

Yukon Legislative Assembly
Whitehorse, Yukon
Tuesday, March 15, 2011 — 1:00 p.m.

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

Prayers

DAILY ROUTINE

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

TRIBUTES

In recognition of Canada Water Week

Hon. Mr. Fentie: I rise in the House today to ask my colleagues and all Yukoners to join me in recognizing the week of March 14 to 22 as Canada Water Week in Yukon and March 22 as World Water Day. Water is fundamental to the lives of all Yukoners and ensuring healthy rivers and living lakes is a central commitment of the Yukon government. Staff across many departments work diligently to ensure that Yukoners use our precious water resources safely and sustainably.

By ensuring strict and transparent regulatory inspections, by leading innovative scientific research and by teaching youth the value of our water resources, the Government of Yukon works to ensure Yukon water will provide benefits for future generations. Reducing water consumption and protecting our water quality can have both environmental and economic benefits.

Clean water is essential to a healthy, secure and prosperous Canada. For this reason, last August, the Yukon joined other Canadian jurisdictions in the Council of the Federation in signing the *Water Charter*. In the *Water Charter*, provinces and territories agreed to work together to achieve a number of important goals related to our water resources. These goals include the commitment to reinforce water conservation, water quality, sharing water data and information and adapting to the water-related aspects of climate change as a key priority for businesses, citizens and governments.

Under the Council of the Federation theme, “Celebrating and Conserving Water across Our Country”, territories and provinces are holding a number of events and activities this week and next to celebrate water, healthy rivers and lakes and to focus public attention on water’s importance to Canada’s prosperity.

In Yukon, Water Week events include scientific lectures and film screenings at the Beringia Centre and displays at the Yukon government administration building and in the foyer of the Elijah Smith Building. I encourage all Yukoners to take part in the Water Week events and to take time in the next week to reflect upon the importance of this vitally important resource to all our lives. Thank you.

Mr. Elias: I rise on behalf of the Official Opposition to pay tribute to Canada Water Week, celebrating and conserving

water across our country from March 14 to 22. Canada Water Week is a week-long celebration of water from coast to coast to coast, starting March 14 and culminating with a World Water Day on March 22, 2011. The objective is to elevate the profile and understanding of water across Canada through a series of public events and activities coordinated under a single banner. Individuals, organizations and governments across the country are encouraged to get involved by organizing or participating in fun and educational events. Together, we will raise the profile and understanding of water and its importance to our prosperity.

Our territory’s major drainage areas and watersheds include the Porcupine and Peel rivers, the southwestern Beaufort Sea, the Stewart, the Pelly, the Alsek, the Tanana, the central Yukon, the upper Yukon, the headwaters of the Yukon, and the upper Liard rivers. Our vast territory is home to some of the largest watersheds and most beautiful rivers and lakes in the world.

Each one of us has a story to share that connects us to our territory’s waterways — from our Old Crow Flats, one of the most important wetland and lake complexes in Canada, whose ecological significance has been acknowledged internationally through a designation under the United Nations Ramsar convention, to our Nordenskiöld and Nordenskiöld River valley south of Carmacks that is a major wetland complex and an important waterfowl staging area, to our Ta’Tla Mun, formerly Tatlain Lake, which is an important food fish lake southeast of Pelly Crossing in the traditional territory of the Selkirk First Nation, to our Horseshoe Slough, which is an important waterfowl breeding and staging area in the traditional territory of the Na Cho Nyäk Dun, to the Lhutsaw wetland, which is an important wetland complex covering 31 square kilometres along the north Klondike Highway south of Pelly Crossing, to our Nisutlin River Delta National Wildlife Area located southeast of Teslin, which contains an internationally important fall staging area for migratory waterfowl. And there’s our Ni’iinlii’Njik, or Fishing Branch protected area, which protects 6,700 square kilometres of the wetlands integrity and maintains the natural processes unique to this area in the Yukon, especially the grizzly bear-salmon interaction. These are just a few of our precious water resources.

What our territory chooses to save is what our territory chooses to say about itself. World Water Day 2011 is intended to focus international attention on the impact of rapid urban population growth, industrialization and climate change on water resources, and environmental protection capabilities of cities and small towns.

Canada Water Week provides Canada with an opportunity to showcase a range of actions and activities across the country that support cascading water commitments across sectors, households, organizations, ministries and levels of government.

These actions and activities will highlight progress toward *Water Charter* commitments approved by Canada’s premiers during the Council of the Federation’s annual summer meeting in August 2010. It will also serve as a platform to galvanize discussion on the opportunities for Canada in the global water-scape.

According to the United Nations water progress report 2010, 884 million people live without water, without access to safe drinking water and 2.6 billion people do not have access to improved sanitation facilities. The Yukon River alone is 3,190 kilometres long and its total drainage area is 832,700 square kilometres, of which 300 plus square kilometres of that is in Canada.

The Earth belongs to us all and we need a local, regional and global effort to protect our water systems. Let us all become better stewards of the land to ensure we maintain a safe and secure water supply for Canadians and all ecosystems.

We would like to recognize and thank all Yukoners who are responsible citizens and respectful of our water systems. We encourage all Yukoners to participate in the many activities being held this week in celebration of Canada Water Week.

Mr. Cardiff: Mr. Speaker, I rise on behalf of the New Democrat caucus to recognize Canada Water Week, which runs until March 22, World Water Day.

Canada's supply of fresh water is estimated at between 5.6 to 9 percent of the world's supply, depending on how one defines it. Only Brazil, Russia and China have more. We are inclined to think that this renewable resource is unlimited. We are also inclined to ignore the fact of desalination that is taking place in many countries due to drought and that potable water is inaccessible for many families. 1.1 billion people live without access to clean water, resulting in over 400,000 children dying every day from water-borne diseases.

Maude Barlow of the Council of Canadians, and now appointed as the UN's first senior advisor on water issues, has warned us that it is a myth that Canada has a surplus of water. Much of it is locked up in the polar ice cap or is inaccessible. Potable water, even in Canada, is not inexhaustible, especially if we continue to misuse this valuable resource.

Canadians consume 350 litres of water a day per capita, where we need only between 20 to 40 litres for drinking and sanitation. There are many actions we can take to conserve our water use, from not flushing the toilet unnecessarily to taking shorter showers and cutting back on the amount of water used for watering the lawn or washing the car. Repairing leaking taps saves a lot of water. A leak of only one drop per second wastes about 10,000 litres of water per year. Saving water helps water quality. Water saved is water that does not end up in the waste-water stream requiring treatment. If we each save a little, it can add up to a major savings in water, energy and money. For the average household, reductions in water use as high as 40 percent or more are feasible.

Water is looked upon by some people as a commodity to be sold for profit like timber or oil. Ownership and control of the earth's dwindling water supplies is creating a water crisis. Maude Barlow again says that it is a myth that we have a ban on water exports. Selling our water around the world is as easy as a signature on a piece of paper. She emphasizes the need to recognize water as a human right and ensure that it stays in the public trust.

At the United Nations Commission on Human Rights in 2002, Canada was the only country to vote against the right to

drinking water and sanitation. In the most recent vote, Canada abstained from recognizing the right to water and sanitation. We urge the Canadian government to develop a national policy that protects Canadian water from the marketplace and prevents diversion, bulk exports and privatization.

At the very time that Canada was voting against the UN resolution making water a human right, more than 100 aboriginal communities across the country were facing drinking water advisories requiring them to boil their water or rely on emergency deliveries. The Yukon was among those communities.

In her book, *Blue Covenant: The Global Water Crisis and the Coming Battle for the Right to Water*, Ms. Barlow warns us that in 20 years, unless we change our course, desalination plants will ring the world's oceans — many of them run by nuclear power; corporate nanotechnology will clean up sewage and sell it to private utilities who will then sell it back to us at a huge profit. The rich will drink only bottled water found in the few remote areas of the world left or sucked from clouds by machines while the poor die in increasing numbers.

This is not science fiction, Mr. Speaker. Like the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin mentioned, it's not just important to human beings and communities, it's an important part of our ecosystem that supports our wildlife and our waterfowl and it supports our way of life. That said, we must act now to save our water and our children's water.

Speaker: Are there any further tributes?

Introduction of visitors.

Returns or documents for tabling.

TABLING RETURNS AND DOCUMENTS

Hon. Mr. Fentie: I have a letter to the Clerk of the Assembly for tabling, advising the House of my appointment to the Select Committee on Bill No. 108, *Legislative Renewal Act*.

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

Any reports of committees?

Petitions.

PETITIONS

Petition No. 15 — received

Clerk: Mr. Speaker and honourable members of the Assembly, I have had the honour to review a petition, being Petition No. 15 of the First Session of the 32nd Legislative Assembly, as presented by the Member for Whitehorse Centre on March 14, 2011.

The petition presented by the Member for Whitehorse Centre appears in two versions. The first version contains original signatures and therefore meets the requirements as to form of the Standing Orders of the Yukon Legislative Assembly. The second version does not contain original signatures and therefore does not meet the requirements as to form of the Standing Orders of the Yukon Legislative Assembly. Therefore, the first version of the petition is that to which the government should respond. The second version of the petition will be returned to the Member for Whitehorse Centre.

Speaker: Thank you.
Are there any petitions for presentation?
Are there any bills to be introduced?
Are there any notices of motion?

NOTICES OF MOTION

Mr. Mitchell: I give notice of the following motion for the production of papers:

THAT this House do issue an order for the return of ministerial travel costs from January 2009 until March 15, 2011.

I also give notice of the following motion for the production of papers:

THAT this House do issue an order for the return of the total costs associated with the current Government of Yukon 2011-12 budget advertising campaign.

Mr. Elias: I give notice of the following motion for the production of papers:

THAT this House do issue an order for the return of any document demonstrating the plan to maximize the benefits and minimize the risks to Yukoners from the potential building of the Mackenzie Valley pipeline.

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

THAT it is the opinion of this House that:

- (1) the Yukon be reaffirmed as a nuclear-free zone;
- (2) nuclear energy is not a viable option to meet Yukon's future energy needs;
- (3) the Yukon supports declaring the Arctic a nuclear-free zone and prohibiting Canada's land, sea or air space above the 60th parallel to transport or test nuclear weapons; and
- (4) there should be a moratorium on uranium exploration and uranium mining in the Yukon as these activities pose risks to human and environmental health.

Speaker: Are there any further notices of motion?
Is there a statement by a minister?
Hearing none, that brings us to Question Period.

QUESTION PERIOD

Question re: Radiation monitoring

Mr. Elias: All eyes are on Japan this week as the nation struggles to deal with repeated natural disasters. Our thoughts are with the people of Japan as they take stock, take care of their families and communities, and begin to rebuild. Our thoughts are also closer to home. Ocean winds from Japan reach our shores. People up and down the west coast of North America are watching the situation very closely.

Public health advisories have been issued from officials in California, Oregon, Washington State, British Columbia and Alaska.

Can the minister advise who is responsible for radiation monitoring in the Yukon, and how will the public be advised?

Hon. Mr. Lang: Certainly, we appreciate the question here this afternoon, and we on this side of the House echo

what the member opposite said about the situation Japan finds itself in in the last three or four days.

We as a government — EMO has been working with the Government of Canada, and of course they are working with the American government monitoring the process and working with us. Certainly, the communication between our government and the Americans is very thorough. The agencies and federal operations throughout North America are working together. We as a government are working with the Canadian component of that group, and certainly we would take the lead here in the territory if in fact the information had to go out. If there was any sort of question, EMO would be the lead on this.

According to the information briefing that I got this morning, currently — and I'm not saying that this can't change in three or four days — there is no health issue for our part of Canada. But, again, that is why we are working with Canada, and that's why Canada is working with America and their high-tech monitoring. They are monitoring the situation. We are very concerned about the territory, if EMO, ourselves or Canada —

Speaker: Thank you. First supplementary, please.

Mr. Elias: I thank the minister for that response. There was another explosion at the Japanese nuclear plant last night. Radioactivity was released directly into the atmosphere. Winds from Japan reach our shores, which is why government agencies up and down the west coast are monitoring the situation very closely.

For example, in Alaska, federal authorities are monitoring radiation levels around the clock and updating state personnel with the results. If levels get too high, their plan is to notify the public through the media and the emergency alert system. Just minutes ago, Mr. Speaker, Japan issued a no-fly zone around its reactor because of the detection of very high levels of radioactive particles. Does the Yukon government also intend to issue a public health advisory on the situation?

Hon. Mr. Lang: Mr. Speaker, certainly, if it's necessary, we will do the work it takes. That information will be put out into the public through radio and whatever way we can. We are concerned, and we are working with the federal government and monitoring this on a 24-hour-a-day basis. This is very serious and we will be monitoring it as we move through the crisis.

Mr. Elias: Again, just moments ago, the nuclear radiological event scale reached level 6 and, just for an example, Chernobyl was level 7, so it would take five or six days for radioactive particles to make it here from Japan, and they will likely have dispersed by then. Nevertheless, officials are monitoring the situation and keeping the public informed. For instance, in B.C. pharmacies today, they are already experiencing a huge demand for potassium iodide as people try to inoculate themselves against radiation. The B.C. government has issued public advisories and is working with pharmacies to address the public's concerns. I guess I'd like to know from the minister if he knows who takes their radioactive readings here in our territory and where are those monitoring stations?

Hon. Mr. Lang: We work with the federal government and they monitor that for us — I don't. I'd have to get back to the member opposite. I don't think we have the where-

withal to do that inside the territory. The federal government is monitoring this issue and, of course, they are working with the American government, which has access to high-tech monitoring equipment.

But I would have to get back to the member talking about a localized monitoring process.

Question re: Mackenzie Valley pipeline

Mr. Elias: Energy development in the north is a hot topic lately. The National Energy Board recently approved the Mackenzie gas project in the Northwest Territories. In its decision the National Energy Board stated, "We recognize that the Mackenzie Gas Project would have much larger and more far-reaching effects than previous developments in the North." There could be a massive energy project underway right next door to our territory very soon. What steps have been taken to maximize the benefits to Yukoners?

Hon. Mr. Rouble: Yes, there are very exciting events unfolding with pipeline issues in Canada's north. On the Mackenzie Valley pipeline, there have been ongoing negotiations and discussions between Government of Yukon and Northwest Territories spanning years. Indeed, Yukon was an intervenor with the Mackenzie Valley pipeline project and we've been very involved with this.

Also on this issue, I have to add, we have very strong regulatory processes in Canada to deal with projects of this magnitude, whether it's through the National Energy Board or through other processes — I could go into the many different regulatory and strong regimes we have here in the territory.

Suffice it to say that the Government of Yukon has been working very closely with Northwest Territories. We expect to see opportunities for economic involvement and opportunities for jobs. I would also expect to see opportunities for training, as we expand the infrastructure here in the north and realize some of the wealth that Canada's north has to offer Canadians.

