yukon government has contributed \$700,000 to the prevention of violence against aboriginal women's fund.

The Yukon government has collaborated with Northwest Territories and Nunavut to present a business case to the federal government to support more women's shelters in the territories. Six aboriginal women were awarded recognition by their communities through the aboriginal women's role-model programming.

Yukon initiated the Whitehorse affordable family project worth over \$7.5 million that provides up to 32 new housing units which the member opposite seems to have forgotten about.

Yukon government invested over \$273,000 to create four transitional housing units for women who are escaping abuse in Watson Lake. Women's shelters received an increase from \$988,000 in 2009-10 to \$1,021,000 in 2010-11 in support from Health and Social Services. The women's annex at the new correctional facility includes six bedrooms and living areas that promote the development of healthy life skills.

In 2009, Yukon released a report entitled, *Improving Treatment and Support for Yukon Girls and Women with Substance Use Problems and Addictions*. Over 200 front-line service providers participated in training that focused on key gender differences in the experience of substance abuse.

Nurse practitioners were recently included under the *Health Professions Act*, and government is working toward regulations to guide implementation of the new positions. Mr. Chair, I can go on. I have a book about what we are doing for women.

We are working with the women. We are trying to meet the demand caused by substance abuse — it's not only the housing. We are helping women — healthy women, healthy families, healthy children, healthy communities, healthy Yukon.

Mr. Cardiff: I'd encourage the minister to listen to what it is I'm saying because she said I didn't even know about the family-focused housing. If she had listened to my comments, I congratulated her for it before I asked the question. We all need to be cognizant of what each other is saying here in the Legislative Assembly — it's what we're here for. This is

a long meeting and it's just about over, but we need to continue meeting outside of this room to try to advance some of these issues, and this is one that I felt was fairly important.

This is an issue that I feel is very important. It was an issue that I intended to address, but it wasn't until I heard the minister speaking about violence and the most vulnerable people and their needs that I became impassioned to even bring up the subject.

It's something I wanted to talk about. The government obviously recognizes there's a need here, and I would hope they do something to address it post-haste. It's something we can't allow to continue to happen.

I've already thanked the officials and I thank the people who work in the department. I think this is very important. The minister cited the Directorate's mandate and the objectives of the Directorate. One of the ones I think is the most important is working throughout government and analyzing legislation, policies and regulations to ensure that the concerns of women are addressed appropriately — that women's equality is recognized, both economically and socially and in all their dealings with government — whether it be at the service counter at the front or in Community Services, Highways and Public Works or within our legal system — that it's fair.

The other work that is going on to support women's organizations is important, but holding the government accountable — for the policies, the legislation and the regulations — is one of the most important things that I think the Directorate can do. That said, I talked with the minister in her capacity as the Minister of Justice at one time about the *Victims of Crime Act* and my concerns with it, about a section of the act that says, "An individual who has been found guilty of an offence is not a victim of that offence." I think this is an important issue for women as well. It has to do with dual charging.

Dual arrests occur for a variety of reasons. It is police responding to family violence calls oftentimes, and the women are the victims. The police are responding to a domestic family violence call and they may be confronted with differing accounts — sharply differing accounts — of what has transpired, with each party claiming to be the victim. What do you do? They're both claiming to be victims in this case, and many times the victim may have used justifiable force against the abuser in self-defence and a false cross-complaint may be made by the person who was doing the abuse. Both parties may actually show signs of being injured and the police get into a situation where if they don't charge both individuals, they may fear some sort of liability.

Now, incidents of dual charges in domestic cases have been recognized as inappropriate in most cases and domestic violence Crown prosecutors, community groups — the document I have is a backgrounder from Alberta, so the Alberta Solicitor General and Public Security for police in corrections and the Alberta Justice and Attorney General for the Crown have identified this issue.

The following issues is one of the problems associated with dual charges: true victims are further victimized. That's my point. When we get to debate this bill, I want to ensure that victims aren't being further victimized. There is a decreased

chance of victims seeking further help. The minister talked about the courage it takes to come out and report acts of violence.

We've recently seen that courage in our community and the difficulty people have in coming out. It's not an easy thing. I sat in that courtroom too. There are decreased chances of victims seeking further help, so it's a deterrent. When our legal system and our police system do this, it discourages those people from having the courage to come out and ask for further assistance. If they don't seek further assistance, it places them and their children at risk of more emotional, psychological or physical harm.

In some jurisdictions, victims can't access victim services or victim assistance programs if they've been charged. Dual charges severely decrease the ability to prosecute because there's no reasonable likelihood of a conviction when both parties are charged. There's an increased liability for police services; there's increased potential for eventual homicide by the abuser; there's a total lack of offender accountability and it could bring the administration of justice into disrepute.

The consequences of a dual arrest: they are always prosecuted and almost never successfully; children may need temporary placement or care; the aggressor actually gains more power because the police are supporting the aggressor; and the aggressor continues to be a threat in the home. It leaves the victim with other serious issues. They are not protected and they experience the fright of being arrested. They may not ever call the police again if they are in danger and, on top of that, they may end up with a criminal record.

Now, there is a lot of other information I have on this. My question for the minister, in her capacity as the minister responsible for the Women's Directorate: has the Women's Directorate analyzed the *Victims of Crime Act*? I am sure they have. I know that consultation was done and that it is a generally accepted piece of legislation. Is the minister, in her capacity as the minister responsible for the Women's Directorate, looking at having the Justice department bring forward some primary aggressor legislation? Actually, I'm going to leave it there. I have another question related to it, but I'll listen to what the minister has to say. I'd like to know whether or not they're looking at the primary aggressor legislation.

Hon. Ms. Horne: I just responded to the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin on this exact question. In the dual charging, we have to remember here, first of all, that policing is a very tough job. The RCMP come to the home, they see a situation and, if it's not clearly evident, they lay dual charges — if they cannot find who is the aggressor in the situation. This will be part of the policing review in Yukon. This is what I was saying — that the review we're launching in partnership with the RCMP is a more comprehensive review than any one incident; it is through the total policing that's done in the Yukon.

Prior to this, we have been working with partners, such as the RCMP, the Crown, Domestic Violence Treatment Option Court and transition homes, trying to gain a clear picture of the current policies and practices surrounding the primary aggressor charges in Yukon.

Sometimes this area is very grey — it's not black and white — and it takes the determination by the RCMP. And, as I say, sometimes that's a tough job, so they charge both until it goes to court and is determined then.

We are aware that the violence against women, including intimate partner violence, is related to gender inequality and this is why we are working through the Women's Directorate to improve this. The primary aggressor policies direct law enforcement agencies and prosecutors to investigate and determine the most significant aggressor when they are dealing with the cases, when it goes to court. I think what I'm trying to emphasize here is that it's not always black and white and it needs to be determined who the aggressor is. Of course, we don't want the victim to be victimized twice, but we also have complaints from men who state that their female partner is the aggressor, so it's not always black and white.

Mr. Cardiff: Well, I thank the minister for that. I apologize missing the conversation between the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin and the minister on that issue. I was otherwise engaged in a different conversation with someone else at that particular time, albeit not in my chair.

The other thing associated with this — and I think this is important — if this is on the government's radar screen and they are going to move forward, I would be supportive of that. There are other things that can be done and can be encouraged. Reading through the documentation that I've got on this — there is a need for training. We need training on identifying abusers or batterers, and even how to look for injuries from a sophisticated abuser, because sometimes they leave no marks or they hit in places where it is difficult to leave a mark or even see the mark, or they hit in places where police officers wouldn't normally look. Then there's also training with regard to encouraging the person who has been abused to seek medical help.

I'd like to know whether or not the Women's Directorate is also working with the RCMP on this, helping them find workshops or training. Is the Women's Directorate sponsoring experts to come to the Yukon and provide ongoing workshops throughout the Yukon for RCMP members to learn about the latest investigative techniques in this?

It's very important and the consequences of dual charges, as I read out, can be devastating. As the minister stated, it's not always women who are the victims.

