

Whitehorse, Yukon
Wednesday, May 24, 2006 — 1:00 p.m.

Speaker: I will now call the House to order. At this time, we will proceed with prayers.

Prayers

DAILY ROUTINE

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

TRIBUTES

In recognition of National Public Works Week

Hon. Mr. Hart: On behalf of the House, I rise today to recognize National Public Works Week, celebrated this year from May 21 to 27. National Public Works Week is an annual celebration across North America that recognizes the men and women in federal, provincial, territorial, municipal and First Nation governments, as well as the private sector, to provide and maintain the infrastructure and services collectively known as “public works”.

The theme for 2006 National Public Works Week is “Public Works: The Heart of Every Community”. It is in the public interest of all residents and leaders of this territory to learn the importance of public works in community life.

The Canada Winter Games Centre is a local public works facility that is increasingly becoming the heart of the community — a meeting place for all ages: teens, parents, grandparents and children alike.

In November 2005 the Government of Yukon completed the construction of a building. It has also been known as a community gathering place, “the heart of the community”, the Old Crow Airport.

For a community without roads, virtually everything that enters or leaves Old Crow does so by way of the airport facilities. Not just people who live there, but also the visiting tourists, doctors, teachers, and many supplies the community requires enter through the airport. The new Old Crow Airport truly is the heart of the community.

The goal of this week is to enhance the profile of these hard-working men and women. They are responsible for and must design, build, operate and maintain streets and roads, water supply, sewage and refuse disposal systems, transportation systems, airports, public buildings, other structures and facilities. These dedicated individuals also look after supporting functions of assets and fleet vehicle, as well as providing services for information technology, purchasing, printing and language translation needs.

As the Minister of Highways and Public Works, I would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to those employees in the department who perform public works activities daily and without notice.

Mr. Speaker, please unite with me in recognizing National Public Works Week and in thanking all those dedicated men and women in our public works sector who strive every day to improve government operations and our community for a better

quality of life, and for the benefits that they provide all Yukon citizens in our territory.

In remembrance of Fraser Ralston Pollard

Mr. McRobb: I am honoured to rise today in remembrance of Fraser Ralston Pollard, formerly of Haines Junction, Yukon. Fraser was born on March 20, 1941, in Springhill, Nova Scotia and was raised in nearby Pugwash. At age 16 he joined the Canadian Army militia and served as a private for two years until he was honorably discharged from Camp Gagetown, New Brunswick.

A few years later, Fraser became an able seaman in the Royal Canadian Navy based out of Montreal, Quebec. He was honorably discharged about five years later.

On April, 1967, he ventured to the Yukon where he lived for the next 38 years, enjoying Yukon experiences, including trapping, hunting and fishing. Soon after his arrival in Haines Junction, local townsfolk dubbed this likeable character after his hometown. He became known as “Pugwash”, or simply “Pug” to people throughout the Yukon.

Pug became well known for his downtown log home and yard full of treasures. His fame and fortune grew as a result of his careful and skilful scavenging at the Haines Junction landfill. Pug pioneered the practice of reusing and recycling long before it became popular with the general public. He found treasures discarded by others and literally filled his home and yard with colourful and unique relics. Simply put, Mr. Speaker, Pug lived the saying, “One person’s garbage is another person’s treasure.”

Pug’s cabin became a featured attraction in Haines Junction’s walking tour brochure. For your convenience, Mr. Speaker, I will file a copy of this now.

To quote from the brochure: “the way in which he could pursue hunting for ‘treasures’ from the dump changed from when the Yukon government and the village invested in a compactor as part of a new waste management project. In a typical Yukon solution, Mr. Pollard obtained employment running the compactor.”

Perhaps Pug’s eye for treasure was sharpened while he worked in a jade mine in British Columbia before coming north. He was also an underwater diver, a skill he learned while in the service. He would often dive to retrieve lures from the Kathleen River and distribute them among friends.

Pug worked at the Blanchard Highway maintenance camp and began scavenging as a hobby to supplement his income.

Pug was an avid gun collector and became a dedicated and proud member of the Canadian Rangers. Along with his passion for the outdoors, Pug enjoyed photography, Yukon history and talking to the elders and seniors about the old days. For many years his Labrador Retriever dogs were his companions.

Pug’s zeal for collecting was surpassed only by his regard for friendship. He was a loyal friend to many people, helping them through tough times. He continued to socialize among friends at the local bar, long after he gave up drinking.

Throughout his nearly four decades in the Yukon, Pug had the pleasure of hosting his siblings who each took the opportunity to discover the north. In true Yukon fashion, Pug’s colourful habits gave him popularity, notoriety and even fame among

Yukoners and highway travellers alike. His many friends will miss this loyal fellow dearly.

Thank you.

Speaker: Are there any other tributes?

In recognition of Yukon graduates

Hon. Mr. Edzerza: I rise today to pay tribute to all the grads in the communities and in the City of Whitehorse. Education is a lifelong learning process that begins with kindergarten, and those who reach grade 12 and graduate have achieved a great accomplishment. But we must remember that to graduate is only the end of a new beginning. I encourage all students to continue on their life path of learning and to reach their destinations and their dreams.

Everyone is important and every opportunity that a young person takes to embark upon trades or go into professional fields is important. Everyone is important and everyone is valuable.

The main message that we can pass on to the kids today is to develop your gifts.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Are there any further tributes?
Introduction of visitors.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Hardy: It's always important that we recognize Yukon people when they come to our gallery and many have been recognized over the years. Up in the gallery today there are many who have been recognized, including some I have worked with many years ago, but also some who have visited and have not been recognized. Freddy Hutter and his companion Evalina are here today.

Applause

Speaker: Are there any further introductions of visitors?

Are there any returns or documents for tabling?

TABLING RETURNS AND DOCUMENTS

Hon. Mr. Kenyon: I have for tabling a letter to the MLA for Mayo-Tatchun in response to a question during the Economic Development debate — specifically, community development fund project approvals by community and the annual report.

Hon. Mr. Hart: I have for tabling the Property Management Agency business plan 2006-07.

Mr. Fairclough: I have for tabling a letter to the Premier dated May 23, 2006, from the Council of Yukon First Nations on the big game outfitting land application policy.

I also have for tabling the procedures in the consultation protocol that had been signed by the Government of Yukon and the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nation.

Mr. Mitchell: I have for tabling today an open letter to the Premier from concerned residents in the Haines Junction area regarding the consultation process for the timber harvesting in the area.

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

NOTICES OF MOTION

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

THAT this House urges the Yukon Party government to fulfill its campaign commitment to develop whistle-blower legislation by

(1) engaging in consultation with the Yukon Government Employees Union on Bill No. 74 of the 30th Legislative Assembly, whistle-blower legislation introduced by the former Liberal government and the NDP Private Members' Bill No. 104 of the 31st Legislative Assembly;

(2) examining Government of Canada public servants' disclosure protection legislation and amendments introduced as Bill C-2;

(3) investigating Alaska Statute No. 39, chapter 90, section 100, Saskatchewan and New Brunswick amendments to the *Labour Standards Act* and Nova Scotia's civil service disclosure of wrongdoing regulations;

(4) preparing draft legislation for examination by members of the 32nd Yukon Legislative Assembly.

Mr. Fairclough: I give notice of the following motion:
THAT this House recognizes that

(1) Liberal members of this Legislature have consistently supported the policy of "people come first";

(2) this government should uphold the honour of the Crown and fulfill the commitments made by Canada, the provinces, the territories and aboriginal organizations to implement the Kelowna accord;

(3) this government has reneged on this historic, multi-government agreement and has proceeded to unilaterally not support the implementation of a significant 10-year plan to address the Third World conditions in some First Nation communities;

(4) true recognition, reconciliation and social justice with respect to lands and resources, as well as social and economic programs, are becoming even more distant goals;

(5) the Kelowna accord is not only about fiscal commitments, but also about the successful negotiations of the accord in setting the high-water mark in the relationship between the Crown and aboriginal Canadians;

(6) proceeding with the big game outfitting land application policy without proper and meaningful consultation;

(7) in the opinion of First Nation leaders, this lack of consultation will only foster confrontation and conflict; and

THAT this House requires that this government publicly state its support for First Nation issues and concerns and com-

mit to establishing meaningful lines of communications with First Nations and all Yukoners.

Speaker: Is there a statement by minister?
This then brings us to Question Period.

QUESTION PERIOD

Question re: Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act review

Mr. Mitchell: The Yukon Party government has demonstrated over the last four years that it is not interested in doing the hard work required to move legislation through this Legislature. As I noted yesterday, it is simple enough to measure the government's performance when it comes to major legislative assignments: the grade is incomplete.

Let's look at the *Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act* as another example. The Ombudsman and Privacy Commissioner have been calling on this government to make changes to the act since 2004. He repeated his request in his annual report that was made public yesterday. The government has ignored these requests. In fact, they have gone one better and even cancelled a review of the act. This demonstrates the low priority this government places on the Ombudsman and Privacy Commissioner.

Why has the Yukon Party government shelved this review and, in the process, earned another incomplete grade?

Hon. Mr. Hart: We haven't shelved a review of the process. We are working with other jurisdictions that are in the process of reviewing their ATIPP legislation, which includes privacy information that seems to be lost in this process. I would like to advise the member opposite that we are working with other jurisdictions to see what they have and what would be applicable in the Yukon context.

Some jurisdictions have gone to review two or three times. I think that indicates that there is some difficulty with ATIPP reviews in other jurisdictions. So, I think it's incumbent upon us to see what those decisions are so we can glean the appropriate information from those jurisdictions and have the appropriate legislation in hand, so that we can do the good work of government here.

Mr. Mitchell: The minister can make all the excuses he wants but the Privacy Commissioner certainly continues to express his concerns. The Yukon Party government has not completed yet another assignment.

Let's move on to the *Liquor Act*. Shortly after coming to office, the Yukon Party government cancelled proposed amendments to this act, which has gone through extensive public consultations. It has not been changed in almost 30 years. Then the minister responsible said, "In fact, we are going to move ahead with some amendments," and then finally returned to square one and said, "No, we are going to leave it as it is."

Another simple assignment — the work was already done when this government came to office, and it's another incomplete grade. Almost four years have gone by and we have not seen changes to the *Liquor Act*. Why has the minister not completed this job?

Hon. Mr. Kenyon: We certainly are continuing to review all recommendations of the *Liquor Act* and regulations review. I should say that 28 out of the 49 recommendations have already been implemented. The current distribution controls the distribution and consumption of alcohol in the Yukon and is still flexible enough to accommodate responsible distributors and consumers.

We are also addressing Yukon's alcohol abuse problems through social responsibility initiatives, in partnership with other stakeholders. We have been able to work within the existing act, although it is becoming noticeable that there should be a review. This will be a priority of this government in our next mandate.

Mr. Mitchell: Well, I believe I just heard the minister say they are reviewing the reviews. I think I'm beginning to sense the nature of the problem.

Let's look at another piece of legislation that the Yukon Party government has been working on — whistle-blower legislation. This is a commitment from the Yukon Party platform. Again, it's an incomplete.

The Yukon Party government spent four years dragging its heels on this bill. They blame the opposition. They blame the federal government. It's always someone else's fault. The fact remains that the Yukon Party government promised and has not delivered. Whistle-blower legislation is incomplete.

Access to information and privacy review is incomplete. The *Liquor Act* is incomplete. The *Children's Act* is incomplete. The *Education Act* is incomplete. The *Workers' Compensation Act* is incomplete. Almost four years and these six pieces of legislation are not done. They just continue to be reviewed.

Why has the Yukon Party government failed so miserably to complete this work?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Mr. Speaker, again, our government is prepared to move forward with the development and the implementation of the whistle-blower legislation. As I have repeated on a number of occasions on the floor of the Legislature, we have chosen to move cooperatively with all members in a non-partisan approach toward the development of whistle-blower legislation via the mechanism of an all-party select committee that would be representative of all political parties. In fact, we have presented a motion for members opposite for their review and consideration that calls for the creation of the select committee that would address whistle-blower legislation, a motion that clearly acknowledges our commitment to initiate a process to develop the legislation itself of which the member opposite speaks. Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, we do not have the consent of all parties to move ahead in this regard.

Again, just for the member opposite's recollection, over the last number of years there have been quite a few different pieces of legislation brought forward by a number of jurisdictions. There have been a lot of discussions about protections as well as some concerns voiced about different pieces. We need to take a look at all the pieces, including the different bills of the members opposite.

Question re: Doctor shortage

Mr. McRobb: I have some questions for the Minister of Health and Social Services. It's report card time for this

government and on the most important health issue this minister is like the student who failed to turn in his homework. He keeps telling Yukoners that he's working on the shortage of family doctors but he never quite seems to complete the assignment. The result is that too many Yukoners are still enduring an acute shortage of doctors and this has led to a new term in the Yukon — orphan patients. This Yukon Party government likes to suggest that everybody is better off now than they were four years ago. Then, in a stretch of logic, this government credits itself for any improvement.

Let's hear straight from the Health and Social Services minister. Are the scores of orphan patients better off now than they were four years ago?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Once again, we see the same problem in attempting to engage in constructive debate with the Member for Kluane. His questions are based on so many inaccuracies that it's very difficult to engage in this debate. The member knows full well that I have been in this portfolio only since December and, since that time, we have announced and are now implementing the \$12.7-million health human resources strategy, including two programs to address the shortage of doctors — the first being debt repayment in exchange for years of service provided to any graduate of a Canadian medical school, and the second is a bursary program to assist Yukon students in attending institutions.

This was announced at the end of March. We will be sitting down with the Yukon Medical Association and intend to have this finalized in the summer of this year. The application forms are available and new doctors are coming in. This is a very high priority for me and this government.

Mr. McRobb: The Health and Social Services minister has prevented any effective solution with all of his detours. He should have spent his time finding actual solutions to the problem instead of waving a boutique of hoops, hurdles and roadblocks. Yukoners deserve to see a family doctor but this government is denying them that critical access.

Earlier in this sitting, I brought to the minister's attention the significant increase in patient waiting times at the Whitehorse General Hospital. As stated, the wait time at the emergency room has experienced a 24-percent increase in the number of patients admitted in just the past two years. The ER is now trying to cope with high traffic levels that have increased the wait time for Yukon patients, and that is bound to worsen with the summer higher traffic loads.

Let's ask the Health and Social Services minister again: are the patients waiting to see a doctor at the emergency room better off now than they were four years ago?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: I know the member opposite does not like the health human resources strategy. He stood up and attacked it and called it a luxury and suggested the efforts the Premier and the premiers of the other two territories made in gaining this badly needed funding from the federal government under the territorial health access fund was simply federal largesse. It is badly needed funding. We are investing it to take action.

Mr. Speaker, with regard to the Whitehorse General Hospital, again the member opposite needs to take a look at the

facts. When we took office, the yearly funding provided by the Yukon government to Whitehorse General Hospital was a little over \$20 million per year. We have increased that to close to \$26 million per year. That is a very substantial increase.

In addition to that, over our three and a half years in office, we have provided them \$10 million for capital projects over and above the operation and maintenance contribution. We are very concerned about the shortage of doctors and, unlike the members opposite, we are actually taking action to address it rather than dancing around the subject and reporting inaccuracies.

Mr. McRobb: Yukoners are not interested in excuses. They want to be able to see a doctor when they need one. This government has failed to deliver. I don't know which one is longer: this government's list of excuses or the growing list of orphan patients.

Under this Yukon Party government, we've had more Health and Social Services ministers than we've had new doctors. This government gets another failing grade on this issue, despite mountains of new funding from the federal government to help address the situation.

This government's track record on nurse recruitment is just as bad. Despite the shortage of physicians, we could be losing born-and-raised Yukon nurses because they couldn't find jobs here. What about those nursing grads? Are they better off now than they were four years ago?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Well, first of all, once again we have Liberal math here — the government has been in office for about three and a half years, not four years, as consistently repeated inaccurately by the members opposite.

The Member for Kluane, the newly minted Liberal, seems to change his position on the issues even more frequently than he changes parties. We do have more doctors offering services in the Yukon than we did three and a half years ago. Is it enough? No, it is not.

That is why we are investing \$12.7 million under our health human resources strategy over the next five years to address the shortage of family physicians, to address expected shortages of nurses in the mid- and long-term, and to address other issues and other needed professions, such as radiologists, speech-language pathologists, et cetera.

We have discussed this on numerous occasions in the House. It is disappointing that the Liberal Party one day supports this and the next day changes its mind and attacks the health human resources strategy as being a luxury.

Mr. Speaker, this is sensible planning. We are addressing the shortage of doctors in the short term, and we are planning to address the anticipated shortages due to retirements in other professions. We are taking the action that is needed for Yukoners.

