

**Yukon Legislative Assembly**  
**Whitehorse, Yukon**  
**Monday, May 10, 2010 — 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 at this time with the Order Paper.

Are there any tributes?

## TRIBUTES

### In recognition of Yukon Mining and Geology Week

**Hon. Mr. Rouble:** As minister responsible for Energy, Mines and Resources, I am pleased to rise today to recognize Yukon Mining and Geology Week. Celebrations are taking place from May 10 to 14 this year, to mark the importance of mining and geology to Yukoners. Mining is Yukon's largest industry and Yukon Mining and Geology Week is an opportunity to recognize and celebrate the importance of this modern industry to Yukoners.

Yukon's mining sector is very strong right now and, as a territory, we are attracting attention throughout Canada and around the world. Despite the economic downturn, high gold and silver prices, along with encouraging results from a number of Yukon projects, have spurred many companies to take a closer look at Yukon and begin investing and doing exploration programs. Mr. Speaker, this translates into jobs and direct benefits for Yukon.

Equally important is that our thriving industry is attracting interest from our own citizens — especially the younger generations who are coming into the workforce. There are many exciting opportunities in Yukon's future, and this government wants our citizens to have the awareness, the education and the experience to help shape a responsible mining industry. Right now, over 500 Yukoners are employed directly by new hardrock mines in the territory. Hundreds more are working in placer mining operations and mineral exploration projects throughout Yukon. By all accounts, it looks like there will be even more economic and employment opportunities in the coming year as well, especially with potentially three operating mines in the territory.

The mineral industry has provided immense opportunities for Yukon historically, and the Government of Yukon is pleased to see this continue. Mining and geology have a tremendous influence on Yukon's history, culture and economy.

I encourage Yukoners to participate in this week's events and to visit the displays at the Elijah Smith Building on Main Street in Whitehorse. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** Are there any further tributes?  
 Introduction of visitors.  
 Returns or documents for tabling.  
 Any reports of committees?

Petitions.

## PETITIONS

### Petition No. 12 — received

**Clerk:** Mr. Speaker and honourable members of the Assembly, I have had the honour to review a petition, being Petition No. 12 of the First Session of the 32<sup>nd</sup> Legislative Assembly, as presented by the Member for Mount Lorne on May 6, 2010.

The petition presented by the Member for Mount Lorne appears in two versions. The first meets the requirements as to form of the Standing Orders of the Yukon Legislative Assembly. The second version of the petition does not meet the requirements as to form outlined in the Standing Orders and the model petition appended to the Standing Orders because the request for action is not directed at the Legislative Assembly. Therefore, it is found that the first version of the petition meets the requirements as to form of the Standing Orders of the Yukon Legislative Assembly and this is the version of the petition to which the government should respond. The other version of the petition will be returned to the Member for Mount Lorne.

**Speaker:** Petition No. 12, accordingly, is deemed to be read and received. Are there any other petitions for presentation?

Are there any bills to be introduced?

Are there any notices of motion?

## NOTICES OF MOTION

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

THAT this House urges the Commissioner in Executive Council to establish an inquiry under the *Public Inquiries Act* to examine the Premier's secret parallel negotiating process with a private company from Alberta to sell out Yukon's energy future.

**Mr. Cardiff:** I give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Parliament of Canada to pass Bill C-300, *An Act Respecting Corporate Accountability for the Activities of Mining, Oil or Gas Corporations in Developing Countries*, a private member's bill currently before the House of Commons Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development, in order to ensure that:

(1) Canadian extractive companies follow human rights and environmental practices when they operate overseas;

(2) the accountability of the Government of Canada to Canadian taxpayers is maintained; and

(3) government financial and political support will not be provided to companies that breach human rights or environmental standards.

I give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Canada to review the regulations for Canadian offshore oil and gas projects in Canadian Arctic waters in order to ensure that:

(1) penalties to cover cleanup and compensation in Canada do not fall short;

(2) Canadian taxpayers and citizens are assured that no lease or drilling activity will be allowed unless companies meet strict and sound environmental laws; and

(3) adequate safeguards and contingency plans are in place in the event of a spill, leak, blowout or any other catastrophic accident or event that can result in adverse consequences for the environment or marine life.

I give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Yukon government to protect the principles of democracy and accountability by:

(1) ensuring that citizens have a right to organize referenda on issues of concern, as was intended in the *Municipal Act*; and

(2) bringing forward amendments to the *Municipal Act* and to the *Ombudsman Act* to allow the Ombudsman to hear citizens' appeals when they feel they have been treated unfairly by a municipal government.

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

Is there a statement by a minister?

This then brings us to Question Period.

## QUESTION PERIOD

### Question re: Yukon Energy Corporation, board recruitment

**Mr. McRobb:** I have questions for the minister responsible for the Yukon Energy Corporation about his government's recent recruiting initiative. YEC's parent company, the Yukon Development Corporation, recently spent \$50,000 to find a replacement chair and three members for the Yukon Energy Corporation Board. This was done, although the government has on staff a person who normally does the recruiting for these types of board appointments, but this government spent \$50,000 to hire an Outside consultant.

The Outside consultant recommended the chair position go to former government leader Piers McDonald. Why did the minister feel it was necessary to go Outside and spend \$50,000 of taxpayers' money to find the person who ran the territory only a decade ago?

**Hon. Mr. Fentie:** The member opposite, the Member for Kluane, should have been updated by now as there was a meeting of the Standing Committee on Appointments to Major Government Boards and Committees this morning. Before that committee, witnesses came forward from the Energy Corporation and the chair of the governance committee for the Yukon Development Corporation and presented in detail the process the Yukon Development Corporation undertook in recruiting appointees to the board for the Yukon Energy Corporation, which is its wholly owned subsidiary.

Furthermore, Mr. Speaker, the Member for Kluane should be aware of this government's energy strategy, its plan for structural changes and governance. It wasn't that long ago that the Member for Kluane vilified the former chair of the Yukon Energy Corporation for double-dipping.

**Mr. McRobb:** Mr. Speaker, this Premier can't hide behind officials. This is \$50,000 of taxpayers' money we are talking about here. Not only does this expenditure appear unnecessary, it went to hire an Outside consultant. Now, we should all be very wary of the events leading up to this situation — the Premier's secret parallel negotiating process with a private company from Alberta to sell out Yukon's energy future.

We can all appreciate the Premier's desire to sweep that scandal under the carpet, but at what cost to Yukoners? As mentioned, the government already has a staff member on the payroll who recruits many, many board members across the Yukon, but a decision was made — no doubt in the corner office — to spend \$50,000 to hire an Outside consultant. Why was this expense necessary when there is already a staff person employed to do this work?

**Hon. Mr. Fentie:** You know, it wasn't that long ago also, Mr. Speaker, that the Member for Kluane was accusing the government of being secretive, about gagging officials, about doing everything that would be defined as wrongdoing, Mr. Speaker. The Member for Kluane has a very clear example before him of transparency, of accountability, of doing things appropriately. By the way, this process was directed by the governance committee of the Yukon Development Corporation. I'm sure the member has a higher regard for those very hardworking citizens who sit on that board. Those are the ones who did not quit, but kept doing their job on behalf of Yukoners when it comes to energy and meeting our challenges, Mr. Speaker. I think they did a very good job. They conducted a process that was transparent, very clear and it was targeting, as best they could, expertise to sit on their wholly owned subsidiary board, the Yukon Energy Corporation.

**Mr. McRobb:** Mr. Speaker, this government is secretive and it has gagged officials. Now it's hiding behind them again. The Premier is obviously still going for broke.

Let's take stock. Nearly a year ago, the Yukon Energy Corporation Board chair and three board members quit because of this Premier's secret negotiations. Recently, this government spent \$50,000 on a contract to an Outside company to find a former government leader — a position now referred to as "Premier" — and this government has a full-time person on staff to handle these very types of board appointments.

In fact, that staffer is currently working to fill the position of chair for the Yukon Utilities Board. That too is an important board but the taxpayer isn't paying \$50,000 to fill that position. I will send the Premier over the new phone book. This could save us a fortune, Mr. Speaker. Will this Premier be hiring Outside consultants to find other board appointments or will he save us a bundle and use the phone book?

### Speaker's statement

**Speaker:** Before the Hon. Premier answers — no props please. This is considered a prop. Everybody has a phone book. Hon. Premier, your turn.

**Hon. Mr. Fentie:** Mr. Speaker, I am astounded — shocked at the display by the Member for Kluane. This is an institution of the highest order, of the highest standard and now

this member is actually taking issue with people who sit on the Yukon Development Corporation's Board, its governance committee, and how it conducts its operations. This is shocking, Mr. Speaker, because it is the Liberals of this House who constantly accuse the government of interference when it is convenient and not interfering when it is convenient and accusing other members — citizens who sit on boards — of double-dipping. Oh, by the way, we've got the government now gagging people and breaking the law. Surely, they are going to come up with more absurd and absolutely ridiculous inferences here, Mr. Speaker.

The bottom line is that the Yukon Development Corporation and its appointees did their job in a very exemplary way. We applaud them for it and we're very pleased that the individuals who have now gone through the process will be sitting on a duly separated board on the Yukon Energy Corporation's behalf. It's all part of governance; it's all part of restructuring. The members had an issue with the former structure anyway.

#### **Question re: Committees of the Legislative Assembly**

**Mr. McRobb:** I've got another question on this government's political interference. Select committees have been struck on ATVs and legislative renewal but this government has yet to name one of its members as chair or to even call a meeting. Let's hope it is not spending another \$50,000 of taxpayers' money to identify these chairs. It's obvious this government is stalling. It doesn't want to do the hard work to consult with Yukoners and is bankrupt of solutions. Last week when we asked when these committees will finally get underway, the answer from the Cabinet commissioner was, no time soon. He also said these issues would not be dealt with until after another select committee had done its work.

When and why did the government decide to postpone the important work of these other select committees without informing anyone?

**Hon. Mr. Fentie:** The government hasn't postponed anything. In fact, the government has been trying, without any success, to convince the Liberals in this House to actually have a meeting of a select committee where members are appointed — and we can't even get a date or a time that's convenient for the Liberals of the House.

This is not about postponing anything; it's about the Liberals simply not doing their job.

**Mr. McRobb:** I guess when you don't have an answer, it's simply attack the messenger again.

Last week, the Cabinet commissioner was eager to speak out about the *Landlord and Tenant Act* committee. That's why he jumped to his feet to answer a question that had nothing to do with that committee. We asked when work would get underway on ATVs and legislative renewal. The commissioner said, and I quote: "... let's get this first committee, the Select Committee on the *Landlord and Tenant Act*, working. Why should we pile more on and then have them all fail?" is what he said.

This government obviously isn't very good at multi-tasking but, unless these other committees are allowed to do their work, there's a good chance the work won't be done before the next election.

Why is this government prepared to risk that important work of these committees by delaying their schedules?

**Hon. Mr. Fentie:** In listening to the Member for Kluane's questioning, I was thinking of the written works called *Aesop's Fables*, Mr. Speaker. But the issue here for the Member for Kluane, the Liberals of this House, is as I have just stated — they've got to do their job. They are appointed to a select committee that we can't even convince the Liberals to meet on. So what we're suggesting to the Liberals is that before we have other failures because of their inability to live up to their commitments to this House by way of unanimous motions, we would suggest to the Liberals they at least demonstrate on the Select Committee on the *Landlord and Tenant Act* that they have an interest in carrying out their obligations and duty.

#### **Speaker's statement**

**Speaker:** Before the honourable member asks his next question, I would just like to put forth a caution to all members not to personalize debate. Hon. Premier, the analogy of *Aesop's Fables* is getting awfully close to that. Honourable members, just please keep that in mind.

The Member for Kluane has the floor.

**Mr. McRobb:** Well, let's take a look at what the Premier is saying. The Select Committee on the *Landlord and Tenant Act*, we already have a member on, who has sat in on at least one meeting.

There was supposed to be another one during this sitting, but it looks like that's not going to happen. The only thing that committee has done is postpone its due date, Mr. Speaker. For the other two committees on ATV use and legislative renewal, the Liberal Party has identified a member to sit on those committees, and we are urging the government to get them to work. But the Yukon Party has still not even identified one of its members to be chair of those committees, nor has it called a meeting. Those are the questions on the floor here this afternoon. Why has this government decided to postpone the important work of those two committees?

**Mr. Nordick:** Mr. Speaker, I just want to thank the member opposite for giving me another opportunity to speak on the *Landlord and Tenant Act* committee. I would like to thank the NDP caucus for possibly agreeing to a meeting this week. I would also like to thank the NDP caucus for suggesting possibly Thursday of this week. What I would like to do is ask the Liberal caucus, why don't they even respond to an e-mail?

Let's get the *Landlord and Tenant Act* committee working. Let's prove that we can actually get that one functioning. We don't even get responses. Mr. Speaker, let's work together and have meetings as soon as possible on the *Landlord and Tenant Act*. I challenge the Liberals: respond to a date. Respond to a meeting request. Come back with something that says, "We want to attend, not this day, but maybe this day. Come with suggestions.

**Some Hon. Member:** (Inaudible)

#### **Point of order**

**Speaker:** On a point of order, Member for Kluane.

**Mr. McRobb:** Mr. Speaker, I've been challenged to give some information. Can I be allotted one more slot here in order to respond to that question?

#### Speaker's ruling

**Speaker:** No, but nice try.

#### Question re: Off-road vehicle use

**Mr. Cardiff:** Mr. Speaker, on Thursday, 200 Yukoners demonstrated outside the Legislative Assembly because they were concerned about Bill No. 82. There were representatives of the opposition parties, but there was no sign of a minister.

On Thursday, as well, 200 Yukoners attended a meeting to talk about regulating off-road vehicle usage in the territory. Where was the Environment minister? I don't know, but I know he wasn't at this meeting listening to Yukoners discuss this important issue.