Mr. Elias: If built, this project has the potential to move 1.2 billion cubic feet of natural gas a day from the Beaufort Sea to Alberta. It's a huge undertaking. That's enough gas to supply about two-thirds of the Canadians who use it to heat their homes. Closer to home, construction will bring employment to Yukoners and supply opportunities for Yukon businesses. These opportunities are not without risks, however, including infrastructure and environmental risks. The Dempster Highway comes to mind, Mr. Speaker.

How will this government balance the economic benefits to Yukoners with environmental and infrastructure protection?

Hon. Mr. Rouble: I just touched on Yukon's strong assessment and regulatory processes, whether it's through our YESAA processes or the strong and stringent permitting processes that apply to projects of this magnitude.

If there is a cloud in the sky to find, I guess we can leave it up to the Liberal Party to find those issues, but the Government of Yukon will be working very closely with the Northwest Territories to ensure that there are opportunities for Yukoners, as the member opposite has suggested, wherein he expected to see employment opportunities and economic opportunities. Recognizing the energy needs that we have throughout Canada and indeed North America, this is another way of responding in a

responsible manner to our growing energy needs and to recognizing the wealth that Canada's north has to offer all Canadians.

Mr. Elias: I am just simply asking questions in preparation for a major energy project that is right next door to us. It is rare to see a project of this scale and, if decided upon, it will be happening just beyond Yukon's border. This project could include three onshore natural gas fields, the Mackenzie Valley pipeline and another shorter pipeline that will connect with existing infrastructure at Norman Wells, Northwest Territories. The Yukon government took part in the National Energy Board's hearings that led to the project's approval. They were there to advocate on behalf of Yukoners. Now that the National Energy Board has approved the project, concerns about opportunities, benefits and risks to Yukoners are much more immediate.

Going forward, what will this government be doing to ensure Yukon gets the greatest benefits from the project?

Hon. Mr. Rouble: We'll work to maximize the benefits for Yukoners, as we have on a number of different issues, whether it's maximizing the benefits through housing or of federal infrastructure dollars coming into the territory, whether it's maximizing the benefits of health care coming into Yukon. This government has a track record of working to ensure that the needs of Yukoners are met. We'll go to work with the Northwest Territories; we'll go to work with the producers and the pipeline companies, once the construction decisions are finalized and we can begin to plan as to when some of these projects will actually be started.

We've done the homework with the Mackenzie pipeline group at the forefront; we'll continue to work with the governments involved, and we'll be ready when the opportunities are there for Yukoners to be involved, to ensure that Canada is meeting its energy needs, now and into the future, and that we're responsibly developing the resources that Canada's north has to offer.

Question re: Nuclear power

Ms. Hanson: Truly the hearts and minds of the world are with the people of Japan at this difficult time. As the people of Japan cope with the natural disaster that has cost thousands of lives and the ruin of entire communities, they have the added human-caused threat of nuclear accident and contamination. Japan's nuclear crisis is equivalent to number 6 on the scale that rates nuclear accidents from 1 to 7.

Every decade or so, we humans are given powerful reminders that, although things change, some things remain the same. I speak here of the constant threat posed by nuclear power and its waste.

The recent energy charette had presentations on a whole host of energy solutions. One speaker called nuclear energy a "viable option" for the territory.

Mr. Speaker, does this government entertain nuclear energy as a viable option, or is it off the table?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: Mr. Speaker, I think it's very clear that the energy strategy of the government and the 20-year resource plan of the Energy Corporation itself does reference all alternative sources of energy — nuclear being one of them.

In fairness to all concerned, the recent developments in Japan are certainly going to generate a discussion about that particular matter. We share the concerns of the Leader of the Third Party in regard to the devastating effects of this disastrous situation in Japan. I think it clearly shows that, regardless of the level of safety and safeguards and all the technology available today in the modern world, Mother Nature has a way of circumventing and overcoming those safeguards. I think we should all be aware of that.

The question of nuclear options for Yukon and all that goes with them — obviously there is a different dynamic for the discussion these days.

Ms. Hanson: Recently the president of Yukon Energy Corporation said the utility hasn't considered nuclear power generation and won't be doing so. We applaud his remarks, but as the Premier has just noted, the government's energy strategy lists nuclear as an option and states, while these are not current priorities for the Yukon government, there are questions about their future role in Yukon's energy sector and some mining companies have not ruled out the nuclear option for independent power production. In its submission to the IPP policy consultation, Largo Resources has said that it could use a small scale nuclear plant to power their Northern Dancer mine. The Yukon New Democratic Party does not think there is any future role for nuclear energy in this territory for our public utility or for private industry. Is this government prepared to say that there is no viable future for nuclear energy as well?

Hon. Mr. Rouble: The Government of Yukon has gone to work with Yukoners, with the Yukon Development Corporation, with the Yukon Energy Corporation and put forward an energy strategy and a 20-year plan. It's a principle-based approach and it looks at maximizing the benefits for Yukon; it looks at developing energy sources in a sustainable, responsible way. When we look at the projects this government has endorsed, it is things like increasing hydro, increasing efficiency of a system, tying the grids together, maximizing the efficiencies of the system. I would urge people to judge us based on our actions and decisions, rather than the wide array of options that are out there.

When we take a look at the track record of this government, we've made investment in increasing renewable energy, increasing responsible use of that type of energy and, yes, we do see a wide array of options that are before us, whether it's biomass, geothermal, run-of-river or looking at Yukon's natural gas sources as other options, including issues such as wind energy.

There's a wide range of responsible alternatives that Yukon will be exploring and we'll continue to address these matters in a responsible manner, following the strong regulatory and assessment processes we have in the territory.

Ms. Hanson: So clearly, we cannot get an answer from this government. The minister, the Premier, is always saying to the opposition: look to our energy strategy. The energy strategy clearly says on page 51 that nuclear is an option. The minister opposite cannot give a clear answer.

The Yukon's MP recently tabled a bill to designate the Arctic as a nuclear-free zone and we couldn't agree more. The

Yukon New Democratic Party has always been clear on where we stand, and that is no nukes: no nuclear power, no nuclear armaments shipped through our boundaries and a moratorium on uranium exploration and uranium mine development.

The risks are just too great. This is what Yukoners are telling us.

Some years ago, the Yukon declared itself a nuclear-free zone. We think it's time we reaffirm this statement. Does the government agree?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: We certainly are today a nuclear-free zone. As far as the Leader of the Third Party's assertions, I think it's fair to say that all Canadians, our federal government, provinces and, indeed, our territory, considering the recent events in Japan — this has given rise for a pause in matters such as these, as I just stated in the House. Regardless of the level of safeguards and modern technology that can be made available, the circumstances in Japan show clearly that these things are not foolproof, that there can be devastating effects. These are things that we must understand more clearly. But I can assure the member opposite that we're not proceeding with the development of nuclear generation in the Yukon. We see no reason to be concerned about nuclear weapons being established here in the Yukon. We are sure that our national government is well-aware of the circumstances and the concern. We have input into the vision for the north and into Arctic sovereignty. I think the world at large is now deeply concerned about nuclear as an option when you consider what the rest of the world is doing in shutting down reactors at this stage. I think we are all aware and very concerned, and we will take the appropriate steps.

Question re: Whistle Bend development

Mr. Cathers: Planning for the Whistle Bend subdivision has been underway for a number of years. The Department of Community Services is the lead department for the Yukon government in working with the City of Whitehorse on both planning and development of Whistle Bend.

Will the Minister of Community Services please tell me what the current time frame is for development of Whistle Bend and when the first lots are expected to be made available for sale?

Hon. Mr. Lang: In addressing the member opposite about Whistle Bend, of course, we are working in partnership with the City of Whitehorse. The timelines for phase 1 and phase 2: phase 1 is 93 lots in total; phase 2 is 106 single-family units. Overall, it will probably have over 200 and some housing opportunities in Whistle Bend in the two phases. The City of Whitehorse is also working on phases 3 and 5 at the moment too. The first lots will be available for sale in late summer of 2012, and we are certainly looking forward to that.

The government has put out contracts to cover much of the infrastructure that is going to be needed on the expansion. Public tenders and contract awards began in 2011. Those are up and running for the new stage of construction, such as deep and shallow utilities and surface work. The City of Whitehorse has started the process, as I said, for phases 3 and 5, so it is an ongoing opportunity for Yukon for an expansion here in the City of Whitehorse, and it's well on its way to being completed.

Mr. Cathers: One consequence of the Whistle Bend development was a need to move the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation's AM tower. The CBC knew of this for years, but instead of making plans to relocate or replace the tower, they made plans to decommission it. Yukoners, including a number of my constituents, expressed their concern with the serious impact that a loss of AM service would have. In rural Yukon particularly, CBC AM is often the only source of information, including information that may be vital in the event of a forest fire, earthquake or other natural disaster or emergency. FM service is not an adequate replacement because the signal doesn't go as far.

When I was Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, I was successful in getting both Community Services and the city to agree to extend the lease for the CBC tower site for three years. I wrote a letter, which I will table for members, and the extension was finalized under the current Minister of Community Services.

Has CBC contacted Community Services, or is the minister aware of them contacting the city regarding finding a new location?

Hon. Mr. Lang: The member is right; the tower has been decommissioned. We did get an extension of three years from CBC, a commitment to extend the life of the tower as Whistle Bend expanded around it. I have written a letter of concern to the CBC on the issue because of going from AM to FM, exactly what the member has spoken to on the floor here today, but I have not received a response.

Mr. Cathers: I appreciate the minister's answer. I believe he meant to say that the CBC indicated they're decommissioning it.

AM radio service is important to Yukon and important to rural areas. On May 6, 2009, the Yukon Legislative Assembly unanimously passed Motion No. 786, which urged the CBC to maintain the integrity of its broadcasting services north of 60. The CBC receives approximately \$1.1 billion in annual funding from Canadian taxpayers, roughly two-thirds of its budget.

A core part of its whole reason for existing is to provide services in rural Canada. The minister indicated he has written a letter. Would the minister provide me information about that? I would also ask him to write another letter to the president of the CBC, asking him to reconsider the decision and fund the relocation of the AM transmitter.

Hon. Mr. Lang: Certainly, the department can send another letter to CBC. I'm not quite sure how interested they are in extending the life of that process. They did go through a lengthy hearing on exactly that. I could commit to send a letter, but I'm not sure if that would have any effect on CBC's final decision.

Speaker's statement

Speaker: Before the honourable member asks the next question — Member for Lake Laberge, just keep in mind that the question and the two supplementaries should relate to each other. The Chair was having a bit of problems with the last two. I understand the first one was about Whistle Bend. It appeared to be on lots, not on CBC. So, honourable member, keep that in mind.

Question re: Yukon Hospital Corporation building projects

Mr. Mitchell: Yesterday, we asked this Yukon Party government why it refuses to produce the feasibility studies and needs assessments that were carried out prior to the development of the Watson Lake hospital. The Premier told us, "The government had to make a decision, which we did. In the context — and here's the study — of meeting the health care needs of the residents of Watson Lake and surrounding area..." This comment confirms that no pre-development studies were carried out at all — that funding was handed out based solely on this government's discretion. A political decision was made. Does this government think that multi-million dollar projects should be given the green light based solely on the discretion of the Premier?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: Well, in the first instance, the decision to build medical facilities, such as hospitals, aren't based on the discretion of anyone — period. They are based on the fact that we have a responsibility to meet the health care needs of Yukoners, regardless of where they live. Now we know the Official Opposition and its leader, the Liberal leader, have already clearly stated they would not do such a thing. They would ignore the health care needs of the people of Watson Lake and Dawson City and surrounding areas, and that's the position they take. No amount of berating the government is going to change the fact that there's a distinct contrast between the Yukon Party government and its approach to taking care of the health care needs of Yukoners and the Liberals' lack of understanding of what health care even means to people.

Mr. Mitchell: Well, the Premier is absolutely wrong. The Liberal Party will look after the health of rural Yukoners and will do so after consulting with rural Yukoners. This government admitted yesterday that it had no plan when it went forward with the development of a new hospital in Watson Lake. Part of the planning of the hospital includes highlighting what services and programs will be offered there. On February 21, when speaking about the old Watson Lake hospital, the Premier said that, "There were even children born in that hospital." For \$27 million, what kinds of programs and services have been incorporated into the new hospital? Are there even plans for Watson Lake residents to be able to deliver babies in that hospital?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: This is really quite something. The Liberals had an opportunity, which they took, to question the Hospital Corporation and its representatives right here in this House about that very fact. I am sure that the answers received from those witnesses, the representatives of the Hospital Corporation, were very detailed in their context, informing the Official Opposition and the Liberals of this House exactly what the plans were for both Dawson City and Watson Lake. The problem for the Liberal leader and his caucus is they don't like the answers. Those answers are inconsistent with the position that the Liberals have taken. Yukon Party government/Hospital Corporation: meeting the health care needs of rural Yukoners. It's called health care at home. Liberal position: to heck to with rural Yukoners. Everything is about Whitehorse.

Mr. Mitchell: We did question the Hospital Corporation. They said, “No delivery rooms in either Watson Lake or Dawson City,” so now we are questioning the Premier, because we do care about health care for rural Yukoners.

Yesterday the Premier said, “...there are people in hospital beds in the hospital at Watson Lake. That’s a pretty good result, I think...”

If this is the kind of innovative planning and evaluation used in deciding to build this hospital, then when it came to actually designing the hospital, did the Premier simply roll out of bed and draw up the plans on a napkin? Because we’ve seen no other documents to prove otherwise.

Did this government explore other options, in terms of more cost-effective health facilities in Watson Lake, or did it think that borrowing another \$25 million beyond the \$5 million already spent was the only option?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: I think we’ve been clear: the Yukon Party government will certainly step up to meet the cost of health care needs for Yukoners, as we have in this case. After 30 years plus of hospital services for the people of Watson Lake and the surrounding area, we saw no reason for the cessation of those services. Indeed, we’ve even taken a step to ensure that our Hospital Corporation is now functioning and working within the full scope of its mandate. We applaud the Hospital Corporation for all the work they’ve done in regard to taking over the hospital services in Watson Lake and Dawson City, as they’ve been doing for years in Whitehorse.

We applaud them for the work they’ve done with the community. We applaud them for the studies they’ve done. We applaud them for the designing they’ve done. We applaud them for their tendering process with respect to both facilities in Dawson City and Watson Lake, and we applaud them for their good work.

Thanks to Yukoners and Yukon citizens who step up and serve on the hospital board, as they have. These are good, hard-working Yukoners — dedicated, committed — unlike the Liberals, who have no concept whatsoever of what it takes to meet the health care needs of its citizenry.

Question re: Motions for the production of papers

Mr. McRobb: Mr. Speaker, once again, it’s necessary to follow up on a previous day’s question, because this Yukon Party government failed to answer straightforward questions. Yesterday, the Premier gave us another rendition of this government’s deny, deflect and attack approach when held accountable to the Yukon public. The Premier went out on a limb so far, he accused us of, and I quote, “... trying to reconstruct history with misinformation.”

Let’s examine that, Mr. Speaker. We’re asking for the Energy, Mines and Resources consulting contracts that haven’t been provided yet. The Premier has stated that they have been provided. So let’s start there. Have the consulting contracts in question been provided, yes or no?