Question re: Government attitude

Mr. Hardy: This may be the last time I have the privilege of asking the Premier a question in the House. Actually, it's the last time we may be all together and I'd like to thank everybody for their time, patience and kindness over the last three and a half years. It has had its moments.

Now, in light of that, it's important to share with the Premier what I've been hearing from hundreds of Yukon people during this sitting and during nearly four years of the Yukon Party mandate. If I can sum up the reaction in a few words, Mr. Speaker, it would be one of profound disappointment.

Yukoners who wanted change in 2002 feel let down by this government. They feel let down because so much of their tax money has been wasted and so many opportunities have been lost. As a matter of fact, I call it the budget of lost opportunities.

In the very brief time that the Premier has left, how does he intend to overcome the sense of betrayal so many Yukon people are experiencing?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: In the first place, the government side is simply not hearing anything of the sort, though I respect the leader of the third party's view and opinion on these matters. I'm sure in their caucus meetings every morning they lament about the great disappointment they feel, considering the position they are in.

But in today's Yukon much has been accomplished. This government has never said it is all of our doing, but what we will say is that the policies, the plan and the vision that we brought forward are complementary to what is going on nationally and internationally, which is creating a sense of optimism, which is creating tangible, real improvements in Yukon's economy and its social fabric.

That is what we set out to accomplish in 2002, and that is indeed what we plan on building upon as we go forward into the next mandate. We are very comfortable with stacking our record up against the opposition members, with the Yukon public, and running on the fact that we have delivered the goods and we intend to do more.

Mr. Hardy: I'm trying to help the Premier here, so let's be more specific. Every single day I hear heartfelt concern about this government's performance — every single day. In communities like Carmacks, Dawson, Mayo, Teslin, Carcross and Watson Lake, I hear about the lack of jobs, about social problems like drug and alcohol abuse, being ignored. I hear from parents talking about the problems in the education system and the lack of childcare options. I hear from municipal and First Nation leaders about the chaos in land disposition systems. From health professionals and volunteers in the social service field, I hear deep concern about this government's lack of direction, Mr. Speaker.

Why has the Premier failed to act on so many legitimate concerns or has he just chosen not to hear them?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: Mr. Speaker, once again I know the discussions in the third party caucus meetings every morning are definitely based on the negativity that they are mired in. But I want to point out some facts to the leader of the third party in the spirit of being helpful.

How can the member then say, considering the substance abuse action plan, that the member was actually partly responsible for creating a nothing, a non-deliverable? That's happening today. How can the member say that when he looks at the facts with respect to daycare spaces and the dramatic increase this government has brought forward? How can the member

respond to this? Why, if the member says people in rural Yukon are looking for jobs, is there such a long list of jobs available for people in rural Yukon today? That's because our economy has turned around. We're experiencing growth. Our population is growing. We have historic unemployment lows. We have \$200 million-plus more dollars stimulating the Yukon economy. I disagree with the leader of the third party entirely on his dissertation, but I'm trying to be helpful by providing him the facts.

Mr. Hardy: Obviously the Premier really doesn't want to hear. Now let me be even more specific. Most of the people who feel let down are the government's own employees. After two years of chaos under the Liberals — and we know what that was, that was the renewal exercise — they had no idea it would get even worse under this Premier. The morale in some departments is so low it could take very many years to recover. Honest, hard-working public employees feel their own government doesn't listen to them, doesn't respect them and doesn't trust them. Many of them tell me that they are just counting the days until they can go to the polls and teach this government a lesson like they taught the last one.

Instead of learning from the Liberal government's failures, why did the Premier pursue a course that has left his own employees feeling alienated, unappreciated and under-valued?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: Once again, those discussions in the third party's caucus meetings are loaded with inaccuracies. In fact, the employees, I would suggest today, are reflecting on what has really transpired over the last three and a half years — a 10-percent increase, a four-year collective bargaining agreement, the investment in public service initiative, which is allowing mentoring, parallel transfers, training and allowing people to expand on and realize their potential within the government public service, as well as taking on all the federal employees that we did through devolution, resolving the problem of red-circling and the issues that resulted from a hastily signed devolution agreement by the former Liberal government.

With respect to the Yukon government employees, we have placed great value in those employees. They are our front-line people. They are dedicated to public service in this territory. Yes, there is always room for improvement and we intend to do that also.

At the end of the day, all the public will make their choice in the next election. I will close by saying the facts and evidence are clear: the Yukon is a better place today than it was in 2002 when this Yukon Party took office.

Question re: Energy policy

Mr. Hardy: I have another question for the Premier, since we are having such a wonderful dialogue here — different opinions, but wonderful dialogue.

Home owners in Whitehorse and elsewhere in the Yukon are facing a number of challenges. Higher interest rates mean higher mortgage costs. Higher energy costs mean higher heating bills. Many homeowners are carrying large debt loads and are looking for ways to cut their expenses, of course. The federal EnerGuide program has been very successful in helping people identify ways to reduce their energy costs, but now the federal government has quietly scrapped this popular program.

Will the Premier follow the lead of Quebec and New Brunswick and provide the necessary funds so Yukon home owners will still have access to this program?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: Well, I do enjoy the dialogue with the leader of the third party because at least we know what this member and this leader stands for, unlike the official opposition, in terms of their plan and vision for the territory. We know what the third party will represent when it comes to an election campaign with respect to what they would do in the Yukon.

But furthermore, when it comes to the issues of housing needs and requirements for Yukoners, there is a tremendous amount going on today in the affordable housing area, in programs and mortgage areas where Yukon Housing Corporation is assisting Yukoners with energy needs and so on. It's this government that brought forward an energy rebate program to assist Yukoners. But one thing the government will never do is occupy federal jurisdiction and authority, because that creates off-loading to the Yukon government — to the public government of Yukon — and indeed elsewhere in the country. We will not occupy that authority.

What we will do, though, is continue to work with Canada on the areas of investment that make sense for the north, for homeowners in the Yukon.

I can assure the member opposite that we are monitoring very closely what the federal government will be doing with respect to environmental issues, climate change, and energy needs in the north. They have stated very categorically that they have a vision for the north. We want it delivered.

Mr. Hardy: Well, that's interesting because when you look at the Premier's move to occupy the federal broken promise to finance the rail study — he moved very quickly to occupy a \$3-million commitment.

Now, he had no qualms about spending millions on the athletes village that cost many times the going rate per square foot of living space. He had no qualms about wasting taxpayers' money for cost overruns on badly planned capital projects that fall way behind schedule. And he has no qualms about wasting money to learn what we already knew about the folly of using a public/private partnership to build a bridge in Dawson City — millions of dollars there.

Yet, when it comes to back-stopping a relatively low-cost item that can save homeowners thousands of dollars in energy costs, he won't make the commitment other provinces have. Will the Premier show some leadership on behalf of Yukon homeowners and keep this program alive, at least for one year until we can see where it's going with the federal government?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: We already have green energy programs here in the Yukon. The member knows full well that they are in place. They are within the Yukon jurisdiction, and we are going to continue to improve on them and deliver in those areas.

I want to caution the member about inaccuracies. The statement about the cost of square footage overruns at the facilities at the college is incorrect. All the member has to do is look at the evidence.

Furthermore, this government will always stand up and defend its investment in the Yukon, considering the number of Yukoners who have been put to work with the increased stimulus. That is important because, when we came into office, the population was exiting the Yukon. Our unemployment rate was in the double digits. We were in a very difficult situation.

That has changed, but there is a lot more work to do. Nothing is perfect. We intend to keep working, as we have shown through the course of the last three and a half years on behalf of Yukoners. We represent the public interest, not political self-interest.

Mr. Hardy: We just heard one of the campaign pitches by the Yukon Party Premier. Earlier on, we heard the slogan of the Liberals: "People come first." That has now trotted out of their campaign slogan. Amazing things are being revealed today.

I hope the Premier doesn't plan to go along with everything the Harper government intends to do, or things could get very bleak here in the Yukon. The Premier's record on the environment is appalling. Yukon is one of the last places in Canada with no plans to implement the Kyoto Accord. The most experienced EnerGuide auditor in the territory says the program saves homeowners an average of six tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions. Plans were already underway to extend this program to low-income housing, which might have saved the government money on fuel rebates. It might have come back.

Since the Premier is also Minister of Environment, what are his plans to replace the EnerGuide program with something that will have a similar impact in terms of reducing greenhouse gases that contribute to global warming?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: The fact is that the emission factor in the Yukon is less than one percent. However, the impacts from global warming are very evident in the territory.

Secondly, once we got the Energy Solutions Centre back on track from the position it was in under the former Liberal government's watch — and we all know what happened there with the Auditor General's look into the Energy Solutions Centre — that's a vehicle we will continue to use to ensure that we are addressing our areas of responsibility with respect to climate change.

Furthermore, in today's Yukon under this government's watch, unlike past governments, our energy production for electricity is now over 90 percent from hydro. We are burning less diesel today. Furthermore, contrary to the issues presented by the official opposition with respect to the beetle-kill area in the southwest Yukon, our plan is to indeed reduce carbon output, because we all know that that massive infestation of spruce bark beetle — the largest on the North American continent — is actually increasing Yukon's carbon output because the trees are dead. We are addressing our areas of responsibility and will continue to do so.

I will close by pointing out the northern strategy includes a climate change component as an objective.

Question re: Whitehorse Correctional Centre rebuild

Ms. Duncan: Eleven years ago a previous Yukon Party government was told by independent experts in the Barr Ryder report to replace the aging facility known as the Whitehorse Correctional Centre. They and the NDP government refused. The Liberal government engaged in extensive consultation with First Nation elders, commissioned an affordable, workable design and turned the dirt on a new facility.

The Yukon Party government cancelled the project and spent \$1.4 million on repairs to a building that was independently assessed as being beyond repair and embarked upon something called correctional reform, spending another \$1.2 million. The conclusion of that report: a new facility was required and programming the Yukon Party said they were delivering was inadequate.

Today is the last day, Mr. Speaker — a trip down memory lane. The Premier was very fond of saying when he stood here — before he moved 12 feet — and I stood over there — at the conclusion of his questions he asked me, “Yes or no?”

My question to the Premier: is the Whitehorse Correctional Centre a better building than it was three and a half years ago — yes or no?

Hon. Mr. Edzerza: I thank the member opposite for that question because I believe it has been asked several times throughout the last few years. Once again, for the record, I'll state that the very member who was the Premier had the full opportunity to complete their dream — a million-dollar warehouse.

This government took on justice reform and to date it has proven to be very successful. We've had input from people right across the territory and this government is going to embark upon building the dream of the people and not of a number of people.

Ms. Duncan: Let's talk about the people. Are the inmates at the Whitehorse Correctional Centre better off than they were three and a half years ago in a facility that is well past its best-before date? Do they have better programming?

Let's talk about the staff members who are required to work in the facility. Are they better off under the Yukon Party government? Have we had protests outside this building by workers trying to resolve the shift scheduling problems? Yes, we have. Has the minister responsible directed his department to work with these long-time Yukon government employees to resolve this issue? No, he has not.

Will the minister, as he packs up his desk in preparation for an election, direct his department to resolve the shift scheduling issues at Whitehorse Correctional Centre? Will the Yukon Party put people who work at the Correctional Centre — Yukoners — first? Yes or no?

Hon. Mr. Edzerza: For the record, I would like to state that no inmate is better off as long as they're in jail. They're locked up. They're incarcerated. They will never be better off. The only way that they can be better off is for them to embark upon the future healing programs that will be offered. That will help the inmate.

With regard to the question about staffing, unlike the previous Liberal government, who took upon themselves to change the whole government system, this government is not going to be involved with the administration part of the operation.

Ms. Duncan: Has the Yukon Party, after three and half years in office, made any progress on replacing the Whitehorse Correctional Centre? No.

Are individuals incarcerated at Whitehorse Correctional Centre any better off with programming than they were three and a half years ago? No.

Are there any fewer individuals in Whitehorse Correctional Centre than there were three and a half years ago? No.

Are the long-time Yukon government employees who work at Whitehorse Correctional Centre any better off in terms of work conditions or their outstanding schedule dispute than they were three and a half years ago? No.

On this critical people issue, the Justice portfolio, is the Premier proud of his government's record? Yes or no?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: Wow, what a great question to close out Question Period.

First and foremost, I am very proud of the Minister of Justice's efforts in this area. True correctional reform is reflected in what the minister has been doing all along. Under this minister's watch, we are going to have a new correctional facility, but we are also going to have the programming necessary to turn away from warehousing Yukoners, programming that allows true rehabilitation in this territory, reducing the recidivism rate.

I am very proud of the minister's efforts in this area, as I am of the minister's efforts in education, through educational reform, as I am of the Minister of Economic Development, in the dramatic turnaround of the Yukon's economy — there are historic lows in unemployment — as I am of the Minister of Tourism and the minister responsible for the Public Service Commission and the Women's Directorate, who has been doing yeoman duty in making sure her portfolios are advancing and improving, as I am of the new Minister of Health and Social Services and his dedication and efforts to truly assist Yukoners in their needs, as I am of the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, who has done a tremendous amount to bring the industry back to this territory, as I am of the Minister of Highways and Public Works and all of our team. I present them to the Yukon public. I am very proud of each and every one of them.

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

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

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

Motion agreed to

Speaker leaves the Chair

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Chair: Order please. Committee of the Whole will now come to order. The matter before the Committee is Bill No. 68, *Act to Repeal the Physiotherapists Act*.

Before we begin, do members wish a brief recess?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Chair: We will take a 15-minute recess.

Recess

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

Bill No. 68 — *Act to Repeal the Physiotherapists Act*

Chair: The Committee will now continue with general debate of Bill No. 68, *Act to Repeal the Physiotherapists Act*.

Hon. Mr. Hart: I would like to bring forward a couple of responses to questions that were provided during the second reading.

How does the government envision the future role and regulation of nurse practitioners in the Yukon Territory in order to enhance their employment? Regulation of nurse practitioners is of interest to the Yukon government. A working group has been meeting to work toward developing regulations under the *Registered Nurses Profession Act*. This group is led by Health and Social Services and includes Yukon registered nurses, association representatives and community service representatives. The intent is to develop a legal framework that will enable regulated nurse practitioners to practice in the Yukon.

Another question was: where are we with the regulations for other professions under the *Health Professions Act* and would I provide an update? Community services branch has been working closely with the Yukon physiotherapists to finalize the regulations governing their profession. We expect to announce the new regulations, which will be under the omnibus *Health Professions Act*, later this spring. We're in the spring now, I guess.

Community Services and Health and Social Services are also working with representative groups from two other unregulated health professions on the development of regulations governing their professions. These are medical laboratory technicians and psychiatric nurses.

Occupational therapists have indicated an interest in developing regulations for their profession also. The department will meet with representatives later to discuss the regulatory development process and the timing of their project.

Also, a question was asked if it was the government's intention to have midwives under the omnibus *Health Professions Act*. The *Health Professions Act* provides a common framework for the regulation of those who work in the Yukon's unregulated health professions. Midwifery is unregulated in the Yukon. Although there were some earlier discussions with midwives, there have been no formal requests to designate midwives under the *Health Professions Act*.

Ms. Duncan: In order to expedite this bill through Committee, I would request unanimous consent of the Committee to deem all clauses and the title of Bill No. 68 read and agreed to.

Unanimous consent re deeming clauses of Bill No. 68 read and agreed to

Chair: Ms. Duncan has requested the unanimous consent of the Committee to deem all clauses and the title of Bill No. 68, *Act to Repeal the Physiotherapists Act*, deemed read and agreed to.

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

Chair: Unanimous consent has been granted.

Clause 1 deemed to have been read and agreed to

On Title

Title agreed to

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Mr. Chair, I move that Bill No. 68 be reported without amendment.

Chair: Mr. Cathers has moved that Bill No. 68, *Act to Repeal the Physiotherapists Act*, be reported without amendment.

Motion agreed to

Bill No. 69 — *Canadian Blood Services Indemnification Act*

Hon. Mr. Cathers: I am pleased to rise today in the House to speak briefly to the *Canadian Blood Services Indemnification Act*. For the benefit of members opposite, I would like to begin by addressing a question that was raised by the Member for Porter Creek South during debate at the second reading stage, when she asked how the indemnity provided under this act would show up on the Yukon government's books. In answer to that question, it shows up as a contingent liability, similar to the manner in which the Yukon government provides self-insurance up to a certain level of coverage and seeks insurance for coverage over that level.

