



# Yukon Legislative Assembly

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Number 179

1st Session

33rd Legislature

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## HANSARD

Tuesday, December 2, 2014 — 1:00 p.m.

Speaker: The Honourable David Laxton

# YUKON LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

**SPEAKER — Hon. David Laxton, MLA, Porter Creek Centre**

**DEPUTY SPEAKER — Patti McLeod, MLA, Watson Lake**

## CABINET MINISTERS

### NAME CONSTITUENCY PORTFOLIO

<b>Hon. Darrell Pasloski</b>	Mountainview	<b>Premier</b> Minister responsible for Finance; Executive Council Office
<b>Hon. Elaine Taylor</b>	Whitehorse West	Deputy Premier Minister responsible for Education; Women's Directorate; French Language Services Directorate
<b>Hon. Brad Cathers</b>	Lake Laberge	Minister responsible for Community Services; Yukon Housing Corporation; Yukon Liquor Corporation; Yukon Lottery Commission Government House Leader
<b>Hon. Doug Graham</b>	Porter Creek North	Minister responsible for Health and Social Services; Yukon Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board
<b>Hon. Scott Kent</b>	Riverdale North	Minister responsible for Energy, Mines and Resources; Yukon Energy Corporation; Yukon Development Corporation
<b>Hon. Currie Dixon</b>	Copperbelt North	Minister responsible for Economic Development; Environment; Public Service Commission
<b>Hon. Wade Istchenko</b>	Kluane	Minister responsible for Highways and Public Works
<b>Hon. Mike Nixon</b>	Porter Creek South	Minister responsible for Justice; Tourism and Culture

## GOVERNMENT PRIVATE MEMBERS

### Yukon Party

<b>Darius Elias</b>	Vuntut Gwitchin
<b>Stacey Hassard</b>	Pelly-Nisutlin
<b>Hon. David Laxton</b>	Porter Creek Centre
<b>Patti McLeod</b>	Watson Lake

## OPPOSITION MEMBERS

### New Democratic Party

<b>Elizabeth Hanson</b>	Leader of the Official Opposition Whitehorse Centre
<b>Jan Stick</b>	Official Opposition House Leader Riverdale South
<b>Kevin Barr</b>	Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes
<b>Lois Moorcroft</b>	Copperbelt South
<b>Jim Tredger</b>	Mayo-Tatchun
<b>Kate White</b>	Takhini-Kopper King

### Liberal Party

<b>Sandy Silver</b>	Leader of the Third Party Klondike
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## LEGISLATIVE STAFF

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

**Yukon Legislative Assembly**  
**Whitehorse, Yukon**  
**Tuesday, December 2, 2014 — 1:00 p.m.**

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

*Prayers*

## DAILY ROUTINE

**Speaker:** We will proceed with the Order Paper. Tributes.  
 Introduction of visitors.  
 Are there any returns or documents for tabling?

## TABLING RETURNS AND DOCUMENTS

**Hon. Mr. Pasloski:** I don't know if this is a first for the Legislative Assembly, but I have for tabling a document today that is actually a Twitter conversation between the Leader of the NDP and the Leader of the Liberal Party.

**Mr. Tredger:** I have for tabling a letter dated December 12, 2012 from the Premier of the Yukon to the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development — Minister Duncan.

I also have for tabling a letter dated November 28, 2014, from President Paul West-Sells of Casino Mining Corporation, to the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada — Minister Valcourt.

**Speaker:** Are there any other returns or documents?  
 Are there any reports of committees?  
 Petitions.

## PETITIONS

### Petition No. 19

**Ms. White:** I have for presentation the following petition that reads as follows:

THAT the Yukon's *Landlord and Tenant Act* continues to treat mobile home owners the same as renters;

THAT mobile home owners have been subject to unreasonable pad rent increases over the years; and

THAT mobile home ownership is an important part of Yukon's housing continuum as it offers affordable home ownership.

Therefore, the undersigned ask the Yukon Legislative Assembly to adopt landlord and tenant legislation that:

(1) recognizes the difference between mobile home owners and renters, and

(2) implements a maximum annual increase for mobile home pad rents.

It has 354 signatures.

**Speaker:** Are there any other petitions to be presented?  
 Are there any bills to be introduced?  
 Notices of motions.

## NOTICES OF MOTIONS

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to:

(1) accept the Yukon Supreme Court's decision on the Peel watershed and refrain from appealing it; and

(2) implement the Peel Watershed Planning Commission's final recommended land use plan.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to make public the full legal costs incurred to date by the Government of Yukon as a result of the Peel watershed land use plan court case.

**Mr. Tredger:** I rise to give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to immediately apply an interim withdrawal on staking in the Peel watershed until the Government of Yukon implements the Peel Watershed Planning Commission's final recommended land use plan.

**Mr. Silver:** I rise to give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to respect the ruling of the Yukon Supreme Court on the Peel land use plan and not waste any more of Yukon taxpayers' money appealing the case.

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

## QUESTION PERIOD

### Question re: Legal actions against government

**Ms. White:** Today the Yukon Party government was served a major defeat by the Yukon Supreme Court. The judgment clearly states — and I quote: "The plain reading interpretation endorsed by the government does not enhance the goal of reconciliation and is inconsistent with the honour and integrity of the Crown."

This government has been handed a clear message that their heavy-handed approach to governing in Yukon is not only unfair, but it is against the law. The government's unilateral Peel plan is dead.

Will this government accept the verdict and finally implement the *Final Recommended Peel Watershed Regional Land Use Plan* that was agreed upon by Yukon First Nations and thousands of Yukoners after years of consultation?

**Hon. Mr. Dixon:** We are aware of the decision that came from the Supreme Court this morning. We will have to take the opportunity to review that decision in its entirety, review it with counsel and review it with our officials in the departments before we make any comment or decision about how to move forward.

**Ms. White:** It is truly appalling that this government would even entertain the idea of continuing to spend hundreds of thousands of dollars of Yukoners' money on an ideological fight that goes entirely against the will of Yukoners. This government's irresponsible ideologically driven disrespect to Yukon First Nations hurts Yukon's economy and hurts Yukon's reputation. Yukon First Nation citizens, businesses, NGOs, youth and elders have told this government the final recommended plan for the Peel was right for Yukon. Now even the Yukon Supreme Court has told this government to come to its senses.

Will this government stop digging in its heels, accept the court's verdict and do the right thing by implementing the *Final Recommended Peel Watershed Regional Land Use Plan*?

**Hon. Mr. Kent:** As mentioned by my colleague, the Minister of Environment, the decision by Justice Veale was released this morning. We are going to carefully review today's decision before determining how to move forward and we will assess the implications of this judgment on land use planning and the economic future in the Yukon.

**Ms. White:** This morning's verdict clearly stated that this government has an obligation to Yukon's First Nations under the *Umbrella Final Agreement*. Yukoners have known this reality for years, but now even the courts are telling this government that their unilateral approach to governing cannot go on.

Last January, the Premier had the audacity to tell Yukoners that court cases create certainty. Well, I doubt that the Premier's office was flooded with companies looking to invest in the Peel this morning. Now that this government's unilateral Peel plan is out and they are still refusing to do the right thing and admit their errors, we're back at square one with the Peel.

Mr. Speaker, will this government reinstate the interim staking withdrawal in the Peel watershed until the final recommended Peel plan is fully implemented?

**Hon. Mr. Dixon:** Mr. Speaker, as my colleague, the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, and I indicated previously, we are reviewing the decision that was made and brought forward this morning. We will be discussing it with our counsel, obviously, and reviewing the implications it has for land use planning in the territory. We will not make any decisions or comments about how to move forward until we have had those discussions.

#### **Question re: YESAA process**

**Mr. Tredger:** Yesterday, this government received another major blow during debate on Bill S-6. The Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada, Bernard Valcourt, hung the Premier out to dry. He stated that the four additional changes to YESAA that are so controversial were requested by the Yukon government after the five-year process was completed. What this means is that the Premier is solely responsible for the embarrassing mess we are in over Bill S-6.

Why did the Premier request that the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada circumvent the consultation process and push through his unilateral amendments?

**Hon. Mr. Pasloski:** The member opposite is just clearly wrong. Through Canada's action plan to improve northern regulatory regimes, they came and requested comments and recommendations from the Yukon government, as they did with First Nation governments. Our comments and recommendations were to ensure that our assessment process was consistent with other jurisdictions, because consistency with other jurisdictions allows this territory to be competitive, and that allows us to have a greater chance to attract investment, creating jobs, wealth and prosperity for Yukon families.

**Mr. Tredger:** After five years of consultation, all of the Premier's boasting about consultation is meaningless when it was his government that pushed the four amendments that bypassed the consultation process and are opposed by Yukon First Nations. It is now clear that this government was an active partner in creating legislation that undermines the *Umbrella Final Agreement* and, by extension, Yukon as a whole.

Yukon First Nations bargained in good faith with the federal and territorial governments for five years. Now they find that the Premier sold them out at the last minute. This will further damage Yukon government-First Nation government relationships that this government has so thoroughly undermined since its first day in office.

Why did the Premier think that it was okay to go behind the backs of Yukon First Nations and propose these four unilateral amendments to YESAA?

**Hon. Mr. Pasloski:** There were four amendments the member opposite is talking about. Two of those amendments were recommended by the territorial government. A third one was an amendment by the federal government based on a concern of the Yukon government and the fourth one, in fact, was right from the Government of Canada.

All of our comments and our recommendations were requesting that our assessment process be consistent with other jurisdictions. What is also very important — as I have stated in this House a number of times — is that every time we provided comments or recommendations to the federal government, we also shared that information — our comments and our recommendations — with Yukon First Nations.

**Mr. Tredger:** Last week, the president of Casino mine wrote to the federal government. Here is a quote: "...I am putting forward our company's concerns regarding the fragility of intergovernmental relations in Yukon surrounding Bill S-6 and the negative impact that it is having on the territory's mineral industry.

"It is imperative for Casino that the *Yukon Environmental and Socio-Economic Assessment Act* (YESAA) has the broad support of all governments in order to ensure the confidence of both proponents and Yukon residents in the YESAA process and to facilitate investment in the territory."

These are not NDP talking points. They are the words of the president of Casino Mining Corporation. Will this government see the writing on the wall and listen to Yukon First Nations, Yukon citizens and Yukon industry and pull its support for Bill S-6?

**Hon. Mr. Pasloski:** Of course we know that the Yukon Chamber of Mines did present to the Senate committee that was reviewing Bill S-6 and supported the amendments, ensuring that there is consistency with assessment processes in other jurisdictions.

Consultation does not mean that you get everything that you want. There were a number of recommendations that Yukon government put forward to the federal government that we did not get. All of our comments and recommendations that we put forward to the federal government we shared with First Nations. There was full disclosure on that.

We believe that having an assessment process that is consistent with other jurisdictions is important to ensure that we can remain competitive. That is why this government supports those amendments. I have been working with First Nations. As we know, it was subsequent to my meeting with leadership last week that I called the federal minister and arranged the meeting for Yukon First Nation chiefs to sit down with the minister in Ottawa while they were there this week.

#### **Question re: Legal actions against government**

**Mr. Silver:** I have a question for the Premier. This morning, the Yukon Supreme Court rejected the government's unilateral approach to developing a land use plan in the Peel watershed. This follows on the heels of a 2012 court decision the Yukon government lost to the Ross River Dena Council. Now that is two major legal strikes against this government in just three years. The government is currently championing Bill S-6, which makes major changes to YESAA. Yukon First Nations have said that they will go to court if this bill becomes law. At the same time, the president of Casino Mining Corporation says that S-6 is having a negative effect on the territorial mining industry because it has no support from the First Nations. This government is not doing well when it comes to the courts.

Will the Premier agree to ask the Government of Canada to pull Bill S-6 so that Yukoners can avoid another lengthy and costly court battle?

**Hon. Mr. Pasloski:** The member opposite — on his Facebook page, I believe it is — talks about the regressive changes to YESAA, but that's what we expect out of the Liberal leader because when he talks to the mining industry he supports the mining industry and when he talks to the conservationists, he supports conservation. Really, Mr. Speaker, when it comes to the Liberal government — when it comes to the NDP-Liberal coalition — it just depends who it is they're speaking to.

These amendments are good for Yukon. They ensure that we have an assessment process that's consistent with other jurisdictions. There was a total of almost seven years of consultation that occurred between the federal government,

Yukon First Nations and Yukon government. We believe that consistency is important to attract investment to create jobs for Yukon families.

**Mr. Silver:** The losses in the courts are piling up. This government lost a major decision at the end of 2012 and it lost an even bigger one today.

In December of 2012, a former chief of the Liard First Nation presented this Premier with a book. It was called *Resource Rulers*, and it was written by Canadian author, Bill Gallagher. The Premier obviously did not even open that book. The author points out in great detail the importance of working with, and not against, First Nation governments when making decisions about land and resources. He also detailed First Nation governments' almost uninterrupted winning streak in the courts when it comes to battles over resources.

Yesterday, we learned that it was the Yukon Party government that had insisted on adding four contentious changes to Bill S-6. It is these last-minute changes, slipped in with no consultation, that have Yukon First Nations preparing to go to court yet again. When is this government going to understand that its unilateral approach is creating economic uncertainty?

**Hon. Mr. Pasloski:** The Leader of the Liberal Party is wrong. Once again, what we hear from the Liberal leader is rhetoric, and it changes depending upon who it is that he speaks to. These amendments are important to the Yukon — that we have environmental assessment processes that are consistent with other jurisdictions — and we will continue to work with First Nations. We can talk about all the projects, whether it's in education or in tourism and culture, whether it's in lot development or on major tourism projects — potentially like Millhaven Bay. There are a number of areas where this government continues to work with First Nations. That won't change.

But I do believe that everybody — all leaders within this territory — need to put their boots together and make a better effort of trying to ensure that we all understand what the priorities are and ensure that we can continue to agree where we can — because we're not always going to agree. That is how it works with relationships — but we are committed to continuing to move forward with First Nations, in partnership, to build an economy that is a benefit of all Yukoners.

**Mr. Silver:** The only boots that aren't in the boot room are the Premier's.

Today, the court ruling was very critical about how this government treats Yukon First Nations, particularly in regard to consultation. The judge rejected the unilateral and polarizing plan brought forth by this government. Unfortunately, the same situation is playing with Bill S-6. The Yukon Party and its federal colleagues are pushing unilateral changes that do not have the support of Yukon First Nations.

One of the largest mining companies in Yukon has also spoken out against this government's approach, saying that it is having — and I quote: "...a negative impact...on the territory's mineral industry." Before we end up in court again, this government should back down.

Yesterday in the House of Commons, the federal minister revealed the most controversial changes to Bill S-6 were, in fact, proposed by this Premier in a 2012 letter. Will the Premier table that letter and its attachments?

**Hon. Mr. Pasloski:** The Government of Canada came out and requested comments and recommendations to meet their northern action plan to improve northern regulatory regimes that also fit into their northern strategy. Did Yukon government supply comments and recommendations? Yes, we did. Did the First Nations supply comments and recommendations? Yes, they did. Did the Yukon government share all of their comments and recommendations with First Nations? Yes, we did.