The minister also read off a litany of statistics that prove that women for the most part are the ones who are the most vulnerable, most at risk and most likely to suffer from domestic violence and revictimized in these instances with the possibility of dual charges. It's about protecting those women, which the minister wants to do. We agree on that. I agree the minister wants to do what is right and do what is right for women.

This is just one other suggestion I have for moving forward: providing a vehicle for that training so that the investigative techniques are there, so that when RCMP go to the house and the fingers are being pointed at each other, that they have the ability to identify whether or not dual charges are warranted. They can identify at an earlier stage who was the primary aggressor. Then we can avoid some of those negative

consequences and negative impacts that are associated with dual charging.

If the minister would consider that, I would appreciate hearing from her.

Hon. Ms. Horne: I am pleased to let the member opposite know that this is already in the planning stage, which has been in the works for probably the past year at our Northern Institute of Social Justice. We anticipate working with individuals to train in trauma care and identification of the effects of abuse. Although there may not be visual effects readily apparent, the effects of trauma will be there. I have already spoken with the commissioner of the RCMP from Ottawa on training RCMP at the Northern Institute of Social Justice on local cultures of First Nations and working further with victims of violence in Yukon.

Mr. Cardiff: Well, I am pleased to hear that there has been work ongoing for the past year.

Can the minister tell us when the first courses will be delivered?

Hon. Ms. Horne: I would say it's too early now to give definite starting dates because of the police review. We'll wait until the police review is complete and then decide on training required and what is actually required in policing in Yukon, so we have a definite plan and do the right approach to it.

Mr. Cardiff: The minister has been working on this for a year, and there's an obvious need, and now we're going to wait for the policing review. I understand, to some extent, what it is you're trying to do, but there is coursework and there are experts out there who could be providing this training now. It's another one of those things that's kind of a demonstrated need.

I understand the minister wants to go through the policing review, but the minister has to remember that every day someone in this territory, some woman, is being abused, and the longer we delay this, the longer this goes on and the longer the consequences are there.

The minister brought up the policing review and there are other consultations that are going on. The Minister of Health and Social Services has the review of — and I had the title of the task force here — the task force on acutely intoxicated persons at risk. As I mentioned, in both motion debates, I think it's important that people most affected by this in many instances need to be involved in guiding either the task force or the review.

My point regarding the Minister of Health and Social Services' task force on intoxicated persons at risk was that we need to have people who are experiencing those alcohol and drug addictions or are recovering and have an understanding of what it is like and what goes on inside their heads when they are fighting those addictions — and that could be men or women.

With the policing review, I know I asked the Minister of Justice in the motion debate about women's representation on that committee and we need to have women's groups represented on that committee and I trust that is happening. One of the other things that I suggested during that debate is that either the Women's Directorate or the Department of Justice provide

adequate support in order to have those women participate in these important reviews. It goes back to the Directorate's mandate, which is the commitment about reviewing legislation and policy and regulations and making sure that women's views are adequately represented and that we're not going down some path that leads toward women's inequality, that it's about economic, legal and social equality of women, as it says on page 17-2.

That's our commitment. The job is to analyze legislation and policies and procedures and regulations, so women's participation, both in the policing review and in the task force on acutely intoxicated persons, is one way the Women's Directorate could ensure that women's voices are heard.

What I'm looking for is a commitment from the minister. I know they support women's groups financially in the territory. A lot of these things — the review and task force — are kind of outside of their mandate and they're being forced to respond to very important issues in very short time frames.

The timeframes on both of these initiatives — the policing review and the taskforce — are very short. So providing support to women or women's groups so that they can effectively participate at an equal level — because if you look at some of the people who are on these taskforces or reviews, we're talking about deputy ministers, assistant deputy ministers who have staff — they have resources; they have good salaries. As we know and as the minister cited earlier, single women and children, women suffering from abuse, are some of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged in our society.

So what I'm asking the minister is this: will the Women's Directorate consider providing extra support to these groups or the individuals who are participating on these groups to ensure that oversight to ensure the equality of women when dealing with the plans that come forward is adequately represented and that there is no inequality on those panels or on those task forces.

Hon. Ms. Horne: I would just like to address the member opposite. He was talking about victims. The Yukon government is not forgetting victims. When I say we're waiting for the police review to come forward with definite recommendations and changes, we have many services that are now available to victims of crime. The Department of Justice currently offers many services. We have the Domestic Violence Treatment Option Court in Whitehorse and Watson Lake; assistance in court processes, such as peace bond applications and emergency intervention orders; 24-hour access to VictimLINK; the sexual assault response team; counselling programs; responses to community requests for programming and training; court support. Every Yukon community has a victim service worker assigned to work directly with victims of crime.

We have the bill before us in the House this sitting for victims of crime. In addition, the Department of Justice also funds the support variation assistance program that provides assistance to persons who need to have their support orders varied, the maintenance enforcement program, legal aid, the Law Line, and For the Sake of the Children parenting program. We just recently released our *Victims of Crime Strategy* as identified in the correctional redevelopment strategic plan. This strategy

provides a framework for the Government of Yukon to address the needs of victims of crime.

An advisory group has been set up to assist in the development of the implementation of the next steps. I just went through the mandate of the Women's Directorate. It's to support government initiatives aimed at increasing the equality of women, to apply a gender lens to all government policies and legislation, to provide public education and to provide project and operational assistance.

The Women's Directorate is a direct participant in the committees that you just spoke of. We don't just have it in writing, we are very active throughout the government to make sure there is equality of women. On the policing review committee, we have three women. Two women represent the women's organizations. Two of those are aboriginal and one is non-aboriginal. We have one who directly represents the women's groups in Whitehorse and one who represents all First Nations. There are three independent females on that committee. I feel we're well covered and I really do expect positive results from the review.

Mr. Cardiff: The minister didn't answer the question. It was about providing financial support to these groups. Dealing with these issues is part of their mandate, but it's outside of what they need to deal with on a daily basis, which is assisting people who are coming through the door and working on projects they've already identified. Then the government comes up with a good idea, like a policing review. It's a good idea, something we've talked about. If I can get a plug in at this point in time, I think permanent oversight of our policing system on a territorial basis — a citizens' oversight of our policing system in the Yukon would benefit both men and women here in the territory. I'm going to get that plug in.

So the question I asked the minister was about financial support so they can participate at an equal level with the others who are on the committee and not be at a disadvantage when it comes to having resources available to them to do the work that's necessary to participate in that committee.

The other question I have for the minister is the objective on page 17-2: "To support the Government of Yukon's commitment to the economic, legal and social equality of women," and the mandate that she talked about: applying that gender lens to legislation, government policy and what's going on in each and every department.

How do you measure or evaluate whether or not you've met those objectives within each of those areas: economic, legal and social issues?

Hon. Ms. Horne: It is not the mandate of the Women's Directorate to provide funding to any organization. I would suggest that the member ask the Minister of Justice when that portfolio comes up for questioning.

I can tell the member that, in preparation of all formal documents, all departments, report their contact with the Women's Directorate. When something comes before Cabinet, I will ask if they have had contact with the Women's Directorate as to the gender lens of anything that's being passed.

Mr. Cardiff: What I'm asking is this: how does the department evaluate whether it has met the objective within

these areas — the commitment to economic equality of women? How does the department evaluate whether or not it is meeting that objective, that the work being done is promoting the economic equality of women, promoting the legal equality of women and the social equality of women? How do we measure that?

We're doing a lot of work out there. The minister, in both her roles, by the sounds of it, is doing quite a bit in these areas. We have policing reviews going on; we've got housing projects.

We've know that there is support for the family violence and violence against women prevention initiatives. We know that there are women's community projects. There is northern strategy money for aboriginal women's programs. There is the women's equality fund, and there is money for the Victoria Faulkner Women's Centre women's advocate. So there is money being provided out there, and there is work going on. How does the minister evaluate whether or not it is meeting the objectives that are stated on page 17-2 of Bill No. 20, Vote 11.