The *Canadian Blood Services Indemnification Act* is the result of an agreement with the other provincial and territorial governments, with the exception of Quebec. Up until 1998, the Red Cross Society included blood collection as part of its business of providing humanitarian assistance, but in the 1980s and 1990s it became clear that the collection and supply of blood required more of a government role to provide dedicated and specialized expertise in this area.

As a result, the Red Cross moved out of the blood business and, as I stated, the provincial and territorial governments — with the exception of Quebec — set up the Canadian Blood Services Corporation, whose sole purpose is managing and administering the country's blood supply.

As I stated earlier, Quebec provides its own coverage through a parallel, non-profit corporation known as Héma-Québec. I think I spoke enough about that at second reading for the benefit of members opposite.

The blood supply business carries a number of risks, so it is necessary to provide coverage for claims made against Canadian Blood Services in relation to those risks.

Canadian Blood Services, as determined by experts, maintains a billion dollars' worth of coverage. The first level of

\$250 million is provided by a captive insurance company owned by Canadian Blood Services. Previously, the second layer of \$750 million in coverage was provided through an Outside insurance company. Due to the significant hikes in insurance rates, it is now being provided by governments, collectively, through indemnities and similar instruments on government books wherein, if the \$250 million level of coverage is exceeded, the remaining \$750 million of coverage will be dipped into.

This is provided through what is referred to as an excess insurance company, which pays for claims only in excess of that first coverage.

The company is set up in British Columbia. Participating governments signed an agreement stating that the capital will come from the governments that participate in Canadian Blood Services.

As stated, the instrument that worked for the Yukon government's books is an indemnity and it shows up as a contingent liability on the government's books.

I thank the members opposite for their attention, and at this time I would entertain any comments or questions they have regarding the *Canadian Blood Services Indemnification Act*.

Ms. Duncan: I would request the unanimous consent of the Committee to deem all clauses and the title of Bill No. 69, *Canadian Blood Services Indemnification Act*, read and agreed to.

Unanimous consent re deeming clauses of Bill No. 69 read and agreed to

Chair: Ms. Duncan has requested the unanimous consent of the Committee to deem all clauses and the title of Bill No. 69, *Canadian Blood Services Indemnification Act*, read and agreed to. Are you agreed?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

Chair: Unanimous consent has been granted.

Clauses 1 to 4 deemed to have been read and agreed to

On Title

Title agreed to

Hon. Mr. Cathers: I move that Bill No. 69, *Canadian Blood Services Indemnification Act*, be reported without amendment.

Chair: Mr. Cathers has moved that Bill No. 69, *Canadian Blood Services Indemnification Act*, be reported without amendment.

Motion agreed to

Chair: We will continue with Bill No. 20, *First Appropriation Act, 2006-07*.

Bill No. 20 — First Appropriation Act, 2006-07 — continued

Legislative Assembly Office

Mr. Staffen: The Members' Services Board is responsible for the budgets of the Yukon Legislative Assembly and its House officers. This includes the Conflicts Commissioner, whose funding is provided in a program in the budget of the Yukon Legislative Assembly.

The Members' Services Board reviewed the Vote 1 estimates for the Yukon Legislative Assembly now before the House at its meeting of November 15, 2005. The board agreed to these estimates and further agreed that they be forwarded to the Minister of Finance for inclusion in the main estimates. The estimates found in Vote 1 are identical to those that received approval of the Members' Services Board.

The operation and maintenance budget proposed in the Legislative Assembly for the 2006-07 year totals \$4,149,000, which is an increase of \$96,000, or 2.4 percent, over the 2005-06 main estimates and forecast. The capital budget proposed for the Yukon Legislative Assembly for 2006-07 totals \$40,000, which represents no change from the 2005-06 main estimates and forecasts.

Recognizing that the budget for the Legislative Assembly has already been reviewed and agreed to by the Members' Services Board, the House is now facing some time constraints. I have asked the Clerk to provide all members the information in written form on the programs included in this vote. I trust the members will find this approach to be satisfactory.

Mr. Mitchell: I thank the Speaker for that report. I think I can refer to you as the Speaker, even though you're out of the Chair — the Member for Riverdale North.

I'll be very brief in the interest of time. I'll put what I have to ask in one question and hopefully we can get just one response. I notice *Hansard* and the broadcasting and televising of it have been addressed in the report. I would just urge the Speaker and the Clerk to see whatever they can do to find a way to provide the television broadcast to rural communities that don't have access to the cablevision as we do here in Whitehorse.

Also, it would appear we may need to look at the possibility of upgrades or replacements for the sound system, which has been failing of late. I would ask if there's enough funding available, should that happen in the near term, to undertake that.

Finally, what are the implications, if any, of our revised sitting hours on the *Hansard* contract and *Hansard* employees in the long term — not so much this session, but rather in future sessions? Would there have to be some rebalancing done?

Hon. Mr. Staffen: I thank the leader of the official opposition for his suggestions. We'll most certainly take them under advisement. Of course, these decisions are also made by the Member's Services Board, of which the leader of the official opposition is part, so we look forward to working with him and finding solutions to these issues.

Chair: Are there any further questions? We will now proceed with line-by-line.

Ms. Duncan: Mr. Chair, I would request unanimous consent of the Committee to deem all lines in Vote 1, Yukon Legislative Assembly, cleared or carried, as required.

Unanimous consent re deeming all lines in Vote 1, Yukon Legislative Assembly, cleared or carried

Chair: Ms. Duncan has requested the unanimous consent to deem all lines in Vote 1, Yukon Legislative Assembly, cleared and carried, as required.

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

Chair: Unanimous consent has been granted.
On Operations and Maintenance Expenditures
Total Operations and Maintenance Expenditures in the
amount of \$4,149,000 agreed to
On Capital Expenditures
Total Capital Expenditures in the amount of \$40,000
agreed to
Yukon Legislative Assembly agreed to

Chair: That concludes Yukon Legislative Assembly Office. Is there desire to continue with the Elections Office?

Elections Office

Chair: We will continue with the Elections Office.

Hon. Mr. Staffen: I am speaking to the House on behalf of the Members' Services Board, which reviewed the estimates of the Elections Office at its meeting of November 15, 2005.

The operations and maintenance budget proposed for the Elections Office for 2006-07 totals \$744,000, which is an increase of \$468,000 or 170 percent over the 2005-06 forecast.

The capital budget proposed for the Elections Office for 2006-07 totals \$5,000, which represents no change from the 2005-06 forecast. The operation and maintenance estimates for the elections programs are being increased by \$468,000. On an activity level, this breaks down as follows: there is a decrease of \$42,000 in the Chief Electoral Officer's activities. This amount represents the cost of two events that took place in 2005-06 that will not be repeated in the current fiscal year. First, \$30,000 was provided in 2005-06 to cover the cost of hosting the Canadian elections officers conference. Second, \$12,000 was provided in 2005-06 to cover travel and honoraria costs for returning officers' workshop and training. Elections administration activity has been increased from the 2005-06 forecast by \$456,000 to a total of \$522,000. This increase is required to cover the cost of administering the next general election of the Members of the Yukon Legislative Assembly.

There is an increase of \$54,000 in the Elections Office's *Education Act* activity. This increase to a total of \$64,000 reflects the amount required to administer the general election of school councils, which will take place in the fall of 2006, with polling day on October 2, 2006.

Electoral district boundaries activity will remain as a \$1 item.

Thank you.

Ms. Duncan: I would request the unanimous consent of the Committee to deem all lines in Vote 24, Elections Office, cleared or carried, as required.

Unanimous consent re deeming all lines in Vote 24, Elections Office, cleared or carried

Chair: Ms. Duncan has requested the unanimous consent of the Committee to deem all lines in Vote 24, Elections Office, cleared or carried, as required. Are you agreed?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

Chair: Unanimous consent has been granted.
On Operation and Maintenance Expenditures

Total Operation and Maintenance Expenditures in the
amount of \$744,000 agreed to
On Capital Expenditures
Total Capital Expenditures in the amount of \$5,000
agreed to
Elections Office agreed to

Hon. Mr. Cathers: I move that we report progress on Bill No. 20.

Chair: Mr. Cathers has moved that we report progress on Bill No. 20, *First Appropriation Act, 2006-07*.
Motion agreed to

Chair: We'll continue with Bill No. 70, *Act to Amend the Income Tax Act (2006)*

Bill No. 70 — Act to Amend the Income Tax Act (2006)

Hon. Mr. Fentie: I will be brief in my comments. This is a very straightforward and short piece of legislation. The purpose of this bill is to limit the amount of mineral exploration tax credit available to a taxpayer to \$300,000 for this upcoming year.

The mineral exploration tax credit was introduced to help stimulate the mining industry in the territory through exploration, as stated in second reading. When this government assumed office in 2002, mineral exploration was at an all-time low of some \$6 million. In 2005, mineral exploration was estimated to be at \$50 million — a very impressive turnaround, to say the least. Projections for this coming season are over double that.

The mineral exploration tax credit has served us well in assisting with the increase in exploration activity, and we believe that now it is prudent to set some financial constraints on this program; hence, the introduction of Bill No. 70.

Mr. Chair, we know that the mineral exploration tax credit is a significant factor for junior exploration companies in the planning of their exploration activities. This credit limit will not affect smaller exploration companies doing their work. Furthermore, it is estimated that this credit limit will not affect any individuals involved in exploration in the mining sector.

In 2002, the tax credit cost the treasury \$1.7 million. In 2006, it is anticipated that this cost could be in excess of \$10 million if a cap is not put in place. It is anticipated that this \$300,000 cap, which is being proposed, will save the treasury approximately — on the bottom end of the scale — \$4 million.

This bill is a prudent move that ensures that there is an appropriate balance between exploration activity and the cost to the treasury/Yukon taxpayer.

I hope all members will see fit to support us in this bill. If members have questions, I would be pleased to answer them now.

Ms. Duncan: I would request unanimous consent of the Committee to deem all clauses and the title of Bill No. 70, *Act to Amend the Income Act (2006)*, read and agreed to, as required.

Unanimous consent re deeming all clauses of Bill No. 70 read and agreed to

Chair: Ms. Duncan has requested the unanimous consent of the Committee to deem all clauses and title of Bill No. 70, *Act to Amend the Income Tax Act (2006)*, read and agreed to. Are you agreed?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

Chair: Unanimous consent has been granted.

Clauses 1 and 2 agreed to

On Title

Title agreed to

Hon. Mr. Fentie: Mr. Chair, I move that we report Bill No. 70, *Act to Amend the Income Tax Act (2006)*, without amendment.

Chair: Mr. Fentie has moved that we report Bill No. 70, *Act to Amend the Income Tax Act (2006)*, without amendment.

Motion agreed to

Chair: We will now continue with Bill No. 20, *First Appropriation Act, 2006-07*, Department of Highways and Public Works.

Bill No. 20 — *First Appropriation Act, 2006-07* — continued

Department of Highways and Public Works — *continued*

Chair: Order please. Mr. Hart, you have the floor.

Hon. Mr. Hart: I would like to continue with my comments from yesterday.

The Department of Highways and Public Works is seeking legislative approval for \$1.2 million in order to proceed with the improvements to the Whitehorse Airport parking lot. Phase 1 of the work will begin in 2006, and we will see a new parking lot area constructed but not paved.

Phase 2 of the project will see paving, landscaping and electrical work finished. It is anticipated that the entire project will be completed in the fall of 2007.

Future growth of the southern area of the airport is largely dependent upon the construction of water and sewer systems that are tied to the City of Whitehorse.

My department is working with the City of Whitehorse and will allocate funds in the amount of \$200,000 in order to undertake design work for water and sewer in the southern development area of the Whitehorse Airport.

In the past year, we have investigated options to replace the territory's aging multi-departmental mobile radio system. Mobile communications is an essential service. Simply put, it saves lives. In addition to replacing MDMRS, the project includes the provision of cellular service to 17 Yukon communities. The Department of Highways and Public Works is therefore seeking legislative approval for \$5.28 million in order to proceed with the mobile communications solution, or MoCS.

The MoCS strategy will enable government to replace the current multi-departmental mobile radio system — or MDMRS, which it was previously called — which has been in operation since 1991.

As you already know from the announcement we made in December 2005, enhanced cell service will begin to be rolled out in the next several months in the first 13 of 17 communities, with service in all those communities being available by the end of 2007.

Through a significant investment in our roads, airports, buildings and systems, my department is contributing to the revitalization of the Yukon economy and creating infrastructure that will open the doors for further investment and continued opportunity. I look forward to the road ahead.

Maintenant je suis heureux à répondre à vos questions, s'il vous plaît. Merci beaucoup.

Mr. McRobb: Bonjour. Pardon my French. It has been years since I took it in high school, as I'm sure you can appreciate.

I would like to start off with a good word about the many employees in this department. Some of them I've known personally for years, Mr. Chair, especially the people who work in the transportation division and look after our roads and highways and who get called out at any hour of the day, any day of the year, to respond to weather events and other emergencies.

So, hats off to all of those dedicated employees throughout the department.

I want to move next to some information requests I made during the briefing. Also, on a positive note, I'd like to start off by thanking the minister for the information he did pass on with respect to the highway camp budgets in comparison to the previous year. That was very helpful, and I do have a question on that that I'd like to get to in a little bit.

Also, in the spirit of cooperation, Mr. Chair, I think with this minister in particular it's quite possible to work together and get through my questions in a relatively short period of time. I know he has two very capable officials by his side, complete with numerous binders, who are champing at the bit to get this department passed through this Assembly.

The information that I think might still be outstanding includes the following: request for a copy of the PowerPoint presentation that was provided by officials during the briefing. That briefing occurred on April 10, and the PowerPoint included a lot of information that is ordinarily provided in a handout — when we get handouts, that is. It would have been very useful to us in preparation for this debate. So, I would like the minister to respond to that request.

Also, I requested a breakdown by airports. I'm not sure if that information was provided. I couldn't find it before this debate. And I also requested the indulgence of the departmental officials, if they could provide us with a list of the highway improvements envisioned by the B.C. government on the Alaska Highway this summer.

That question, Mr. Chair, is related to the fact that the Alaska Highway soon will be paved or covered in its entirety, from Dawson City to Fairbanks. Aside from some remaining Shakwak project and the chipsealing near Marshall Creek, to my knowledge the only outstanding sections are in the northern B.C. section at mile 400 and mile 500.

If the minister could undertake to provide that information, it would be appreciated.

In a different area, I requested a list of property leases this department currently has, along with the amounts of the leases. Again, I haven't seen that information so I'd like the minister to respond to that.

There are four items, right off the top. I'd like to hear what the minister has to say.

Hon. Mr. Hart: I think I'll try to deal with the Alaska Highway reconstruction for northern British Columbia first. It is anticipated reclamation of this portion of the highway will cost somewhere around \$300 million. In 2006, PWC — which is Public Works Canada — is focusing on bridge replacement and some paving. The Smith River bridge will be replaced in 2006. Pavement overlay is being scheduled for kilometre 145 to 165, which is mile 101 and south. The Racine River and the Tetsa River bridges will be replaced in future years.

PWC does not plan to do any reconstruction on the Alaska Highway in 2006.

With regard to the aviation and marine branch, a main estimate by site, I could provide the member opposite with that copy, which he can have today.

In addition, with respect to the request for leases, I can provide the member with that information at a later date, and probably fairly shortly.

And the PowerPoint — yes, we can provide the member opposite with the PowerPoint presentation of the briefing.

Mr. McRobb: It's a pleasure for me to say on record once again that this minister earns my vote as the best one over there to deal with. I have always found his demeanour rather accommodating, Mr. Chair, without all of the political zeal that is quite time-consuming and that we are subjected to from time to time.

I want to turn now to the prospect of highway washouts. I know the minister is familiar with this publication I'm holding in my hand now, which is entitled the *Yukon Snow Survey Bulletin & Water Supply Forecast*. This is the May 1 edition for this year.

In reviewing it, it strikes me, Mr. Chair, that there is a lot of potential for washouts under the current conditions. We see it happening in British Columbia — not too far away — and given the usual delay we have in the warmth up here, this is something that we should be prepared for, if it should happen here.

Just to ensure the minister is aware, I'd like to recite a little bit from this publication. It says that April was a very wet month. It says that there has been considerable precipitation. There has also been less melt than normal, and the Yukon has above-normal snowpack for May 1.

Now, in addition to this, Mr. Chair, it's probably accurate to say that the first half of May was also quite cool, and there was precipitation. So, what this has done is load up the mountainsides and the watersheds with quite a bit of snow and groundwater that is making its way down to lower elevations where our roads are primarily located.

