



Yukon Legislative Assembly

Number 7

2nd Session

34th Legislature

HANSARD

Tuesday, May 2, 2017 — 1:00 p.m.

Speaker: The Honourable Nils Clarke

YUKON LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

2017 Spring Sitting

SPEAKER — Hon. Nils Clarke, MLA, Riverdale North
DEPUTY SPEAKER and CHAIR OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE — Don Hutton, MLA, Mayo-Tatchun
DEPUTY CHAIR OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE — Ted Adel, MLA, Copperbelt North

CABINET MINISTERS

NAME	CONSTITUENCY	PORTFOLIO
Hon. Sandy Silver	Klondike	Premier Minister of the Executive Council Office; Finance
Hon. Ranj Pillai	Porter Creek South	Deputy Premier Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources; Economic Development; Minister responsible for the Yukon Development Corporation and the Yukon Energy Corporation
Hon. Tracy-Anne McPhee	Riverdale South	Government House Leader Minister of Education; Justice
Hon. John Streicker	Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes	Minister of Community Services; Minister responsible for the French Language Services Directorate; Yukon Liquor Corporation and the Yukon Lottery Commission
Hon. Pauline Frost	Vuntut Gwitchin	Minister of Health and Social Services; Environment; Minister responsible for the Yukon Housing Corporation
Hon. Richard Mostyn	Whitehorse West	Minister of Highways and Public Works; the Public Service Commission
Hon. Jeanie Dendys	Mountainview	Minister of Tourism and Culture; Minister responsible for the Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board; Women's Directorate

GOVERNMENT PRIVATE MEMBERS

Yukon Liberal Party

Ted Adel	Copperbelt North
Paolo Gallina	Porter Creek Centre
Don Hutton	Mayo-Tatchun

OFFICIAL OPPOSITION

Yukon Party

Stacey Hassard	Leader of the Official Opposition Pelly-Nisutlin	Scott Kent	Official Opposition House Leader Copperbelt South
Brad Cathers	Lake Laberge	Patti McLeod	Watson Lake
Wade Istchenko	Kluane	Geraldine Van Bibber	Porter Creek North

THIRD PARTY

New Democratic Party

Liz Hanson	Leader of the Third Party Whitehorse Centre
Kate White	Third Party House Leader Takhini-Kopper King

LEGISLATIVE STAFF

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

**Yukon Legislative Assembly
Whitehorse, Yukon
Tuesday, May 2, 2017 — 1:00 p.m.**

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

Prayers

Withdrawal of motions

Speaker: The Chair wishes to inform the House of a change which has been made to the Order Paper. Motion No. 1, standing in the name of the Leader of the Official Opposition, has been removed from the Order Paper as it is now outdated.

DAILY ROUTINE

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

Tributes.

TRIBUTES

In recognition of Yukon Mining and Geology Week

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I rise to recognize and acknowledge Yukon Mining and Geology Week, taking place from May 1 to 5. During this week, we sponsor educational events for students so they can understand Yukon's unique geology and history of our landscape.

This week is also our opportunity to acknowledge the importance of the science of our geology and demonstrate the incredible mineral potential of our territory. Yukon's mineral potential and investment attractiveness have attracted five of the world's top-10 gold mining companies to our territory.

Last month's announcement of Barrick Gold acquiring an interest in ATAC's Rackla Gold project underlines that Yukon is a world-class jurisdiction for gold exploration and mining.

In March 2017, Newmont Mining, the world's second-biggest gold producer, entered into a strategic alliance providing a \$53-million investment in Goldstrike Resources and its Plateau property in the Mayo mining district. Goldcorp Inc. submitted its application to the Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Board at the end of March for permitting of the Coffee Gold project after it had purchased the asset from the Kaminak Gold Corp. in May 2016.

Yukon's White Gold district, south of the Klondike, has attracted the interest of numerous exploration companies and investments from top gold producers Agnico Eagle mines and Kinross Gold Corp. There are other significant projects that are also underway, including the following: the Eagle Gold project northeast of Mayo is licensed for development and production and is being advanced by Victoria Gold Corp., which has also signed a cooperation agreement with the First Nation of Na Cho Nyäk Dun; BMC Minerals has submitted the mine development proposal to the Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Board for the Kudz Ze Kayah project — a lead-zinc deposit in southeast Yukon; and Western Copper and Gold Corp. has also continued to

advance their Casino project through the Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Board process. We are excited about this rejuvenation of interest in the mineral sector, and we are looking forward to the new mine developments that will provide numerous benefits to our territory and its people.

Placer miners also continue to do very well. Last year placer miners recovered 67,270 crude ounces of gold worth a total value of \$92.4-million Canadian worth of gold. This is the highest annual production recorded in the past decade.

Exploration in mining contributes significantly to Yukon's economy by providing good-paying jobs while also supporting local businesses and communities throughout the Yukon.

Yukon's industry is recognized nationally as an innovator and leader in exploration practices that minimize environmental impacts and maximize benefits for Yukon's First Nations. For example, this past year, Susan Craig received two awards: the Gold Pan Award for the Association for Mineral Exploration BC and the Women in Mining Canada Trailblazer Award. She was recognized for being a role model for industry in the areas of environmental assessment and community engagement and leading and inspiring so many women working in the field of mineral exploration.

Another nationally recognized innovator here in the Yukon is Shawn Ryan who, with his colleagues in GroundTruth Exploration, developed a unique set of exploration tools that minimize environmental impact and maximize value for investors. Their novel approach to exploration has attracted national attention.

Susan Craig and Shawn Ryan are just two of the many creative and dedicated Yukoners who are working to continuously improve our mineral sector and contribute to its success. I want to thank Shawn who, over the years, while working in the mining sector, is always willing to sit down with a person in the industry in Yukon and give them some wisdom on how to look at exploration projects, what the industry is like and how you go about raising funds. He and Cathy are constant champions, not just with their success, but for all Yukon miners.

For our end, Yukon government is working to ensure the proper supports are in place so that exploration and mining will continue to surge forward. One step in accomplishing this is to ensure Yukon's regulatory process is effective, while maintaining responsible development that reflects the values of Yukoners and respects the rights and culture of First Nations.

Yukon has a long, rich history of mining and an even longer and richer history of First Nation culture, stewardship and traditional economies. By working in collaboration with Yukon First Nations to improve management of mineral resources in Yukon we will better be able to tackle our common issues related to mining and mineral exploration. We will find solutions that reflect First Nation values and interests and will ultimately benefit all Yukoners. Together we will determine how to access the resources we need in a way that

respects the environment. Through our respectful and productive government-to-government relationship, we can build the foundation for a solid mining industry that also protects the environment and provides tangible benefits to Yukon communities.

Mr. Speaker, one thing that you learn when you are working with the mining sector is that the people who are here today — they are Yukoners. They are miners, but this is their home and they respect the environment the same way anybody else does. They want to make sure that things are done right. Working together, I think we can reach these goals.

We are moving forward on initiatives that include First Nation governments in resource management that pertain to their traditional territories. By working together to resolve outstanding issues, the mining industry will have more opportunity for growth and that will help to bring prosperity to Yukon citizens and their communities.

The education sector has also benefited. A good example is the Yukon College Centre for Northern Innovation in Mining, where Yukoners can be trained for highly skilled and good-paying jobs. Throughout the school year, our geologists visit classrooms throughout Yukon to teach students about geology. During this week, the geologists from the Yukon Geological Survey are hosting numerous events, some of which are family focused, so our youth can learn more about earth science, exploration and mining and how we can help safeguard the environment.

The Yukon Geological Survey is primarily a science organization that produces and houses geological and geoscientific information that is invaluable in numerous ways. Each year they also provide an overview of exploration and production highlights in Yukon.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to point out that there has been phenomenal work done on marketing the Yukon as a jurisdiction over the years, but one thing you hear over and over again is that the Yukon Geological Survey and their work have been key to the results that we are seeing now — the advanced work. They are known internationally. Every company that I have had an opportunity to meet with always focuses on the fact that the Yukon Geological Survey is so skilled and their information is so good.

This summer they will continue their outreach activities, including leading public hikes in areas throughout Yukon to share their knowledge about Yukon's landscape and geological history.

Mining and Geology Week is important because it helps us to better understand the mineral sector and how it contributes to the well-being of this territory. Industry provides many opportunities for Yukoners, and we are looking forward to those opportunities increasing in the future.

To wrap up, I would like to encourage everyone to take time this week to join the free activities put on at the Yukon Geological Survey, by the Yukon Geological Survey and the Yukon Chamber of Mines.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and certainly I look forward to those events and will be attending them with some of my colleagues on Friday.

Ms. McLeod: I am pleased to rise today to recognize Yukon's annual Mining and Geology Week.

This week, Yukon students and members of our community have the opportunity to learn about the mineral industry and the science of geology.

For the members of this House, it's an opportunity to acknowledge the great contributions that mining and mineral exploration provides to our economy and our quality of life in the territory. As the Yukon Prospectors Association mentions on their website, "Prospecting and mining have defined the Yukon since the Klondike Gold Rush in 1898".

Our territory's rich history was built in large part by these prospectors, and I believe we should certainly recognize them for their contributions and for the towns and cities originally founded to support nearby mines that have grown into vibrant, thriving communities.

The direct and indirect benefits of mining spread across all areas of our economy and it's felt in every community. Operating mines directly and indirectly employ hundreds of Yukoners, and many more jobs are created during the exploration and drilling phases of projects. As well, the revenues generated from this industry allow us to invest in infrastructure such as roads, hospitals and schools, and programs ranging from arts grants to education and social programs.

I would like to applaud Victoria Gold Corp. and the First Nation of Na Cho Nyäk Dun for an initiative that they have undertaken. In October 2011, they signed their collaboratively developed and implemented comprehensive cooperation and benefits agreement, or CBA, which applies to Victoria Gold's Eagle Gold project northeast of Mayo. Since its groundbreaking agreement was signed, Victoria Gold has contributed over \$41 million to the NND and its citizens, to the Village of Mayo and to the socio-economic strength and vibrancy of the entire Yukon. The company and First Nation work together through a CBA committee to help ensure that company expenditures in the region reflect the needs and priorities of the community. As Eagle, the territory's next gold mine, advances, Victoria Gold and NND hope their mutually creative agreement not only benefits NND and the community, but also serves as a model for transparent, effective and mutually respectful industry-First Nation relations across the territory and across the country.

Additionally, the mineral sector offers partnerships and investment that benefits local businesses, including hotels, restaurants and retailers. The industry also relies upon the suppliers of equipment, transportation, health services, engineering expertise and environmental monitoring services.

The Yukon Party has always been a strong supporter of the mining and exploration industry in our territory. Earlier this year, the members from our caucus were able to attend the Mineral Exploration Roundup in Vancouver as well as the Prospectors and Developers Association of Canada's

conference in Toronto. As the Official Opposition, we have continued to make attending these conferences a priority to promote investment in the territory and we will continue to engage and advocate for the companies that invest here.

The past two years have brought renewed optimism for the future of mining in the Yukon, and we have seen significant investments from Agnico Eagle and Goldcorp in 2016, followed up this year with partnerships between Goldstrike and Newmont and, most recently, between ATAC Resources and Barrick Gold.

We said before that it requires hard work and determination to get a project to successfully take off, and these have been very promising announcements. That being said, mining is not only about big investments. Mining and exploration is about the men and women who work so hard and dedicate their lives to ensuring this industry continues to define our territory and its future. It's about those who go to work day in and day out to put food on their tables and provide for their families.

Last week, we heard that the Minto mine will continue to operate and mine at least until 2020. Not only is it exciting to hear that a mine with such deep roots in its community will continue to operate, but it's encouraging to know that the employees of the contractors on-site will be able to keep their jobs and keep working.

Public awareness is something that is key for the industry as well. The placer industry has embarked on their "It's in our veins" campaign to build awareness of their industry.

The Our Yukon — In It Together campaign is an initiative of the Yukon Chamber of Mines, generously supported by the Yukon government, to help Yukoners understand the positive impacts the mineral exploration and development industry and the numerous service and supply companies that support mining contribute to Yukon residents, businesses and communities each and every day.

In its third year, the Our Yukon — In It Together campaign focuses on the stories of our friends, family members and neighbours — individuals we all know who work in or support the territory's mining sector, which is such an important part of our private sector — while upholding the economic, cultural and environmental values that we all treasure.

Thank you to Samson Hartland, executive director of the Yukon Chamber of Mines, and Amanda Leslie, Our Yukon — In It Together project manager and campaign storyteller and the entire board of the Yukon Chamber of Mines for their ongoing efforts to celebrate what an essential partner responsible mining is to our present and our future here in the Yukon.

This week, families and students in particular can spend time at the mining exploration and discovery camp, which is situated at the *SS Klondike* National Historic Site, to learn even more. The well-being and success of Yukon's mineral sector is very important. Our caucus would like to thank the organizers of Yukon Mining and Geology Week, including the Chamber of Mines and the Yukon Geological Survey, who work together every year to organize events dedicated to

mining and geology in Yukon and provide a better understanding of what this vibrant industry contributes to our territory.

Ms. Hanson: I rise on behalf of the New Democratic Party caucus to also pay tribute to Yukon Mining and Geology Week. It's hard to imagine what Yukon might look like today if not for the discovery of gold and for the ongoing exploration and extraction of our extensive non-renewable resources throughout Yukon. We are pleased to see that Yukon is once again coming out of the down-cycle with the recently announced extended operations forecast for Minto mine and the new and old companies looking to build partnerships with Yukoners and First Nation governments to continue exploration and to build on plans toward opening new mines.

Yukoners in the mining industry are fortunate to have as a partner Yukon College and the Centre for Northern Innovation in Mining. This community asset continues to plan for and provide training in Whitehorse and in the communities to meet the immediate and future needs of the mining industry and to ensure good jobs for Yukoners. The flexibility and adaptability of this centre to address the immediate gaps and needs provides opportunities for many Yukoners to gain many skills.

Yukon has been on the forefront of change before. We have the resources and the tools to make the non-renewable resource sector an ongoing contributor to our territorial economy.

The Yukon NDP takes this opportunity to thank all those geologists and miners working in the industry today. We acknowledge the important role mining plays in our territory. Yukon has the resources, natural and human, to work with industry to ensure an environmentally sound and prosperous future.

We look forward to welcoming to Yukon more of the most progressive, safety-conscious, environmentally responsible and community-focused mining companies that are prepared to lead the way to a sustainable economic future.

In recognition of Susan Craig's contribution to Yukon's mining industry

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have a big day here today. There are many, many things to celebrate.

I rise today to pay tribute to Susan Craig. Sue has an extensive history of making significant contributions to Yukon and its mineral industry. She has received numerous awards for her work in Yukon and across Canada. Sue's work has been focused primarily in Yukon and BC, where she has spent most of her career working in the mining and mineral exploration sectors.

While she is a geologist and explorer, some of her most significant contributions have been in engaging affected First Nations during the environmental assessment phase of projects. For example, she led the permitting and development of the Brewery Creek mine in Yukon and the environmental assessments at Galore Creek and Kemess Underground

Project in northern BC. Sue's work in environmental sustainability at Galore Creek was also recognized by the BC Association of Mineral Exploration by their Robert R. Hedley Award for Excellence in Social and Environmental Responsibility.

In 2012, Sue received the Yukon Chamber of Mines Member's Award for promoting responsible development in Yukon.

Sue has served in a variety of roles with the Association for Mineral Exploration BC, which hosts the Mineral Exploration Roundup Conference in Vancouver. In January of this year, the MEBC acknowledged Sue's meritorious service to the mineral exploration community with its Gold Pan Award. Then, in February, her contribution to Canadian mining was acknowledged when she received the Women in Mining Canada Trailblazer Award for being a role model and inspiring women to work in the field of mineral exploration.

Amazing to see was that when Sue received her award — and I apologize; I don't know how many women were there. There was a room full of individuals, and Bill was there with her. There were hundreds of women who are focusing on careers as engineers, whether it be in the mineral sector focused on exploration or development — individuals who are working in all facets. To see that many individuals focused and listening to the tribute to Susan really put into perspective how she is known and respected nationally and internationally in the mining sector. We're certainly lucky to have Sue here.

The award also recognizes Sue's role with the mineral industry in the areas of environmental assessment and community engagement. She has also served on numerous boards, committees and associations of regional and national scope, including the Society of Economic Geologists and the Yukon Minerals Advisory Board. Sue now serves as a director with Yukon Energy Corporation, the Yukon Minerals Advisory Board and the Yukon Chamber of Mines.

Susan Craig is a highly respected professional geologist with extensive knowledge regarding all stages of mine development and mineral exploration. We're very fortunate to have Sue's generosity and commitment to the mineral sector here in Yukon.

Susan, thank you for putting up with somebody who is new to the role. I appreciate your wisdom and support. That is our tribute on behalf of our government and the NDP. I would like to turn the floor over, as I think there are some other kind words that we would like to share.

Applause

Mr. Kent: I am proud to rise today on behalf of the Yukon Party Official Opposition to pay tribute to my friend, my son's godmother and long-time Yukoner, Sue Craig.

I would like to share a little information about Sue and the incredible accomplishments that she has made over her career in the mining sector in our territory. She came to the Yukon in 1990 and had what she calls her first foray into community, First Nation and environmental work as a geologist during her first stint at Brewery Creek. Sue attributes this work as the start of what would monumentally

shape her career going forward. She was fortunate to work with experienced people in mining such as Brad Thrall and Clint Nauman, who are both still here in the Yukon today and committed to our mining industry. She has had an incredible and eventful career so far, and we all know her journey is far from complete. She graduated with a bachelor of science in geology from the University of Calgary in 1986 and completed her master's in 1991 at Lakehead University in Thunder Bay. She poured the first bar of gold at Brewery Creek in 1995. She was part of the team that received the Robert E. Leckie Award from the Yukon government for excellence in environmental stewardship. She was also part of the team recognized, as the minister said, by AME BC for the social and environmental aspects of the Galore Creek multi-billion dollar project. That happened in 2006.

During Sue and Bill's time at Northern Freegold, she had a field crew that was comprised of 54-percent females. If that was not recognizable enough, Sue figured out that they also took home 59 percent of the pay. For this, Sue was quite proud. Sue was asked by the Member for Lake Laberge, as former Energy, Mines and Resources minister, to be the chair of the Yukon Minerals Advisory Board in 2012. I had the opportunity to work with her in that capacity as well during my time as the Energy, Mines and Resources minister. During that same year, she was recognized by the Yukon Chamber of Mines for promoting responsible development in the Yukon and engaging First Nations.

As the minister mentioned, most recently Sue was awarded the Gold Pan Award this year from the Association for Mineral Exploration British Columbia for her exceptional meritorious service to the mineral exploration community. As well, Sue received the Trailblazer Award from Women in Mining Canada. At that ceremony, she commented that she didn't ever approach anything in the industry with the mindset of — and I quote: "I want to be the first female to do that." She simply challenged herself to do new things. Much of the recognition Sue has received over the years is the result of the direct recognition of her peers, for which she is thankful, especially because there are so many people who do so much for the industry and give back to their community.

Of course Sue's accomplishments didn't stop there. A registered professional geoscientist, she has participated on boards, committees and in conferences throughout her years. She has championed projects like Yukon Women in Mining and the Yukon Imagination Library. I am so proud to recognize her for the incredible contributions to the mining industry and to the Yukon in general. You truly are an incredible person, and I thank you, Sue, for all that you have done for mining in the Yukon. I have to say I am very proud to call you a friend.

Applause

In recognition of Yukon Women in Mining

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Our next tribute is fitting after our tribute to Sue. This tribute is to Yukon Women in Mining.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and acknowledge Yukon Women in Mining, a non-profit organization focused

on creating awareness of and attraction to the opportunities for rewarding careers for women in the mineral and mining industry.