Hon. Mr. Rouble: Mr. Speaker, I think it’s pretty obvious. The Liberal Party had all the information they needed to jump to the conclusions they reached. Okay, we heard their conclusions. We don’t agree with them, but they certainly leapt

to a conclusion — probably heading down the wrong road as we’ve heard them before.

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Hon. Mr. Rouble: Yes, I’m being reminded of the member opposite tripping over a spruce goose.

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Hon. Mr. Rouble: Grouse. Excuse me. A grouse. We’ve heard the member opposite and his grouse story a number of times.

Now, the opposition reached its own conclusions. They stood on their soapbox and declared what they thought to be the truth. Unfortunately for the opposition, that has proved to be inaccurate, proved to be wrong, and the Yukon public has recognized that for what it was and they have seen the light.

Mr. McRobb: I refuse to take the minister’s offer to pursue another wild goose chase. It’s impossible to get a simple answer to a simple question from this government. So much for its promise to Yukoners to be open, accountable and transparent. This government has a serious credibility problem. That’s why Yukoners have identified good governance as their top concern. The Premier has stated we’ve tabled those contracts — he said. This is 100 percent incorrect, and I’d challenge the Premier to provide those tablings. This government spent \$275,000 of taxpayers’ money on Outside consultants to pursue its secret privatization of Yukon’s energy future.

The public deserves to see those documents and know who ordered those contracts. Will this government now agree to provide those contracts?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: Here we go. The Member for Kluane won’t even accept what’s written in *Hansard*. I’m sure the Member for Kluane reviewed *Hansard* and found his own view of what was written on the pages of *Hansard*, which is incorrect. Once again, as my colleague has suggested, the Member for Kluane is incorrect and there are many examples of that fact.

As was said yesterday, check the contract registry. I also said that it’s the Liberals themselves who tabled all the documents they’ve been asking for in regard to any discussions that may have taken place regarding energy and partnerships and alternatives in this territory.

The Liberals and the Member for Kluane do take issue with the government, because we are the government of the day and they’re seeking the office. The problem for the Liberals is they haven’t presented any credible plan to the Yukon public, so I guess I can agree with the Member for Kluane that it is about credibility — the Liberals don’t have any.

Mr. McRobb: Deny, deflect and attack — what’s this government hiding? Why won’t it release those contracts paid for by the Yukon public? What is it hiding?

Now we know this government spent a lot of time trying to find a way out of the maze on this scandal. It took several months for the Premier to emerge and unveil his chosen escape route. Maybe, just maybe, these contracts would disprove this government’s excuses to the public. I’ve had enough of this government’s deny, deflect and attack approach to accountability and so have Yukoners. Let’s put in on the line. Let’s call this government’s bluff and raise the stakes on whether those

contracts have been tabled. If wrong, I'm willing to resign my seat in this House. Does the Premier have the courage of his convictions to do the same? Yes or no?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: Well, I can say to the Member for Kluane upon the tabling of his resignation, please write when he finds work. The Yukon Party government has no intention of renegeing on its commitment to the Yukon public and, for the ninth year now, we've been carrying out that commitment to the Yukon public. I think the evidence of our hard work is all around us today in the Yukon.

The Liberals keep trying to escape themselves from the predicaments they've got themselves in, in referencing discussions with anyone regarding energy — even the witnesses who appeared before the House in April 2010 presented evidence to the Liberals. The Liberals do not accept the evidence. Let me just refer to some of that evidence — the witnesses certainly presented this, confirmed that there were no secret negotiations, but rather discussions with ATCO regarding a proposal put forward by ATCO; confirmed that the president — and this is to do with the secret part the Member for Kluane is talking about — of the Yukon Energy Corporation and the board were given a copy of the proposal immediately for their input; also confirmed the Yukon government was not interested in selling assets of the Yukon Energy Corporation and discussion ended, and of course no mandates were ever issued for negotiations — period. I offer a t-shirt to the Member for Kluane —

Speaker: The time for Question Period has now elapsed.

Petition No. 15 — deemed read and received

Speaker: Prior to proceeding with the private members' business, the House should be informed that the report on the petitions should have also included that Petition No. 15 is deemed to be read and received.

Notice of opposition private members' business

Mr. McRobb: Pursuant to Standing Order 14.2(3) I would like to identify the item standing in the name of the Official Opposition to be called on Wednesday, March 16, 2011. It is Bill No. 112, standing in the name of the Member for Porter Creek South.

Mr. Cardiff: Pursuant to Standing Order 14.2(3), I'd like to identify the item standing in the name of the Third Party to be called on Wednesday, March 16. It is Motion No. 1358, standing in the name of the Member for Mount Lorne.

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

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

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

Motion agreed to

Speaker leaves the Chair

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Chair (Mr. Nordick): Order please. Committee of the Whole will now come to order. The matter before the Committee is Bill No. 24, *First Appropriation Act, 2011-12*. We will resume general debate in the Department of Education.

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. 24: First Appropriation Act, 2011-12 — continued

Chair: The matter before the Committee is Bill No. 24, *First Appropriation Act, 2011-12*. We will now continue with general debate in Vote 3, Department of Education.

Chair's ruling

Chair: Before we continue in debate, yesterday the Chair undertook to review the Blues and report back to the Committee regarding a point of order raised by Mr. Cardiff about a comment made by Mr. Rouble. Having reviewed the matter, the Chair finds that there is no point of order, just a dispute between members.

However, the Chair would like to remind members of the Speaker's recent caution to members against characterizing other members' contributions to the debate and interpreting other members' intentions, as this path can lead to disorder.

Minister Rouble, you have about 12 minutes left.

Department of Education — continued

Hon. Mr. Rouble: Mr. Chair, we left off yesterday with a question from the NDP critic regarding what we are doing to eliminate the barriers for post-secondary education for Yukoners here in the territory.

I'm pleased to report that the Government of Yukon has made a significant amount of progress on this issue. One issue that I have tabled with the member opposite is the entire labour market framework exercise that was recently completed. It was led by the Department of Education, Advanced Education branch. Officials within the Department of Education went to work with Yukoners to identify what the long-term training needs were; what the long-term recruitment and retention needs were here in the territory; what we needed by way of an immigration strategy; and what we needed by way of labour market development data or labour market data in order to make informed decisions.

I would really like to thank all of those who were involved in the labour market framework project. These include organizations such as the Chamber of Commerce, major employers,

First Nations, municipal governments, other training institutions, Yukon College and, of course, Department of Education's Advanced Education staff.

It was a very progressive exercise to go through — to take a look at how we should best define our policies for the future regarding these very important issues regarding our labour and ensuring that we're meeting the labour market needs here in the territory. Again, it's another way of preparing Yukoners for Yukon opportunities. We have to do the work to identify what those opportunities are, what we see coming down the path into the future, seeing the direction the territory is headed by way of diversifying the economy and ensuring that people are prepared to meet those opportunities. That preparation often involves having the appropriate training and skills.

Another important document that the department has worked on is the strategic plan for the Department of Education. While it focuses considerable efforts on the K to 12 areas of education, it also goes into details about what we can do on the Advanced Education side of things. It's important to look at the tools that we have within Advanced Education in order to support Yukoners in leading meaningful lives and meeting the needs that we have here in the territory, meeting those employment gaps that we have, ensuring that people have the skills we need them to have in order to lead happy, healthy, productive, contributory lives, and ensuring that we have enough electricians, plumbers, carpenters, bakers, lawyers, doctors — the whole breadth of opportunities out there.

When I take a look at the want ads or look at the hiring on YUWIN's website, we see the entire Yellow Pages of opportunities out there, from accountants to welders, and there are a tremendous number of opportunities available to Yukoners. Again, looking at the very low unemployment rate we have, we have some challenges in that area of recruiting additional people to fill those opportunities in the territory, to find people who haven't traditionally been part of Yukon's workforce and provide them with the skills, training and characteristics necessary so they can participate. We have a number of different programs there with the labour market development agreement — I can go into details about those — ensuring that we have the full spectrum of programming available for Yukon students.

When Yukon students complete high school, we then have opportunities for them to take advantage of the Yukon student grant. I'll remind members opposite: that is a grant, not a repayable loan, as is done in other jurisdictions. With that, there are no strings attached to it; there are no requirements for service coming back into the territory, although we would welcome Yukoners back here with warm and open arms, but we don't have those kinds of strings attached that have been talked about by others.

That certainly removes some of the fiscal barriers that Yukon people have in going to school. Now, most Yukon students who graduate from high schools have opportunities both here in the territory through Yukon College or they have the opportunity at other Canadian universities from coast to coast to coast. It's great to see the number of Yukon students who are

really going to the centre of excellence for their chosen field in institutions across the country.

Before taking office, I thought that Yukon students would typically tend to go to institutions like UBC or U of A, but it's really encouraging to see that Yukon students go to over 110 different post-secondary institutions across North America — again, finding that centre of excellence for their field, going out, getting the education, getting the certification and then bringing those skills back here to the territory.

Also on that front, I should note that we have negotiated special entrance levels, if you will, with different universities across Canada to encourage Yukon students to get into those programs. I'm thinking about the spot that is available to a student who wants to attend medical school at Memorial University of Newfoundland.

That's a great opportunity where a student can go if they meet the requirements of medical school and take part in a program that is dedicated to providing doctors with the background they need to practice in more rural and remote areas, similar to the situation that we have here in the territory. It's great to see so many young Yukoners coming back to the territory with those kinds of skills. I've heard anecdotally that about six second-generation Yukon doctors are now practising here in the territory. That's a pretty exciting statistic — to know that out of a community of our size that number of students have gone on to medical school, graduated and then come back here to form their practice. That's great news for the territory.

We also had that type of program available for veterinary school, should students want to participate in that field. Again, it's not just about university or college positions throughout Canada. We also support many students to go out and attend institutions, such as NAIT or SAIT, in pursuit of their journey-level certification. We've seen a huge increase in this area in recent years with increases of 50 to 70 percent participation rate in the number of apprentices we have going into apprentice programs, and then also seeing increases in the participation rate of people of First Nation ancestry and the participation rate of women in non-traditional types of positions.

We have gone through that before in a previous question in this Assembly about how great it is to see the gender barrier breaking down for many of the trades that we have out there. We are seeing the completion rates of apprenticeship programs increasing too. So it is not just people going out and taking the program and not progressing; instead, we are seeing people continuing through, earning their journey-level certificate, and then coming back and providing those much-needed services here in the territory.

Also, with the expansions we have put into Yukon College, with the increase of base funding there from about \$11 million a couple of years ago to over \$17 million now, we are seeing the number of opportunities increase there. We are also seeing Yukon College becoming very responsive to identifying needs in the community and putting in place programs like the licensed practical nurse program, the home heating maintainer, the survey technician. The survey technician is a neat one. It recognizes that, with the conclusion of land claims, a lot of surveying would need to be done in the territory for First Na-

tion orders of government to identify their land mass and to do the survey.

What better way to respond to that than by putting on a survey program at Yukon College so we can prepare Yukoners for these Yukon opportunities?

With the explosion of work we've seen in other sectors of the economy, those people with those skills will also be in high demand. We've also increased the student grant and indexed it to inflation, in order to reduce the barriers for accessing post-secondary education. We've constructed new facilities, and those are in Dawson and Pelly Crossing now, so people won't have to leave their community in order to expand their training opportunities.

We've worked with other institutions to increase the amount of distance education or computer-based training that's available throughout the territory. We've put investments into Yukon College housing to provide accommodation for people coming in from other areas of the territory — to have access to residence at the college.

We believe very strongly in post-secondary education here in the territory. The government, through the Public Service Commission, has invested heavily in training for helping to prepare people to move up the corporate ladder.

The Department of Education is certainly investing in its staff through the professional development of our teachers, administrators and departmental staff. A great example of that is the Master of Education program that is being offered at Yukon College that is accredited through the University of Northern British Columbia. Again, my hat has to go off to the folks at Yukon College for their increased partnerships with other institutions and seeing how that has increased the opportunities for Yukon students.

Mr. Chair, we have gone to work on this very important issue. We have sat down with our stakeholders and partners in the process. We have identified long-term strategies as to how we will go forward. We have put these strategies in place. We have resourced them appropriately and we look forward to seeing the benefits accrue in the territory for decades to come.

Mr. Cardiff: I don't believe the minister really addressed the question of whether or not the government would support looking into the possibility of the government funding the first two years at Yukon College for students who have graduated from the Yukon high school system. If he doesn't support that or looking into the possibility of it, I guess that's where we're at with that one.

I want to go back to some of the discussion that we had yesterday and I want to get the minister on record about where he stands, as the Minister of Education, on the issue of governance. We talked about this yesterday quite extensively and the minister's response is basically that they are involving communities and parents through school councils and school growth plans, but I want to go back to the document that he dropped off in my office several years ago right around Christmastime. It is almost becoming dog-eared. I want to talk about the section in the education reform report that starts on page 1.7. It deals with a proposed governance structure, a new education governance model, that is recommended in the report.

I'll say right up front that I'm not necessarily saying the model proposed in the document is the one that needs to be looked at, but we could look at various governance structures for the education system.

I'm going to quote from a couple of sections of the report. This comes from the Kwiya report, the final report toward a new partnership in education that was published around 1987, I believe. It reflected the same sentiment that had been reflected in 1973. It outlined the need for an educational system to meet the learning needs of First Nation students and involve First Nations in an effective and meaningful way. The quote from the report is: "The absence of direct Indian parental responsibility and local control over education, in spite of past commitments to such policies by federal and territorial governments, can be cited as one major reason for the re-emergence of the call among some segments of the Indian population for a separate school system."

The report goes on to talk about the fact that the same concerns and issues were raised by the members of the education reform project team during the pre-consultation meetings and in discussions with First Nation members and leaders. Some of the reasons that were given were the level of frustration that many First Nation people feel about the education system in general, the disparity between First Nation and non-First Nation student achievement, the lack of culturally relevant curriculum. I applaud the department and the minister for making progress in this area. I think I said this yesterday and I do have some other questions about that. There is also the lack of opportunity for meaningful involvement in the delivery of education programming, the perceived and actual systemic barriers within the education system and the slow pace of progress toward acceptable measures of control over First Nation education.

The review committee, in the document *Renewing the Partnership: Draft Recommendations, Education Act Review, 2001* — the review committee stated that a new governance model for public schools in Yukon was needed based on several observations. Those observations are that much of the *Education Act* is based on the concept of school board governance, although after nearly 20 years, only one small board exists. The current governance model does not adequately provide for a true partnership between the people it affects. Parents feel powerless with the current governance model. The school council structure has not provided an adequate level of involvement for them in shaping the kind of school that they want for their children.

I suspect that the minister is going to say in his response that that's where the school growth plans come in. I can understand why that might be his response. I understand that it is a vehicle for the community and the parents to become involved, but there is still a level of frustration.

There is a desire on the part of First Nations — they want a part in the decision-making process to make sure that their children will do better. The partnership that was envisioned during the creation of the *Education Act* has not survived its actual implementation. The concept of a school board in every

community and several boards in Whitehorse has failed to meet the test of public interest.