What did we ask for, Mr. Speaker? We asked for an assessment process that was consistent with other jurisdictions. Consistency will ensure a greater opportunity to attract business and investment that will create jobs for Yukoners to ensure that opportunities for our children to have jobs here, to raise their families and to continue to live in the most beautiful part of Canada that we have — and that is Yukon.

#### Question re: Mobile home owners

**Ms. White:** There has been much discussion today and every day about the voice of people of the Yukon and government needing to listen. When government discussed landlord/tenant regulations, they forgot one voice: the voice of mobile home owners. The voices have not been heard or even considered in legislation that affects them directly. I proudly represent the residents of half the mobile home parks in Whitehorse and over and over I have heard from these homeowners that they are worried about not being able to financially plan for their future.

How can these homeowners make financial plans for their future if they can't anticipate the amount of the annual increase to their pad rents?

**Hon. Mr. Cathers:** Yukon's new *Residential Landlord and Tenant Act* will govern tenancy agreements — or will, I should say, once it is in effect — between mobile home owners and mobile home parks. It will limit rent increases to no more than once per year, require landlords to provide at least three months' notice of an increase, and prohibit increases in the first year of tenancy. As well, it will prohibit a landlord from requiring a tenant to move a mobile home during the months of December, January or February.

I do understand that the Member for Takhini-Kopper King has a different view on how this should be handled, but as I have indicated to her previously — and indicated directly to mobile home owners who contacted me — the legislation passed by this Assembly does not allow us to go to the extent that the Member for Takhini-Kopper King would like to see. We are focused on completing the regulations within the scope of what the act allows for.

**Ms. White:** Those are hollow words for mobile home owners and legislation can be amended. It seems the minister is still not hearing the voices of mobile home owners. Mobile home owners are vulnerable to decisions made by their

landlords, including the potential for unlimited rent increases once every 12 months.

Nova Scotia doesn't have rent control for private-market rentals but they do have mobile home pad rent control. This year it was indexed at 1.9 percent. If the Yukon had similar legislation, Yukon mobile home owners would not be paying the \$410 a month in addition to their mortgages.

Will the government consider the successes of Nova Scotia and follow their lead to ensure mobile home owners in the Yukon have the same protection so they can budget and better plan for the futures of their families?

**Hon. Mr. Cathers:** Again, as I noted to the member, the legislation that was passed by this Assembly does not allow for those restrictions to be put in legislation. What we are working on right now, as I have been tasked to do and the Department of Community Services has been tasked to do, is completing the work of developing the regulations for the *Residential Landlord and Tenant Act*.

I also would remind the Member for Takhini-Kopper King that the last time she asked me questions about this act she questioned why the act hadn't been implemented yet. I remind the member that she voted against the act. She voted against modernizing legislation that had not been updated in 50 years. We are continuing to move forward with implementing this important modernization of Yukon's residential landlord tenancy rules.

**Ms. White:** Here is a reason why I voted against that act. We amend legislation every sitting in this House — every sitting. Yesterday, the minister assured Yukoners that without regulations for the *Residential Landlord and Tenant Act*, the sun would continue to shine and the sun would continue to set. What this means is that mobile home owners will continue to wake up each and every day without certainty and protection as homeowners. Yukon mobile home owners carry mortgages. They pay property taxes to the City of Whitehorse, are responsible for the maintenance and upkeep of their homes and, Mr. Speaker, they can get home improvement loans from Yukon Housing Corporation. Clearly, the Yukon government, through the Yukon Housing Corporation, the City of Whitehorse and financial institutions, recognize these homeowners as just that — homeowners. Mobile home owners don't have the flexibility that renters have, yet they have the same obligations under the law.

When will the minister recognize owners of mobile homes as homeowners under the *Residential Landlord and Tenant Act*, and give them the respect that they deserve?

**Hon. Mr. Cathers:** I appreciate the member's passion on this issue, but I would remind the member —

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

**Hon. Mr. Cathers:** Again, we hear the off-mic comments from the Member for Copperbelt South. Mr. Speaker, we appreciate the member's passion for this issue. We appreciate that we have a different view on how this should be addressed, but I would remind the member that Yukon's residential tenancy law does not contain rent control provisions. It does not allow us — in regulations — to place restrictions of the type that the member is asking for mobile

home owners. The work that we are focused on completing is the work we were tasked to do by this Legislative Assembly and by Cabinet, which is to develop the regulations that will give further detail to the legislation that was passed by this House that modernized legislation that had been in place for more than 50 years. I remind the member that she voted against that modernization of legislation, voted against the *Residential Landlord and Tenant Act*, and then just this week was asking me why we haven't implemented it yet. The member needs to decide whether she wants the current rules in place or whether she wants the *Residential Landlord and Tenant Act* in place. That is what we're focused on doing and we're focused on getting it right in the regulations and ensuring that we complete this work of modernizing Yukon's residential landlord tenancy rules.

**Question re: Legal actions against government**

**Ms. Moorcroft:** When this government decided to unilaterally overturn the Peel Watershed Planning Commission's final recommended land use plan, they should have known full well that they were picking a losing fight. Yukon citizens, First Nation governments, businesses, interest groups and non-governmental organizations have all made it clear that the uncertainty this government has created with their my-way-or-the-highway approach to governing will be harmful to Yukon's economy and costs Yukoners jobs and money.

Not only is this government undermining Yukon's economy, they are also spending potentially hundreds of thousands of dollars of Yukoners' own money to fight a court case that goes against the people's wishes.

Will the Minister of Justice tell the people of the Yukon how much of their money was spent to go to court to fight a losing battle?

**Hon. Mr. Kent:** As we mentioned earlier in Question Period today, in response to questions from members opposite, the government is carefully reviewing today's decision before determining how to move forward and will assess implications of the judgment on land use planning and the economic future of the territory.

As we examine the court's opinion and the reasons given by the judge, we will continue to work with First Nations, consulting and engaging on many ongoing files, projects and activities. Those include activities that are underway and my responsibilities, such as work on the class 1 notification for mining exploration projects.

We continue to work with First Nations and, again, we are reviewing the decision rendered by Justice Veale this morning.

**Ms. Moorcroft:** The Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources can continue to read his speaking notes about how they are responding to the decision of the court, but my question was to ask the Minister of Justice how much money this government has spent to fight a losing battle. On top of hiring outside legal counsel, a case of this magnitude with so much at stake requires a significant investment of time and money by departmental staff. That is not to mention the cost

of setting aside other departmental priorities to allocate resources to this government's ideological court battle.

If the government won't disclose the outside counsel legal costs, could the Minister of Justice tell us if he even knows what the costs are for its Department of Justice staff and lawyers to participate in the court case that they just lost?

**Hon. Mr. Kent:** It has been a mere four-and-one-half hours since this decision was made public. It was made public at 9:00 this morning. As I have mentioned and as my colleague, the Minister of Environment, has mentioned, we are carefully reviewing the decision that was put forward. There are implications that this judgment may have on land use planning and the economic future in the Yukon. We feel it would be irresponsible to comment on that until we have had the opportunity to sit down with officials, with our legal counsel, and fully understand what the implications of this judgment are.

**Ms. Moorcroft:** I would remind the minister that the costs incurred by the government to fight this losing battle took place long before the decision was rendered four hours ago. Either the minister doesn't even know the costs or he is refusing to tell the public. In both cases, it is one more reason Yukoners cannot trust this government.

If this government doesn't come to its senses and stop its irresponsible and ideological fight against First Nations — a fight they are consistently losing — the legal tab that Yukoners will have to pick up will keep rising.

Will the minister tell this House how much he has budgeted for the Yukon government to hire outside legal counsel to continue their ideological legal battle against the will of Yukoners and the First Nation final agreements?

**Hon. Mr. Kent:** There are many examples of the Yukon government working positively with First Nations. Of course, as the Premier and others have mentioned, there are instances where we don't agree, but there are instances where we have to partner and move forward. I look only to the Carcross-Tagish First Nation memorandum of understanding that we signed around this time last year. It is largely completed. We have cottage lots available in the Southern Lakes. The work on the Millhaven Bay resort is proceeding. The work on Conrad campground is proceeding. There will be waterfront lots available on Bennett beach in the near future, on First Nation land. That is one of them.

I have also mentioned the work on class 1 notification that we continue to do. I am involved in a steering committee with the chief of the Kluane First Nation and the chief of the Na Cho Nyäk Dun First Nation. Mr. Speaker, you can look up and down these benches at all of the ministers, and each and every one of them would have an example — at least one example — of positive work and cooperation with First Nation governments.

For the members opposite to suggest that we don't work cooperatively with First Nation governments is simply wrong.

**Question re: Takhini Haven group home**

**Ms. Stick:** The Takhini Haven group home was set up as a group home to assist and support individuals with

disabilities. It is not an extension of the correctional facility. No one who calls Takhini Haven “home” is a prisoner, including Review Board clients, and should not be treated as such, but that’s what is happening. Yukoners living with disabilities are feeling like prisoners in this home, because this government has failed to provide an appropriate location and has left these individuals on the correctional grounds, feeling like they live at jail.

Will the minister responsible for Health and Social Services support the dignity and well-being of all people living with disabilities and take immediate action to find Takhini Haven a site off the Correctional Centre property?

**Hon. Mr. Graham:** Health and Social Services was looking for a facility that we could utilize as a home for Review Board clients a number of years ago. This particular facility was suggested to us because it would require a minimum amount of change — modification — and it would be relatively inexpensive for us to rent. That’s the reason it was chosen. It has nothing to do with taking away these people’s dignity.

The people who live there — I don’t know if they’re entirely happy with the situation, but the people who are looking after the facility treat them as individuals, treat them with the respect and dignity that they deserve, and will continue to do so.

**Ms. Stick:** I’m glad to hear that the staff — and I know the staff there — are treating these individuals with dignity. It’s this government that’s not.

This is not a facility; it’s a home. These people live there. It is not a facility, and not every person there is a Review Board client. I’m not saying they’re not getting appropriate care. I’m saying it’s in the wrong place. It’s at the Whitehorse Correctional Centre. It’s the jail.

I don’t think anyone here would like to live there. I certainly wouldn’t, because I know that those individuals believe that’s where they live. They don’t say, “I live at Takhini Haven” — “I live at the jail. I live at the group home at the jail. That’s where I live.”

Will this minister consider looking at another option for these individuals in a community where those people deserve to —

**Speaker:** Order please. The member’s time has elapsed. Minister of Health and Social Services.

**Hon. Mr. Graham:** Of course we’re looking at it. We’re always looking at alternatives to many of the services that we provide at the present time. Unfortunately, there are a limited number of facilities or buildings available for this type of use. At the present time, Takhini Haven serves a very real need in this community and it is being well-run. The people who are living there are being treated with respect and dignity —

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

**Hon. Mr. Graham:** Unlike the member opposite from Carcross.

**Ms. Stick:** There are homes to rent in neighbourhoods. There’s a brand-new subdivision where a home could be built for these individuals. They don’t need a facility. They need a

house with bedrooms, a kitchen and a common living area. They do not need a facility.

Last week I asked the minister why we are spending at least \$2.2 million to send Yukoners with disabilities outside to group homes. That is not money well spent. Those individuals are being taken away from their families and from their communities. It is good that the minister is always looking, but it is time for action.

When will the minister develop an action plan to bring those currently living outside back home, back to the community, and keep people living with disabilities in respectful and dignified places in the community?

**Hon. Mr. Graham:** As I have told the member opposite on any number of occasions, the people who are going to group homes outside of the territory are usually people with multiple difficulties. They are people who cannot be adequately or legally housed here in the territory for whatever reason. We would love to bring these people home. That is why we established Takhini Haven — to bring people home from outside of the territory. The member seems to forget that. That was the original concept behind Takhini Haven and that is the reason it is still there.

We are also, as the member chooses to forget, in the process of planning and constructing a new group home here in Whitehorse. We have also agreed to keep a group of five individuals together who have been together for a number of years as residents of a group home here in Whitehorse and who have now transitioned to adult status. We are keeping those people together and placing them in a single home by themselves. If that is not respect, Mr. Speaker — unlike what members opposite seem to have — I don’t know what is. We are attempting to do the best possible job. We know in many instances that the best possible alternative for these people is to be placed in homes throughout the territory. We are constantly looking for homes that will receive these folks.

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

#### Notice of opposition private members’ business

**Ms. Stick:** Pursuant to Standing Order 14.2(3), I would like to identify the items standing in the name of the Official Opposition to be called on Wednesday, December 3, 2014. They are Motion No. 812, standing in the name of the Member for Mayo-Tatchun, and Motion No. 808, standing in the name of the Member for Riverdale South.

**Mr. Silver:** Pursuant to Standing Order 14.2(3), I would like to identify the items standing in the name of the Third Party to be called on Wednesday, December 3, 2014. They are Motion No. 251, standing in the name of the Member for Klondike, and Motion No. 804, standing in the name of the Member for Klondike.

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



## ORDERS OF THE DAY

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

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

*Motion agreed to*

*Speaker leaves the Chair*

## COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

**Chair (Ms. McLeod):** Committee of the Whole will now come to order.

The matter before the Committee is general debate on Vote 3, Department of Education, in Bill No. 15, *Second Appropriation Act, 2014-15*.

Do members wish to take a brief recess?

**All Hon. Members:** Agreed.

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

*Recess*

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

### Bill No. 15: *Second Appropriation Act, 2014-15* — continued

**Chair:** The matter before the Committee is general debate on Vote 3, Department of Education, in Bill No. 15, entitled *Second Appropriation Act, 2014-15*.

#### Department of Education

**Hon. Ms. Taylor:** I am very pleased to rise in the House today to speak to the Department of Education supplementary budget for 2014-15.

The department's focus continues to be on our number-one objective of supporting success for every learner, with the ultimate goal of building an inclusive, adaptable and productive workforce that meets the needs of all our respective employers.

This supplementary budget request will support this government's continuing commitment to delivering programs that meet the educational and labour market needs of all Yukon students and communities.

In the area of Advanced Education, a total of \$129,000 for operation and maintenance is being requested to support initiatives underway in the Advanced Education branch of Education. In May, I had the opportunity to attend the labour market summit, which was held at the Kwanlin Dun Cultural Centre here in Whitehorse. At that summit, representatives and stakeholders from governments, industries and community organizations came together through the Yukon labour market framework to explore the needs of Yukon's labour market and to collectively build a consensus as to how to continue to meet those demands.

In this supplementary budget, we have \$64,000 being requested in ongoing support for the labour market framework in order to further the collaborative grassroots work being accomplished through this initiative — whether it be in comprehensive skills and trades training, recruitment, employee retention and immigration and labour market information.

The Yukon Skills Table — one of the working groups under this very framework — has been working to support the development of labour market information that is of integral value to employers, employees — both present and prospective — and that of the Department of Education, and of course, the Government of Yukon in all respective levels and orders of government. \$13,000 is requested for that particular summit, which is also 100-percent recoverable from the Government of Canada.