Hon. Ms. Horne: I'm not positive what question the member opposite is asking. What evaluation? For gender analysis? Formal gender inclusive analysis? That is reported by all departments, and a lot of it is just common sense and project specific.

We have Yukon Advisory Council on Women's Issues — YACWI — which represents all of Yukon. The council reports to us. They report to me as minister as to things that are happening in the Yukon. I'm talking about common sense and we're learning. Yukon representatives attended a review of the Hague Convention to eliminate all discrimination against women. This was in New York. It was very interesting that, in Israel, they have homes — they don't have second-stage housing — specifically for men who abuse their partners. They put them into this secluded housing. They leave the women and their children in the home.

The men are removed, are not allowed to go near the home and they're put into a room. They don't have their vehicle, they don't have their big-screen TV, and they don't have their toys. It hurts them more than what we do by removing the women and children from the home. That makes sense. I'm just learning from different countries in attending these meetings — human rights. We're involved in every department. I'm really not sure what the member opposite was questioning. So I don't know if I responded correctly to his question.

Mr. Cardiff: The question was about measurement. How do you measure the effectiveness of the programming? How do you know that it's supporting the Government of Yukon's commitment to economic, legal and social equality of women? What tools do you have? In construction, we have measuring tapes and squares and all kinds of things. But a lot of this is about statistics. The minister cited a whole litany of statistics that are horrendous.

So how do we measure the effectiveness, for starters, of the \$1,750,000 expenditure, which is a pittance in a \$1 billion budget for something that's very important? I believe much more could be done, but we need to be able to measure the progress we're making in achieving the commitment to the eco-

nomie, legal and social equality of women. We need some sort of statistical evidence that what the government is doing is actually achieving that.

Part of that is the policing review, I suppose. We're going to look at what we're doing right and what's not working but, on an ongoing basis, we need to know that we're moving forward and the statistics need to show an improvement. We can't blame the fact that the statistics are getting worse on people's courage to come out and report all the time because it continues to happen. It's a big issue, and we need to know that we're moving forward.

Some of the things that have happened recently are actually discouraging women to come forward. There are acts of courage out there, but there are events — and "events" is not the word to use — but there are things that have happened in our community that are discouraging women from coming forward, and we've got to put an end to that too. But we need to be able to measure and evaluate what it is that we're doing and make sure that we're moving forward and progressing in our society. That was the question.

Hon. Ms. Horne: Unfortunately, we don't have any measuring tools, as you say in construction, to measure lengths of a building, the sidewalk. You have to remember we've only been in existence since 2002 and we don't have a program yet to collect effective statistics.

For our funding programs that we give out to communities, to the women's equality fund, the prevention of violence against aboriginal women, the women's community fund — when we give out the funding, we have built-in reporting measures for them to report back to us and hopefully we get some level of assurance from them that the programming is working and that is the objective of asking for the reporting.

We will be working with victim services advisory committee on more specific measures, but we don't have a program to collect statistics right yet.

But I'd like to assure the member opposite that Yukon has taken a leadership role on the issue of violence against women at the national forum and it is critical for us to keep this issue at the forefront of all levels of all governments. We have to keep exerting pressure on all governments at all levels to step up to the plate and do their part as well, but no, we don't have any specific measuring sticks right now. We are working on that and we've only been in existence for about seven years.

Mr. Cardiff: Just making notes for the future here. Okay, I can't let that pass actually. There may have been a short hiatus or period of time and, in the period of time that this has been an issue, or has become part of our political structure in the Yukon, we're missing two years.

The Women's Directorate has not just been around since 2002. There are some people in my office who would take that as an affront and an insult. I have a very capable staff person, who is a former member of the Legislative Assembly, and in the 1970s actually started to speak out about women's issues and created the Women's Directorate, if I am not mistaken. As recently as last weekend, the former MLA for Whitehorse Centre and the minister responsible for the Women's Directorate during the 1980s were here. So the Women's Directorate has

been around for a long time, and we need to ensure its good work continues.

I am going to ask the minister another question along the same lines. In the budget there are monies for the women's equality fund and the aboriginal women's programs. I'm wondering if the minister can tell us what criteria is used for choosing those projects. The amount of money is not a large sum of money, and it needs to be spread out. I don't know how many projects are identified — I guess we'll talk about that maybe when we get to line by line. But I'd like to know what criteria are used to evaluate which proposals get funded and how projects are evaluated — not just by the finances, but what results they produce. So, if the minister can answer that question — and I only have a couple more, and we'll move on to line by line.

Hon. Ms. Horne: Those statistics are not at my fingertips right now and we'll get back to the member opposite with the criteria.

Mr. Cardiff: I only have a couple more questions for the minister, one specifically related to funding. I noticed that, for a number of years now, the transfer payment for the women's advocate is \$60,000 and it has been for two years. One of the things that I have advocated for is kind of cost-of-living increases. In this instance, it is not just about that. It is about expanding services to women.

I guess the thought is that our population is growing. We know that there are issues out there. We know that there are needs — women who need assistance with a variety of things. It can be landlord/tenant issues; it can be dealing with domestic violence; it can be dealing with the bank. As the minister quite rightly pointed out, it's oftentimes women — single women with children, single parents — who are the most vulnerable and the most in need. They need a helping hand to get them through the system.

We get this kind of casework coming through our door — women who need help dealing with the Department of Health and Social Services or Yukon Housing Corporation. They need someone to help them through that process, because they're having a hard time and, for whatever reason — whether it's gender-based discrimination, or it's about their insecurity because of discrimination that they've suffered — they need someone to go with them to an appointment, to help them out.

So while I recognize that we're not going to amend the budget, all I'm asking is this: would the minister consider giving some thought in the future year's budget — or the best possible of all worlds would be in the fall supplementary — to bring forward a further allocation for a women's advocate. So maybe there could be — in the case of job sharing — two or three or four and they could share the workload. I know from doing casework and from people in my office who deal with those emotional situations, that the hard work they put in doing that casework takes its toll on an individual person. If that's all you're dealing with is advocating day in and day out, it's going to take its toll.

You need the ability to have adequate funding so that there can be job sharing, so that there can be benefits provided to the

individuals who are fulfilling that position and that they don't get burned out and they can continue to provide the assistance.

It's a simple request. I've given the minister some of the rationale behind my thinking on this issue. Increase that allocation either in future years — or if she could bring forward in the fall a supplementary budget — and have a discussion with the Victoria Faulkner Women's Centre about what the real needs are, because I'm positive that they could use the extra assistance. As the minister said, women in many instances are the most vulnerable and they're the ones who need the advocacy in these areas. Would the minister consider doing that?

Hon. Ms. Horne: I have been sitting here thinking about the last question the member opposite asked about the funding and how it is approved. It would depend, in the Women's Directorate, which fund was being requested and the proposals would have to meet the objectives of the fund.

Can the proposing group demonstrate the financial stability that they will carry out the work? Do they have staff in place? Are they organized? So it would depend on the funding. There are no set criteria. It would depend on which fund was being requested and assessed in that case.

As to the member's last question on someone to walk them through the services, the national crime prevention trust fund just funded the Whitehorse Aboriginal Women's Circle for a First Nation advocate in the amount of \$72,000, which does just this. It would be the Whitehorse Aboriginal Women's Circle that has the advocate who would walk an individual through the services of the government.

Mr. Cardiff: I believe that is good news, and it is good to know that there is more than one advocate out there. If the minister would match that funding, there would another \$12,000 added to that line item in a supplementary budget that would go to assisting others to continue the advocacy because, as I said, it can be a stressful and emotionally draining job.

It's not even a job. In some cases, it's a calling, or it's people's dedication to a cause, more than it is a job. I'm going to leave that and I have one more question for the minister that's not related to funding. It's more of a policy question. If she'd like, the minister can respond to my questions about the funding. Basically, I'm just asking to consider increasing the funding. I'm not talking about what the federal government provides. We're not talking about the federal government's budget, here, I hope. If we are, I hope they'll bring me the book, because I don't have that one in front of me.