I think not necessarily that it has failed to meet the test of public interest; I think — as I said yesterday — that governments have been resistant to share that decision-making power at the local level, and that there is this issue around control. I believe that there is a quote in here about the reluctance to share the resources and to give up control of the resources.

So there were some questions that were posed. Why is there only one school board in Whitehorse? Why have communities not embraced the potential for the substantial authority granted by the act over the operation of their local schools? Have schools been encouraged to assume more authority over the operations of their school? Have school councils — this is what I was asking about yesterday — been encouraged to evolve into school boards and to take the responsibilities in part 7 of the *Education Act* or haven't they?

Ultimately the question for the minister is — there's a lot more information in the document and I'm not going to read it all — does he believe the proposed structure? It talks about a new approach; it talks about a proposed structure; it says the existing education system is perceived as hierarchical and resistant to community input.

The government structure that is proposed in here would allow the government to become more responsive to the wishes of the larger education community, and the structure would have the following characteristics: facilitating a broad community input in education; providing First Nations with representation; shifting many decisions away from the Department of Education; senior administration support; and facilitating educational decisions based on instructional, not political, needs.

Like I said at the beginning, I am not saying that the proposed structure in the education reform project is necessarily one that — I think it bears looking at, but I think that it bears discussion with the partners in education before moving to a structure that is in the reform project position paper.

Does the Minister of Education support the position taken by the education reform committee — that we need to look at overhauling the governance structure? It's basically a yes-or-no question.

If he wants to stand up and repeat the discussion we had yesterday about school councils and school growth plans, he runs the risk of being called on a point of order under Standing Order 19(c), being repetitive, because I heard all that yesterday. What I'm looking for is a yes-or-no answer to the question: does he support the recommendations in the education reform document — that the structure needs to be looked at and reviewed?

Hon. Mr. Rouble: I was all set to stand up and say yes, but then the question shifted and changed and morphed. To that, I have to add a bit more information, so the member opposite appreciates the context it's delivered in.

The member opposite has talked a bit about governance and talked about how the purpose of governance is to involve people in an effective and meaningful way. Do I believe in doing that? Most assuredly. Have we demonstrated that? Most assuredly.

The Member for beautiful Mount Lorne went on to talk about different models, and he commented that he wasn't endorsing that particular model. I can appreciate that because there were certain different ideas that were presented in the *Education Reform Final Report*. The department, Yukon First Nations, a variety of governments, Yukon citizens, school councils have all taken a look at some of the issues in the report, and some they can easily support and some they look at and say, "That's an interesting idea to talk about." Some say, "Yes, I agree that it is an issue that needs to be addressed, but I don't agree with the manner it's being proposed to be addressed."

Can we go about addressing the interest that the member opposite has expressed — that of involving, in an effective, meaningful way, people of Yukon First Nation ancestry in the education system? Yes, most assuredly. In fact, we want to involve all Yukoners of First Nation ancestry, non-First Nation ancestry, of the Christian faith or other faiths, of French first language ancestry or other language ancestry in today's education system.

We might not always agree with the model that might be proposed but I think we can all agree on the interest that we are addressing. That is, how do we incorporate the views of Yukoners into Yukon's education system and how do we do it at the variety of different levels that we have within our system? I'll go into that in just a moment.

I do want to touch back on the education reform project. The member opposite commented yesterday that we have provided a pile of paperwork. There was a different term yesterday — but substantial information to the member opposite, to Yukoners, about what's going on in education. One of the documents that was put on the Government of Yukon's website last week was a database. It links the recommendations or the positions or the ideas or the points brought forward from the education reform project to ongoing changes in practice within the Department of Education.

The companion document to that is linking our strategic plan to the recommendations, ideas and thoughts that came forward from the education reform document. The Department of Education isn't one that commissions a report, puts it on the shelf and lets dust gather on it. Instead, they are incorporated into the policies, practices and budgeting process of the Department of Education. That has been illustrated in the recent strategic plan where we built upon the work that the previous government had done on the *Education Act* review. We built on the work of education reform, built on the work of the secondary school study, and built on the work of many of our committees.

When we take a look at how we involve people in a meaningful manner in the education of Yukon students, let's start right at the nub, right at the centre, with the student. We provide meaningful information about the progress of individual students back to their parent or caregiver through report cards, through interviews and meetings with the teacher, through the three-way conferences including the student, teacher and parent.

As well, our teachers go above and beyond the call of duty to also contact parents and provide additional information about the progress of students. Then we also have the IPPs — IEPs. Sorry, I'm confusing Ontario terminology with Yukon terminology here — the individualized education plan —

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Hon. Mr. Rouble: And yes, not including it with Energy, Mines and Resources terminology.

With an IEP, students work very closely with their teacher, with other education officials, on identifying specific individualized plans for those. Of course, their parents are involved in that; the parents are signing off on the plan; the parents are seeing the progress that students are making through the education system.

The best advocate we could have for a student will be that person's parents. We're all involved; we all have a responsibility, but that link with the parent is a tremendous responsibility and plays a tremendous role.

So if we go from the individual level to the school level, we have the opportunity to engage people in an important, meaningful and effective manner with the school growth plans. We recognize that there is diversity in our communities. I think that's why some people envisioned having different school boards for different communities. They envisioned that there were significant differences between the communities and then they'd want to have the flexibility to respond to those.

We're finding now that with our school growth plans we can find a way to respond to the diversity through our communities, while at the same time ensuring that we have an equity throughout the whole education system and that is an important balance, an important point to note. Not only do we have to recognize the differences between schools, but we also have to recognize the common areas and some of the common outcomes that we need to accomplish. Again, we need to identify those common interests that we are trying to accommodate. Just as an example of this one, we can take a look at recreation. I have some schools come in and say, "We want to recognize the diversity of our school. We think it's important for us to put in a rock-climbing wall to meet the issue and the interest of physical fitness."

Another school will come in and say, "In order to meet the issue of physical fitness and recreation, we want to do something different. We want to put in a hockey rink." So we can find a way to support that. A third school might come in and say, "We want to increase the number of visits to the Canada Games Centre in order to address the issue of physical fitness throughout our school system." We're recognizing that there are different ways of accomplishing the same goal. Or, as one of my colleagues previously said, "You can hit the same target by shooting from a different direction." We want to discuss a moose analogy on that one. Yes, you can hunt the same moose by shooting from different places. It's all about what we're interested in accomplishing, but recognizing that there might be different paths to follow there.

That's what we accomplish with the school growth plan — being responsive to the needs in the specific community and

ensuring that we have methods in place to ensure equity in education throughout the territory.

Our next level of involvement or next way of involving people in an effective, meaningful way on a local basis is with the school council — the school council, which has guaranteed representation by the local First Nation.

We've talked before about how this is a floor and not a ceiling. It guarantees a minimum representation, not a maximum. That's a way that involves the community in a number of different issues, many of which are laid out in the *Education Act*. Yes, there are a variety of "mays" and "shalls". There are duties they are expected to do. They are expected to be involved in the setting of the school calendar. They are expected to be involved in the setting of March break. There are other activities that are of a "may" nature and, based on the involvement of the school council, they may get involved in those issues.

We provide assistance to our school councils, both from an administrative perspective on the school level and also with Department of Education staff who participate — I'm searching for the title of the person: the school council coordinator — who leads or is involved with — because it's co-facilitated, it co-facilitates the two conventions that are held each year where we bring school councils to a central location for training, for discussion and for feedback.

At these sessions that are held in the spring and the fall, we collectively sit down — I've met with these folks many a time — and discuss issues that are of concern to them, issues of commonality throughout Yukon's education system, different ways that the school councils are addressing those issues in their own specific school where they are making meaningful, efficient and effective changes.

We have been told in recent correspondence from the Yukon Association of School Councils, Boards and Committees that they have been very pleased to see the responsiveness of the Department of Education in responding to the issues and concerns brought forward to them.

The next layer up, speaking more broadly about territorial education issues, we have all of the committees that I have put on the record yesterday. Whether it is looking at report cards or policy, there are a number of different ways that we regularly engage with Yukoners about education where they provide effective, meaningful input, and I provided members opposite with a wide range of examples of this yesterday.

If we go up a level, we then have opportunities for discussion on a territorial level with the Association of School Councils, Boards and Committees.

Another tool that I had or that was in place in Yukon was the Yukon Chiefs Committee on Education. Unfortunately, the Yukon Chiefs Committee on Education disbanded a number of years ago. However, the very good news is that recently — in fact, earlier this week — the Council of Yukon First Nations announced that they would create an education commission, which will include representation of Yukon First Nations to get together to discuss issues around education and participate in an effective, meaningful way. I look forward to meeting with the education commission. I know my staff, whether it's the

deputy minister, or the assistant deputy minister, or the staff involved in the First Nation Programs and Partnerships unit are all looking forward to that as well. On that note, I should mention the First Nations Programs and Partnerships unit. They work with the First Nation Education Advisory Committee, which is another territory-based committee that includes representation from Yukon First Nations in order that they can have effective and meaningful input into education issues.

Also, recognizing that the self-governing First Nations and, indeed, even those that aren't self-governing, might have specific issues that they want to discuss, we have met with them and worked on specific bilateral programs, in which case we do address — one-on-one with another order of government — an interest or concern that they have expressed for their community. Then we have the public Assembly here, where duly elected officials — representative of all Yukoners — sit and discuss, as we're doing today, education in the territory, the budget allotments, the direction, the mission, and the vision objectives of Yukon's Education department.

So yes, the answer to the member opposite's question is, yes, I agree that the involvement of all partners in education is important as we continue to improve Yukon's education system, as has been demonstrated by the activities of the Department of Education.

Mr. Cardiff: I understand the minister's answer. It doesn't address the issue of whether or not he is willing to look at or entertain trying to change the governance structure to work with Yukoners to do that. There has been work done, and the minister has outlined it in yet again the same speech we heard yesterday.

I would like to move on to a different area in the same report, and that is on page 2.7 of the education reform document. There is another position paper that talks about the establishment of a First Nations secondary school. I'll quote a few excerpts from the report.

The context is that many First Nations students are subject to a range of negative experiences that adversely affect their ability to succeed in the existing education system. Some of these issues can and should be dealt with by the system, such as relevant curriculum, culturally sensitive educators and alternative programming. It goes on — there's a bit more about the context, but I think we live here and I think we know and understand the context. In the planning section it talks about how designing a secondary program for First Nation students is a complex endeavour. Time is needed at the outset to effectively plan such a program. Some of the programs of particular interest to First Nations are leadership training, language and cultural immersion, land-based programs to teach the connection to the land and elders and increase the students' knowledge of heritage and culture. Similar programs already exist in some Yukon schools.

There has been an effort on the part of this government and other governments to make changes in this area. It also goes on to say students who receive an education that is grounded in the roots of their history, language and culture are more likely to be able to successfully connect the academic concepts and skills taught in school with real world social dynamics, economics

and technology. Knowing and understanding their place in the world can make a big difference in helping to prepare young people to make the transition into adulthood.

There is a section, as well, on defining success. We must also consider how best to define and measure success in terms of meeting students' needs. Success should be defined not only by how well students are mastering basic academic principles, but how well they are able to look at real world issues and situations and put them into context. Educational institutions need to build student commitment to the curriculum by making students and teachers collaborate in working toward a common goal. It is necessary for what constitutes educational success to be defined with the involvement from Yukon First Nations. This definition will help to shape the school program and curriculum, and it is vital that Yukon public school educators embrace this definition.

Educational success may be defined by some of these characteristics: academic achievement; physical, emotional and spiritual health; a strong sense of self; a strong sense of worth and belonging; an appreciation of the land and culture, and an understanding of First Nation values and beliefs. There are other sections in here. It also says it is important to acknowledge that there are differences between the existing system of education and the First Nation system. Success in the former system will look much different from success in the latter system. It is not certain whether these two distinct definitions will be able to exist within the same system, although it is important that First Nations have the opportunity to determine this for themselves. They do have the ability to do that.

The report goes on to talk about the need for teacher recruitment and to have an education system that is truly reflective of the participants in that system. It talks about transitions, curriculum, training, best practices, involvement of First Nation students to achieve success, and it talks about collaboration.

The recommendation is that the Government of Yukon, in partnership with Yukon First Nations, should implement a plan to initiate and operate a Yukon First Nation secondary school. A comprehensive workplan, which will take into account models across Canada, should be developed and supported by students, parents, First Nations and relevant government partners. If the minister remembers where we started when I was talking about planning, it talked about the fact that it's a complex endeavour and the time is needed at the outset to effectively plan such a program. I'd like to ask the minister this: is there any work being undertaken on this recommendation, in partnership with Yukon First Nations?

Hon. Mr. Rouble: We've just left one topic and gotten on to another one, but I can't leave the issue of governance without commenting on the member opposite's remarks because it's unfortunate that he is not willing to listen to what is actually being said and instead chooses to give his own interpretation of what he thought he heard.

I went on in great detail, Mr. Chair, about how we are addressing the interests of many Yukoners and incorporating their ideas, thoughts and beliefs into our education system. I have provided a number of details about opportunities for input, whether it was at the student level, the classroom level, the

school level, the system-wide level, or here on the political level.

We have taken to heart many of the beliefs or interests brought forward in our discussions and have made changes to Yukon's education system in order to involve Yukoners in an effective, meaningful way. By the member's own definition, that is what governance is all about. I am very pleased to see how this government, which was given political direction through the mandate of the voters, has worked with Yukoners, has worked with the Department of Education and with Yukon First Nations on all the variety of inputs that we have.

We've also gone on to address an issue of a First Nation high school. Now, I have to tell the member opposite my priority for building a high school right now is F. H. Collins. That is the project that is on the books. I expect that it will be a fine institution that will meet the needs of Yukon students for decades to come. I am concerned about comments about segregating high schools. I have talked to many people about their feelings about residential schools. I have been told by many people of First Nation ancestry that they don't want to see a First Nation-only high school. I have to tell the member opposite, I have no intention of building a First Nation-only high school at this point in our mandate. We're not going there. We have a responsibility as a public system to build an inclusive education system to meet the needs of diversity throughout the Yukon. We work on a daily basis to meet those needs, whether it's working with people of First Nation ancestry or not, or working with people who speak French as their first language.

We've incorporated many of the ideas and thoughts and concerns the member has just shared with us in the strategic plan. When we take a look at goal 1, it's for everyone who enters school in Yukon to have the opportunity to successfully complete their education with dignity and purpose, well-prepared to enter the next phase of their life.

The member opposite went on to talk about success and how we define success. Part of that is captured in the act; part of that is captured with individuals' expectations for themselves; part of that is captured in the expectations their parents have. I would suggest that everyone's definition of personal success is different. That's what makes us different and unique as individuals.

Some people will feel success in doing one thing and other people will not feel successful unless they have \$1 million in the bank. The opportunity to reach that level of individual success is what we are trying to provide.