Earlier this fall, the Member of Parliament for the Yukon and I signed the Canada-Yukon job fund after months of hard work on behalf of provincial and territorial labour market ministers that was very much deemed, on behalf of the Premiers of this country. We were able to come up with an agreement that certainly was a stronger agreement that was originally anticipated when it was first rolled out under the Canada job grant.

This fund supports training for workers and groups that are underrepresented in the labour market, as well as greater involvement of Yukon employers in making training decisions. We have dollars in this supplementary budget as an adjustment for this program, again which is 100-percent recoverable from the Government of Canada.

When it comes to the labour market development agreement, we have \$41,000 requested, again as an adjustment for this particular program — a program that continues to be funded under the Government of Canada. It is funded through employment insurance and is deemed to help EI-eligible, unemployed Yukoners to find, obtain and to maintain employment.

When it comes to Yukon College, this past year it has really marked a remarkable year of growth of this unique post-secondary institution. The supplementary budget refers to just over \$900,000 in funding for the operation and maintenance of Yukon College. Last month I was pleased to be able to announce with our partners at Yukon College a major milestone in the evolution of the college — that being the development of the first made-in-Yukon degree and certificate programs.

Starting in 2017, Yukon College will be offering its first-ever three-year bachelor of policy studies in indigenous governance, and a one-year, post-graduate certificate in climate change and public policy.

When we look back over the past 51 years, Yukon College has evolved significantly from the very beginning of this school back in 1963 as the Whitehorse Vocational and Technical Training Centre to the granting of college status in 1983 to the relocation to the campus where they find themselves today.

Today, the college continues to develop and expand a diverse range of programs designed for the academic and training needs of our students and the labour market in our territory. This particular expenditure really builds on the incremental work that the Yukon College has been undertaking over the past 51 years. We are very pleased to be able to invest a record-level amount in support of Yukon College's programs, activities, services and supports.

As partners, we continue to develop and implement a strategic plan for this institution, with the end goal of becoming a university for the territory and ultimately, a university for all of Canada's north. The evolution of the college as we have seen over the past 51 years and looking forward — it is really a logical step along the path of natural growth and it's a commitment our government made during the last election.

We have and will continue to work toward the creation of a university for Yukon, based on a model that is best suited for Yukoners. Of course, in addition to building upon this momentum that was announced back in the middle of October, what also comes along builds upon strategic initiatives being undertaken by the college, whether that's the Centre for Northern Innovation in Mining, the Northern Institute of Social Justice, or the Yukon Research Centre.

We have also been able to expand the land reserve for the college in support of long-range planning that will guide the growth and further development of the campus as it transitions to a university. Those discussions are very much well underway.

Part of that path to becoming a university is very much creating and delivering a degree program. As you're very much aware, the college currently offers a number of undergraduate degrees in partnership with other institutions. Those have worked very, very well over the years. Moving toward the first-ever made-in-Yukon degree and post-degree certificate programs speaks to the evolution of the college as a leader in post-secondary education.

We're very pleased to be able to continue to support the Yukon College in its endeavours in this regard. Of course, in partnership with industry and First Nations, Yukon College's Centre for Northern Innovation in Mining continues to develop and deliver training programs focused on mining and resource exploration and — what is really key — all industrial trades across the Yukon — so not just in support of mining, but in support of development across the territory.

A design contract was awarded by the college back in August, and early foundational construction is now underway at the Whitehorse campus for a new trades facility — again building upon our government's commitment to work to expand the trades. We're very excited about the development of this particular facility. We have had some preliminary discussions and presentations made by the Yukon College as to what that facility will look like, but basically it will enhance the capacity of the college to be able to deliver expanded trades programming. For an individual to be able to complete his or her apprenticeship in electrical, for example, instead of

having to go to other institutions outside of the territory's boundaries is indeed a very great success.

Part of CNIM is the creation of the partnership between Canada and Yukon in coming up with a mobile trades facility. This trades trailer has been seeing a lot of highway these days. In fact, it was up in Dawson was responsible for hosting a dual-credit welding program for the benefit of high school students as well as adult learners. It's currently in Pelly Crossing right now. It's another great collaboration between the Selkirk First Nation, Yukon College and the mining industry as well. In fact, there was just recently a graduation, as I understand it, in Pelly Crossing. It certainly has seen a lot of great success. Next for the mobile trades trailer will be the community of Ross River and it will be making its way in January.

Again, just another exciting example of what CNIM is, in fact, doing on behalf of Yukoners. Approximately \$664,000 is being requested for CNIM as it continues the expansion and further development of each of its programs.

Likewise, the Yukon government was very pleased to announce continued long-term stable funding for the Yukon Research Centre as the Premier had announced back in September.

We certainly have seen the great benefits of this particular investment by this government and previous Yukon Party governments. Now we are seeing some of the great return on investments. Back in 2009, of course, members opposite will recall that our government, together with Yukon College and the Council of Yukon First Nations, opened the doors to the Yukon Research Centre to build on and enhance our knowledge and understanding of changes in our regional climate, in the environment, in our economy and to work collectively to come up with a made-in-the-north Yukon solutions from well-designed research programs.

In the matter of five short years, the research centre has managed to do just that and more. Through collaborative research, innovative initiatives and regional outreach, we have been able to establish and build what has been coined as a cutting edge research facility that provides Canada and the world with a unique northern perspective.

From climate change adaptation to cold climate technologies, the scope and the volume of the research projects and the publications undertaken here are not only numerous, but very relevant to today's Yukon. We have a lot to be proud of as Yukoners when it comes to those individual researchers, teachers and the collective research entity that the research centre provides.

I would like to congratulate all of those members whose work, innovation and creativity has really worked to expand the degree and delivery of programs. We continue to receive national and international recognition on the stage and that is tremendous. The work continues to build relationships with First Nation governments, governments in Canada, businesses, communities and entrepreneurs, yielding new funding for research and new investments that contribute to the development and the growth of our knowledge economy.

We have been able, thanks to the good work of the research centre, to attract very bright students from a range of disciplines and have really piqued their interest — and the rigour for science and that of traditional knowledge — again, showing them and all of us the vast opportunities that research in northern life has to offer. In doing so, Yukon College has been able to leverage our resources and has been able to expand those resources some four-fold-plus times. In doing so, we have been able to build capacity in the north with the growth of a number of scientists and academics who train, study and discover here.

Yukon government of course has been a very proud supporter and funding partner of the research centre and, over the next five years, we are proud to commit a further \$6.3 million to support the continued extension of the research centre, bringing our total contribution under the Department of Education to more than \$10 million since the opening of the centre.

Madam Chair, I know my time is running low, but I also wanted to make mention of a number of other expenditures in this supplementary budget — the Northern Institute of Social Justice. We were able to just recently announce, earlier this spring, long-term ongoing funding in support of a number of programs — long-term funding in the amount of just over \$2.5 million over five years.

This supplementary budget makes reference to \$84,000 in additional expenditures in addition to what is already housed in this year's main estimates. The Northern Institute of Social Justice has been very instrumental working to leverage funding and incorporate many partnerships with RCMP and other service providers across the northern territories — Victim Services, for example — and many professional development opportunities pertinent to the growth of northern professionals.

We are also very pleased to provide \$75,000 to support the college in continuing to deliver the water and waste-water operator program. This is really in support of the Department of Community Services, which has provided millions of dollars in support of drinking water and waste-water treatment infrastructure initiatives underway over the past number of years in many, if not all, of the respective communities. These dollars will go to ensure that we do have trained operators who are qualified and are very much needed to operate these critical pieces of infrastructure.

Under Public Schools, we also have a total of \$293,000 for operation and maintenance in the Public Schools branch, specifically in support of Student Support Services, learning support and professional development for Yukon teachers.

We also have within the supplementary estimates for capital expenditures a number of revotes for a number of budget items, coupled with a number of net decreases. We continue to work with the departments of Highways and Public Works and Community Services to coordinate facility construction and maintenance projects as it pertains to various individual schools throughout the territory.

There are also a number of expenditures pertaining to school renovations, capital maintenance, repairs and school-based equipment.

I see that my time has pretty much run out, so I will certainly look forward to today's debate in the Department of Education. I want to also just leave off my remarks by thanking the Department of Education staff and those who have joined me here in today's Assembly for their ongoing work, their expertise and all of the collaboration they undertake — in collaboration with our communities, school councils, school administrations, teachers — and working with the many various stakeholders in support of literacy, after-school programs, students supports, immigration and labour market framework. It is indeed a very large department and very all-encompassing. It is indeed a privilege to continue to serve as Minister of Education.

With that, I will take my seat and entertain any and all questions. Thank you.

**Mr. Tredger:** I thank the minister for her opening remarks. I would like to thank the members of the department for their attendance and welcome them to the Legislature.

I will keep my opening comments brief, in order that we may have more time to more thoroughly examine the details of the supplementary budget, but I would like to take the time to recognize and thank school staff throughout the territory — our educators, principals, the teachers, the learning assistants, the tutors, the janitors, the school secretaries, the bus drivers, and all those who attend school every day in support of our children.

Parents and school councils play an important part in our school system, and I thank them too for taking the time to get involved in their children's education. They do make a difference. I would also like to recognize the First Nation governments and First Nations for their increasing involvement in our school system and our schools, especially in some of our rural schools, where they have become a true partner.

I would also like to follow up on some of the minister's remarks about Yukon College. Yukon College has become a leader in research, innovation and education. This year, I have met many students, many teachers and many parents of students who have been very proud and spoke very highly of Yukon College and their efforts to get into every community. The community campuses are really paying dividends, and Yukon College is an institution that all Yukoners can be very proud of.

I would like to thank the Department of Education and Yukon College for bringing the trades trailer to Pelly Crossing. Talking to some of my constituents, it has been a real success. They're excited about the possibilities, so I would like to say thank you.

The first question I have has to do with First Nation representation in our education workforce. It has been a goal of successive governments to increase the percentage of teachers, of management and of EAs in our education system, so it's representative of First Nation populations. There are some successes; there are some challenges. I'm wondering if

the minister could let me know — or tell the House — the percentage of Yukon First Nations in management positions, the percentage of Yukon First Nations in teaching positions and the percentage of Yukon First Nations in education or remedial tutor positions.

Some of the challenges we're facing — the last I saw, we were looking at around 10 percent, and I know the goal is to be representative, which would be between 20 and 25 percent — so some of the challenges, some of the successes, and what the minister is currently doing to further raise those percentages.

**Hon. Ms. Taylor:** I don't have any of those particular statistics at my fingertips. I can say that — as we have spoken to at great length about the staffing protocol that was just recently amended back in February of 2014 — it does make reference to changes in the protocol that do give additional priority to Yukon First Nation candidates in the second group. The first group, of course, receiving priority are those indeterminate teachers with continuous service. Coming right up after that are the Yukon First Nation candidates, and then temporary teachers and so forth. There have been those recent changes, of course.

With respect to the YNTEP program that has worked very well over the years — unfortunately, I just don't have any statistics in front of me, but I do know that I have asked the department on a number of occasions for an accurate account as to how many teachers have in fact been hired. The staff complement for this fiscal year — just the number of teachers who have been hired from Outside versus here in the territory — I understand that the vast majority are here in the territory and that those individuals who subscribe to YNTEP have also received job offers when there are openings, whether that be in rural Yukon and so forth.

It's an ongoing work in progress — working in collaboration — whether it's the Council of Yukon First Nations or whether it is individual First Nations through bilateral agreements — there are a number of various leadership programs available through the Public Service Commission and also through Yukon Teachers Association. We'll endeavour to get back to the member opposite.

**Mr. Tredger:** I guess I'm looking for some creative ways to increase the numbers, but I would appreciate it if the minister would get back to me on the percentage of Yukon First Nations in management positions, in teaching positions and in educational assistance and bring that to the House to share it with myself and the Member for Klondike.

My next question has to do with the residential school curriculum. Three years ago, the Yukon government decided to go it alone. Nunavut and Northwest Territories were developing a curriculum and invited Yukon to join. Yukon declined with the intention of developing their own curriculum.

In the last two years, Nunavut and Northwest Territories have implemented their curriculum. We heard last spring that the Yukon Territory had a pilot project in place. I know the Legislature unanimously agreed that a residential school

curriculum was very, very important to our students and to our understanding of who we are.

What I'm wondering from the minister is: Now that we have had the pilot project, what are the target grades? What percentage of the student population will receive training or education on the residential school curriculum? When can parents and the Yukon public expect the full implementation of this? When can we assure our students that, by the time they reach grade 12, every student in the Yukon will have received significant training in residential school curriculum? Finally, how many teachers have been trained? How long have the training units been so that our teachers, at the very least, are aware of residential school effects, implications for us as a territory, and that they are able to answer and work with their students on this very important topic? I guess I am looking for an implementation date territory-wide, the amount of training that has happened for our educators and how much is expected to happen. If the minister has a curriculum for teachers or an outline of the training that teachers have, I would appreciate that being shared with the House as well.

**Hon. Ms. Taylor:** There have been a number of discussions in the territory over the past number of years and, to be very clear, there has been a significant amount of work done by the Department of Education working collaboratively with First Nation governments and individuals working throughout all of the respective schools.

As the member opposite just outlined, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, of course — I had the opportunity to actually meet first-hand Dr. Marie Wilson back in July at the meeting of ministers responsible for education across the country. There was a presentation made by Dr. Wilson on behalf of the commission itself. It was a fantastic presentation. I have to say that, on the screen, one of the presentations that they did highlight was some of the video that was taken at various events across the country to really promote residential school training or curriculum, to be able to discuss this legacy in our territory — and not just in our territory, but across the country. It was very moving for me, Madam Chair, because there were a number of students who were highlighted from your home community of Watson Lake, from my home community and from Lower Post in British Columbia.

I have often said that having been born and raised in the Yukon, had I had the opportunity — had many of us had the opportunity — to very much become familiar with this legacy and this important history in our own backyard, perhaps we would have a lot more understanding and tolerance in our communities here today and certainly the strength to carry us forward as a more healthy population, a more healthy and contributing territory.

That said, there has been a significant amount of work that has been done over the past while. The member opposite made reference to Northwest Territories and Nunavut, and I had an opportunity to meet directly with the two ministers of Education back in May, in Yellowknife, to talk about their successes and to talk about some of the challenges they have had in rolling out their curriculum. What we have been able to

do is glean those successes and learn from those challenges, in what didn't go right, and be able to build that into our program.

As the member opposite has made reference to the Northwest Territories just had that curriculum underway for, I believe, two years. It is also being taught in some British Columbia schools, starting this year. We're seeing pockets of the country going toward this direction. Some have made it mandatory; some have not.

I know that our First Nation Programs and Partnerships unit of the Department of Education has been working very diligently with the Government of Northwest Territories, as well as the First Nations Education Steering Committee in British Columbia, to learn from those best practices. We have been working closely with First Nation elders and former residential school students on how to deliver our history — and directly with the Council of Yukon First Nations and individually with First Nation governments and Health Canada to host training to provide support to our schools and to our communities.