We're talking about the Women's Directorate, Vote 11 in Bill No. 20. There is \$60,000 for the women's advocate, and all I asked the minister is this: would she consider increasing the level of funding in future years or in the supplementary budget? Could she answer that before or after she answers this next question? This is the final question.

I'd like to thank the minister for the answers that have been provided and the sharing of information. I thank the officials for their work here today and on a year-round basis for the work they do.

The final question for the minister is this: I would like to know what the minister's or the Directorate's position is on the new federal policy not to fund any programs that may involve

abortion in the government's international initiative around maternal health grants. This is important because it's about the minister's role as an advocate for women. I know this is a touchy subject and it's not an easy one. Believe me, it's not an easy one for me to speak about, because I believe in a person's right to control their body, but I've never ever had to go through what a woman might have to go through.

It is important. The Prime Minister came out and talked about an international initiative to globally address the health of mothers and children. A lot of people are on different sides of this, as we saw recently in the streets of Whitehorse — but it was a peaceful disagreement and we need to show a peaceful side to this issue. It is important to the health of women and children how this policy of the federal government is rolled out.

I would like to know what the minister's position and the Directorate's position is on the federal policy not to fund any programs that may involve abortion and their international maternal health policy and whether or not the minister has had any conversations with the federal government or her counterparts in the federal government on this issue.

Hon. Ms. Horne: In response to the member opposite requesting we match the funding, we have just recently hired a policy and program coordinator in the Women's Directorate who works as an advocate for the women's groups and, as of today, this policy and program coordinator is in the process of hiring an assistant to assist her in assisting the women's groups in Yukon.

As to the federal views on abortion, our investment with the Women's Directorate is on maternal health, to participate in discussions about midwifery consultation, healthy families, healthy children and healthy communities.

Chair: Any further debate?

Seeing none, we will proceed line by line in Vote 11, Women's Directorate.

Mr. Cardiff: I only have one question in the lines. The minister just talked about hiring new staff. Could the minister just provide us with how many FTEs there are? There may be job-sharing going on — the number of employees working in the Directorate.

Hon. Ms. Horne: There are nine employees in the Women's Directorate. Five are FTEs.

Chair: Any further debate on that line?

Mr. Cardiff: Mr. Chair, I respectfully request the unanimous consent of Committee of the Whole to deem all lines in Vote 11, Women's Directorate, cleared or carried, as required.

Unanimous consent re deeming all lines in Vote 11, Women's Directorate, cleared or carried

Chair: Mr. Cardiff has requested the unanimous consent of Committee of the Whole to deem all lines in Vote 11, Women's Directorate, cleared or carried, as required. Is there unanimous consent?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

Chair: Unanimous consent has been granted.

On Operation and Maintenance Expenditures

Total Operation and Maintenance Expenditure in the amount of \$1,747,000 agreed to

On Capital Expenditures

Total Capital Expenditures in the amount of \$7,000 agreed to

Women's Directorate agreed to

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

Recess

Chair: Order please. Committee of the Whole will now come to order. The matter before the Committee is Bill No. 20, *First Appropriation Act, 2010-11*. We will now proceed with Vote 2, Executive Council Office.

Executive Council Office

Hon. Mr. Fentie: Once again, Mr. Chair, I am pleased to introduce the Executive Council Office budget for 2010-11. The Executive Council Office budget forecasts overall operation and maintenance spending of \$23,570,000 and capital spending of \$246,000.

Mr. Chair, the proposed budget will allow the Executive Council Office to achieve several key initiatives, which are as follows: providing significant annual increases to Yukon youth organizations; increasing the availability of information on the Yukon government's website, including a plan to provide on-line services for clients of the Yukon Water Board by implementing a new electronic registry for water use licences; working in partnership with First Nations on strategies and projects to help address First Nation capacity-building priorities in collaboration with First Nations, investing in northern strategy trust projects that enhance Yukon's long-term interests; and, working with First Nations and the federal government in the five-year review of the *Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Act*, which we all know as YESAA. This list represents only a portion piece of many activities and responsibilities the Executive Council Office has been tasked with for the coming year.

On the operation and maintenance side, as members are aware, a large part of the Executive Council Office budget is corporate funding allocated to other departments, other governments and organizations through transfer payments. For example, the Executive Council Office is responsible for the allocation of Yukon government's land claims and implementation funding, and YESAA funding. In addition, the Executive Council Office is accountable for funding provided under the northern strategy trust to Yukon First Nations where they are the lead on projects approved by the Yukon Forum. The total amount of money provided through these types of transfers totals \$6,046,000 or, on a percentage basis, 25 percent of the department's O&M budget.

The Youth Directorate will be providing over \$900,000 in stable funding for programs directed at youth in the Yukon. The budget includes \$660,000 in direct funding to youth or-

ganizations, such as Bringing Youth Toward Equality, the Boys and Girls Club of Whitehorse and the Youth of Today Society.

This represents an increase of \$330,000 per year. In addition, starting in this fiscal year, we have committed to a three-year agreement with these organizations, which will provide stability to aid them in their long-term planning and retention of their personnel.

In addition, \$102,000 has been allocated to the youth investment fund and the francophone youth organization, Comité Espoir Jeunesse — I hope I didn't damage the second official language too much.

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Hon. Mr. Fentie: The other, sorry — I stand corrected. I have enough trouble with the English portion of the official languages.

It will again receive a contribution of \$25,000 to support its activities, focusing on youth in our very active francophone community.

Mr. Chair, community organizations or other governments will receive a combined total of \$204,000 to work with youth and deliver summer and winter activities in Yukon communities.

With respect to land claims, the budget allocation for the Land Claims and Implementation Secretariat is \$6,944,000, representing approximately 30 percent of the total O&M budget for the Executive Council Office. The planned expenditures confirm this government's commitment to working closely with First Nations by funding key personnel and activities within the Yukon government to support implementation of the final land claim and self-government agreements. This funding will total \$2.3 million.

An additional \$2.85 million will be provided to First Nation boards, councils and planning commissions to support their very important work as outlined in the agreements. The Governance Liaison and Capacity Development branch in this year's budget allocation will receive an increase in funding for personnel and a decrease in overall transfer payments. This decrease is directly related to the annual variation in funding to the Executive Council Office and its First Nation partners for implementation of ECO-specific northern strategy projects and is based on annual cash-flow requirements.

Northern strategy — a total of \$3,423,000 is allocated to projects approved through the northern strategy trust for 2010-11. This allocation covers projects approved in all three intakes — 2006, 2007 and 2009 — and will flow to First Nations for their work on 25 different projects. On the capital side — as noted previously, the capital budget for the Executive Council Office is relatively small — some \$246,000. The majority of this expenditure is \$153,000 that has been set aside to support the activities in other departments associated with implementation of land claims. The remaining funds will support the acquisition of office equipment that has reached the end of its lifecycle and systems development work in both the Development Assessment Branch and the Yukon Water Board secretariat.

With these comments, I look forward to answering any question relative to the Executive Council Office and our main estimates for fiscal year 2010-11.

Mr. Mitchell: I thank the Premier for his opening remarks. I look forward to some interesting debate. I certainly hope we can keep the temperature of the debate lower than the temperature in the room, which is warmer than usual.

First of all, Mr. Chair, I would like to express our appreciation to all the officials who work in the Executive Council Office. The work they do is very, very important and integral to the success of the Yukon government in implementing its programs. I would like to thank the deputy minister and the officials for the briefing they provided, I guess, a month and a half or almost two months ago now — early in this sitting, which was and is much appreciated.

Some of the questions that I will ask I may have asked when we had, early on, debate on the supplementary budget for 2009-10. The answers may well be the same or there may be progress. Since we won't have another opportunity for some time to ask these questions in the Assembly, I hope the Premier will bear with me and provide the answers.

The first question: is there any update on any possible progress on the three unsettled land claims in Yukon, both in establishing a new mandate or in determining interest from the relative First Nations on there being a new mandate, were Canada to establish one, to move forward to try to have all Yukon First Nations eventually have settled land claims and be operating, so to speak, on that same level playing field? I'll just let the Premier answer that and we'll move on.