Yukon Women in Mining works hard to develop initiatives that foster personal and professional development for women in mining. They are dedicated to promoting the dynamic and rewarding careers available for women in the mineral and mining industry in order to help meet future labour needs in Yukon. The mandate of Yukon Women in Mining is to work with Yukon mineral exploration and mining industry representatives to develop toolkits, events and activities to facilitate increased attraction, retention and advancement of women to one of the most important sectors in Yukon.

Today, I would like to acknowledge the great work done by this organization, which adds massive value to Yukon's economy. I would like to pay tribute to the board of directors that has worked to make this organization the success it is today, including: the president, Anne Lewis; Allison Rippin Armstrong; Wendy Taylor; Marika Isaac; Angela Drainville; Jasmin Dobson; Mary Mioska; and Jane-Marie Glynn. I would also like to recognize chief volunteer, Randy Lewis, who is here today.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to recognize and acknowledge Yukon Women in Mining champions, Eira Thomas, Rob McIntyre, Ron Light and Sue Craig; and our director of strategic initiatives, Math'ieya Alatini.

Yukon Women in Mining has announced a new and exciting initiative, the Yukon mining community experiential extravaganza, which will take place in the communities of Pelly Crossing on May 15, Faro on May 17 and Dawson City from May 19 to 20. This extravaganza will include more than 30 representatives from over 15 companies and organizations who will join Yukon Women in Mining in a week-long Yukon tour to share the benefits, opportunities and careers in Yukon hard rock and placer mining. I look forward to it. I think many of us here will be at the Gold Show and certainly I will have an opportunity there to take a look at this fantastic road show.

With more than 100 careers in Yukon's mineral sector, from geology to environmental sciences, marketing to management and trades to technology, over 2,000 youth — young entrepreneurs — in several Yukon rural communities can discover the occupational trades and professions in Yukon's valuable mining industry thanks to the Yukon mining community experiential extravaganza.

I would like to acknowledge and encourage everyone to take time to learn more about Yukon Women in Mining and the events and activities that will take place during the Yukon mining community experiential extravaganza.

In closing with our tributes, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the organizations that are here today: Klondike Placer Miners' Association is here; Yukon Chamber of Mines; and Yukon Women in Mining. I think there are probably some people here as well from the Yukon Prospectors Association. It was interesting that within minutes of walking down this way after having the opportunity to take this role, they were waiting for

me with a list of things to work on. I was about a minute into the job.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Applause

Ms. Van Bibber: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It gives me great pleasure today to rise on behalf of the Yukon Party Official Opposition to recognize Yukon women in mining.

Yukon Women in Mining is a non-profit organization that was founded in 2012 and also continues to be a great partner to mining and exploration industry leaders by organizing events and activities as well as offering the tools to help bring more women into one of the most important sectors in Yukon's economy.

My personal experience with mining was in the early 1970s. Early on in my marriage, Pat and I lived in Elsa and we both worked for United Keno Hill Mines. This was a changing time for women and we felt we were making huge progress in how women were perceived in the industry. There were women who worked in the mine office, stores and various other admin-type jobs, but there were a few brave women who wanted to go underground and work as miners, blasters and labourers. As the mine manager grappled with the changes in society, he asked if any women in town would like to have a mine tour. I signed on.

After putting on all our safety gear and a headlamp, we crammed into the hoist at the Ruby mine shaft. We dropped a mile underground, leaving my stomach at ground level. Now we were really out of our element, shuffling along in a dark, damp tunnel with only the light on your head. But quickly miners and labourers shouted at us that we weren't welcome, to get out, that we didn't belong. You see, to them, like women on ships, we were bad luck, but we persevered. It was an incredible eye-opener to see how the silver and by-product ores were taken from the earth. I did not ask for a second tour.

Yukon Women in Mining helps us celebrate mining in the territory and the important role women have played and continue to play in this industry. They are a voice for inclusion and advancement for women interested in careers that can have a significant impact on Yukon's economic, cultural and social prosperity. The very existence of Yukon Women in Mining speaks great volumes about the growth and maturity of our mining industry and society. As such, the participation and achievement of women in the resource sector cannot be understated.

This year, everyone has recognized mining champion Sue Craig, she being one of the amazing women in our territory who continues to promote the significant contributions of mining in Yukon and Canada and to the inclusion of women in this industry.

I believe it is important to recognize all the notable women who have brought success to our territory and played a key role in the industry. I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the Yukon Women in Mining board of directors. Each and every one of you stands as an incredible role model for young women who are working to build their careers here in the Yukon. I applaud you and I encourage you

to continue engaging young women in Yukon to spark their interest in mining.

Today we can celebrate the changes we have seen mining and exploration that have made it an attractive and rewarding career choice for both men and women, bringing economic and social benefits to all Yukon communities.

Applause

In recognition of women in mining

Ms. White: I have taken this tribute in a different direction. I rise on behalf of the Yukon NDP to recognize the contribution of the mind-blowing women in mining. To be honest, I had a much cooler title, but I didn't want to cross the line of parliamentary language so early in your tenure.

I proudly stand here as a retired camp cook. I have cooked in kitchens all over the world, but my time cooking in mining camps was some of the most fun, challenging, satisfying and exhausting work I have ever done in kitchens. I met incredible people and saw phenomenal leadership from the women I worked alongside.

Today, we salute the trailblazers, the environmental champions, the surveyors, the inspectors, the miners, the blasters, the heavy equipment operators, the geologists, the camp staff, the mechanics, the carpenters, the electricians and the female leadership of both the mine sites and the geological survey.

Without these women, the mines where they work would be very, very different sites. We recognize your dedication and your passion for our territory, and I thank you so much for your contribution.

Applause

In remembrance of Charlie Roots

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I rise today to pay tribute to Dr. Charlie Roots. I'm honoured to speak on behalf of all of my colleagues here in the Legislature. Charlie was an accomplished and highly respected research scientist with the Geological Survey of Canada. Charlie was someone I knew and admired. Charlie dedicated his career to mapping and understanding the geology of northern Canada, focusing primarily on the Yukon. His work extended across the north, including the high Arctic. Charlie's work advanced our scientific understanding of the geologic history of Canada's north and helped northerners understand the processes that shaped our unique landscape.

In May 1992, Charlie was a key member of a multidisciplinary team on a successful ascent of Mount Logan. It was on this month-long expedition that researchers were first able to accurately measure the height of Canada's highest mountain, using GPS instruments. I note how heavy those instruments were back then, including all of the batteries. The team also collected the first rock samples from the summit.

His colleagues at the Yukon Geological Survey described Charlie as an invaluable resource, and they greatly miss his depth of knowledge about Yukon's geoscience, much of which he learned in the field and on the ground. Charlie's

fieldwork took him across most of the Yukon, mapping bedrock from the Alaska border north of the Yukon River, right across the Northwest Territories.

In addition to his work on the ground, Charlie's contributions to the geological literature of the Yukon are endless. He published many maps and reports that record his contributions to science. During his last years with the Yukon Geological Survey, he compiled unpublished data from the field notebooks of some of his retired Geological Survey of Canada colleagues so their work could also be published.

What distinguished Charlie from most scientists was his passion and enthusiasm for sharing his knowledge of Yukon's dynamic and evolving landscapes with the public. Over the years, he led many walking tours for people who wanted to learn more about the land under their feet. If you've hiked Charlie's Canyon in Tombstone Park, then you've already benefitted from one of his geological legacies. Charlie also visited classrooms and collaborated with Yukon artists to increase awareness of the geology that underlies our territory.

Mr. Speaker, I got to know Charlie through my work as a climate change researcher. We shared a passion for the scientific pursuit, the north and outdoors. A little over a decade ago, I had the opportunity to go on a teaching expedition into the high Arctic with Charlie's father, Fred Roots, with a group called Students on Ice. Through that experience, I got to know Charlie even more, hearing stories of his childhood and his home in Gatineau Park. Charlie will always be highly respected for his devotion to science and how generously he shared his knowledge with geologists, research scientists and the public.

In 2014, Charlie was interviewed in the *Whitehorse Star* — and I quote: "As I can see my end more clearly than most people can see theirs, I focus on being positive and completing things simply... I'm proud of what I've been able to accomplish since learning my fate. Not many are given that foreknowledge."

I'm honoured to acknowledge the significant contributions that Dr. Charlie Roots has made to our territory and I encourage all of us to carry on his remarkable legacy.

I would like to acknowledge the friends and colleagues of Charlie here today. I got a note earlier that his daughter Galena is actually going to be working this summer with the Yukon Geological Survey at the geology camp that her grandfather, Charlie's father, did as a mapping area back in the 1940s. His son Logan will actually be taking part in the Canada 150 coast to coast students on ice trip, which is a wonderful thing and a great legacy to see that family represented.

I would like all of us to acknowledge Charlie's wife Mary Ann please.

Applause

Speaker: Introduction of visitors.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Mr. Pillai: We have lots of visitors today. I think that first I just want to mention a few people who are here

specifically for — they wanted to be here for the last tribute: Lee Pigage — these are all former colleagues of Charlie's — Grant Abbott, Don Murphy, Joan Turner and I think Mike Burke as well.

We also have a number of the staff I spoke about earlier from the Yukon Geological Survey who are here — Maurice Colpron, Craig Nicholson, Steve Israel, Esther Bordet, David Moynihan, Kristen Kennedy, Panya Lipovsky, Sydney Van Loon, Scott Casselman — also a fantastic goaltender, Rob Deklerk, Olwyn Bruce, Leyla Weston and Carolyn Relf. Carolyn, your team is, especially this week — it's important to announce what a superstar team you have. It's certainly appreciated, like we said, across the country. What we see now with the growth in mining — your team has really led this charge.

Also, Samson is here — Samson Hartland from the Yukon Chamber of Mines; Sue and Bill, who are with Metallic; Jonas from the Klondike Placer Miners' Association; Claire Derome, from Derome and Associates, who is also working on lots of new stuff when it comes to planning infrastructure for the Yukon; Anne Lewis and Randy Lewis from the Yukon Mining Alliance; Heather Burrell from Archer Cathro and also from the Yukon Minerals Advisory Board; Lena Brommeland from Hunter Dickinson, and Stanley Burrell, who I have not yet met but who is Yukon's youngest geologist. He is here as well.

Applause

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I know that Samson is here on behalf of the Chamber of Mines, but I would like to acknowledge that he is a city councillor and I am putting a shout-out for all of our municipal politicians — our colleagues.

Applause

Mr. Kent: I know that he has already been acknowledged in the gallery, but I would also like to put a special shout-out to Maurice Colpron as well. Last year at the energy and mines ministers conference — I believe it was in Winnipeg — Maurice received a national award as a territorial geoscientist. Congratulations on that award, Maurice. It was well-deserved.

Applause

Mr. Hassard: I would like to ask all members to join me in welcoming a Yukon contractor, Mr. Jon Rudolph, to the gallery today.

Applause

Hon. Mr. Silver: I would be remiss if I didn't mention that the person we stole from the Geological Survey is also in the audience today — Monica Nordling.

Applause

Speaker: Are there any further introductions of visitors?

Are there any returns or documents for tabling?

TABLING RETURNS AND DOCUMENTS

Speaker: The Chair has for tabling the *Report on Subsistence, Travel & Accommodations of Members of the Yukon Legislative Assembly 2016-2017*, dated April 2017. This report is compiled pursuant to an order of the Members' Services Board.

Hon. Ms. Frost: I have for tabling a report, entitled *Cancer Mortality Trends, 1999 – 2013*, from the office of the Yukon's chief medical officer of health.

Speaker: Are there any further returns or documents for tabling?

Are there any reports of committees?

Are there any petitions?

Are there any bills to be introduced?

Are there any notices of motions?

NOTICES OF MOTIONS

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I rise to give notice of the following motion:

THAT the Yukon Legislative Assembly, pursuant to subsection 22(2) of the *Human Rights Act*, does appoint Maxwell Rispin and Benjamin Bruce Warnsby to the Yukon Human Rights Panel of Adjudicators for a term of three years, effective immediately; and

THAT Karen Keenan be reappointed to the Yukon Human Rights Panel of Adjudicators for a term of three years, effective immediately.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT the Yukon Legislative Assembly, pursuant to subsection 22(3) of the *Human Rights Act*, does remove Raymond Kokiw, Michelle Mbuto, Elaine Cairns and Darcy Tkachuk from the Yukon Human Rights Panel of Adjudicators, effective immediately.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon, in collaboration with Yukoners with disabilities, their families, caregivers and community organizations, to develop a plan to implement and monitor the United Nations *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*.

Speaker: 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: Budget estimates and spending

Mr. Hassard: Yesterday, we asked the Premier about his plan to throw Yukon into a hole of big deficit and big debt. Is his plan for debt to be in Yukon for many years to come? Yesterday I didn't get an answer to this question so I'm hoping that today, maybe we will.

Can the Premier tell us what year he is projecting that Yukon will come out of debt?

Hon. Mr. Silver: We can go back and forth again as to where the current financial situation is, but we're happy to move forward. There is a change in the budget planning methodology for the 2017-18 budget. The full cost of future commitments is now included in the long-term fiscal framework. This was not the case in previous iterations of the long-term financial plans contained in the budget documents. Many programs were assumed to have automatically ended or fractions of costs were included in future plans. For example, items not included in the fiscal long-term plan would be things like the Whistle Bend continuing care facility and the full cost of the collective bargaining agreements.

Again, we're talking about having full cost accounting. This is a snapshot of where we are right now, based upon where the previous government has left us. These are forecasts moving into the future. We're very committed to working with the Financial Advisory Panel to come up with all options. From conversations we have had on this side of the Legislative Assembly, we are confident that, within our mandate, we will get ourselves back into a financially prudent situation.

Mr. Hassard: Again, no answer.

Yesterday, it was pointed out that the Premier's new budget doesn't account for the impacts of the carbon tax on the economy or on the O&M budget for the Yukon — this, despite the fact that he took a record six months to bring back the Legislative Assembly and table his first budget. This means that the Premier might be underestimating the size of those deficits and the size of his huge debt that he wants to drag the Yukon into.

If the Premier's budget truly accounts for the true cost of government like he says, then why has he not included the cost of the carbon tax?

Hon. Mr. Silver: Once again, the federal carbon-pricing mechanism is going to be the backstop from Ottawa and, once again, this is revenue neutral, so, for every dollar that is being put in, that money is going back into the economy. We are doing full cost accounting, and the full cost accounting includes all of those costs that were not in the previous mains: \$2.6 million for cost overruns for two rural hospitals, never accounted for; \$3.5 million in costs related to pension solvency within the Yukon Hospital Corporation, as well as half-a-million dollars at Yukon College; more than half-a-million dollars for the learning commons and electrical upgrade renovation; and \$1.4 million for the Art and Margaret Fry Recreation Centre in Dawson City. The list goes on and on. All of these things being put in the budget were not put in it before.

To ask if we have numbers for a carbon-pricing mechanism from Ottawa in the budget, once again — and we have gone over this time and time again — this is revenue neutral. That money is going to be coming back in. We have departments — Energy, Mines and Resources or my Department of Finance. All of these public servants are

working diligently, as the previous government did, on carbon-pricing mechanisms for the Yukon Territory.

We didn't see in their budget money for their departments when they were working on the carbon-pricing mechanism because that is an internal cost taken by the departments.

Mr. Hassard: Once again, no answer. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

When asked questions on his budget, it seems the Premier has two answers. It's either, "Don't talk to me; talk to the Financial Advisory Panel" or "It's Ottawa". Well, he is the Premier. This is his budget, so I have to ask him because he is the one who is responsible for it.

Will the Premier commit today that he will not go further than \$216 million in debt? That is a very simple question, Mr. Speaker — yes or no, unlike yesterday's answer.

Hon. Mr. Silver: Again, I believe I am answering the member opposite's question when it comes to carbon-pricing mechanisms, when it comes to our plan to get ourselves out of the financial crisis that we've found ourselves in. I look forward to continuing this debate during Committee of the Whole as far as getting down into the real numbers, but there are certain things that we have to accomplish here in the Legislative Assembly as far as long-range plans, long-range costs and the cost of operating government. I think we have been very good with the media in sharing that information. If the members opposite would like to come and have more conversations about the forward progression of this budget, the next budgets and our plan, I think we have been very forthcoming in that.

There are things that we can't answer necessarily because we don't have the numbers coming in — those will be coming — but our plan is to get to a situation for the Yukon where we will be in a good financial situation, out of debt, and with a plan to maintain a pathway forward so that our future generations will not bear the burdens of the trajectory right now that we find ourselves in. That's our plan — to get ourselves out of that negative trajectory that is currently with us. We hope that the opposition will help us in that pursuit when we get into the Financial Advisory Panel this summer, and I look forward to that time.

Question re: Carbon tax

Ms. Van Bibber: The Official Opposition has obtained documents that state the government has not done any analysis on the impacts of the carbon tax on the cost of operating schools. In Alberta, it has been reported that the carbon tax is going to increase the cost of operating schools by \$8 million to \$12 million.

Since this government hasn't done any analysis on the impacts of the carbon tax on our schools, does that mean that this budget is underestimating the cost of government and that the deficits could be even larger?

Hon. Mr. Silver: Again, the federal carbon-pricing mechanism is revenue neutral. The money that is going to be taken from the pump is going to be given back to Yukoners. If the member opposite would like to share the information that she has received, then we will definitely commit to responding

to this information. But again, at the same time, we've been doing the due diligence since the pan-Canadian framework. We have in our annex that we want to make sure that the carbon-pricing mechanism works the way that it's supposed to work and it's going to identify areas where we can do our reductions, but not penalize people or governments in those areas where they cannot reduce their emissions.

We're confident that once we hear back from the federal government what their intent is, then we will use that information to move forward. We'll be happy to work with the opposition in formulating those plans. We'll be happy to work with the private sector as well to make sure that every penny that is collected from this revenue-neutral carbon-pricing mechanism goes back into those areas where we're seeing a conscientious effort to reduce those emissions, whether it be schools or placer miners or anybody in between.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and I do appreciate the question from the member opposite.

Ms. Van Bibber: I appreciate the Premier's answer. Is he then saying that the carbon tax scheme will have zero impact on the cost of government operations?

Hon. Mr. Silver: Again, the details of how we're going to give back this rebated money — you know, we're not there yet. We do have time. We have time to make sure that we take a comprehensive analysis.

This is a great use of the Legislative Assembly — opposition bringing forth concerns of particular sectors, whether it be government or private sector — where they're concerned that the money is not going to come back in the proper way, I guess, for lack of a better term. We're looking for solutions from the opposition as well as far as how that money is going to be rebated.

Again, we can't move forward until we know what Ottawa is going to do as far as setting the parameters of their tax. So once again, I think the Yukon Party is waiting for us to get that information back. Once we do get that information back from Ottawa, we will share it with the opposition and we will be looking forward to their suggestions as to how we make sure that the carbon-pricing mechanism from the federal government does what it's supposed to do — target those areas where we can do our reductions and not penalize businesses or, in this case, schools in those areas where they cannot necessarily make any alternatives.

So there's more to come on this, but once again, we're waiting for Ottawa for any more information.

Ms. Van Bibber: If the carbon tax does increase the cost of operating our schools, then the government is going to be faced with some tough decisions. If the cost of operating schools in Alberta increases, how can it still not happen here in the Yukon?

Hon. Mr. Silver: I do appreciate the question from the opposition, but again, to think that this is only going to affect the Yukon and we're the only jurisdiction that is going to feel the effects of a carbon-pricing mechanism is just simply not true. All over Canada we see that there are jurisdictions that already have a provincial mechanism for carbon pricing. We do not. In that pursuit, we have the ability to make sure that

however this is going to be collected and returned, we do that with a Yukon-made solution to a carbon-pricing mechanism.