The NDP organized a public meeting on independent power production in February. Eighty people attended that meeting but there was no minister. What sign is the public getting from this government when its ministers choose not to attend important public meetings and events?

**Hon. Mr. Fentie:** I think the Third Party knows full well that the government's ministers are constantly in the public doing their job. We also recognize that in our democratic society, citizens have the right to demonstrate, to protest and to voice their opinion. By the way, citizens also have the right to meet on matters and that's the way it should be. We encourage all citizens to do so. So the government ministers will continue to do their job and I'm pleased to hear that the New Democratic caucus held a meeting on independent power production because the government is out consulting on that very process. It is a matter of policy.

**Mr. Cardiff:** It's also ministers' responsibility to go to meetings where they can hear public comment. If the Environment minister had attended the meeting on Thursday, he would have heard a robust debate on off-road vehicle use in the Yukon. He would have been struck by the need for balance on this issue, that Yukoners want access to recreation and they want to protect the environment. They want designated trails. They are concerned that once pristine areas are being degraded.

Some others talked about the consequences in other jurisdictions that have been slow to act. The minister missed an opportunity to hear from Yukoners at this forum.

Has the minister had any discussions with the Trails Only Yukon Association, with the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board, with First Nations or with municipalities about regulating off-road vehicle usage in the Yukon?

**Hon. Mr. Edzerza:** I thank the member opposite for the question. We know this issue has been quite controversial for many years. It's not a new issue; it's something that is best regulated by the individual. What I heard from people who phoned me with regard to the meeting was, "Don't you guys regulate enough things? Do you have to start trying to regulate ATV use?" And "What's next?"

There are two sides to every story. This being an issue that takes a lot more meetings than just one, I might add, is something that is best regulated by the individual.

**Mr. Cardiff:** It sounds like the minister is predetermining the outcome of a process that hasn't even begun yet, which is a select committee process that will make recommendations. What the minister needs to do is listen to what all people are saying.

He needs to take advice from the boards that are mandated to provide the government with advice, like the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board that did a study in 2003 on the issue of off-road vehicles and the need for some rules. I believe it was last year, the board put out more information as part of their *20:20 Vision* process about the need to preserve alpine areas and put some limits on where ATVs can go. Now we have a new organization formed, the Trails Only Yukon Association, and Yukoners want to see some action from this government. Will the minister take an interest in this issue or can Yukoners expect just more of the same from this government: silence and inaction.

**Hon. Mr. Edzerza:** As an individual, I have always been interested in the environment. I have always had respect for the environment. I never once had to have any government write out a document or a piece of paper to tell me how to respect the environment. Maybe that is something that should be focused on more here than any regulation: education — education on how people need to start respecting the environment. Mr. Speaker, one issue I know would be of very grave difficulty would be to police people in all areas of the Yukon — in the valleys, on top of the mountains and everywhere else about how to ride an ATV.

I think everyone who owns one and wants to ride one needs to get busy and start learning what it means to respect the environment. Thank you.

#### Question re: *Municipal Act*, referendum

**Mr. Cardiff:** Mr. Speaker, I want to talk about two fundamental principles enshrined in the *Municipal Act*: (1) Yukon municipal governments are created by the Government of Yukon and are responsible and accountable to the citizens they serve and to the Government of Yukon; (2) public participation is fundamental to good local government. These statements are right from the preamble of the act, and they form the basis for accountability for local democracy. Why has the minister neglected these principles?

**Hon. Mr. Lang:** Certainly, I agree with the member on the importance of our municipalities in the Yukon, and of course the *Municipal Act*. We as a government are working with our communities to make them even stronger. We certainly have worked, over the last eight years, with the act itself, and we are reviewing that act as we move forward.

**Mr. Cardiff:** Well, he has neglected the intent of the act, and here's an example: section 155 of the *Municipal Act* says that Yukon citizens can have a referendum on any issue if they get 25 percent of the total number of voters in the municipality to sign a petition. If a citizen does this, then the municipal council must act creating a bylaw respecting the will of the

petition and put it back to the public in a referendum. It's a wonderful idea, Mr. Speaker.

The sad reality is that not too long ago, a Whitehorse citizen collected 2,500 signatures on a petition — more than enough to launch a referendum on creating a park at McLean Lake. After a lengthy court battle, the judge ruled against the citizen and against having a referendum in favour of the city's official plan. The minister's response was, "Let the courts decide."

Is the minister prepared to throw away Yukoners' rights to direct democracy via referenda?

**Hon. Mr. Lang:** In addressing the member opposite, we are reviewing the act itself with our partners, the actual communities that are affected by the *Municipal Act* and we're doing that as we speak. It's an ongoing issue and we certainly are aware of the stumbling blocks that communities have found themselves in. We are working with them on the *Municipal Act*. As we move forward and strengthen it and strengthen the communities themselves, you will find that review is a constant in the municipalities. Things change and we certainly work with the changes.

**Mr. Cardiff:** Well, Mr. Speaker, it's fine to work with your partners — the municipalities and the communities — but the most important partner is the people — not the people in the municipal governments, but the people who vote in municipal elections. Government accountability means that citizens have adequate recourse when they perceive unfairness from government, including the ability to appeal a decision. There's a problem in this regard under the *Municipal Act*, where municipalities have the power to create appeal processes, but the practice is in small communities that appeals are often heard by the same people who have made the decision that leads to the appeal. There's a concept that I would express in Latin, but I'm not going to even attempt. It's that no man is permitted to be a judge in his own cause.

What is the minister's plan to ensure that citizens who have complaints or issues with decisions of municipal councils are given a fair hearing and the right —

**Speaker:** Thank you.

**Hon. Mr. Lang:** Again, Mr. Speaker, we work with our communities through the *Municipal Act*. I've said in the House today, we're in the process of reviewing that act, but certainly the communities themselves have responsibilities and we as senior government have responsibility.

It is a partnership. My job is to work with the municipalities within the *Municipal Act* to make the communities stronger, and that's exactly what this government is doing.

#### **Question re: Whitehorse waterfront development**

**Mr. Inverarity:** I have some more questions for the Minister of Tourism on the long-delayed waterfront project she's in charge of. In 2005, the minister called this project critical and endorsed the plan to include a new wharf on the waterfront. Unfortunately for taxpayers, the Yukon government didn't get around to building the wharf on time, as promised. Like many of the other capital projects undertaken by this government, the wharf has been delayed repeatedly. In a January 2008 news release, she pegged the cost at \$1.9 million; last

week the government admitted the budget for the wharf project has ballooned to \$5.2 million.

Why has the minister allowed her project to go so far overbudget?

**Hon. Mr. Lang:** We're responsible for the actual on-site work for Tourism. We have 11 waterfront projects currently underway, including the wharf. We're also designing and building the wharf so it can accommodate future additions, which I said last Thursday, such as adding a floating dock component to it. In the Whitehorse waterfront projects, we have finished a concession building at Shipyards Park, First Avenue road reconstruction, street lighting on the Robert Campbell bridge, the trail reconstruction at Rotary Park and the demolition of Kishwoot Island footbridge. We have done extensive waterfront work in Carcross. There is \$20 million invested on the ground.

I am not quite sure if the member opposite lives in a bubble. If you were to tour the waterfront as we speak today, we have extensive work going on at the waterfront, whether it is the new Kwanlin Dun cultural centre — which by the way, has a library component, which would be a brand new library for Yukon, for the City of Whitehorse. We have a project starting — the Alexander Street apartment complex for our seniors is going to be on the waterfront. So, Mr. Speaker, there is lots of work on the waterfront, the wharf being just one of those projects.

**Mr. Inverarity:** Mr. Speaker, the only person living in a bubble around here is the minister. A new wharf was budgeted at \$1.9 million in 2008 and, under the ever watchful eye of the Yukon Party government, that cost has ballooned to \$5.2 million. It is more than double the construction cost and we haven't even started the project yet.

When the minister announced the project, she said that it would require prudent fiscal management. It is too bad that the minister hasn't followed up on her own advice.

Because of cost overruns on the wharf and the larger financial problems the government finds itself in today, other projects have now been cancelled altogether. These include the floating dock, the boat launch, an activity and animation area and a historical interpretation centre — they're all gone.

Can the minister provide us with a list of projects that have been cancelled?

**Hon. Mr. Lang:** In answering the Member for Porter Creek South, none of the projects have been cancelled. All of the projects are going forward. This government is spending up to \$19 million on the waterfront. This government has moved from when we were elected in 2002 after the Liberal government tenure in office — this government has spent \$19 million on the waterfront.

You only have to go to — start at Rotary Park: new paving, new landscaping. Move down and see what we did in The Old Fire Hall. That was all invested by this government. By the way, Mr. Speaker, the members opposite voted against every one of those improvements.

So there is nothing cancelled on the waterfront; it's all moving forward and we're looking forward to all of the improvements that have been done over the last 10 years. We're

looking forward to the wharf — the floating dock component, the approach to the wharf and of course the Kwanlin Dun cultural centre, the Alexander Street seniors complex — all of that is investment this government made, and those people in opposition voted against it.

**Question re: Project management**

**Mr. Inverarity:** Mr. Speaker, it looks like we are getting answers out of the Minister of Highways and Public Works, so we know that the Minister of Tourism is not the only minister who can't deliver a completed project on time and on budget. The minister responsible for Highways and Public Works, as well as Community Services, leads the way in uncompleted projects. This government has been criticized by the Auditor General for consistent cost overruns and poor project management.

The waterfront initiative is yet another glaring example of how this government deserves such criticism. The minister was front and centre on stage five years ago when he announced the waterfront project at the time, and the wharf was a critical component of this. The only thing accomplished so far is that the cost has doubled. This government has learned nothing, because it doesn't keep its announcements for projects and it can't afford and doesn't deliver on them. When is the minister going to give us something more than just excuses?

**Hon. Mr. Lang:** This government has given many opportunities for investments in the waterfront and, by the way, many opportunities for the member opposite to vote against them.

\$19 million — there's going to be \$40 million invested in the Carcross and Whitehorse waterfronts — \$40 million. And he says there's no investment in the waterfront in the Whitehorse area.

There's massive investment going into our waterfront. There has been nothing cancelled. The improvements that are made will be made; the permitting will be put in place; and we are working with our partners on the waterfront — the Kwanlin Dun as far as the cultural centre; we're working with Yukon Housing Corporation on the brand new Alexander Street seniors complex, which will be on the waterfront — again, another thing for the members opposite to vote against.

**Mr. Inverarity:** It's just more excuses. This government doesn't deliver and everyone else is always wrong.

After spending \$15 million of federal money to upgrade the Erik Nielsen airport to international standards, this government has failed to budget for the jetway. This is just another half-completed project that's late and overbudget. The airport upgrade was delayed, more expensive than initially planned and missing critical components, just like most of the other big-ticket projects this government has announced.

The minister failed to deliver on the airport upgrade on time and on budget. Does the minister have a plan B for the jetway and, if so, what is it?

**Hon. Mr. Lang:** The actual expansion on the Erik Nielsen Whitehorse International Airport is not only on time, it's ahead of schedule and right on budget — and by the way, Mr. Speaker, another project that the members from the Liberal Party voted against. As far as the second jetway is concerned,

that's a partnership we have with the Kwanlin Dun and that will be put in next season and we're looking forward to that — another partnership with a First Nation to work on the international airport. The airport, to correct the member opposite, was ahead of schedule and was completely on budget.

**Mr. Inverarity:** We see that this government always has a plan B for everything. They also have a plan B for putting toilet paper in the campgrounds out there. We have to wait three weeks for that.

The minister is making my point — this government continues to announce all of these projects that it can't afford and doesn't deliver. Carcross is planning a centennial celebration this year and the Yukon visitor information centre has been forced to use temporary facilities. This government knew that mould has been a significant concern in the visitor information centre since the flooding in 2007. For three years this government did nothing to fix it and, as usual, it got caught in the scramble because of its own lack of planning.

What is plan B? Just throw more money at the project and see if that solves it?

**Hon. Mr. Lang:** I am going to address the issue in a couple of ways. Mr. Speaker, we did look at the building and did a thorough overview of it after the flood, so to say we didn't was not correct. Secondly, we have an obligation to our staff that our information centres or our structures or the buildings that they work in are safe and that they would not harm them in any way. There has been a question about the building. I remind the member opposite the building is over 100 years old. There is a thorough review of that building going on and, at the moment, they are in temporary accommodation or temporary office space, which is there. I was there; I looked at it on Saturday. They are accommodated as I speak. There is a very highly competent individual looking at this structure, the old White Pass railroad station, to make sure that, if work has to be done, it is done and that the building will be safe for employees. The employees will not go back in that building at any level until such time as that study is done.

**Speaker:** The time for Question Period has now elapsed.

**Speaker's ruling**

**Speaker:** Prior to proceeding to Orders of the Day, the Hon. Member for Kluane raised a point of order during Question Period, and unfortunately, I didn't give you a ruling on it. From the Chair's perspective, there was no point of order.

We will now proceed to Orders of the Day.

**ORDERS OF THE DAY**

**Hon. Ms. Taylor:** 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 (Mr. Nordick):** Order please. Committee of the Whole will now come to order. The matter before the Committee is Bill No. 20, *First Appropriation Act, 2010-11*. We will now continue with general debate in the Department of Education, Vote 3. Do members wish a brief recess?

**All Hon. Members:** Agreed.

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

*Recess*

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

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

**Chair:** The matter before the Committee is Bill No. 20, *First Appropriation Act, 2010-11*. We will now continue with Department of Education, Vote 3. Mr. Rouble, you have about 15 minutes left.

#### Department of Education — *continued*

**Hon. Mr. Rouble:** Mr. Chair, as we left off on Thursday, the Member for Mount Lorne was starting on a line of questioning regarding the number of FTEs. Those are the full-time equivalents or the number of teachers in our education system. I want to once again let the member know that the number of FTEs in our education system will be remaining the same this year. We have seen a significant decline in our student population in recent years, dropping by almost 20 percent in the last decade. At the same time, we've actually seen an increase in the number of teachers in our system and a significant increase in the number of teaching assistants and education assistants.