How, Mr. Chair, considering the precarious situation the Yukon is in — we are facing a tourist season already strapped with a couple of disadvantages, including the low exchange rate on the American dollar and the high price of gas. The nail

in our coffin could be a road washout in northern B.C. and perhaps the Racine River bridge, which the minister mentioned, which has washed out on previous occasions, causing a total blockade of the Alaska Highway. Or it could happen at Silver Creek, which has washed out before, or it could happen in a number of other locations.

In reviewing this snow course information, it's quite evident there is significantly higher than normal averages of water content in the snowpack in the Alsek River basin, as well as the Yukon River basin and the Liard River basin. A lot of our highways are located in those watershed basins.

I know the minister is going to stand up and probably give the typical response that he has prepared for any emergency. Well, we've heard that before. He is obviously in no position to control an act of God, but perhaps it comes down to preparation, the response time, contingency measures, and so on, to be able to handle this. I think the minister has heard from me quite a bit on this. I'd like to hear his answer.

Hon. Mr. Hart: The member opposite puts forth a very hypothetical case by reading what he has into the register here. He also stated that he commends the department for coming out in emergency times of the year and assisting where needed.

We are currently aware of two situations where we are monitoring the water situation — that is in the Liard area and the Frances River area. Those two particular areas we are watching particularly closely and we are doing that in conjunction with EMO, which is helping us with this particular aspect to ensure that we are monitoring this to get some warning when we need it so we can get our forces in place to attack the situation when it arrives. I stress "attack the situation when it arrives".

We have been very successful to date in managing any emergency circumstances that have come to us. I foresee no reason why we can't do it in the future.

Mr. McRobb: Well of course the minister is quite right, Mr. Chair. This is a hypothetical situation. I guess we can leave this particular issue, seeing it has been raised and there is no reason for anybody to be unaware of the prospects. Nor is there reason for anybody not to be proactive and ready for such a washout should it occur.

Mr. Chair, I would like to ask the minister about the capital funding he is planning on the Campbell Highway. We note the recent news with respect to the overvaluation of the Wolverine deposit and the decreased consequent likelihood that the property might be developed. Will that be impacting the significant expenditures the minister plans to upgrade that highway?

Hon. Mr. Hart: We have a full development plan for the Robert Campbell Highway and it is dependent upon the development that takes place on that highway. Should that come about, we have the process. We have the engineering aspects ready to go for improvements to take place on the Robert Campbell Highway.

Mr. McRobb: The minister is proceeding, regardless of the fortunes of any particular mining properties along the road. They're just sticking to the overall game plan. The minister is shaking his head in disagreement. Can he explain?

Hon. Mr. Hart: It depends on the production. It depends on the issue and the need of production or mining area requirements or natural resources within the area.

Mr. McRobb: It depends on production? I can't quite figure that out. Maybe the minister can help me. There is \$1,650,000 budgeted for this summer for reconstruction of the Campbell Highway, yet, today's *Yukon News* indicates the Wolverine property will be delayed at least a year. So, what do you mean that it depends on production?

Hon. Mr. Hart: It's a production decision by the mine. The member opposite indicates it will be a year. With issues with regard to our budget, we have a million dollars for reconstruction on the Robert Campbell Highway that is taking place farther down the highway, closer to Watson Lake, and the remainder of the money will go into engineering for design and upgrading of the facilities.

Mr. McRobb: I think there is some new information that the minister hasn't adjusted to. Also, in this article it says that a new start date has been set for spring 2007, with actual mining work to begin in spring 2008. This is quite a ways off. It would seem prudent to have this huge expenditure timed and synchronized with a greater level of certainty of this mine's production. I see the minister is conferencing with his officials. Let's hear what he has to say.

Hon. Mr. Hart: Once again the member opposite is bringing in a newspaper article with respect to the Campbell Highway. I will advise the member opposite that we are working with Energy, Mines and Resources and the mining industry on these needs. I can tell the member opposite that there is no way we can build 100 miles of road in one year. We are in the process of working with those two departments to ensure we are in the midst. As I said, it's based on production and whether the mining company decides to go into production. We will work with Energy, Mines and Resources on the needs that are required to take place. This road has not been substantially worked on for many years and it will require a substantial amount of capital at inlay.

Mr. McRobb: Would the minister consider relocating this budget appropriation further north on the same highway, to maybe reconstruct the section between Little Salmon Lake and Ross River? This is something we have heard about and it's probably something you would agree with, Mr. Deputy Chair. The section between Little Salmon Lake and Ross River has been a concern to residents in that area as well as other travelers for years.

If we have this kind of money to throw at a highway, why not put it where it would be the best use?

Hon. Mr. Hart: I'm sure if the Shawkaw funding wasn't available, he would be asking for the funds to go into Haines Junction. We made plans with regard to improvements on the Robert Campbell Highway. They've been needed for some time. We're continuing on in that particular vein to ensure we can follow through with the improvements that were previously made. We anticipate making the other repairs to the road, depending upon what comes out of our negotiations with the industry, as well as Energy, Mines and Resources.

Mr. McRobb: We believe there's probably a better use of that funding, at this particular time at least. Of course we understand the importance of ensuring the infrastructure is upgraded to accommodate future mining developments but, given the uncertainty we're reading about in today's paper, we're not sure if this is the precise time for that particular property.

I'd like to shift gears slightly and look at the Alaska Highway. I note that the low amount appropriated for upgrading on the Alaska Highway that is YTG-funded is only \$250,000. That's a very low amount. It's only about 10 percent what it was a few years ago when this government took office.

My concern is, what if the pipeline comes soon? There's a chance. We've heard a lot of rhetoric about how this government is pipeline ready, blah, blah, blah, pipeline ready.

I've talked to people in the transportation industry and can say with 100-percent certainty that they are rather depressed about the future, should the pipeline come very soon.

Here is why they are depressed. They are depressed because of the rather degenerated condition of the Alaska Highway from here to the south. I'm referring mainly to the lack of passing lanes on the hills and so on that would be deemed necessary with the increased truck traffic related to the world's largest ever private-industry project coming to the Yukon.

Now, there are issues about weigh stations and enforcement and so on. We've gone through those before. We've talked about this before too. And I'm not too enthused. There's been really not much done about it in the last few years. Looking now at this budget — \$250,000 for the Alaska Highway — and realizing that it's less than 15 percent of what the government is spending on the Campbell Highway, or less than 12 percent of what it's spending on the Dempster Highway, or less than 12 percent as well of what the government is spending on the Atlin Road.

Well, Mr. Chair, where are the priorities? It's time for a little bit of accountability here. I want to bring a bit of flame to the minister's toes on this final day of what could be the final day of the session. Let me put it in a question to the minister, now that he's all primed up: how can this minister possibly claim that he has done all he can to make his department pipeline ready, vis-à-vis highways in the Yukon, when he's only spending \$250,000 on the Alaska Highway this year when it's in dire need of passing lanes on the hills and so on and so forth, and he's spending nearly 10 times that much on the Atlin Road, and about nine times that much on the Dempster Highway, and more than six times that on the Campbell Highway.

Where are the minister's priorities and, in his mind, how does he validate being called a "pipeline-ready minister"?

Hon. Mr. Hart: The member opposite is again using a hypothetical situation. First of all, the pipeline decision is not made by the Yukon government. The pipeline decision is going to be made by the suppliers; that is, if it ever gets built. I would remind the member opposite that, in 1978, we were pipeline ready and away we went. But where did we go? Was the pipeline built? No.

My issue with the member opposite is this: when it is decided to be built, it will be built. The decision is not ours to make.

With regard to the money on the Alaska Highway, I would remind the member opposite that we are expending well over \$2 million on capital projects throughout the Alaska Highway, other than the Shakwak project. We are spending money on the Atlin Road — a similar amount on that particular venue. Maybe the member opposite can just review the financial document. We are evening it out throughout the Yukon: we have money going to Atlin; we have money going into the Dempster; we have money going into Shakwak and, I might add, a substantial amount of money is going into the Shakwak. Yes, we have money going into the Robert Campbell Highway, but we have 5,400 kilometres of highway and I would say to the member opposite that, if you are going to get in there, review the material.

We are doing lots with regard to our highways, given the budget that we have, and I am very happy to say that we are spreading it throughout the Yukon on an even basis.

Mr. McRobb: I'm afraid the minister has proven me wrong, in that my earlier assessment that he tends to avoid the political speeches has been contradicted, and I am so sad.

Mr. Deputy Chair, he mentions the other amount being spent on the Alaska Highway by his department — I know he is hiding in shame; we can see that — he is hiding behind the numbers.

These other numbers that he refers to — Shakwak highway improvements are all paid by good old Uncle Sam. That is paid by the American government. The Government of the United States is paying the bill on those projects.

The bridge upgrades — the Teslin River bridge and these other projects — are federally funded to at least half the extent. The bridge upgrade just west of town on the Alaska Highway is a revote from last year. It's not part of this year's budget. Like I said, I think the minister is getting a little political there. He was getting out of his message box a little bit.

I want to move on and talk about the HERC project. I wasn't the critic for the Department of Highways and Public Works for most of the controversy over the HERC. There is a lot I don't know yet, but I'd like to get to the bottom of at least one aspect. It seems to me that, after listening to some people, the HERC project is giving the government a licence to, in some respects, privatize the public funds spent on highway upgrading. What I mean by that is this government is leasing equipment that is privately owned as opposed to the standard practice of using its own equipment and then buying and replacing its own equipment. It is doing this through contracting.

I know this question has been on the minister's mind for quite a long time. He might have even been asked this question before. I would like an answer but not the same old answer. I would like one that sincerely addresses the issue of privatizing the public expenditures versus doing it the usual way.

Hon. Mr. Hart: This is not a privatization exercise. This is a response to many requests we got from smaller rural areas, requesting that the government provide smaller jobs for which they can utilize their equipment in their areas. We got several complaints from the smaller areas that most of the jobs in their community were being taken by companies from out-

side — either from Whitehorse or wherever, but not from their own community.

We looked at the program that was handled in northern British Columbia; we adopted several of the methods that were identified in that particular program, and we've gone forward with the rental of equipment for highway construction.

Mr. McRobb: Does the minister have any data he can provide us in terms of what the government is renting with respect to vehicles, something we can compare?

Hon. Mr. Hart: The evaluation of the HERC program was tabled in the House; however, I could provide the member opposite with a thick copy of the third party agreement we obtained and, if he wishes, I could send it over to him.

Mr. McRobb: Well, I understand that is totally inconclusive, and I'm asking the minister if he has any real data he can provide us with, so that by looking at it we can make an honest assessment of what's happening here.

Hon. Mr. Hart: We'll provide the member opposite with all the information we have.

Mr. McRobb: Has a decision been made on whether or not to proceed with the final phase of the Teslin River bridge restoration?

Hon. Mr. Hart: The Teslin River bridge has been awarded.

Mr. McRobb: Okay, I'm referring to a *Whitehorse Star* article from April 27 of this year, where it indicated that the government budgeted \$6.75 million over two years to install a new bridge deck. That was about \$1.4 million less than the low bid of \$8.14 million received from Copcan Contracting Ltd. of Nanaimo, B.C. Which contract was it that has been awarded?

Hon. Mr. Hart: The project that has been awarded is Copcan Contracting Ltd. for the Teslin River bridge.

Mr. McRobb: Is that the one I just referred to? Because that is old news.

Part of this same article said that it has not been decided if the final phase of the bridge restoration will proceed. The minister says it's the same contract.

What about the \$1.4 million less than the low bid received? What is happening with this?

Hon. Mr. Hart: We awarded to the lowest bidder on this particular project, and we postponed other projects to capitalize it.

Mr. McRobb: Okay, so now we found out the other stuff has been postponed.

In property management, is the department moving money to cover construction or rent at the One Stop Business Shop expansion?

Hon. Mr. Hart: Maybe the member opposite can elaborate on specifically what he wants answered.

Mr. McRobb: Well, let's talk about the One Stop Business Shop expansion. We don't need to go back in history and start quoting the Yukon Party members and what they called it when they were in opposition. We don't need to do that, even though it's report-card time.

In the interest of productivity, I would like to ask the minister for one thing. How much space is in the addition that has

been leased by the government? What amount of money is that leased for, and what is the term of the lease? Has he provided a copy of the lease arrangements?

Hon. Mr. Hart: I don't have specific details, but it's approximately 4,700 square feet and there are around seven years left.

Mr. McRobb: I would just ask the minister, when he provides the information he agreed to earlier with respect to the list of property leases and the amounts, to ensure that each space rented or leased in each building is singled out and identified, along with the terms of the lease and the amount being paid according to the terms of the lease or the current rental agreements. We would expect that information would cover this building space.

I would like the minister to give us an update on the MoCS, and specifically when that cell service will be available to Yukon communities.

Hon. Mr. Hart: The Government of Yukon selected Latitude Wireless as the service provider to expand cell service to 17 Yukon communities. Latitude Wireless is commencing construction on the initial 13 communities in May 2006. The remaining four communities will receive cell service in the second half of 2007.

Latitude Wireless is a new company that is jointly owned by Northwestel Inc. and the Dakwakada Development Corporation. The first public information piece provided by Latitude Wireless is being delivered to all Yukon households during May and June of this year as a mailer and via Northwestel bills and addresses the launch of the company and its services.

Community construction scheduled for 2006-07, May through September, is on track as per Latitude Wireless' original proposal and communication plan and is being implemented.

The Government of Yukon will directly be advised in advance of each community's launch. Tagish and Teslin are to be the first communities to receive service in May of this year. I understand that we have service available for the cell system right now, but they are still working out some of the kinks with regard to some of the towers.

Other specifics concerning operations and services are pending release from Latitude Wireless from that particular spot.

Mr. McRobb: I note the department issued a mobile communications solution update sometime back — probably about a year and a half ago. It would seem like, in the words of the Member for Porter Creek South, a timely time to maybe have this again. Has the minister got any plans to do that?

Hon. Mr. Hart: Latitude Wireless has their own newsletter release and they are handling the release of that particular document.

Mr. McRobb: Then it does seem like it is a timely time. I note the budget has a \$500,000 appropriation to Northwestel. We're not quite sure what this is for. Can the minister elaborate?

Hon. Mr. Hart: Could the member opposite refer to a specific point where it identifies Northwestel?

Mr. McRobb: I am sorry, Mr. Chair, I don't have that reference in front of me but I am willing to accept an undertaking by the minister — if his officials find that reference, which I'm sure they will — if he could simply include the information with the material he has already agreed to pass on, that would be acceptable.

In looking at this whole MoCS situation, I have a very simple question: is this a P3 arrangement?

Hon. Mr. Hart: This is not a P3; it's a service agreement with Northwestel.

Mr. McRobb: Okay, so it's not a P3, in the minister's words. It's a service arrangement or agreement with a private company. It involves public funds, and so on.

I would like to know, does the minister have any policy parameters he goes by in conducting his actions with respect to what arrangements he carries out in partnerships or agreements with private enterprise?

Hon. Mr. Hart: We follow the contract regulations and we follow the normal procurement process. This agreement is basically the purchase of a service.

Mr. McRobb: So, I didn't hear if there are any policy parameters that guide the minister's actions or not.

I want to ask the minister about the concept of a Yukon-wide community television network. This is something that was raised in the fall sitting, and it was something that was raised at the briefing. So, the minister should have been apprised about this.

There is one individual who has proposed that such a network would require the capital cost of approximately \$500,000 and would bring television capability to every Yukon community, using existing towers and so on. As I understand it —

Some Hon. Members: (Inaudible)

Mr. McRobb: Mr. Chair, it's becoming hard to hear in here, with other members talking.

Chair: I agree. The Chair is having difficulty hearing the speaker, with all of the chatter. Mr. McRobb, you have the floor.

Mr. McRobb: If this information is accurate, it seems to be a reasonable cost and it would provide public service in many Yukon communities — well, virtually every one — and would help to reinstitute the broadcast of this Assembly to rural Yukon. We know that, in this sitting in particular, that service has been curtailed as it has only been available on WHTV channel 9, as far as television broadcasting goes.

I know the communications group is considering concepts such as this. What can the minister tell us in terms of the development or practicality of this idea?

Hon. Mr. Hart: Those decisions are made through the Members' Services Board, of which the leader of the official opposition is a part.

Mr. McRobb: I will accept that there is some legitimacy in the minister's answer only with respect to who decides to pay for the broadcast of this Assembly's proceedings, period. But when it comes to the development of a community television network across the Yukon, it is this minister's department, the communications branch, that has the responsibility to review these proposals, especially when the use of public

funds is being considered toward the capital costs. It is this minister who has the expertise in that branch to assess these proposals. I know there has been some liaison already between the branch and other branches of the government toward this project.