Hon. Mr. Fentie: There is no evidence that we can uncover and no information we can access that demonstrates that the federal government at this time is developing a new mandate to deal with the three unsettled land claims in the Yukon. We know they went through the process, resulting in the Fitch report; we know that's now public; but we have no indication at this time of how the federal government intends to proceed.

The Yukon government's position continues to be encouraging the federal government to recognize that 11 of 14 First Nations have settled their land claims and agreed to their self-government agreements, as negotiated under the *Umbrella Final Agreement*. We see no reason why the federal government would not conclude the process here with the remaining three First Nations under the same format. It's balanced and it obviously works, because the progress the 11 First Nations that have concluded their agreements are making is a marked departure from the First Nations that remain under the control of the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. I think there is much to be said about the tools provided in the treaties being tools that will contribute to self-determination.

Mr. Mitchell: I will just ask a follow-up question. The minister says we have no evidence or we see no evidence, which sounds a little passive. Has the minister actually made the case in recent months with the DIAND minister or the Prime Minister that he just made here — the benefits of there being 14 First Nations with settled claims, both for the First

Nations and for Yukon? So has the minister been proactively making that case? I'll look for the reply.

Hon. Mr. Fentie: Most certainly, Mr. Chair, and in fact, I can say that even the federal government and its ministers — those represented in the federal government who deal with the First Nations and aboriginal Canadians and the issues therein and all other land claims recognize the value of the Yukon land claims, the final agreements and the self-government agreements and, in recent times, have actually articulated this by referring to Yukon as a model.

All that said, however, there is an issue here of unsettled business and we continue to encourage the federal government to conclude that unfinished business.

Mr. Mitchell: On a related matter, or corollary to it, can the Premier provide us with an update. The Kaska have been much in the news of late regarding concerns they've expressed about activity within their traditional territory, and we're all aware of the existing lawsuits. Is there anything the Premier can update us on in the area of the lawsuits, such as the possibility of settlements without going through the whole court process? Any encouraging news?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: There is a great deal of encouraging news in the southeast Yukon. There is a lot of activity. In many cases, that activity includes the involvement of First Nations like the Ross River Dena Council, for example. Yes, we're well aware of what the member has presented to the House.

These are issues and choices made by First Nations. The Yukon government stands ready, should we be required to present all the information that has been compiled over a long, long period of time that reflects on the government meeting its obligations to ensure we are consulting and accommodating, as these First Nations' claims in this particular area are unsettled. Therefore, we do not have the blueprint and the guide of the treaties and the *Umbrella Final Agreement*. That said, we wouldn't entertain some sort of an arrangement out of court because there's no reason why the government would do that. We will continue to work with Liard First Nation and Ross River Dena Council, and we do have transboundary First Nations that we must also work with to meet our obligations. That also includes the federal government. The Government of Canada has some very significant responsibilities and obligations here.

As far as where those court cases are at, I think the basic one leads us back to the 1870 order which is in court. I really at this time can't provide the member any insights into what status this is at. This is in the courts and we will let the courts conclude their business.

Mr. Mitchell: We'll move on. As always, I'll ask the minister responsible for an update on the status or progress of the nine-year review. I would remind the Premier that on October 25, 2007, the Premier tabled a notice of motion. It has a very small number of 167, compared to the thousand number plus that we're at now: "THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon, the Government of Canada and Yukon First Nation governments to develop a timely, inclusive process through the reinstated Intergovernmental Forum to implement the recommendations of the nine-year review of the Yukon

final land claims agreements in order to ensure the spirit and intent of the land claims agreements are fulfilled."

More recently, in the current sitting, the Premier tabled a similar notice of motion. I don't believe we have actually ever debated either motion.

I'm reading the first one to indicate that two and a half years have passed and this process is still going forward ever so slowly and we often hear from various First Nations of their frustration on the lack of finality to this because the FTA is integral to their ability to move forward successfully to implement their programs. So if the Premier can provide us with information or a progress report, it would be appreciated.

Hon. Mr. Fentie: In comparison to the 30 years plus that was required to negotiate land claims — the time spent on the nine-year review is actually time well-spent and indeed, much shorter in terms of the number of years involved here. Great progress is being made, but there are a lot of very complicated issues. I think it's clear that all parties agree that in the short term we would focus on the governance part of all of this, which would be a financial transfer agreement finalized. There are a myriad of issues that are to be dealt with over a longer period. I don't think First Nations, the federal government or indeed this government take issue with that.

The progress that was made was very encouraging but now there is a bit of a challenge that has come forward from Treasury — federal Finance — in regard to own-source revenue issues. I think it is fair to say that the parties are working through that now and we'll see where that gets to. Overall, I think we are close if a resolution can be brought into the equation that deals with the own-source revenue issue.

One of the things there that the Yukon government has positioned itself on is the fact that the application of a national policy in many cases in Yukon does not apply. The situation that other First Nations in Canada find themselves in, at whatever level of treaty process they are at, is not necessarily the situation that Yukon First Nations are in. We must make sure that is always in the forefront of any equation so that there is no reduction in any way of what Yukon First Nations have negotiated. That would mean no reduction in the federal government living up to its obligations to those who are a signatory to the treaties here in Yukon.

Mr. Mitchell: We do understand that several First Nations have indicated they were very disappointed or frustrated at this latest hiccup, feeling they were close to getting a resolution of these issues. Clearly, for those First Nations interested in drawing down some responsibilities for various social programs, be it justice or health issues or education, this would be a real stumbling block to not have certainty in this area.

The Premier indicated that the government's position is that the application of a national policy does not apply. I guess we should perhaps be stating that our position is "should not apply," as opposed to "does not apply," because our situation is clearly different in Yukon.

I'm not going to carry forward. The Premier may have comments when he's next on his feet, but we have many questions and only a couple of days left after this afternoon.

Ministerial travel costs — we just recently had the report tabled. We always used to call it “MLA expenses” but I think it has a much more ornate name now. I don’t have it in front of me because I think I just brought it back to the office, so I won’t try to cite it. But I think that report leaves out ministerial travel — travel that is strictly for ministerial purposes, such as travelling to conferences across Canada or indeed international conferences.

Does the minister have those figures, which no doubt exist, and can he table them for us?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: I just want to make sure that there’s clarity on the matter of the treaties here in the Yukon. The member mentioned that the FTA also included the issue of taking down education and so on. I just want to make sure that we’re clear on the fact that there is another formal process should any First Nation choose to occupy an authority as vested in the treaties, and that that process is a separate one from what we’re doing with the FTA overall. That includes the Yukon government’s net savings transfer back to Canada and then the issue of funding the particular authority that the First Nation has occupied.

As far as the travel — I don’t have all the copies, but I will table the document and point out for the member’s benefit that the out-of-Yukon travel in total also includes opposition members who travelled out of the Yukon for certain initiatives, like COP15, for example.

So that is included. Then it will show the total of travel 2007-08, 2008-09 and 2009-10. This is an updated — April 1, 2009 for the period April 1, 2009 to March 12, 2010. The breakdown is on the document.

Mr. Mitchell: Indeed, I didn’t mean to oversimplify the scenario, were First Nations to draw down. I appreciate the minister’s comments. I was only indicating that all of this is related. Regarding these figures, is there a reason why we can’t get a number for the period that would be a full fiscal year from April 1, 2009 to March 31, 2010 for comparison purposes?

The normal cycle would be to go from April 1 to March 31, not April 1 to the end of February. So maybe the minister can just answer that. It might have been that this was prepared before the numbers were finalized, but if we can get an update, that would be appreciated.

Hon. Mr. Fentie: Yes, Mr. Chair, normally that’s because there is some information that is not accessible at the time that the report is produced. But it’s all being consolidated on an ongoing basis. Call it a “going-concern basis”. All matters are being consolidated.

Mr. Mitchell: I sense a reference to other issues in the Premier’s response and that’s another department for another day.