Mr. Chair, this certainly speaks volumes about this government's commitment to education and about the importance that we place on education in our community. We also have seen in other jurisdictions recently that there have been layoffs of teachers. The member was questioning about what we are going to do to fill the gap or to replace those teachers who are retiring, which happens on an annual basis — there is usually a portion of the workforce that does retire — and where we are going to go to find new teachers to replace those who are leaving our system — and yes, keeping in mind that the number of FTEs in our educational system is remaining consistent.

I agree with the member opposite that working to see homegrown teachers is the preferred option to follow. I believe very strongly in preparing Yukoners for Yukon opportunities and I believe that using mechanisms that we have here in the territory, such as the Yukon native teacher education program, or YNTEP, which does have some seats open to Yukoners of non-First Nation ancestry, is an excellent way of populating our teacher positions and also a way of continuing Yukon's cultural uniqueness.

I would strongly encourage people who are interested in a career in teaching to take a very good look at the YNTEP at Yukon College and take a look at continuing their education in

that field and obtaining a teacher certification here in Yukon that does provide the appropriate credentials to teach school and is transferable to other jurisdictions.

I would endorse the YNTEP and encourage students from across the territory to apply to it. Unfortunately, it is not always at maximum capacity. In fact, there are usually some seats that are left available. I would love to see that program full because I think it is important to prepare Yukoners for teaching positions in Yukon schools.

It works on so many positive levels. There's the familiarity with the community, with the culture, with the weather, with the people, and with our territorial uniqueness and unique situations. So if members are aware of potential students or if there are others in our Assembly who know of students who might be interested, I would strongly encourage them to discuss those opportunities with their fellow students and to take a look at the programs that we have to offer here in the territory.

On this point too, Mr. Chair, I would just like to add that the member made reference to social workers and also to nurses. Government of Yukon has taken steps in recent years to recognize that there are issues in these areas of our economy of needing to have more social workers and more nurses in Yukon. Government has responded with support to Yukon College for programs such as the bachelor of social work that is provided through the University of Regina — or, it's the University of Regina that provides the accreditation of the baccalaureate degree. But the course is offered here at the Ayamdigut Campus.

Also, on the issue of recruiting nurses, I believe this is National Nursing Week and we'll be hearing more about some of the activities to celebrate nursing in our community. We're also nearing the graduation of the first licensed practical nurse program graduates from Yukon College. This is another example of how the government recognized a labour market situation in the territory, identified that there was going to be a gap in the number of people that we had in the areas, recognized the priority of preparing Yukoners for Yukon opportunities, and put in place a program that was done in partnership with another jurisdiction. I'm not sure of the institution that Yukon College worked with for the licensed practical nurse program, but it wasn't a case of sitting down and drafting all of the curriculum from scratch; it was indeed another example of working with another institution to provide appropriate programming for Yukon students.

Also, at this time, Yukon College, in cooperation with the Department of Justice, is looking at another need we have in our community. Members will be aware of the community justice programs and initiatives that have been undertaken in recent years. One of the areas we need to address in our corrections facilities, especially in the new corrections facility that is being constructed right now, is ensuring we have appropriate programming in place.

Yukon College is preparing to start a correctional officers course and they right now have an ad going on Yukon radio, encouraging people who are interested in pursuing a career in corrections to get involved and do a bit of a pre-corrections

course, so they can find out if indeed they have a significant interest in the area and would like to pursue it further.

Just to summarize here, there are a number of different initiatives we have in place to look at Yukon's labour market needs, then working very closely with Yukon College to ensure that they have responsive programming to the territory's needs. Then we are in fact educating, here in the Yukon, those people for positions, such as nurses, social workers and teachers.

I also want to take this time to touch on the issue of the staffing allocation that is related to this whole issue. We have discussed numerous times on the floor of the Legislature some of the criticisms that have been put forward with the past formula for the allocation of teachers and teaching resources across the territory. This was an issue that was brought forward not only by Members of the Legislative Assembly, but also the Auditor General of Canada in her recent report and also from the Association of School Councils, Boards and Committees. Members will recall that the Auditor General made a recommendation that the department create longer-term plans and look at broader staffing plans for Yukon schools.

In order to respond to these appropriate criticisms, the past system had reached a point where it needed to be updated. There were significant challenges with utilizing it, so this government took the step of creating a staffing allocation advisory committee. We have discussed in the past our commitment to working with Yukoners, to working with our partners in education to jointly solve the problems that are facing us. This is another example of doing just that.

On this committee, Mr. Chair, there were representatives of the Yukon Teachers Association and the Yukon Association of School Administrators that included a mix of urban and rural elementary and secondary school participation. It included area participants. The director general from the francophone school board was invited, as were designates from four different school councils. There was also a position available for a member of the francophone school board and a member of the Catholic Education Association of Yukon. Additional support was provided by the ADM of public schools, the director of human resources, the director of special programs and a consultant who works specifically with the group. When we recognized that we had a situation we had to address, we immediately took action on it. This was indeed an area where we did need to develop a new solution.

When we sat down at the beginning, the following principles were included to guide this committee's deliberations and work on these issues. We wanted to see a formula that provided equity in that it treated those people who had the same characteristics the same, and provided an opportunity for different treatment for those who had identifiably different needs. It was to be data-driven, include real student numbers and use the evidence that we have in our education system to drive decisions. It was to be transparent; it was to be predictable; it was to have a certain degree of timeliness to allow for efficient decision-making and deployment; it was to be responsive and adjust to the changing drivers in a reasonable amount of time; and it had to be sustainable and provide continuity for viable programs into the future.

We provided these principles to the committee and they did the work. I was very pleased to meet with this committee some weeks ago, when they provided their findings to me. I was thankful to the committee for their very engaged, productive discussions on this. I know it was not an easy topic to work through, but it was because we had the wide variety of positions, interests and backgrounds and more groups behind the people that that worked to make a much stronger and more robust policy.

That policy is being put into place for this coming school year. When it was presented to me by the committee members — it included a very broad cross-section of the community from teachers, to principals, to school council members — they were very positive in their support for it. It was presented as having full consensus from the committee on the plan and I was encouraged not to deviate from the intended recommendations. Really, it's a way to create an allocation process that provides direction based on equity, sustainability and transparency. I think these are very strong principles to have built the policy behind. I should note that the committee will also be reviewing this as we go forward with this. They have advised that there are a couple of areas that they still want to have an opportunity to monitor and review, and we will certainly work with them to do that.

I trust that that answers the member opposite's questions. He has asked about what we are doing to encourage the development of locally grown teachers. I didn't mention the other programs outside of YNTEP available for Yukon students, but there are certainly facilities such as the Yukon student grant and the other support for post-secondary education that does assist students who go to other post-secondary institutions across Canada.

We've answered his question about what we're doing to grow more local students. What are we doing to recruit more — if that is a challenge? Well, other jurisdictions are laying off teachers now, so we have not had an issue with having a large number of respondents or applicants for past positions. So that hasn't been a particularly challenging situation for us. As well, we're working to provide other options and opportunities to prepare Yukoners for other positions in our community and in our economy.

**Mr. Cardiff:** Well, I would like to thank the minister for his answer. It encompassed a lot more than what I asked for. It was good to hear the minister tell us again. I'm just going to quote what the minister said on Thursday. This was in response to some of the concerns I raised about staffing levels and what we're doing to recruit new teachers. He said, "We do recognize that we do have retirements and we do need other teachers to come into our system. I agree developing home-grown students is a key success and I would love to see more participation and a greater enrolment in the Yukon native teacher education program that we have here in the territory in an effort to ensure that we are preparing Yukon students to become Yukon teachers." And it was at that point that the minister moved we report progress.

I thought about this on the weekend and my experience in being an MLA, working in the labour movement, being a con-



struction worker who has worked in communities, my experience of nine years on the Yukon College Board of Governors. Thinking this through — in communities we have teaching or education assistants working in the school. We have employment and training officers. We have CELCs, community education liaison coordinators. We have native language instructors.

If the minister and the college are having a problem filling seats in the Yukon native teacher education program, my question to the minister is, will he consider having the program expanded so that at least some courses — why don't we pilot something that goes out into the communities? We could pilot some of the courses, but eventually what I'd like to see is — because it's difficult for people in communities, especially if they're one of the major breadwinners in their family, if they're raising their family in Ross River or Watson Lake or Haines Junction or Dawson City, for them to take time off work — to take four years off work, basically — to come to Whitehorse. If they were able to do coursework to get to the point where they could actually have a teaching degree but stay in their community — that's the concept and that's why we have Yukon College. That's why we have campuses in the communities — because we want those opportunities to be there in the communities for them.

This is a need that the minister has identified. He seems receptive to having more students in the program. What I would like to see is some movement to make it easier for Yukoners who live in rural Yukon, who are committed to the education system or they wouldn't be working in these occupations — but give them an opportunity to become full-fledged teachers. The government is going to have to hire teachers anyhow. These are people who live in those communities, who want to serve those communities and who are going to take their paycheque and spend it in the community, so it seems like a good thing all around.

Would the minister consider doing something along those lines — a pilot project with the idea that, down the road, we could make a lot of the coursework available in rural Yukon?

**Hon. Mr. Rouble:** I appreciate the question coming from the Member for Mount Lorne. Indeed, he has hit on one of the cruxes of the issue of post-secondary education in Yukon, that being: what are the barriers that are in place or that exist that prevent Yukoners from expanding their post-secondary education opportunities? I should note that Yukon has been identified as having the highest rate in Canada of participation in post-secondary education, and Canada does have the highest rate of post-secondary education participation of all countries in the OECD.

What that indicates to me is that many Yukoners are participating in post-secondary education or have gone to a post-secondary educational institution before coming to the Yukon and that many Yukoners are benefiting from many of the programming opportunities at Yukon's college and the community campuses. Not only do people take courses at Ayamdigut here in Whitehorse but also in the rural campuses throughout Yukon. With the use of video conferencing, which we have in all Yukon College campuses, where they have high-speed video conferencing facilities, we also have high-speed video

conferencing in all of Yukon's schools too. We look at ways of expanding those ways to reduce the barriers to post-secondary education.

When you talk to individuals in Yukon about what some of the barriers to post-secondary education are, they're not unlike many of the barriers people in other jurisdictions face. For those of typical post-secondary education age, the 18 to 25 cohort, they are looking for a program that is of interest to them; they need to ensure they have the right financial assistance or financial support in order to take the course. They also need to have the time available to do that.

So we do have many students who benefit from Yukon financial assistance, whether it's the Yukon grant, which is a tremendous cash grant — not a loan, but a grant — that provides assistance to Yukon students to attend educational institutions across North America.

It is really interesting to take a look at where Yukon students go. One might expect to see that most Yukon students attend the University of British Columbia or the University of Alberta, but, really, it is much more than that. Yukon students attend over 110 different educational institutions across Canada. That's a tremendous result, a tremendous accomplishment, because it does indicate the steps that Yukon students take in order to pursue their education.

If we look at the older cohort — those over 25 — many of those people are moving from the world of work or are thinking of switching careers. Many of them have families and, in some cases, some folks are living in communities outside of Whitehorse that don't have access to the courses in their community. One way we have overcome this and worked to reduce these barriers is by the creation of the family residences at Yukon College here in Whitehorse at the Ayamdigut Campus.

We recognize that people are deciding to return to school and that they do have families, so we have taken steps to make that transition easier. Yes, I recognize it involves a move from their home community into Whitehorse, but sometimes one needs the large enough group of students at the same place at the same time to make it feasible to provide a class. We've taken steps such as the creation of the family residences at Ayamdigut Campus to reduce that barrier.

Other issues that do cause some concern are about the difference between full-time studies and part-time studies. Many people who are looking at a mid-career change or at returning to school for the first time are in a situation, due to financial obligations, where they need to maintain a full-time position. Therefore, we need to look at how we change some of our programming from being a full-time September-to-May typical calendar to something that's more responsive to meeting the needs of these returning-to-work professionals.

Another issue here is the area of distance. These are challenges that are being faced nationally and internationally as we look at how we expand post-secondary education opportunities. Again, this is an ongoing discussion with the three northern Education ministers. We are all committed to increasing post-secondary education opportunities for our citizens. Much has been discussed in the recent couple of years regarding a university of the Arctic or a university of the north and, once we get

into a deeper discussion of that, it usually turns into someone making the statement: “Well, how does one bricks-and-mortar building in one community address the needs of three different territories spread across a distance as vast as Canada’s north?”

Yes, that is a challenge of having one building to satisfy the needs of all of the people from coast to coast to coast. We need to take a step back and ask what we can do to increase post-secondary education opportunities. Can we look at issues, such as more support for housing, more support for families with student housing, and greater support for education in other jurisdictions? What can we do then with other educational partners?

This is where Canada is really leading the way in some distributed education models. We have several institutions in Canada that I just want to make members aware of. These are accredited universities, such as Royal Roads, or Athabasca, or other jurisdictions. I’ll find a more exhaustive list for the member opposite.

These are Canadian institutions that are working to respond to the situation of how we provide more courses that people can do from a distance and part-time. I have a particular experience with this issue. I did a master’s degree while working full-time and did the course work from my home in Marsh Lake. It was partially Internet-based, it was partially face-to-face, and it was a new model of education delivery.

We are certainly working with those institutions — the member might have seen that Royal Roads, for example, was here two weeks ago at the trade fair providing more information about their programs. We are working with other institutions that are already providing these kinds of flexible-delivery models.