I have made clear who makes the final decision — sure, it could be Members' Services Board-related, but the expertise is within the minister's department. I am asking him if he could provide us with an opinion on the viability of a Yukon-wide community television network, irrespective of its use.

Hon. Mr. Hart: What the member asks is actually a large undertaking on behalf of the department. In addition, I'm concerned we would be interfering with the private sector in regard to television rights. After all, we have a local Whitehorse television station that provides that kind of service throughout the community. In essence, that's a bit of a competitive issue.

With regard to the television request, I have received no request for this particular type of technology and/or a request to do a feasibility study on it.

Mr. Cardiff: I thank the minister for the opportunity today to ask a few questions in Highways and Public Works. I thank the minister's officials for the briefing we had. I as well as the Member for Kluane look forward to receiving the information that was requested, which the Member for Kluane duly noted.

I have some questions. I'd like to start with a request about the rural roads program. I've asked the minister questions about rural roads before. For starters, can the minister tell me how much funding is in this budget for the rural roads program?

Hon. Mr. Hart: It is \$300,000.

Mr. Cardiff: This raises some questions. This is the same answer that I got in previous years when I asked this question. There is \$300,000 in the rural roads program. Admittedly, this information was obtained through the *Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act*. This is a listing of rural roads projects. I don't know whether these are all projects — I believe that was what was requested when they requested this information about rural roads projects in the rural roads upgrade program.

If you look at the amount of money that has been spent over the years, in the year 2000, it was \$1 million in rural roads projects, \$375,000 in 2001, \$847,000 in 2002, \$791,000 in 2003 and \$698,000 in 2004.

I don't want to be too critical, but we've talked about this before. I recently asked a question in the Legislature about the need to upgrade the sawmill road south of Whitehorse here that runs along the Yukon River. I have asked the minister questions about rural roads before, as have other members in the Legislature.

Consistently, every year, I get the same answer. The budget is \$300,000, and it's oversubscribed. When I put in a request to the minister about why certain projects can't proceed, it's because the project is oversubscribed. So, for the last three years, the budget has been \$300,000 for the rural roads upgrade program, and it's always oversubscribed.

I want to know why there is not an increase? If the program is consistently oversubscribed, there is obviously a demand to have rural roads upgraded. It's an issue of public safety — and public health in some cases. I would like to know why this item can't have its budget increased?

It appears they spend more money on rural roads. And when you look at some of the projects — there was money spent on the breakwater in Destruction Bay. That was considered a rural roads project. The last time I checked, it might be helpful for boats, but it's not a road.

Can the minister tell me a little bit about what the rationale is behind that? Why, it appears, do we spend more money than what's budgeted? And why isn't the request increased?

Hon. Mr. Hart: We usually expend funds in excess of what's available in the program in the budget because of what the member stated — there is a high demand, and also because we usually have funds that we can divert from other programs to accommodate that particular situation.

It happens on a regular basis. If I put \$600,000 in it, will it be \$800,000 next year? Where does the end go?

The issue is that we look at the appropriate priority based on the need with respect to our equipment — whether it can go up and down the road, what it's going to cost us to maintain these facilities once they are brought up to road standard — and we're working from that process.

We're not looking at repairing somebody's driveway. There has to be a minimum number of people involved in a particular aspect, so that we can work ahead.

Mr. Cardiff: The minister knows full well — just out of the blue last year, they upgraded the road into the Annie Lake golf course for some valid reasons but, at the same time, other projects that I have asked the minister about — like the one I asked the other day, the one project on Gentian Lane I asked about. It seemed like a pretty low-cost, reasonable request to make a road passable, and it wasn't a driveway. I know that there have been some requests for other roads in Mount Lorne to be upgraded. Hopefully, the minister will take some of that under consideration and the department will, as well.

I would like to ask the minister a question about the highway business sign policy. There was quite a flurry of activity last year resulting from the new highway business sign policy — a flurry of activity along the Alaska Highway, putting in new sign standards. I know there was quite a bit of work done on the north highway in this regard. I haven't been out that way, so I'm not sure how many signs are up. I notice that south of Whitehorse there are virtually no signs, but we have culverts with concrete and eight-by-eight posts sticking out of the ground and no signs, save for the Canada Winter Games sign. I am wondering where we are at or if there is some problem, because there doesn't seem to be much activity out there with regard to these signs.

Hon. Mr. Hart: The Government of Yukon recognizes that highway signs are important for motorists to locate businesses and services when they are travelling throughout our highways. A thorough process to develop the sign regulation has allowed for extensive consultation with the public and the

business community in order to deliver regulations that balance the needs of all stakeholders.

The revised highway sign regulations will be implemented shortly. We are just fine-tuning our agreement with the Whitehorse Chamber of Commerce and hopefully, within a very short period of time, there will be signs going up on those blocks and on sticks hanging out on the road, as the member opposite indicated, south of town, to take care of his lack of sight there.

Mr. Cardiff: I would like to ask the minister some questions. I asked some questions in Question Period a little while ago about the government contracting summary. This one just happens to be until March 2004. I'd like to know how this report is produced. When I look at it and when I ask other people about it, it looks like a computer-generated document. It's in a database. I would like to know how this report is produced. All this information should be in a computer and you should be able to push the button and generate it.

When it is provided this way, it is broken down by department and by contract type, whether it's a service contract or a general contract — there are a number of different ones.

I am wondering how this report is generated, if he could explain that.

Hon. Mr. Hart: The data is provided by the department and submitted to us when we prepare the report. We are looking at ways to improve the information we get so that it is easier to read and easier for the data to be entered by the departments so that the information can be disbursed, so we are working on it concurrently.

Mr. Cardiff: There are definitely some problems. The minister insisted the last time I asked these questions that all this information is available on the Web site, but it is not available. There are differences between what is available on the government Web site, on the Department of Highways and Public Works site — the contract registry search you can do, but you can't find out, unless you actually go further and further, as to what kind of contract it is, whether it is a public tender, an invitational tender, or a sole-source contract. You don't know that unless you get further into the details. You can get that out of the contract summary, but it is really hard to get all of the information in a sortable, searchable manner on the Web site.

The minister says they are looking at ways to make it easier. When they are doing that, I would hope they make it easier for the public because it is a matter of public information — how the government spends the public's money on these contracts. Hopefully they will look at that, and what I would hope, actually, is that this document should be an ongoing construction project.

Can the minister tell me how long after a contract is signed does it take to be put into that registry? Does it take a week, a month? It shouldn't take very long once the contract is signed. It should be able to go to whomever and they should be able to enter the data about the contract in a matter of minutes. Can the minister tell me: how long does that take?

Hon. Mr. Hart: We don't have a specific time to provide the member opposite as to how long it takes to get some-

thing registered there. It varies at all times of the year. In the spring, for example, it will take longer. In the fall and winter, we will get there faster. In the summer, it is going to be a little slower because we have more contracts to work out. I can't give the member opposite an answer of seven days, four days or 14 days, because it varies throughout the year.

Mr. Cardiff: It seems a little strange. If there is somebody who does that particular job of entering contracts as they are signed into the registry, it should go fairly fast — if that is what their job is.

The minister said they can't generate this report and make it available until next fall, which means it might be during the next session of the Legislature when we actually get it. What I'd like to know from the minister is whether or not these contract summary reports could be made available electronically on the Web site. It seems to me that there should be no reason, if this information is stored in a computer, why you couldn't just run a query in that program and have all this information available on a monthly or bi-monthly basis. What would be the problem with that?

Hon. Mr. Hart: As I stated, we are working on trying to improve the system. We take many of his issues seriously and we are looking at trying to improve that so everyone can have access to this information. The member talks about getting it electronically, for example, but that requires you to have the appropriate software. It requires us to have the appropriate information input and data processed. Right now, that is what the department would have to face in order to put it on the Web site so it is available.

Currently, that's a decision that has to go through Management Board and DMRC with respect to the IT equipment. They determine where the priorities are, and we move from there.

Mr. Cardiff: Well, it's a matter of public information. I could probably ask questions about the *Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act* today too, but I understand that there is some progress being made there. I don't have the copy of the Ombudsman's report in front of me, but it appears that there are still problems with getting access to information. This is just but one example of where we have problems — the public has problems, the media has problems — getting information, and this is information that should be available to the public.

The minister has previously told me that it's going to be another month or more before this report is available for the previous year — the contracting summary report by department. So, could the minister commit in the House today to making that available to the public prior to it being tabled in the next sitting of the Legislature? So, instead of waiting until fall — if we have a fall sitting — can the minister make it available when it becomes available in the department?

Hon. Mr. Hart: We'll do our utmost to provide a written copy to the general public as soon as possible.

Mr. Cardiff: I would just like to thank the minister. It has actually been a pleasure working with him, asking questions and receiving answers. It has been a lot easier than dealing with some of the other people.

I don't have any further questions. I think that the Member for Klwane covered off a lot of the areas of questioning I had. I don't want to delay this any longer. I don't have any further questions at this time. I look forward to receiving the information that has been requested and thank the minister.

Chair: Are there any further questions in general debate?

Mr. Fairclough: I do have a question with respect to the heavy equipment rental program. When it was introduced, it was introduced as a pilot project, and before an evaluation of this program was done the following year, the government continued on with the HERC program. I asked these questions before, and I'm not satisfied with the answer I was given. So, maybe things have changed a bit, with more information gathered by the department.

The question I asked before was whether or not this program was saving government money. The minister couldn't say that the government was actually saving money through this program because there wasn't any way to properly compare the construction of highway costs on different highways. That's partly reflected in the evaluation of this program.

I would like to ask that question again — if the minister has more information gathered since the evaluation, and whether or not there will be another evaluation on this program since there is more government money spent on it and more information gathered. Perhaps the public can see a comparison of what it would cost doing construction on a highway with government employees versus contracting out certain sections versus using the HERC program.

Hon. Mr. Hart: With the HERC program that he has discussed with regard to whether we make a profit, as I stated before, it's very difficult to make a comparison — it's apples to oranges — with regard to whether it's safe or not or whether we are saving money on a particular project. We are going to continue on with some portions of the HERC program where we know we can get it. A further evaluation will be planned for that particular aspect. In addition, we will look at a way of evaluating that program at a future date to get a comparison on that particular road and see where we can go from there.

Once that is complete — again, this is a long-term objective and we will see where we go. To get a real comparison, we will need to do projects of similar value on the same road so that we are comparing apples to apples.

Mr. Fairclough: I would think the department had enough information with all the construction work that took place, for example, on the Campbell Highway in the past years and could make that comparison.

The minister just said they were going to continue on with some portions of the HERC program. Can he tell me which ones? Did he just misspeak, meaning we are continuing on with the whole program?

Hon. Mr. Hart: We have \$1 million under HERC for the Robert Campbell Highway; we have \$600,000 on engineering for that particular aspect on the Robert Campbell Highway. We are looking at approximately \$500,000 for the Dempster Highway and the Klondike Highway for grub control on the side of the road.

Mr. Fairclough: My question really wasn't answered, Mr. Chair, but I would like to move on to another question in this particular program.

The government is using the HERC program extensively and moving it around the territory. Is it becoming policy now that we are going to be using this program? Also, can the minister tell us if the department will be cutting back on purchasing or replacing equipment in the Highways and Public Works department for maintenance and so on and relying on private sector rentals?

Hon. Mr. Hart: We are not cutting back on any purchasing of equipment. Under our Fleet Vehicle Agency we are purchasing our equipment. We recently had an assessment done of our equipment by an independent assessor on how we purchase our equipment and which equipment we are going to keep. We are following the process outlined within those particular parameters. It indicates, for example, that there is some equipment we should unload and it highlights what specific equipment we should be keeping. In essence, we are following that particular route; we are not doing the grubbing and scrubbing that we were talking about regarding the highway. It is work that we would normally tender out anyway.

Chair: Is there any further general debate?

Mr. Cardiff: I have one more question that just came to mind in this regard, and I thank the Member for Mayo-Tatchun for jogging my memory about this. It has to do with a question that I have asked a couple of times previously. It is about reduction of employees in rural highways maintenance camps. I don't have the figures in front of me or readily available at my fingertips, but the minister said they are working, trying to fill those positions in various communities. I recall Watson Lake, Carmacks, and Haines Junction — there were several reductions from what I can gather. Maybe the minister could make some information available as to the staffing levels in those facilities. The minister's response was that they were working to try to fill those positions.

A quick check over the last month or so since this was first raised shows no advertisement in the newspapers or on the government Web site trying to fill positions in highways maintenance camps. The question for the minister is this: how are they working toward trying to fill those positions if they're not advertising for them?

Hon. Mr. Hart: Throughout Highways and Public Works, we have difficulty in hiring mechanics and heavy-equipment operators. Those skills are in great demand in both highway construction and the regular construction industry. For example, we did run a mechanics test but we didn't get one response.

There has been no reduction of staff from mains to mains. No services have been reduced from last year to this year. We currently have full-time mechanics in Watson Lake, Ross River, Mayo, Haines Junction, Dawson City and Teslin. We're working on that with regard to ensuring we have appropriate people, especially during winter months.

Chair: Is there any further general debate? Hearing none, we'll proceed with line-by-line.

Mr. Fairclough: I request unanimous consent of the Committee to deem all lines in Vote 55, Department of Highways and Public Works, cleared or carried, as required.

Unanimous consent re deeming all lines in Vote 55, Department of Highways and Public Works, cleared or carried

Chair: Mr. Fairclough has requested the unanimous consent of the Committee to deem all lines in Vote 55, Department of Highways and Public Works, cleared or carried, as required. Are you agreed?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

Chair: Unanimous consent has been granted.

On Operation and Maintenance Expenditures

Total Operation and Maintenance Expenditures in the amount of \$76,738,000 agreed to

On Capital Expenditures

Total Capital Expenditures in the amount of \$72,446,000 agreed to

Department of Highways and Public Works agreed to

Chair: We'll now continue with Vote 52, Department of Environment.

Department of Environment

Hon. Mr. Fentic: It's a pleasure for me to rise today to apprise the members of some of the various programs and projects that will be undertaken this fiscal year through the proposed Department of Environment operations and capital budget.

As everyone knows, April was designated as Biodiversity Awareness Month, and the department's year-round role is to protect Yukon's environment and to ensure the continued viability of the territory's biodiversity. The department's efforts are intended to protect and enhance the quality of the Yukon environment through ecosystem-based management, conservation resources and protection and maintenance of biodiversity.

I would like to outline some of the many activities, projects and programs that are utilized by the department to achieve those goals.

First, when it comes to climate change initiatives, the department is moving forward on its commitment to climate change initiatives and has allocated \$95,000 in this year's budget to support the recently recruited climate change coordinator. Environment Yukon has been a key player in the government's climate change activities, ever since it helped the establishment of the northern climate exchange at Yukon College more than six years ago.

The first task for the coordinator will be to start the planning for the delivery of the department's climate change activities, so that we can address the concerns of impacts and adaptations. For example, there are concerns for the impact of climate change on the health of our wildlife and plant populations and whether we will be facing new diseases that have not existed here in the past.

Helping resource planners is very important, and the department is embarking on a new and innovative approach to how it uses the information that it collects in its operations.

This new initiative will have critical, long-term benefits for decision makers who must consider the many aspects of natural resource management in the Yukon Territory.

Referred to as the bio-physical land classification and mapping project, this initiative will have benefits for the many federal, territorial and First Nation governments and agencies that will be called upon to make land use and resource management decisions: land use planners, wildlife and forest managers, First Nations, renewable resource councils, the mining, oil and gas, and agricultural industries.

I was reminded recently that the days in which the game branch was considered the sole source for information about our wildlife populations have pretty well changed in this modern area. Today there are wildlife and resource managers on staff with First Nation governments, non-government agencies such as Ducks Unlimited, the Canadian Wildlife Service, Parks Canada, the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, land use planning commissions, the Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Board, and also the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources. Private sector companies searching for oil and gas, mineral properties and forest resources also employ their own environmental and resource management specialists, as do private environmental consulting firms.

Mr. Chair, we have allocated \$180,000 to start the project this year so we can start the job of developing standards for a common language that foresters, biologists, agronomists and other resource managers and naturalists can use to describe and communicate about ecosystems in the Yukon.

Tasks will include the recruitment of an expert ecologist to head the delivery of this new program and the development of a strategic plan to put all the pieces together to undertake bio-physical mapping in the Yukon.

Over the long term, the biophysical land classification and mapping project will contribute to the territory's sustainable development and benefit Yukon's wildlife through more effective habitat planning.

Linked to this initiative is \$202,000 going to the Yukon environment information system. This ongoing work is key to ensuring that the department's data is standardized, well-managed and available for inclusion in the government's corporate spatial warehouse.