I would like to thank, as always, the diligent Legislative Assembly staff for so quickly providing me with one of the officials’ personal copy of the report on *Subsistence, Travel and Accommodations of Members of the Yukon Legislative Assembly, 2009-2010*, which is the title I was struggling to remember a few minutes ago.

Mr. Chair, I would ask — we had a report — we had some indication by letter, back in February, as to what initiatives had been undertaken by the internal audit branch.

It indicated that key initiatives for the current year were to access areas for future audit work, so the audit branch is carrying out work on an audit risk profile this year for planning purposes. Once completed, it will form the basis of the annual audit plans for the fiscal year 2010-11 as well as the strategic plan going out another three years. Is there any additional information that the minister has as to that initiative or perhaps any internal audits that may therefore be undertaken in the current fiscal year?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: I will give the member the most recent status update that I have available. The internal audit plan for 2010-11 is currently being developed by the Government Audit Services branch. The plan will be informed by the analysis and survey of risk across government and will look at specific audit projects for this year and potential projects for the next two years.

Also, the Government Audit Services branch is currently working on the audit on the government’s performance under the *Environment Act* which, under this legislation, is required every three years. The government is very confident and looks forward to a very favourable report.

I’m just trying to input some levity into the debate, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Mitchell: The levity is duly noted. The briefing note sounds remarkably similar to the letter previously sent, so it sounds like there hasn’t been much change or many final decisions made since then.

Again, for the Premier, if he could update us — we did receive a breakdown of the northern strategy project summary, identifying the recipient First Nations and the budget allocation for the remaining funds that are carried forward to this year from the northern strategy. I’m wondering if the Premier would let us know about his discussions with Canada and if there was a replacement for this fund being discussed or anything else the Premier could update us on?

I would hate to have to wait for our senator to make these announcements. It would be nice to hear them in the Assembly.

Hon. Mr. Fentie: At this time, given that the northern strategy initiative was actually sunsetted, the focus by the national government right now is in the broader context of the CanNor — the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency. The focus right now by the national government is consistent with that and their overall strategy for the north, to which the territories continue to provide input.

Mr. Mitchell: We would ask the Premier: does he have a date that he can provide us yet for his next meeting with the Prime Minister?

We’re thinking that there are some pretty major issues out there right now, such as the oil catastrophe off the coast of Louisiana and its implications for the Beaufort and north Yukon; the food mail program and some of the issues around that; any possible updates on the continuation of what used to be called the THAF funding, which has been extended for three years under a different acronym, but anything toward making

that permanent so that we don't have to continue to negotiate it, since the realities of the territories don't really change compared to the provinces for the need for that funding; issues about the international border with Alaska; and, any update that he can provide about the next anticipated meeting with the Prime Minister.

Hon. Mr. Fentie: We have no indication that the Prime Minister will be calling another First Ministers meeting in the foreseeable future. The Minister of Finance, however, has called finance ministers together for June. Of course, there will be the western premiers conference in British Columbia in June. We've just recently had the northern premiers conference, in which we have gone over a number of items that we will continue to work on. Much of that is in preparation for not only western premiers and the Council of the Federation annual gathering, but of course any First Ministers meetings that may take place. These are the Prime Minister's call, including renewal energy inventory, northern climate change adaptation strategy, water stewardship, housing, infrastructure, health funding — I'll go back to the health funding issue — northern university and northern research, and the Arctic Council issues, which are all part of an ongoing, evolving process.

We were successful in a two-year extension for our health funding. I would remind the member that the year 2014 is looming large. That is when the national agreement on health care transfer ends and we are already, as committed by the northern premiers, going to work on that two-year gap between 2012 and 2014.

Mr. Mitchell: These meetings at the national level and the international level are important. I understand that, in the hockey arena, the team based in the United States has a one-goal lead over the team based in Canada. The Premier would probably be interested in pursuing all these international discussions.

On that note, can the Premier give us any information on the next proposed meeting with Alaska Governor Sean Parnell? Again, there are issues such as the issues of the safety in the northern waters where they are not all — the Premier discussed the National Energy Board earlier today and when we asked these questions, but of course there is a boundary in the waters, although I think it is in dispute. It is a line on the map and the water flows back and forth and the wildlife moves back and forth, so what the Alaskans decide regarding safety issues is absolutely critical to us as well. Besides which, Alaskan governors seem to have a habit of running for vice-president, so it is always good to maintain those relationships.

Hon. Mr. Fentie: We've had a meeting with Governor Parnell and a number of members of his administration, so some of that work continues. I think I can say with confidence that subsequent to our discussion with the governor, the governor moved quickly to address the issue of a tax on cruise ship passengers, which I think is important. Our Minister of Tourism and Culture was at the meeting with the governor and impressed upon the governor and his representatives the importance of dealing with this matter.

I am pleased to say the government expeditiously acted on the issue. There were a number of other issues: Yukon River

salmon and many other issues, including Shakwak, that we continue to work on. I haven't got a date for the next meeting, but there will be one.

On the international issues, we're pleased that our federal government is moving now to address further the issue of disagreement on offshore boundaries. If you want to relate this to what's going on in the Gulf of Mexico, oil spills don't really have a problem with crossing boundaries out in the ocean, no matter what arguments are being made. We all know that it's not just the United States or the Alaskans and Canada that are dealing with this issue; this is a circumpolar issue that includes Russia, probably Japan and others who recognize that the future does probably hold development in the Arctic. So all these things are linked and our job at this stage continues — to develop good, cooperative, constructive relationships with our neighbours.

I'm very pleased to say that our relationship with the new governor has not diminished in any way the many, many years of cooperation and collaboration that the State of Alaska and the Yukon Territory have experienced and will continue to experience for the betterment of our citizens, both on the Alaska and Yukon sides of the border.

Mr. Mitchell: Well, on that cruise ship passenger tax issue, I think there were probably many voices, including many within the state — from what we heard from the City of Skagway — who were making their concerns known and were pleased that the Premier's voice was added to those. Former governor Wally Hickel just passed away this week, and he was once, I believe, Secretary of the Interior. He would have been pretty horrified at the disaster that's occurring off the coast of the United States right now, because he was indeed an advocate for caution in some areas.

In terms of court cases, again, we recognize that there's much the Premier cannot say when it comes to court cases, and probably little that he can, but I'll ask anyway. Is there any update or knowledge of when a decision might be expected in the Paulsen case?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: No. At this time, we don't have any update in terms of timing on the Supreme Court of Canada releasing its findings on the matter. I think we should be reflecting, however, on a recent decision by the Supreme Court of Canada, I believe, regarding Quebec and how they referenced the difference between modern treaties and treaties in past history.

There was a clear reference by the judges in the matter that we should reflect upon, because it does have some linkages to the case that we have before the Supreme Court of Canada.

Mr. Mitchell: We are aware of that decision, but one thing we've learned from watching Supreme Court decisions in this country, as well as in the United States, is that one should never presume to interpret in advance the logic that may be applied in a particular case based on another decision, because sometimes the justices come at it from a different perspective from the one we might think they would use.

We've seen reports from First Nations on how they spent the northern housing trust monies. How many reports have

been received and what First Nations have not yet submitted reports?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: Of course, the Yukon government continues and will always continue its efforts to have 14 First Nations in compliance with the reporting requirements, but we're not going to approach this in a manner that is disrespectful or inconsistent with government-to-government relationships. I guess that's the best way to put it. As to the date and timing of the information I have received, only two First Nations have not yet met their reporting requirements, and they are Kluane First Nation and Liard First Nation.

Mr. Mitchell: We certainly wouldn't be recommending that the Premier deal with any government on a less than fully respectful basis, so if he were to do so, that would be of his own initiative.

Moving on to the youth groups — there are several of them that are receiving funding from the Government of Yukon. Are they receiving that funding now on a quarterly basis or are they among the groups that are going to receive it on an annual basis?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: Mr. Chair, I must first recap a little bit on the issue here and some of the history. Reporting by the Auditor General on front-end allocation of expenditures by government — we all know that has been a negative reporting in providing full allocation of annual fiscal requirements. Secondly, we had an internal audit on the matter, consistent with the reporting of the Auditor General, and the federal government struck a blue-ribbon panel on the issue to delve into it further.