The key strategies in doing this include the school growth process, the rural strategy, strengthening school boards and school councils, community engagement, supporting advisory committees, engaging Yukon First Nation governments and communities to enhance success for students of First Nation ancestry. We've gone through with different strategies and tactics to implement these objectives, and these are also outlined in the budget.

In the budget, we have issues regarding the First Nations experiential program. The Department of Education is developing a Yukon First Nations experiential program open to Whitehorse secondary school students — all secondary school stu-

dents in grade 9. The first component of this experiential-based program with a First Nation perspective is ready to be implemented for grade 9 students in the spring 2011 semester at Porter Creek Secondary School.

Management Board has approved three years of funding starting in 2009-10. Total funding for 2009-10 is \$242,000; 2010-11 is \$219,000; 2011-12 is \$219,000 and a little bit of change.

We will be continuing to work with the First Nation Education Advisory Committee and others on the curriculum and the implementation of this. The program, which focuses on community, heritage, arts, outdoors and skills, is called CHAOS 9. The motto for the program is a Southern Tutchone phrase, which translates to "Together we will learn". So we are working to build a public education system that recognizes the diversity of our students, both from a community level and an individual level, and to put in place programs, services and curriculum that meet the needs of those. We are working to be responsive to the needs in the community in which we work. We are being responsive to other orders of government. We are being responsive to parents who have high expectations of a quality education here in the Yukon. We have expectations of other institutions — that they expect that when people graduate from a Yukon high school that they will have the skills and capacity necessary to go on to that next transition into the world of post-secondary education, whether it's at Yukon College or, with the support of the Government of Yukon, at some other institution. That goes on to be captured within the strategic plan of the Department of Education.

"Objective 2: To promote a positive, inclusive and responsive learning environment that contributes to the success of each learner and ensures continuous improvement." Some of the strategies here are to integrate and support languages and cultures to connect learners to our rich history and contemporary Yukon. Some of the specific projects are the Yukon First Nation languages and cultural framework, French first language, French second language, and English language learners.

The strategy to accomplish this objective goes on — to develop and strengthen the social and emotional skills of each learner. Well, how are we going to do that? We will work on that through the early years transition initiatives, the resiliency in transition programs, the efforts that we put into the social responsibility and citizenship programs, and the environmental stewardship programs. With those, if we drill down, we see the effects of those in the classroom today, whether it's the Be the Change movement that we have in our high schools, whether it's the social justice clubs that have started up, whether it's Yukon students getting involved to raise funds for areas that have been hit by disaster, we have evidence of Yukon students learning these skills.

Others will measure the success of an education system by how well they do on a Fraser Institute report or a PISA study or some other statistical indicator of the day. But I personally believe there's more to an education than doing well on one good math test on one good day.

We have a responsibility in our education system to develop the whole individual and to provide them with the oppor-

tunity for success. We're not going to tell them what success is. That's up to them to decide. But we have a responsibility to provide them with the opportunities.

I've often talked about education and the dual purpose it serves in a community. It has a responsibility to the individual — to help that individual to grow up to be everything he or she wants to be. On the other hand, it has a responsibility on the macro level to meet the needs of our community, and to ensure we have a community full of people who have the skills to participate in our economy, the skills and beliefs to participate in our democratic institutions, the skills and ability to lead happy, healthy, productive, responsible lives.

Through the vision of the Department of Education that has been developed in partnership with Yukoners, with the plans that have been provided for the strategic performance of the Department of Education in our K to 12 branch and our Advanced Education branch, through our strategic plan, and through our labour market framework, we're putting in place those strategies and programs to accomplish it.

Then what are we doing, Mr. Chair? In the budget we have before us today, we're funding the specific initiatives. We have recognized the comments that the Member for Mount Lorne is sharing with us, we have taken them to heart, and when we drill into the budget and look at the allocations, we can see that they are there. They are there in black and white. Our budget for teachers has increased. We have more teachers in our system than we did a few years ago — and fewer students. We have increased resources, we have increased expenditures, and we've done so in a focused and targeted manner, based on the input of Yukoners. I am proud of the work the Department of Education has done and the lead and initiative they have taken because they have gone out and listened to Yukoners.

They have been responsive to the needs of our students and our community and they have put forward a plan as to how we can go forward, and they put forward budgets as to how we can accomplish our common goals.

Mr. Chair, I would encourage all members of the Assembly to stand up and endorse the budget we have before us, endorse the positive plans and to go forward and join us in providing an excellent education system that will meet the needs of the territory now and into the future.

Mr. Cardiff: It's interesting. The minister just basically delivered a political stump speech, and nobody in the Legislature — at least not on this side — is running for the leadership of the Yukon Party, but obviously the Minister of Education is considering it.

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Point of order

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

Hon. Mr. Rouble: Mr. Chair, I certainly wasn't going to cause an issue over the accusation that this was a stump speech, that I was somehow politicizing the debate, but the member then did stray a bit and certainly imputed false or unavowed motives. But if he does want to join the Yukon Party, I would be happy to send over a membership form for him.

Chair's ruling

Chair: Order please. The debate today was going quite well, actually. There were no personal comments lobbed in either direction. I would encourage the members to go back to the way the debate was happening about 15 minutes ago and focus on the budget and not on personal comments toward each other.

Mr. Cardiff, you have the floor.

Mr. Cardiff: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I thank the minister for his lengthy answer. He gave an answer up front and I apologize if the minister misinterpreted what I was saying. I was asking him what work was being done with regard to the recommendations — there are three of them on page 2.12 of the education reform document — and I ended up getting a long speech. As I said, I apologize if he misinterpreted what I said.

Nowhere in my comments did I ever talk about segregation or that this would be a First Nation-only school. If the minister truly wanted to look at how this is being done in other jurisdictions, he would realize that there are schools that are run and operated and led by First Nations in other jurisdictions but that they're not segregated. These are not residential schools. There are children from all cultures and some people who aren't of First Nation ancestry choose to send their children to those schools. That wasn't at all what I was talking about. I'm disappointed that the minister thinks that is what I was implying. He chose to look at the negative aspect of the recommendation as opposed to the positive possibility of what this might mean for all Yukon students in the sharing of languages, culture and way of life.

The minister also mentioned the CHAOS 9 project or programming that's being delivered at Porter Creek Secondary School. He has talked about that before. We're aware of it.

He has talked about the bicultural program. We're aware of all of that. He also talks about a lot of these things as pilots, as pilot programming and that there's three-year funding attached to them. My concern is, what happens after that? Is there a commitment to continue? Obviously, there needs to be an evaluation of the outcomes and possibly an adjustment of the delivery in order to ensure that the outcomes are being met.

I know the minister will stand up as he did previously and respond to my comments, but I have some other questions for the minister in this same area. Could he give us an update? He has mentioned the bicultural program. He has mentioned the CHAOS pilot program.

Could he provide an update on the progress on the project that's being worked on with the Carcross-Tagish First Nation curriculum development that's around, I believe, their constitution? Can he tell us where that is at, and what programming initiatives may be coming? Maybe he can give us some timelines of when we might see actual programming delivered in that school.

Hon. Mr. Rouble: Mr. Chair, I accept the apology as presented by the Member for Mount Lorne. If education isn't an issue worth getting excited over, I don't know what is. We have made great strides in the Department of Education. The

previous Education minister, the Member for McIntyre-Takhini, was very far-sighted when he started the education reform initiative. I have been in the fortunate position of being the one responding to that and building on the work that was done.

We do need to recognize that this was a fairly recent document that was received by the orders of government in the territory and we are making strides to address this. So, yes, some of these programs are indeed pilot projects. They are initial responses to achieving some of the common objectives identified. We need to try out these pilot projects in order to further define whether or not they meet the objectives we have. In fact, we've worked on a bilateral basis with a number of different communities to fine-tune what is going on in their schools. We have worked hard to make a systemic change throughout the Department of Education to change the manner in which we work, to respond to the valid criticisms that were expressed by others about the department. We will continue to evolve. Education is in a constant state of evolving to meet the ongoing and changing needs of our community. We are constantly learning about how individuals learn, about different techniques, about different practices. Our teachers are learning about the issues and concerns that the students in our classrooms have.

We as a system are responding to some of the other issues that are coming forward and are ever changing. That does mean, in some cases, we come up with a pilot program, but as you can see in taking a look at the budget, programs that were identified as a "pilot" in past years have been incorporated through and now form part of our standard operating procedure.

Programs like MAD started as a pilot program that's now part of the programming. Programs like the YNTEP started as a pilot project. It's important for us to do these projects, to learn from them and then to make them best practice throughout the territory.

We do recognize that in, the Yukon First Nation self-government agreements, they did negotiate a wide range of powers and responsibilities. I believe the powers and responsibilities of those orders of governments were put in there for a purpose, and that they felt, when they were ready, if they wanted to — and if the need wasn't being met by the Yukon government or the federal government or other orders of government — they would draw down those responsibilities

That is something that I, as a Yukoner, respect — that the authority is there to do that. I also feel, as an elected official and as a Cabinet minister, that I have a responsibility to meet the needs of all Yukoners — the Yukoners who may be members of the Carcross-Tagish First Nation, the members of the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation. But they are still Yukoners too, and I have an obligation to respond to their concerns as well. So we try to do that through the Department of Education.

Being the MLA for the beautiful Southern Lakes, I'm very well aware of the initiatives that the Carcross-Tagish First Nation has put in place. It is a very progressive First Nation that has passed several pieces of legislation, and it is taking a very

forward look at increasing the educational level of students there and working on economic opportunities.

The Government of Yukon has contributed to the Carcross-Tagish First Nation daycare, and it was great to see the whole community turn out and take a turn in carrying the totem poles from the carving shed to the daycare.

As the MLA, I am very proud to see the investments in the community — that there could be such a thing as a carving shed, and then the support on the programming side for the carving programs that have helped the community to once again capture many aspects of their culture. Yes, the work that the Carcross-Tagish First Nation has done has been very progressive in preparing many curriculum materials and providing resources to the school — whether that is human resources or the printed resources — and the provision of information regarding the clan and the governance structures — the whole issue regarding many aspects of history and development.

Department of Education officials have been working not only on a school basis with the administrator in the school and previous administrators in the school, it is working with the First Nation to incorporate many of their thoughts, concerns and ideas into the school, whether it was with small things, such as curtains in the gymnasium or some of the land-based programs, such as the bison hunt.

The school has really worked to engage all members of the community. Indeed, it does recognize itself as being a community school. Carcross is, again, one of those areas that serves both students of First Nation ancestry and students of non-First Nation ancestry. We have to create an environment that is welcoming to both — one that helps to prepare all students for literacy, numeracy and the other objectives of education and works to prepare all students to be in a position to respond to the opportunities that will be presented to them in the future. There has been work done with the Carcross-Tagish First Nation with different funding opportunities in the past.

Just last week, Department of Education staff were in Carcross, sitting down with members of the Carcross-Tagish First Nation, with the staff and the school council to work on these projects and work through and identify their workplan as to how this would proceed. Those things are still being worked on right now. I can tell the member opposite that the department is committed to working with all involved to address the issues that have been identified. We are continuing to make progress on many of these issues and the Department of Education is committed to working with Yukoners.

I won't just limit this to Carcross and the Ghùch Tlà Community School, but we're really committed to working with all Yukoners to improve educational opportunities throughout the territory.

Short answer: there is progress being made; there is work being done by the department as we speak. There were people at meetings last week. Right now this week, we have First Nation leadership working on issues, such as the education committee I mentioned earlier, agreeing in principle to work with the MOU on education that we expect will be committed to or signed off by the federal government, the territorial government and Yukon First Nations.

We've talked in the past about how we can all work together on this new memorandum of understanding, which I look forward to having the opportunity to sign and to have a public demonstration of. It will be a great indicator of all of the orders, respective of each others' jurisdiction, agreeing to work together to address a common goal, that of increasing the educational outcomes of Yukoners of First Nation ancestry. The Department of Education certainly looks forward to implementing the action plan that is part of that and creating the proposals to go to the federal government to receive funding so that we can identify other projects where we can all work together to accomplish our collective goals.

Mr. Cardiff: I thank the minister for the update. While we're talking about the Carcross Community School, I would like to bring up another concern that I have heard. The Carcross school is indeed a community school, and it does serve children of various ancestries, not just First Nation ancestry. I have heard a couple of concerns, one being — or at least when the concern was raised; this may have changed, I don't know — that there was no one teaching at the school who had graduated from the YNTEP program, that there were no teachers of First Nation ancestry. I don't know whether that information is available but I would like to bring it to the attention of the minister, because that is what the YNTEP program was created for and envisioned to do, to create those positive role models in the community for the students of those communities. I did ask a question about YNTEP grads yesterday, but this one is specific to the Carcross community school.

Another concern that has been raised in Carcross is the issue of housing for teachers. The concern was brought to my attention and so I'm asking the minister to maybe work with his colleague, the minister responsible for Yukon Housing Corporation, to ensure there is housing available not just in Carcross, but this specific concern was raised about the community of Carcross. The concern is that there were teachers having to travel long distances in order to perform their duties as teachers in that school. Some were travelling from as far away as Riverdale and out on the Mayo Road, and it seems like a difficult position to put those teachers in. It's harder for them to become immersed and involved in the community when they're faced with long commutes of two or two and half hours a day. There are admittedly two questions there.

I know the community has a role in hiring teachers and the school council has a role to play in that, but it's about the department and the minister trying to facilitate the goals of YNTEP and the outcomes in the community. Again, it's about working interdepartmentally to ensure that hard-working teachers, who are providing education to our children, are able to actually live in the community and become part of that community.

Hon. Mr. Rouble: I appreciate the question coming from the member opposite. I don't have the information he's looking for at my fingertips. It wasn't one of the questions we anticipated coming up in budget debate. On this one, again, I will revisit some of my comments from yesterday when we were talking about YNTEP and talking about how to increase the number of Yukon teachers of Yukon First Nation ancestry

in our school system. I think the best way we can do that is to have more students enrolled in YNTEP, because each year we often have empty seats in that program.

So I would love to see that filled. Again, I'll put the pages on notice today too — I did this yesterday — that if they know any students who are thinking about becoming a teacher and they're in high school, I would encourage them to tell their friends about YNTEP at Yukon College. Okay? I'm getting a nod of approval. I appreciate that. Unfortunately, I often put the pages under some expectation. But sometimes with these programs, even though Yukon College does ads in the newspapers, word of mouth about the opportunity is the best way to do that.

Now, I know Yukon College, too, has also been very involved in academic trade fairs with Yukon students. Earlier this year, they hosted an academic fair for Yukon high school students from across the territory, so that students could come to Whitehorse and meet with representatives of many of the colleges and universities from across western Canada and some from eastern Canada.

Again, I applaud them for that — for increasing the awareness of the opportunities that are out there for Yukon students. Also, at the same time, Yukon College chose to provide increased awareness for some of their programs — well, all of their programs really — whether it was YNTEP, the bachelor of social work program, the culinary arts program, or all of the other programs at Yukon College — to make the students aware of the opportunities that we have here in our backyard, so to speak.