Now what can we do specifically with Yukon College? I mentioned a couple of ways already, with the video conferencing and the expansion of the programming I know Yukon College is looking at. It will also require a bit of a change on the college’s part and a different philosophical perspective for them. I believe it is something that they are considering now, recognizing that a large portion of Yukon College students are those changing occupations or returning to school. Interestingly, I had a discussion with some of the board of governors not too long ago and we talked about how the average age of the students at Yukon College was about 35. However, there were no 35-year-old students there. There were a lot of 20-to-25-year-old students and then a lot of 40-to-45-year-old students, but if you did the math, you came up with the average age being 35. It was really a mix of students who were going to post-secondary for the first time right after high school and then another group of people who were returning to traditional education after being away for awhile.

The college does have a responsibility to this demographic, this portion of our population that is returning to school and needs to find additional ways of engaging with them. Part of that is through changing the model of the courses that are provided, whether that is face-to-face or distance based, changing it from a full-time student calendar of September to May, to something that people can do more on a part-time basis or at their own pace basis, and also recognizing some of the an-

dragological practices of teaching older students, which are a bit different from the practices put in place for dealing with students who are coming straight from high school.

I have discussed this issue with Yukon College in the past, and it is key in their commitment to becoming a more responsive educational institution. When I say “responsive”, that is not just responsive in the types of programming that they deliver but also in their delivery model. Yukon College has been very receptive to some of these initiatives in the past, so I will take the member’s suggestions under advisement. I will raise them with the college board of governors and encourage them to recognize that, in order to build a responsive education system, they also have to take into consideration the needs of rural Yukon students who are looking to return to school on a part-time basis.

**Mr. Cardiff:** I wasn’t sure if the minister was going to answer the questions, but I thank him for taking it forward. Far be it for me as a former member of the board to suggest that the minister tell the board that they should do this, because, as a previous board member, I know that that’s not always that welcome.

It was meant as a suggestion and I thank the minister for agreeing to take that suggestion forward. I would like to comment on a couple of things the minister said and clarify my thoughts around some of this. One of the things we’ve seen and one of the things I know this minister has liked to talk about previously is the connectivity we have in the Yukon, how we’re one of the most connected jurisdictions in the country and in North America.

The comment about the University of the Arctic and the idea that there needs to be bricks and mortar in one place that can service the entire circumpolar region, I think is not what the original concept was. The concept was that it would be like a virtual university that used distance education techniques, and actually, rather than building with bricks and mortar, basically it made use of the bricks and mortar that already existed in communities, whether it be in Whitehorse, or Reykjavik, Sweden, Russia, or wherever — it could be in Haines Junction. It was a whole concept of using existing bricks and mortar and the existing knowledge and coursework, and trying to share that through the circumpolar world. The idea that we need more bricks and mortar for that — in my mind, it can be hosted in existing bricks and mortar.

I really am pleased that the minister is going to take the suggestion because I believe that it’s important for people who are in leadership situations in their communities, being the breadwinners and contributing to their community, to be somehow allowed the opportunities as well — that they not be forced to travel to Whitehorse or other jurisdictions.

I am going to tie this question into it because one of the options that the minister raised was using other institutions. I think he specifically talked about Royal Roads and Athabasca University. I know that there are other distance-education type institutions that do offer programs and I know there are people in the north here who have availed themselves of those opportunities. I know we’ve had this discussion in here before but we haven’t had it in this context. When you suggest that somebody

from Mayo or Dawson City or Watson Lake or Ross River try to get a teaching degree from an Outside institution, I want to know how that affects their ability to be hired. I mean, number one, some of the people I am suggesting would be interested in this are actually employees of the Department of Education. Therefore, the Department of Education should be interested in advancing people like education assistants, teaching assistants, native language instructors. A lot of those people already work for the Department of Education. It would be good for the Department of Education to give them opportunities to advance. The others are employment and training officers, community education liaison coordinators. Other people who are working in the education field for First Nation governments and others aren't working for the Department of Education. It's about where the priority is when it comes to hiring teachers.

This was brought up again with me recently. It's about Yukoners who were born here, raised here and graduated here. Then they went Outside and got a teaching certificate and, when they came back, found out that they weren't necessarily the preferred hires, that people who had come from Outside and participated in the Yukon native teacher education program were actually on the list ahead of them.

Believe me, we want YNTEP students to be hired, because it is about a Yukon program for Yukoners and having those role models in our education system. If the minister was suggesting that some of these people I've been speaking about could avail themselves of education opportunities at universities down south, where does that put them when they come back and they apply for a job? Theoretically, it could put them behind people who have come from Outside and availed themselves of the teacher education program, people who weren't born and raised in the Yukon. I am just trying to figure out how he rationalizes that and how he sees that working.

I honestly believe that making our programming here in the Yukon available to those communities is a better option. I'm not saying it's the only option. I think it is the preferred option, from my point of view.

**Hon. Mr. Rouble:** Mr. Chair, I don't have all the stats for all the programs here at my fingertips, but I'm just thinking of YNTEP, and typically each year we have fewer than 10 people who graduate from that, and not all of those 10 choose to apply for Yukon teaching positions. I'm not even sure how many of those students would not be born and raised Yukoners or fit that other criteria that the member was using. I think that there might only be five or so people who might be YNTEP grads each year who would fall into this category that the member is talking about.

Typically, we have many more than five positions, given the number of teachers we have in Yukon's education system. I don't think there would be a huge shift caused by recognizing the YNTEP grads and the way they are recognized under the current staffing protocol.

One only has to look at the demographics of educators in the Yukon to see that we do have many teachers nearing the age of retirement. We certainly will want to hire local people, especially local people in a community. The knowledge that they bring about community life, about the history, the culture,

the structures in the community is important. They carry that through.

There are instances, I know, where people, once they have received their teaching certificate, might want to go and work in another community to gain other experience or different perspectives for a couple of years, but I don't really see the barrier that the member is talking about. Maybe if we have an opportunity to discuss this outside of budget debate we might get more to the bottom of this.

On the other issue of increasing access to post-secondary education, I'm encouraged to hear the member's perspective on the University of the Arctic and how it is important to tie all of the institutions together. We do have a structure in Canada called the University of the Arctic, and the Canadian council includes I think about 35 Canadian institutions that are interested in participating in University of the Arctic activities. Yes, this is part of a larger international University of the Arctic organization, which includes countries from around the world.

It's unfortunate though that in some of these discussions a "University of the Arctic" or "University of the North" or "University in the North" gets talked about and we need to have a university — it's always "a" — we need to have a university in the north. I really think we all recognize that we need to increase the number of post-secondary educational opportunities for people in the north.

I agree with the member opposite: one brick-and-mortar structure is not going to serve the needs of people in Yukon, Northwest Territories and Nunavut, but we can work together to share best practices. Indeed, we have an example of that with the Northern Institute of Social Justice, which has just been established at Yukon College.

The Institute of Social Justice — we had a thorough discussion about its programming but those programs have been started in consultation with other jurisdictions, namely Nunavut and Northwest Territories, and we will be working to tighten the ties that bind us and to increase the number of students from those jurisdictions who can take courses here in Yukon.

I agree wholeheartedly about increasing the capacity of Yukon College. We've certainly seen the tremendous growth in the programming that they have been offering. Members are aware that students can take the first two years of an arts or science degree at Yukon College and then transfer those to others jurisdictions in the south and, as well, the partnerships that have been developed through the college with institutions, such as the University of Northern British Columbia, Royal Roads, University of Alberta, University of Regina, and University of Alaska to provide Yukon students with access to those programs.

With the University of Northern British Columbia, Yukon College is offering the Master of Education program that is underway right now. This is another example of how Government of Yukon and Yukon College is responsive to the needs in our community.

Just for the member opposite's information, through the Yukon education leadership program, which we have put in place to develop both formal and informal leaders, 44 participants have completed the first year of the two-year certificate

program. Also, as part of this initiative of working to ensure that we are developing the next generation of administrators and leaders for our school system, we are also working on the MEd with UNBC. That program currently has 26 students in it, 11 of whom are Yukoners of First Nation ancestry. These are certainly important steps that we're going forward in.

As well, the member opposite mentioned Royal Roads and other institutions that provide Internet or distance-based education. Another one we should add to that is the Thompson Rivers University. These are Canadian schools that are recognizing the importance and value of providing a different format of distance education. I understand from discussions that I've had with Royal Roads officials that over 100 Yukoners have completed a bachelor or master program through Royal Roads in the last couple of years.

That's 100 more Yukoners who are typically taking a master program. They do offer baccalaureate programs, but they do focus mostly on master-level programming. These statistics, these indicators, aren't typically captured by Yukon's education statistics. If students do not access student grant funding to assist with the financial obligations then we really have no record of their participation in expanding their educational credentials.

We have undertaken at the Department of Education a plan to do a more thorough survey of the education-attainment levels of students after they complete high school, but that is a longitudinal study that will be undertaken in the next couple of years. We hope that it captures some of this information as we go forward.

We are continuing to work with other institutions to expand the programming opportunities here. Many of these are Internet or distance based. We are continuing to work very closely with our sister territories on addressing these issues. We're continuing to work with the University of Arctic people in strengthening the ties that bind us in those areas. Government of Yukon is continuing to work with Yukon College to ensure that Yukon College is responsive to the needs in our community, both from a programming and program-delivery perspective.

**Mr. Cardiff:** I thank the minister for the answer and the perspective that he put forward.

In the interest of time, I want to move on to another area. We may end up jumping around a little bit here, but this is kind of a community-based question as well. It's about experiential programming. The secondary program review — my belief is that it was recommended that there be more experiential learning and that it be delivered in rural Yukon. I know there are challenges in this area about delivering programming in communities, and it's about having adequate resources, having the staff there to provide the services. I think it was mentioned in the briefing that there is a project in Old Crow. I applaud that. I think that's good.

I believe I heard the minister mention this on Thursday when he said that it was a kindergarten to grade 9 initiative to develop experiential programming in Old Crow that would be relevant to the community, and that's great. I'm really pleased to see that.

We actually have an experiential learning program taking place in the riding of Mount Lorne and I believe it's a project that is sponsored by International Polar Year. It's a study. It would be good for the Minister of Environment and maybe the Minister of Community Services or Highways and Public Works to get in on this as well, because there is a group of students — this is a study that is going to go on. It would be students who are actually doing the work, looking at the lake levels and the reasons behind why the lake level in Cowley Creek has declined in recent years, looking at the impact it's having on the fish and wildlife in that area and what the causes of it are.

I'm really pleased to see things like that happening in Mount Lorne and the students who are involved in the experiential science programs in Whitehorse. Like I said, I applaud the project in Old Crow.

What types of initiatives is the department pursuing in order to expand experiential learning processes or programs into other Yukon communities?

**Hon. Mr. Rouble:** I certainly appreciate the question coming from the Member for Mount Lorne about what the Government of Yukon and the Department of Education are doing to — I think it boils down to what the department is doing to help students learn more, learn better or learn faster and to succeed more in education.

One of the steps that we're doing is recognizing that different students learn differently and that some students are auditory learners, some are visual learners, but many learn by kinesthetics or getting involved with having a different approach to the learning — maybe a more holistic approach. So we, the Department of Education, are trying to engage teachers to ensure that they are aware of different learning styles and different learning approaches and also to make them aware of different teaching styles, different teaching approaches and to facilitate that in the strong work they do and also to recognize, across the board, that learning isn't just something that happens in the classroom, that learning happens between the ears of the students — it is even more than between the ears. Learning happens when there is a change in what some people call, "the head, hands and heart". The cognitive domain, the thinking skills, the feeling, the heart or the hands — what people can do with their psychomotor skills.

We recognize that learning doesn't just happen in the classroom and that learning will happen outside of the classroom and that when there is that teachable moment that engages the student, where they do that "Aha, I get it" — that's what we're all trying to encourage and have happen more often and more frequently.

Some of the ways that we are doing that are by encouraging different approaches to teaching styles and using the data that we have on education, researching how the brain works and looking at other pedagogical best practices and sharing that information with our teachers, with our parents and with our school administrators. We certainly see that sharing of information, whether it is through things like support for the Learning Disabilities Association of Canada's national conference that was held here in Whitehorse, or some of the other supports that

we have to encourage the professional growth and development of people in the Department of Education, including teachers.

A couple of years ago, we established the experiential education program and the vocational initiatives in that. That's a fund of \$385,000 a year that is allocated for teachers to use to increase the number of vocational education opportunities or experiential education opportunities for their classroom. Those are providing financial resources if teachers need to acquire different stuff or go different places.

Another fund has been the leaders in education/innovation fund, which is another resource that school councils, teachers, principals and schools can apply for in order to try out something new. This is a peer-reviewed process where teachers, school councils or administrators can put together a brief identification of a project, or brief project proposal, take it to a community of their peers and say, "We'd like to go from the idea stage to a good idea stage and see if we can find a way that's going to engage students in their education and lead to an increase in educational outcomes."

We're trying to foster that spirit of innovation and that spirit of trying different things in our education system. That's a philosophical shift, if you will. We recognize that, if we're going to see different results — and people have encouraged us that they want to see some different results — we then have to try different things. Sometimes trying those things is not without fear or trepidation. The idea, for example, of going ahead with a gender-based classroom is one that certainly gave me a lot of thought. But we did recognize that if we want to see different outcomes, we have to try different things. We're trying to foster that spirit of innovation in providing resources for leadership programs, for experiential education programs. We also recognize that we have had success with other programs, more specific programs such as the TEST program, OPES, ACES and MAD programs, and have started to seriously look at putting the planning in place for a First Nation experiential education program.

This is an initiative that has come about because of the education reform project, because of New Horizons, and because of the engagement of our stakeholders. It is an opportunity for the department to enhance opportunities for First Nations in the secondary school system and to meet the recommendations put forth in the education reform project, the secondary school program review and the Yukon First Nations Education Advisory Committee's strategic plan. The first component will be a Whitehorse-based experiential program with a First Nation perspective and it will be ready to implement in the 2010-11 school year for grade 9 students. The department has sought the advice of the First Nations Education Advisory Committee and the First Nations curriculum working group on this program. The First Nations FN9 program will be offered in February 2011.