To say that we don't think that it's going to affect — I mean it's going to affect us just like it's going to affect any other jurisdiction in Canada. It's the proper thing to do and it gives businesses on an international basis the impetus to actually start putting technology toward renewable resources and away from fossil fuels. This is the goal. This is the point. We should be embracing that — this is a good thing. There is money to be made in the technology sector because of this transformation.

I would assume that the opposition would like to move forward in areas where we can actually increase our own-source revenue as far as innovation and technologies. I'm looking forward to a time where Yukon can say that we are off fossil fuels. Again, carbon-pricing mechanism on an international and a national basis is exactly how we're going to do that.

Question re: Minimum wage

Ms. White: Mr. Speaker, right now Yukon has the lowest minimum wage in the north at \$11.32 per hour. As I told the minister last week, it's more than one dollar below the minimum wage in both the NWT and Nunavut. Everyone knows that \$11.32 is not enough to meet the basic needs in Yukon. It's a poverty wage, Mr. Speaker. That's why we see so many working people at the food bank very month and that is just not acceptable. A government committed to fighting poverty would take action immediately, but when I asked the minister what he is planning to do, he said he was satisfied with the recent 25-cent inflation adjustment to the minimum wage.

Mr. Speaker, does the minister truly believe that a 25-cent inflation adjustment to the minimum wage will lift any Yukon worker out of poverty?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thanks to the member opposite for the question.

I think when I answered this question last week, my response was not to say that this was the only solution. I think I described that there were many approaches that we were taking as a government. I think the question as it came last week was, "Would we consider raising it to a \$15 minimum wage?" — more like the concept of a living wage — and my response was, "No, we're not considering that as a government".

Mr. Speaker, I have gone back, following the question from the member opposite last week, and asked the department to do some analysis with the Yukon Bureau of Statistics to try to get a sense of what the cost of living is against the minimum wage. But to try to get to the point of what the member opposite is asking, it's about what programs are we doing around dealing with people and their conditions. I think we have several programs — a Housing First program, programs around mental wellness, et cetera — so I think the question should be directed away from minimum wage to ask us about how we're working with Yukoners to make sure that everyone is cared for.

Ms. White: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The problem here is that we're speaking about working people who are earning \$11.32 an hour. They will not be taken care of by programs offered by government that target very specific problems. The minister continues to repeat that Yukon's minimum wage is fifth in the country and that is good enough for him, but by doing so, the minister is putting Yukon on the same foot as New Brunswick, for instance, where the average house price is less than half of what it is in the Yukon.

The minister has to know that Yukon's cost of living is not comparable to other parts of the country. Yukon's living wage for a family of four with both parents working is \$19 per hour each. That's an \$8 gap with the minimum wage as we currently have it.

Mr. Speaker, why is the minister satisfied with the status quo when there is an \$8 gap between the minimum wage and a living wage?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate that the member opposite has started to do some of the very analysis that I have requested and I will try to share it. For example, the highest minimum wage in the country is with Nunavut. Their minimum wage is \$13 an hour. I wonder if we took a look at what the cost of housing is in Nunavut and the cost of food and services is in Nunavut compared to a \$13 minimum wage — how that would compare. I will do that analysis and I hope to share it with the member opposite. I actually think we would look somewhat favourable in that light, but let's do the numbers and figure it out.

How I'm trying to respond to the member opposite is that we are satisfied with the minimum wage. We are working on other fronts to address the issue of poverty in the territory and that's how we're working on it. I don't follow the argument that if we don't raise the minimum wage, we're not going to work to care for Yukoners.

Ms. White: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The minister is not in a position to teach anyone about poverty or tell people living in poverty about their experience. He is the minister responsible for Yukon's \$11.32-an-hour minimum wage. That's a poverty wage, Mr. Speaker. The minister knows it and he has the power to make changes.

No later than next year, Alberta's minimum wage will be \$15 per hour. Fifteen dollars per hour in Yukon is still below the living wage, but it would be a good first step to lift people out of poverty — yet, last week the minister showed us how low his government has set the bar on minimum wage when he said — and I quote: "I would like to acknowledge that it is not the lowest in the country ..."

Well, that's quite a visionary statement, Mr. Speaker. The minister also said that Yukon will review the minimum wage when we drop to the sixth place in the country. Well, good news for workers and bad news for the minister who seems to prefer the status quo. This will happen in just a few months when British Columbia raises its minimum wage to \$11.35 an hour this September.

Will the minister tell Yukon workers earning poverty wages to hang tight for another five months or will he take immediate action?

Speaker: Order. The member's time has elapsed. Thank you.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Mr. Speaker, I will go back to try to check a few facts. One of them I think is that when I last checked, British Columbia is raising its minimum wage to \$11.25 so I will have a look to try to see whether I have that number correct or not. I also note that British Columbia is in election right now so let's see where they land and what they go to.

If you would like a different quote, here is a quote: Yukon has the fifth highest minimum wage in the country. Our minimum wage is tied to inflation so that it continues to rise with inflation. We are working to address the issue of poverty here in the territory, but not with this tool.

Question re: Whistle Bend continuing care facility

Mr. Cathers: Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Premier told this House that the previous government had only budgeted \$2 million for the Whistle Bend continuing care facility's operating costs. However, on April 21, 2016, and again on April 25, the former Minister of Health and Social Services told this House that the government had budgeted \$28 million per year for the facility and that those costs were included in the long-term fiscal plan.

I have to assume the Premier would not intentionally mislead the House, so changing \$28 million to \$2 million must have been a rounding error on his part.

Regarding the Premier's debt that he's planning to plunge the territory into, it will be future generations of Yukoners who have to pay the bill.

Will the Premier tell us today when his high-debt plan will see the territory get out of debt?

Hon. Mr. Silver: The member opposite would have to appreciate that I would have to go through reams of Hansard to find that number because it hasn't been ever put in a main estimate.

Yes, in the Legislative Assembly there might have been a number given, but, again, a number in the Legislative Assembly given by a minister is one thing. Having a number actually in the mains is a whole other thing, and so we didn't see that.

As we see a scattershot from the member opposite as far as the overall planning, that gives me a good opportunity to come up and talk about current long-term plans reflecting the real cost of government.

For operation and maintenance expenditures, an example would be the current long-term plan that reflects a more fulsome budget of approximately \$36 million to operate the Whistle Bend continuing care facility when it is completed.

The prior 2016-17 long-term plan forecasts net O&M expenditures of \$1 billion for 2018-19, with a current 2017-18 long-term plan forecast of \$1.061 billion in net O&M expenditures. The prior 2016-17 long-term forecasts for O&M expenditures was \$1.032 billion for 2019-20, while the current 2017-19 long-term plan forecasts \$1.079 billion for O&M.

My question for the previous government is: What programs and services that Yukoners depend on every day

would they plan to cut based upon these forecasts in their future? When were you going to inform Yukoners of these cuts if you were forming government?

Mr. Cathers: That was a nice attempt by the Premier, but I would refer the media to my remarks during second reading yesterday in explaining how the Liberals appear to have arrived at these numbers.

I would in fact point out to the Premier that O&M costs were in the budget, booked in future fiscal years.

Earlier today I asked the Premier to reverse his course on his high-debt plan. The Premier's plan is to go from almost \$100 million in the bank to \$216 million in debt. It seems the Premier's only plan is to throw the Yukon's economic bus into reverse and drive it off a cliff.

Can the Premier tell us today whether or not he will stop his spending spree at \$216 million in debt, or whether he plans to run up future debts for future generations of Yukoners to pay?

Hon. Mr. Silver: The members opposite know this. We're showing a forecast based upon a current trajectory that we're left with, with the Yukon Party government. We can debate who got us here, but there are questions that have been left from the Yukon Party — capital expenditures, prior long-term planned forecasted net capital of \$175 million in 2018-19, and 2019-20, while the current long-term plans forecast \$220 million in net capital expenditures.

What we see from the previous government is capital — that was assumed to be drastically reduced in the previous government's last budget — reduced to \$175 million net spending on an annual basis in 2019-20 from their forecasts. The new plan has \$220 million setting net capital spending assumptions straight across the map. My question again to the opposition would be: What were you planning? Were you planning to leave federal infrastructure dollars on the table when the communities need this infrastructure? What capital were you planning to cut? Were you planning on leaving local contractors in the lurch of massive cuts in the capital plan?

Again, these were the questions that we were left with from the previous government. It would have been interesting to see how they would have gyrated right now, if they were in the government talking to us about how they would plan the future knowing full well the shortcomings in their forecasts.

Mr. Cathers: Again, yesterday I pointed out at great length where the Liberal forecast has gotten this wrong. It clearly appears to be a case of overprojection or a plan of reckless spending. We know what the numbers were and the red ink we see in this budget is dramatically different.

The Premier's plan to leave future generations of Yukoners holding the bill for his spending raises lots of important questions — namely, does he ever intend to get out of debt? How does he intend to pay for the debt and the debt-servicing costs? If the Premier doesn't have a plan to get out of the debt he is incurring, he should have an answer to this question: Is the Premier's plan to raise government revenue or is it to reduce government spending?

Hon. Mr. Silver: Of course we have a plan to get out of the debt that we're left with from the Yukon Party, and it

involves the Financial Advisory Panel, but it also involves us having a new approach to fiscal responsibilities and fiscal expedience when it comes to the Department of Finance.

Again, to recap, the previous government tabled a surplus budget in 2016-17. However, before the election, the government chose to implement millions of dollars of unbudgeted spending before leaving the office. They chose not to account for these things. Some examples we already talked about: the collective bargaining agreement; the new staffing of teachers; pension solvency payments; the new Thomson Centre beds; McDonald Lodge; increase to home care supports; and a contribution to the MacBride Museum for expansion. So that ship has sailed. All of that money was not accounted for. The result is an \$8-million deficit.

This fiscal year, our government is tabling a surplus and we believe that we are facing a structural deficit beyond this fiscal year based upon the accounting methods of the last Yukon Party government. So we are going to have a sustainable forecast and we want to do that based upon taking a whole-government approach and taking a look at a non-partisan exercise of the Financial Advisory Panel, and we'll let them show us a suite of opportunities moving forward. This government will show that leadership that is desperately needed in the Yukon right now.

Question re: Budget estimates and spending

Mr. Kent: Yesterday, I asked the Premier if he has tasked the Financial Advisory Panel with a plan to bring Yukon out of debt. Unfortunately, we didn't receive an answer to that question and he hasn't presented a mandate letter or terms of reference for the panel itself. He did, however, say that the panel will be looking at all options.

My question is a simple one for the Premier: Do these options include layoffs in the public service?

Hon. Mr. Silver: I guess that would be a question for the opposition — when we take a look at the way that they were doing their forecasts for future years. But again, I'll answer the question.

When it comes to the Financial Advisory Panel, they are going to take a look at all options. They're going to put everything out there. Of course, we know what the options are. There's a full suite of them. We will pick the solutions as a whole-Yukon approach to moving forward. So the Financial Advisory Panel will give a suite of options, but it will be up to this government to determine the pathway forward.

Terms of reference — sure. You want terms of reference? We'll give you the terms of reference. If there's any other information that the opposition needs as far as the Financial Advisory Panel — we're open and accountable. We want to give that information.

The opposition asked yesterday as well if we would be producing the results of the panel, unobscured. Of course we will be. We are not putting any blinders on the Financial Advisory Panel. We're getting them to do their work and to showcase all of the options out there.

There are going to be some options out there for which, of course, we would not want to go down that route. But we

want to see what a non-partisan board is going to tell us for all the options and we will pick the option that makes the most sense for Yukoners, moving forward.

Mr. Kent: It sounds to me like the Premier hasn't ruled out layoffs. That is very interesting. I am sure it will be interesting to the government employees' union as well. If the options he has asked the Financial Advisory Panel to consider include layoffs, it would be interesting to know where he would consider these. Is everything on the table? Are there some departments or positions that would be protected from the Premier's layoffs?

Hon. Mr. Silver: Of course nobody wants to do any layoffs. I love how the member opposite likes to put words into our mouths. We never said that. Those are his words, not ours. If we take a look at the forecasting from the previous government, we were wondering what programs and services they would cut. If you take a look at the forecast expenditures, there is a narrative here. I am looking forward to talking more, based on our conversations in Committee of the Whole, to get down to these numbers — prior long-term forecasts of operation and maintenance from the previous government — and the real problem that would have been facing the Yukon Party government moving forward based upon their own forecasts. What programs and services were they going to cut based upon their own numbers?

It is interesting that the member opposite is now accusing us of somehow in the future making layoffs when what we are trying to do is be fiscally responsible for the decisions we make. If we make pertinent fiscal decisions, then the hope and prayer — and of course we would love to move forward with absolutely no layoffs, no changes to programs and services, but actually a fiscal model that doesn't have political decisions being made coming in at the ninth hour like we have seen in previous government.

Mr. Kent: This is a very interesting development here today where the Premier has not ruled out layoffs in the public service and will not commit to where those layoffs may come or which ones may be protected.

The massive new debt that the Premier is getting us into is a scary thing. It means our children and grandchildren are going to have to pay for the reckless spending of this Premier. For the options the panel is considering, what reductions in services is the government considering? Perhaps that will be answered in the terms of reference, but again we don't have that information available for us, so I hope the Premier will answer that question on the floor of the House here today.

Hon. Mr. Silver: Nobody believes the narrative from the Yukon Party as they try to put words into our mouths. Nobody over here wants to do any layoffs. For the record, no we do not want to contemplate any layoffs. That would not be a great situation.

The current long-term plans reflect the real cost of government for the first time. Operation and maintenance expenditures — as an example — would be current and long-term plans now reflecting the fulsome budget of approximately \$36 million for the Whistle Bend care facility. The prior 2016-17 long-term plan forecasted net O&M

expenditures of \$1 billion for 2018-19 with the current 2017-18 long-term plan forecasting \$1.061 billion in net O&M expenditures for 2017-18. The prior 2016-17 long-term plans forecasted net O&M expenditures of \$1.032 billion for 2019-20. The current plan for 2017-18 long-term plans forecast is \$1.079 billion. My question back to the member opposite: What programs and services that Yukoners depend on every day were you planning to cut based upon your own numbers? When were you going to inform Yukoners of those cuts?

Speaker: The time for Question Period has now elapsed.

Notice of government private members' business

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Pursuant to Standing Order 14.2(7), I would like to identify the items standing in the name of government private members to be called on Wednesday, May 3, 2017. They are Motion No. 17, standing in the name of the Member for Mayo-Tatchun, Motion No. 20, standing in the name of the Member for Porter Creek Centre, and Motion No. 23, standing in the name of the Member for Copperbelt North.

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

Motion No. 4

Clerk: Motion No. 4, standing in the name of the Hon. Mr. Silver.

Speaker: It is moved by the Hon. Premier:

THAT pursuant to section 18 of the of the *Conflict of Interest (Members and Ministers) Act*, the Legislative Assembly reappoint David Phillip Jones, QC, as a member of the Conflict of Interest Commission for a three-year period.

Hon. Mr. Silver: I'm pleased to move the motion for the reappointment of David Phillip Jones, QC as our Conflict of Interest Commissioner for a three-year period.

This is no surprise to the members of the Legislative Assembly that Mr. Jones was first appointed as Yukon's conflicts commissioner back in 2002. This House has subsequently reappointed him to this position in 2005, 2008, 2011 and 2014. The established practice of this Assembly is for the Members' Services Board to consider the appointment of all House officers and then to make recommendations to all members.

Mr. Speaker, on February 23 of this year, the Members' Services Board met and agreed to recommend Mr. Jones' reappointment to the Assembly. The *Conflict of Interest (Members and Ministers) Act* recognizes that the appointment of the commissioner requires the solid support of the Members of the Legislative Assembly here today. Accordingly, the resolution presented today requires a

recorded vote, supported by at least two-thirds of the members here represented.

Mr. Jones brings a great deal of expertise and experience to the position of the Conflict of Interest Commissioner. He is a leading Canadian expert in administrative law. He co-authored the *Principles of Administrative Law* and is co-editor of the *Administrative Law Reports*. Mr. Jones earned his law degree at Oxford University as a Rhodes scholar. For 16 years he was a full-time law professor at McGill University and then also the University of Alberta. Since then, he has been in private practice in Edmonton. His firm does considerable work in the areas of administrative law, including actions involving House officers of the Alberta Legislative Assembly as well.

A significant part of Mr. Jones' practice involves acting as a neutral arbitrator, either as a sole arbitrator or chairing boards of arbitration in both labour and commerce matters.

Mr. Speaker, in addition to serving this House, Mr. Jones is the Conflict of Interest Commissioner for the Northwest Territories Legislative Assembly. Mr. Jones has served members of this Legislative Assembly ably since his original appointment in 2002. I am pleased to join with my colleagues on the Members' Services Board in recommending the reappointment of David and I would like to ask all members to support this motion.

Mr. Kent: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

As Official Opposition House Leader, I will respond and respond briefly to the motion put forward by the Premier. I thank him for bringing this motion forward. I thank the Members' Services Board as well. Of course we'll be supporting the reappointment of Mr. Jones as the Conflict of Interest Commissioner here in the Yukon. He has been very responsive to all members of the House throughout his time as conflicts commissioner. I know he makes regular appearances in person here to meet with members if they have specific concerns.

Again, we thank him for his work and look forward to supporting him in continuing that work over the next three years.

Ms. Hanson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I thank the Premier for his outline of the process and the decision of the Members' Services Board and of course the New Democratic Party will support the reappointment of the conflicts commissioner.

Speaker: Does the Hon. Premier wish to conclude debate with any comments?

Hon. Mr. Silver: No, I will just thank the members opposite. Of course, we don't have to call division but we need to have our recorded vote. I look forward to that recorded vote. Thank you for the opposition's comments today.

Speaker: Are you prepared for the question?

Some Hon. Members: (Inaudible)

Speaker: As the Hon. Premier has set out, but I will put it on the record: Before putting the question, the Chair shall draw all members' attention to section 18(4) of the *Conflict of Interest (Members and Ministers) Act*, which says as follows: "In order to take effect, a resolution of the Legislative Assembly for the appointment or removal of a Member of the commission must be supported in a recorded vote by at least two-thirds of the Members present for the vote".

In order to ensure that the requirements of section 18 of the *Conflict of Interest (Members and Ministers) Act* are met, the Chair will now call for a recorded division.

Division

Speaker: Division has been called.

Bells

Speaker: Mr. Clerk, please poll the House.

Hon. Mr. Silver: Agree.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Agree.

Hon. Ms. Dendys: Agree.

Hon. Ms. Frost: Agree.

Mr. Gallina: Agree.

Mr. Adel: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Agree.

Mr. Hutton: Agree.

Mr. Hassard: Agree.

Mr. Kent: Agree.

Ms. Van Bibber: Agree.

Mr. Cathers: Agree.

Ms. McLeod: Agree.

Mr. Istchenko: Agree.

Ms. Hanson: Agree.

Ms. White: Agree.

Clerk: Mr. Speaker, the results are 18 yea, nil nay.

Speaker: The yeas have it. I declare the motion carried by the required support of two-thirds of the Members of the Legislative Assembly present for the vote, and that David Phillip Jones, QC, has been now reappointed as Conflict of Interest Commissioner for a three-year period.

Motion No. 4 agreed to

GOVERNMENT BILLS

Bill No. 201: *First Appropriation Act, 2017-18* — Second Reading — *adjourned debate*

Clerk: Second reading, Bill No. 201, standing in the name of the Hon. Mr. Silver; adjourned debate, Mr. Kent.

Mr. Kent: Mr. Speaker, I know I have about 28 minutes or so to conclude my remarks. Yesterday, of course, when I started shortly after 5:00, I had the opportunity to thank a number of individuals, including those constituents in Copperbelt South, and I did get into some generalities as well about my reaction to the budget. I am going to continue on with some of those generalities, get into some constituency-

specific issues and, as time permits, speak a little bit about my critic roles in Energy, Mines and Resources, Economic Development and Community Services before I wrap up.

