



Speech from the Throne

FIRST SESSION OF THE THIRTY-THIRD YUKON LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

DELIVERED BY COMMISSIONER DOUGLAS PHILLIPS

DECEMBER 01, 2011



MOVING FORWARD TOGETHER

Mr. Speaker, Members of the Yukon Legislative Assembly, Yukoners, visitors and honoured guests, I welcome you in our Sovereign's name to the First Session of the Thirty-Third Legislative Assembly.

It is worthy to note that my government is the only government since the inception of party politics in 1978 to achieve a third mandate. This is indeed historic and clearly demonstrates that the people of Yukon continue to want political stability, continuity and prosperity.

Prior to 2002, Yukon had experienced seven years of economic recession.

Yukon's population had been in decline for six consecutive years following the closure of the Faro mine in 1997.

Yukon's unemployment rate had been in the double digit range for years.

Yukon's mining industry was nearly defunct with exploration and development spending in the territory being less than \$10 million.

Almost 3,000 Yukoners, our young people, our prime labour force, left the Yukon to find work outside.

Rebuilding Yukon's private sector economy was job one for the two previous Yukon governments elected in 2002 and re-elected in 2006.

They put Yukon on the pathway to prosperity and my government re-elected in 2011 wants to continue that journey.

My government's vision, "Moving Forward Together" continues to build upon the four pillars of the two previous Yukon governments:

- Better Quality of Life;
- the Environment;
- the Economy; and
- Good Governance.

These pillars are the solid foundations upon which my government will continue to build Yukon's future.



A growing, prosperous economy creates challenges.

My government welcomes these challenges.

In relation to the Quality of Life, both housing and land availability have been identified as pressing challenges.

With a strong economy and housing demand exceeding supply, my government is committed to making a range of housing options available to Yukoners.

For those most in need, my government is working with The Salvation Army to significantly increase the capacity of their shelter which could mean a new shelter at a new location or a significant renovation to the existing shelter.

As part of its housing strategy, my government is proposing to implement a number of projects throughout Yukon, including:

- a youth shelter in Whitehorse;
- the construction of a new seniors complex in Mayo;
- the replacement of McDonald Lodge in Dawson City with a new facility to be attached to the new Dawson City Hospital;
- second stage housing for Kaushee's Place in Whitehorse;
- expansion from 6 units to 24 units of the Options for Independent Living complex for adults with FASD;
- replacing double wide trailers in Carmacks and Ross River with four stick built units in each community; and
- other housing projects including making land available to Yukon College to construct a new student residence.

My government will be working with the private sector to increase the supply of affordable rental units, which has been identified as another pressing need.

It has been proposed that a four-hectare parcel of land located between Range Road and Mountainview Drive in the Takhini area be sold to a private developer or developers on special terms and conditions with the caveat that the property will be used for the construction of affordable rental units.

My government also recently signed an agreement with the Kwanlin Dün First Nation (KDFN) to explore development opportunities in relation to residential land and housing for the general public while providing economic benefits to KDFN.



Yukon First Nations are key partners in our thriving economy.

My government is also working in collaboration with the Teslin Tlingit Council to make land available and will be working with other interested Yukon First Nations to meet the territory's land availability and housing needs.

Yukon's growing, prosperous economy has resulted in a substantial increase in population which in turn is putting increased pressure on the territory's health and social services safety net.

This is another challenge my government must meet.

My government has proposed a variety of initiatives to meet this challenge including:

- putting more resources into addictions recovery, including replacing the aging Sarah Steele Building with a larger, more modern facility that will provide space and resources to support an after-care program for people coming out of the 28-day program as well as support for land-based treatment programs with Yukon First Nations;
- providing more resources towards youth alcohol and drug programming;
- adding more incentives to attract medical professionals including family doctors;
- investing in health care infrastructure such as the new MRI facility and new emergency department at the Whitehorse General Hospital;
- providing support for families caring for seniors and children with disabilities through a new caregiver Tax Credit and other measures; and
- enhancing the homecare program and helping seniors stay in their own homes longer.

My government is committed to implementing its vision for supporting child care and early learning including:

- expanding the "Learning Together" initiative that assists parents and children with transition to kindergarten in schools throughout the territory;
- providing additional supports for children with disabilities and developmental challenges, including adjusting the Direct Operating Grant to address the additional costs of helping children with special needs;
- strengthening the licensed childcare system by helping to address training and retention needs; and
- creating a new Parenting and Early Development Resource Centre.



Yukon's growing, prosperous economy has created an increasing demand for more educational facilities and training programs.

My government is committed to meeting this challenge by educating and training Yukoners for Yukon opportunities.

The aging F.H. Collins High School will be replaced by a new modern school, and my government is committed to transforming Yukon College into a northern university in the longer term.

Immediate priorities include providing land at Yukon College for the proposed Centre for Northern Innovation in Mining, and increasing opportunities available to Yukon entrepreneurs by expanding programming delivered through the Technology Innovation Fund and the Cold Climate Innovation Fund.