The spatial warehouse coordinated by the information and communications technology division in the Department of Highways and Public Works is a service through which data is shared with other departments, governments and the public. The 2006-07 expenditures include database development and data conversion for wildlife survey, biophysical and other resource inventory data. This initiative is expected to create a total of 33 weeks work in the private sector.

Other data collection initiatives include a new half-time NatureServe Yukon technician position, which is being created with \$35,000 of funding from the Nature Conservancy of Canada. This position will provide critical support in areas of data collection and responding to client requests.

The NatureServe Yukon office also receives annual support from the Canadian Wildlife Service, which covers the cost of a coordinator's position. We have earmarked \$20,000 to

undertake a project to integrate moose survey data with land use planning activities. This initial project, which needs to be designed and tested this year, can have long-term benefits for wildlife and land use planners.

Enhancing and supporting field operations are also important through the activities of the Department of Environment. As I previously mentioned in my tribute to Earth Day, on April 20, the government has met with the employees in the department's fish and wildlife branch to obtain their advice directly on what we can do to enhance and support their invaluable work.

We've also had representation from First Nation governments, the Yukon Fish and Game Association, and the Yukon Outfitters Association on the need to extend additional financial support to the field studies and operations carried out by this very important branch in the department.

I've directed officials in the department to prepare the details on how we can improve, enhance and expand our annual wildlife survey population work, so that we have timely and accurate information throughout the territory. We need the information, so that resource managers have the necessary tools and resources to make informed recommendations to decision makers, who must look at all aspects of resource management.

This information is also important to help all of us determine whether we have healthy wildlife populations, or whether we need to start plans for species or populations that might be considered at risk. We also recognize that improving this wildlife survey work is not going to happen overnight, and officials have been asked to come back with a five-year plan, so that we can improve our research and management capabilities.

When it comes to wildlife management planning, there are numerous significant undertakings this year for fish and wildlife management and in projects related to species at risk. The department oversees a variety of fish and wildlife management plans with input from First Nations, local resource users, the public, renewable resource councils and, of course, the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board.

Works in progress include an elk management plan, a Southern Lakes moose recovery plan, as well as reviews of the integrated fish and wildlife management plans for the Kluane region, Teslin and north Yukon.

We are also working with the Kaska to carry out fish and wildlife planning in their traditional territory. And we will be carrying out several species-at-risk management plans this year, including work on Yukon wood bison, bears, woodland caribou and wolverines.

One of the projects that is very important is the Chisana project. This will be the final year of the Chisana caribou project. It's a very successful model of international and intergovernmental cooperation. The project continues to receive considerable international and national attention and is very important to the people of the White River First Nation and Beaver Creek area.

The partners in this project have been the White River First Nation, the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board, the Canadian Wildlife Service, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, the United States National Parks Service, the United

States Fish and Wildlife Service and, of course, Environment Yukon. The techniques developed over the last three years are now being looked at by agencies in Alberta, which see this project as a possible answer to that province's efforts to reverse the decline of some caribou herd populations within Alberta's jurisdiction.

We have budgeted \$206,000 for this year's fieldwork, which is an increase of \$60,000 over 2005-06. An additional \$120,000 will be spent by contributing partners such as the Canadian Wildlife Service and the White River First Nation. The State of Alaska is also contributing significant funding and resources — one-third of the staff time is coming from the State of Alaska.

Under fisheries management, the fisheries section is working with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans on freshwater habitat administration. This is intended to increase Environment Yukon's involvement in freshwater habitat management. This would include the field assessment of proposed projects. Programs popular with the public will be supported this year as work is done to improve public viewing at the Whitehorse fishway and to expand the Whitehorse Rapids Fish Hatchery.

Wildlife viewing is another important program and we will be adding to its efforts to help increase the public's wildlife viewing satisfaction. New wildlife viewing information signs will be installed at significant wildlife areas in Whitehorse, at Emerald Lake on the Carcross Road, at Keno Hill, and Gravel Lake and Wye Lake.

Another interesting initiative by the department was the environment board game. On this front work is continuing on the production of the new Yukon environment board game designed by elementary school students in grades 4 to 7. This government feels it is very important to engage with our young people on the values of Yukon's wildlife and its environment. This game is tied directly to the curriculum taught in Yukon schools and uses the ecological footprint, or the amount of land required, to support a certain activity or lifestyle as the underlying principle of the game. The board game's development has involved teacher and student focus groups and piloting as well as input from Environment Yukon staff to provide maximum Yukon content.

The Department of Education has also been involved, through the consultation and testing with teachers and curriculum specialists, and the department will also be helping with the cataloguing and distribution of the game. Development work is continuing to have the game produced in both French and English. Officials have scheduled the broader release to schools for mid-May with the full bilingual version ready for September so that all schools have copies on hand. A lot of work has been done on this production, and we know it will be fun for students to learn about the Yukon environment and the value of our biodiversity throughout the year.

Mr. Chair, the Yukon Wildlife Preserve is another initiative this government has undertaken. Environment Yukon is continuing the government's commitment to the Yukon Wildlife Preserve by helping to improve the overall infrastructure. The major task is to make sure the preserve is double-fenced so that the risk of nose-to-nose contact and the risk of wildlife

escaping into the wild or wildlife entering the preserve is minimized.

Fencing is one of the requirements of the preserve to become an accredited member of the Canadian Association of Zoos and Aquariums, which sets standards for animal care, housing and, indeed, security. There is also the need to install new feeding stations to meet occupational health and safety standards and to upgrade health and safety standards for buildings on the property.

Mr. Chair, to this end we have allocated \$412,000 to undertake the necessary work.

Another very important initiative undertaken by the Department of Environment is special management area planning. The department's commitment to land claims implementation is also highlighted within its parks branch and the efforts toward special management areas and parks planning.

Much of the work will be done on ecosystem assessments and preparing information for future SMA management planning. Fishing Branch and Horseshoe Slough habitat protection areas have been designated, and work is proceeding on drafting management plans for Nordenskiöld, Ddhaw Ghro and Lhut-saw habitat protection areas. Work is also continuing on management plans for the Fishing Branch ecological reserve and the Fishing Branch Wilderness Reserve and Habitat Protection Area.

When it comes to the parks branch, it is moving forward on plans to expand and enhance visitors' and residents' experiences in Tombstone Territorial Park. The Yukon government, the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nation government and Holland America Tours are working on a partnership agreement to promote interpretive trips into Tombstone Territorial Park.

Work will continue this year to provide basic visitor services in the park, including bear-proof garbage containers, trail construction and improvement, backcountry shelters and backcountry washroom facilities, or toilets.

In the other parts of the territory, work is planned to fix and upgrade facilities at Five Fingers Rapids, Wolf Creek, Kusawa Lake, Pine Lake and Simpson Lake campgrounds. The parks branch will also be working with the Ta'an Kwäch'an First Nation on the maintenance and management of the campsite on the Thirty Mile portion of the Yukon River out of Lake Laberge.

Concern for drinking water and making sure our water is safe has resulted in \$20,000 being added to the parks branch operational budget. This is to make sure that biophysical well-water quality monitoring is carried out on a regular basis to ensure basic environmental health water quality standards are being maintained.

Another initiative is the ice-patch research project. The department is continuing its contribution to the ice-patch research work in the southwest Yukon. It is a program that continues to amaze scientists and many others around the world. We have budgeted \$50,000 to continue the search for and access to rapidly melting alpine ice patches so that ancient biological specimens can be retrieved. This invaluable work and the collection of environmental data to examine paleoecological is-

ues will continue to enhance our understanding of climate shifts and how they relate to modern-day wildlife populations.

In summary, the overall operations and maintenance budget is down by a modest one percent over last year's projected expenditures. This is primarily due to a decrease of one-time funding received in *Supplementary No. 1* in 2005-06. The major portion of this one-time funding was \$240,000 to pay for costs of managing what is known as the Lambert Street fuel spill. To this day, the cause and source of that oil spill is still a mystery.

The additional one-time funding dollars went to cover other corporate initiatives to strengthen the department's strategic focus on environmental sustainability and integrated resource management.

On the capital side, there is an overall increase of \$428,000, or 17 percent, and I covered several of the new and ongoing projects in earlier remarks.

With that, I would be delighted to take questions from the members opposite on one of the most functional and important departments in the Yukon government's corporate structure.

Mr. Fairclough: I would like to ask a few questions on this department. We have less than an hour to get through several departments. It's unfortunate that the minister says this is a very important department, but this is the second sitting in a row that Environment has been left to the last with very little time to debate it. It should have been bumped up to the beginning. I know what the response from the Premier will be when he gets up and talks about this.

So, we have to cut our questions as short as possible and give all members in this House an opportunity to ask some questions. I would like to ask a question with regard to climate change. I had the good fortune to attend the Kyoto Protocol meeting when it was developed in 1998. There was a lot of passion to reduce greenhouse gases. Since then, the Yukon government has tried to address this on a number of different fronts. The biggest one was focussing on energy efficiency. I didn't hear the Premier say what the department or his government have done to try to address this issue, other than some of the programming that was carried on from previous governments.

I would like to ask the Premier what new programs or action this government has taken to address climate change and global warming — not the ongoing programs that the department normally does. What is his government doing that is new?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: I am compelled to respond to the Member for Mayo-Tatchun's remarks on the importance we place on the Department of Environment and the parallel he draws to its position in the daily business of this Assembly. I would remind the member that this is the 30th day of the sitting. The official opposition had ample time during the course of the last 29 days to manage their debate and time so that we could get to all the departments. They have not been very effective in that area. That is something that the government is not responsible for, although we continually encourage constructive and expeditious debate in this Assembly.

So, I will again encourage the official opposition to conduct themselves in a manner that reflects constructiveness and

in a manner that will expedite debate on behalf of the public interest.

Of course, one of the things that is new is the establishment of the coordinator position for climate change. But I will repeat again the issue for Yukon. Our emission factor is really quite low in this territory in overall emissions contributing to climate change or global warming. But the impacts that we are experiencing are quite severe and quite stark.

Another area that is new is the objective within the northern strategy toward climate change, which could include research and development, establishment of adaptation measures to deal with the impacts of global warming while the world itself, country by country, becomes much more efficient in reducing emissions.

Now, with respect to Kyoto, the member mentions passion. I agree that there is a lot of passion in this particular area, given its significance to the planet and human daily life on the planet. But I want to point out that Kyoto, as it existed, though it brought forth some very noble goals, is not at question here. What did we do as a country in meeting those goals? All the information available to this government shows that, on the federal stage, we haven't reduced emissions. In fact, our emissions, even under implementation of Kyoto, have increased.

I think it's an important time for us, where the federal government is thoroughly looking into these investments — what they actually accomplish in terms of meeting our real responsibility and addressing, in a real way, reduction of emissions.

I don't have that information at my fingertips. We will have to await the federal government's overall assessment of the many investments that were transpiring. One could also draw a parallel to Kyoto and our commitment to lowering our emissions and what has transpired in terms of those emissions increasing, while other countries, such as the United States — to the best information made available to me — have actually reduced their emissions overall. There are huge questions in this area. Our focus here is to address what we can do here, effectively, in a meaningful way. I have pointed out two new objectives that are very important to climate change.

Mr. Fairclough: Part of the problem we have had in this Legislature is that we have had ministers giving 20-minute answers in this House. Not the Premier, not this time, but it has taken place. The proof is in *Hansard*.

In four years, I guess I can go back to what this government has done for those who are interested and point out those two sections.

I would like to ask the minister about contaminated sites. Over the past year — I am not sure if this question was asked in the last session — I would like to know which sites have been identified for cleanup and what action this government has taken to ensure that the polluter pays for these contaminated sites.

Hon. Mr. Fentie: Under devolution, I think we're all aware of the fact that the majority of the major contaminated sites in the Yukon — labelled as type 2 mine sites — are still within the purview and responsibility of the federal government. Work is ongoing with the federal government on ad-

ressing those contaminated sites, whether it be Faro, Clinton Creek or other areas.

As far as holding the private sector proponents responsible, that too would be a federal government area of obligation. I think it's important we recognize that decisions made in the past, creating the issue of where we're at with some of these sites, is something we should not spend a lot of time trying to reconstruct but, more importantly, focus on how we address these sites in terms of cleanup. That's something we will continue to work very closely with Canada on, as we had a requirement under the DTA to go through a period of time to put together a reclamation plan.

With respect to other contaminated sites, this is an ongoing process, because we are obligated by the Auditor General to book our environmental liabilities. One of those sites is the Marwell tar pits, and we are engaged with Canada right now in the possibility of putting together an investment package to clean up the Marwell tar pits.

There are also other areas still within the private sector purview. Of course, the National Energy Board, the Department of Environment and the Department of Health and Social Services are also involved in certain areas. Other consulting firms are all involved in addressing many of those areas.

Work is ongoing and underway on all fronts. I guess I could close by saying one of the immediate targets for the government, in terms of what we're going to do in isolation of all other factors involved, is trying to address the Marwell tar pits and finally get it cleaned up. It has been a long time coming, and I think we're close to an arrangement with Canada right now on a sharing investment plan that would see us address this mess in the very near future and have it dealt with. That's a very important facet of what the department has been up to over the last while.

Mr. Fairclough: Other than the type 2 mine sites — Faro and others — I guess the government hasn't been doing very much on that front.

With respect to traplines, in the First Nation final agreements it is an obligation of governments to ensure that 70 per cent of the traplines within First Nation traditional territory be in a First Nation name. Many of these First Nations are not near to that, and neither is government working toward ensuring that happens.

An example I can give is that there is a member in Mayo who has applied for a trapline that is in an overlap between Pelly and Mayo. The go-ahead was given with the two First Nations and the renewable resource council and so on, but nothing has been done on the Yukon government side, and there is still a delay.

So, what is government doing to ensure that First Nations reach this 70-percent goal?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: You know, Mr. Chair, it's always difficult to be constructive in dealing with the public's business, especially with the official opposition.

The facts are that the department has done a tremendous amount of work in addressing our obligations and liability with respect to the contaminated sites. And I want to point out that there have also been years and years of negotiation and discus-

sion through devolution with respect to the issue of contaminated sites.

So, it would be inaccurate to suggest that past governments and this government have been doing nothing. There has been a tremendous amount of work accomplished to date.

We are getting closer to addressing — not only booking the liability, which is important, but also getting to where we can reclaim and clean up many of these sites. Of course, that would include Canada and the decision-making process that Canada is under.

With respect to traplines, as the member well knows, that is an obligation under the land claims final agreements. But many of these traplines, as they exist today, are in the hands of a concession holder. Once that concession has expired or been turned back in, then we must reach the 70-percent threshold going forward where trapline concessions in the Yukon would then be in First Nation hands at that level.

Mr. Fairclough: That is, in fact, not happening. I know the Premier can recall a letter recently written to him by one of my constituents laying out his concerns. The department is not acting quickly enough and priority is not put on this by the department to ensure we reach this level.

A long time has gone by now and there are a lot of concessions that have been opened and asked for by First Nation members and not received. That's why I asked this question. It is important that the department put some priority on looking at this.

I will leave that with the Premier and the minister and move on to my next question. I would like to ask the minister about the bison numbers in the territory. When they were introduced, I believe the department looked at between 400 and 500 as the sustainable number for this bison herd. I believe 450 was the number that the department was looking at, and 500 was okay. We have long passed 500 animals. I believe we were up to 650 last year, and climbing. I would like to know what the plans of the department are to ensure we have this number reduced to what the department is comfortable with — 500.

Hon. Mr. Fentie: I can only deal with the information at hand with respect to the bison question. In March 2007, Environment Yukon conducted a count of the Aishihik wood bison — the herd itself. I want to point out that the survey conditions were excellent and a total of 350 bison were counted during the one-day helicopter survey, but we could not locate all of the radio-collared animals.

We recognize that there is an issue here; we have been in discussions with First Nations, such as Champagne and Aishihik First Nations. Part of what we are going to do in an upcoming initiative, which I have no problem articulating here today, is I have directed the department, as I pointed out in my speech, to bring back a five-year plan.

We want to update our database to include this particular area. Some of the immediate initiatives may be increasing the quota for the number of animals that can be taken through hunting. Maybe we'll look at other options besides a lottery, but that is all part of the discussions we will have — especially with First Nations — as we go through this very important exercise.

Overall, I think it is fair to say that the department is fully aware that there are issues with respect to this herd since its reintroduction here in the Yukon, and it is actively pursuing measures to address or mitigate those concerns — in particular with First Nation people, because we share their issues and concerns about habitat and concern for other indigenous species that are important to First Nation needs on a daily basis. Also, I think it is fair to say the herd is growing rapidly, and it is something we are going to have to address as quickly as possible.