The first thing I wanted to talk about is a motion that we started to debate last Wednesday — a private member's motion on the carbon tax and potential exemptions. I wanted to reference a comment made by the Minister of Tourism and Culture yesterday in her response to the budget. I'll quote her from Hansard, where she was talking about the carbon-pricing mechanism that will be coming to Yukon. She said — and I quote: "For example, a tourism business that pays more for fuel will also see a corresponding rebate. Therefore, the prices of products and services offered should remain unchanged." She goes on to further say, "By 2018, all Canadian jurisdictions will have carbon-pricing plans in place, giving no jurisdiction a perceived competitive advantage." She said, "That's something that's very important to keep in mind — that this is Canada-wide and that this is a federal carbon-pricing program."

Mr. Speaker, that begs a couple of questions for me. Perhaps when we get into Tourism departmental debate, she can have an opportunity to clarify that, or if we do get the carbon tax motion back to the floor of this House, she may have an opportunity to respond there. I have a couple of questions for her with respect to that. Is she expecting companies to carry the risk and wait for their annual rebate or monthly rebate, or will that rebate be instant? This is going to be pretty tough for a gas station or an airline that sells or consumes an awful lot of fuel. Again, we will look to an answer from the minister on that.

Of course, with respect to the other jurisdictions, one of our main jurisdictions when it comes to competing for visitors is Alaska. Alaska, of course, will not have a carbon-pricing plan in place, so I would be interested to hear how we will compete with the State of Alaska for visitors when the numbers from this tax on tourism come in. Again, I will look forward to hearing back from the minister during debate when it comes to the carbon tax.

Just to follow up on Question Period today, we are left with more questions on this side of the House, unfortunately, than we got answers from the Premier. Specifically, I'll reference my question on layoffs. I'll take the chance and the opportunity to review the Blues and take a look at the Premier's response. It sounded to me like the Financial Advisory Panel would be looking at potential layoffs and potential service reductions in the government. Again, we will look to explore that further with the Premier.

Perhaps when he gets up to close second reading debate of the budget, he will have a chance to get further briefings from department officials and give us an answer. With respect to that, I will get a chance to review the Blues from Question Period today and see exactly where we are at with layoffs in the public service coming out of the Financial Advisory Panel's work.

I am going to turn my attention to some specific constituency issues that I would like to deal with for residents of Copperbelt South. Some of those issues are located right in

the riding and some are broader government budget commitments where we would certainly be looking to get some answers. I will put some of those questions on the record here today.

Recently the government, through Highways and Public Works, conducted some consultations on the Whitehorse corridor of the Alaska Highway specific to improvements at the intersection of the south Klondike Highway and the Alaska Highway — or the Carcross Cut-off as many of us know that area to be called. I would like to get — if they are not already published on the department's website — the results of those consultation meetings that took place out at The Cut Off Restaurant and get a sense for what some of the responses from area residents has been. I have heard from a number of constituents both in my riding and in the Minister of Community Services' riding about concerns with access — not only access off the highway, but the frontage roads as well as the potential gating of the access into the fire hall. I thank the Minister of Community Services. I know he followed up with my constituent on his concerns with that. Of course we will be looking for some further responses. I note that the budget itself recognizes an amount for the Alaska Highway, but I will also be interested to hear whether or not improvements at that intersection are included in this budget.

Something that came up at the doorsteps and again with yesterday's earthquake here in Whitehorse — this week marks a terrifying one-year anniversary for many Canadians. That is of course the Fort McMurray fires and what happened in Fort McMurray last year at this time. Many Yukoners will recall the images on our television screens of the mass evacuation and what was happening there. In that immediate aftermath, firesmarting and protecting people's homes against wildfire is something that certainly came up. I am hoping to have the opportunity or have the appropriate critics given the opportunity to explore what the FireSmart plans are for this year — if there are any significant opportunities — whether through commercial harvest and building larger fire breaks and what individual Yukoners can do to FireSmart their properties and protect themselves from any potential wildfire.

As we enter Emergency Preparedness Week next week, this is something that I know will be very important to my constituents. It is something that did come up on the doorstep given the fact that most of my constituents live in a rural residential or country residential setting — trying to get a sense of what we can do to protect our homes and protect area residents from the potential threat of wildfire is important to our constituents.

With respect to improvements to the Whitehorse corridor of the Alaska Highway, the work was completed last fall on passing lanes and deceleration and acceleration lanes near the Pioneer RV Park in my riding of Copperbelt South. There was also a multi-use trail put in. At the time, I know HPW officials mentioned that paving of that trail would be put off to a future budget year. I will be interested to talk to the Minister of Highways and Public Works or perhaps hear from him on whether or not that paving will be done this year.

Bicycle safety is something that is extremely important to constituents. Many of the constituents in my riding cycle to work along the highway. I'll recognize the work of HPW officials in sweeping the highway very early this year so those cyclists can get out as early as possible, whether it's their preferred method of commuting to work or they are training for events like the Kluane Chilkat International Bike Relay. It's an important area and there are an awful lot of cyclists who use that area.

Something that did come up at the doorsteps last year was the paving of that multi-use trail, so I hope to get a response from the minister on whether or not that will be done in this current budget or future budgets as presented in the longer term plan.

Something that also came up — the Minister of Highways and Public Works will be familiar with this as I did send him a letter shortly after his appointment to his portfolio — and that's signage on the highways for commercial businesses. There is specific signage for the McCrae industrial area and I would note also in the Porter Creek North riding for the MacDonald Road industrial area as well as the Kulan industrial area, but one area that it is missing is the Mount Sima industrial area.

There are a number of businesses that are located there — everything from a brewery to assay labs, construction companies, heavy construction companies and road companies and those types of contractors. I'm just wondering if there is an opportunity to put in some similar highway signage to what exists at McCrae. I know that some of the businesses — the Winterlong Brewing Co. in particular has requested specific tourism-oriented directional signage or that blue signage. I know that the policy suggests that not be allowed within the city limits, so I'll explore with the minister whether or not he would consider a policy change when it comes to that particular kind of signage. I know it's not only for me, but my colleague, the Member for Kluane, has had similar concerns raised by constituents in Haines Junction as well. I have heard them as well from business owners in the Tagish area of Yukon — the community there. There are a number of businesses that would be looking at this. In fact, the former member for Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes, Kevin Barr, asked, I believe, about that during debate when we had an opportunity to talk.

One of the issues that has come up by some of my constituents is with respect to children with diabetes and the purchase of constant glucose monitoring machines for them. I did reach out to the Minister of Health and Social Services. I thank her for the response. It certainly wasn't the response that I was hoping for, or the parents of these children were hoping for. There are some young constituents in my riding who I had the opportunity to meet during the campaign who have diabetes and require constant monitoring of their glucose levels. There were some pretty scary incidents described to me by parents where they thought their child might not make it, so again whether it's through debate questions or written questions — I'll follow up with the minister and hope that we can get her, as she gets more comfortable in her position, to

take another look at this request, especially for the young kids who don't have the opportunity or perhaps the skills to mention to their parents when their blood sugar is getting too low or too high.

I had the opportunity to meet with a number of parents. They showed me the technology and it's very interesting to see it at work. We'll look to follow up with the minister on that.

Mr. Speaker, Copperbelt South contains a number of contractors — small, medium and larger contractors. This is for the Minister of Highways and Public Works — we would look to get a sense of some of the important budget numbers for the smaller contractors. One of the important programs is the rural roads program. We were informed yesterday by one of the small contractors that there has been \$1 million taken out of that program. This is really the bread and butter for some of the smaller operators and we would certainly like to explore with the minister what led the minister to make that budgeting choice to remove that, because it really represents a shift throughout the contracting community, where some of those smaller jobs that some of the smaller contractors have traditionally done are no longer available.

The same of course applies on the vertical infrastructure, or the building construction — we'll look to see what's in this budget for some of the small and medium contractors. There are some land availability concerns, particularly in Whitehorse, for some of the private sector builds, but we'll see where we land once we get into some details.

I'm hoping that the Minister of Highways and Public Works and the Minister of Community Services can provide a more detailed list as to what projects are being considered with respect to some of the line items, particularly with the clean water and waste-water fund, and then the highway projects and the other building projects scattered throughout the budget — which ones are being done. Perhaps we can get a list of the capital maintenance projects as well. That will give us a better sense so that we can communicate to our constituents who are contractors as to whether or not there'll be work for them here this summer. Perhaps they may have to take advantage of the Canada free trade act that was recently signed and look beyond our borders for work if it doesn't exist here.

When I was Highways and Public Works minister, one of the things that we tried to stay on top of — and I believe it's in the contracting directive — was the tender forecast system.

I haven't been on there since the budget was introduced, but I'm hoping that particular tool is better utilized by department staff and we get a better sense on when some of these projects might be tendered. Again, this helps us as MLAs in communicating with our constituents or other interested Yukoners who come in and talk to us about contracting issues with the Yukon government. We will look forward to these contracts rolling out as soon as possible and we will look forward to next March when the government committed to seasonally dependent contracts being tendered prior to the end of that month. That will certainly be a big help to the local contracting community.

The other thing that jumped out at me generally and from a constituency issue in the budget is the \$4 million — I believe that is the number — that will be put into Education staffing in our schools. With Golden Horn Elementary School in my riding, that's the one that I'm obviously concerned about, but all members will be concerned with the schools in their communities or in their specific ridings. I hope to get a little bit more detail from the Minister of Education on the staffing allocation model and where those resources will be deployed. Are they educational assistants? Are they learning assistants? Is it going to be additional support for English-language learners? Those are some of the questions that we hope to explore further with ministers once we get further into Committee of the Whole and departmental debate.

Specific to my critic roles — with Energy, Mines and Resources, I have the mines, the oil, gas and energy side of things. We will be exploring with the minister his mandate letter and what the Premier has asked him to do on the energy side of things. I'm particularly interested in the retrofit program. I know that they're not at the \$30-million commitment level that they made during the campaign, so we will look to see when they anticipate being there and exactly what the number is contained within this budget. There may be some areas where those dollars aren't readily apparent, but we will look to the minister to provide some direction for us as opposition MLAs to the budget and where we can find them.

I will also be interested in the success of the microgeneration program. It was one of the early programs that I was able to institute when I took over Energy, Mines and Resources. I thank the MLA for Lake Laberge for his work previous to me in getting that program ready for deliver. I know that no matter where we travel — again, in my riding or other ridings — there are individuals who have taken advantage of that — mostly for solar panels, I believe, on their homes. There is the up-to-\$5,000 rebate. Hopefully, we will be able to get some statistics from the minister with respect to that.

On the independent power production policy — work was progressing as we entered the election cycle last year. We are looking to get a sense for when that work will be done. I note that there is a private sector company looking at windmills on Haeckel Hill. I'm sure they will be interested in taking advantage of that. One of the officials from Energy, Mines and Resources, I believe, was quoted in the paper saying that they will be entering into negotiations for a power-purchase agreement. We will look to get some details there.

I know that one of the Liberal campaign commitments was that the IPP no longer allow LNG or liquefied natural gas to be considered as an energy source. So we'll explore that a little bit further with the minister and get a sense of what that means for some of the mining companies. This may not be the case currently, but some of the previous management at Wellgreen was hoping to partner with the community of Burwash Landing and potentially Destruction Bay and sell excess power from their LNG generations into the community. Some of the mining companies would have relied

on that additional revenue. I have talked to others that have considered similar things for areas around Faro or other areas that were close to the grid as well to generate the power they needed and sell the excess, but, of course, they were going to use liquefied natural gas. So we'll just confirm with the minister that's off the table and perhaps get a sense for any discussions that he has had with those companies.

On the mining side of things, there are a number of areas that we'll look to explore with the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, particularly when it comes to assessment of abandoned mines. I noticed a significant decrease in the amount that is budgeted for that. Of course, 90-plus percent of that money comes from Ottawa. It is down, I think, about \$10 million from where we were a couple years ago, so I am kind of interested. You can't tell from the budget, but hopefully the minister is able to give us a breakdown of which type 2 sites will receive work and the amounts that they'll get. I know there were some management changes contemplated when it comes to assessment of abandoned mines last year. The Government of Canada was taking over the remediation management piece and we — by "we", I mean the Yukon government — would be managing the care and maintenance aspects of it. We'll hopefully get a few more details from the minister on that work and where we're progressing there.

Something that is very important to the mining industry — it was obviously important prior to the election and I'm sure it remains important — is the regulatory improvements. We'll look to get a sense for what is happening in the Strategic Initiatives branch.

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Mr. Kent: Pardon me — five minutes left? I had better pick up the pace here a little bit then.

So again, regulatory improvements — get a sense for those. The Centre for Northern Innovation in Mining — I note that there was some talk of support for Yukon College and the trades there, so we'll get a sense, hopefully, from either the Minister of EMR or the Minister of Education as to what plans there are for CNIM for this year. They have a tremendous new facility that Yukon and Canada partnered on. We certainly want to see that utilized. Especially now is the opportunity to train, as well as to look in the coming years at the projects that are coming down the pipe.

Roads and energy investments are also important to the mining industry, so we'll get a sense from either the Minister of EMR or the Minister of HPW on that.

Oil and gas — I know the Kandik and Eagle Plains basins received some attention last year. The minister alluded to that in the local media. We'll get a sense, hopefully, from him on the progress. There were some First Nation consultations that were underway. We hope to get a sense of when the 60-day public consultation period will start as well.

I will also look to explore with the minister some of the Select Committee Regarding the Risks and Benefits of Hydraulic Fracturing work and the recommendations that they made. One of those recommendations was for an economic analysis. I believe the minister has the document he alluded to, either in debate or in Question Period, that talked about the

benefits but not about the risks. Reading the select committee's report, there is plenty of talk about the risks and that is why we ask the department to do the benefits analysis. I hope to get a chance to explore that with him a little bit too.

Quickly, to talk about Economic Development again, we will look to the mandate letter and talk about the redundant fibre and the new options, and potentially what that might mean with some of the trade disputes that we are having — that Canada is potentially having with the United States — and if that has any effect on what the minister's thinking is with respect to that.

We will also look to discuss support for industry and other opportunities. I would have gone into more detail had my time not been running short. When it comes to Community Services, taking a look at the mandate letter for the minister — we will have a go-through there.

One of the things that I should mention that has been mentioned to me by various sporting organizations is that sport didn't receive a very prominent role in the mandate letter for the minister. Hopefully we get a chance to talk about that for a little bit and get a sense for what his vision is on sports. The mandate letter had a very noticeable lack — especially noticed by members of the local sporting community — of what the Premier expects the minister to do when it comes to sport and amateur sport in particular.

With the Community Services minister I would like to see a project list when it comes to the clean water and waste-water fund. I know there is a fairly substantial number identified in the line item. We talked about some of the other opportunities as well, but I see my time is running short. With that, Mr. Speaker, I will conclude my remarks. I look forward to getting into Committee of the Whole with members opposite.

Ms. Hanson: I thank all of the members so far who have contributed to the discussion around and about the budget that was tabled in this House last week.

Before commenting directly on the budget speech, I was reflecting on some of the comments made by government members on who they are when one peels away their label of government member or minister — what motivates them to serve or to seek political office. It was interesting to note that I share Maritime roots with three of the Yukon government's front bench. My mother came from a tiny dot — a point, not even a village — in Prince Edward Island. My father was a first-generation Swedish/Finnish mix. He served in the RCAF, training pilots and later as an air traffic controller and as a pilot. It was also noted that several of us in the House share the experience of having strong maternal figures — mothers who were nurses — and also that a number of us were raised by moms who were single parents. In my case, my mom was pregnant with her sixth child when my father was killed while working. I was almost eight. I am — I guess I was — the eldest. All the research that talks about early childhood experiences having a lasting effect — well, my personal experience reinforces that this is the truth.

The slogan "Question authority" for me isn't a button worn in a protest. It is a learned truth. A small example —

when my mother had my youngest brother, the federal survivors benefit for widows provided benefits for five, not six kids, because he wasn't born. She was pregnant and it was only five months after my father was killed that the youngest was born — so impeccable logic from a bureaucratic point of view, but neither just nor compassionate. To this day, those who know me know that I do not accept at face value any assumptions that this is the way it is, or has to be or must be. On a personal and political level, I believe we must always ask why and to what end.

Equally, when I reviewed the Budget Address presented by the Finance minister, I looked for measures that will go beyond window dressing, that will deliver on commitments made during the election campaign and that, above all, will help make Yukon a place where no one is left behind.

Having worked in provincial, municipal and federal public services for over 30 years, I understand deeply and respect the role of a professional public service. It's why I questioned the previous government on their failure to take seriously the issues identified in the audit of the public service staffing, or when the highest position in Yukon's public service — the Public Service Commissioner position, a position that's intended to set the tone for all of Yukon's public service — was shuffled aside. Or when the employee assistance program contract was yanked from a local agency and handed to a national HR giant, Morneau Shepell, the current Finance minister — and many more examples that show a lack of respect for the public service.

Actions are louder than words. I look to this new government to demonstrate by its actions, not by its words, because in the context of a budget that impacts every single Yukon citizen, talk is cheap and actions can be cheapened if the talk behind actions is for show and not grounded in a commitment.

Before I speak briefly about the areas in the budget that appear too positive and appear to contribute to a Yukon where no one is left behind, I thought I would share an anecdote that I found in Hansard. It is from a time in this Legislative Assembly when there had been yet another government change. The Speaker was Tony Penikett and I believe the year was 1994, but I stand to be corrected.

I think he quite correctly described it as an "apt apocryphal story" and it was about a newly elected and I will call it a Liberal government: "In this case, the incoming first minister was wise enough to ask for some advice from his predecessor. The outgoing first minister responded by giving the new man three sealed envelopes. 'Put them in the safe', advised the outgoing minister, 'and whenever you have a crisis, open an envelope'. Well, for a few days the new man enjoyed his honeymoon, but when he started to make decisions, he began to annoy people, even some of his own supporters. In this mythical story, two of the government's first decisions involved resolutions to shelve their election promises and to freeze hiring. Predictably, many of their supporters who expected jobs began to desert the cause. Groups who believed they would benefit from promised new government programs started to grumble. Public employees

who felt betrayed wrote nasty letters to the editor.” Even the Liberal cheerleaders at the local daily felt bound to report some of this dissatisfaction.

“Feeling somewhat tired and emotional, the new leader went to his safe. He tore open the first envelope and read the note inside. It said: ‘Blame the previous administration’. Quick as a fox, the leader called a press conference and blamed the previous administration. Sure enough, the crisis passed. Thinking he had struck a vein of pure gold, the leader continued to blame the previous administration. He blamed it for everything.

“For a while it worked. One by one, other problems arose and rapidly mushroomed into full-grown crises. This time, there were demonstrations and protest marches. Local newspapers began to editorialize against the government in their headlines. Former friends even cursed the government leader in public. Badly shaken, the first minister went to the safe again and opened the second envelope. It said, ‘Blame Ottawa’. With the envelope in hand, the desperate man rushed down to a Chamber of Commerce lunch and gave a rip-roaring speech, blaming Ottawa for everything from the weather to the world metal prices. The business lobby gave him a standing ovation and social peace returned to the land for a few months.

“As sure as snow in winter, another crisis arrived at the leader’s door. Now, he faced angry words in caucus and stormy silences in Cabinet. He even heard rumours of a leadership challenge. Nervous and overwrought, the politician dragged himself back to the safe and clutched the third envelope. He took a deep breath and broke open the seal. Inside, the message read, ‘Prepare three envelopes’.”

The story is apocryphal, but it is a story that sort of tells us about the choices we make and where they can sometimes lead us.