My government is committed to protecting, preserving and celebrating Yukon's pristine environment, sensitive ecosystems and wilderness landscapes.

It will continue to take innovative steps to address climate change through the implementation of its Climate Change Action Plan and manage Yukon's air, land, water and wildlife resources for the benefit of present and future generations of Yukoners.

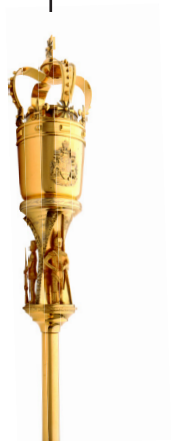
A new initiative will see the development of a Yukon Water Strategy to improve access to safe drinking water and increase data collection and information sharing on water resources.

My government is committed to meeting its obligations to establish Special Management Areas and Habitat Protection Areas under the land claims settlements as well as to plan and manage a system of wilderness preserves, natural environment parks and ecological reserves throughout the territory.

Implementation of the Solid Waste Action Plan will ensure the creation of a state-of-the-art solid waste management system that will adapt to the changing needs of future generations of Yukon communities.

Yukon today enjoys one of the best economies in Canada.

My government is committed to the continued expansion and growth of the Yukon economy by:



- promoting the territory’s economic mainstays such as mining, both hardrock and placer, tourism, and oil and gas;
- promoting economic diversification in other sectors such as arts and culture, film and sound, forestry, agriculture, wilderness tourism, outfitting, trapping, research and development, knowledge-based industries and value-added manufacturing;
- maintaining Yukon’s extremely favourable general tax environment that promotes investment in the territory; and
- providing access to land, regulatory certainty, business incentive and marketing programs, and the provision of necessary transportation, communication and energy infrastructure.

A growing, prosperous economy needs affordable, accessible energy if it is going to continue to grow.

This is one of Yukon’s major challenges.

Yukon’s energy needs are real and immediate and my government is committed to investing in short, medium and long-term solutions to ensure energy in Yukon remains clean and affordable.

To this end, my government will ensure the completion of the Mayo B hydro project, the development of an Independent Power Producer Policy and Net Metering to provide power to Yukoners in the short term.

My government is committed to the development of a natural gas industry as well as geothermal, wind, solar, biomass and hydro-electric projects to meet medium to long-term needs.

For longer-term energy needs, my government is committed to planning the construction of large-scale hydro-electric projects in one or more of the numerous areas in Yukon already identified as suitable for a hydro project.

As part of its long-term vision, my government will also plan for the extension of Yukon’s power grid to Alaska and British Columbia.

“Good Governance” is another important pillar laying a solid foundation for Yukon’s future.

Yukon is coming of age through effective leadership, political stability, cooperative governance and strong fiscal management.

My government will continue to implement cooperative governance and partnerships



with Yukon First Nations utilizing the Yukon Forum and the Intergovernmental Forum with Canada as well as promote mutual respect of each other's jurisdiction.

It will work cooperatively with Yukon communities to address the issues raised in the "Our Towns, Our Future" report.

It will utilize a Pan-Northern collaborative approach with the Northwest Territories and Nunavut to advance northern interests with the provinces, the Government of Canada and the international community.

It will work cooperatively with neighbouring jurisdictions such as the State of Alaska, British Columbia, and Alberta as well as members of the Pacific Northwest Economic Region to promote strategic alliances and regional economic development initiatives in which there are shared interests.

Canada north of 60 is coming of age.

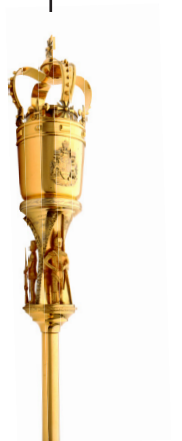
It is gratifying to see that the Government of Canada increasingly appears to recognize that Canada's northern frontier holds Canada's promise for the future and that the three northern territories will play an important role in confederation.

My government remains committed to completing and implementing land claims and will continue to urge the Government of Canada, the White River First Nation, the Liard First Nation and Ross River Dena Council to complete the unfinished business of settling land claims in Yukon.

It will work individually with settled First Nations to implement their settlements on a government-to-government basis and fully honour the commitments set out in the treaties.

My government will continue to advance Yukon's constitutional position in relation to federal recognition of the "Crown in right of Yukon," the resolution of outstanding offshore northern boundary issues, and initiatives that support Arctic sovereignty.

My government remains committed to practising open, accountable, fiscally responsible government and to working constructively with all members of the House to improve the operation of its committees and the proceedings of the legislature.



Of equal importance, my government will work with Yukon's professional public service to implement the commitments outlined in my government's vision for the future, "Moving Forward Together," to turn this vision into reality and help all Yukon citizens reach their potential and realize their dream of a better tomorrow.

During this sitting Honourable Members will be asked to consider Bill No. 2, the *Fourth Appropriation Act 2010-2011* and Bill No. 3, *Second Appropriation Act 2011-2012*.

May divine providence attend your deliberations. I thank you in our Sovereign's name. God Bless Yukon, God Bless Canada and God Save the Queen.