The end result, Mr. Chair, is that the appropriate approach is to do so on a quarterly basis. Yes, the youth groups are receiving their required fiscal resources on a quarterly basis, but not always are these quarterly installments equal. Some of this depends on what the expenditures are during that period of reporting and what is required. So the simple way is we do not provide the full allocation of any particular fiscal year; we're doing it on a quarterly basis but not always is each quarterly installment equal or the same.

Mr. Mitchell: Well, so what I'm hearing from the Premier is that there is some flexibility based on the projected budgetary issues that those groups would be dealing with, and that's probably at least a partial solution. I think when we had the CEO and the chair of Yukon Hospital Corporation here, they indicated that the government was actually providing them with an increase in their funding that would be calculated to offset the loss of interest that could have been accrued had they received all of their funding up front as in the past.

Is that something the Premier would be open to for some of these other groups, as well?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: I would have to go back and reflect on what the witnesses actually said in this House before I provide information on that. We do have a contribution agreement, contract, with the Yukon Hospital Corporation that defines the flow of money between the Yukon government and the Yukon Hospital Corporation.

Mr. Mitchell: This next question is a little difficult because I'm going to ask a question about select committees.

Select committees are committees of the Assembly; however, the decisions involved are decisions of the government, so this wouldn't be an appropriate question to ask when the Speaker is here to deal with the budget of the Assembly. I just wanted to make it clear to the Chair why I feel I have to ask it now rather than of the Speaker, because the Speaker could not answer these questions.

So the question is, when will chairs be named for the ATV and legislative renewal committees? Why has the government dragged its feet for six months in doing that?

The Premier himself wrote a letter to me some time ago, asking for the name of the person from the Liberal caucus — the Official Opposition — for the committee to go out and consult on Bill No. 108, dealing with legislative renewal. We responded to that letter with a name. Presumably, if the Premier wanted to know the name of our member of the committee — and I presume that the Third Party has also responded — then the government must have had someone in mind to chair their committee.

Regarding ATVs, we asked it in Question Period and I believe that the Minister of Community Services — I don't have the Blues in front of me from today, but he said that they were working on constructing a chair or building. I don't know; it sounded like furniture was involved. Clearly, the Premier is not likely going to chair these committees, and the Speaker isn't. If the minister himself won't be, then we're down to seven, and it should be pretty easy to ask the question, or indeed to designate the person. Can we find out when we'll know who is going to chair the select committee on legislative renewal and when it will be going out to do its good work?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: We were getting along so well and now the government is being accused of dragging its feet. That is one thing the Yukon Party government — this government having been in office now for eight years or somewhere thereabouts — the last thing this government has ever done is drag its feet. I think the member opposite well knows that.

Now, with respect to committees, the Legislative Assembly directs by way of instrument — motions in many cases — that we the members of the Assembly undertake certain duties, and we follow that course. There have been a number of examples — the legislation on smoking, for example. I use that one because it is one that is a good example of this type of process.

Unfortunately, recently there appears to be some issues. I think we finally have some progress now on the Select Committee on the *Landlord and Tenant Act*. There were difficulties in getting dates, times and so on. I think the progress that we're making there will allow us in due course to move forward with other committees.

We have to recognize that we can't saturate the Yukon public with these initiatives all at one time. I don't think that benefits what the House is seeking in its deliberations and why it agreed to do these things, nor does it benefit the public.

We have to recognize that — that these things should be planned and timed to be most constructive. The other problem now appears to be this issue of confidence and confidentiality in committees and we have to be very careful, as members of this House, how we conduct ourselves once we have agreed to

let our names stand to be a member of any type of select committee of this Assembly. Most recently, it is clear that in the public domain through the media, names and information of individuals who were to appear before a meeting of the select committee on a determined date for review were leaked to the media before that meeting date.

One can only wonder how much information was provided to the media. Then, further to that, there appears to be information being provided through the media with regard to in-camera discussions of committee members. That should give us all reason for pause to deliberate on what exactly is going on here.

That type of information being put out into the public domain, in the manner that it was, is a serious issue and is of serious concern. I point this out to the Leader of the Liberal Party and to all members of the House that it is inconsistent with our duties and responsibilities for this type of thing to be happening — for this type of conduct by members of this House, who have been duly designated and directed to undertake certain duties on behalf of this Assembly, for that kind of conduct to continue.

So we will be having some discussions at committee level, hopefully, in the regard to address that and curtail such inappropriate conduct by any member of committees that this House strikes. With that said, the short answer in all these is: in due course, all matters will unfold.

Mr. Mitchell: Well, Mr. Chair, I hate to disappoint the Premier if he said we were getting along so well. We were and we can continue to, but it doesn't mean we won't ask questions, seeking information.

First of all, the Premier said that the government doesn't drag its feet and if that were the case, this government would have completed a multi-level health care facility in Watson Lake years ago. So there are lots of things this government does, has and continues to drag its feet on. Certainly these committees are in that category.

Now, the Premier wrote me a letter. I'm sure it was over a month ago, inquiring who our member would be for that particular committee — the one to go out and consult with Yukoners on legislative reform. I don't know whether the Premier just has time in his day to satisfy idle curiosity and decides he wants to write me letters to seek my opinion on various issues, but presumably he wrote the letter because there was some urgency or at least time sensitivity to moving forward. So it's certainly a legitimate question to ask why we haven't moved forward.

Now let's go back to leaks. The Premier has been making insinuations and giving us his gravest concerns about committee confidentiality for about a week now.

So let's make something clear here. Our member on that committee did not leak any information to any reporter or any other person. Our member, in fact, simply refused to answer calls that came in from a reporter asking whether the committee had chosen any people — or whatever. He simply declined to respond to the phone call. I have checked with our staff. I can tell you that I haven't spoken to any reporters about it. If the Premier is concerned about it, well, he can fill his boots with concern or interest. Maybe he should look around and ask that

question of every member of this Assembly, but he should stop suggesting that the leak came from opposition members, because I don't believe it did. In fact, I don't know in terms of this business who voted for him and who didn't, I don't know if anybody other than the people who were in the room had access to that information, so it should be a pretty short list of people he can ask his questions about. If he wants to make a specific accusation in this Assembly, I would encourage him to do so. If not, I would encourage him to stop making references that indicate what his concerns or beliefs are, because it sounds like a bunch of posturing, Mr. Chair, and it serves no purpose.

Well, I think I'll just leave it there because, as the Premier said, we were getting along so famously.

So let's move on to some other issues and see how well we can get along. I'll take that the Premier's response to that first issue is that when he chooses to tell us by appointing a member to chair these other committees — because he said these things will happen in due course — that will be when it will be. It might be tomorrow, it might be six months from now, it might be never, as the Premier is now concerned about burdening Yukoners with consultation. He wasn't much concerned about burdening Yukoners with consultation when we came to Bill No. 82, *Civil Forfeiture Act*. The government simply decided not to consult, but only to consult with targeted groups: the RCMP and the Crown attorneys. I guess that was, again, out of concern not to overburden the Yukon public.

Recently, there was a decision by the Water Board regarding the application by Carmacks Copper, having to do with the proposed mine development. I see now that there is an article in *The Northern Miner*, where Carmacks Copper has been quoted as saying that two reputable environmental groups in Vancouver reviewed the data and decided it was okay, and then it gets to the Water Board, and they read all the reports and, "We don't believe it," says the spokesperson.

So you just sort of put your hands in the air, he went on to say. The article then says Western Copper sees three possible avenues forward, two of which it is already pursuing. The company is lobbying the Yukon government to step in and better define the Water Board's mandate, arguing the government has to clarify which agency actually is responsible for assessing which aspects of the proposed project. The spokesperson says his company is also making potential legal avenues of recourse. It goes on to say the third option is to reapply but, given the procedural issues encountered to date, that is not currently under consideration.