Mr. Speaker, my preference, as the MLA for Whitehorse Centre, would be to see the commitments made by the Liberals in their platform reflected in this first budget — again, transforming words to action. Even though many people have said to me that the Liberal platform read like NDP light with vague nods to the Yukon Party, I was pleased to see the commitments to increase the number of front-line community mental health workers. We agree with the notion of a strategic approach to an economy. We would only hope that this government is open to moving beyond the status quo — that the newly minted expert panel is not simply a cover or a protracted public relations exercise — an exercise in public consultation that we have seen from the previous government where decisions have already been made. That would go contrary to what the kinds of commitments we have heard this government make to open government.

I mentioned I worked for many years for government. That, Mr. Chair, has given me a history and a perspective on the cycles of government commitments and broken commitments and promises. I recall well the big, bold promises of the federal Liberal government and the red book in the early 1990s. I also recall the complex and lasting impact of the cuts that followed — cuts that were attributed to the

necessity of austerity. Words were used repeatedly by Liberal then-Minister of Finance, Mr. Martin, including the infamous two-percent cap placed on First Nation program dollars. Those cuts initiated by Minister Martin — later to be Prime Minister Martin — set the stage for further cuts by the Harper Conservatives.

Mr. Speaker, my experience tells me to look beneath the language of a promise. I have, over the years, seen governments use process, fora, conferences, summits and meetings as substitutes for hard decision-making requiring deep discussion and compromise. I hope that this is not the pattern that will be set by this government in its first set out with this expert panel.

The Premier, the Finance minister, has reiterated time and again that this is a government that will make decisions based on evidence and yet, with no evidence to back the decision, the new government chose to cut the corporate tax rate by 20 percent. The fact of the matter is that the only thing that corporate tax cuts do is reduce government revenues. They do not stimulate investments or job creation.

You know, Mr. Chair, one needs only to recall the frustration expressed by former Conservative Finance minister Jim Flaherty, who, prior to his untimely death and after years of Conservative corporate tax cuts aimed at stimulating the Canadian economy, stated quite plaintively that corporations were sitting on excess of \$650 billion and not investing in job creation in Canada or in research and development. I hope that members in this House will recall those words.

If not Mr. Flaherty, recall the speech given by Stephen Poloz, the Governor of the Bank of Canada, who said much of the same in his speech to the Chamber of Commerce at the gala last summer. It was a Debbie Downer of a speech. He didn’t hold out much in terms of optimism for any quick resurgence in the economy, nationally or internationally, but he was really clear that those tax cuts had not worked.

If decisions are to be evidence-based, why did the government not wait until they had received the advice of the expert Financial Advisory Panel to see if tax cuts were one of the tools that would assist? At a minimum, we would have expected the government to have read the admonitions contained in the Standard & Poor’s Yukon ratings, which found that in general — and I quote: “The Yukon Party tax cuts had not stimulated Yukon’s economy and that is to our collective detriment. The cuts have weakened the ability of government to finance Yukon’s priorities and chart a new direction.” It is not so much the actual amount of each tax cut; it is the cumulative impact, and that cumulative impact needs also to be assessed against the backdrop of an ideologically driven legislative framework that, as Standard & Poor’s identified, has entrapped Yukon governments. I’m quoting here from the S&P: “The territory’s ability to increase revenue is somewhat constrained as a result of the *Taxpayer Protection Act*, which stipulates the Yukon government cannot introduce a new tax or increase an existing one, in particular personal income, corporate income or fuel taxes, without a referendum. This requirement would be more of a

negative credit factor if the territory relied more heavily on own-source revenue.”

So here, Mr. Chair, the government is getting caught in an ideological trap, unless they have the courage to spurn the *Taxpayer Protection Act*, which was put in place by the Yukon Party in the mid-1990s.

A clear sign that this new government believes in the future of Yukon would be shucking the shackles of the *Taxpayer Protection Act* because, until they do, their flexibility as government will continue to be constrained by self-imposed restraints. I say that as Standard & Poor's points out — and I quote: “Although transfers from the federal government provide a stable and predictable revenue source, we believe Yukon's budgetary flexibility is weak...” The modifiable — the things that the Government of Yukon can do on its own, the amount of the budget flexibility it has — revenues typically account for a relatively small percentage of operating revenues. It hasn't changed over the years. You would have thought that post-devolution, when we had provincial-like responsibilities and authorities, the government would have grown its revenues. We have shrunk our revenues. There is something wrong with that, and further cutting the ability to generate revenues further decreases the flexibility of government.

Contrary to what the Member for Mountainview may hope or perhaps believe — because it really is a neo-liberal mantra — the private sector is not unfortunately the backbone of Yukon's economy. Again, as Standard & Poor's put it, “... public administration, health care and social assistance, and educational services...” remain the foundation of Yukon's economy constituting a significant proportion of its economy. The expert Financial Advisory Panel may, if not constrained by the terms of reference from this government, offer new insights for moving the new Yukon government further along the continuum of self-government as a territorial entity. We can only hope so. We can call on civil society to pay close attention to this initiative.

The budget is at times disappointing because of the apparently conscious decision not to address inequality. For example, if the government was looking to tax as a method of addressing inequality, they might have, and still might consider — here's an option for the government — the fact that all Yukoners — including pensioners, the working poor and lower income people earning up to \$44,700 — annually pay a tax rate of 6.4 percent on that taxable income. Compare that to Nunavut's lowest bracket at four percent, BC at 5.06 percent, and Northwest Territories at 5.9 percent. I realize that the Minister of Community Services doesn't believe that Yukon should move toward a \$15 per hour minimum wage as a stepping stone toward a living wage, but we can hope that the government is prepared to look at all the evidence prior to making decisions that affect the ability of this government to equitably serve its citizens.

We will have an opportunity to delve into each of the departments in more depth. However, I do want to note a concern that the budget speech and the budget itself appear to have adopted some of the aspects of the federal Liberal

approach to promise and defer. There has been blowback at the national level when Canadians realized that promises made are not necessarily promises kept. The NDP will expect clear and substantive action on the promises made by the Yukon Liberal government.

For example, as promised, we will be asking when and by how much will the government increase the small business investment tax credit. When will it implement the five-year funding plan for tech innovation, given that two-thirds of the first year of its mandate is almost past? When and under what terms does the government intend to, as promised, accelerate completion of the fibre optic line? When — that is, in what year — will it commit to allocation of the \$30-million per year toward energy retrofits? This is a steep climb from the \$200,000 announced this year.

Will it introduce tax credits or incentives for local food processors? When? When will it publicly set out, what, if any, commitments it will make to the Vimy independent seniors housing project?

Mr. Chair, there is so much more. We heard the Member for Porter Creek Centre read a motion yesterday urging his own government to act on daycare — a motion that reflected a portion of the depth of what we had tabled in the Legislature the week before. Regardless of the words we use about the need for daycare, the question most Yukon parents with little kids ask is: When will I be able to access quality, affordable daycare for my child? The question that workers in daycares ask is: What kind of training is necessary and how can I access it without having to work full-time and try to get an education at the same time in order to qualify to go to the next rung in terms of recognition of my training?

Mr. Chair, in addition to the issues that face us as Yukoners, each one of us represents our own ridings. The riding of Whitehorse Centre, as I have discussed many times in this House, is a diverse community. The Downtown Residents Association has evolved into an active organization reflecting the hopes and concerns of people who are both downtown residents and those who live and work in Marwell. One of the continued concerns is that the DRA is the apparent lack of coordination of planning between the City of Whitehorse and the Yukon government. It's not so much the lack of planning with the City of Whitehorse, Mr. Chair. The City of Whitehorse has an amazing amount of planning activities involving downtown residents.

Going back, an example I would give is that, in 2010, the city planners involved downtown residents in what we called the “downtown south charrettes” to talk about what our vision was for south Whitehorse. That plan excited a lot of people and involved a really interesting cross-section of the population. If you look at south Whitehorse, you'll understand what I mean in terms of the demographics. One of the key areas was in the area of Taylor, Jeckell and Drury streets, where there is a lot of Yukon Housing or social housing and a very dilapidated playground at the end of the street at the base of the clay cliffs. As a result of the planning exercise and the charrettes, the community was finally thrilled that there was

going to be a playground. There was actually a playground for their kids.

Then, out of the blue, the Yukon government dropped St. Elias group home at the end of Hoge Street — no community consultation, no discussion with the DRA or with the neighbours in the area — and the end result is that the downtown playground is still not built. It's not likely to be built in that area.

That downtown south plan also included a lot of discussion about the vacant space along Fifth Avenue and Rogers Street. There were many plans developed. There were shadow models developed for proposed housing developments — the mix that would be there, a nice eclectic mix we need to have a vibrant downtown — mixes of shops and residential properties. Again, it's 2017 and there is nothing on Fifth and Rogers. There is another announced planning exercise, but Fifth and Rogers is still vacant.

The territorial government, through its decisions about how and where it changes the attitude toward licensing and offsales, has had a significant impact on downtown Whitehorse. We've seen neighbourhoods in downtown Whitehorse reacting in anger to what they have had to experience and had to protest in order to get some of these operators out. There are real concerns about how many offsales you need to concentrate in downtown Whitehorse? What's the impact of putting in ostensibly a private liquor store around the corner from Whitehorse Elementary and across the street from the new Sally Ann? Why?

You can say it's legit because they have a business attached to it. Well, it's on a different street address in a different building. Somewhere there must be a connection. I don't raise it to disparage the particular business, because they're just doing simply what the law provides for, but it does raise the question about the importance of social responsibility by government when it looks at the impact of decisions. I have heard the government members, particularly the minister, speak of a whole-government approach. If we're talking about community wellness, I think this is an area that we're going to have to look at very carefully.

Mr. Chair, in addition to the other areas that we will certainly want to talk about — our concerns — I raised the issue about the \$30 million that was the commitment to energy retrofit and other measures that would address climate change. I am puzzled and concerned about a government that speaks of — and I heard the Premier speak very clearly this afternoon about making that transition off of fossil fuels and making the transition to a renewable energy future. When I look at the budget I see that, from 2015-16 to 2017-18, we're proposing to double our expenditures in Energy, Mines and Resources in the oil and gas sector and I'm wondering, why remove over \$3 million? I look at the figures and it's puzzling to me. Why are we investing in an area that we should be divesting ourselves of? That's a contradiction that we'll be looking to try to plumb the depths of and understand the rationale that the minister and the government is pursuing here, because you cannot invest in oil and gas and still say you are committed to renewable energy.

It doesn't take a rocket scientist — and I think you'll find that most Yukoners will quickly parse out that you can't say that you are investing in some kinds of fossil fuels and not other kinds of fossil fuels. It's not going to wash.

A final comment — and one we will pursue through the budget debate — is the absence of any consideration or attention to any issues that address Yukoners living with disabilities. The opportunities to work with individuals and families to help Yukoners living with disabilities to participate in all aspects of public and community life are significant, not the least of which is the adoption as a guiding principle of the idea that, as a society, Yukon gains when it supports individuals with disabilities to determine their own experience, be it health, employment, housing or education.

Mr. Chair, there are many promises made in the budget speech and in the budget — promises that say, "Trust us," and we say, from the NDP caucus, that we're going to do so. But we will look to the government when they say, "We're going to do X, or Y, or Z, but we're not going to put any money against that. We're not going to tell you how much money we're committing to these ideas and to these promises" and they tell us to trust them — we want to. We want to believe that the Yukon Liberal government realizes that it will be judged, as the bard of the Yukon, Robert Service, put it, by the powerfully simple credo: "A promise made is a debt unpaid."

Hon. Ms. Frost: Thank you for this opportunity. I rise today to discuss the 2017-18 Yukon government budget. I will share some of the important investments we're making in Yukon people, places, and programs across the territory. I will also give a bit of a summary in regard to the collaborative approaches and how we intend to reach our targets.

The Yukon government will continue to advance the lives of Yukoners and we're doing so in a planned and calculated fashion as expressed in some of the opening comments from the Yukon Liberal Party and the budget presentation.

The Yukon, as we know, is a diverse place with diverse economies. We have multiple levels of government and we need to start working together with all levels of government, as expressed earlier by a few folks that own-source revenue generation in the Yukon requires calculated and collaborative efforts with Yukon First Nations, with corporate sectors and with mining sectors. There are processes that are impacting how and what we do with our economy and so legislatively, some things will have to change, and that process will reveal itself in time.

The private sector and First Nations are huge stakeholders in our environment and the social fabric of our communities, and they will be participants in addressing the needs of Yukoners and their own people, given that 25 percent of the Yukon is controlled by the 11 self-governing First Nations in Yukon. They are significant contributors to the economy, significant investors in this economy and significant land owners, and we're going to find solutions in collaborative partnerships. We're going to find the solutions that we need in terms of cooperation and seeking a process of reconciliation on all fronts.

The diversity of perspectives, expertise and knowledge is not in this House alone; it's not on the shoulders of this government alone. It's really important that we expand as a government. Coming from the First Nation community and having worked in that public sector government, we are always looking for alternatives. Given that the resources we have within our respective communities and with our respective governments as First Nation communities, we know this to be fact — insufficient resources — so they are always trying and attempting to seek solutions. A good case in point is the riding of Vuntut Gwitchin — the success of an isolated aboriginal community. It's thriving. Why? Because they are always seeking solutions to make their community a better place.

The better place they're looking for is: How do we tap into impact benefits agreements, to own-source revenue generation that doesn't limit or restrict? That's an honest fact. They cannot tap into revenue generation from partnerships with mining sectors without getting taxed on it, or without getting that yanked away if they make revenue after it's taken off the government base. We have to fix those things. That's part of our relationship in terms of fixing the economy of the Yukon.

I want to make a point here because I have heard some comments around where the wealth generation is going to be stimulated. How are we going to seek solutions and resolution to some of the challenges we're confronted with in this budget? It will come from those collaborative partnerships; it will come from creative solutions, creative partnerships, and private sector partnerships.

The wealth is within — not the whole responsibility of the government, but by breaking down some of the silos we've been confronted with for generations. We want to break those silos down. We want to look at input from our communities. Rural Yukon is an incredible part and fabric of our community. We need to not only consider, but include all rural communities in the budget-planning process. Due to the development of the Financial Advisory Panel, we will be including public engagement to ensure that the input of all communities is included in our future budget planning.

I have to say that in my 20 years working in the private sector and working with First Nation governments, not once have we — I refer to "we" as an MLA from Vuntut Gwitchin and as a former negotiator for Vuntut Gwitchin — ever been given an opportunity to say, "Do you have a solution? Can you come forth with some recommended options?" We want to be able to create some opportunities and look at building programs and services that meet the needs of the community, that are owned by the community.

I am going to refer to a project in Dawson City. The Dawson City's development association, through partnership with the municipality and the First Nation — Chief Isaac Inc. — and through private sector investments was able to build a state-of-the-art, energy-efficient, eight-unit complex to end and address some of the hard-to-house, some of the challenges in that community. There is no reason you could not take that template, go to other communities with it and use it as a

model. There are solutions that are already tried and true and that we can take and build out.

We are pleased to introduce the panel. I know this will support our government in making evidence-based decisions that best reflect the needs of Yukoners. We have skilled and experienced individuals on it who have been born and raised in the Yukon with a lot of experience. We have academia representatives with economic experts who have the experience and knowledge that can help to lend its expertise to this government as a whole and the bureaucracy of our government in working at finding the solutions.

I am going to focus a little bit on young people and youth programming. I heard some comments yesterday that the Aboriginal Sport Circle was getting a bunch of money, so why are only select groups of individuals in Yukon receiving a certain amount of money. Today again — well, why are communities not getting sport funding? They are suggesting that perhaps only the Aboriginal Sport Circle is receiving funding. That is not acceptable. We have to look at providing equality of services to all residents of Yukon. All youth matter. All children in Yukon matter. There are opportunities to look at supporting youth programming. We are building up future leaders. We are investing in our future. I can say that this is matched with the early childcare development strategy. We will support our children and we will build a strong future for them.

This year I am pleased to speak now as an MLA for Vuntut Gwitchin, as the Minister of Environment, Health and Social Services, and Yukon Housing Corporation. I am pleased that we as government have looked at some of the priority pressures in my community that have been far overlooked by the previous government. The contaminated site on which the health centre is situated is not acceptable. I am happy to see that there is funding in the budget for that. Just imagine for a minute that you have a fuel spill site sitting there, knowing that it has been there for years and years — 20 or 30 years — and you have a health centre sitting on top of it.

You have residents of the community coming into the health centre for health care and it's situated on a contaminated site. You have nurses in this facility. That's not acceptable. I'm happy to see that we are looking at advancing that to a feasibility process and engaging the community. The remediation of the contaminated site is a key priority.

I'm excited and I'm extremely proud to say that this government is looking at \$325,000 to support the Yukon Aboriginal Sport Circle. As an athlete myself and as a coach having supported our indigenous youth to go and attend the North American Indigenous Games, as a volunteer — many, many hours in years of support from our community and our sector to address the community members, the citizens of this Yukon, the children of this Yukon who are marginalized and perhaps have never been given an opportunity to participate in a competitive environment. This government is prepared to do that — provide the support, build capacity in our communities, showcase our culture, showcase the value that our communities bring — the children bring — to the economy and to the wealth of our nation.

The early childhood strategy ties into that. It's building our youth and building our future. We have heard this quite a few times — well, this budget, this government — the planning is going to diminish or somehow not consider the future for our grandchildren and their grandchildren. I can say that, seven generations from now, that's where I want to look. I want to look at what this government is doing to provide the supports and the stability for seven generations from now, and that's part of the business planning model that we've attached to our budgets and our budget presentations. The strategic thinking and the evidence-based decisions are really about taking a business approach, a strategic approach and a business approach in how we're going to address that.

Under the Health file, the Premier's Budget Address highlighted a number of key departmental initiatives. In this budget we're following through on our commitment to helping Yukoners live healthy, happier lives. Investing in a system of health and social services that best reflects the needs of Yukoners is a priority for this government.

Just this morning, I spent time with the elders, with the older adults at Macaulay Lodge. I spoke to them. I listened to them. There are many, many people in there I knew or who knew someone whom I knew. It is very interesting, and I do believe that's the sector of our society that we're not perhaps spending enough time with. I learned a lot in my one hour with them. I learned that they're passionate about what happens with Yukon. They're passionate about supports. They're passionate about providing and lending their many, many years of wisdom and experience.

There was a young lady of 99 hoping that she can live long enough to get into the Whistle Bend facility — as a joke, but in all seriousness, they're looking for the future. They are looking to find a collaborative care facility that will provide them all the services they need. The questions they were asking are: What is the facility going to provide for us? Will we have a doctor? Will we have a pharmacist come in? Is someone going to come and check our eyes? What about those who have mobility challenges, how are they going to get downtown to get what they need? There were some questions they were asking about the whole-of-life care, the collaborative care that the previous government didn't really consider, that we're now looking at: How are you going to staff 250 positions in that facility in the next 18 months? That was the question these older adults were asking this morning — so there is a lot of wisdom is what I wanted to say. Taking the time to sit and have tea with them and hearing them — they have answers and they want to be heard. I was happy that I did that because that really gave me, I guess, a reality check that a lot of the folks who are there come from our rural Yukon communities.

So what does it mean to be healthy and happy and age in place? That means they want to be home. They want to be home in Old Crow. I asked one of the old men, "How are you?" He said, "I'm okay, but I want to be home." He wants to be home in his own community. "Although they provide good care for me here, I want to be home," he said. The message that I took away from that is what can we do and

how can we engage with that sector of our society? They will find and give us the answers we need, so a valuable lesson this morning in terms of collaborative care and aging-in-place models from the very wise elders I met with this morning.

Creating a system that is coordinated and seamless in delivering health and social services to Yukoners is our mandate and our vision. To achieve this, the department is working closely to better coordinate their efforts. We are also reaching out to communities and First Nations to build collaborative systems that everyone can be a part of. That means, I guess, part of the response to some of the previous questions around infrastructure building in the communities and responsibilities. Aging well in place in our communities means that we need to work with the municipalities, work with the communities, and work with the First Nations to find those solutions there in the communities. That means perhaps fiscal partnerships and alternative management measures so that all of the responsibilities don't fall on this government.