There's a rather engaging acronym for this course. It's based on community, heritage, arts, outdoors and skills, so the acronym for that would be CHAOS. It will offer integration of the subject areas, as well as developing understanding and making connections to Yukon First Nation knowledge, traditions, skills, values and beliefs. The motto for the program is

based on a Southern Tutchone phrase that translates roughly to "Together we will learn."

Also, a grade 10 experiential program will be developed this year and piloted in 2012-13. Those are two of the other programs that we have working. To clarify for the member opposite: no, the shoe-phone will not put one in direct consultation with the people behind the CHAOS program — I think that was spelled with a K, too. If there are other pieces of *Get Smart* trivia that we could include, I'm sure that will come to the floor too.

The other program I'd like to bring to the members' attention is the northern strategy project, which is funding the Old Crow experiential education program.

In this program the Government of Yukon Department of Education is working closely with the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation to help implement the Old Crow northern strategy experiential education project. It is a three-year project to develop a rural First Nation experiential education model for kindergarten to grade 9. I've had discussions in the past with the Chief of the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation and he has often reminded me that we give kids credit in high school for learning how to put a round ball in a hoop 10 feet off the ground, so why can't we provide recognition to students who learn more practicable, community-based, culturally appropriate skills?

This is a way of doing that. It's a way of pursuing academic excellence in a culturally appropriate manner. It certainly builds upon the fact that Yukon people have been educating people to know, to learn, to do and to be long before the Department of Education was ever formed, long before there was ever a Minister of Education and long before we had bricks-and-mortar schools in our territory.

With this project we are working to engage students to teach them the curriculum as it's laid out in an engaging manner. We realize that we have had challenges in the past with students disengaging from our education system too early and we want to certainly take steps to prevent that. That's why we have put in place a variety of different programs.

Just to sum them up, Mr. Chair, they include a different philosophical approach, an approach based on trying different things. It has been an approach that has included additional education and resources and training for Yukon's educators. It has included financial support for all grades and all schools through a variety of programs, including the experiential and vocational training programs and the innovation fund for Yukon schools. It also has manifested itself in the creation of several new experiential education projects, one with a local Whitehorse-based First Nation experiential education program and the other in a community-based experiential education program.

I trust this has provided a bit more information on this area to the member opposite and has clearly demonstrated this government's eagerness and commitment to engaging Yukon students and working to prepare them for the opportunities that they will face in their community and in their future.

**Mr. Cardiff:** I'd like to thank the minister for that. I had a lot of that information already. The question is about experiential programming in communities. I applauded the

minister for the northern strategy project in Old Crow — I think that's great. I think that a program that is defined by community, that is defined by heritage and arts and outdoor skills is another great opportunity for Yukon students, especially Yukon First Nation students, to learn in an experiential way. I think there is a lot that they can do in those areas.

If I have something to say about it — from the briefing note — the subjects that are offered during each semester will be English 9, Socials 9, Fine Arts 9, and Outdoor Pursuits 9. I'm not even going to attempt to pronounce it because I would probably make it sound wrong. If I was going to do this, I would have asked. But the motto for the program is "Together we will learn." It would seem to me that if it's targeted at First Nation students, or if it's supposed to be like First Nation pursuits or a First Nation-focused program, there should be a First Nation language component to the program, I would hope — that together we're going to learn about the culture of First Nation people.

Earlier in this Legislative Assembly we heard most eloquently from the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin, I believe, how culture and heritage are linked to language. That's not the point I was going to try to make. The point I'm trying to make is that these programs — CHAOS 9 and the one that is supposed to be developed this year and piloted in 2012-13 — are targeted for the community of Whitehorse. The question I was asking the minister is this: are we going to be able to take the curriculum that exists now in ACES or MAD or OPES and make that transferable to community schools that would like to do something like that? I understand the whole concept behind providing funding. I can't remember all the names that the minister used — innovators in education is one; leadership in education is another, I believe. I probably butchered that too — but providing funding for teacher and educators in communities to do little bits and pieces.

My understanding was that what was recommended in the secondary school program review and through education reform was to actually have some of these programs available in rural Yukon. I understand the problem. It is very similar to the discussion we were having about delivering YNTEP in rural communities. It is about numbers, but it can't always be about numbers, Mr. Chair. It has got to be about the people we are serving here in the Legislature. It is what we're trying to do to assist our communities to heal, to grow, to develop, and it is for them to develop how they would like to develop. What I understood from reading through the materials that I read through was that there was a desire in rural Yukon to have more experiential programming.

If what's happening in CHAOS 9 and 10 is — and I don't know if that's the appropriate acronym for the grade 10 one, but — if what's being developed there is transferable to communities, then that would be great.

We can't be doing this here in Whitehorse and asking communities to stand by and watch it be done here if we're not making an adequate effort in their communities. It doesn't matter — it can be Haines Junction, it can be Dawson City, it can be Mayo, it can be any number of communities, but they're all

faced with the same problem: it's about the support of the community; it's about the support of the family.

I note that the department is looking at what supports can be provided for rural students who want to apply and come to Whitehorse, but not all students want to apply and come to Whitehorse. They want to stay in their community; they want to have the support of their family. They want to be able to contribute to their community.

There are a lot of young folks out there who have a tremendous amount to offer a program like this in the community. They're the ones who are out there going with their aunts or their uncles on the trapline or going to the fish camp or going to ensure that there's firewood for their aunt or their grandmother. That's all experiential learning too.

But providing these opportunities around socials or fine arts or outdoor pursuits, and English or another language — a first language maybe — in a community would be greatly welcomed in many communities.

That's the thrust of the question that I was asking the minister. I've probably taken too much time to delve into it, but I think I've covered it. A lot of times, they're not looking for support to come to Whitehorse; they're looking for something to come to them. They're looking for the opportunity — the educational opportunity — to come to the community.

I know the numbers are here in Whitehorse, and maybe we have to look at a regional model — I don't know — where because of travel, basically, it's not so long to travel home on the weekend.

I'm looking for the minister to stand up and inform me what exists now, whether it's OPES, ACES, MAD, any of the other existing programs or any of the new programs — CHAOS 9 and the curriculum that's being developed for grade 10 — whether or not they're going to be able to be delivered in the communities if the community wants it.

Will the department support that?

**Hon. Mr. Rouble:** The short answer for that question is yes. Just as we have recognized that different students are different and that different approaches are sometimes needed between one student and another, we recognize that the different communities are indeed different and that a program that works for one community might not work for another community.

That has led us to the fundamental shift in New Horizons, of working with the school growth plans, of identifying the community's issues and concerns and encouraging the community to be more engaged in the school and in the education process and to engage the community through the school growth planning. Also, we will engage our other communities through other mechanisms. I am thinking of things like their First Nations Education Advisory Committee or the First Nation working group on curriculum.

I will start with the school growth plan because I don't want to go into a regional-based model as the idea has just been tossed out, but instead focus on the community and the school. The school growth planning process is the mechanism that we have in place to work with the community, the school council, the First Nation orders of government and others interested in

education so that they bring thoughts, ideas and encompass those into the plan for the school.

Yes, some of the expected outcomes will of course be literacy and numeracy. We will be responsive to other needs that are brought forward. On that note, I want to just reinforce the fact that the objective is that we're trying to attain educational excellence in a culturally appropriate manner. There are certain elements to a high school diploma — one that is transferable from Yukon to British Columbia to other jurisdictions in Canada — where we have to maintain the educational integrity and the transferability, as the member opposite is saying, to ensure that we are meeting the educational outcomes that are expected from a high school diploma across Canada.

There are different ways that we can achieve the same outcomes and that's where looking at the creativity and fostering those different approaches — either from a school-based perspective or from a system-wide perspective — come into play. We want to enhance the skills and things like problem-solving, research, communication, independent work, and teamwork — all of those kinds of core competencies — and the group I've listed here is by no means a definitive list. We do that in conjunction with the specific subject matter expertise that goes forward in our school projects.

So I mentioned a bit about how the school and the community can have input specific to their school situation. Also, through the work that we have done with the secondary school review, the First Nations Education Advisory Committee and the work with the Association of School Councils, Boards and Committees, we look at ways that we can make changes to the whole system. Yes, when we do look at creating one program or running one pilot, of course we look at how we can make this transferable to other schools.

So when we do run a pilot project, such as the bicultural program in Haines Junction — the member asked what we are doing to enhance things in Haines Junction. That was just one of the communities that came to mind. Well, in that community we've worked with the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations government. We worked with the school council. We've identified that a bicultural program that embraces Southern Tutchone is one of the things that that community really wants to see.

Now we can't take that exact same program and move that to Carcross because it is a different language. We can take many of the same processes or styles, but because the subject matter is different, we then have to do another project where we are focusing on a different language. So that is one of the challenges that we have — the different languages throughout the territory.

On the language side of things, when we get into the line for the Yukon native teacher education program, I can go into more specifics about the master apprentice program and some of the programs that we're putting in place to train Yukoners to be First Nation language teachers. I will come back to that when we get deeper into the budget.

Yes, we are looking at how we create a pilot project that is transferable and that creates a framework that we can apply in different communities. We recognize that there are unique differences from community to community. We recognize too that

we had several experiential education programs that were focusing on science, or music, arts and drama, or some of the other approaches.

We also wanted to create one for high school students that was really focusing on First Nation students. It's open to all students but we recognize that we have a disproportionate number of First Nation students who disengage from Yukon's education system too early, so we're putting in special programming. I don't want to use the word "special". I'm going to use the word "different" — different programming or different approaches to keep them engaged. Then, once we learn some of the best practices from this, yes, they will be shared with teachers across the territory. That's what we're doing with the wide variety of programs that we have. We're trying to identify the best practices and move that into common practice in all schools. We've been working on this and providing additional resources for experiential education. On that, I just want to reinforce that we don't need a new acronym to do experiential education.

When I was in high school, for example, Mr. Chair, we had these rock tablets from which we read. Actually, it was a little bit more modern than that — we had real paper. We had a record player. For those who are unaware of what a record player is, we had these large vinyl discs that spun round and round and a needle played on it, and we heard these really scratchy old recitals of Shakespeare. We used to listen to Shakespeare on records that had been played dozens and dozens of times before. Not being an auditory learner, I had challenges with that. Unfortunately, when students are faced with a challenging situation, often they don't pay attention and then they often turn into troublemakers in the classroom. I will blame my frustrations and my visits to the principal's office on the scratchy old records that I was forced to listen to because they didn't engage me. They engaged those learners who were auditory learners. They didn't have any problems.

They could understand when the three witches were talking about the hurlyburlys and the other incantations that went along with their magic spells, but I couldn't follow it. That was a method that engaged auditory learners. Other learners would have been engaged by reading the actual script. Others would be engaged by actually having the students act out scenes from a Shakespearian play.

It's that different approach of saying, okay, we're going to do something new; we're not going to listen to the 78 rpm of the *Merchant of Venice*; we're actually going to have these three students stand up, and who's going to be Iago and why do you think Shylock will act that way?

It's a different approach; it isn't a new acronym; it's just a way of approaching the learning outcomes that are to be experienced and finding a different way of engaging the students.

If that means the teachers all of a sudden, instead of saying, okay, we're going to sit down and read Shakespeare today, today we're going to act out a scene from *Julius Caesar*, great. It's that kind of innovation, that kind of change, that kind of different approach that we want to foster in Yukon's education system in order to engage other students.

On the other issue of ensuring that our programming — especially for First Nation initiatives — includes the appropriate language, yes, I agree. We've had a debate already in the Assembly about First Nation language programming going on throughout the territory. I can provide more details and background on that if members opposite want, but I trust I've captured the essence of this question of what we are doing to ensure that we're not just doing a one-off, that we're establishing frameworks that we can take to other jurisdictions. Yes, that's what we're trying to do. Are we doing work in specific communities to meet specific community objectives? Yes, that's the focus of the school growth plans and some of the specific initiatives, such as the Old Crow experiential program or the Haines Junction bicultural program.

We're also working with some of our broader territorial partners as to how we can make broader changes to curriculum. In some cases, those get presented here in Whitehorse; in some cases, they happen in communities first.

Really, it depends on where we have the opportunity sometimes. If it's the grade 5 section on First Nation governance structures, some of those get tested in rural communities before they get tested here in Whitehorse. Once they go through the appropriate testing process, they are shared with all 29 schools throughout the Yukon. We're not trying to just provide a program here in Whitehorse, we are trying to provide programming that is put in place across the territory.

One of the initiatives that we have here in Whitehorse is the Individual Learning Centre, the ILC, that has been put in place to re-engage students who have disengaged from high school. We had a test of this project in Dawson City, done in conjunction with the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in. Unfortunately, the program ran through a couple of snags, so we're reworking those and we'll be looking at how we introduce that type of program or that model of education delivery to other Yukon communities.

We also have stories from Yukon communities — for example, in Dawson City, where people are building an electric car and people in Whitehorse are saying, "Wow, that sounds like a great idea. Why can't we try that here?" The short answer to the member opposite's question is yes, we are trying to identify best practices for education delivery across the territory and provide that to all of our schools. At the same time, we're recognizing the differences between communities and providing information in all of the schools. Also, we are striving for academic excellence in a culturally appropriate setting. We have to ensure that the standards and the intended outcomes of education are being met in the courses that we are offering. We have to ensure the meaningful nature of a high school diploma and its integrity across the system. It certainly is not our intention to reduce the levels in our schools. It certainly is not our intention to, as some would have said, dumb down the content. No, far from it. We're working to increase the educational outcomes and working through a variety of different methods and means in order to encourage a diverse group of students to all build the skills that they need to complete high school and to be a contributing, participatory member of society and ultimately a participant in lifelong learning.

**Mr. Cardiff:** I appreciate the minister's — I won't say it that way, but his humorous approach, I guess. I could have sworn that those long-play records were actually long cylinders. I think that what you could learn from the minister's comments, Mr. Chair, is that if you didn't keep the chisels that you were using on the rock tablets with the long-play records, they wouldn't be as scratchy.