I want to emphasize this: we are taking steps to prepare Yukoners for Yukon opportunities. We are taking steps in our public school system and our early childhood education, with things like full-day kindergarten to give them the early boost. We are putting into place programs and initiatives in our later grades in our high schools to keep students engaged so that they complete high school, so that they then go on to Advanced Education and do the accreditation, come back and then provide these services here in our local community.

I mentioned a while ago that macro responsibility of Education to meet the needs of our community. This is a perfect example of this. We need Yukon teachers to teach in Yukon schools. They are aware of the cultural context; they are aware of many of the issues, the history; they are aware of what it's like to live in the north from a weather perspective or a social perspective or a cultural perspective, and that's great. What we need to do is encourage more young people to get involved YNTEP. On that line, too, Mr. Chair, when we do attract teachers to work in our schools, we pay a very competitive salary. We've seen the salary grid for teachers increase substantially in recent years. We've negotiated a new contract with the Yukon Teachers Association. This was done without a work stoppage or a strike, as we saw not too long ago. We are also working very closely, interdepartmentally, on issues around housing.

Indeed, it is a growing concern throughout the territory. I expect that, with my Energy, Mines and Resources portfolio, I will be addressing additional questions about what we're doing for lot development in other communities. I expect the Minister of Community Services will also be talking about what we're

doing for lot development. Also, the minister responsible for the Yukon Housing Corporation will be talking about the efforts we're putting in place to provide not only accommodations for seniors, students, single-parent families, but also — and seniors; I should add the seniors housing in there, because that's an important mix in the Yukon Housing Corporation portfolio — what we are doing to ensure we have appropriate levels of staff accommodations throughout the territory to address not only the needs in Carcross, but other communities.

This is an issue that is debated around the caucus table. I know the minister responsible for Yukon Housing Corporation has ideas on this and he will likely share some of those when he is up for debate.

Additionally, we're looking to other people in the communities to be involved in the housing market to increase the number of rental stock we have available. I have put in calls to First Nation chiefs in order to discuss with them opportunities for housing, especially in some of our smaller communities where the majority of the housing is constructed by the local First Nation. We need to explore the options that are before us, and that's one of the emerging issues, one of the issues of success in the territory that we are seeing. As we have demonstrated in the past, we are good at identifying the challenges that are ahead of us, good at identifying and motivating our partners to be involved in the process and allocating resources to fund it responsibly. Then, as we've demonstrated in the past, we're good at implementing the overall objectives and crossing that off the list and moving on to other issues that are also of importance to Yukoners.

Mr. Cardiff: I look forward to the minister getting back to me. He said he didn't have the information on that specific issue. He went on at quite some length, but he assured me he would provide me with a response to the issue that I raised. I would also like to ask the minister about progress as far as discussions that may be ongoing with residents of Burwash. This has been an ongoing issue. There were commitments made previously, and then they were never followed through on. There has been some concern raised in our office about the conditions at the current school located in Destruction Bay. I understand there is an issue where somebody needs to be transported, and either it is the kids in Destruction Bay or the kids in Burwash, but I am wondering about the statistics that are in the annual report that show that in rural communities the percentage of First Nation students in rural Yukon are actually rising or remaining steady and the non-First Nation students are declining.

I'm not sure whether specifically in those communities or in that area — what the specific statistics are. But what I'm asking the minister is, are there any discussions happening? Are there any feasibility studies happening? I know that there previously was a desire to try to use the youth and elder recreation centre that was being constructed there as some sort of an educational facility for the community of Burwash. If the minister could provide an update on what he and the department are doing in that area, it would be appreciated.

Hon. Mr. Rouble: As we've discussed a couple of times in this Assembly, Yukon faces the same challenges as other jurisdictions in other areas of Canada.

We have very large geographic distances to cover and small population pockets interspersed around. The member opposite was talking about people driving from Whitehorse to Carcross and I also have to add we have many folks who drive from Carcross into Whitehorse for work. In fact — well, it's not quite all the way to Carcross that the bus goes, but there are students who travel significant distances every day on Yukon school buses in order to get to schools.

We, like our jurisdictions in Canada, face issues like split grades where we don't have enough students in one particular class, or the issue of bussing students. It is an issue throughout the territory. We have about 2,300 students who ride school buses daily. That's almost half of the students in Yukon schools who are on the bus.

The longest bus route takes some one hour and 41 minutes from the time of its first student pickup to reach the last of the five schools it services in the morning. We do our best in the Department of Education to limit the amount of time spent on the bus by students to 90 minutes, but we do have students who live further than that from our schools. We've had the discussion in the past, how the Department of Education has the responsibility to provide transportation or to accommodate parents, to cover some of the cost involved in accommodating them, or to provide for home-based education materials.

Just to put things in perspective, there are some children who live on the Atlin Road whose parents drive them in to Jakes Corner, where they then get on the bus. As you can imagine, those students are spending quite a bit of time each day commuting. In fact, the vast majority of students on Yukon routes spend at least 30 minutes every morning and every afternoon on the bus.

I put this out as a bit of context that we have. Yes, we do have students who attend the Kluane Lake School. Yes, they do take the bus to get there, but that is similar to the other 2,300 students who ride the school bus every day. Many of the students who ride the bus spend quite a bit of time on that. So if we were looking at that as the indicator as to how we should look at allocating resources, I would expect it would be one of the factors we would indeed consider. The Kluane Lake School, which has about nine students — I understand that there are three students in kindergarten, four in grade 2, one in grade 4 and one in grade 6. The majority of those students live in the Burwash Landing area. A number of them live in Copper Joe.

So we're working with them to provide a quality educational experience for them at the Kluane Lake School. We do recognize that they're going approximately 20 kilometres each way on the highway.

The recently elected Chief of the Kluane First Nation has recently met with the Premier and Cabinet members. We have gone into some discussions about the youth and elders centre. They have some other ideas about how that interest can be accommodated without maybe doing that specific project. The minister responsible for the Community Services branch will

be able to address that in more detail and have more information as to where exactly that is.

But we're continuing to work with the Kluane First Nation and continuing to work with parents in the area. We're continuing to provide quality education at the Kluane Lake School. It's a neat school. I've had the opportunity to correspond with a number of students there for a couple of years now, and I know how engaged their teacher is.

So we'll continue to provide quality education there and continue to provide the busing service, as we do in other jurisdictions, and continue to explore our opportunities with the First Nation.

Mr. Cardiff: I thank the minister for the answer and the update and look forward to discussing with the Minister of Community Services what is happening with the elders and youth activity centre.

I'd like to ask the minister — in the budget there is a little over \$2 million for curriculum development, and I'm just wondering if he could give us a brief — and I emphasize "brief" — overview of what all is involved in that.

It's my understanding that, for the most part, we follow the B.C. curriculum. There is curriculum being developed for some programming here in the Yukon and we've talked a lot about that already. What I would like is a breakdown of what's involved in that specific \$2-million item.

Hon. Mr. Rouble: Under Program Support there is a line that is titled Curriculum Development with an estimate of greater than \$2 million. The member is correct in that that includes the curriculum development work being done by our First Nations Programs and Partnerships unit and the initiative such as the CHAOS 9 program I talked about. It also includes new resources that are required or new teaching materials.

Another member was discussing textbooks. That was kind of the 19th century technology. We're now buying additional resources in order to expand the learning opportunities.

I believe this also includes the math consultant and the language arts consultant. This is one of the statistics included in the budget. I don't have a detailed briefing note on it, but it includes the acquisition of resources as well as salaries for people working on locally based curriculum and some of the previously identified projects that I discussed earlier.

Mr. Cardiff: I thank the minister for the clarification on that. If there is a breakdown or a briefing note available, I would look forward to receiving it in the future. I'd like to ask the minister about community training funds. I believe I recall community training funds going back to the late 1980s or early 1990s when the NDP was in power.

There was a New Democrat — in fact, he later went on to become the Premier of the government — where they created these community training funds. We've seen a growth in that area.

There was a recommendation from the Auditor General's report back in January 2009, and it said that the Department of Education should develop a comprehensive strategy for managing community training funds. Contribution agreements should have clear terms and conditions and should be properly reviewed, managed and monitored. The department's response

was that the department, in consultation with stakeholders, was developing a 10-year training strategy that will address coordinating training needs and training programs, as well as addressing training gaps for the next 10 years. This strategy will include an action plan, an evaluation component and will address the shortcomings associated with the current deficiencies in the management of community training funds, including the monitoring process.

It also states that in July 2007, new monitoring processes were implemented to monitor all contribution agreements. I am just wondering: what progress has been made on this recommendation and what has changed as far as the department's response is concerned? Is that 10-year strategy being worked on? Is it available? Is the action plan and the evaluation component also being worked on or complete, and is it available?

Hon. Mr. Rouble: Again, this is another highlight within the Department of Education. We had a situation a couple of years ago when the Auditor General did the audit, they raised a concern, or identified that this was an issue. We accepted that and developed a strategy to be responsive to the concern that they had identified. We went to work with the partners in education and stakeholders in the community, with the labour market framework developing the longer term training strategy for Yukon, identifying projects with Yukon College, with labour organizations, with chambers of commerce, with employers, to guide our strategic investments in this area.

We have the plan now that will be part of the execution of this. We'll be working closely with the community training trust funds. Members will recall that a previous government more than cut these programs, but really reduced the opportunities that were out there. The Yukon Party government has reinstated the funding level and increased it to a level of \$1.5 million a year. It's a combination of both area-specific and industry-driven or sector-based programs. We're continuing to work with the entities that deliver many of these training trust funds. We have worked with many groups in the past, as they are very close to the industry or very close to the community, to ensure that they were being responsive to the identified needs in the community.

Yes, there were issues raised about the accountability and the information that we were getting back. Department staff members have worked very closely with several organizations to ensure appropriate accountability measures are being put in place to ensure that taxpayers are receiving value for their taxpayers' dollars.

We have \$1.5 million allocated in this budget. The department is working with the existing plans to fine-tune some, especially with the continued effort, advice and direction provided by the labour market framework. We're making some very good progress in this area, both in terms of being responsive to identified needs in the community and to issues of accountability. There are other policy issues that do arise on an infrequent basis and the government is always willing to take a look at those to ensure we're providing opportunities to Yukoners to become engaged in appropriate training for life in a modern Yukon.

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. 24, *First Appropriation Act, 2011-12*. We will now continue with general debate in Vote 3, Department of Education.

Mr. Cardiff: There are numerous questions in the Department of Education, and I know others in the Legislative Assembly are awaiting their turn to ask further questions of the Minister of Education. So I'm going to attempt to be brief.

The next subject I want to raise with the minister is going to require some background. I asked the minister previously some questions about the temporary foreign worker program. I want the minister and especially the Premier — because I think the Premier basically misunderstood or didn't understand what it was we were getting at. The Third Party — the New Democrats — are not against immigration. We are not against foreign workers coming to Canada, to seek gainful employment, contribute to our country, our territory and our communities. We're all for that. We think one of the strengths of our country is the cultural diversity that we have here.

I referenced a document that is called "Canada's Temporary Foreign Worker Program" — a model program that's put out by the Canadian Labour Congress. Unfortunately, I only have one copy of it. I would be happy to make copies for the minister if he so desires. I have tried to get other copies. If they do become available, I would be happy to make one available to the minister and the Third Party, as well.

Just a bit of history: the temporary foreign worker program in Canada actually began back in the 1960s. It was more of a seasonal agricultural worker program. It was to address the needs of the agricultural industry and the labour shortages that they were experiencing.

The program was originally managed by a department of the Canadian government — Human Resources and Development Canada — but the administration of the program was later privatized in 1987. It was given then to the Foreign Agricultural Resource Management Services.

Over the years, to address the shortage of labour in Canada the program has seen an expansion and there are some concerns in other jurisdictions. I'm not saying that all of these things are happening here in the Yukon, but I think they are important things to note. Some jurisdictions have responded by providing through other pieces of legislation — I believe it is Manitoba that has a separate piece of legislation that provides for the protection of temporary foreign workers.

Some of the problems are migrant workers who confront racism, who are belittled, who are told which activities they should participate in and to not get involved in the community. These people are here temporarily and I think it would be important for them to participate in the community and that there's a sharing of the cultural experiences.

I'm going to read a little from the report. There are a variety of issues. In the case of housing, some farm operators are

supposed to provide housing and, in some cases, they can also charge a fee. A Quebec labour standards board made an important finding early in 2010. They found that Quebec agricultural operations were deducting a housing charge from migrant farm workers' paycheques that was beyond the maximum allowable under that province's labour regulation. That's one of the abuses that can happen.

There is a listing here of some of the conditions that contract Guatemalan farm workers are required to sign in order to work on Canadian farms. During your stay in Canada, you should only do the activities you are assigned to and you should not distract yourself with any group or association. Alcoholism, theft, lack of respect and sexual relations — are reasons to be excluded from this program. This is the temporary foreign worker program. It's specifically related to farm workers in this case. Upon your arrival at the farm, the employer will keep your passport for the duration of your stay in Canada. This one says to use deodorant before the flight and every day you stay in Canada. That's kind of ludicrous. It's about their personal hygiene and requiring them to wear deodorant. Beware of having relations with women.

In case you need to go back to Guatemala before ending your contract, you will have to prove that you have a good reason. Even then your employer can choose whether or not to hire you in the next season. You should keep your hair short to avoid lice. Guatemalan migrant workers are required to seal the contract with a \$400 deposit, which is the equivalent of 17 per cent of the average annual income for Guatemalans.

Those are some of the reasons why we have concerns and we want to ensure that there is a way to protect these people who are visitors in our country, in our territory and in our community and ensure that they have all of the protections.

The Auditor General in 2009 — an individual highly respected by all members of this Legislative Assembly — made a report that said that clear reforms to the Canadian immigration system are increasingly shifting responsibilities and consequences to provinces — and therefore territories — and Canadian employers.

She took direct aim at the temporary foreign worker program, which brings in an increasing number of often low-skilled workers for jobs ranging from oil sands labourers to construction workers on Olympic facilities and live-in caregivers. Over the years since 2002, the total entries of migrant workers in Canada have almost doubled from 110,000 to 192,000. There are more and more of these individuals coming to our country to try and earn a living.

Madam Fraser said that there is little being done to catch the abuse occurring on all sides of the program. Workers are particularly vulnerable, given that they often don't speak English and they owe their status in Canada to their employer. She was blunt, saying that there is no systematic follow-up by either Citizenship and Immigration Canada or Human Resources and Skills Development Canada to verify that employers are complying with the terms and conditions under which the labour market opinion application was approved, such as wages to be paid and accommodations to be provided.

There was a report done by a special advocate in Alberta and they cited problems in six areas facing migrant workers coming in under the temporary foreign worker program. They included fraud perpetrated by labour brokers, substandard wages and working conditions, jobs disappearing without notice, excessive rents charged by employers for substandard housing, lack of enforcement of basic employment protections, and long wait times for work permits.