Addictions and wellness — many Yukoners have been affected by mental health and addiction issues. Whether they have had an illness or an addiction themselves, they have been impacted in some way. Ensuring that all Yukoners have access to the support they need to lead healthy lives is a priority.

In the budget, we have identified 11 new positions for the communities — mental wellness assistance for addictions awareness. We're looking at a people-centred approach to wellness, making sure that as much as possible, people get the care and services they need in their own communities.

Today I'm proud to announce that we will be enhancing the mental wellness and addiction support workers. I made that public today and spoke to the media about that, but that will have to be driven by the communities as well. They will have input in terms of what their respective needs are, working closely with First Nations and other community partners to develop very specific locally tailored options that will support priorities identified in each community.

We've looked at the proposal that is in the budget for \$150,000 to look at pre- and post-care land-based treatment options. We need to find the solutions and the communities will have input into that. It's no longer about what we can do for Whitehorse, but what we can do for Yukon. The Member for Kluane made this point known: How are you going to get out to the communities and the very isolated places and provide them the services? How can we keep folks there and listen and hear them? I aim to get out and I have gone out to meet with members and sectors of our society. In fact, I met with the chief and council members of Burwash Landing to talk about the health centre and about the education facilities. Although it's not my responsibility, it happened to be on the agenda and I heard what they had to say. We share the information as a government and as departments to try to find solutions we need and look at collaboration within as well.

The Yukon will receive \$5.2 million from the federal government over the next 10 years for a health initiative strategy. We have the mental wellness strategy that Yukoners

participated in and designed. The implementation of that will take effect through this process — through the \$5.2 million.

We're actively working with the federal government to identify guidelines and investment areas for the new fund. How do we align that with the priorities? How do we align it with the Yukon priorities and the needs of Yukoners? The work is currently underway and I will be sure to keep Yukoners, the opposition parties and members of this House informed and participating in that process, because the solutions really come from everyone and we need to all participate in putting an implementation strategy together.

The innovation around mental wellness and addictions with the new Sarah Steele Building — the recommendation and support was driven by the Yukon and driven by Yukon people. Now we have to look at, how effective is the programming? How effective is the programming for women and for men? Is there a program for children and is there a mental wellness program? It's a new initiative and these are things we need to check on periodically to make sure we are on target and we aim to do that.

It's quite an impressive facility. It's a beautiful facility. It provides for a patient-centred treatment program for all sectors and we do have community members accessing that facility quite regularly. It's full all the time. The partnerships in terms of our diverse and talented health sector and public sector is appreciated.

I want to just acknowledge that also, because we heard yesterday that perhaps we don't value the input of public servants. We do value the input of public servants. They are the drivers of this government. As politicians, we provide the mandate, we provide the direction and they are the people on the ground. They absolutely need to be respected, appreciated and acknowledged, and I do that. I'm doing that now and I'm sure all of my colleagues feel the same way. The process in which we work and deliver our mandates is not done without consideration of the advice from the great staff that we have around us.

The fetal alcohol spectrum disorder plan for the Yukon — we are looking at a 10-year strategy, or a strategy around how do we look at fetal alcohol spectrum disorder, which is a serious lifelong disability affecting individuals in communities across the Yukon. To be effective in addressing this, we all need to be on the same page and have a clear idea of how we are going to make a difference and support each other in the process. We'll work to enhance support for women to have healthy pregnancies and to improve the lives of those living with FASD.

Government and community partnerships have resulted in many community-based initiatives in the area of FASD prevention, assessment, diagnosis and support. The plan will build upon the good work that is already happening in our communities as we continue to work together to develop a coordinated approach and response to FASD. We are taking action on maternal and prenatal supports delivered in our communities, including supports for pregnant women at risk of using alcohol. We're looking at enhancing supports and interventions for individuals with FASD. Health and Social

Services will work with First Nation communities and municipalities to develop options to better coordinate supports for individuals.

With regard to the Yukon Hospital Corporation, I understand there was a question asked in regard to the new Emergency department. I went on a tour of the facility and I'm really happy to say that they are on target and on budget. The objective is to help improve quality and efficiency of services and to help meet the challenges of increased patient volume.

The support for two collaborative care clinics in Whitehorse is also on our radar, and we will continue to work with the Yukon Medical Association to build further opportunities to develop collaborative care models in Yukon.

Over the past few years, the challenges of access to hearing services due to long waiting lists have been repeatedly discussed in this House, and I'm happy to say we are hiring a second audiologist and there will no longer be a waiting list for hearing services in the Yukon.

Electronic health initiatives will be fully implemented this year. This initiative continues to improve patient safety, quality of care, appropriateness of care by providing more complete and fast-tracked access to patient information.

My department has worked collaboratively with physicians, pharmacists, First Nations and other community organizations to develop a more comprehensive system for Yukoners. In accordance with the privacy legislation, the *Health Information Privacy and Management Act*, relevant information between health care providers will be more comprehensive and timely in the provision of health care. In addition to these advancements, we will be modernizing technologies for our social assistance and disability services programs across the Yukon. The new integrated system will increase efficiencies that will lead to more time spent with clients and increased support for vulnerable Yukoners.

We are looking at our health care system and an aging population. We are working to develop good, people-centred care options for Yukoners. Not only have we made investments in enhanced home care supports, we have also reached an agreement with the federal government for an additional \$6.2 million for enhanced home care services over the next 10 years. We will continue to collaborate with First Nation governments and communities as we develop options for aging in place and create a place where people age well and are happy in their own homes and in their own communities. To relieve immediate needs for long-term care beds, we have permanently opened four beds at McDonald Lodge in Dawson City and 10 beds at the Thomson Centre here in Whitehorse. These additions, along with providing funding for the Yukon Hospital Corporation to open four additional observation beds, have provided some immediate relief to the bed pressure that the Whitehorse General Hospital has experienced over the past several years. Although we know there is always more work to do, these are just a few of the highlights I wanted to provide from Health and Social Services and demonstrate that we are here to provide excellent core support for Yukoners and residents of Yukon.

A crucial part of supporting families in the Yukon is supporting the land, being good stewards of the land and protecting the environment on which our communities rely for subsistence, recreation and land-based activities. The department works together with First Nations and the Inuvialuit, given that we have a transboundary agreement and a number of other partners to maintain and help the sustainability and prosperity of Yukon's environment. Making sure that the environment that we live and work in is healthy and sustainable is at the core of everything that we do. We cannot thrive if we live in an environment that is not healthy. We are working on effective implementation and management of our land claim agreements and our land processes. We are looking at collaborative approaches on land-use process through working with our fish and wildlife management boards, our renewable resources councils and our communities and seeking necessary solutions to some of the pressures that we have been confronted with. That is part of the work that we are obligated to do on a daily basis.

Department of Environment focuses on people through our programs and services. Yukoners understand the health benefits of being outdoors and being active. I know that first-hand, because I lived in Old Crow and, when I have time, I'm at home. This is how the people live there. They're on the land; they're thriving on the land and they rely on the environment to provide for an offset of their economic pressures.

The landscape and unique wildlife viewing opportunities in our vast Yukon — the Minister of Tourism and Culture expressed the need for winter tourism expanding opportunities in the Yukon. With the untouched resource there and to utilize it, what we have to do is protect the environment to allow for the great potential in tourism and other opportunities to explore.

The number of hunting and fishing licences as well as camping permits purchased each year continues to increase. That's a good demonstration that people are thriving and they love being outside — they love being outdoors — and hunting and fishing. The hunting and fishing also needs to be somewhat regulated and controlled to some extent. The Department of Environment knows how important it is for people to have healthy and respectful interactions with the environment, both for safety and for wildlife-viewing opportunities. The ecosystems and ecotourism is important.

We're looking to explore what Yukon nature has to offer. We're looking at numerous events and opportunities in the Yukon and supporting the Celebration of Swans and the sheep viewing in Kluane Park and elsewhere. Those are things that we clearly have to protect, and also look at partnerships with our communities in designing the necessary management measures to ensure that they're there for all time.

We talk a lot about economy and building resources, but we also have to protect what we have, in terms of sustaining our environment. Occupancy in our campgrounds has grown significantly. We've seen excessive use of our campgrounds — that means we need to put more resources into building up those campgrounds and making sure their facilities are kept

updated, recent and modern so we can get our citizens and our families and our children out exploring and enjoying the vast Yukon and the facilities.

We're currently investing \$300,000 in upgrading these campgrounds and improvements in park infrastructure, making sure they continue to provide safe, enjoyable, pleasing and accessible camping experiences, so \$33,000 will go into support for park management. We're looking at partnerships to support proactive awareness and effective responses to wildlife conflict. There's \$60,000 in the budget to support the development of a trapping industry — which includes the \$60,000. We're looking at \$700,000, which will go toward keeping the Yukon Wildlife Preserve operating. We have \$30,000 identified for an environmental awareness fund aimed at educating Yukon people.

Currently, this year, we will continue to offer fishing licences and annual resident permits online, which is new, and \$150,000 will help to expand that e-service.

I expressed in the e-health process that we are also looking at putting things online for easier access for Yukon citizens, eliminating wasted time and energy processing everything through a paper process and then having to do the data entry. That eliminates a lot of work and a lot of money and utilizes our public servants to do the good work that they are obligated to do and interact with our citizens of Yukon.

In the 2017-18 budget, more than \$7 million will support remediation of 12 contaminated sites and assessment work at five old and 27 active solid-waste facilities across the Yukon. The sites include highway maintenance camps, the nursing station in Old Crow that I mentioned earlier, a visitor information centre and an administration building in Dawson City, the Salvation Army Centre of Hope, the former Motorways facility at the Kwanlin Dün Cultural Centre — where that's now located — and the Marwell tar pit area.

We have also budgeted \$75,000 in transfer payments to Yukon College to support climate change research. The Department of Indigenous and Northern Affairs — we are working with them on projects on the climate change preparedness northern program. This four-year agreement will provide a total of \$1.7 million on recoverable funds beginning with a \$500,000 contribution in 2017-18.

I'm going to venture to say that strong First Nation relations are really important in all of this. Strong government-to-government partnerships, environmental management and stewardship are cornerstones of reconciliation. We work together on planning and management of protected areas and species and we value the input of the mandated boards and councils that I highlighted previously. It takes both governments. It takes all of government and it takes all of Yukon to work together for responsible management of our shared resources to ensure we have sustainability for future generations.

This year, more than \$1.1 million of recoverable funds from Canada will allow us to continue our role in supporting the implementation of our *Inuvialuit Final Agreement* in Yukon.

We also have an additional \$258,000 in transfer payments that will go to the Wildlife Management Advisory Council for the North Slope.

We have identified \$67,000 for transfer payments that support the work of a number of First Nation governments on community involvement and participation in groundwater monitoring.

Environment responsible economy — it's a combination of all of that. The department provides a key role in supporting a diverse economy so that Yukoners can have good jobs that can grow and be sustainable. To do this, we must work together as integral partners with industry, with First Nations and with the private sector. Our economy is not sustainable if the ecosystem it relies on is not.

The government's priority for Yukon Housing is to implement the housing action plan, tying that to and working in collaboration with Health and Social Services on the mental wellness strategy and the anti-poverty strategy, and looking at the responsibilities of the Housing Corporation. Addressing Housing First in our communities means aging well in place and building aging-care facilities in Yukon. Looking at our hospitals in our communities — how do we do that? How do we meet the goals of Yukon? How do we meet the goals with all of our governments, all of our government departments and this whole-of-government collaboration?

The municipal matching grant is a very significant portion of all of that. Putting that out there with our communities — they will find the solutions and address their needs. We have also looked at social housing complexes in our communities. First Nation housing partnerships are a significant component to that. We ventured into — with the Da Daghay Development Corporation — a 42-unit affordable housing unit in Whistle Bend. That's addressing and eliminating poverty in housing in Yukon, in Whitehorse, and hopefully provides opportunities. The collaboration is really important.

Stakeholders, strong economy, health communities, environmental stewardship — we look forward to future opportunities in providing more details on the budget — highlighting key activities in all of the areas that I mentioned. The budget reflects Yukon needs and Yukon priorities, and we will do this through sound, evidence-based decision-making.

Thank you.

Ms. Van Bibber: I'm honoured today to stand and provide remarks on the 2017-18 budget. But first I would like to take this opportunity to thank my family — especially my husband Pat, for all of his support during my campaign. No matter what I decide to take on, he is always encouraging and helping me — also, my children Stuart and Ann-Marie, who are there cheering me on always. To my campaign manager and team — words are not enough to say how wonderful you all are and you know who you are — thank you.

To my constituents of Porter Creek North, I thank you from the bottom of my heart for entrusting me to be your voice on your behalf. Our riding is diverse and much larger than I thought. I commit to each of you to advocate your

concerns and ideas to the best of my ability. It is my first run at an elected position, and although many in the Yukon thought I was a politician, it wasn't true. This is a new learning curve for me and I'm still trying to find my stride. I would like to thank the Yukon Party team for helping me adjust to this new adventure.

I met a great number of you during the election campaign in the fall, and I hope to have the chance to meet and get to know many more. Please know that our office doors are always open. I will bring up more constituent issues and concerns as we debate further in the Spring Sitting.

I would like to begin with observations and comments on the financial position of and future projection for this Liberal government. The Premier said in his budget speech, "We are determined to ensure strong, sound public finances for Yukoners". This is a wonderful commitment. However, with the direction in which this government is showing itself to be headed, public finances will be neither strong nor sound. I am wary of this new direction the Yukon government is taking.

I have always been quite proud that the Yukon often held a high, if not the best, position in our country for their stable control of finances and balanced budgets. Looking at projections of future years of this government, I am concerned that if our government does not distance itself from the path our federal government is taking, we, along with future generations, will be clawing our way to get out of debt.

I am pleased to see the government's commitment to upholding their promise to lower the corporate tax rate. I am also looking forward to seeing if they will uphold their commitment to eliminate the corporate tax rate for small businesses.

It will be interesting to delve into the details on highway funding and I would like to touch on an issue within my riding of Porter Creek North — to ensure the government is willing to hear concerns of my constituents with regard to safety and ongoing close calls on our highway. I have spoken with a number of constituents who are happy to see some of the work planned for the Whitehorse corridor project by the previous government. Specifically, there were plans to upgrade the stretch of highway between Crestview and Rabbit's Foot Canyon, with much focus on safety. I do see this part of our Whitehorse corridor of the Alaska Highway as a priority for upgrades. From turning lanes and slip lanes to a focus on pedestrian traffic and crosswalk upgrades, I am sure that my fellow Porter Creek members would agree that this area needs work to tackle potential safety issues.

Education is one of the main focuses within any budget. It is the mainstay of our society, as it educates our children and lays the foundation for the communities. With proper education, we will produce literate and healthy Yukoners. It gives educators a platform to provide steady, good programs to students. It also gives students a good, steady foundation from which to apply for steady employment or to go further with their education dreams.

As with any large department, there are many components that ensure our education system works for all — whether a student, teacher, neighbourhood or community. The

infrastructure includes school buildings — bricks and mortar — and everything from books and desks to classroom supplies. For those brick and mortar buildings, there is a tremendous cost to maintain and operate each school building. A huge list — including but not limited to utilities, groundwork and cleaning — has to be taken into account. I was a little disappointed in the amount of funding dedicated toward education for new initiatives. Critical funding areas or programming would be of great benefit to our children. I was happy to see funding of \$422,000 for emphasizing skills and experiential learning. I'm left to wonder what this funding will cover in detail and, as I said, we'll find out as we go further down this questioning.

I'm curious as to whether the reviews will be undertaken by the department to determine the level of success these changes will have on students. Additionally, I would like to know that students do, in fact, have an option to choose not to partake in an experiential learning program, but rather increase their academic load if they so choose.

I would assume this would affect the projected cost of these programming changes. In my role as critic for both Education and Aboriginal Relations, I'm happy to see this government continuing support for the joint education action plan. Strengthening First Nation roots and closing the education gap has been a priority of the previous government.

Human resources are also an integral part of the education system. There's always concern that our teaching staff is well-trained and well-equipped to handle any changes that are given them within the school year. Personal development days and training days ensure all staff are adequately prepared. There can be many stressors for our educators in our modern times. Whether it's a few extra minutes each day or a shorter Christmas holiday period to ensure the number of teaching days are upheld for a complete school year, educators are expected to adjust their schedules to accommodate.

The public school system was put in place to guarantee each child, no matter their status in life, would be given a good basic education. The mandatory age of 16 years before a child can leave the school, usually to work to help the family or they're just not into school — we're constantly trying to invigorate and change the school's style and teaching methods to ensure as many children make their way as far as they can within the public system. This gives everyone a chance for employment and basic literacy skills. As our knowledge of why children learn differently or why any number of challenges face our youth — the Education department and educators try to accommodate and help. There is a far better understanding and recognition in this last decade than ever before.

There are many areas of education that I have not even touched on today — advanced education, Yukon College, trades apprenticeship, foreign students, grants, training allowance, residences, rural students, busing, francophone and First Nation input and job security. So many things have to be considered and included to ensure our small jurisdiction is all-inclusive.

The need to have a well-educated population is a given. It will ensure our children have the best possible launch, as well as make our communities richer for having them. While I was chancellor of Yukon College, it gave me great pleasure to arrive at this time of the year for convocation day or grad day, because it was a huge event, both for the student who worked and studied in their relevant field to arrive at that milestone, and also for their families so that they could celebrate their achievements. It was an honour to be there to witness such pride and relief.

As you may or may not know, the chancellor title is only that — a title. Yukon College is one of the few colleges in all of Canada to have such a position. Having had the opportunity to hold that honour, it gave me great pleasure to address the students and present them with their diplomas or certificates. We do have a little college that can, so kudos for any help that goes their way to becoming a whole-learning facility.

As I look at the budget, I see many areas where questions will arise. We will also be asking so that Yukoners can see what the thought was behind the decision — such as tourism, and the fact that once the knowledge gets out that a carbon tax will be added to our dollar, we will not be a choice destination for travellers. I don't believe we have considered all the implications or even how to implement this federal tax. I believe there will have to be another group of employees added to the Department of Finance just to administer this tax.

To redistribute wealth, this scheme is not a wise one. It will not do anything to change our need to keep the lights on and keep warm. To say we must change our heating systems, our way of travel and our way of doing business will be another huge tax on people's monies. There are many who are just getting by now, and additional money being drained for immediate output to pay for a carbon tax will be very hard.

Each time we drive our local highways, especially during our warmer months, we see repairs and maintenance on the highways and byways. It appears that these will be scaled back as some major bridge work happens. I worry again about our tourism folk who hope to have a good road to travel and not be worried about potholes and huge heaves. I also understand that our environment is precious.

I, for one, love to be on the land camping, boating and enjoying traditional pursuits. I would hope that people who live in urban areas get out and see the magnitude and the size of this territory. It is precious, but with correct planning and care I believe it is our responsibility to ensure we also have an economy for our future generations.

As a First Nation northern elder, I understand much, but not everything, that happens in our communities. I know someone in every town or village in Yukon and I am proud to be welcomed by them. I am also proud of my heritage — Gwitchin and Irish — and I walk comfortably in both worlds.

I am also aware of both things rural and urban, having lived in both. Small-town concerns are just as all-consuming as large towns. Being someone who has been in the public eye for a number of years through various positions and jobs, I have had the opportunity to listen to many, many Yukoners.

I urge this government to listen to the concerns of the Official Opposition, and indeed all Yukoners, when making decisions that will affect Yukon.

Mr. Hutton: Mr. Speaker, it's indeed an honour and a privilege to rise in this House today to provide my unconditional support for this 2017-18 budget.