Currently we have a number of initiatives underway. I'm not even sure where to start here. Vanier Catholic Secondary School in Whitehorse, Porter Creek Secondary School, Robert Service School in Dawson, the Del Van Gorder School in Faro and the Tantalus School in Carmacks are rolling out the unit as we speak. I understand that there's a total of about 160 students, all told, who are enrolled in those particular classes which, I understand, are underway right now.

Those are specific schools that have offered to deliver that particular content. Again, we are looking at really focusing in on the grade 10 social studies unit on residential schools. That's what has been underway. Again, it's developed using knowledge gained from other jurisdictions, but really building on best practices used in other provinces and territories.

Earlier this year, back on October 1, I had the privilege of attending a two-day in-service training that was attended by over 80 people, in anticipation of the rollout of the grade 10 residential schools unit.

Attendees really were looking to develop school learning, support teams and were provided an in-depth look at individual lessons within the unit. Among those 80 people were teachers, health support workers, education support workers — we had a number of former students — elders and staff from the Department of Education. It was immediately followed by a one-day in-service, also hosted by Health Canada and Council of Yukon First Nations, to provide training to those health support workers and other front-line workers on how best to offer that school and community supports during implementation of the unit.

So that was, in fact, a tremendous opportunity for us to hear — to not only roll out — but also to continue to receive feedback from those teachers, from support workers on how to best roll out those resources in a particular kit, pertaining to that curriculum.

I believe I have said this on the floor of the Assembly that we continue to work with all First Nations, but we are also

very respectful of the fact that if a particular community is not ready to teach the unit, we need to respect that. We do need to continue to work with those individual schools and communities and any concerned parents to better articulate what is being taught and to ensure that we have the counselling and support being provided to students and their families, so that when they do leave the classrooms, it is being extended to those families in the homes as well.

We have hosted a number of inter-agency meetings to look at the range of supports available. As I mentioned, that ranges from the Department of Health and Social Services in the Yukon government and nurses to CYFN, First Nations, health support workers, and are continuing to work to strengthen those supports in place. There has been a lot of work that has been underway here and we're very proud of the work of the First Nations partnerships unit and all First Nation individuals and governments who have contributed to the evolution of the programming over the past while.

As members opposite also are aware, I would be remiss if I didn't mention our agreement with Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nation. Part of that educational workplan was really to develop a teacher's guide to use the *Finding our way home* book in the school. As we have all debated on the floor of the Assembly, it has been an incredible resource. It is a collection of the histories of Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in residential school survivors and former students from Dawson City and the unit and the timeline resource has been the result of collaboration among our own consultants within the department, First Nation individuals, social studies grade 10 teachers, historians, elders and former residential school students.

Students will have the *Finding our way home* book as a resource, along with a timeline of our history of residential schools in Yukon and in Canada. It is modelled along a very similar approach that Northwest Territories and Nunavut have taken — very successfully, I might add. There is an opportunity for co-teaching with local First Nations and having former students as guest speakers. Digital resources are also being prepared and provided with the stories of both former students and inter-generational survivors based on their respective communities. It also includes student projects that students can engage in through the reconciliation process, such as documenting the local residential school history and strengthening language and cultural activities, whether it is supporting individuals or families or celebrating what students have learned within their respective communities.

There is a significant amount of work that is underway. I very much have a lot more that I could add, but I did want to take note of the in-service training that was held back in early October. There are lists of individuals who have really contributed to sharing their experiences at the in-service training and who helped create some of the resources included in the grade 10 kit and whose history we continue to learn about.

Special thanks go to the Yukon First Nations Programs and Partnerships unit and curriculum staff who were presenters at those various sessions. Yukon College staff First Nation initiatives — a very special thanks to those individuals

who helped create the entire socials 10 unit throughout the past year using input from all of the working groups. The CYFN education department — again, very instrumental — Health Canada partnered with CYFN to facilitate the health support training, all the teachers and the counsellors who attended — a significant amount of input.

It was a very emotional couple of days, but it was very inspiring as well. In fact, I just want to share some of the evaluation questions and some of the feedback that was provided following that in-service training. It was incredible. Individuals walked away from that training saying that they gained more knowledge of the residential schools. It helped set goals for healing. There were a number of activities that were showcased, including the blanket activity. I am not sure if individuals across the way are familiar with that, but it was a very inspiring and very information-driven exercise.

The importance of preparing students and parents before teaching this content is absolutely critical. The fact that it was presented holistically and the ability to have feedback and share everyone's ideas was absolutely critical.

Having elders present was an instrumental part of the workshop. Their experiences and knowledge in the area were so essential. The understanding of why parents are the way they are today — some parents do not wish to share their experiences — but the importance of involving elders and community members. Hearing about how important it is to forgive, face to face — networking, building relationships with the students is important when you teach — elders' reflections in the lesson plans.

I have pages of content here, in terms of the feedback that was received after those two days.

A better understanding of the history of mission residential schools — reconciliation means healing from both sides, having to bring something to the community, actions speak louder than words. As students and the younger generation, we need to heal in our own way and help others heal by showing respect and compassion and taking it upon ourselves to help others. Another individual's account says, "I learned so much again, particularly from individuals' personal stories." Keeping an open heart, and how that in itself creates a healing environment — quality of resources, having a support system. Again, resource books, people and sharing stories help us understand more the residential school trauma.

There was tremendous feedback. All of this is to say that, you know, we are very much working with each and every individual school. We are inviting contact with each of the First Nation communities that are in a position to implement the unit immediately and I just listed off a number of schools that are currently doing that.

We are also working through the First Nation Programs and Partnerships unit to offer a second in-service training in early 2015 to ensure that any and all teachers delivering the unit will in fact be trained as well.

I see that my time is running out, but it gives a very good synopsis of some of the things that we have been working on diligently, building on the successes from each of these respective schools' experiences and taking that, building upon

the in-service training that was provided back in early October, and being able to enhance that delivery of training and the support systems that we are working on with the Government of Canada and First Nation communities as we continue the in-service training in early 2015.

**Mr. Tredger:** I thank the minister for that response. Attending in-service training and listening to First Nations recount some of their experiences is indeed a very powerful experience. I thank the minister for taking time to attend some of those.

If I can just express a couple of thoughts around that, it seems that there are five schools targeting an optional grade 10 class and about 160 students. I think what people had in mind was that it would be mandatory, not just at one grade, and that all teachers would take part in the similar kinds of experiences that the minister described. The concern coming from First Nations is that people come from outside or not from their community and they don't have the understanding and the breadth of feeling that the minister was describing there. It is important that we expand that program sooner than later. It has been three years now since we left — or never even joined with the Northwest Territories and Nunavut. They are well along on their program. We were talking about 160 students and some two-day training for 80 people, some of whom were teachers and some of whom were not. There is an urgency about this. The second and third generations after the residential schools experiences — it's still affecting our communities in many, many ways and it's critical that our schools learn that history and the horrible legacy that we left. It was not just a legacy; it was a horrible legacy and we're still living with it.

I have just a couple more questions and I'll sort of roll them together so that the minister can answer them together. One of the things I've noted in the past is that many of our teachers — and in particular, our administrators — do not have training in land claims and self-government agreements. They're often the point person in our communities for our government. I believe that it's critical that they receive intensive training in that. At one point, the Yukon territorial government was training people from all departments, but stopped short of training our administrators in education. I believe that the training is still going on. It used to be a week, but from what I understand, it's down to a couple of days. Given the debate around the *Umbrella Final Agreement* and the misunderstandings that are happening around that in our territory today, I believe that it's critical. I'm wondering if the minister would concur with that — that it's critical that our administrators do get intensive training in self-government agreements and land claim agreements.

I want to ask another question. Last spring, the minister talked about an MOU with CYFN. I'm wondering if there is a report from that MOU, what policies and directions have come from that, what accomplishments have occurred and where we're going with that MOU. Also, Selkirk First Nation was in the process of negotiating with Yukon territorial government in developing a memorandum of understanding

around education. Can the minister give me an update on that and what has been accomplished with that?

**Hon. Ms. Taylor:** As I understand, according to the member opposite, the training made available for the administrators — I would have to get clarity from the department but, as I understand it, to the best of my knowledge, we haven't had specific training geared for the administrators in the past, but we have —

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

**Chair:** Order please. Ms. Taylor has the floor.

**Hon. Ms. Taylor:** We do meet on a routine basis, though, with our administrators on a number of different fronts. In fact, I believe there's another meeting scheduled for next week, if I'm not mistaken, or later this week.

I'm not entirely sure if that has been a point of discussion in months past, or years past, but we can take it up with them again, if it hasn't in the past. I haven't seen their agenda for the past couple of ones.

With respect to Selkirk First Nation, there have been a number of discussions with officials in the Department of Education and officials within Selkirk First Nation. I do believe we're seeing some progress there on a couple of fronts. That builds on our commitment to work on an education agreement with Selkirk First Nation. It has been a work in progress for some time. I know that we were recently able to come up with an agreement under section 68 of the *Education Act*, which would see guaranteed representation for First Nation individuals on the Eliza Van Bibber School Council. I just signed off that agreement with Selkirk First Nation, so that has been requested and we have been able to deliver on that front.

With respect to the overarching education agreement, I know there have been a number of various drafts. I just shared with our deputy minister of Education that we just received the last draft from Selkirk First Nation on Friday. I have not seen that draft. I have not been apprised of it, but I can say that I had discussions on a couple of occasions with the chief of Selkirk First Nation to discuss the importance of moving forward with this agreement.

Of course, it really builds on the great work that has been put into place by Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nation, the first of its kind as a bilateral. We look forward to hopefully concluding that agreement soon. Without having seen that last draft from Selkirk First Nation — but I believe, based on the discussions that the chief and I have had, we are very much wanting to move forward with this agreement and then, of course, working on a collaborative workplan in setting the stage for improving the learning outcomes for the student of Eliza Van Bibber School.

With respect to the ongoing work with Council of Yukon First Nations — and of course that makes reference to the agreement that was signed off, I believe by the previous Minister of Education and the Grand Chief at CYFN and the Government of Canada — there have been, as I understand, a number of meetings of officials over the past months — in fact they meet bi-weekly and continue to do so — working to

find ways to come up with a workplan — an implementation action plan, so to speak.

It takes time, of course, but working to achieve our achievement outcomes, graduation rates, assessment rates, overall engagement of First Nation students and partners in our schools is of the utmost importance. That agreement was designed to produce those results for First Nation students. We are holding a series of meetings — as I mentioned, meeting bi-weekly, as I understand — to move forward with creating and moving forward with the implementation plan. That is very much all-inclusive of literacy.

As I mentioned, it is inclusive of how we assess and how we report those outcomes, in terms of prioritizing the workplan going forward and how we can really pool our respective resources — and also seeing very much great merit in terms of working with the Government of Canada. The Government of Canada has just recently made resources available, or has talked a lot about that, in terms of delivering on First Nations education legislation in the House of Commons — but really looking forward to coming up with dollars associated with that.

I know that the three Ministers of Education from the three northern territories have very much been looking for a meeting with Minister Valcourt in the Government of Canada to have an opportunity to discuss the work that is ongoing not only with CYFN here, but also individual First Nations on many different bilateral fronts.

There is quite a list of various initiatives in each of our respective territories — some incredible work is going on in Northwest Territories, Nunavut — likewise here in Yukon over the past number of years.

We continue to build upon those tripartite agreements with Canada, CYFN, but also those bilateral agreements, such as with Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nation. As I mentioned, we are working forward on negotiating an education agreement with Selkirk First Nation — continuing to implement those intergovernmental accords which speak to the component of education with Vuntut Gwitchin Government, Kluane First Nation — and looking at other successes such as the Southern Tutchone bicultural program being delivered out in Kluane country. Those are all fantastic initiatives that are underway.

We know that when we integrate — especially with on-the-land experiential learning opportunities — I have seen it first-hand, even when I visited the community of Old Crow with the MLA and spending a couple of days at their spring culture camp. What a unique —

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

**Hon. Ms. Taylor:** That's right. Skinning muskrats and trapping them too which was a first for me and it will not be my last, I can say that.

Having the privilege — the luxury — of being able to talk to elders like Stanley Njootli, Sr. and being able to see him collaborate and work directly with the teaching professionals at the school in Old Crow and to be able to talk to our administrators as well — also, that dovetails in with the extremely great work of the chief and council of Vuntut Gwitchin Government. We're seeing similar efforts underway

with the accreditation of culture camps made available through Robert Service School as well. We see great results coming from them — coming up with specific locally developed curriculum.

We see learning outcomes when we engage our younger students. There are incredible opportunities. We need to build on those and we need to be able to showcase those very highlights and be able to share those with our southern counterparts and we do at every turn. We see that there is an opportunity for Canada's participation in assisting our efforts and being able to leverage those results. That too is also a work in progress.

Likewise, looking to expand the applied skills in trades, especially in rural Yukon — I know we debated at great length about the rural equity action plan here earlier this spring. Really, it's about being able to bridge those gaps between rural Yukon and of course, the urban centre of Whitehorse — but also looking that we need to bridge those achievement gaps between First Nation and non-First Nation students. That's why we continue to work with our partners at all levels with talking and really, putting initiatives underway to provide those students with meaningful opportunities to engage in learning so that they can improve their success at school.

A couple of other examples are the First Nation delivery of cultural activities at Vanier Catholic Secondary School — and Whitehorse Elementary School as well — with a full week of core content. I know at Vanier school — I was looking at their week, and they had over 50 different sections, 50 separate blocks, of different detailed activities, thanks in great part to the work of the First Nation Programs and Partnerships unit, but also working with our partners at CYFN and governments as well, in their respective traditional territories. That was a first of its kind for those two schools earlier this year. What we know is that there is definitely a desire for more, and so we do need to do a better job and we are working to provide more flexibility within our curriculum. Even as the B.C. curriculum continues to unfold, with the delivery of their new competency-based curriculum, we see that there are great opportunities for us as well, building on those successes that we have seen over the years and really looking to provide additional initiatives.

**Mr. Tredger:** I will just move on to a couple of questions about F.H. Collins. Although F.H. Collins will be replaced, the new school will still use the tech wing of the old high school to teach Yukon students trades. We all recognize the importance of the skills in trades and recognize that it is an old wing. Equipment needs to be upgraded and maintained.

In 2012, the Department of Education received a report from the Yukon Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board to improve the safety of both students and staff using the tech wing. The recommendations included that changes be made to the woodworking shop, the automotive shop and the machine shop — totalling 24 recommendations. In addition, there are unresolved concerns around the use of lead paint, asbestos in the building and ongoing air-quality concerns.

Can the minister tell us what the maintenance costs are currently to maintain the tech wing? What expenses are incurred there? What expenses do they anticipate to upgrade the tech wing so that people are able to safely work and use the tech wing and, finally, to upgrade the tech wing in terms of equipment so that our students can get a facility where they can receive up-to-date training and activities? The fourth part of that question would be around staffing of the trade wing. What efforts is the department making to ensure that we have qualified tradesmen working in the facility?