I know I cited some of these before but, when it comes to working conditions, the important thing to me are that people are paid a fair wage that is comparable to the people they're working alongside. I know that during the construction of the light rapid transit system in British Columbia, there were labour shortages and a labour market opinion obtained, and in fact there were workers who were working on that construction site who were being paid well below — in fact grossly below — the workers who were from Canada who were also working on that site.

That is neither fair nor just when it comes to how we treat these people who have come here to try to better their lives and those of their families. I talked about the fact that in 2007, there were two temporary workers from China who were killed on the job in Alberta. There were four other temporary labourers who were injured. This is while they were working on the job. There was a tank that they were working on and it collapsed. After nearly two years — it was just three days shy of the investigation deadline — 53 distinct charges were laid against the employer, including several counts of failing to ensure the health and safety of the workers.

During the investigation, the Alberta Employment and Immigration also determined that there were 132 Chinese temporary foreign workers who were not paid between the months of April to July in 2007. It's these types of examples — and as I said earlier, I'm not saying that this is happening here in the Yukon, but we want to ensure it doesn't happen.

I'd like to cite a couple more examples just so the minister has an idea of exactly what our concerns are. There were migrant workers who were taken to a remote location in western Canada, housed in a two-room bunkhouse with no indoor bathroom and no laundry facilities. The workers were only provided two meals a day at 10:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. and told on days when there was no work there would be no pay. The workers who challenged the employer about working conditions faced a violent reaction from the employer. Employers threatened the workers at knifepoint to accept their fate or face violence.

I know the minister doesn't support these types of actions, but it's our job and our responsibility as leaders in this territory to ensure that there are safeguards put in place to ensure these types of things aren't occurring in our community.

There's another item in here I want to highlight for the minister, if I can find it. I'm going to paraphrase, because I can't lay my fingers on it right at the moment. The concern has to do with fraud perpetrated by labour brokers. There are people who deal with these labour brokers and charge them sometimes exorbitant fees in order to get them a job in Canada. Unfortunately, what happens — and I know this is out of our con-

trol territorially, but we need to work with our federal counterparts to ensure that these contracts for labour are administered fairly and that there are safeguards and enforcement in the countries they come from. Foreign workers are coming from areas of the world where criminal elements are actually threatening their families, and temporary foreign workers in this country are being forced to pay money to criminals in their country of origin in order to ensure the safety of their family.

These are all things — I don't have a problem with temporary foreign workers coming to our country to make their lives and the lives of their families better. I think we should be encouraging them to immigrate. There are implications, though, and the minister needs to be aware of this in some of our smaller Yukon communities. If the labour market opinion shows that there are skills required, we may be displacing local workers with temporary foreign workers.

I realize I went on at length, but those are the concerns and what I'm asking the minister is, what work are they doing to ensure that these types of abuses don't happen and are they looking at other legislation from other jurisdictions and working with the federal government to ensure that this doesn't happen?

Hon. Mr. Rouble: Wow. Well, we first started off with the NDP backpedalling on this issue and now we've heard stories about employees being held at knifepoint and their families being threatened. You know, I'm not sure where the member is getting this stuff from, but it certainly looks like he has found Yukon employers guilty of these offences and the offences that he put forward before they've even applied for the program.

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Point of order

Chair: Mr. Cardiff on a point of order.

Mr. Cardiff: On a point of order, I believe it's Standing Order 19(g), imputing false motives. I haven't found anybody guilty. As a matter of fact, I said I don't know that this is happening in the Yukon. I don't think that it's happening, but protections need to be put in place to ensure it doesn't happen here.

Chair's ruling

Chair: On the point of order, the Chair believes it's a dispute between members. Mr. Rouble, you have the floor.

Hon. Mr. Rouble: Thank you, Mr. Chair. So just to clarify: we don't know if this is happening here, we don't know if this is an issue in Yukon, but we have to do something about it. I think I will be able to clear up some of the misunderstandings or misperceptions by members opposite today by providing them with more information regarding the temporary foreign worker program, more information regarding the immigration agreement with Canada, more information on the temporary foreign worker annex and more information around the application process that goes through, the monitoring process of the Department of Education and the compliance structures we have within the department.

I might need more than 20 minutes for this one, Mr. Chair, because there's a lot that needs to be cleared up and clarified and some of the previously expressed misunderstandings or confusion need to be removed. In Canada, we have the federal government, with Citizenship and Immigration Canada, that is largely responsible for immigration and immigration-related issues in the country. However, in Yukon, as in other jurisdictions, we have worked with the federal government on programs that are responsive to the unique situations in the different provinces and territories. Through the work of the officials — through folks sitting at the immigration deputy's table and through work with the ministers of immigration across Canada and also the Service Canada ministers — we have worked to respond to the needs demonstrated in Canada, to respond to concerns raised by the Auditor General, and to concerns raised by employers and employees, and to respond to other criticisms of some of these programs.

First and foremost, I want to start off with Yukon's objective, which is to prepare Yukoners for Yukon opportunities. When we have jobs here in the territory, we need to work with citizens in the territory to ensure that they have appropriate training or appropriate accommodation. You can use that in a broad sense — not just housing accommodation, but accommodating some of their needs. If we can't find Yukoners — and we can't force people to move from one community to another community. We can't force people to go after training opportunities. That's how things work here in our democratic society.

When we have economic opportunities in the territory that are going unfilled and our businesses need other people to work there — yes, they have a responsibility to employ Yukoners first. We train Yukoners first. But when they demonstrate a need that they cannot find appropriate people locally, then, obviously, it's the prerogative of that company to look nationally.

We do have programs and assistance for recruitment strategy, as members opposite will see in the labour market framework, of efforts to encourage people from other jurisdictions to come to the Yukon and work. We only have to look at some of the programs with our tax return, for example, to see some of the incentives that have been agreed to, to encourage people to work in Canada's north and remote areas.

Then when we find positions we can't fill, we need to look outside of our borders. We have a number of different programs, and there are a number of different programs offered from Citizenship and Immigration Canada. We have a Yukon nominee program, which works to bring people who want to immigrate permanently to Canada. This is a way we can work to fill long-standing types of employment positions and work to help grow the cultural diversity of the community we're in.

We also recognize in the territory that there are some short-term opportunities. We see this just in the nature of some of the economic opportunities throughout the territory in practically all of the industries we have.

There are many people who work in the tourism industry who work non-stop. I have talked to people who own tourism businesses and they run like crazy for that 100-day season. But

we have other opportunities out there. We need people to fill the positions, provide the service and pour the coffee or what have you, so we look outside our borders. We work responsibly with the federal government on these programs.

The member opposite has focused mostly around the temporary foreign worker program. I would encourage the member opposite to visit the Canadian Citizenship and Immigration website, which was linked to the press release that was issued recently regarding the Canada-Yukon agreement on temporary foreign workers. When we click on the background, it provides additional information about the temporary foreign worker program.

The actual agreement for Canada-Yukon cooperation on immigration is posted on the website. The annex, the temporary foreign worker annex, is listed on the website. There has been quite a brouhaha — I hope that's an acceptable term in our Assembly — but there has been quite a brouhaha about the production of papers. There was a motion for the production of papers that hasn't been debated; the motion hasn't been called. We haven't had a debate in the Assembly on this motion for the production of papers for the Canada-Yukon cooperation on immigration, but it's available on-line. There was a press release that was sent out identifying the agreement, trying to gain interest in this. There was a press release that went out that had a link to the Department of Citizenship and Immigration's website with a background on this issue that includes Yukon's role in managing the temporary foreign worker. It includes a background on the protection of temporary foreign workers and it includes the agreement for Canada-Yukon cooperation on immigration and it includes the annex.

I know there seems to be a desire by some members of the Assembly to clutter the Order Paper with the production of papers. Perhaps there are some people who are trying to make a point on this. However, let's at least read the information that is provided before putting forward a request to provide the paper. At least there was some backtracking on recent discussions about this. I'm not sure if the request to produce the department's strategic plan has been removed or not. Maybe we'll check the Order Paper tomorrow and see if the request to provide a copy of the Department of Education's strategic plan is still on the Order Paper, but it has obviously been tabled.

When we take a look at the temporary foreign worker program and the press release — because it was an important issue that Canada and Yukon wanted to make Yukoners aware of. It provided some information about the date of the signing. One of the quotes from our Senator, who was included in this, is: "The Government of Yukon has a role to play in protecting temporary foreign workers from exploitation and in identifying how immigration can help address gaps in its labour market. This agreement formally recognizes these roles."

So we're having a debate here about whether we will you do something to protect temporary foreign workers. We don't know if it's a problem in Yukon or not. We've heard all kinds of horror stories of people being held at knifepoint and people's families being threatened. But Yukon has already recognized the role and the responsibility, signed off on the agreement and posted it on the worldwide web. I'm trying to provide informa-

tion in a timely, pertinent manner. But, sometimes, it's a challenge when the information provided isn't read or isn't looked at or isn't understood. It's great to see we have the return of the mumblor from Mayo-Tatchun.

Chair's statement

Chair: A comment in that personal nature toward a member of the Assembly is definitely not in order. Mr. Rouble, I'd encourage you not to do that.

Hon. Mr. Rouble: Sorry. It's great to see the Member for Mayo-Tatchun in the Assembly. Unfortunately, I can't hear what he's saying because he's mumbling.

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Chair's statement

Chair: The Chair stepped into the debate to encourage members to be polite and respectful to each other. It works both ways. Member for Mayo-Tatchun, I am also speaking with regard to you. You don't have to clarify that I am correct in doing it. If you would like to make a comment, please stand up and say it on-microphone.

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Chair: Mr. Fairclough, on a point of order?

Mr. Fairclough: No, not a point of order. I just want to make comment —

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

Hon. Mr. Rouble: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Government of Yukon will be working very closely with Citizenship and Immigration Canada. The Government of Yukon will be able to recommend the entry of some temporary foreign workers without requiring a Service Canada assessment of whether there are Canadians or permanent residents available to fill the vacant position. That is part of what is agreed to in the workers annex. It is part of the natural evolution of governance in the territory and is part of the devolution of duties and responsibilities of the federal government to Yukon.

Yukon will be able to identify situations where we are in a situation where employers have demonstrated there is a valid need that would have previously been identified as the labour market opinion, but now, Yukon will be able to fill that area of recognizing whether or not a labour market opinion is necessary.

I should add, even as we've stated in the press release, our first priority is to work with under-represented groups in Yukon to meet labour force demands and turn to temporary foreign workers when the need arises. We've seen that in other programming throughout the Department of Education, whether it's the program for older workers, the acronym is TIOW — I'm looking for some help — targeted initiative for older workers, whether it's programs targeted at people with disabilities or whether it's programs to provide more information to youth prior to entering the workforce.

I tabled it previously, or maybe it was the minister responsible for Community Services who provided some of the background information we're providing to Yukon youth to make them more aware of the world of work and their rights and responsibilities in that prior to working.

For the member opposite's information, we're now working to provide that same kind of document for recent immigrants or temporary foreign workers to Canada to make them also aware of what their rights are and what their role is here in Yukon and how to access additional services with advanced education, with workers compensation, with the labour market board, with the RCMP if they ever find themselves being held at knifepoint by an employer. I know this was a hypothetical — well, no, it wasn't a hypothetical situation; the member opposite put it on the record that this was a case of what had happened in another jurisdiction — but again I have to remind members opposite, when they know of a situation where someone is being held at knifepoint, don't put those kinds of things in your back pocket and save them until it's politically useful to bring it forward. Instead, do the right thing and call the police or call someone else who can address this. If the member opposite has examples of where in Yukon there are stories going on like he has been describing, please have them bring them forward to the Department of Education, bring them forward to Service Canada, bring them forward to the RCMP if people are being held at knifepoint. We certainly don't want to see these horror stories that the member is sharing with us happening here in the territory. If people see that — the member opposite wants to know what I am doing to ensure it doesn't happen. Well, if he knows it is happening, if he sees it is happening, tell me. Don't wait, like the Member for Mayo-Tatchun, until it is politically expedient to remind me that there is a piece of rebar sticking out of the playground; don't sit there like the Member for Porter Creek South who watches kids fighting in the playground; don't wait and put it into your back pocket until it is politically expedient. Call the reporting agencies; call those who are involved.

We have Department of Education staff who are devoted to this. We have Community Services with their labour standards boards. We have Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board with their inspectors to oversee this. We have people in the Department of Education who go in and inspect these places of work, who meet with the applicants, meet with the employers, who meet with them on an ongoing basis to ensure that there is compliance by all people involved.

We go on in the backgrounder on this. With the greater involvement in managing temporary foreign workers, the Government of Yukon agrees to make information available to better inform foreign workers on territorial health insurance, workers' compensation benefits, as well as applicable employer- or government-sponsored pension plans. We will continue to do that. We will continue to do that with the applicants who are coming in and working with the people involved in this program.

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Hon. Mr. Rouble: The member opposite, off-microphone, wants to know if we will do that in their native language. Well, one of the requirements that we are working on with immigration is ensuring that they have fluency in or an operating knowledge of English. It is an important part. It's an important part of this program. But I appreciate the constructive nature with which that advice is offered. I will take it under

advisement and I will check with the department about how we are proceeding with that.

Also, it goes into the agreement, Canada-Yukon Cooperation on Immigration, which is available on the Citizenship and Immigration Canada website. Just for clarity, one goes to the home page, about us, laws and policies, agreements, federal-provincial-territorial, Yukon — that's the tree to follow in order to find the document.

There's a section on shared principles, objectives and purposes. I'll share some with members opposite. I see I'm out of time. I apologize. I have a lot of information to share on this and I look forward to another opportunity to clear up some of the misunderstandings that are going on about this.

Chair: Is there any further general debate?

Mr. Fairclough: I do have a couple more questions. I hope the minister can handle some of these questions and not fly off the handle in the House again. It is this type of attitude that the minister is portraying in this House that the general public is so disgusted with. Every day we hear that. This minister flies off the handle. I can't imagine how even staff people would even —

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Point of order

Chair: Point of order, Member for Whitehorse West.

Hon. Ms. Taylor: On a point of order, the member opposite through his comments —

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Mr. Chair, do I have the floor? Thank you. On a point of order, the member has just articulated how he takes great offence to personalizing debate. What he is now doing is personalizing debate himself. So, I'll just leave that in your good hands and urge you to provide some advice in this regard.

Chair's ruling

Chair: On the point of order, both sides have personalized the debate this afternoon and I would encourage both members and both sides of the Assembly today to focus their comments in a non-personal manner and debate the budget that's before us.

Mr. Fairclough.

Mr. Fairclough: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The Yukon Party promised to improve decorum in this House and we've seen nothing but a downhill spiral on that side of the House. The general public recognizes that and it will reflect in the polls. It will reflect in the Yukon Party's popularity. We've been hearing it time and time again; we've heard it from department people, even the minister's department people. They don't like it.