First, I would like to thank all of the good people who put their trust in me to be the voice for Mayo-Tatchun: my beautiful and loving wife of 29 years, Melody; my favourite son Frank; and my beautiful and talented daughter Nicole; my campaign team who worked tirelessly to help me; and all the voters in Mayo-Tatchun to whom I owe my gratitude and sincere thanks. Mahsi' cho and thank you to them.

I would also like to acknowledge Corey Bellmore-Mayer, who ran for the Yukon Party, and Jim Tredger, the former MLA for Mayo-Tatchun. Campaigns are hard work and involve spending a lot of time away from your family, and I know it was no different for them than it was for me. I know they both worked hard and it's not an easy thing to do. I commend them for their efforts.

I need to do a special thank you to a man from Mayo named Wilf Tuck. He and his wife, Hilda, are probably known to many of you. They are former Mr. and Mrs. Yukon. But without Wilf's generosity and support, I wouldn't be standing here today. He was absolutely critical to my success.

When it comes to thanking people, I would be remiss in not mentioning the following individuals who worked very hard to help me in my campaign as well as helping many others. My sincere and heartfelt thanks go to Monica Nordling, Laura Cabbott, David Morrison, Devin Bailey, Valerie Royle and the rest of the territorial campaign team. Last, but certainly not least, I owe my thanks and gratitude to my door-knocking mentor and master of critique, Conal Slobodin. Thank you, Conal.

Mr. Speaker, the pledge I made door after door was that I would work hard, and I have done my best so far. Our team has worked very long and hard to produce this budget. I would like to thank all of the departments, but especially Finance, for the tremendous amount of time and effort that they put in to helping us with this budget. This is indeed a budget for all Yukon. Capital spending has been allocated to every community and every community will see some real benefits. For the good folks in Mayo-Tatchun, I'm very happy to see \$2.9 million in YG funding to continue working on municipal infrastructure and maximizing the federal clean water and waste-water funding.

The Village of Carmacks will see a \$986,000 contribution from our government for construction of four accessible seniors housing units in Carmacks. Pelly Crossing will see a new generator for Fort Selkirk, support for the public library and \$24,000 in funding for groundwater monitoring. Pelly will also be receiving \$102,000 to support recreation programs in the community.

Keno City continues to have their water delivered from Mayo to provide for local and community business needs after their well was contaminated at a cost of \$25,000 per year.

Recreational program funding — \$17,924 has also been allocated to Keno. The residents of Stewart Crossing will be pleased to know that \$2.48 million in Yukon government funding will be provided for replacement of the Highways and Public Works living quarters for the staff in Stewart Crossing.

As we are all aware, capital funding is only part of the story when it comes to investing in our communities. There are many social, wellness and other challenges that cannot be fixed by capital spending. My community of Mayo was impacted in the 1980s by two sexual predators. One of them was the principal at the school. Our community will never get over the havoc that was wreaked on our young men. We lost seven over the five years after these predators left our community. Countless other lives have been totally destroyed by the actions of these people. I am very happy to see that our government is going to be providing mental wellness workers for our community. They should have been there 15 years ago. They should have been there 30 years ago. I am glad that we finally have a government that has recognized that we need some help.

There is \$95,000 provided to assist rural communities with dog population management. As a former mayor in a small community, I can assure you that dog management is an issue in every community in this territory, and I am happy to see that our government is going to take some steps to try and deal with that.

The regional economic development fund has seen a very significant increase from \$400,000 to \$800,000. This is going to assist all of our communities, especially in Mayo-Tatchun, to deal with some of the economic challenges that are facing us. It will help us to prepare for the positive and negative impacts that are coming as the major resource extraction companies are lining up to work in Yukon, and especially in Mayo-Tatchun. Five out of 10 of the world's largest mining companies will be doing major exploration programs in 2017-18. For the most part, this will be in the Mayo-Tatchun riding.

I am very happy to say that our government is providing \$1.5 million for the First Nation housing program. I have three communities and three First Nations in my riding, and I can tell you that, based on my observations and the lifelong experience of living with those communities, every one of those communities needs help with their housing. I am very proud that in light of that — knowing that all of these communities are looking for housing — our government decided not to look at things through a Liberal lens and say, "Oh, Don, you're a Liberal, an MLA for Mayo-Tatchun. We are going to look after your housing needs." Instead, the bulk of the money for this year's housing is going to Ross River because the people there need it, not because it's a riding that is held by the Liberals.

There is \$1.5 million in funding going toward the innovative renewable energy initiative. I am very proud of my First Nation in Mayo — the Na Cho Nyäk Dun — for the solar panels that they have added to their government building. They are leading the way in terms of innovative technologies to help us get off of fossil fuels in this territory. I

am very excited that our government has chosen to partner with First Nations in this territory.

We're going to see \$150,000 to plan land-based healing programs. I know from personal experience that these programs work. I had the pleasure of being a cook at one of these healing programs and I saw the people come out.

Also in my 34 years working in the fire program here in this territory, many of the people who are brought out to assist us in fighting fires are these socially challenged individuals with alcohol and drug abuse problems. They would come out there shaky and hardly able to work and not even able to eat their meals, and three days later you wouldn't recognize these individuals. From being out on the land, from working, from getting good food, working hard, being in that environment — it changed them into a much better version of who they can be. Land-based healing is extremely important to every community in this territory.

I have already mentioned \$2.4 million to support the staff housing in Ross River and it is because the need was the greatest there. I am really encouraged and hopeful that this is the way the government will make its decisions going forward. It won't be about who has a Liberal MLA or who has an NDP MLA. It will be about where people need these things the most and we will try to deal with it that way.

I'm happy to see \$4.5 million for Watson Lake's municipal infrastructure. Being a rural MLA, I'm certainly aware of how difficult it can be to advance the needs of the rural municipalities when you have this big wonderful beast called Whitehorse here that just seems to suck up a lot of the funding out of every year's budget.

I'm extremely happy that there are 11 new full-time addiction and mental wellness workers. You have heard part of my story about Mayo and I can assure you that Mayo is not alone and it's really sad. Pelly Crossing and Carmacks — there are many individuals there who need our help and these counsellors are going to be key in helping to improve the lives of these young people. We've lost far too many of them.

I'm happy to see that there is \$130,000 going toward developing a heritage management plan for historic sites. This is going to benefit all three of the First Nations in my riding and all First Nations in the territory. They all have heritage management plans under their final agreements and I'm happy to see that our government is finally going to partner with them to get some work done.

I'm very happy to see \$650,000 to purchase four new ambulances and \$771,000 toward enhancement and home care. My colleague, Minister Frost, talked about aging in place and how people want to be home in their communities. It's no different when they're sick. When people are sick, they want to be around people who love them, whom they love, and who will care for them. They don't want to be in a facility surrounded by strangers, regardless of how high quality that care is. They want to be surrounded by their loved ones in their time of need.

The \$1.6 million to support the implementation of e-health programs I think is another way that is going to contribute to allowing those of us who want to stay in our

community to be able to stay there, but not be penalized by having a lesser standard of health care because we choose to live in a quieter, more peaceful, gentler community.

I'm very happy to see \$9.4 million in affordable housing. Every community in this Yukon has an issue with affordable housing and this is a good step to start to address it. I'm very happy about the \$8 million being spent on the Sarah Steele alcohol and drug detox centre. There will be clients coming to that facility from all five of my communities in the territory over time, I'm sure, and it is going to be of benefit to all Yukon.

I'm happy to see that our government is investing \$57 million in transportation infrastructure. That will fill a few of those potholes. The emergency department expansion and an MRI at the Whitehorse General Hospital will see an investment of \$22 million from this government. Again, Mr. Speaker, this is something that benefits the residents of this entire territory. This is a budget for all Yukon residents. It's not based on which ridings had Liberal MLAs, but rather on which ridings had the most pressing needs. I'm pleased to support a Liberal budget that responds to people, not parties.

I've heard much today about balanced budgets from members opposite. Mr. Speaker, budgets are not balanced by creative bookkeeping, which is a method that seems to be favoured by the Yukon Party. No favours are provided to Yukoners when they're saddled with \$36 million a year in operation and maintenance costs for just one facility. There have been numbers thrown around about a \$216-million deficit. If you take \$36 million a year and times that by five, that deficit goes from \$216 million to \$36 million. The \$180 million is the responsibility of the former government; it is not the responsibility of this government.

No budget will ever meet the needs of all people in a one-year time frame. I'm convinced that our Liberal government will meet the needs of many Yukon residents over our term and that we will show Yukon residents that the words "all communities matter" is not just a platform commitment, but rather this new government's philosophy toward creating vibrant, healthy and sustainable communities where people can prosper.

Our government's work to rebuild relationships with First Nations is an important step toward reconciliation for our economy and for all Yukon people. That trust has to be restored to allow new partnerships to be formed with our government and all Yukon First Nations.

Mr. Speaker, previous Government Leader Mr. Pasloski's favourite method of dealing with First Nations was one-on-one. It was a tried and true method over many generations — divide and conquer. He never wanted to sit down with all the First Nations and address all their needs at once, so it was always easy to do a one-off with an individual First Nation and buy their support for an election, but it was something that never worked for all First Nations.

The era of implementation by litigation, I hope, has finally come to an end. I, like all Yukoners, am very tired of watching our government use our tax dollars to go to court

against our friends, family and neighbours. It makes no sense, Mr. Speaker.

Our government will have a truly respectful government-to-government relationship with First Nation leadership. Part of that has been exhibited already by my colleagues, ministers and the Deputy Premier coming out to meet with the leadership in my communities. We're not sending our directors, managers and mid-level bureaucrats out to meet with First Nation leadership. The First Nation leadership is meeting with our leadership. That's how you show respect.

Our government's first budget, which we've heard from the members opposite they so want us to own contained a huge undocumented O&M commitment of \$180 million for five years. I guess we own that, but we certainly didn't cut the cheque on it. To simply do these large capital projects without accounting for the O&M cost is simply irresponsible. Talking about saddling future generations — my children and my grandchildren — with debt — don't start putting the blame on us. That damage has already been done with the previous budget.

I have heard repeatedly, Mr. Speaker, from members opposite. We were responsible for six months of the government costs in 2016-17. The math I was taught in Mayo suggests that if there are 12 months in a year and eight of them have been used, there are only four remaining and I will only accept responsibility for those four months.

We have been accused of dragging our heels. Nothing could be further from the truth. I have been working very hard for the constituents of Mayo-Tatchun. I have opened 26 casework files dealing with issues from every one of the five communities that make up the Mayo-Tatchun riding. As a member of four out of the five standing committees, I'm pleased to say that all four of these committees are now active and doing the good work of government. Our government chose to do a one-day Sitting on January 12. One of the key priorities was to appoint members to get these committees working.

The Standing Committee on Statutory Instruments had its first meetings after many, many years of sitting idle under the previous government. The primary purpose — the mandate — of the Standing Committee on Statutory Instruments is to ensure that any regulations, either existing or proposed, are reviewed to ensure that they are in fact *intra vires* within the jurisdiction of the regulators. This provides an important oversight into all regulations proposed for implementation to ensure that they are appropriate for Yukon residents.

I am also happy to be a member on the Standing Committee on Rules, Elections and Privileges. This committee has already met three times and identified numerous priorities to be worked on. Fixed Sitting dates for this Assembly is one of the priority items. This committee is charged with reviewing parliamentary procedures and practices in the Legislative Assembly. I also sit on the Standing Committee on Public Accounts, which has also had several meetings since I was appointed. The primary role of this committee is to ensure that government is accountable for

its spending. We do that with the help of the able members opposite.

The Standing Committee on Appointments to Major Government Boards and Committees has had two meetings, and a third is scheduled for later this week. This committee's mandate is to review nominations and make recommendations on appointments to major government boards and committees. One of the priorities that this group is working on is to update and revise the list of major boards and committees to ensure relevance and to reflect the current reality as much as has changed over the past few years. Much has changed since the original list was incorporated in Standing Order 45(3.2).

There has been much discussion in this House in the last couple of days about the true numbers in the budget and whether or not the government is left in a surplus or a deficit. There can only be one true set of numbers, and I agree with the numbers presented by our Premier in this budget.

In closing, I would like to leave you with the words of former US President John F. Kennedy: "... the great enemy of truth is very often not the lie — deliberate, contrived, and dishonest — but the myth — persistent, persuasive and unrealistic."

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Thank you for the opportunity to reply to the 2017-18 budget speech today. The 2017-18 budget speech tells a story of a government that is ready to make tough decisions and have the courageous conversations needed to steer Yukon into calmer waters. This journey will first bring us to multiple sets of rapids. This government and Yukoners did not need to test their resilience by tackling these rapids. There was a calmer channel, but our line has been chosen by the Official Opposition. We will tie down and challenge these rough waters as Yukoners do. We will study our risks and challenges. We will look for opportunities within the rocks and eddies, and we will guide this government to safer and calmer waters. We will ensure that future journeys are well planned and that all risks and opportunities are well discussed and planned for before choosing our line.

In this political arena, it would be very naïve to think that all parties could agree on everything — or even most things. We all have different political philosophies and this leads to different perspectives and ways of dealing with things. But when it comes to the numbers, it is difficult to not all see the same picture. I'm not saying that there will not be attempts to describe the numbers in different ways. There will be, and there already have been attempts to do just that.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the departments of Energy, Mines and Resources, and Economic Development, as well as those at the Yukon Development Corporation and Yukon Energy Corporation, for their commitment to the 2017 budget and their commitment to provide Yukoners with the real picture.

Shortly into this mandate, our team began to build a new 2017-18 budget. At that time, our Premier, in a true show of leadership, stated that we would take the time to get this budget completed with the utmost of respect to Yukoners. No matter how bad things looked, we would provide the numbers

that showed the true cost of what it takes to run the Yukon government. We would not shy away from the overwhelming cost that had not been discussed over the last years. On the contrary, we would deal with things as we were elected to do — in an open and transparent fashion.

I would like to thank my colleagues for their commitment to this budget process and for choosing to undertake this work with respect for Yukoners as the paramount focus. We need to discuss the tax strategy put forth during the campaign. We are following through on the commitment to reduce the general corporate tax rate from 15 to 12 percent. Unfortunately, in this fiscal year, there will be a one-percent reduction of the small business tax rather than the full elimination previously promised. In the summer of 2016, Yukoners were told that the Yukon government had a surplus of \$9.4 million, and now we find that, in 2016-17, we've revised the budget with an \$8,269,000 deficit.

Once our new government received the accurate information, we had a decision to make — a decision that needed to balance sustainable economic growth with the needs of our people and their well-being, all the while promoting healthy, vibrant communities. The question was: Do we eliminate the small business tax, as we had stated during the election, now that we had this new data and numbers, which we didn't have access to at the time? This stay-the-course decision would have been the least problematic from a political standpoint, Mr. Speaker, but would it be the right thing to do?

Do we make the easy political decision or do we now analyze our current situation with our new reality in mind? I think we have answered that question. As all MLAs here understand, sometimes you must do the less popular thing because it's the right thing to do.

We understand that this leaves a two-percent small business tax on the table to be addressed in future years, and we will work toward this commitment, but not without fully understanding the implications of the actions before doing so.

The Loyal Opposition and the Third Party must be champing at the bit to ask me about fibre and redundancy. Certainly, we've had a couple of questions — at least that question — over the last day. This new government is committed to the Yukon fibre redundancy project. We are continuing to investigate all options for this project. This includes an analysis of potential routes, financing and ownership models.

Shortly after taking office, I was provided with a class D report based on the Dempster fibre route and the estimated cost for this project of potentially \$75 million. This new government will not make a financial decision of this size with only partial information. I know yesterday that there was a comment from the interim Leader of the Official Opposition, and I think the comment was: "There was a lot of money spent on this already. It was good to go." I think that is what he said. What I have is a class D estimate from Ledcor. It has a variance of 30 percent either way off the costing. I have a tremendous amount of respect for the interim leader and I will

tell you why: he is an extremely successful private business person.

So I'm not going to debate with him today, but I think he and I both know it was definitely not ready to go. Yukon Development Corporation will have an opportunity to speak about that when they come to Committee.

For the Stewart-Keno line — I will just put this in comparison — the previous government spend \$4.1 million on engineering reports so they could prepare to build out and then have a capex of quite similar — about \$75 million. When we see the \$80,000, approximately — I think the cost of this contribution from the Yukon government toward a report — and then it's good to go to build a \$75-million piece of infrastructure taking into consideration that the Mackenzie Valley line was estimated at \$95 million but now has ballooned to over \$200 million. I can't; I'm not taking that risk. There have been a lot of risks taken. They haven't really paid off well, so I'm going to look at all options when it comes to fibre. I'm excited to be questioned by the Official Opposition and by the Third Party. Let's dig into this. It has to be a public conversation. My colleague continues to work with me daily. This one is a tough backpack to slap on, but you know what, we need to do it. We said we would do it and it will get done.

Within the departments we have tasked the civil service to continue to gather information so we can make an informed decision, and we have tasked the civil service to investigate multiple funding sources so we can achieve redundancy. We have committed to Yukoners that this will get done as I said, and it will.

Also, through our Technology and Telecommunications Development Directorate, we will continue to work — and I just want to answer this question because I think the interim leader asked me yesterday and I owe him an answer to this — with Bell Mobility to ensure that the last of our communities — no, it was the Member for Kluane, I believe — have access to the fourth generation service, which will promote innovation and connectivity for individuals and businesses across the territory.

I know the interim leader knows the Economic Development budget inside out. There was a fourth year of funding. When we go to Committee of the Whole, we will have an opportunity to talk about that.

Further to this, we have almost doubled the funding support offered through the regional economic development fund from \$405,000 to \$800,000. This funding will help build capacity and develop diversified economies in our communities by working with First Nations, local governments, communities and organizations to identify opportunities in support of economic planning.

Now, I want to be taken to task on that increase, because when you look at the economic picture that we're forecasting, a good question by anybody in the opposition would be: Why would you double the budget of the regional economic development programming? Well, I will tell you why. First of all, not only have there been some big capital projects that have pretty significant O&M pieces attached to them that we

have to talk about, but in some of the programs, there has been out-year commitments made. So when you look at the overall budget of Economic Development, as compared to other departments, it's really not that substantial. But I think there's a belief inside this Legislative Assembly that it can be a catalyst for economic growth. It can trigger certain things. The private sector is going to do their thing; government spending is going to do its thing — but there is still an opportunity there.

When I look at CDF — I apologize because I might be off a little bit, but it's about \$2.9 million a year. When the previous government has already spent into your mandate, you don't have that amount of money. So then you have to go back to CDF applicants and explain to them that the money has already been committed previously. There have been substantial commitments made there — multi-year funding agreements.

When I looked at the envelope and the toolbox that I had to work with the department to spur economic growth at a time when we have the lowest GDP in the country — we are at the bottom as we walk in and tools are limited based on previous commitments, so what do you do? Well, where can I get flexibility to work with diversification in the economy? The NDP asked me this yesterday. What are you going to do? Partially, that's where we look to. I'm happy to say that when we look at where the interest is, we are looking at communities like Watson Lake, Mayo, Haines Junction and Old Crow. That's where the interest is right now. How can we use these funds? Faro, Teslin — how do we diversify our economy and support things in the communities? I will make that commitment. I say with 100-percent sincerity that, with the people across the way, we need to continue to work together. We are going to have challenging conversations. It will get heated and we will go home grumpy some days, but we need to make sure that we work on some of the diversification projects in these communities.

Our government is committed to reducing its resilience on diesel to power our energy needs. We will move to renewable and sustainable clean energy options. By implementing the \$1.5 million innovative renewable energy initiative, we will support energy projects that create opportunities for First Nations and communities.