I would like to thank the minister for providing the draft strategic plan on New Horizons. I didn't have a lot of time to read it on Thursday after I received it, but I did have a chance to look at it a little bit over the weekend and compare some of it with the other large document I received last week as well.

There's a mention in the plan of a tripartite memorandum of understanding and action plan. My initial note was, when would a copy of that — because it says it's being developed to define the roles and responsibilities of all parties in order to advance student achievement and success for First Nation learners. The purpose of it is to address the disparity between First Nation and non-First Nation learners and to eliminate that gap.

When I read the ministerial note, it actually raised more questions than just when would we be able to see the MOU. The background to it states that it's being developed by Canada, the Yukon government, Yukon First Nations, and CYFN is coordinating the development of the MOU. It's going to allow the parties to create a prioritized action plan for education change in Yukon. I know that everything is in a constant state of change, and not just education. Everything around us is in a constant state of change. I can relate to that. I guess the concern that I have is that it says that \$300,000 is being provided by INAC to develop the memorandum of understanding. It's not just the memorandum of understanding; it's an action plan that will prioritize the work on recommendations from recently released reports such as the education reform initiative.

We've had the education reform document for a number of years now. I guess one of the questions for me is this: why is it only now that we're getting to this stage? Why is it going to cost \$300,000 — I understand that there'll be a lot of meetings, and there are a lot of stakeholders to get involved, but it also says in the backgrounder that it's a national program that ends on March 31, 2013. That's three years away.

So I'm looking for some clarification and more information around this. Why is it going to take three years and cost \$300,000 and why are we just now beginning work on prioritizing the recommendations from what we learned in the education reform process?

**Hon. Mr. Rouble:** Yes, I once again agree with the member opposite. There is always a constant change going on. There are different wheels moving within wheels and then there are different opportunities that come up.

A number of years ago, the Yukon Party government recognized that we needed to take action on education. There had been the previous *Education Act* review, which had received literally thousands of comments about education but, at the time, very few that actually had to deal with the piece of legislation.



We realized that we needed to do work on reforming, on evolving education and that would address many of the issues that had been brought forward by people who had commented on the *Education Act*. That started the education reform project and that also created an important relationship between the Government of Yukon and the Council of Yukon First Nations.

At the same time we have been going through the process of self-governing First Nations, looking at their authority and their jurisdiction and having discussions on a government-to-government level with Yukon First Nations. We also were in a process where the Council of Ministers of Education across Canada looked at the outcomes of Canadian First Nation citizens from the traditional education system, and where the Council of Ministers of Education made a commitment to eliminate the gap in performance between First Nation students and non-First Nation students, and also calling upon the federal government to come to the plate and take steps to address these situations.

The education reform process was a very good one and it has resulted in numerous recommendations that have come through to all orders of government — to Government of Yukon, to Yukon First Nation governments, and also calling upon Government of Canada to take some action.

If we do have an opportunity, Mr. Chair, we could go through the education reform document and go through section by section and see changes that have been made in Yukon's education system to respond to the interests that have been identified through that document. But that doesn't mean that the work is concluded. Reforming and evolving education is an ongoing process and one that will continue — really, I would expect it will never conclude. We will always look at ways of increasing the educational attainment levels of our students, of working to address the broad spectrum of issues that are now part of the expected curriculum, and we will continue to work together on a government-to-government-to-government basis in order to meet the needs of our constituents.

With the education reform project, the Council of Yukon First Nations and Government of Yukon have made a strong commitment to continue to work together — to continue that — and that has led us through the New Horizons process. I have discussed many of the initiatives from New Horizons on the floor of this Assembly.

This process has also been embodied by some of the philosophical shifts that we have been discussing in the last couple of days, about the work on an individual student basis and on the development of our teachers in providing the resources that they need to make the difference in the classroom.

We've been talking about the differences that the community is making with the school growth plans and the direction of the community. We've been talking about many of the different mechanisms in place that Yukoners are involving themselves in to change the direction of education in specific subject matter areas throughout the territory.

We also had a responsibility under the education reform project to engage the federal government. Members will recall that one of the priority areas was to engage the federal government and to remind them of their fiduciary responsibilities for

some areas of education, especially as it pertains to education of students of First Nation ancestry. Just a side note on this: I do want to state that Yukon does have the responsibility to provide education for all Yukon students. We do not have an on-reserve type of situation that is in place in other jurisdictions in Canada. According to our Constitution, education is the domain and responsibility of the provinces and territories, except for areas such as on-reserve education and the education of Department of Defence members and staff, and the education of foreign service people in Outside jurisdictions.

The education of on-reserve First Nation students is still the responsibility of the federal government and that falls under INAC's responsibility. We have a variety of different systems in place across Canada. We had education systems, for example, in Alberta where Alberta is not responsible for on-reserve education. Again, with the Alberta example, they do not include the educational expenditures or the educational outcomes in the statistics they provide for their education system.

The federal government, a number of years ago, recognized that this was an issue of national importance. They had heard that from the Council of Ministers of Education and they wanted to look at ways of addressing this across Canada. That is why we have the involvement of the federal government and the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs in this situation. At the time, the resources were available only for on-reserve education.

We also recognize that, through education reform, we were called upon to re-engage the federal government. We did just that. The federal government also looked at the relationship that had been established between the Government of Yukon and the Council of Yukon First Nations and individual Yukon First Nation orders of government and they were so impressed by the process and the collaborative approach that we had taken, that they decided then to change their program criteria and then said they would like to invite Yukon to participate in this.

Now, Mr. Chair, if someone advises that they have a pot of money that, if you would like to tap into it, you are invited to do so — I'm sure you would agree that it was appropriate for us to do that.

So we had identified then that Canada, Yukon and Yukon First Nations would work through a process of establishing this MOU that would then provide resources available to implement many of our different educational objectives, all the while remaining cognizant of our jurisdictional authorities and areas of responsibility.

When we were faced with a situation where the federal government said, would you like to participate in this program and have access to these additional resources, we said, of course we would.

We have made significant progress on many of the initiatives under education reform. We're going over many more of them today in budget debate, but I certainly am not going to turn away additional resources if people are saying they would like to provide you with some. That has then led the Government of Yukon to work very closely with the Council of Yukon First Nations and the federal government on this tripartite part-

nership. It will recognize the different jurisdictional areas of responsibility of the various orders of government. It will provide additional resources to undertake additional programs, or to expand existing programs to other communities.

There are some timelines in the member's notes that he now has. It provides a term for this project. I don't anticipate that it will take three years to sign the memorandum of understanding. In fact, that is being developed right now. Once that process is concluded, then the remaining funds will be allocated, based on a proposal-driven process.

We will also develop an action plan for annual proposal calls to be submitted for funding consideration.

This is a very good step. It is engaging the federal government in looking at their financial role, or fiduciary role, of supporting educational activities in Canada. It is recognizing the areas of jurisdiction between the three orders of government and it is bringing the three orders of government together, working toward the collaborative and common goal of increasing the educational outcomes for Yukon students of First Nation ancestry.

Some of the original criteria of the funding was that the original seed money — the \$300,000 — would go to the Council of Yukon First Nations and they would be the funding vehicle then for bringing together much of the consultation or the coordination.

Yes, I will agree that many of these discussions have taken place in the past. We are continuing to build upon these and are moving forward based on the recognition of common objectives. This isn't a situation of reinventing things, redoing things or throwing out one proposal and coming in with something new. No, this is building upon the successes that have been accomplished and recognized. It is building upon a relationship and a common goal of increasing educational outcomes and it is looking at a way of expediting some of the programming opportunities that we have before us in Yukon. We have a wide variety of very innovative and engaging programs such as the bicultural program in Haines Junction or the Old Crow experiential land-based program and I expect that by accessing additional resources from the federal government through this process, that we will be able to expand these types of programs to other communities and ultimately increase the educational outcome of Yukon students of First Nation ancestry.

**Mr. Cardiff:** I thank the minister for that. I guess, as a point of clarification on what the minister was talking about — when you read the briefing note, it says that following the signing of the MOU — and I'm encouraged that the minister thinks that it is going to be sooner rather than later and it won't be three years to do that and that there will be money left over — it also says that the parties will seek additional funding to implement the action plan. I'm assuming that's in relation to the annual proposal calls that he was talking about.

My understanding of what the minister was saying — and I want to try and get this in before the break so I can have a little time to think about what his answer is — is the minister saying that this is going to be a stream of funding that is going to support education initiatives in individual communities, based on an annual call for proposals, where communities or

schools — it could be school councils or teachers — will make proposals about enhancing education opportunities?

**Some Hon. Member:** (Inaudible)

**Mr. Cardiff:** No? Could the minister explain the call for proposals, what the intent is behind them and what that additional funding — because it talks about implementing an action plan, so how is it going to assist our children who are sitting at desks in community schools throughout the Yukon?

**Hon. Mr. Rouble:** The member opposite has the information at his fingertips, that I typically have every day. There's a bit more to this though. The first step in this relationship — which is a government-to-government-to-government relationship among the Government of Canada, Government of Yukon and Yukon First Nations through the Council of Yukon First Nations — is to develop the MOU, and then the life of this program will go until March 31, 2013.

The completion of the MOU is just the first step that we expect to be concluded in the near future. The next step then is regular, or annual, funding proposals that would come from the First Nation governments. That's the specific point I need to make — this isn't coming from a school-based initiative, or a school council initiative, but this is a First Nation government initiative.

We will certainly work with Yukon First Nations on these proposals, but the monies, as I understand, will be going to the First Nation governments. Would there then be some opportunity for funds coming back to the Government of Yukon for the provision of services? On that we'll have to see based on the proposals that come in.

The first step is to solidify the willingness of all of our jurisdictions to work together. Government of Yukon is very eager to work with the Government of Canada and Yukon First Nations on this.

Following that, it will allow for a shared agreement that will allow parties to create a prioritized action plan for educational change in Yukon. That is building upon the work that we have identified through education reform, through New Horizons with the First Nations Education Advisory Committee, and with our unique bilateral agreements we have with different Yukon First Nations.

While we are trying to make systemic and broad change through Yukon's education system, we also recognize that there are unique changes to make for unique schools. This is building upon that. It is also building upon the government-to-government relationship between Yukon First Nations, the Government of Canada and the Government of Yukon. This is part of a national program where the Government of Canada has identified these funding pots through different jurisdictions in Canada, the first step of which is creating the MOU, and then once we create the prioritized action plan and then do a call for proposal, each of the proposals will be evaluated on their merits and then the funding will flow. Then we will have to work out the different funding arrangements of how the money goes where, who hires whom, or who buys what asset and who gets to keep it when all is said and done.

This is a strong step forward in governance issues. It's a strong step forward in working on a government-to-

government-to-government basis and it will build upon the initiative brought forward under the recent process that we've gone through. It will enable us to work faster to address the needs identified by Yukon First Nation governments to address the educational outcomes of Yukon First Nation citizens.

Have I — does that capture the — if I could get a yes or no? Okay.

I would like to just comment for the member opposite that I hope that he appreciates the situation of finding some of the information sources that he now has at his fingertips, and then also wanting to know that you have to dig a little bit deeper, but then recognizing that the information isn't always as close at hand as one would like.

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

### *Recess*

**Chair:** Order please. Committee of the Whole will now come to order. The matter before the Committee is Bill No. 20, *First Appropriation Act, 2010-11*. We will now continue with general debate on Vote 3, Department of Education.

**Mr. Cardiff:** I thank the minister for his answer and the clarification of the intent of the MOU. I have a better understanding now of what they are trying to achieve and I support that. I wish them well.

I do have one additional question in this regard.

It says that the parties will seek additional funding to implement the action plan. There's \$300,000 there, initially, so whatever's not used in developing the memorandum of understanding and the action plan will be used for the implementation of the action plan. But does the minister know what type or what amounts of funding are going to be available? Does he have any indication? It's my understanding that it will be the federal government that is supplying the funds. Is there an amount that the government has set aside for the next three years to address this issue nationally? How big is the pot of money and what can we reasonably expect to bring to the Yukon to address the action plan that's going to be developed?

**Hon. Mr. Rouble:** Mr. Chair, I just want to clarify something for the member opposite; that the intention of the initial funds from the federal government — the \$300,000, which has been provided from the federal government to the Council of Yukon First Nations — is the first step to prepare the MOU.

That's separate from project funding. It's separate from the action plan. It's what the Government of Canada has provided the Council of Yukon First Nations with to do the initial front-end work for this. It isn't a line item under the Government of Yukon's budget. We have to see if it will even make an impact on the Government of Yukon's financial situation. That remains to be seen.

Certainly, this has been a large commitment in other jurisdictions. It has been used primarily in other jurisdictions to effect or to make changes in on-reserve education, where a First Nation order of government is responsible for, in part, the delivery of education. In other areas of Canada, the Department

of Indian and Northern Affairs provides financial resources to First Nation orders of government or to First Nation owned and controlled school boards, who then have the responsibility to provide educational programs and services in their specific community.

Yukon's jurisdiction is very different. In Yukon, the Government of Yukon is responsible for the education of all students, including the delivery of education for students of First Nation ancestry. We make no distinctions in our budgets about the allocations of resources for these areas.

We have been working on specific programs to identify many of the issues brought forward under education reform and are working to address the priority issues, both of a bilateral nature and of a cumulative nature with Yukon First Nations. We are working to put in place appropriate programming in specific schools and we're also working to create more generic programming that can be used in all Yukon schools.

The federal government approached the Government of Yukon and Yukon First Nation orders of government and said that they wanted to engage with us; that they were impressed with the work that was being done through education reform and New Horizons and want to support this type of growth here in the territory. The federal government created a program that will expire in March 31, 2013.