**Hon. Ms. Taylor:** I believe that journeyman might be a journey-level person — a woman, perhaps.

With respect to the tech ed wing upgrades, we've been abundantly clear all along that the tech ed wing would remain intact, and that yes, we recognize that there are deficiencies with the current tech ed wing. Working through the Department of Highways and Public Works, through the Property Management Agency, we have been working to assess that particular facility to identify and get a broadened scope and better understanding of the deficiencies and what it is specifically that we do need to resolve. We have been and continue to work with Yukon Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board to ensure that we have a safe environment in all our facilities, particularly when it comes to working in our school shops.

That work is underway. I don't have an assessment, because I believe that work is still underway, so it has not been completed. I believe that, through the Department of Highways and Public Works — perhaps the minister would have more at his fingertips to offer than I'm able to offer right now.

Obviously it will continue to be a stand-alone facility. I've had the opportunity to walk through that facility on a couple of occasions. It is fantastic — the amount of space that there is available and the degree of programming that they are able to provide, recognizing that there are deficiencies and that there are improvements, in terms of air quality, in terms of all of the areas the member opposite had outlined.

Again, we have been working pretty closely with the school administration and Workers' Compensation on that very front, as we do with many of our schools. We have been making, and continue to make, considerable progress in all our shops across the territory, in terms of the area of equipment maintenance. As I mentioned earlier in the Assembly, we have been working to do an assessment of all our schools shops, in terms of the health and safety and in terms of the applicability, and working with those specific school communities to identify what is relevant and what is needed.

It may not be a full-blown shop facility that is what that particular school community wants. Again, in terms of providing additional and more skilled individuals, journeypersons and certified teachers, I speak to things like the rural experiential model — REM — that was held in Dawson just recently this fall — the third one we have hosted. We're going to host another one, I think in Watson Lake, if



I'm not mistaken, coming up next year. Those are fantastic opportunities.

We've heard nothing but great feedback, in terms of working to expand the capacity of teachers and providing that expertise from those certified teachers — journeypersons, as the member opposite has referred to — looking at considering options like co-teaching, outside instructors, as I mentioned, through the REM — the rural experiential model — being able to share that capacity and building on that. Sharing resources between schools is really part of the essence of the REM session that we have had. It is not only fantastic in building peer networks among the student population, but also among our teachers as well.

Within the department, we have been able to help build capacity within our own department to work with each and every one of the individual schools, as I mentioned. Working with the Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board, we're looking at all of our shops, doing a complete assessment and then turning out a lot of these and replacing what could be old table saws with state-of-the-art equipment and the lockout and replacement of machinery deemed unsafe. There has been a lot of work underway by individuals in our department. Of course, we want to ensure that every shop is in compliance with our regulations. We are working on a more cohesive program when it comes to expanding trades delivery programming in our shops. There are tremendous opportunities. Over this past summer, we had a great number of shop upgrades completed in most of our rural schools. Work is still underway in some of our other schools but we are looking at anticipated completion in the months to come.

We are looking to address how we can place more certified shop teachers in our schools, particularly in rural Yukon — to find that skill set — but in the meantime, really looking to find unique and creative ways through the rural experiential model, for example, and expanding that capacity.

As I mentioned earlier, the supplementary budget contains almost \$1 million — two-thirds of which is comprised in support of CNIM — Centre for Northern Innovation in Mining. CNIM is really about how we can better expand the trades. I am really excited about having discussions with Yukon College on how we can do that through the mobile trades training trailer unit and how that is making a concerted difference in communities like Dawson and Pelly Crossing in the ability to be able to help leverage resources through mining companies. I was just talking to the head person for CNIM at the college and she was mentioning that they were able to leverage some \$55,000 from Selwyn Resources in support of the trades training being delivered through CNIM. That is exactly what that program was intended to do and that is exactly why the Yukon government — our government — made it a platform commitment. We came through with a commitment of \$11.5 million over five years in support of not just the development and growth of the mining industry, but really all industrial trades — whether it is electrical, welding, you name it.

Many of those programs and many of those skillsets are very transferable from industry to industry. I think that even

with the new trades building going up on the college campus here in Whitehorse as well, it's going to lend to more certified individuals — red seal journeypersons in many of our trades that we have not been able to deliver on in years past. That too will lend itself in making more individuals readily available to share their skillsets in our communities and that is a good thing.

Of course, with the Department of Education, we provide tremendous supports through student financial assistance and certification when it comes to apprenticeships. We see a continued demand for that particular training. It is great to see in the Yukon, but it is a challenge. We continue to work with other jurisdictions — British Columbia, Alberta and Northwest Territories — on how we can better unite and offer training in support of more trades and skilled persons in the territory. Indeed, it is key.

Last Friday, I was really pleased to attend as Minister of Education and minister responsible for the Women's Directorate, taking part and joining almost 90-plus individuals from grade 8 across the territory in the Young Women Exploring Trades Conference. That is another organization that we provide funding to through the Women's Directorate and through Advanced Education. They were able to promote workshops like cool tools for young women and after-school workshops in support of the trades. Really, that's where it starts: opening up the door and showing what is feasible and what can be done in terms of trades training and options available.

Also, when you look at venues like Mining Week that is held in the spring, for example — I think in May, which coincides with National Mining Week — and having school tours, we had a number of grade 6s and grade 7s from all over, touring through the respective booths available at Shipyards Park. It's but another example of how we are able to raise awareness about the importance of the trades and apply that to everyday work that's going on, whether it's through Alexco or Capstone Mining and so forth. There are lots of opportunities.

Again, I go back to Yukon College. We have had some discussions with Yukon College in terms of also expanding networks — our partnership with Yukon College when it comes to providing career counselling. We see there is a great opportunity for sharing those resources with our own career counsellors in our schools and being able to help promote the college as a post-secondary institution in terms of promoting more Yukoners to subscribe to the college and take advantage of the increased number of programs and services being made available here in Whitehorse, but also throughout all of the campuses in the territory — again, it's a work in progress.

It is an exciting time, Madam Chair, and we look forward to the opening of the new trades facility. We very much look forward to the opening of the new F.H. Collins School and seeing the many opportunities available for students and for our teaching professionals, as well, to be able to benefit from this new asset and all that goes with that.

**Mr. Tredger:** I guess I was looking for some hard numbers there as to how the department came to a decision to keep the old trades wing, given the costs to maintain it and to

upgrade it. The minister did not have an estimate on the costs or the current costs.

I guess strategic planning is a management tool that focuses on the future. It helps set priorities and goals to develop a plan to meet those goals. It also helps to access how resources are to be allocated. That is from the Auditor General's report of 2009.

We have made a decision to go with a new school. There are some concerns about the plan of the school. I am looking for how much the minister thinks it is going to cost. I know that there is asbestos in the trades wing. It is a hazardous substance — there is no place in the Yukon to safely dispose of that. It will have to be trucked out. There is concern about the lead paint that is on the walls. There are ongoing concerns about the air quality and it has been brought up many, many times. Yet, the department chose to keep it, without any actual costs of what it would take to upgrade the facility so that our students and teachers can be safe in there.

I haven't seen any construction building on that. I haven't seen any plans for that. Does the minister have a timeline for the upgrade of the trades wing? We have heard lots of speculation and stuff but I am looking for some hard facts on that.

**Hon. Ms. Taylor:** I just want to reiterate for the member opposite that work is underway. That assessment of the tech ed wing is underway. It hasn't been completed. I don't have any more specific information, but I did refer the member opposite to the Minister of Highways and Public Works, who is undertaking that particular work — the assessment of the tech ed wing.

Of course, the overall intent is to have that tech ed wing ready and upgraded to coordinate at the same time as the opening of the school, so that when you do have bums in seats at F.H. Collins School, that in fact, the tech ed wing would be open at the same time. That is the intent, but, the Minister of Highways and Public Works should be able to perhaps expand on that timeline and be able to provide more details as to the specifications associated with that assessment plan.

That is the best information or intel that I have at my fingertips, but again, it is with Property Management. It is a priority. I think that we have made that known all along. It is a very important part of the new school going forward. We recognize that there is work to be done. It is a relatively new piece of infrastructure when you compare that to the existing F.H. Collins school, so there was merit in seeing that upgraded instead of being replaced. All of that was taken into consideration, but we very much rely on the professionals within our departments, working with consultants and contractors, to make that determination.

A determination was made. There is an assessment that is currently underway, and that will help guide those upgrades going forward.

**Mr. Tredger:** I guess I was a little startled to hear that we determined to keep the tech wing without knowing the actual cost to upgrade it to standard.

We now know that the new F.H. Collins gym will be smaller than the current one, and certainly too small to hold

three classes at the same time, which is what currently F.H. Collins has — three concurrently running classes. The new gym is smaller than the current one so there is room for two classes. There has apparently been this spring — one of the ministers mentioned that there is consideration of keeping the old gym now in play. That might be a solution but, in the meantime, I am wondering if the minister has any suggestions for F.H. Collins staff as to how they are to put three gym classes into space for two.

I am also hearing concern that the labs are much smaller than the current ones and, in fact, when the school was redesigned for the sixth or seventh time, the labs were — because there weren't enough, another one was added but that meant that the labs then were much smaller. There is concern being expressed that there is not room in the labs for tables. It is essential in science classes and in hands-on learning that students have access to tables in areas. I am wondering if the minister has anything new on that.

I have a couple more issues. With the cafeteria, there are still ongoing rumours that there is no dedicated cafeteria area — whether they intend to use the front entrance or something. I know that students like to have a dedicated cafeteria, a place where they can spend their spare time and where they can study together, where they can do things. That is a concern.

I understand that the new sports field that was built was built too small to accommodate a full-size soccer pitch, given how popular soccer is in the territory and the need. Then I heard the Premier talking about “don't worry, there's a new pitch down in Whistle Bend that's going to be built, and that'll be \$6 million or \$7 million, but boy, it will be nice — it will have artificial turf.” I'm wondering if, in our haste to adopt the F.H. Collins school, we have set ourselves up to spend quite a bit more money in the long term because it was underbuilt and a last-minute plan from Alberta that wasn't quite what we wanted or anticipated.

So those are three or four areas. It would be very nice if the minister could elaborate on them and how the school staff is to accommodate that, and whether she still believes that the new school will adequately house 750 students — and the population is growing.

**Hon. Ms. Taylor:** I appreciate the member opposite is completely against the new F.H. Collins school, continues to vote against it and continues to — I can't even recall how many questions have come on the floor of the Legislative Assembly by the member opposite with respect to — well, let's see. I think the member opposite referred to there being not enough learning spaces in the school, when in fact, as I understand, the number of spaces actually supersedes that of the original F.H. Collins — call it what you will.

Then the member opposite made reference that it didn't meet the building code, that it was an ice palace. That's not in fact the case. That was backed up by the City of Whitehorse. Then I think the member opposite made a reference that the tender wasn't going out for another year on the original school, when it was going out within a month.

So the list just keeps growing and growing. I have seen the school. One of the first things I did as Minister of

Education, when I was appointed just over a year ago, was to travel with representatives from F.H. Collins to Edmonton, Alberta to see first-hand the Mother Margaret Mary school — modelled after that particular school, the F.H. Collins school that is currently going up.

There have been significant changes to that particular school, so we took that plan and then we Yukonized that plan. The school design that was provided by Alberta has been successfully built and has been modified to reflect Yukon's needs and to reflect a positive learning environment, not only for today's students, but also those students well into the future.

I want to thank the many individuals who have contributed to those changes and who have contributed their input over the years toward coming up with a design that is fiscally responsible but also reflects, most importantly, the student needs of today and well into the future.

I feel it is going to provide a learning environment that meets the current as well as the long-term needs of the student population. It has the ability to be built upon — to be expanded, if need be — which is a very desirable component of the school that was built in Alberta. One of the changes to that particular school, from where it is in Alberta to where it is here, is actually having an industrial kitchen. The one in Alberta, of course, did not have that component. It did not have a cafeteria and that is for the simple fact that because across the street, there is literally a food court. There is a mall — a shopping centre. We don't have that available to us across the street from F.H. Collins, but in fact, there is an industrial kitchen for the culinary arts program. In addition, there will be a cafeteria space and a home economics room with additional cooking facilities. There is a new dedicated distance learning program, as I mentioned, additional learning studio spaces, enhanced science facilities and increased wireless network capacity. There is going to be a number of First Nation language labs, an elders' lounge, a number of community and education liaison coordinator offices. Instead of one counselling office, there will be two — another modification from the original design in Alberta. There have been a number of changes that have been made to reflect Yukon's needs.

When you look at the current F.H. Collins, it was built for a much larger student population and it was also built at a time when it was Yukon's only high school as well. I think it was built for a capacity of about 1,100 students, if I'm not mistaken. This school is being built for capacity of 750 students. Currently, at F.H. Collins, there are approximately 600 students right now, so there is room for growth in that particular school. As I mentioned, the way it is configured is that there is room for additional expansion down the road if need be.

There are a lot of various features that are very attractive. I know that when the Minister of Highways and Public Works and I had the opportunity to accompany members of F.H. Collins School community as well as a representative from CSFY. It was a beautiful space, a beautiful school with lots of natural light and lots of unique features. Obviously there is

work to be done on the fit-up — the actual furniture — in terms of the lab equipment, the actual tables, chairs and all the furniture that goes with it — a very important component as well. That work is also currently underway — again, going through F.H. Collins school, recognizing what is reusable and what is not, and being able to build on what is needed to fit those needs.

We were also pleased to have a number of school council members who accompanied us on that visit to Edmonton and, of course, we have been working with a bridging consultant at Barr Ryder. We have been able to modify the design, based on consultations with the school community previously and also more current discussions with the school administration. It is a work in progress. As I understand it, the usable space contained in the new school's gymnasium will also be slightly larger than the existing F.H. Collins gym, and that is due to the efficient use of the bleachers. It is an interesting concept, because when I was in that gym in Edmonton, the bleachers were very unique. Because of the way that they almost go simultaneously in sync with the wall, they can expand and, basically, when they come out and when they go in, they are about 18 inches from the wall. Compare that to what we have currently with the older set of bleachers at F.H. Collins. When you are able to utilize those bleachers with the more efficient design of those bleachers, you are actually able to have more readily available space for programming. That is another unique feature.

Additionally, there will be a fitness centre located directly adjacent to the gym in the school design. The gym will have windows that will allow for spectator opportunities. That is something different compared to the one in Edmonton — looking on to the cafeteria space. There are great opportunities.

As I mentioned, the new school design offers some 42 learning spaces, compared to 35 in the previous design, in addition to the space at the technical education building, as I mentioned. We just spent lengthy debate on that. It incorporates spaces for First Nation programming, an elders' lounge and language labs. We have CELC offices with their own kitchen area. We are really quite excited about seeing the outcome of this school.