Here, day after day, that member gets up and is the way he is. I guess he feels that's the way he should be conducting —

Chair's statement

Chair: Order please. Earlier, the Chair intervened with regard to personal comments being levied toward opposition members, and the Chair just finished intervening on a personal

comment and encouraged members to focus on the budget and refrain from personal comments toward other members. It was less than 60 seconds later we were back at it. If members don't want the Chair to intervene, I encourage you to speak in a polite and non-personal manner about the subject in front of us, which is Bill No. 24, Vote 3, Department of Education.

Mr. Fairclough: I'm hoping that the Minister of Education will be able to answer these questions directly and not bring the answers that he had for the Member for Mount Lorne. I thought that was a bit off from what we expect for information coming from the department.

I would like to ask a question in regard to recommendations coming out of the education reform project. I know this hurts the member opposite every time we bring it up, but the whole issue of governance, for example, that was talked about time and time again by First Nations — the Premier stepped in and took the lead in ensuring that wasn't debated in the discussions with the education reform project.

I have a lot of questions with regard to this. There are 207 recommendations in the education reform project. We could probably go right to the end of the sitting and beyond that in asking these questions. I am going to give the minister an opportunity to give short answers here and demonstrate that there is improvement on that side of the House. I am going to go right down to some of the recommendations that are here.

One of them that came forward was to hire a third deputy minister, who is solely responsible for First Nation programming and services. What actions have been taken? Has this recommendation been fully implemented? Has this person been given the direction to be responsible solely for First Nation programming and services?

Hon. Mr. Rouble: With the fear of being repetitive, I did go through a significant discussion earlier today about how Yukoners have opportunities to provide meaningful involvement into Yukon's education system at a variety of different levels.

We've also gone into a bit of a discussion about how there were many thoughts, ideas, concerns put forward in the education reform document. I've discussed earlier today the two documents that have been released on the Government of Yukon's website. One links the suggestions, the thoughts, the comments and the positions put forward in the education reform document with changes in the department. The other document links the strategic plan initiatives to the education reform document.

Certainly, when we read the education reform document, it was clearly there — an idea that we needed to have a responsible position of significant authority within the department looking at First Nations' specific issues. The Government of Yukon and the Department of Education responded with the creation of the First Nation Programs and Partnerships unit.

This unit, which is headed by a director, reports to the Assistant Deputy Minister of Education. In the Department of Education we have two ADM positions. One is for the public schools sector, the other is for advanced education sector, although there is often a considerable cross-pollination of ideas

between the two departments. We have a director with significant staffing in the First Nation Programs and Partnerships unit with a budget of almost \$2 million a year.

Mr. Fairclough: That particular recommendation wasn't followed through on is what the minister is saying. Also, there's a recommendation to come up with a definition through an MOU of what partnership is all about. We know what the definition of "partnership" is through the *Education Act*, so what's new that came out of a memorandum of understanding with First Nations in regard to an agreement of a definition of "educational partnerships"?

Hon. Mr. Rouble: It's unfortunate the member opposite is not willing to listen to what's actually being said and chooses to give his own interpretation of what he thought he heard. The recommendation that we establish a senior position in the Department of Education to have a responsibility for overseeing the issues of First Nation programs and partnerships was clearly recognized, clearly lived up to a number of years ago, and continues to be an ongoing important part of the Department of Education.

I guess the member opposite doesn't recognize the work that is going on in that department. That's unfortunate because the First Nations Programs and Partnerships unit has done a tremendous amount of work in recent years and has made a very important contribution to education here in the territory.

The member opposite has just asked me about a memorandum of understanding that is currently being worked on between the federal government, the territorial government and Yukon First Nations. Earlier this week at a Council of Yukon First Nations meeting, I believe there was a motion passed in principle to continue with this memorandum of understanding, in which case we, the Yukon government, will continue to work with the Council of Yukon First Nations and the federal government to conclude the signing of the memorandum of understanding, to continue the work that is identified in that, and to identify projects that are suitable for the funding that the federal government has available to support this memorandum of understanding.

It is a project-based funding application process. Once we have brought all the orders of government together on this and have concluded the memorandum of understanding, we'll then be able to begin the work that's contained within it.

Mr. Fairclough: I asked about the definition of educational partnerships for a memorandum of understanding. So is that what the minister's saying — that it's going to be created and this is still being worked on?

Hon. Mr. Rouble: We have a number of statutory instruments that are important to recognize here. We have the *Yukon Act*, which empowers the Government of Yukon and establishes that Yukon has certain roles and responsibilities here in our portion of Canada.

It also empowers or makes Yukon responsible for education for Yukon citizens. We also have the *Education Act*, which recognizes the partners in education and how we will continue to work together. We also have the First Nations self-government agreements, which provide roles and responsibilities on many aspects in their documents. We, the three orders

of government, respective of our jurisdictions — the federal government doesn't have a role in education, that's clear in the Constitution of Canada. That's a role of the provinces and territories, but we can recognize and respect each other's jurisdiction. We recognize that we have a common goal, and that is to see an increase in the educational outcomes of Yukon First Nations.

We agree that we recognize each other's roles; we recognize the different treaties, pieces of legislation, agreements and acts. We, as orders of government, also recognize that it is important for us to work together when there are common goals that we all want to achieve and that is why we're going through this process now with the Council of Yukon First Nations and with the federal government.

The federal government did announce a fund several years ago to provide assistance to on-reserve education in order to help jurisdictions elsewhere in Canada to increase the outcomes for citizens of aboriginal ancestry. We made a case to the federal government that we were progressing and creating relationships here in the territory, working on common goals of increasing the educational outcome of all students, including those of First Nation ancestry, and then the federal government said, well, you know what folks? It sounds like you would be eligible to have access to this fund. The first step is to agree cooperatively among the three jurisdictions that we have this as a common goal, to identify that as an objective. Once we conclude through that, we can start taking a look at different specific opportunities, specific projects that are out there to continue steps to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of Yukon's education system, to increase the opportunities of success for Yukon students and to increase the relationships that we have throughout the territory.

I very much look forward to signing this agreement. This is in addition to individual bilateral agreements we have had with specific Yukon First Nations. This is in addition to ongoing discussions that the Department of Education has had with Council of Yukon First Nations staff. This is in addition to the work we have done to build upon the education reform document and the New Horizons work. This is in addition to the work we see going on in Yukon schools every day.

The Department of Education has been very responsive to the concerns and issues brought forward in the territory. One only has to take a look at the strategic plan and how that recognizes the different inputs that have been out there. It recognizes the thoughts and ideas of a multitude of partners in education and stakeholders in education. We just have to take a look at the response in the annual report to the Auditor General's report to see how the department has recognized those legitimate concerns and has acted on that and, in the other documents that I mentioned earlier, we can see the progress the Department of Education has made in responding to the issues and concerns brought forward in the education reform document.

I'm very proud of the work that the Department of Education has done in order to be responsive to the needs of all Yukoners, and I look forward to continuing that effort as we continue to enhance Yukon's education system in order to see an increase in educational outcomes for all Yukoners.

Mr. Fairclough: Is there a memorandum of understanding signed by the Government of Yukon and Yukon First Nation governments on the definition of “educational partnership”?

Hon. Mr. Rouble: I believe I just answered that question. The Government of Yukon has been working with the federal government and with the Council of Yukon First Nations on this memorandum of understanding. It has not been signed off by the principals. It has not been signed off by the federal minister or me or the chiefs of Yukon First Nations. But we are very close to concluding that. I will ensure that the member opposite is apprised of when the signing ceremony is taking place.

Mr. Fairclough: The recommendations did not include the federal government. So I’m not sure why the minister is bringing this forward. The recommendation was to have the Government of Yukon and Yukon First Nations agree to a definition of educational partnerships through a memorandum of understanding. Is that what the minister is saying — that work is continuing to take place after all the policies have already been decided?

When does he expect an agreement to be put in place on the definition of “educational partnership” as per the recommendation of the education reform project?

Hon. Mr. Rouble: I would encourage the member opposite to dust off his copy of the education reform report and go back into the depths of the Liberal caucus library to find it. I’m sure they might have to clear out a few cobwebs to find it. It’s obvious from this line of questioning that the member opposite hasn’t taken a look at it recently. If he did, he could pull it out and look at the terms of reference where one of the key objectives is how to engage the federal government to recognize, in addition to its fiduciary responsibility — to have the federal government be part of this process.

We can go through the whole discussion about the Constitution of Canada. We can go through the whole discussion about land claims if the member opposite would like, but one of the objectives in the education reform project was to ensure that we have appropriate resources in Yukon to address the needs in Yukon. That was identified in the terms of reference, and it is something that the Government of Yukon will continue to work on.

As I mentioned earlier, this is part of a fund that was created a couple of years ago that has provided assistance to other First Nations in other jurisdictions in Canada in order to help them increase the educational outcomes of their students. Yukon is very unique in that it is different from Canada as we don’t have an on-reserve type of system. Yukon government also has the responsibility to provide education for all Yukon students. Yes, we have the self-governing agreements which recognize the authority and jurisdiction of Yukon First Nations; should they wish to draw down that authority or occupy that space, they may do that.

But I want to work with all parties to ensure that we are building the best educational system for Yukoners now and into the future, and if that involves evolving and developing relationships — that sounds good to me. If that means working

collaboratively with the Council of Yukon First Nations on a broader, territorial approach — that works for me. If it means working with individual First Nations on a bilateral approach as we’ve demonstrated in the past — that works for me. I’m interested in finding ways and means of increasing the educational outcomes for Yukon students and we’ll do that in spite of the — I’m not even going to go there. We’re going to work with everybody who will come to the table, and if that means Yukon First Nations come to the table — excellent. If that means that Yukon parents come to the table — wonderful. If it means the federal government comes to the table with a pot of money — wonderful, because it means that we’re all working in the same common interest — that of seeing Yukon students succeed. That’s the business we’re in.

I encourage the member opposite to support the budget that we have before us. This is the tool that funds the operations. This is the tool that funds the personnel. This is the tool that funds the acquisition of assets and resources. This is the engine that helps to drive us down the path that has been set forward in the strategic plans. The opposition can show their support for the strategic direction that Yukoners have agreed upon and support the budget that is tabled before us.

Mr. Fairclough: I’m sure that the minister would love to see that happen. But the fact of the matter is that the Yukon public doesn’t have confidence in this Yukon Party government. The direction to us is to have this money bill be voted against as a non-confidence bill. The minister knows that. As much as he wants to say that he wants our support, we don’t have confidence in this Yukon Party government — we don’t, and neither does the public. I’m sure the Yukon Party recognizes that. They hear it every day — out in the streets, in the stores. What have we been hearing? This is a common wording from the general public — that the Yukon Party has to go — period. That’s the message we’ve been getting.

We’ve heard the minister do his best to bring forward the department’s direction. He wasn’t very kind to members on this side of the House. We’re asking pretty simple questions, I would think. The minister should have been able to handle those. We asked about educational partnerships, as per recommendations out of the education reform project. That gave the Education minister a whole lot of trouble. It is that that the general public dislikes the most about this Yukon Party government. They say they want to hear from the general public, they want to hear from the federal government, they want to see the federal government bring a pot of money to the table. Those are the words of the minister. But they sure didn’t want to hear from Yukoners before the creation of the budget. They cancelled the community tours. They didn’t want to hear from the public. What’s up with that, Mr. Chair? That came back to us time and time again. It’s something the general public expected, and the Yukon Party failed the public in regard to that. They create their budget and say, “How do you like us now?”

The general public doesn’t forget that they were not consulted, even though there was a memo put out that said okay, if you have questions, give us a call. That’s what the Premier said. All the member needs to do is go back and look at what has been said and what the Yukon Party has done over the

years. There wasn't a demonstration outside of this Legislature for nothing. Look at the kinds of signs that were there. This was right on the Education minister at the time. They were pretty graphic signs, and those types of messages are still coming from the Yukon Party. So the general public is going to put their X where it counts and they will feel it in a general election.

The members opposite may not want to go into one, but thank goodness we are going to have to be faced with one sometime soon and not have to put up with this any more. We have been hearing this over and over from the general public. Let's see what the department people have to say about this in many of the departments. This Yukon Party government — this Yukon Party — promised to bring forward whistle-blower legislation. This is about the protection of employees and speaking out —

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Point of order

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

Hon. Mr. Rouble: The matter that the member opposite is currently debating is not held within the Department of Education.

Chair: Mr. Fairclough, on the point of order.

Mr. Fairclough: There is no violation of the Standing Orders whatsoever. I am in the Department of Education. The minister is just having a hard time.

Chair's ruling

Chair: I appreciate the information on that end. With regard to the point of order, I'm pretty sure the Member for Mayo-Tatchun will explain how the whistle-blower legislation would be relevant in the Department of Education.

Mr. Fairclough: It's about the protection of employees wanting to speak out. This goes across every department. It was a promise made by the Yukon Party, a promise broken. Not one meeting called in a year? They're expecting the public — vote for us again and we're going to promise to do better. Well, they did that the last time. They said they were going to improve decorum in this House. This is probably the most I have seen the Legislature deteriorate in all the years that I've been here. A lot of it has to do with the Premier. I give direction, the rest follows — they're all in it together.

Given the time, I move that you report progress.

Chair: It has been moved by Mr. Fairclough that Committee of the Whole report progress. Do members agree?

Some Hon. Members: Disagree.

Some Hon. Members: Agree.

Motion negatived

Mr. Fairclough: Well, thank you, Mr. Chair, for the opportunity to continue. I thought I'd give the Yukon Party a break, but I guess they don't want it. This Education minister doesn't have all that great things to say about the opposition. We bring forward really good questions, the Education minister has a lot of trouble answering them, it takes 20 minutes at times to answer a question. It's frustrating for the general public to

even listen to this. We get e-mails constantly — just before I came in here — about the answers that the minister is giving, and there is no improvement. This is right down to the wire. It's right down to the end of the day and we have not seen any improvements.

No wonder there are demonstrations outside of this House. No wonder there are signs that say, "Dictator go, mahsi' cho." No wonder the public is angry at the Yukon Party. It is with these types of answers that we get from the minister day after day — not just this minister but most of them on that side of the House. I say most because it's not all who are painted with that brush. People are tired of it. This Yukon Party government is tired, they're burnt out. We've seen it time and time again. They're done, and that's when the general public will make those decisions — very soon.

It's unfortunate. Promises get made; they get broken. The previous minister promised a school in Burwash and no, the Premier overruled that and nothing happens. The Minister of Education today doesn't give any sign of even moving on that project, their own promise. It's their team.

I can't imagine how the caucus and Cabinet meeting goes on that side of the House, because obviously the minister doesn't seem to have the kind of control he should over his department. It is the Premier who has the last say. It was quite obvious during the education reform project, when we talked about —

Chair: Order please. The time being 5:30 p.m., 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. 24, *First Appropriation Act, 2011-12*, and directed me to report progress on it.

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.

The following Sessional Paper was tabled March 15, 2011:

11-1-204

Select Committee on Bill No. 108, *Legislative Renewal Act*: Letter naming Government Caucus member to the Committee (dated March 15, 2011) from Hon. Dennis Fentie, Premier, to Floyd McCormick, Clerk of the Legislative Assembly (Fentie)