Mr. Fairclough: I am sure that there are many people interested in what the department plans to do. The minister said that they are looking at a five-year plan. This is a bigger concern than I even thought. It has been brought to my attention almost every time I return to my riding. The issue is the size of the herd and its impact, like the Premier said, on other animals in that area.

I would like to move on. The minister said that they would like to deal with data and make decisions on that basis with regard to the bison. I would like to ask about the deer permits that are being given out now. Has the government any idea of what numbers are out there? Is it just a guesstimate or is there an actual count that's done by the department.

Hon. Mr. Fentie: The estimate is in the 800 range for the deer population. Yes, there is a hunt that is going to take place with respect to deer. Again, this is a very real impact of what can be considered climate change. Animals, like deer, are starting to migrate northward. It has been my experience that since the 1980s we have been experiencing this migration into the Yukon. They are moving further into the Yukon Territory. Originally they were just in the border regions with British Columbia, but now are extensively up into the beautiful Southern Lakes area. There is a large population of deer there. There are, of course, deer in the Whitehorse area and beyond to the Lake Laberge area. They tend to like areas that have been cleared and put into production. It's part of what they need to sustain themselves.

We know that they're here and we will probably experience growth in that area considering all the elements in the Yukon to contribute to a healthy deer population.

This is one of the measures we have undertaken to date: that is, to do some hunting to reduce the numbers as much as we can. But it's important that this be part of the data collection that we will be undertaking overall, along with the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board, which recommended that we move in this direction. We accepted that and are implementing that recommendation.

Mr. Fairclough: The minister didn't answer the question about the determination of the number of deer in the territory. Just before that, in regard to the bison, the minister said we are relying on data and doing counts and so on. I know the department has difficulty in counting deer. Perhaps the minister can elaborate a bit more on that — not too much, or we will run out of time here.

Also, there was a decision made to hunt, and it was a recommendation by the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board, but I would like to know how much consultation took

place with First Nations on this matter. The important thing here is that First Nations themselves have left this population alone for many years now. It was probably not until the last five years that they started hunting this animal. They have left it to grow in numbers. I don't believe it's so much that it requires permit hunting right now.

What the minister just said is we want to reduce the numbers as much as we can. I don't believe that is the initiative and direction given by the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board or the department itself. I'd like the minister to answer that question in regard to consultation and how they got to the numbers they did.

Hon. Mr. Fentie: Again, this is time management. In my previous response I clearly articulated for the member that our estimate is in the 800 range — 800 deer. That's the population estimate.

With respect to the hunt, it's a measure recommended by the Fish and Wildlife Management Board to help reduce the population, considering that this is a management tool. All the appropriate steps were taken in making the decision.

Mr. Fairclough: Well, I think it's pretty poor management if we're going by guesstimates. The department hasn't done a count, like they should, and I know that. So, we're going by guesstimates and we're already giving out permits. There's no real reason for that. The minister didn't say that we need to reduce the numbers — that's the reason for giving the permits out — but he did say that we need to reduce the numbers as much as we can, which I find startling when we don't really know what the numbers are.

I'd like to move on and I'd like to express my disappointment that the government side did not even list the Department of Education as part of this afternoon's debate. It's not even on the list of departments up for debate. Yukon Liquor Corporation is next, and I'm really disappointed that they feel that this department should not even be debated at all in this session. I wanted to raise that for members who may think that we're not asking appropriate questions in some of these very important departments.

I'd like to ask the minister about the beetle kill. He said that we were looking at perhaps designating Yukon as a disaster area when it comes to beetle kill.

I know that there are concerns by some people with regard to the one million cubic metres of wood that have been allocated. It is harvesting beetle-kill wood and green wood that is probably going to be killed by beetle infestation, but is the minister pursuing Yukon as a disaster zone — the beetle-kill area — and what portion of it?

My concern is that this beetle kill is moving into the Carmacks area, and Pelly is also experiencing this and has been asking questions about it. I don't know if it is the same area or a separate section where beetles are killing our trees. It seems to me that there is a huge jump when it comes to the Pelly area, and I know that the beetle kill is moving into the Carmacks area. I just want to know if we are pursuing this as a disaster zone.

Hon. Mr. Fentie: Well, interesting dissertation by the Member for Mayo-Tatchun.

First, I have to address his comments on the Department of Education. In fact, here on the Order Paper for Wednesday, May 24, it is listed that the Department of Education is up for debate, under business of the House for the date. I also want to point out that here we are on the 30th day, and the official opposition is making these kinds of claims with this list of public business left undone.

We started this afternoon in the Orders of the Day with the Legislative Assembly, Elections Office, Highways and Public Works. Now we are in the Department of Environment; there is the Yukon Development Corporation, the Yukon Liquor Corporation, Department of Education and the Office of the Ombudsman.

These are all left, Mr. Chair, for the final day of this 30-day sitting. Again, I point out that to have gotten to this point with the business left to be dealt with is not under the government's purview or its responsibility. It is the management of time by the opposition that is important.

Now, I will give credit where credit is due. The newly-anointed independent Member for Klondike has been expeditious in his debate. The third party has been direct, focused and expeditious in its debate. The official opposition has spent a lot of time stick-handling around such things as the price or cost of bypass surgery and all the rest of it. If the shoe fits — I guess the terminology would be — then wear it.

With respect to the Member of Mayo-Tatchun bringing information to the House that, somewhere at sometime, the government declared the Yukon a disaster area — I challenge the member to read *Hansard*; that's what the member said — nothing could be further from the facts.

In the southwest Yukon, we have the largest known spruce bark beetle infestation on — I believe — the North American continent. What we have said is that this region should be declared a natural disaster. The reason that declaration is important to the Yukon is to mitigate and reduce the impact and effects that this infestation is having, not only on the forest, but also in terms of the potential wildfire putting communities at risk, which is very real. The declaration of natural disaster then brings the federal government into this issue with a 90-percent federal and 10-percent territorial requirement for investment to deal with mitigating measures.

I want to make it clear for the members opposite, especially the official opposition who have, like the issue with the Ombudsman's letter and tabling of affidavits out of context and quoting from letters — and we all know what that resulted in — and now this statement. These are inaccuracies that have contributed to the official opposition being where they are at today in terms of the business left in this House.

I have a response for the Member for Mayo-Tatchun and the official opposition: turn the debate over to their colleagues, the independent member and the third party — so we can really get on with the debate in the public's interest.

We on the government side would certainly not disagree if the official opposition stood down on this kind of debate, which is, frankly, totally out of context and riddled with inaccuracies.

Mr. Fairclough: We saw what the debate looked like with the independent member yesterday, Mr. Chair.

Also I want to bring to the attention of the Premier a note that was from his own government House leader, which was a list of departments — I have it right here in my hand, and it's not a prop or anything, it's a note that was sent to our side of the House — that did not have the Department of Education on it. It is also signed by the government House leader. That's why I asked the question.

I am trying to go through the questions as quickly as I can. I have one final question and then I would like to turn it over. I know the members opposite — I can almost hear some of the questions that they will be asking.

My next question is about funding toward renewable resource councils through this department. I know they are responsible for a huge area and a lot of pressure is put on them to address things like land use permits or timber operations — anything to do with timber projects, water licences or mining or land use plans. A lot of that takes place under this department, including oil and gas and agricultural applications and so on.

They are expected to do research and put time and effort into this for Yukon government and for First Nations, and I would like to know, because of that and the increased activity that is taking place right now, how much additional money and resources are going to the renewable resource councils through this department to address these many issues?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: I am somewhat astonished at the Member for Mayo-Tatchun's question. The member, who has been involved in the land claims process for a long, long time, knows full well that the Yukon government is merely a flow-through vehicle for the funding for resource councils. This is all dedicated funding from the federal government; in fact it is this government that made the stand recently with Canada to ensure that some of the resource councils that were out of money were getting their necessary contribution so that they can function and carry out their work.

The member talks about assessments, and he mentioned increased activity. I thought recently the official opposition was saying that nothing is happening — it's all a myth — but the member now has obviously changed his mind, because there is increased activity out there, and how are we addressing that with assessments. Well, YESAA is the tool for the most part. Again, this is an initiative that is federal law; it is an initiative that came out of the land claims process and, of course, all available resources, as committed to, are being flowed to the YESA Board and the district offices.

I am pleased to say we have a full complement in terms of the YESA Board's ability to assess. I have recently, in a meeting with representatives of the executive of YESAB, encouraged them to come forward quickly should they recognize further needs so that we can sit down with Canada and work on this issue. That would mean this: does YESAB need more people? Does it need more resources? Where are we at now that we have started to implement this whole new regime in the territory?

That is something we are going to be very mindful and conscious of. As we go forward we will ensure that the ability

to do thorough and meaningful assessments will certainly be taking place in the Yukon for the benefit of industry and First Nations, but also of course Yukon's environment and its conservation.

Chair: Is there any further general debate?

Some Hon. Members: Clear.

Mr. Hardy: Contrary to the Liberals, it's not clear yet. They don't have the only voice in here.

Now, we have some very strong concerns, of course, about the environment. I've been accused of being too environmentalist, too left, and frankly, I've never considered them as badges of dishonour. If people want to label me as being concerned about the environment, so be it.

However, I am very concerned as well — I'm not pointing fingers. I'm very concerned about the time that's left. The fact is that we have now 22 minutes left before we have to end debate to complete our business by 5:30 p.m., and we are not even through the Department of Environment. We have hardly even touched on it. We haven't talked about the big issues yet.

We can talk about bison, about tar ponds and that, but we haven't even talked about the big issues, such as what's happening with the greenhouse gases and the polar ice caps and the permafrost that's starting to melt, and the buildings that sit on it and the towns that are actually based on permafrost and what's going to happen to them — those that sit by the oceanfront, with the rising of the waters that's being recorded. I mean, there is a mass of issues.

I know the Premier said we contribute very little, but you know what? Everybody contributes something, and we can contribute in an opposite direction. That's leadership — leadership around how we approach the environment, how we as a territory are going to recognize the significant negative impact we as a species on this planet have and what needs to be done to ensure that there is something for our children's children's children.

Right now, I am very concerned about some of the direction the world is going in.

Last month's *Time* magazine — the front page and many articles — was about global warming in both the United States and Canada and the issues that are facing us.

I don't know how to talk about something so significant to life and debate it in just a few minutes. It can't be done. I think that there's a serious problem in this Legislative Assembly and it has to be addressed before the next election. It has to be addressed by whoever is brought back here. There has to be an agreement that we find a different way to debate such significant issues. We have tried to ask questions in Question Period to cover the areas that we knew would not be covered in budget debate, once we knew time was running out. That's why we asked questions about education and the environment — to at least get something on record to indicate that we are very concerned. My colleague, the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin, has asked questions about the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. Kyoto has been asked about. The new Liberal member has mentioned Kyoto. We are also very concerned about that. I asked about it again today in Question Period, as part of our concern.

What I'm going to do now is put a few questions to the Premier. The Premier can get up and do what he sees fit. He can answer what he remembers or not. Basically, I am going to finish it there. I feel absolutely sick doing it this way. I feel like I'm letting down so many people in this territory by having to debate in this manner. Maybe I will wait for a minute while a person deals with his own issues.

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Mr. Hardy: You're still struggling, brother.

Here are some of the questions. If the Premier and the deputy minister could please pay attention to them, I will go through a few of them. The bigger ones I probably won't even touch on. I think they know where I stand on those and what we've tried to say. If the Premier can't give me the answers on the floor, I would really appreciate it if some of the answers could come back in written form.

Where is the Yukon conservation strategy and what is the status of it? Where is the Yukon climate change and energy strategy and what is the status of it, if there is anything there? I am concerned about land use planning and what is happening in that area with regard to large-scale developments. What is the role of the Department of Environment with regard to these large-scale developments such as railways, pipelines, petrol and mining developments? If he could give an overview on that, I would really appreciate it.

There are 10 wetlands that have been identified by a broad cross-section of Yukoners that are worthy of protection. Has the government been looking at those and planning to move ahead on any of them specifically or all 10 of them? What is the approach in that regard?

What is happening with Tombstone Park, for instance? Where is the management plan in regard to that? Three years have passed since the park has been created, but where is the plan? How are the First Nations that did give up their traditional lands to see the realization of this park involved in the development of that?

What is the state of the park management plan for the Kusawa area?

Here is one that has been talked about a lot — again, I am just touching on these — Wolf Lake park. I know there are opposing viewpoints about that. Can the minister please give me an indication of where they are sitting on that and if there have been any ongoing discussions with the Teslin Tlingit Council and where the federal government is in relation to that? I know it was a federal government initiative — I believe, more so than anything. What is the position right now of the government?

Of course, we've already talked about the beetle-kill area in Haines Junction, and there are so many questions around that, and concerns are being expressed about the size and the fact that some of the areas that will be logged are prime wildlife areas. Has that been considered in the protection? Are those areas being protected, or is it just going to be one big logging operation in order to deal with this? Without proper analysis and input, we may be doing more harm in the long term than we are necessarily aware of at the present time.

Wildlife Act amendments — to protect endangered species. Could I have a status report around that? Bison and the deer have already been touched on.

Again, just to sit down — we are running out of time. It's unbelievable. We've never come to this situation in the Legislature that I can remember, where we still have four or five departments that haven't even been touched, especially departments the size of Education and Environment, which is just being touched on now, and the other ones. It's a shame.

Ultimately, what is the status of the situation that evolved around the reindeer, and where are we? Are there court actions around that? Is the government in any type of negotiations to resolve that final outstanding issue? And overall, just basically the awareness that we do have a responsibility on a global scale, even if we're a small part of it. It's about leadership and setting an example of what the rest of the world can do.

I would like to see alternative energy, and I would like to see more conscious involvement. I would like to see more of an integration of awareness of economic activity and environmental activity and environmental concerns so that we don't walk ahead with one and leave the other behind — in either case — but that they are united and we see them as a whole and not separate.

Hon. Mr. Fentie: There was quite a long list, but I first want to go back to this issue about where we're at with the public's business in this House. The government brought in all its bills within the five-day time limit, including the budget. It was presented 29 days ago. I can't speak for why the official opposition took the route it did. A lot of debate was certainly questionable in terms of whether or not it was constructive debate of the public's business. The Member for Mayo-Tatchun advised us to read *Hansard*. Anyone who reads *Hansard* is going to pick that up quickly, especially when we have issues like the Member for Kluane going on at great length, line by line, asking questions that were somewhat — I don't want to say the word, because it might be ruled out of order, so I will just say somewhat blank.

Anyway, for the leader of the third party, land use planning is finally underway. The commission is up and running in north Yukon. It has been a long time coming, so we're very encouraged that those very dedicated Yukoners appointed to the commission are seriously undertaking the work. We expect great progress there.

Of course the member will understand that this government's approach with wetlands and other areas, in terms of conservation, are first focussed on our obligations through the claims with special management and special habitat areas. We are working on a number of those as we speak. That's important, because that's our first order of business — living up to the obligations that we've signed to under the final agreements.

We're extremely excited about what is going on with the Fishing Branch. When we took office, there were no boundaries set; they were absolutely not set. There was no management plan in place — none. We negotiated, along with the Vuntut Gwitchin, a way to get this resolved, so not only did this government do the necessary work to set the boundaries for

Tombstone; we also implemented the management plan as agreed to.

The same holds true for Tombstone Territorial Park. The boundaries have been set — by order-in-council. We are working with the First Nation on the management plan as we speak, and the scope of work is quite extensive with respect to management of Tombstone. As the member will well know, under the former NDP approach to protected areas, third party interests got involved in the park boundaries, and I don't think I have to go into any further detail with respect to that, but we are certainly working through the issues.

One of the reasons why we cancelled the flawed process and focused on our obligations under the claims themselves is because those agreements are largely going to be responsible for conservation as Yukon First Nations view conservation and the requirements therein.

I also want to delve into other areas like the issues of activity, mining, oil and gas and all these types of developments on the land base. We are now in the new era of YESAA; the new regime has been implemented. As I pointed out earlier, we have a full complement with our district offices and our YESA Board up and running and actively doing their work. As I said, we want to make sure that, as we go through this initial phase, we are definitely dealing with assessments in an appropriate manner, and if there are requirements we have to address in terms of human resources or other resources, we should do so.