The Premier and I recently had the opportunity to also take a first-hand look at some progress being made at the F.H. Collins school and had the opportunity to speak with a number of the individuals working on the site and work with the bridging consultant as well. Tremendous progress is being made as we speak. We are quite excited. It is on time and on budget, as I understand. Of course, the Minister of Highways and Public Works would be able to break that down more specifically, but we are very pleased.

In terms of the replacement of the upper track and field, there were a number of options that were explored up front for replacement of those facilities at a number of various locations. We looked at locations from using Vanier Catholic Secondary School to Porter Creek Secondary School. In the end, there was a decision made to focus on the lower field at the F.H. Collins site specifically because the individuals —

staff, administration, students — wanted to ensure that we had a facility there like we do currently. So it has been basically going in the same as what we have had in the past. That work is also well underway.

I am not sure if I am missing anything here in terms of moving forward. I know the member opposite had made reference to whether or not the old gym should be saved or demolished or other options. I refer to the good work of my colleague, the previous Minister of Education, and his work as the chair of the Education Reserve Planning Committee. I know he and I attended the first inaugural meeting of that planning committee just recently — earlier in October. The overarching objective is really to take a look at exploring options and making recommendations to the Government of Yukon for short-, medium- and long-term plans for the use of not only facilities on the education reserve, which encompasses many various facilities including the Teen Parent Centre, the Gadzoodsaa Residence, and the F. H. Collins and Selkirk Elementary schools. There is a very large space identified as party of the overarching education reserve.

This group is comprised of representation from Selkirk Elementary School F.H. Collins Secondary School, the Teen Parent Centre, the Gadzoodsaa residence, the superintendent for that particular area, the representative from Commission scolaire francophone du Yukon, a representative from the City of Whitehorse, Sport Yukon, Kwanlin Dun First Nation, the Ta'an Kwäch'än Council, the Deputy Minister of Education, Deputy Minister of Highways and Public Works and we also have representation from the Riverdale Community Association. It is a rather large group, but we are very pleased with the first meeting of its kind. Looking at the plans going forward for not only those particular facilities, but also the use of the land going forward short, medium and long term — again, looking to maximize the site for student achievement and overall success, maximizing the flexibility of the site for both education and community use of course being as fiscally and environmentally responsible with the site as possible, looking to offer expanded opportunities for providing on-the-land experiences, collaborating with First Nation connections, and also complementing existing and planned facilities in the Riverdale area in the broader context of the City of Whitehorse.

That is why it is critical to also have representation from the City of Whitehorse. The next meeting is this evening. I was just reminded by my colleague, the MLA for Riverdale North. I think it is a progressive group. We had a really good discussion at the first meeting about the terms of reference going forward and talking about the reserve itself. There is a lot of discussion to be had. I know that there will probably be presentations made available — whether it is through Highways and Public Works, or it could be the bridging consultant, Barr Ryder, or it could be other entities coming in to present to the group.

I want to thank all of the representatives who have agreed to provide their time and effort in support of this planning going forward. I think it is very timely, obviously, and that

will help determine again where we go with those facilities and also current and future use of that land.

**Mr. Silver:** Thank you to the officials of the department for being here today.

Madam Chair, in all of the news that has been going on this week, we missed a huge story in education. For the record, I want to put it into the record here today in Committee. This is from the *Whitehorse Star*, and it is titled, “Dawson City boys strike junior volleyball gold”. I am not going to go on too much about the whole article, but I will say there is a quote here from the captain, Zack Bartholomeus, a grade 10 student. He is very excited. “We’ve been working hard all season. I’m really happy.” By the way, Zack also was the MVP for the tournament as well.

There is a great quote here from coach Steve Laszlo. “It’s special,” he says. “They’ve been a special group since I’ve started with them in grade 7. They’ve worked hard and it’s really neat to see. They were a really determined bunch this year. They wanted it and I think it showed on the court.”

I just wanted to congratulate, alongside Zach Bartholomeus, also the other Knights: Jacob Caley, Caleb Verdonk, John Kolpin, John Dagostin, Will Connellan and Connor Fellers. Congratulations to the boys for striking gold for the Knights. It’s good to get these on the record Madam Chair.

I am going to start with my questions for the minister on the labour force. This is an issue that I have been talking with the Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in education department for quite some time.

Since 2009, the Department of Education has been working on a labour market framework to guide its employment and education strategies. First Nation employment is currently off the table in the labour market strategy, despite Yukon having a 25-percent First Nation employment rate.

A question for the minister would be: What is the department intending to do with First Nation employment, when it seems they have been left out of a key strategy tool? Also, it has been proposed in Dawson that a fifth pillar be added to the labour market framework. This fifth pillar would be for First Nation employment. Has the department considered this?

**Hon. Ms. Taylor:** I would like to thank the MLA for Klondike for his accolades for the home-town talent. It never ceases to amaze me — all the talent we have in every single school. I am constantly reminded that I can’t take sides when it comes to individual schools, but there are significant talents in each of our schools, and Robert Service School in Klondike is but one of them.

With respect to the labour market framework, as the member opposite made reference, that work has been underway and continues to be a work in progress. As I understand it, there is work afoot right now in terms of being able to add a separate pillar to the labour market framework, as we know it today, for a First Nation employment labour market strategy.

We're actually working specifically with FNEC, in terms of working to see how we can do that best and collaboratively. We're very supportive of that approach. Obviously, with First Nation development corporations — we have many discussions, in terms of how we can more effectively engage with Yukon First Nations, whether it be with governments, whether it be with individuals, whether it be with community organizations, in terms of enhancing Yukon's labour market. We definitely need to do a better job. I recognize that for one thing, that's to be certain.

Working with Yukon College through the President's Advisory Committee on First Nation Initiatives with Yukon College and the respective work they have with all their campus committees, we recognize that it's a great approach, and those discussions continue on, and they have been for the past, I believe, number of months.

**Mr. Silver:** Thank you to the minister for the answer. I would be remiss if I didn't also mention that the grade 9-10 girls of Dawson City of Robert Service School also brought home a bronze medal in the tournament last week — so congratulations to them as well.

I'm going to go to the Canada-Yukon job grant. The Canada-Yukon job grant is a training support program to assist employers by providing training for existing or potential staff. The program was developed jointly between the territorial and the federal governments and has taken the place of the former business training fund. The program is funded one-third by the federal government, territorial government and the employer. Special modifications were made to the Yukon variation of the program to make it more accessible to small businesses. The question would be for the minister: How many people have applied to the Canada-Yukon job grant program thus far? Of that number, how many, if any, have been denied?

**Hon. Ms. Taylor:** Madam Chair, this has been the source of many discussions over the past year on getting to this Canada job fund. Originally, it was coined at the Canada job grant. Its original iteration was far different from what it is today. Again, I do credit the Council of the Federation, comprised of all of the Premiers, who mandated each of the labour market ministers to come up with a better deal for Canada and to come up with the best deal available for Canadians. The federal government, through the federal minister, has made it abundantly clear they want to see more skin in the game, so to speak, for employers — hence more employer-sponsored training. So how do you do that? You can do that by helping to leverage funding through our respective government and the Government of Canada.

Obviously, we have benefited from labour market agreements over the past — since 2009. That agreement came to an end at the end of March of this year. We were tasked about a year ago to negotiate a new agreement to put added dollars in the hands of employers to train existing and potential workers. That work has resulted in a number of bilateral agreements with each of our provincial and territorial governments and it also included our own Canada-Yukon job

fund agreement that our own Yukon Member of Parliament and I signed earlier back in September, as I seem to recall.

The agreement includes three streams of funding: the job grant itself, employment services and supports and employer-sponsored training. I think that seeing that initiative come to fruition was an important milestone for our territory and also for all of Canada. As I mentioned, we were able to host a meeting — myself — with various stakeholders to discuss that proposed Canada job grant when it was first being touted and really, to obtain that preliminary feedback and suggestions for consideration. We had also distributed an open-ended questionnaire to various stakeholders which was also distributed by their respective networks through the Chambers of Commerce, TIA Yukon — through, I believe, ARTSnet — to the Chamber of Mines. You name it — there were probably about 23 different stakeholders represented there at that meeting.

That gave us a lot of great feedback in terms of how we could improve that original iteration of the job grant. Thanks to their input — I believe that we weren't able to accomplish everything that we wanted to, but we were able to accomplish a number of changes to that original program, which have helped to strengthen that program overall.

As the member opposite alluded to, we were actually originally slated to receive a reduced funding agreement by 50 percent. So originally, when the LMAs were first rolled out back in 2009, we had benefitted by having \$500,000 in LMA, which was then complemented by an additional \$500,000, thanks to economic stimulus funding at the time. That funding was actually slated to come right off so, not only were we faced with potential reduction of half of that \$1 million to \$500,000 right off the bat, we were also faced with some significant changes by the original iteration.

By working with Northwest Territories and Nunavut, we were able to secure that approximately \$1 million each year for the next five years, and that was obviously an added bonus in funding for each of the territories, which effectively maintains our existing level of funding that we have enjoyed. In consideration of small business, we were also able to negotiate a provision where employers with fewer than 50 employees are not required to come up with their full third of the direct cost of training; rather, the provision was changed so that half of that one-third contribution by employers can now be counted as wages or wage replacement for the trainee.

We also were able to secure a commitment to come up with an evaluation — my apologies; it is actually a six-year job fund agreement instead of five, as I referenced before — so after two years, to really take a hard look and see how successful the program has been — the uptake, in terms of the quality of applications, in terms of where the demand is coming from, what it didn't fund and so forth. Starting next year, in 2015 — and we have been working as labour market ministers across the country to really start forming the essence of that evaluation so that by the time we roll around to the end of 2015, we will know if it is working or not, or where it needs to be re-tweaked and so forth. That was a major win that we wanted to see happen.

I also just want to make note that, when it comes to employment services and supports, one of the three pillars contained within the Canada job fund — it was very critical that that stay, because when we talk about Yukon's labour market and the challenges that we have, we have such varying degrees of unemployment rates in the territory. When you look at Whitehorse, for example, you have a relatively low employment rate — and even in the communities, there is relatively low unemployment as well. We really need to do a better job in terms of matching up and training up individuals, especially those under-represented in the labour market force, whether those are persons with disabilities, First Nation individuals, and youth, in particular — we are seeing that clear across the country: youth unemployment being much higher than the rest of Canadians.

I've had a number of meetings. Even on Friday, I met with the Learning Disabilities Association of Yukon, LDAY, who is a major recipient of these programs. Challenge Yukon is another recipient, for example. Skookum Jim job outreach centre is doing some fantastic work in terms of reaching out to those underrepresented groups and providing entry-level skillset development to be able to get people through the door, in terms of putting a resume together, really identifying what your skillset is today, how you can get to the next level and how they can match those training opportunities through our programs available in Advanced Education, Government of Canada, but also with industry, and see where the demand is.

It is a collection of various partners working together, but these agreements, under employment support services and supports is really critical. You will see that that stream is still there. It's also complemented by a new labour market agreement for persons with disabilities, which also gives us that added capacity to be able to help deliver that continued stream of programming by groups like LDAY — or it could be YCOD or it could be Challenge Yukon, for example. That's an additional \$1.25 million on top of the \$1 million we receive through the Canada job fund.

Again, we're very appreciative to the Government of Canada on that front. That's the first time ever that any of the three territories have received those dollars. It has really helped us to be more flexible and more creative in how we continue to deliver these supports.

Of course, the next stream is the employer-sponsored training. We are working with many of our partners in determining the nature of the training, who receive it, and coming up with that broader scope for training activities and costs to be covered. We know that we've been trying to include flexibility, in terms of rolling out this program. I know that travel costs, for example, were not included as part of this funding mechanism under the Canada job grant. We heard that loud and clear through the employers — that Yukon College may not be able to provide that training, or perhaps it's the Federation of Labour that can't provide that level of training, but maybe they require that training to be delivered Outside. That's what that travel cost component comes into play.

We've asked the department to see what we can do with our third of the training complement to see if we can help fund

the travel component of that. There was a business training fund that was offered by the Whitehorse Chamber of Commerce. I think it was the Leader of the Official Opposition, who claimed, the Member for Whitehorse Centre, who erroneously claimed that we had cut that program. We had not. It was actually funded through CanNor, the Government of Canada funding, and that funding expired. We have been working — and we continue to work with the Whitehorse Chamber of Commerce under the parameters of the federal program to instill more flexibility and good time turnaround on the program as well.

We just recently met in Toronto as labour market ministers. We had compared some notes and initial inquiries about how much uptake there was of some of these programs. Obviously, we only got our program out the door in the last month and half — two months at best — like many jurisdictions around the country. We have not had a lot of applications, but compared relatively to other provinces and territories, we are actually ahead of the game. I am kind of surprised at that, but as of early November — and I do not have the statistics for November — we had nine applications that were received under the Canada job grant, most of which — seven — had been approved and two had been rejected.

Under the employment services and supports, we have had a number of applications go out the door for that. In fact, a lot of that has been approved already. So under the Canada job grant, we have had a total of just under \$24,000 that has been approved. Under employment services and supports, we have had almost \$535,000 committed for the fiscal year. We are doing our best to promote it. I have had a number of stakeholder meetings with chambers of commerce looking for an opportunity to meet with First Nation development corporations as well about how to better access these funding opportunities. Our department is doing outreach through the labour market framework through the various working groups that we have in play.

I want to thank everyone who did provide thoughtful contributions from each of our stakeholders over the past year and those who provided input, providing our government with the ability to negotiate an agreement that better suits our unique labour market.

**Chair:** Prior to taking the next question, would members like a brief recess?

**All Hon. Members:** Agreed.

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

*Recess*

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

We are continuing general debate in Vote 3, Department of Education.

**Mr. Silver:** I do appreciate the comments from the minister about the Canada-Yukon job grant. I don't believe she answered the question, though, so I will ask the question again, which was: How many people have applied to the Canada-Yukon job grant program?

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

**Mr. Silver:** You did? I didn't hear it. Okay, I'll have to check Hansard for that.

I will move on though. The minister did mention the concern of the program and the ineligibility of travel costs for training within Canada and no eligibility for international training, period. I totally agree, while the Yukon College is a great school for offering many of these programs and courses, the reality still is in the north that there are a lot of employers who need to send their employees out of the territory for specialized training. The minister did mention that they were looking into funding and I was wondering if she could be a little more specific about that particular statement and whether this is a commitment from the Yukon government to help ease the burden on employers to access training outside of the territory. That is the end of that question.

I guess I will also bookend that with school portraits. There is an issue that has been brought to my attention up in Dawson. I guess the person who — Wilson Studios — is normally doing the contract, isn't. Can the minister update the House as to the state of the school portraits? I know that there are some concerns from parents up to Dawson. There is also some capacity up there. Lots of different folks are wondering how they can get into the game and apply for the contract to take these school portraits. I will leave it at that for now.

**Hon. Ms. Taylor:** I did answer the question from the MLA for Klondike with respect to the uptake on the Canada job grant and I don't want to go through that again, but he can reflect upon my comments earlier this afternoon.