The first step is the signing of the MOU. That is the process that we are in now of working collaboratively from government to government to identify the appropriate protocol that will recognize the jurisdiction of the federal government, of the Government of Yukon and of Yukon First Nation orders of government and identify our common goal of increasing educational outcomes for Yukon students of First Nation ancestry. Once the MOU or the protocol has been identified and completed, we will then begin the work. Much of this work is going on concurrently with identifying projects that would be suitable for receiving additional federal funding. The funding would go from the federal government to Yukon First Nation governments.

I don't have all of the figures that the member opposite is looking for. This was a federal government budget allocation and it is affecting more than one jurisdiction across Canada. The federal government has come to the table in a meaningful way.

I expect that the involvement over the next couple of years of provision of resources to undertake these proposals will also be meaningful, and there will be a substantive amount of financial resources available. However, I don't have the specific dollar figures at my fingertips today. I don't want to hazard a guess or create unrealistic expectations with that. So I know it's not the answer the member is looking for, but I simply don't have that allocation of financial resources from the federal government's amount at my disposal right now.

**Mr. Cardiff:** We're just playing a role in this right now. I mean, not that it's not a major role — I think it is a major role. I agree that there are a lot of recommendations and there's a lot of work that has already been done, and it should make the creating of an action plan and the basis for First Na-

tion governments to make proposals to the federal government a lot easier.

I don't have all of the information at my fingertips, once again, and I can appreciate that there's a lot of information out there. I don't have a copy of the *Education Reform Final Report* in front of me right now. Where this is leading me is: one of the things that was in the *Education Reform Final Report* was to look at the governance model for education in the Yukon. So I guess what I would be asking the minister at this point is whether or not something like that is on the table. Is that something that could come forward from a First Nation government or as a group looking at — and I don't have all the language in front of me, because I don't have that document in front of me here today. I'm just exploring this as we're going along here, now that I understand it.

Is it possible that one of the proposals could be to look at how education is governed in the Yukon? It can go from the model we currently have to looking at the model that, I believe, was proposed in the education reform document, to the actual drawdown of education by individual First Nations.

What exactly is on the table here, when it comes to these proposals? What is the work that could possibly be done? What I'm reading is that the partnership aims for a Yukon education system that respects the role of Yukon First Nation governments and meets the needs and aspirations of all Yukon First Nation students. Ultimately, the goal is to fully prepare Yukon First Nation students for successful participation in training, work and post-secondary education and create lifelong learners.

I'm sure there are a variety of opinions out there. I'd be interested in knowing what the minister is hearing in this regard; whether or not the governance model — because that's one of the things that came out of the education reform initiative — is on the table and whether or not it's being discussed or if looking at that could possibly be one of the proposals that comes forward.

**Hon. Mr. Rouble:** The MOU will be a very broad document, recognizing the jurisdictions of the variety of different governments and recognizing our common goal of increasing the educational outcomes of students of First Nation ancestry. The proposal for initiatives under this will certainly have to be jointly worked on between Yukon First Nations and the Department of Education. It's going to be a very strong and collaborative effort.

I am not going to prejudge or pre-decide what gets included in those initiatives or not or what priorities are brought forward. There are a number of issues or themes that have been brought forward. The themes that came out of education reform included: pride in our culture; education of children and youth; education of adults and producing labour market effects; of looking at healthy communities; of collaboration, consultation and partnership; of professional growth; of responsive information systems and facilities; and, information assessment, research and reporting. On the issue of collaboration, consultation and partnership is where we have the issue of governance. When we look at governance, governance is how one has an influence on the decision-making. How do we effect the

changes that we want to see? Again, I'm not going to prejudge anything that goes through.

We're working on a number of different issues right now. The Government of Yukon is working on bilateral arrangements with Yukon First Nations. We are working on making broad systemic change to Yukon's education system and some of our approaches to conducting business. We are working very closely with our communities and with the schools through the school growth planning process, which is a very important and effective tool for engaging the community and helping to make community decisions — which is a form of governance — in order to see changes at a local school level.

There are a variety of different topics, I'm sure, that we could look at through these areas. I certainly wouldn't limit them to issues, such as First Nation language, First Nation culture, land-based programming, First Nation-specific course work, such as history or governance courses.

Curriculum models could be looked at, and the issue of school calendars is another area we could look at. We already have the provisions under our *Education Act* for the school councils to provide input or direction into the school calendar; however, when we have a situation like this before us, one of the projects that could come forward might look at something along the lines of a different school calendar altogether.

The short answer is that we won't know what programs or proposals we're going to go forward with until we sit down with the folks at the table and decide on the content of the proposals. I'm not going to prejudge or preclude different ideas coming forward on that. It will have to be consistent, too, with the other situations or other controlling factors in our territory. I'm thinking of things like the self-government agreements. We'll have to ensure that we're consistent and compliant.

Again, this is an important tool that we now have at our disposal, in addition to the other tools in our toolbox, to further develop the government-to-government relationship between the federal government, the territorial government and Yukon First Nation orders of government in order to address an issue of importance to us all, that being how to increase the educational outcomes for Yukon students.

That will be the ultimate goal and the standard against which the proposals will have to be measured. Once we conclude our memorandum of understanding, which has its basis in our legislation today, we will be able to go forward and to take a look at the different ideas or opportunities that come before us.

**Mr. Cardiff:** I thank the minister for the more detailed information. I'm going to move on. I was going through the draft strategic plan for New Horizons. There are a number of questions, and I'm going to kind of roll it all up into a ball here for the minister and then await the answer.

There are a number of things that are being worked on. I am assuming that when the MOU is done it will become a public document and we'll be able to see a copy. It also talks about how the department is currently developing a school council handbook and some training programs. I am not sure if the handbook is complete and whether or not it would be possible to receive a copy of it when it is available, if possible.

I would like to also ask the minister — it talks about a literacy framework and that the department has developed a literacy framework. We'd like to see a copy of that if possible. I have got a question around it too. I think that literacy is a very important issue, as we've identified here before, and we've talked about it today and on other days. It says that implementation will support priorities identified for K through 12 learners.

We know that there is a need for literacy beyond grade 12; that there are adults out there who are struggling. I guess the question is why isn't it going to address adult learners? As well, it's my understanding that there was an evaluation done on literacy programming by Yukon Learn and we'd like to ask whether or not it can be made public, if possible. I don't believe we've seen it. I'm going to roll a little bit more into this question: our information is that in the labour market framework there is an immigration strategy that was supposed to be finished by May. We'd like to see that when it's available. As well, it talks about comprehensive skills and trades strategy, a recruitment strategy, a retention strategy and a labour market information strategy that are all in development.

It says that the immigration strategy is in development, but our information was that it would be finished in May. So, what I'm looking for on the other five — or maybe on all six of them — is when is the expected completion date for those? It's under goal 2, objective 1 in the draft strategic plan.

**Hon. Mr. Rouble:** Yes, there are certainly a number of different things being worked on in the Department of Education in addition to — I think I've heard the word lots.

It is focused around the objectives of building a responsive education system that meets the needs of the individual learner and that meets the needs of the community. When we go back to the original objectives that I stated last Thursday for the Department of Education, I think you'll see that these are all lining up. We have worked very hard to gather a lot of data and comment from the different partners and people involved in education and we are putting in place strategies to respond to that. It is making a very concerted effort to be focused on the learner, to provide different strategies, to provide education and resources for teachers so they can respond to the different situations, and also to engage the community in community-based decisions and in local broader issues in education. That includes looking at things with the school councils, which are a very important tool for governing many of the activities in a school, for really setting the theme or the tone for the school, for looking at identifying the objectives in a school and recognizing the unique challenges they face.

It is expected that literacy and numeracy will be some of the objectives of our schools and, as well, we also have to respond to some of the unique characteristics in the schools.

We're also looking at a broader territorial level about ways that we can look at specific theme areas and then transfer that information back to the schools. There has been a considerable amount of work with the Yukon Association of School Councils, Boards and Committees. I'm not sure if we're looking at changing the name of that yet, but we did have one school committee and that has since changed and become a school

council — although our current act allows for the creation of a school committee — so I guess we'll have to keep that in the title of their association.

As Minister of Education, I have met with the Yukon Association of School Councils, Boards and Committees on several different occasions. We have included their members or their participants, or in some cases their leadership, in decision-making bodies and advisory groups within education.

For example, there was a representative of the Yukon Association of School Councils, Boards and Committees on the hiring committee for the deputy minister a number of years ago. We have also met with them at their annual general meetings that are held in the spring and at their fall planning sessions. We have listened to their advice and incorporated it in activities in the Department of Education and responded to the areas that they have asked us to look at. A specific example of that is the staffing allocation formula. It has also come to the awareness of different school council members and thus to the general membership of the Yukon Association of School Councils, Boards and Committees about the greater role and responsibility that is outlined in the act for school councils to play in their school community. Many of the initiatives about which people have been saying, "Boy, I wish we could do this," are already recognized and entrenched in the *Education Act* as an area where the school council has some authority or ability to be involved.

It is often a bit of a concern when I go to a meeting and I'm asked, "Well, how come we can't do this?" and I say, "Well, here in the act it says you can." The challenge there is that we have to make people aware of the processes involved for actually accomplishing what they are already empowered to do.

Part of this issue has led to the development of more information for school counsellors. There is some information provided when a person becomes a member of school council and in some cases it's, "Well, here is the *Education Act*." I'm sure members will appreciate that receiving and going through a copy of legislation to identify the pertinent and important parts of it is often a daunting task.

We have done some work to provide additional information about the school council roles and responsibilities, and that is included in the handbook. Additionally, there has been more training provided about issue management or working through an issue that has been provided at a recent school council meeting where there was specific training going on about how to expand some of the skills and capacities of our boards and how to go through the development of some of the policies.

I know that a couple of school councils have been very involved in the development of more consistent policy work. They will then be sharing that with the other school councils. The school council handbook is still in draft form. Once it has been finalized, it will be made public and we'll endeavour to get it to the member opposite.

He also asked about literacy and moving forward on that issue. He will recall that our 2010 education summit included a focus on literacy, both in the kindergarten to grade 12 areas and from the Advanced Education perspective.

For the member opposite, there are the two different branches of the Department of Education. We have our K to 12 area, which looks after public schools and that type of programming, and then Advanced Education, which is really almost everything but kindergarten to grade 12. Advanced Education looks at the areas involved in lifelong learning, from university, college and trades skills through to other learning initiatives in the territory; for example, the community training trust funds, where we provide resources, both on a geographic base or on an industry base, to expand specific community learning objectives.

Advanced Education also provides significant resources to organizations, such as Yukon Learn, and I believe there was an evaluation done recently of Yukon Learn as part of our ongoing work with that organization.

Members will of course realize that, through the recommendations of the Auditor General, we have been strongly encouraged — and just as good management process — to take a look at the operations and activities that are being undertaken by our programming partners.

I don't have a copy of it at my fingertips. I will endeavour to get a copy to the member opposite. There has been a considerable amount of discussion in the past about how we increase literacy rates for adults. Well, one of the best ways of accomplishing that is to increase the literacy of children. In recent years we have put significant resources into literacy programming — whether it is full-day kindergarten or Wilson Reading or Reading Recovery in order to increase the literacy level of students coming out of our system and, in some cases, we won't see the results of those investments for 12 or 13 years, by the time the student has finished public school and is now going out into the world of work or into advanced education.

That isn't to say that we have ignored our responsibility in other areas. There has been significant programming. Once we get into the line-by-line and for some of our budget allocations for Advanced Education, I'll be able to detail some of the specific resource allocations for literacy for adult education.

The member opposite also brought up the issue of the labour market framework and how that is encompassed in the draft strategic plan. At this point, I just want to make a highlight of reinforcing the word "draft" strategic plan. We believe that we have captured many of the areas of high interest to Yukoners, and we have identified several strategies to go out and accomplish the objectives that are identified. But it is an important step to take it out to our stakeholders and get their feedback. We do expect that there will be changes made to this draft process. Otherwise, we'd be sitting there going, "Hey, you know, it's perfect. Let's just run with it."

We expect we will have meaningful consultation on it and that will have an impact then of creating a change from this document to the final document — unless, of course, our stakeholders come back and say, "You folks are really on the right track here and we are endorsing and supporting the directions you are going." But we're also expecting to receive some meaningful input on it that could cause refinement and a change in part of the process. We're not ready to send the document to the printer and call it done.

The member brought up the issue of the labour market framework, and that is really the other house in the Department of Education — that being the area of Advanced Education. When I became the minister I started to take a look back and ask what the driving force was for some of the initiatives that we had underway in this area. I realized that there were some times where we were going in different directions, where we didn't have the data or a pre-determined idea or objective about what we were going to accomplish. We needed to take another look at the current labour market situation in the territory to ensure we were on the right track. We needed to take a look at comprehensive skills and trades training strategy, to look at an immigration strategy, to look at our recruitment needs from across Canada, and to ensure that Yukon employers had access to important information about employee retention and that we were, in fact, collecting the appropriate data so that we could make research-based decisions into the future.

A bit of a note as to what was one of the driving forces on this: I remember a situation where we had been approached by an organization to attend an immigration session that the Government of Canada was having in another country. We were looking at the proposal and saying, "Well, this is a Government of Canada initiative; maybe we should go."

Now, we don't have all the resources at our fingertips to go to every one of these types of events, so we sat down and asked the question of — wait a second — where are Yukon employers going to find employees they need for some of these immigration issues? We looked at it; we identified that there were a couple of employers who were going to a specific Central American country to recruit drillers, but no one was going to this other European country to recruit people. So we thought, why would we go on a specific trade mission to Europe when our employers are going to South America to recruit people?

We needed to have more consistency and cohesion between the activities of the department and the activities of industry and employers. This mechanism was launched; a significant amount of work has been done, including a labour market framework symposium held in October of 2008. That then established a series of working groups made up of — there were over 70 people who attended the symposium. The working groups have been meeting monthly since February 2009. Some of the meetings have been face to face but, in other instances, they have been working collaboratively on-line through a website where we have been making use of modern technology to provide a document on-line. Our stakeholders — the people working on these groups — then have the ability to comment on a joint working document.