But, also, we have withdrawn the land base for Kusawa park. That has been done by this government. When you consider all that we have done, today the total of the Yukon land base that is either national or territorial protected area is at 12.7 percent. Fully protected designations cover 10.5 percent of Yukon. These designations, of course, include national and territorial parks. Partially or interim protected designations are at 2.2 percent. Designations such as heritage rivers and wildlife sanctuaries are not legally protected and are, therefore, not included in the Yukon total. However, fully protected areas total 10.5 percent, compared with other jurisdictions such as B.C., Alberta and Ontario, which are only at nine percent, Manitoba, which is at 8.5 percent, Quebec, which is at seven percent, N.W.T. and Nunavut at 5.5 percent, and Saskatchewan, which is at five percent.

We have to factor in, going forward, that a number of the special management areas and habitat protection areas will have full to partial protection, increasing further the total land base that is under protection and conservation in the Yukon. I think it's fair to say that we're doing quite well in that area.

With respect to Wolf Lake park — first, there is no settlement in the Kaska traditional territory, and we oppose the federal government's move in the creation of Wolf Lake park and the alienation of land until the Kaska settlement is in place. That is important because that is part of what the First Nation recognizes as an issue in their traditional territory.

Furthermore, we need to address a number of other factors with respect to Wolf Lake park, and we want to ensure this is not something that Canada just arbitrarily or unilaterally dictates to the Yukon.

This has to be dealt with so that Yukoners make the ultimate decision. We are, of course, in the post-devolution era. We are responsible for lands, water and resources, not the federal government. I hope that helps the leader of the third party in terms of where we're at with Wolf Lake park.

In terms of the reindeer, fair market value was offered, subject to a thorough analysis of the health of the animals. We all know what the end result of that was.

Overall, I think it's fair to say that the department, with its ever-increasing budgets and ever-increasing workload, is doing a very good job on behalf of the Yukon and its citizens with respect to the mandate the Department of Environment must adhere to. It's a broad, extensive mandate in the areas it is responsible for. As I said to the department officials, it's time we start promoting what this department does. One of the initiatives that we are very excited about is what we call "celebrating Yukon parks". We want to start promoting the work that this department does, because this department has an extensive number of very professional and skilled people, whether they are scientists, biologists or others. They are skilled in areas that are critical to the Yukon environment and its protection and conservation.

I am saying to the members opposite that I think we should all recognize the work that this department and its officials and employees do. We should take more time to promote what they do throughout this territory.

I want to leave this with the issue about time. The government side is very disappointed that we could not engage with the members opposite in a thorough debate with respect to the budget and all it's intended to do. The investments that are within this budget are extensive. It's a record budget for this territory — some \$793 million, with a huge capital investment, but also the areas that are strengthening the Yukon's social fabric in health care, day care and social service. There are important investments being made in education. They are all relative to debate that should have taken place, instead of what transpired.

Leadership is much about that, Mr. Chair — ensuring that time is managed well and constructive debates are taking place in this Legislature on behalf of the Yukon public.

The government has been, is and will continue to be ready to have those discussions. As soon as the members of the official opposition are ready to do so, we will be prepared to engage in a meaningful way.

But overall, Mr. Chair, the budget in its entirety will certainly provide a positive impact on Yukon today and in the future. We're very pleased that we were able to bring forward a budget such as this, with all departments being invested in, so that they can do the work that they are responsible for.

It has been awhile since the Yukon has been experiencing this kind of positive trend, and we want to keep it going in a positive direction. One of the ways that can be maintained is right here in this Assembly, in this institution, in our debates in the fall and spring sittings.

So, we look forward to the fall sitting, Mr. Chair, which is soon to be upon us and would hope that the official opposition reflects on their approach to debate in this Assembly. The third

party and the independent member, as I stated earlier, set themselves apart in how they conducted themselves.

So, we're ready as a government to engage in the fall with a newly focused official opposition in dealing with the public's interest in a constructive and expeditious manner.

Mr. Fairclough: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I see that we only have a few minutes, and I just wanted to address some of the issues raised by the member of the third party and the Premier in regard to time and time management.

Look back in *Hansard* and look at the questions being asked — say, in the Department of Tourism and Culture — the minister took some 20 minutes to answer questions, Mr. Chair.

Some Hon. Member: Point of order, Mr. Chair.

Point of order

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

Mr. Hardy: I thought we were debating the environment.

Chair's statement

Chair: The department under debate is Vote 52, the Department of Environment.

Mr. Fairclough: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Also, Mr. Chair, if you reflect back to last Wednesday when people gave up motion day to speed up the business of the House, the leader of the third party went on for 20 minutes to ask a question — 20 minutes — and what he went on about, Mr. Chair, is that — and I'll get back to the issue at hand, because the Premier answered it — was about —

Some Hon. Member: Point of order, Mr. Chair.

Point of order

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

Mr. Hardy: It is my understanding that we are supposed to debate the department. If the member wants to waste time going back and looking at stuff, that should be done in a different venue.

Chair's statement

Chair: Order please. The time has reached 5:00 p.m. on this the 30th day of the 2006 spring sitting.

Termination of Committee proceedings as per Standing Order 76(1)

Chair: Order please. The time has reached 5:00 p.m., on this, the 30th day of the 2006 spring sitting. Standing Order 76(1) states: "On the sitting day that the Assembly has reached the maximum number of sitting days allocated for that sitting pursuant to Standing Order 75, the Chair of the Committee of the Whole, if the Assembly is in Committee of the Whole at the time, shall interrupt proceedings at 5:00 p.m. and, with respect to each government bill before Committee that the government House leader directs to be called, shall:

“(a) put the question on any amendment then before the Committee;

“(b) put the question, without debate or amendment, on a motion moved by a minister that the bill, including all clauses,

schedules, title and preamble, be deemed to be read and carried;

“(c) put the question on a motion moved by a minister that the bill be reported to the Assembly; and

“(d) when all bills have been dealt with, recall the Speaker to the Chair to report on the proceedings of the Committee.”

It is the duty of the Chair to now conduct the business of the Committee of the Whole in the manner directed by Standing Order 76(1).

The Chair would now ask the government House leader to indicate whether Bill No. 20, the only bill now before the Committee of the Whole, should be called.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: The government directs that Bill No. 20 be called at this time.

Chair: The Committee will now deal with Bill No. 20, *First Appropriation Act, 2006-07*. The Chair will now recognize Mr. Fentie as the sponsor of Bill No. 20, for the purpose of moving a motion pursuant to Standing Order 76(1)(b).

Hon. Mr. Fentie: I move that all clauses, schedules, and the title of Bill No. 20, entitled *First Appropriation Act, 2006-07*, be deemed to be read and carried.

Chair: It has been moved by Mr. Fentie that all clauses, schedules, and the title of Bill No. 20, entitled *First Appropriation Act, 2006-07*, be deemed to be read and carried.

As no debate or amendment is permitted, I shall now put the question.

Are you agreed?

Motion agreed to

On Operation and Maintenance Expenditures

Operation and maintenance Expenditures in the amount of \$606,658,000 agreed to

On Capital Expenditures

Capital Expenditures in the amount of \$191,702,000 agreed to

On Clause 1

Clause 1 agreed to

On Clause 2

Clause 2 agreed to

On Clause 3

Clause 3 agreed to

On Schedule A

Schedule A agreed to

On Schedule B Grants

Schedule B Grants agreed to

On Schedule C

Schedule C agreed to

On Schedule D Special Warrant

Schedule D Special Warrant agreed to

On Title

Title agreed to

Hon. Mr. Fentie: Mr. Chair, I move that you report Bill No. 20 without amendment.

Chair: It has been moved that Bill No. 20 be reported without amendment. As no debate or amendment is permitted, I shall now put the question. Are you agreed?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Chair: I think the ayes have it. I declare the motion carried.

Motion agreed to

Chair: As all government bills remaining in Committee of the Whole have now been decided upon, it is my duty to rise and report to the House.

Speaker resumes the Chair

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

Chair's report

Mr. Rouble: Mr. Speaker, Committee of the Whole has considered Bill No. 68, entitled *Act to Repeal the Physiotherapists Act*, and directed me to report it without amendment.

Further, Committee of the Whole has considered Bill No. 69, entitled *Canadian Blood Services Indemnification Act*, and directed me to report it without amendment.

Further, Committee of the Whole has considered Bill No. 70, entitled *Act to Amend the Income Tax Act (2006)*, and directed me to report it without amendment.

Further, Committee of the Whole has considered Bill No. 20, entitled *First Appropriation Act, 2006-07*, and directed me to report it without amendment.

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

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Speaker: I declare the report carried.

Standing Order 76(2)(d) states: "On the sitting day that the Assembly has reached the maximum number of sitting days allocated for that sitting pursuant to Standing Order 75, the Speaker of the Assembly, when recalled to the Chair after the House has been in the Committee of the Whole, shall:

"(d) with respect to each government bill standing on the Order Paper for third reading and designated to be called by the government House leader,

"(i) receive a motion for third reading and passage of the bill, and

"(ii) put the question, without debate or amendment, on that motion."

I shall, therefore, ask the government House leader to identify which of the bills now standing at third reading the government wishes to be called.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Mr. Speaker, the government directs that Bill Nos. 20, 70, 68 and 69, be called for third reading at this time.

GOVERNMENT BILLS

Bill No. 20: Third Reading

Clerk: Third reading, Bill No. 20, standing in the name of the Hon. Mr. Fentie.

Hon. Mr. Fentie: I move that Bill No. 20, entitled *First Appropriation Act, 2006-07*, be now read a third time and do pass.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Premier that Bill No. 20, entitled *First Appropriation Act, 2006-07*, be now read a third time and do pass. As no debate or amendment is permitted, I shall now put the question. Are you agreed?

Some Hon. Members: Division.

Division

Speaker: Division has been called.

Bells

Speaker: Mr. Clerk, will you please poll the House.

Hon. Mr. Fentie: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Agree.

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Kenyon: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Edzerza: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Lang: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Hart: Agree.

Mr. Rouble: Agree.

Mr. Hassard: Agree.

Mr. Mitchell: Disagree.

Ms. Duncan: Disagree.

Mr. McRobb: Disagree.

Mr. Fairclough: Disagree.

Mr. Hardy: Disagree.

Mrs. Peter: Disagree.

Mr. Cardiff: Disagree.

Mr. Jenkins: Agree.

Clerk: Mr. Speaker, the results are 10 yea, seven nay.

Speaker: The yeas have it. I declare the motion carried.

Motion for third reading of Bill No. 20 agreed to

Speaker: I declare that Bill No. 20 has passed this House.

Bill No. 70: Third Reading

Clerk: Third reading, Bill No. 70, standing in the name of the Hon. Mr. Fentie.

Hon. Mr. Fentie: I move that Bill No. 70, entitled *Act to Amend the Income Tax Act (2006)*, be now read a third time and do pass.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Premier that Bill No. 70, entitled *Act to Amend the Income Tax Act (2006)*, be now read a third time and do pass. As no debate or amendments are permitted, I will now put the question. Are you agreed?

Some Hon. Members: Division.

Division

Speaker: Division has been called.

Bells

Speaker: Mr. Clerk, please poll the House.

Hon. Mr. Fentie: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Kenyon: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Edzerza: Agree.
Hon. Mr. Lang: Agree.
Hon. Mr. Hart: Agree.
Mr. Rouble: Agree.
Mr. Hassard: Agree.
Mr. Mitchell: Agree.
Ms. Duncan: Agree.
Mr. McRobb: Agree.
Mr. Fairclough: Agree.
Mr. Hardy: Agree.
Mrs. Peter: Agree.
Mr. Cardiff: Agree.
Mr. Jenkins: Agree.

Clerk: Mr. Speaker, the results are 16 yea, nil nay.

Speaker: The yeas have it. I declare the motion carried.

Motion for third reading of Bill No. 70 agreed to

Speaker: I declare that Bill No. 70 has passed this House.

Bill No. 68: Third Reading

Clerk: Third reading, Bill No. 68, standing in the name of the Hon. Mr. Hart.

Hon. Mr. Hart: Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 68, entitled *Act to Repeal the Physiotherapists Act*, be now read a third time and do pass.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Minister of Community Services that Bill No. 68, entitled *Act to Repeal the Physiotherapists Act*, be now read a third time and do pass. As no debate or amendment is permitted, I shall now put the question. Are you agreed?

Some Hon. Members: Division.

Division

Speaker: Division has been called.

Bells

Speaker: Mr. Clerk, please poll the House.

Hon. Mr. Fentie: Agree.
Hon. Mr. Cathers: Agree.
Hon. Ms. Taylor: Agree.
Hon. Mr. Kenyon: Agree.
Hon. Mr. Edzerza: Agree.
Hon. Mr. Lang: Agree.
Hon. Mr. Hart: Agree.
Mr. Rouble: Agree.
Mr. Hassard: Agree.
Mr. Mitchell: Agree.
Ms. Duncan: Agree.
Mr. McRobb: Agree.
Mr. Fairclough: Agree.
Mr. Hardy: Agree.
Mrs. Peter: Agree.
Mr. Cardiff: Agree.
Mr. Jenkins: Agree.

Clerk: Mr. Speaker, the results are 17 yea, nil nay.

Speaker: The yeas have it. I declare the motion carried.

Motion for third reading of Bill No. 68 agreed to

Speaker: I declare that Bill No. 68 has passed this House.

Bill No. 69: Third Reading

Clerk: Third reading, Bill No. 69, standing in the name of the Hon. Mr. Cathers.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: I move that Bill No. 69, entitled *Canadian Blood Services Indemnification Act*, be now read a third time and do pass.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Minister of Health and Social Services that Bill No. 69, entitled *Canadian Blood Services Indemnification Act*, be now read a third time and do pass. As no debate or amendment is permitted, I shall now put the question. Are you agreed?

Some Hon. Members: Division.

Division

Speaker: Division has been called.

Bells

Speaker: Mr. Clerk, please poll the House.

Hon. Mr. Fentie: Agree.
Hon. Mr. Cathers: Agree.
Hon. Ms. Taylor: Agree.
Hon. Mr. Kenyon: Agree.
Hon. Mr. Edzerza: Agree.
Hon. Mr. Lang: Agree.
Hon. Mr. Hart: Agree.
Mr. Rouble: Agree.
Mr. Hassard: Agree.
Mr. Mitchell: Agree.
Ms. Duncan: Agree.
Mr. McRobb: Agree.
Mr. Fairclough: Agree.
Mr. Hardy: Agree.
Mrs. Peter: Agree.
Mr. Cardiff: Agree.
Mr. Jenkins: Agree.

Clerk: Mr. Speaker, the results are 17 yea, nil nay.

Speaker: The yeas have it. I declare the motion carried.

Motion for third reading of Bill No. 69 agreed to

Speaker: I declare that Bill No. 69 has passed this House.

We are now prepared to receive the Commissioner, acting in her capacity as Lieutenant Governor, to grant assent to certain bills that have passed this House.

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

ASSENT TO BILLS

Commissioner: Please be seated.

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

Clerk: *Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods Act; Act to Amend the Securities Act; Third Appropriation Act, 2005-06; First Appropriation Act, 2006-07; Act to Amend the Income Tax Act (2006); Act to Repeal the Physiotherapists Act; Canadian Blood Services Indemnification Act.*

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

I would also like to take this time to thank all the Members of the Legislative Assembly for their hard work and dedication. Working on behalf of Yukoners is not always easy. I commend each and every one of you for standing up and being counted.

Have a wonderful summer, and I also hope you have some quality time with your friends and family.

Thank you.

Commissioner leaves the Chamber

Speaker: I will now call the House to order.

As the House has reached the maximum number of days permitted in this spring sitting, as established pursuant to Standing Order 75(3), and the House has completed consideration of the designated legislation, it is now the duty of the Chair to declare that this House now stands adjourned.

The House adjourned at 5:26 p.m.

The following Sessional Paper was tabled May 24, 2006:

06-1-223

Property Management Agency 2006-2007 Business Plan (Hart)

The following documents were filed May 24, 2006:

06-1-145

Community Development Fund legislative commitments made May 4, 2006 on *Hansard* page 6122; Project Approvals by Community covering the period June 23, 2003 to May 23, 2006 and Annual Report covering the period June 23, 2003 to March 31, 2005: letter from Hon. Jim Kenyon, Minister of Economic Development to Eric Fairclough, MLA Mayo-Tatchun (Kenyon)

06-1-146

Big game outfitting land application policy: letter dated May 23, 2006 from Council of Yukon First Nations Grand Chief Andy Carvil to Hon. Dennis Fentie, Premier, Government of Yukon (Fairclough)

06-1-147

Consultation procedures (Fairclough)

06-1-148

Consultation process, failure of: letter (dated May 24, 2006) from concerned residents of the Haines Junction area to Hon. Dennis Fentie, Premier (Mitchell)