With respect to the travel, as I had mentioned in my earlier remarks, this was indeed flagged as a great issue of importance in terms of being able to access training opportunities for the reasons that I had outlined earlier and also the MLA for Klondike had reiterated — having that added flexibility to be able to deliver training by others, other than Yukon College or the campuses or another training institution outside that may, in fact, be outside of the territory. As I mentioned, I have asked the department to take a look at a couple of different opportunities for funding travel. We have to be working within the confines with the Government of Canada who does oversee this program ultimately. But you know, even looking at the Canada job grant, for example, it's the third to be sponsored by the recipient — by the employer themselves in support of their employee or a prospective employee — with the other third coming from the Government of Canada and then the other third coming from the Yukon government. If it's not eligible under the Government of Canada — the job grant and so forth — if there is any way that we can help provide that training component through our third, that's one way. There is also the third stream in addition to the Canada job grant and the employer supports and services. The third plank within the Canada job fund speaks to employer-sponsored training.

We are working with all of our stakeholders right now to further define that stream and see whether or not we can work with Canada to actually make travel a component that can actually be used in support of the training initiatives. There

are a couple of venues that we are looking at right now, but we recognize — and that continues to come up and was something that was funded under the business training fund and administered by the chamber of commerce before it expired last June because of the Government of Canada's funding agreement with them.

We very much recognize the importance of travel being an important component of training, accessing training opportunities and, as I mentioned, we have a couple of different initiatives in support of that. I've lost my train of thought.

The member opposite had made reference to school photos, and I am familiar with this issue. As I understand it, back in June or July — I think it was — the Department of Education had collaborated with the tender management system through the Department of Highways and Public Works' new way of procurement. It was chosen that — in fact to be able to obtain more interest prior to that, I believe school photos or portraits had been undertaken with Wilson Studios. He has done a great job. I am very familiar with those photos over the years.

Working through the procurement system — the new tender management system, administered through Highways and Public Works — we had received the recommendation to proceed with an expression of interest to see whether or not there were any other entities out there or any other companies or proprietors.

We issued that back in June or July, and there were four responses from four different companies or individuals. Then following in July — I believe it was in July or August; I don't have the specific dates on that — there was a request for proposal following that. Based on that level of interest, there was an RFP that was issued. At that time, there were zero responses. So we were in a situation where we needed to make a move in terms of how do we get the school portraits completed in the most timely manner, keeping in mind that perhaps we were already behind.

So there was a decision made to directly award to Wilson Studios, as we had in previous years. That is the case. In terms of working — I know that Wilson Studios is doing the best they can to meet all the respective school requests and priorities, given the time frame allotted at the end of the day.

I know that, going forward, the department will be convening a meeting, or convening probably another session, with interested companies or individuals to see why there wasn't an uptake when there was an RFP that was put out, or that was issued, back in July or August. We want to know if there's a better way of handling this particular contract, going forward. So that's where we're at. I don't have much more to add to that.

**Mr. Silver:** I appreciate the answer from the minister. I do know a couple of specific folks who did want to apply. I believe the contract was for the whole of the Yukon, and I think that was one of the biggest problems. In Dawson, I know there were a couple of companies that could do it specifically for Dawson, but weren't willing to do the travel.

I'm going to ask one more question and then I'm going to turn it over to my colleague from Takhini-Kopper King. I want to get a statement here from the minister on a previous statement about temporary teachers. It's more of a clarification here. We'll start with a quote. Earlier this spring, the minister said — and I quote: "I would remind the member opposite that temporary employees are also members of the YTA, they're covered by all the benefits of the YTA collective agreement, they're paid at the same rate and they have the same benefits they would if their jobs were permanent — and also as part of the staffing protocol, as I mentioned."

Being a former teacher, I found that interesting. If I were to ask the question, are these temporary teachers considered to be in the first tier of the staffing protocol — in other words, are they considered first for permanent jobs — I believe the answer would be no. Once again, if the minister could confirm that, yes or no. If they were on a short-term contract, do they get the same pension benefits? I believe the answer would be no. Can they walk into a bank and get a mortgage while on a temporary contract? Probably not, given the uncertainty surrounding the future of employment.

There are some differences between the positions if you are on a temporary, compared to a full-time equivalent, teacher. I do appreciate what the minister is saying, but there are other considerations when we are talking about the temporary teachers and how they do differ from the full-time staff.

These are just a few of those issues and there are more, but I just wanted to ask the minister, with these comments once again, if she can comment on whether or not that is true. Also, would the minister still stand by her statement that they are treated the same way as if their jobs were permanent, or does she recognize that in fact there are some differences?

Once again, if there is recognition of these differences — and if these are actually true — is there a plan for the minister to address these differences?

**Hon. Ms. Taylor:** I thank the member opposite for his question. I would concur that there are differences. I can't say whether or not going into the bank, not having that full-time employment — because, as I have always mentioned, temporary teachers are hired for those defined periods for temporary employment to fill in those times when you are there to replace a permanent teacher who may be on a long-term leave. There are many different kinds of leaves, of course, to fill in. At the end of the day, I have always spoken to temporary employment beyond two years, but even if a person was on a year, they would still be paid the same and they would still have the benefits under the collective agreement. I would concur that, obviously, it doesn't have as much certainty or long-term stability employment as your full-time equivalent to a teacher.

We recognize and, believe me, I hear concerns as well from temporary teachers and I respect that. We have had a number of meetings with the Yukon Teachers Association, trying to work through these issues and challenges, because eventually you have these individuals — permanent teachers

— coming back into their substantive positions, so we need to honour that position and we need to honour that permanent employee. You are absolutely right, next in line would be the temporary teacher, beyond that year or two years, I believe it is. Again, as I mentioned, the hiring protocol was changed from those having less than three years' service to those having a minimum of one year's service. That was made in February of this year as well. Again, we recognize that there are some challenges — to be clear, there are challenges.

Our officials are discussing these issues with YTA to try to resolve them in a mutually beneficial way. There have been, I think, three meetings, if not more, thus far in the past few months. I'll leave it at that.

**Ms. White:** I thank the department officials for being here and I'm grateful for the opportunity to ask questions under Advanced Education.

My questions today are pretty focused on one very particular aspect of the Advanced Education department and that would be under the nominee program. I am curious — how many nominee workers are currently working in the territory?

**Hon. Ms. Taylor:** With respect to the nominee program — we often talk about this as being part of couple of programs — a couple of streams — that we administer as part of the immigration plank under the Yukon labour market framework. We have been administering it since 2007. In particular, we administer a couple of streams — the critical impact worker and skilled worker streams, as they apply to the Yukon nominee program. It is but one venue for helping employers fill positions crucial to their business with individuals from foreign countries who intend to become permanent residents. That is something that is very specific — very different from that of — this and the federal temporary foreign worker program, in that when a nominee application is accepted that automatically triggers an application for that permanent residence. That is unlike the temporary foreign worker program that the Government of Canada administers. We do not administer the temporary foreign worker program in the Yukon.

To be very clear, this is really meant to be used when in fact Canadians — any Canadian or permanent resident worker — cannot be hired to fill the position that is being filled by the nominee. That is done by specific means of advertising requirements under the program. Those advertising requirements have really been strengthened and enhanced, especially over the past couple of years, particularly.

Since 2007, we have had a number of nominee applicants who have been approved through the program. In fact, it just came to my attention that in this current fiscal year to date, we have had 77 who have applied and been approved — 77.

Since 2007 — and again I am not sure how accurate this is, because this is really just a note from September — so it probably could be a few more — but since 2007, 899 applicant nominees were approved through the program. Most of these were for the critical impact worker — about two-thirds of those — and then the remainder were in the skilled worker stream — that program.



When you look at that compared to the rest of the workforce in Yukon — the labour force statistics provided — it is less than one percent of our entire labour force. It is not substantive, but that said, it is an important component for many businesses that have tried and have obviously proven that they were not able to secure a Canadian worker or a permanent resident worker who was able to subscribe to that particular job.

I think the criteria for the nominee program should be on-line. As I mentioned, foreign nationals require appropriate education for the position and their qualifications have to meet Canadian standards. Especially those entering the critical impact worker stream need to demonstrate that they have had at least six months of work experience in the same kind of position. For the skilled worker stream, that minimum is 12 months as proscribed under the federal program. There are many different employment and immigration programs available in the territory, primarily through the federal streams that the federal government does administer, including their own temporary foreign worker program.

**Ms. White:** I thank the minister for those numbers.

Currently in 2014, we have had 77 new applicants. Since 2007, we have had 899 applicants — I would guess, successful applicants — which is fantastic for people who wish to move to Canada. It's a fantastic thing.

My question is: In 2014 — seven years since we began — how many people are currently working under the nominee title? The minister pointed out that there are the differences between the critical worker and the skilled worker — so six-months' and 12-months' experience. I understand that, but within all Yukon nominees, how many, currently in 2014 — we can include the 77 new applicants — work within our businesses?

**Hon. Ms. Taylor:** Permanent residents have up to two years to receive their permanent residence under the program. That is what we are able to keep track of, literally speaking. When you look at 2013-14, during that year we had 130 who were approved. Then coupled with the 77 that are currently in this fiscal — and we're not done the fiscal year so far — that's below the cap that is provided to the Yukon. We're provided caps so we're well below that cap. There just hasn't been that demand and that's a good thing. Totally, we have 207 individuals who, through the Yukon nominee program, we're able to keep track of. But when they do receive their permanent residence, they may stay within the territory. They may go to the Northwest Territories. They may go to British Columbia. I'm not entirely sure if the federal government keeps track of each of these individuals, but it's 207 within these two years.

**Ms. White:** I thank the minister for her answers. I think that once someone puts in their two-year time with a business and they have gone through the application for their permanent residency, welcome to Canada and go wherever you like. I think that's fantastic and I think it's a wonderful way to welcome new citizens — new residents to Canada.

With the number of 207, how many businesses currently have nominee employees? How many employers have nominee employees within their ranks?

**Hon. Ms. Taylor:** I don't have that specific information at my fingertips.

**Ms. White:** Would the minister endeavour to get me that information?

**Hon. Ms. Taylor:** What information I do have, of course, is just the number of nominees in various categories, whether they be skilled or the critical impact worker categories. With respect to the specific businesses, I'll endeavour to take a look for the member opposite and see what we can come up with.

**Ms. White:** That leads me, very nicely, to the next question. What sort of oversight does Advanced Education do for nominees and the businesses that employ them? How does the Department of Education keep track of working relationships, what's going on, and those processes? Could I get an explanation?

**Hon. Ms. Taylor:** There are a number of initiatives underway, some of which I have tried to speak to during Question Period, as good as that gets. The Department of Education works in partnership with Yukon Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board to ensure that employers applying for foreign workers demonstrate established health and safety programs in all of their workplaces.

As I have spoken to at great length on the floor of the Assembly, when a new foreign worker arrives in the Yukon via this nominee program, the worker, the employer and the Department of Education all come together and they meet and sign an agreement in which the rights, roles and responsibilities of each of the parties are spelled out. They are clearly defined and they sign that off.

Through our own immigration unit, our Advanced Education unit, staff meet regularly with immigrants at the Multicultural Centre of the Yukon, to which we also provide funding in support of settlement services, to answer questions, familiarize themselves with programs available through some of our partners, like the Yukon Tourism Education Council. They administer the ready-to-work program, for example, and other settlement services. We also offer the same service in French, on demand, at I'AFY. We provide orientation sessions for nominees — those are new, incoming nominees and their employers.

As I mentioned, through YTEC and through the actual Multicultural Centre of the Yukon, we do provide I think over \$200,000 together with the Government of Canada. Actually, I think it's more. I don't have the specific amount here. I know that, through our own Yukon government, we provide about \$150,000 for the fiscal year to YTEC in support of integration services. That does not include the settlement service dollars. That comes in through the Government of Canada as well, which is even more substantive. That is available to all newcomers.

We also have, obviously, written resources, the *Foreign Workers' Guide to Employment in Yukon: Rights and*

*Responsibilities*, for foreign workers entering the Yukon through the nominee program. Obviously, we take care to protect the integrity of the program itself and staff are very trained to verify information and to ensure that applications adhere to policies that we have in place.

As I have mentioned on a number of occasions, if there are any questions, if there are any — you know, in terms of complaints or examples of abuse going on in the program, if there is wrongdoing, whether on the part of the employer or the employee, we will check into that and we will investigate that to the nth degree. How that investigation unfolds really depends on the nature of the investigation and what the nature of the allegation is. It may be dealt with internally through the Department of Education through our own independent investigator or it may be referred to the RCMP — a criminal matter. It could be referred to CBSA, through Immigration Canada, depending on what the nature of the wrongdoing is, or what the alleged abuse is.

Any and all calls are acted on immediately and again, through that tripartite agreement, we want to make sure that right at the onset — before that individual starts employment — the employer and the employee know full well what their roles and what their responsibilities are. There are steps that are taken and it has been a program that has worked relatively well. I know that it was not impacted during the renewal of the federal temporary foreign worker program. It continues on, but, again, we continue to work even at the national level with — getting back to that labour market information — how we can better share resources with the federal government to ensure integrity in the program, so that we are able to cross-reference any and all information so that we can best respond to any allegations or any wrongdoing within the program.

**Ms. White:** I have spent, in the last number of weeks, quite a bit of time on the government's Education website under the immigration clause. It is pretty heavy reading and I am an English first-language speaker. That is my native tongue. It would be a daunting process for anyone who — English is their second, third or even fourth language — and nothing but respect to people who speak that many languages, of course.

Under the Yukon nominee program forms and documents, there is a whole section of things that comes up. We've got application handbooks, the application form, the authority to release personal information, settlement and retention plan, guaranteed employment offer, tripartite agreement template, employer participant monitor form, employee participant monitor form, skilled worker criteria and the critical impact worker criteria. Each of those documents is complex and it's wordy, because they're important documents. I understand that.

When the minister just spoke of the tripartite agreement — and having never had to sign one or be part of one, I opened it up, because it is referenced under the employer participant monitor form and the employee participant monitor form. So I have some questions about those documents.

In the tripartite agreement template — and I'm not sure if this is what is followed or if it's just kind of the loose interpretation of what is followed — it says it sets things like wages, so it has a part for where you would put in the wage.

My question is: If we go back further, are those wages based on — this might just take me a second, because of trying to navigate the website, but there is a section — a couple more clicks where it takes you to the — and I've gone the wrong way — federal wage scale. So it has low, mid and high of what it is. When someone is designing their tripartite agreement, are wages that are picked based on that? Are they wages that meet Yukon's minimum wage standard?

**Hon. Ms. Taylor:** Just going back to that tripartite agreement, all those agreements are signed off in person. That information is on the website. I know the department is reviewing all the information on the website again to make it more user-friendly and make it more relevant, recognizing there are legal terms and these are legal documents.

The tripartite agreement is really the opportunity for everyone to come together in the room, to sit down and have that exchange of information, so it's not just, "here you go with your information; here's your application form pertaining to this aspect of the program." It's really a to-and-fro discussion and meant to be as an information exchange. It really lends to the rationale as to why we have those sessions that are promoted by immigration staff through the Department of Education — again, staff meetings, face to face, providing those workshops available at the multicultural centre, whether it's through YTEC in joint collaboration with Advanced Education, and so forth.