I guess the Premier has the ultimate ability to sign off on a licence, despite the decision recommended by the Water Board, but there has been an indication here that lobbying of the Yukon government is going on.

So perhaps the Premier can enlighten us as to just what discussions the government has gone into and how the government views and will treat the recent Water Board decision.

Hon. Mr. Fentie: I will try to encapsulate all the issues that the member has just put on the floor. Let me begin with the dragging the feet comment and the correlation to an investment in hospital health care in a rural Yukon community — in this case Watson Lake.

You know, the Liberals of this House voted against those investments. Regardless of what they are saying, by voting against such investments to the benefit of people in those communities — the citizens of those communities and surrounding area — and to criticize is empty criticism. They can't have it both ways, so either stand up and say to the people of Watson Lake and Dawson City you support building hospitals and health care facilities of this type in those communities, or not. But to put on the floor of the Legislature the type of inferences is empty criticism and serves no purpose.

Now the member is obviously very sensitive about the issue of information being provided outside of the parameters of committees and the work they are to do. I can understand why the member would be — the leader of the Liberals. We can go through the pages of *Hansard* and point to a litany of examples of the struggles that the Liberal members of this House have with the facts and in trying to articulate the facts.

The member got sensitive about what appears to be an accusation of some sort, which was never made by the government side. That is somewhat ironic, given the fact that we've had examples of Finance officials, along with the Auditor General, "cooking the Yukon Territory's books"; examples of our hiring agency "being in an adult store"; an example of a Liberal member of this House Googling a government employee, obviously taking great issue with that person's democratic rights and freedoms — freedom of speech, for example, and taking great issue with that — and the list goes on. So I can understand why the Leader of the Liberal Party is very sensitive about these matters, because one who lives in glass houses should not be throwing stones.

So, Mr. Chair, the issue here is of concern. It is not about accusations to any member across the floor. It is about our obligations, our conduct, and our responsibility when this Assembly directs members by what ever instrument to undertake certain duties. So let's get that straight. I would hope the members of committees, when they convene — get together on this — and talk about it, ensure that these types of things do not continue. The Public Accounts Committee, for many years, did not meet because it got politicized. That is not the function of the committees. To politicize them is to compromise them and ensures that those committees do not function as they are required to. That is a disservice to the Yukon public. I would encourage all members to reflect on this and ensure that we do the appropriate job that we have been directed to do by the Assembly.

With the member's issue about the appointments to committees and the timing and everything — Mr. Chair, in due course, all matters will unfold.

Certainly, the Liberal leader can understand that. There is much going on in the Yukon public, as there always is under the leadership of the Yukon Party government.

Now let's go to Bill No. 82. Here's another issue that is of concern on how the Liberals handled themselves on this matter. We first, as a House, unanimously — all members present — supported a process to proceed with civil forfeiture legislation. The government followed that direction and presented a bill to the House. We were in the process of working with the Third

Party and the Independent member on the bill, right to the point where amendments were being proposed. The Liberal caucus decided that consultation was their stance. It's very interesting that something started to evolve here. That was clearly a campaign in the matter of Bill No. 82 and civil forfeiture. I'm glad the member brought this up.

We as a government respected the House's direction, continued our work, were very open to amendments, made statements about ensuring the bill is right, and then a demonstration took place.

First off, what became very interesting was that a number of signs appeared throughout the City of Whitehorse that were strikingly similar to Liberal colours — red and white. It was very, very interesting. Then a demonstration took place and, full of righteous indignation, the Liberals went forth before the demonstrators and voiced, in very loud voices, their position on how they dealt with the government of the day and the *Civil Forfeiture Act*. They even changed their position before the public. I'll get into that momentarily. What came our way — from a very reputable source — was one of the demonstrators holding a sign while the Liberal caucus was out there trumpeting their ever-changing views and position to the crowd. A very reputable source informed the government that one of the demonstrators had recently been released from the Whitehorse Correctional Centre.

Now what is interesting here, as I've been presenting all along these interesting scenarios, we have the Liberal caucus out before the public and among individuals who have recently been released from the Whitehorse Correctional Centre. It only gives one pause to reflect on all of this and what it really was.

Bill No. 82, by the way, had received another motion as presented by the Third Party to delay its passage, to work on it further, to have more public consultation on the bill. You know, once again, this House, for all the members present, unanimously voted in favour of that. And yet on the day of that very demonstration, the Liberal members who went before those demonstrators did not once tell those people what had transpired in this House.

That's why we ask questions such as what happened with this information about citizens who were being selected through a process to serve on boards, such as the Yukon Energy Corporation? That is why we ask these questions, Mr. Chair. That is why we bring these issues forward.

This is very important. This is not something that the Yukon public deserves, this ever-wavering Official Opposition, this ever-wavering Liberal caucus. Surely the Yukon public deserves better, Mr. Chair, much better.

So, once again, we are faced with a situation where we are trying desperately to have a constructive debate —

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Chair's statement

Chair: Order please. The Chair has been hearing fairly unparliamentary comments off-mic and was challenged to call the members to order. And yes, Mr. Mitchell, those comments are unparliamentary. I asked you just to be polite and then you asked me to call you to order. So please keep your comments parliamentary.

Hon. Mr. Fentie: Just let me point out some of the other inconsistencies. The Liberal Member for Porter Creek South said in this House, strike that committee, I'll be a member on that committee, we'll go out to the public on Bill No. 82.

His colleague, the Member from Vuntut Gwitchin, told the public right outside of this Legislature that as long as the Liberals are Liberals and they are elected to this Assembly, Bill No. 82 will never see the light of day. We do have to point these things out, because — albeit I know that the Liberal leader is very sensitive on matters such as these — they are items that must be addressed.

On the matter of the Water Board, the member knows full well that the Yukon government, vis-à-vis devolution, has taken on management and control of lands, waters and resources in the Yukon. The member also knows that the *Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Act* has been passed and implemented, and that is our single assessment process. The member knows full well that there is another federal statute, which has been mirrored as required by the devolution transfer agreement that the Liberals of the day signed us on to. It required us to mirror those federal statutes, which includes the *Waters Act*. That mandates a quasi-judicial board to undertake the duties as defined in that legislation.

As we should be, we are closely monitoring the issue and the situation. Yes, the company does have some choices and, of course, in all matters we want to ensure that we are consistent with the law. That is our job — being consistent with the law.

In going forward, we would hope and encourage all to reflect on this type of thing and many others to ensure that we are conducting ourselves in the best interests of the law — of course, which we are required to do — of industry, of Yukoners and of our future, because that's essentially what it's all about. It is about our future.

The irony here is that the Yukon Party government has been actively building a future — a different and better future than we've experienced in the past. The evidence is there and before us.

It's because of that success that the Liberal opposition has chosen a tack in this House and outside of this House to not reflect on policy and present to Yukoners how they would build the Yukon's future. They've chosen another tack, which will never result in success. It never has. It never has through the history of our democratic process.

I would encourage the Liberals to reflect on these matters and much more, and remember that contract they presented to the Yukon public — a contract that they said they would never break. It was a contract between them and Yukoners — the voting public, Mr. Chair. It was presented as a cornerstone of the Liberals' plank to building Yukon's future. I would encourage them to repair that contract with Yukoners as soon as possible because that's what Yukoners deserve. That contract has been broken and ditched and that, I think, is something that the Liberal caucus had better soon reflect on because they will be judged on that contract that they presented to Yukoners that they said they would live by but have not.

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

Motion agreed to

Speaker resumes the Chair

Speaker: I will now call the House to order.

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

Chair's report

Mr. Nordick: Mr. Speaker, Committee of the Whole has considered Bill No. 20, *First Appropriation Act, 2010-11*, and directed me to report progress on it.

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

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Speaker: I declare the report carried.

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

The House adjourned at 5:31 p.m.

The following document was filed on May 18, 2010:

10-1-154

Yukon Geographical Place Names Board 2008-2009 Annual Report (Taylor)