This initiative supports the economic reconciliation with First Nations by allowing First Nations and communities to develop solutions that reflect their unique needs and priorities. What I like about this is that, as the board of Yukon Development Corporation builds the terms of reference that they are comfortable with, they will table that with me because it's new. If you look at the original order-in-council of what the mandate was of the Yukon Development Corporation, it was quite limited — and potentially for good reasons. The direction that I have from that board — that board has some good experience when it comes to the business sector, with members from Watson Lake, Whitehorse and Haines Junction on the Yukon Energy Corporation. So these two boards working together and conversing — what I am getting is: "Give us a bit of time and we will build you

proper criteria in terms of reference. We will table that for you. We will come up with some options." I am excited to be being able to look at that. That is where, as the NDP asked me, we will have those discussions about where we can inject some dollars. We have to lever dollars from other sources and then use these as initial commitment dollars.

I haven't heard the question yet from the Official Opposition about next generation hydro. I want to talk about next generation hydro. There has been over \$4 million spent on next generation hydro. We have some good data and good reports but zero social licence. I have made a commitment, and I have been asked about this, "What are you going to do?" Certainly on this one, you are right — as the interim leader said — that there is a lot of money spent. That doesn't mean that we are going to try to build a major hydro project, but what I am going to do is communicate with all off the list of top candidates. We are going to see if there is any interest now that there has been a bit more of an approach to reconciliation. I am not sure. Some communities — I think when I was in Mayo there was some sensitivity around Fraser Falls. I made a commitment to hold on that. Certainly, when I have spoken with Selkirk First Nation, there are some concerns as well. But we are still going to ask because I think it is appropriate to go back and have those discussions.

The Liberal government will continue to support the development of the mineral resource sector in an environmentally sustainable way by increasing the funding for the Yukon mineral exploration program by \$830,000 to a total of \$1.6 million. We encourage exploration and private sector investment in our economy. Under this program, we have implemented a new model specific to placer exploration. Several have noted the decrease in the budget of the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources, as the previous minister did. He is going to have some tough questions for me on that, but I am ready to answer those questions. I will outline a few of the areas that have been allocated less funding.

First, as a result of the reduction in the scope of the oil and gas action plan, we have decreased that for the 2017-18 budget by \$410,000. To the Leader of the Third Party — certainly if you look at the numbers on the oil and gas action plan, we have decreased that for a series of reasons. I think that most people in the Legislative Assembly can see that we are having challenges in the north and we are having a big cleanup in the south. We will have a side conversation. I can come and talk to you about it, but most of those dollars, we are trying to clean up.

The Member for Takhini-Kopper King has also put out that she wants to have a discussion about this and it's important about the cost of that — how much it really costs, what's happening with security, will it be covered, and things such as that.

As well, there's a five-percent decrease in funds required for the development of land just issued, and that's looking at capacity. We need land. Some of it is focused primarily on Whitehorse, yet there are some other communities that we will focus on. Maybe I'll just wait until a different time. The

Member for Watson Lake, respectfully — I did commit to her and I'm going to get you some information about what's happening in Watson Lake concerning land development.

I know I'm not going to have enough time, probably, but there are so many things that I got to listen to. Lots of it was focused on the departments that I have responsibility for. I'm going to do my best and go through some of these interesting points.

It's not really about getting into conversations that tend to be a little challenging, but I think part of what we're supposed to do here is set the record straight, so I'm going to try to talk to a few points that each person across the way touched on — some of them today, some yesterday.

We have talked about fibre. I'm going to start with something here. I think the Member for Lake Laberge yesterday — and this was an interesting one — it's important because they still have an obligation to stick to the budget reply, yet it's important to understand. I'm going to build some context about how decisions were made over the last number of years. I think that's an important piece. This is an interesting piece, because this story, this narrative — there are three or four people — three of us at least within the Legislative Assembly — who are all part of this, so it's an interesting one. It's really based on facts.

When the Member for Lake Laberge mentioned yesterday — here's the previous government. What we would do is we would table a platform and we would follow through on everything that we did and everything we promised got done, and that's how things were governed and we put \$250 million in surplus. We did that.

First, we all have to come to the understanding — and it was touched on today — look at our own-source revenue inside this government. The members across the way agree on this one. I know the Member for Lake Laberge agrees with me on this. We have to expand our private business sector. The Leader of the Third Party touched on this today. We're really not where we need to be. It's mostly a transfer payment. So when you think about \$250 million and you're walking in with a quarter-of-a-billion dollars — yes, it was allocated by the previous government, but you're dealing with a transfer payment, which we all are putting in that piece.

There are a lot of things that were stated by the member, but I want to talk about those commitments when it comes to the platform. I have to speak from my own personal experience on this. I think that's the only fair way to do it.

I remember in 2011 how, at that particular time, the Yukon Party — I remember I was working at Yukon College at the time, and I remember walking down and seeing this press conference. During the press conference, there was an announcement that Yukon College would become a university. That was it; it was done.

What we've learned as we've gone along is that's a big task. There is legislation. There is a tremendous amount of cost. You have to do an analysis of your HR requirements. How many people do you have with PhDs? All of these things — but it was interesting. Three people walked in, sat down, and announced this. The interesting thing was we didn't

know. I didn't know. I worked for the college. I didn't know. I was voted on as the staff representative on the board of governors. During that time, it was interesting — what a task to take on. What a feat to just roll in and say we are going to become a university.

Why am I telling the story? Because it gives a real indication of how decisions were made. The member opposite said everything got done. Sure, the announcement got done. The interesting thing is that the House Leader was the minister at the time. As I sit here today in this role and I think about what he was tasked with, I feel for him because that was an extremely unfair position. I can remember that I was sitting at the end of a major board table and the Member for Porter Creek North who, a year after that became — she just spoke about it — she's the chancellor.

I can still remember sitting at that big boardroom table we had and he walked in and sat at the end. We all were waiting patiently. What is the plan? What is the cost? Where is the money coming from? You have an existing budget. There was no plan. There was no plan. There was no idea of the cost. There was no legislative strategy. There was no idea. All there was, was a press conference. I can't let that one go. Today, I just read through the whole 2011 budget — all 55 pages of it. I can go on and on and on, and certainly we can talk about this, but that's not what we want to do. I think I got some good lessons today from the Leader of the Third Party about that. I think it's important to set the record straight on a number of these points.

I will say this — I don't want to be too direct, but the Member for Porter Creek North was chancellor the year later — understands extremely what was going on inside that organization. Our figurehead attended many board meetings. The individual right over there was Minister of Education. There was no plan — no analysis of financial commitment, yet their colleague up there is saying, "Hey, this is how we did it. We made a plan and this is —"

Speaker's statement

Speaker: Order, please. Order.

Minister of Economic Development, please avoid pointing. Thank you.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: I apologize. I'm sorry, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

Anyway, I think that's important to just give us an idea of how things had played out.

I think it's important, too, to talk about the seniors centre. The Member for Kluane mentioned the seniors centre yesterday and that there was a commitment to a seniors centre.

Once again, speaking from personal experience, I spent the last year and a half before this working in Haines Junction. I've been at community meetings where there were comments made. There was an announcement for a seniors centre. There was some early work done there, absolutely — phase 2.

I have to say, let's set the record straight. It is one thing to come in and say that, yes, we are building this — but I will stand in this Legislative Assembly and I will apologize at a

future point — I just need to see a budget that has that listed because, in my previous job, I looked to see if there was a number in a budget for that, because I wanted to see the impact. The elders from Champagne and Aishihik were wondering if there was going to be an opportunity. I had to create a budget for my political masters there, and they said, make sure you take into consideration — if you do a capital expenditure for our elders — no, there is something else, but there is nothing else. We had to start making some additional plans.

I apologize for this. I know that these are tough conversations, but let us set the record straight.

It is one thing to say it was never there. Let us talk about seniors. I think part of our challenge when we talk about seniors is that we have a \$150-million building that my colleague is trying to get on track. The minister down the way is trying to make sure there is a proper HR strategy in place, and working with her staff, who are probably doing double-time on this thing, and we are trying to figure out how to pay for it.

If people across the way say we are not doing anything for seniors — that is not really correct. It is probably the biggest part of our budget at this point in time.

Yesterday I found it interesting that there were a lot of mixed messages. It's interesting. During Question Period, what happens is — and I am trying to get direction. I want the direction from the Loyal Opposition.

At one point, we go into Question Period and there are a lot of conversations about, "Look at what you're doing. Look at what you're doing. You caused this. You Liberals — you came in here and in six months you have created this problem." That's fair. I have to say, standing outside this Legislative Assembly, when I looked at the Yukon Party, I would think that I may not get along on the policies, but the financial stewardship — you have that down. That might not be accurate. I don't think it's accurate. I'm standing over here now and I'm building budgets and I'm telling you — that's not accurate.

As we stood here yesterday and looked and listened, there were definitely mixed messages. First, the interim leader stated there were some okay parts about the Financial Advisory Panel, but the terms of reference had to change. Then the Member for Kluane stated that, no, it's the wrong thing to do. I look forward to some remarks from our Premier. So he said that, no, you should just go to the Finance people. So it's interesting — I wonder where some of these concepts came from. But anyway, you should just go to the Finance people — you shouldn't do it. Then the Official Opposition House Leader said, that's pretty good; it's interesting; it's a good option. Then we had the Official Opposition House Leader saying, actually — and then he did a nice tribute to somebody and talked about the stewardship of the Finance department when he was there and how effective some of that leadership was. Then we back up. I think the Member for Kluane said that the doors were ready to be shut down when he rolled in, in 2002. So there were differing opinions — three

different people giving three different opinions about where to go on this advisory panel.

I don't know — I read the paper on Monday after the weekend. I didn't think the competition was starting already, but it's starting I guess. There are different processes coming out.

Also, the Member for Watson Lake — one thing I found really interesting in the comments was that there was mention of, "stop spending when the money is gone". She did not last year. The money was gone — that's what a deficit is — and you kept spending. Think about this from a financial standpoint — post-devolution — tons of dollars, tons of dollars being transferred. If you take a look at what the budget was previous to devolution — post-devolution, the transfer starts coming in. What happens? More capital, more capital, more capital — not that we didn't need capital, but capital was coming. It spurred economic activity.

There were some phenomenal years — absolutely. Under Premier Fentie, there were some phenomenal years of economic growth and I commend him for that. I remember having the opportunity to work with Minister Lang on some stuff when I was at the city. There was big growth and then we hired more people. So now we're getting to this point — our O&M as it stands right behind the capital. It keeps growing, growing, growing. But we don't see this big increase in our transfer payment and no increase, remember, in our own-source revenue.

We hit this point where one-quarter of a billion dollars gets spent and then this year, we walk into — it's a first deficit, a small deficit — a very small deficit; I agree. We walk into this deficit. So think about what we would have to do. No government services have been cut. We have increased the government services through Health and Social Services. We have essentially the same envelope of services. We're walking in with a deficit and now we at least have the ability to say, look, through tons of work, lots of work from the civil service — I appreciate everything they did and the nights they put in — and now we come back and see a surplus. I haven't seen a government do that, and I commend our team for being able to do that. My friends across the way know — and I say this — it's funny. You're lucky. You are lucky. I wish I had the opportunity to be in a Cabinet with a quarter of a billion dollars, because what an opportunity to serve Yukoners — versus walking in when you have a deficit. You know, maybe they did some good rainy day stuff. I'm not going to take away from them on that.

I was a little concerned yesterday, because I don't want to belabour it too much, but I don't want to see us get into dog-whistle politics. There are certainly some statements that were made about this or that or funding or that and I hope that's not what it was. Maybe it wasn't, but certainly that was the sense I got and that doesn't help anybody. Certainly with what's going on in the world, we don't need to go there.

The Member for Porter Creek North — I just want to touch on a couple of things. You had mentioned about the twinning of the highway. Certainly on that one, I do urge you to talk to some of the business community in Porter Creek

North. I had an opportunity to do that just last night. There is some concern. Some people are really afraid of the impact of the twinning. I will give you the names of those people and you can follow up with them. They are people who live in Porter Creek and they're concerned about how that's going to affect their business. For further information on that, there might be an opportunity to chat with them as well.

The Member for Copperbelt South had talked about a few things. I know we're going to have some good discussions about land. Certainly I think it will be good, because I am going to look for some direction. He knows this file. He spent more time on this file than I did when it comes to land allocation and land development in conjunction, but what I will commit to is that with the city — they were really waiting to see what the plan of allocation was, so we're trying to expedite those conversations so that we can help the city with their planning and to work on that. Certainly I will take that guidance from the member for the Third Party — the south planning process happened when I was on city council in 2009 to 2012. I know that file well. I think I do. You're right; it's a good wake-up call for me to make sure I'm focused on what's going to happen.

Fifth and Rogers — the Downtown Residents Association sent me a letter. We have replied to that, but I think I need to sit with my officials and cross-reference that city plan. There's a lot of time and effort put into it. It is a good process. It is a strong process.

The Minister of Education will speak to the allocation of teachers. I know that was brought up by the Member for Copperbelt South. He probably has a really good understanding. I remember the allocation formula was sort of defined in many ways during his tenure. I could be off and it could have been the other minister, but I think a lot of that happened at that time.

As for the contractors and whether or not they are going to leave — I know we touched on how they may use the CFTA. I think the most alarming thing is that — there are times when it will be a tough task, but when I look at how we've allocated our budget and we have the capital expenditures and are trying to keep it steady — \$220 million — as we roll out the out-years. I urge everybody in the Legislative Assembly — I know the other members know already — to take a look at that. Really take a look at that reduction in the out-years — a \$45-million reduction. I know that contractors are happy that it's not the route we are going down where we would see that huge drop, which would have caused a tremendous amount of grief for them. They certainly would have been leaving if that had happened — and to use the CFTA, as he said.

IPP is going to be a big conversation. You are right. There is one group right now that wants to start right now and I have tasked our people. There were a couple of things that didn't happen. Some of the players were not at the table. I think it's important that the president of the Yukon Development Corporation is part of those discussions, as well as Energy, Mines and Resources. I have asked that the president of the Yukon Development Corporation becomes

part of those discussions, taking into consideration — as have the funds that will go from there. Inevitably, that's the owner of Yukon Energy. So I look forward to that. We are tasked with it. There are some big conversations that have to happen. You know the file well. As we go through that file, we are going to have to figure out — questions become pricing, and there are all the players. There is ATCO and, of course, there was an existing project that the previous government had worked on. It was a good project and that has to do with Burwash — the project with the Kluane First Nation. It's concerning their wind project. We need that IPP. It's going to be one of the biggest tasks that I have to look at.

In closing — it has been brought up over and over again by everyone across the way. They say that we will get into Committee and ask the questions. You know what? I am ready for Committee and to sit beside my government officials. There is nothing in this budget that I'm not willing to stand behind. The more they ask questions and the more they dig, they will see decisions that we saw before. Not a multitude of new programs, not a big stimulus spend — none of that. This is a budget based on the costs of government.

Speaker: Member for Takhini-Kopper King, do you wish to start today? I guess we have about five minutes or so. Do you wish to start?

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Speaker: Go ahead.

Ms. White: I haven't ever been given the choice before whether to start. Normally we go right to 5:30 and then you cut debate, so I was ready for that.

I want to thank everyone for the opportunity to be here. It's a fascinating time. We talked about it in the debate — about contracting — and we had some good conversations there. It's interesting to hear how history has started to re-tell itself. It's interesting. I learned when I travelled that what I learned as a Canadian kid in school was different from what my friends in New Zealand learned and the friends I met in Poland and the friends from the United Kingdom, because when history was retold, it depended on whose perspective it was coming from. There were different heroes in all the stories. Sometimes you would have to wonder how that happened and what perspective was maybe closer to what actually happened.

It has been fascinating to listen — and really interesting. I can tell you from over on this side, where I've been for a couple of years — and maybe I've shifted down the desks a bit — but it's fascinating to hear how history is being retold. Stay true to your course and understand that we come from different values. Ultimately our big common value is the belief that we want to make the territory better than it is right now. We want to move toward a better future for people, we want to make sure that no one is left behind, and we're going to have different ideas on how that can happen. You will have your perspective, I will have my perspective, and the Official Opposition will have their perspective. Sometimes, when the planets align, we'll meet in the middle and something will

move forward and everyone will have something nice to say about it. It happened once, I think, previously. I look forward to more times of that.

I am so fortunate to have been re-elected. That was the third election I ran in. I lost my first one in 2006, but I got punted to the fire in that one. I had no idea what I was doing. I was 28. I was referred to as a youth, and it was hard. It was hard and it was an eye-opening experience because I got to see how politics could affect people. I got to see that it could be a really good, positive thing, and I got to see people who were destroyed by it. I got to hear stories that I couldn't believe they would tell some random person who knocked on their door. They would share things.

Now you've all been on that journey with me, with us, and you've been invited into people's homes in a way you never thought was possible. That is what, in 2006, made me say that I would do it three times. Interestingly enough, by the time the election was called in 2011, Todd had passed away, Boyd was around, Ken was across the country, and it was, "Okay, I'm ready for my second time" because I thought that by the time I'm 40, maybe then I'll be considered an adult.

So 2011 happened and I was in 35. I was the oldest candidate in my riding, and I had no idea about the outcome. I put my head down and I talked to people, because that's what I really love to do and that's what I wanted to do. I listened to stories. I learned more things, and I probably got more fired up than I thought I could be and, to my amazement, I won. Then in 2016, it was my job to lose.

I love my job. I hate my job some days, and you guys are new so you might not be fully exhausted yet, but let me tell you — year three, Fall Sitting, week 75,000 — is what it's going to feel like — and you're going to be tired and you're not going to want to go to the grocery store or gas station and you're going to be really looking forward to that last day, but knowing that in that entire time, when we come in and put that energy into this job, it's because we're trying to do our best for both sides — from government side, from opposition side.

I know when the Yukon Party was government, they felt the same way. I disagreed. I disagreed almost all the time, which was hard because I'm a natural cheerleader, so it was hard to be like, "No, I don't like that." I'm hoping that there are more things that I can be supportive of with this new government, so I wish you luck. But know always that, if we come from a different point of view, it's because we're coming at it from different perspectives.

I'm not going to talk about all the things that are listed in the budget, because there are some great things — absolutely. You've picked some priorities that you are focused on and you're looking at how you are going to get toward that. I am not going to try to revisit — we talked about this. You did not inherit the financial resources that you were told were going to be there. To hear it retold on both sides, it's fascinating, because somehow the dollars and the cents are there or they're not there, and how it happened and when it happened is irrelevant because, right now, you have to work with that budget and you have to move forward.

That is what I'm going to focus on: how we can look at those things and sometimes where I see those gaps.

The very first thing I'm going to mention before I forget about it is the Child Development Centre. The Child Development Centre is one of the most phenomenal tools that we have in the community for children with learning disabilities, for children who will have a harder time functioning in society. The sooner we identify those kids and we give them the tools to work within their abilities — not their disabilities — the better off it will be.

But right now the Child Development Centre acts like a school year. That means that these kids, for a number of months a year, are encouraged, supported and led down the way they have to go. Then summer happens and those same kids are left without those resources. If you talk to the staff of the Child Development Centre, they want to run 12 months a year. They want to offer those programs to children. I think one thing we need to look at is how to expand that. How do we make sure that families are involved in that conversation? How do we make sure that no Yukon family has to leave the territory because the help that they need for their child is not available 12 months of the year?

That is something that is not mentioned in the budget and it's not talked about how we would deal with that — and that is one thing that I would like to put forward. That is an aspect of when we talk about raising strong Yukoners who can contribute to society, understanding that success is going to look different for everybody, part of that is starting young. Part of that is starting with children. Look at the budget —

Speaker: Order, please. Thank you to the Member for Takhini-Kopper King. We look forward to the continuation of your comments at a later date.

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

Debate on second reading of Bill No. 201 accordingly adjourned

The House adjourned at 5:30 p.m.

The following sessional paper was tabled May 2, 2017:

34-2-12

Report on Subsistence, Travel & Accommodations of Members of the Yukon Legislative Assembly 2016-2017
(Speaker Clarke)