Indeed, as I understand, we are also about the only jurisdiction in the country to have that tripartite agreement in place. In fact, we started it — I'm not sure if others have carried on. I've spoken at great length about it on the national scene, but it does set us apart. Obviously it's a busy shop in Advanced Education, but we have some great expertise. We have some employees who actually used to work with Immigration Canada. They're very up to speed with these programs and used to be immigrants themselves, so they're very knowledgeable and I do pay them good credit for instilling that integrity and having themselves in those exact shoes, so to speak.

In terms of the wage rates, that is where we get into the federal classification of different wage rates — prevailing wage rates — for different categories of work. Prevailing wage rate is what it is called, and it is under different national occupation classifications — the acronym is NOC. That is in fact established by the federal government under ESDC — Employment and Social Development Canada. They have that sole ability to set those rates. What we have said all along when it comes down to labour market information, whether it is Yukon, British Columbia, Alberta, Nova Scotia or Manitoba, we recognize that there is greater opportunity and need to work collaboratively together ensuring local labour market information, just to make sure that the information that is being used by Canada does reflect the local labour market conditions.

Those discussions continue. We have had ongoing discussions with the federal minister and the ESDC officials, and we have continued to have those discussions, as recently as our FPT of local labour market ministers in the country just recently. Just a reminder that employers subscribing to the nominee program are required to advertise at the prevailing minimum wage rates. Some of those wage rates have changed as of the beginning of October and they are compelled to advertise at that. I keep coming back — it is really trying to promote the use of Canadians first and foremost at every opportunity. But there are times when they are not able to receive any applications and they try, try again — whatever extenuating circumstance — and that is where the nominee programs have come into play.

**Ms. White:** I thank the minister for that. I am sure the department does excellent work and I appreciate what has just been said — that we are one of the only jurisdictions with a tripartite, which means that government has taken responsibility over — I would like to think — the health and well-being of the nominee within that agreement. It talks about health insurance being covered by the employer for the time that they are here until they access their permanent residency. It talks about — if they are not in Canada, flights here and home — if that is the case, and all these things that are laid out. I really appreciate that, and I appreciate the people who are doing that work. It was just for clarification about what those were.

There are also two other sections — the employee participant monitor form and the employer participant monitor form. There are some really interesting things when you scroll through these and they are very similar. They ask very similar questions, including things like: Do the duties and tasks you perform in your position match those agreed to in the job description? Are you working the hours agreed upon in the tripartite agreement? Do you work overtime? If yes, how often? Are you compensated for overtime at agreed rates? I have questions about that line right there.

I was under the impression that any overtime hours were to be covered under the *Employment Standards Act*, and it would not be an amount agreed upon by the employer. Can the minister elaborate on that please?

**Hon. Ms. Taylor:** Madam Chair, to be very clear, any and all nominees who come through the nominee program who are employed under that tripartite agreement must comply with any and all laws. Just like employers and the employees, there are rights and responsibilities. They do not deviate from our existing laws and regulatory regimes. The monitor forms that the member opposite makes reference to are all reviewed and they highlight issues to perhaps be flagged for any wrongdoing or potential for abuse but that is, in fact, why we do review those very forms so if there are any irregular areas needing to be highlighted in terms of further investigation, then so be it.

**Ms. White:** The last sheet I was reading from was the employee form and now this is the employer form, which is: Is the nominee working hours as agreed to in the TPA? Do you ask for overtime? Do you compensate for overtime at

agreed rates? I'm just looking for clarification at that language — at agreed rates. Those agreed rates are based on the *Employment Standards Act* and cannot be deviated from. If they made \$16 an hour, overtime would be whatever that amount was. It's not that they can decide on a different amount for overtime. Madam Chair, I see the officials and the minister shaking their heads "no" so I will move on from that one, but I thank them for that.

The next question is: How often are these employer participant monitor forms or the employee participant monitor forms submitted and how are they submitted? What is the process for that?

**Hon. Ms. Taylor:** According to the department, those forms — I should back up. There are check-in times every six months by our actual employees within Advanced Education. They do a check-in with both the employer and the employee.

In terms of submitting those monitor forms, though, as I understand it, that could vary. It could be every month; it could be two months. But what I do know has been set in stone is that, at six months, there is an official check-in by the department. I would have to get a little bit further clarity from the department in terms of how often those monitor forms are submitted, checked, verified and so forth.

**Ms. White:** I appreciate the six-month check-in with department officials and I think that is important. Are those done face to face or over the phone? Are they done separately between an employee and an employer? Are employees able to talk without the employers present? Are they in the office? Can I just get a bit more of an elaboration about how that process works?

**Hon. Ms. Taylor:** This would be something that would be discussed at the time of signing off on that tripartite agreement in terms of talking about how to check in, whether that is electronically, whether that's on the phone or whether that is at the specific workplace. Of course, that could change throughout the course of employment, depending on the needs of the employer and the employee. Those are separate. The check-ins, though — to be very clear — are not just one session — so, separate. That would be something that would be decided based on a specific preference at the time of the tripartite agreement, or that could be changed or altered down the road too.

**Ms. White:** I have told the minister before, in places like the parking lot, that I struggle with French telephone interviews. I speak fluent French. Face to face, I have no issues but, over the phone, I have to really concentrate hard and I can't be distracted at all. I am just wondering how that works.

When we talk about an electronic check-in, can the minister just elaborate what that is? Is it a questionnaire? Is it an e-mail back and forth? What is an electronic check-in?

**Hon. Ms. Taylor:** I would assume that would be in the form of an e-mail.

**Ms. White:** The minister, in a couple of statements previous, said that the check-ins didn't happen with both the employer and the employee. If we are only doing an electronic check-in, is there any way to know that the employee is able

to write freely — if they are using a computer at their employer's, for example? Is there any way to know if someone is not standing over their shoulder or approving what gets written? Is there any way to know that the employee is able to freely speak of their experience if something is going poorly?

**Hon. Ms. Taylor:** I can't speak for specific circumstances, but if the individual feels more confident in having a phone conversation or having a one-on-one discussion, by all means — that is what I said. It may have been at the tripartite agreement that they agreed to have something separate. It could have been electronic. It could have been a phone call. It could have been a visit here. That could change.

If there are any threats or any alleged abuse or a violation of that agreement — by all means, bring that to our attention and certainly make that available, and we can get investigating on any and all complaints or any alleged abuse. There are actions or retributions for that instead, and it could be handled by various authorities. We want to make it as welcoming an environment as possible for employees to feel safe and welcomed, and we want to ensure compliance, integrity and quality assurance throughout the duration of the life of that agreement.

That is something we strive for at every turn. We are trying to look at all venues possible to help strengthen that integrity at all turns.

Generally speaking, I think it has worked relatively well. It has been a relatively successful program throughout its duration. When you take a look at the temporary foreign worker program administered through the Government of Canada and what precipitated those changes, those were changes that we had already pretty much instilled through a nominee like the tripartite agreement.

It's something that we continue to monitor and ensure that we do have quality assurance instilled in the program. To the point of making information more user-friendly on the website, I would concur, obviously, that there's room for improvement. The department staff are aware of that as well, and working. That's just one angle in terms of getting information available. That's why we work pretty seamlessly with our service providers, like YTEC and the administration of the multicultural centre, and obviously through strengthening organizations as well. Around the territory, we see organizations flourishing — again making Yukon a very vibrant, welcoming environment for our immigrant population who will soon become, within two years, permanent residents and contributing members of our society. They have helped our economy flourish and they've really added to the quality of life, as we have come to know here in Yukon.

**Ms. White:** I agree with the minister that our new faces in the territory have made it a much more vibrant place than when both the minister and I were growing up. You know, it wasn't until we left town that we got to have ethnic food and conversations with people with foreign accents. So it's an exciting time.

I don't doubt the integrity of the department, just to be perfectly clear. I'm just trying to flesh out what people's options are, and to know that the department is on the side of the nominees is really important. I'm just trying to understand how the checks and balances work. It's not that I am questioning the intentions of the department. I appreciate the work that they are doing. I am just trying to understand more of how it gets carried out.

I asked earlier about how many businesses in the territory had nominees and wasn't able to get a clear answer. Does the department ever do site visits to businesses that have nominee employers?

**Hon. Ms. Taylor:** Madam Chair, that is very much a possibility and that has been done, whether it's through the Department of Education, or whether it's through Yukon Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board. I believe that they have more boots on the ground and that is why partnership with them is so critical in administering this program and ensuring the health and safety of the workplace. I don't know how often that is done, but obviously if something is triggered that could be irregular, or something is flagged, then we will do that.

**Ms. White:** It looks like I might have a question for the Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board, which will appear this week.

One of the reasons why I'm trying to figure out — when I asked how many businesses have — and just to be clear, I said “employers” last time and I actually meant “nominee employees”. When I was trying to figure out how many businesses had those nominee employees and what kind of oversight the Department of Education had — because I understand the six-month check-ins and the periodic e-mails or phone calls, or the electronic transmissions, but it's more of what kind of happens on a day-to-day basis for someone — what happens if a complaint is filed against an employer who has nominees, by a nominee? What are the steps that are taken once a complaint is filed?

**Hon. Ms. Taylor:** I thank the member opposite for her question. As I mentioned before, the first step would be to verify the nature of the complaint, or the nature of the alleged abuse or violation of the agreement, then try to determine what that is: if that is a matter that would fall under the RCMP, or if that would be a matter that would fall under Immigration Canada, or if that would be a matter that could be adhered to by the Department of Education, within the confines of our annex agreement with the Government of Canada to administer these two streams of the program.

It takes a conversation to determine the full scope and breadth of the actual alleged complaint, or the concern coming forward, and then being able to readily identify who is following up. Of course, we would be tracking that all along. Sometimes it may require, as I mentioned, an independent investigator who we have hired from time to time to administer investigations — again depending on the source of the complaint or the nature.

**Ms. White:** I appreciate the streams of investigation and how it is important to be thorough.

If found guilty, is an employer able to reapply to hire other nominees under the program?

**Hon. Ms. Taylor:** Without giving specific incidents, it's depending on the nature — whether or not it is a legitimate, alleged abuse or a violation of the concern — and depending on the extent of the violation or the abuse. We have had employers who do not comply within the terms of the agreement. Again, it can be wide-reaching or not. They may, in fact, be banned from the program.

It is for a specific period of time. It's up to three years. It is three years for being banned in the program. We have had employers who have been banned from the program since 2007, and so forth, but I don't have that information at my fingertips. There is that ability.

Likewise, employees can also have their agreement taken back as well, obviously, and there are repercussions for that. Both streams are investigated and then it is determined what the actions are.

**Ms. White:** If an employer is banned for up to three years, after the three-year point, is there more oversight when they have nominee employees that they rehire or re-sponsor or have within their employ? If there has been a problem before with an employer, what does the Department of Education do to make sure the future nominees are protected within that workplace?

**Hon. Ms. Taylor:** I don't know whether or not we've had an example of that in the past. I haven't really pored through the files lately to determine who has been banned from the program in years past and, after that three-year ban, whether or not, two years later, they reapply and are accepted. I don't know whether or not we've had a circumstance like that in the past, but obviously, if there was an example of that, one would assume that would form part of the comprehensive file on that particular employer. That would have to be taken into account going forward, in terms of providing that additional compliance or at least keeping an eye on how things unfold — again, depending on the individual circumstances, or what source of retribution there was, or what the source of the allegation was that was found to be accurate.

Again, I just don't know if we've had an example of that in the past. If we had, then I would have to take a look, but I'm just not aware.

**Ms. White:** I thank the minister for that candid answer. I am not looking for a one-size-fits-all solution because I realize that there is not. Different industries require different skills, and there are a lot different expectations throughout. It was just more of a general "what would happen". I appreciate that there could be files and more oversight, and that would be decided on a case-by-case basis.

In that same breath, as an employer myself, there were times when I had staff who were not necessarily the right fit, but when you have come from another country to establish yourself in Canada and if you are not that right fit, there is a lot riding on that. There can be a couple of things that can happen within the nominee program — and there are examples and I know that there is an active case right now

with the department, in Advanced Education, that you are dealing with. I am not trying to speak about that, but just more in general terms. If a nominee is unfairly let go from an employer and they have a very short amount of time before they can find another one, they get caught in this kind of crossfire between programs. It means that they have to restart. Once they find a new employer, they start that two-year time again at the beginning. There are vague examples where we can say that — after spending a year and a half in a program and then needing to restart, that is quite troubling.

The federal government has a new program and it is referred to as the "bridging open work permits". Does the Yukon government recognize the new federal program — the bridging open work permits in the territory?

**Hon. Ms. Taylor:** In an instance where an employer is banned from the program, under the federal program guidelines, we do have the latitude of being able to afford that employee who has been impacted up to 90 days to provide an opportunity to find other work. Obviously that's where our department will come into play. We're quite familiar with the labour market, and usually we have — I'm not sure how many incidents there have been, but obviously probably a handful of incidents. I can think of a couple in the last year, and they were matched up with jobs right away.

Especially here in the City of Whitehorse, there are a lot of different various jobs available to individuals seeking work. With respect to this other program, I believe it is a federal program, the bridging work program. I'm not as familiar with that program being administered through Immigration Canada.

Through the Government of Canada, under the agreement that we have and our annex that we administer on behalf of Canada, we do have that ability to provide 90 days.

Madam Chair, seeing the time, I move that you report progress.

**Chair:** It has been moved by Ms. Taylor that the Chair report progress.

*Motion agreed to*

*Speaker resumes the Chair*

**Hon. Mr. Cathers:** Madam Chair, I move that the Speaker do now resume the Chair.

**Chair:** It has been moved by Mr. Cathers that the Speaker do now resume the Chair.

*Motion agreed to*

*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**

**Chair:** Mr. Speaker, Committee of the Whole has considered Bill No. 15, entitled *Second Appropriation Act, 2014-15*, and directed me to report progress.

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

**Some Hon. Members:** Agreed.

**Speaker:** I declare the report carried.

**Hon. Mr. Cathers:** Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

**Speaker:** It has been moved by the Government House Leader that the House do now adjourn.

*Motion agreed to*

**Speaker:** This House now stands adjourned until 1:00 p.m. tomorrow.

*The House adjourned at 5:23 p.m.*

**The following documents were filed on December 2, 2014:**

33-1-96

Review of the *Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Act* (YESAA), letter re (dated December 12, 2012) from Darrell Pasloski, Premier, to the Hon. John Duncan, Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada, including YESAA Review Opportunity, Summary of Issues to submit to Canada, December 12, 2012 (Tredger)

33-1-97

Yukon Intergovernmental Relations Surrounding Bill S-6, *Yukon and Nunavut Regulatory Improvement Act*, letter re (dated November 28, 2014) from Paul West-Sells, President, Casino Mining Corporation to the Hon. Bernard Valcourt, Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (Tredger)