So we didn't have to have people coming to meetings all of the time, and we could allow for the asynchronous provision of input on these types of documents.

We are getting very close to finishing this process up. Part of this was funded through the labour market agreement. I do have meetings scheduled in the very near future with some of these working groups, where they will be in a situation or position to provide me with the conclusions that they have reached and the directions that they would like to go in.

I made a significant practice in the past of working with and meeting with many of our stakeholder groups so that they have an opportunity to present their findings directly to the minister's office, and so that I also get to ask questions and ask them to look into other things too.

Just because they present things to me doesn't mean that they get rubber-stamped by me, because often I ask other questions and ask them to do other work. That's my prerogative and I'm sticking to it.

These committees will be concluding their work over the summer. I expect that once the information has all been brought together and the work with the graphic designers and that type of stuff is all done, we'll be looking for another meeting probably in the fall for a formal release of all the findings of the different committees. At that time, the information will then be, of course, made public. We will endeavour to get copies of the final reports that are produced by these committees to the member opposite.

I think that answers his questions. I think you're also about to tell me I'm out of time, Mr. Chair.

**Mr. Cardiff:** I'm going to wind it up here for me today, anyhow. I'd like to thank the officials for attending again today and assisting and providing clarity to some of these important issues.

I'd like to ask the minister about a couple more items from the draft strategic plan. One is that it appears that there's an evaluation ongoing of Yukon apprenticeship and certification programs. It says the current legislation dates from the mid-80s and will be reviewed and updated to ensure they meet the current needs of the labour market — or the current labour market. I'm looking for some more detail, I guess, and an expected completion date. Which actual pieces of legislation might be reviewed?

It says that advanced education will work with public schools branch to initiate three trade-targeted secondary programs by 2014, along with increased promotion and counselling for students and parents related to apprenticeship.

As a tradesperson, I'm interested in what direction the department is going. I support initiatives that encourage young people to get involved in trades. I think it's a rewarding career. I just hope that when we're doing this, we're going in the right direction and that there are jobs for these young people at the end of the day.

The third and final thing I wanted to ask the minister about today is — and this is under the second goal — support and fulfillment training for employment opportunities. It's under objective 4 on page 29. It says, *Yukon Youth Connections Program*. It says, "This initiative will provide career counselling for youth who are not attached to the workforce or the school system. Using a case management system, success will demonstrate an increase of return to work or school on an ongoing basis." I think this is something that's important.

If they are not engaged in the workforce, they're not engaged in the school system, and they're young people, I think we need to do something to get them engaged and to find out why they're not engaged.

I guess the question for me is — and maybe this isn't fleshed out enough yet in my mind, and the minister could provide more detail — if they're not engaged in the workforce and they're not engaged in the school system, how are we going to do that? How are we going to go out there and engage them? I'm assuming we're going to find these young folks on the street or in front of a television somewhere. I'm just wondering what the strategy is to engage these young people.

**Hon. Mr. Rouble:** Mr. Chair, I appreciate the far-ranging discussion today during budget debate. It is always interesting during budget debate how we are talking about the numbers that are before us and some of the initiatives that we plan to undertake during this calendar year. At the same time, I appreciate that the department has released the draft strategic plan that is looking at its vision and its direction for future years. We are having the opportunity to sit here with a magnifying glass and look at the initiatives that are before us and also look at the future with a telescope, and where we can steer the ship in between.

The member opposite has asked about the Yukon apprentice program, what we're doing in that area, how that relates to the strategic plan, how that relates to our labour market framework and then how it relates to the legislation.

I will start with the data collection that we're doing right now, taking a look at where our apprentices are currently going, how many are being engaged, and then what is happening to them. For the calendar year 2009, there were over 520 Yukon residents who were registered as apprentices in 30 of the 48 trades designated in the Yukon. Of those apprentices, almost 20 percent were members of Yukon First Nations, and over 10 percent were female. These are significant growths in participation rates and in the total number of people involved in the trades in the territory.

The number of people becoming involved is increasing. The number of people continuing on toward certification is increasing. For example, Mr. Chair, in 2005, there were 36 certificates that were issued and in 2009 we had 70, which is almost twice as many certificates issued. So we're seeing more people involved in trades. We're seeing more people of First Nation ancestry and women in non-traditional trades and we're seeing more people completing certification.

These are good indicators, because the data that we've had in the past indicates that we needed more people with a background in the skills and trades. One comment to identify this was that recently, in the same day, I had to phone a lawyer and phone an electrician. The lawyer was, by far, the fastest one to call me back and the easiest one to get an appointment with. Working with the electrician was going to take a bit more time and availability.

We have been doing a lot of work in the territory in the last number of years with organizations such as YWITT Yukon Women in Trades and Technology and with Skills Canada Yukon. I'm going to give YWITT a lot of credit for the work that they have done with young women in the territory, interesting them in careers in trades, technology, science and engineering. We're starting to see those numbers change and the

trends change, and the statistics indicate that we're seeing greater participation.

Also, my hat goes off to Skills Canada Yukon for the work that they do with their skills club throughout Canada. The work done by Dan Curtis and the board of directors for Skills Canada Yukon has been tremendous.

Just last summer, we saw a Yukoner, Karl Loos, representing Canada at the WorldSkills competition in Calgary. We did the math at the time and realized there were more participants in the Olympics than there were in the international skills competition, and thus reached the conclusion that it was easier to make it to the Olympics than it was to represent your country at a skills competition. Karl did a great job and, right now, the Skills Canada crew is gearing up for their competition coming up in Waterloo, which will be a trial stage, or the first step, in identifying the team members who will be competing in London, England, next year.

The work the skills clubs is doing is tremendous, not only to engage kids in a trade, but also in building their self-confidence and teaching them valuable skills, improving their work ethic and their ability to work together to accomplish a goal. My hat goes off to all the volunteers who are involved in that.

We are doing some work on the front end to encourage exploration and participation in this. We are doing a lot of work with data collection around what are the trade needs that we have in the territory. So this is the work through the labour market framework and work through Economic Development and Executive Council Office — through the Bureau of Statistics. It is to look at the number of people involved in an occupation and then to look at what the ideal number of people in that is. For example, do we need more plumbers in the territory or do we need more carpenters? Then it's working with organizations like Yukon College to ensure that they are responsive to the needs and say wait a second, what we really need is an oil burner maintenance technician who can work on the oil burners that we have heating many of the homes and offices and buildings in the territory, and thus become responsive to the need there. How is this going to affect the department into the future? Based on the ongoing discussions that we're having through the labour market framework and the data that we get from that, the engagement that we have through our high school programming people, and then taking a look at the facilities that we have to offer, that will then ultimately fine-tune those three or four or five different trades being highlighted in the future.

But we haven't reached that decision yet as to what will actually be going on in the classroom because we're working through all of the data-collection stages now in order to reach that decision.

That being said, we have recognized the importance of it and have established that as a goal; therefore, we'll continue to work through the other processes that I've outlined in order to fine-tune that answer. But we're not at the stage where we're looking at the budget and looking at this specific allocation. We're looking a few years out as to what are some of the programs that we'll need to offer — whether it is photography,

electricity, 2-D mapping, CAD operators, or flux capacitor technicians. That will then drive any changes that we need to see in legislation so that we can assure that the legislation is being responsive to the needs in the community now.

The member has also asked a question about the Yukon youth connection. Members will remember the initiatives that we've had in the ILC, the Individual Learning Centre. We are expanding some of the work in that area this year with having another staffing position that's outlined through the budget process here. It will work on engaging youth.

Yes, the member has identified some of the challenges and part of that is going out and seeing the kids. If it's two o'clock in the afternoon, and someone is playing hacky-sack on a street corner, I would expect that will be one of the people with whom this Yukon youth connection person will work to engage. Yes, there will be some different strategies. I don't expect that they will just walk up and say, "Hey, wouldn't you rather be sitting in a classroom than sitting outside on a beautiful day like today playing hacky-sack?"

There is a person who is identified right now in this budget who will be working with the ILC. We have over 100 students engaged in that process now, but we know that there are others out there.

I mean, this person won't be driving around in a truancy wagon. We'll try a different approach, but they will be out in different functions throughout the community. I expect that they will be up at the Kwanlin Dun House of Learning. We will try to build upon those relationships in order to expand into that area, as well. We'll work with the other youth groups in town that also see some of these kids who have disengaged from our formal education system too early. Sometimes it is increasing awareness about the programming and sometimes it is friendly cajoling. I will leave it at that as to some of the tactics that they may employ.

Again, this is recognizing the responsibility that the territory has to increase the participation rate and the completion rate of secondary schools. That is one of the key things that we want to accomplish. Members will realize the change in statistics provided in our annual report.

We will be working diligently to continue to keep Yukon students engaged in our education system. For those who have disengaged, we will find out why, and it's a wide range of reasons — some socio-economic, some substance abuse, some related to family situations, some that we can overcome in the department, and others that we will work with our partners in Health and Social Services and Justice to see about addressing the needs that — I'll just highlight the importance of the common client project that is a relationship between the departments of Education, Health and Social Services and Justice to look at those kids affected by those three departments in government.

I think that has answered the question about what we are doing about apprentices, what we are doing about the data collection about labour market — framework information around that — and what are we doing with the Yukon youth connection and the expansion of the ILC.



**Mr. Mitchell:** I've been listening with great interest to the questioning over the last few days and the responses, and I would agree with the minister that attendance is an issue in our education system, and not only at the secondary level but all the way through.

You can't teach something to a student who is not in the classroom, regardless of how dedicated the teachers are. We know that we do have very dedicated educators, but they need to have the students there in order to teach them.

I just have one question for the minister and it's a constituency question. The minister is used to hearing it, but I'll ask it again. The Elijah Smith Elementary School is in the Copperbelt riding and has generally for several years had the highest numbers of any school in the system, basically, in terms of percentage of capacity. I know that there have been attempts to address the pressure on the school of ever-increasing enrolment by using changes in the catchment area and yet the school is still — at least in some of the classes — oversubscribed in terms of children whose families would like to send them to the school.

If the minister could just provide any updates — I've asked this in the past and the minister has referred back to the Copper Ridge Advisory Committee — I think that's what it was called at the time — and it has been some time since that decision-making process occurred. Events change and the people change as well.

I know that the department has announced no plans for a new school, so I would rather ask what plans there are to address the overcrowding at the existing school and whether those plans are additional proposed changes to the catchment area, additional portable classrooms or the possibility of yet another addition to the school. There was one major addition to the school many years ago in the 1990s when I was actually on the parent advisory committee. I do believe that the principal and the staff don't really want to enlarge the school any more, but rather simply want to address the issue. I know that my constituents would like to see the ability for more families to send their children to a school in the area. With that, I'm not going to play games and try to hold the floor. I'm going to sit down and hopefully the minister will give me an actual answer to the question. Thank you.

**Hon. Mr. Rouble:** Mr. Chair, this has been a very important issue for this government.

It has certainly been brought forward by the Member for Whitehorse West. It is an area that the Department of Education has put a lot of energy into. The member is correct that there was an original Copper Ridge advisory committee that was formed a couple of years ago. Their direction at the time was not to go ahead with putting in a new school. It was felt that the impacts on the current school, Elijah Smith, would be very significant, but that we should carefully monitor the situation and really stay up to date and current with the changing demographics in the area — the growth in the neighbourhood, the growth in the subdivisions in that area and the overall expansion plans for the City of Whitehorse.

The member opposite will also recall that one of the significant recommendations from the Auditor General during her

review of public schools in the territory was to see a better use of school facilities that are below capacity.

**Some Hon. Member:** (Inaudible)

**Hon. Mr. Rouble:** Yes. The member opposite is saying we can't send them to Carmacks, and there's certainly no intention to send them to Carmacks, but there are schools within the Whitehorse area that are significantly below capacity.

The member is right in saying that further reviews and refinements of catchment areas would be important in order to address the situations. We have seen a couple of schools in the Whitehorse area whose population has dropped by almost 50 percent in the last couple of years, which has created challenges and concerns for them. At the same time, we have seen other schools that are operating much closer to their maximum operating area.

The member is correct too that, a number of years ago, we created an advisory group called the Copper Ridge Advisory Committee and we have certainly honoured the recommendations that they have put forward.

Members will also remember that during the last time that we discussed this issue or one of our previous debates on this issue, I made a commitment to further examine the situation, take a look at it and ensure that we were having a broader look at Whitehorse in general. It was important to take a look at where our whole community was growing and where people were going. To that end, the Demographic Adjustment Advisory Committee was formed. It looked at the changing enrolments in schools and the shifting demographics to make recommendations on attendance areas, shifting demographics and enrolment pressures. The makeup of the Demographic Adjustment Advisory Committee structure closely resembled that of the Copper Ridge Advisory Committee. It included representatives of Whitehorse area superintendents, four members of the Yukon Association of School Administrators, the director of programs and services, facility project managers and school council representatives. The Kwanlin Dun First Nation was invited to participate, and there was also representation from the City of Whitehorse.

We carefully looked at the most recent school enrolment statistics and the demographics of our different schools, the cross-section of the different populations in the different grades, the areas of growth throughout the territory — specifically in the Whitehorse area and some of the proposed planning projects for the City of Whitehorse — and the committee returned with the following seven broad recommendations: maintain the present philosophy on attendance areas; neighbourhood school-based approach with the option of student/parent choice upon request and with approval of the school. That is to say that we will identify a catchment area and then if people do wish to have their son or daughter go to a school outside of their catchment area, they have to contact the school and —

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

*Speaker resumes the Chair*

**Speaker:** I will now call the House to order. May the House have a report from the Chair of Committee of the Whole?

**Chair's report**

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

**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.

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

*The House adjourned at 5:30 p.m.*